Researching primary school children's
"museum theatre" experiences

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Abstract

As the number of museums that employ theatre as part of their educational provision is increasing there is a need for the articulation of the theoretical framework and an in-depth insight into the children’s “museum theatre” experiences.

The aim of this empirical research is to examine how primary school children “make meaning” of the form and content of the experience in two forms of “museum theatre”: a) a participatory theatrical experience in the heritage site of Clarke Hall and b) first person interpretation events in the Museum of London. Based on the principles of the constructivist qualitative paradigm, the research attempts to offer an insight into how the children understand the content and format of the “museum theatre” experience. The research focuses on the interrelationship between the children’s prior-to-the-event agenda and their “museum theatre” experiences and examines the children’s experiences as products of relationships between the involved parties: the museum’s agenda and the schools’ agenda.

The constructivist paradigm and the interpretive sociological approach illustrate the epistemological position that underpins the formulation of the research questions and the methodological framework employed. The data generation methods derive from ethnographical research methods and mainly involve interviews, observations and children’s drawings.

The research attempts to elucidate the parameters that shape the children’s “museum theatre” experiences. These include the museum’s setting and objects, the children’s willingness to suspend disbelief, the interactive/participatory aspects of the experience and the opportunities given to children for reflection and generation of new understandings. The research findings underline the subjectivity of the theatrical experience, as shaped through the various objectives and expectations of the involved parties. They suggest that interplay between the event’s format/content and the experience’s fictional/real context is evident in the children’s interpretation of their “museum theatre” experience.
Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

AATE American Alliance for Theatre and Education
Actor B The actor who performs the event B in the Museum of London
Actor A The actor who performs the event A in the Museum of London
BERA British Education Research Association
BL School in London, the year 4 class participated in the first person interpretation event A in the Museum of London
C Children
DIE Drama in Education
DGT Data Generation Techniques
E-IMTAL European Affiliation to International Museum Theatre Alliance
G School in Wakefield, the year 4 class participated in the theatre event in Clarke Hall
IMTAL International Museum Theatre Alliance
MOL Museum of London
N School in London, the year 5 class participated in the first person interpretation event B in the Museum of London
NAM National Army Museum
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TIE Theatre in Education

R Researcher

Ro Class teacher (BL School in London)
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to set the background that explains the wider scope of this research and the rationale of the inquiry. To explain the need for the inquiry, the status of the use of theatre in museums is described briefly as experienced during the preliminary stage of this research and illustrated in current bibliography, conferences and previous researches. In particular, it states the research questions that underpinned the inquiry, provides an explanatory grounding in terms of the vocabulary used throughout the research and locates the thesis in the wider field of visitor studies. This chapter also deals with questions in regard to the design of a qualitative inquiry and contextualizes the two case studies selected for the research.

Setting the “scene” - Tracing the use of theatre in museums
In the twentieth century the theatre, by moving from conventional to experimental forms, has reshaped the actor-audience relationship as the theatre’s vital ingredient and emphasised its power as a medium that gives us a deeper understanding of life and ourselves, finding its expression in drama and theatre in education movements. Museums with their prominent focus on education and communication, in seeking to find new ways to exhibit and to interpret their collections that respond to their visitors’ needs for meaningful museum visiting experiences, have adopted a variety of live interpretation methods including a range of theatrical styles. The use of the medium in museums will be described briefly to set the context for the emergence of this inquiry.

The conceptual roots of using the theatre in museums can be traced back to 1891 when the first experiment with living history programmes took place at the Skansen Open Air Museum in Sweden. In order to engender a sense of cultural identity without being “a dead museum” actors and artists were dressed up to represent customs and aspects of the traditional lifestyle (Anderson, 1984:19; Baehrendtz et al., 1982:177; Andren, 1947:4-5). The use for the first time of people-based interpretation aiming to bring the past to life
influenced at the end of the nineteenth century the development of a few exhibitions\(^1\) in North America to be used a few decades later by various open-air museums\(^2\). It is estimated that by the early 1980s more than 800 sites in the U.S.A. employed the medium\(^3\) while in the early 1970s the Association for Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums in the USA (ALHFAM) was established to support the use of living history techniques in farms, agricultural and outdoors museums.

The initial use of the medium having the form of costumed interpreters giving guided tours in a “third person” and being mainly associated with representations of everyday life in the past expanded with the indoors’ use of the medium by various North American museums (Alsford & Parry, 1991:8; Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:47). As a response to criticisms regarding the use of the medium to portray an idealised past\(^4\) institutions such as the National Museum of American History\(^5\) and the Canadian Museum of Civilisation\(^6\) developed programmes to address controversial issues. The development of the medium was also expanded by its systematic use by various science museums in order to interpret the cultural and scientific context of their exhibitions\(^7\). By the 1980s the formulation of

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\(^1\) Examples of the two exhibitions are given by Hudson (1987) Museums of influence in (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:47)

\(^2\) Since the 1940s the Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia has been using costumed guides and craft demonstrators on a systematic basis to simulate life in the past (Greenspan 2002). The example inspired other North American open-air museums, such as the Plimoth Plantation, the Old Sturbridge Village, the Farmer’s Museum and the Mystic Seaport to incorporate living history programs in their provision for their visitors (Anderson, 1984:33;Robertshaw, 1997:17-18).

\(^3\) Robertshaw, 1990:30

\(^4\) Alsford & Parry, 1991:11;Greenspan, 2002:148-172

\(^5\) At the beginning of 1980s the National Museum of American History developed a scripted dialogue entitled as “Buyin’ Freedom” between two actors raising issues of slavery. It was one of the first programs that brought live interpretation indoors centered around a dialogue (Munley, 1993:70).

\(^6\) For example, the Canadian Museum of Civilization developed scripted plays performed by two or more actors aiming to explore historically remote cultural attitudes, values and preconceptions (Cannizzo & Parry, 1994).

\(^7\) The Science Museum of Minessota was the leading one in the field to influence other museums such as the Boston Museum of Science, the Franlkin Institute and the Singapore Science Centre (Alsford & Parry
residential companies in some museums contributed to the development of various forms of the medium focusing on the intercourse with the visitor rather than merely “giving life” to static exhibits (Cannizzo & Parry, 1994; Alsford & Parry, 1991). Although at the beginning of 1990s the medium was still considered experimental and controversial for its entertaining nature and potentiality to trivialize history, gradually the use of the medium expanded also to zoos and aquariums. By the end of the 1990s a shared understanding was created in regard to the medium’s potential to reach a wide range of visitors, add depth and meaning to the museum visiting experiences, present multiple perspectives and effectively discuss complex issues. Associations such as the International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL, in 1990) and more recently (in 2003) the Museum Theatre Network by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) organized to advocate for the use of the medium, exchange and dissemination of practice, might have contributed to this wider acceptance.

Various definitions and forms

With the establishment of IMTAL a new term emerged: “museum-theatre”, which was used instead of terms such as “interpretive theatre”, “living history”, “theatre in museums” that appeared in the then current bibliography. It is more of an umbrella term used to encompass various forms of theatre in museums rather than a concept defined in fixed terms. As illustrated within the context of this research the term is mainly used amongst the IMTAL members when referring to interpretation where (a) performer(s)

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8 The two companies that are considered to have played a leading role in the field was the theatre department in Science Museum of Minnesota created in 1984 and a few years later the Canadian Museum’s of Civilization residential company (Cannizo & Parry 1991:43; Leger Richard 2001, Artistic Director Canadian Museum of Civilization – interview ; Larry Gard 2001, Artistic Director Carpenters Theatre Company / Science Museum of Virginia, interview).

9 This shared understanding was especially reflected in the directors’ voices of various institutions in North America at the 1998 American Association of Museums conference (Directors Support Museum Theatre. Proceedings from IMTAL session at the 1998 American Association of Museums Conference, http://www.mos.org/learn_more/imtal-directors.html, last accessed at 02/05/2003.)
assume the role of a character(s) to communicate ideas, facts and concepts via fictional activity.\textsuperscript{10}

In order to provide a baseline for the vocabulary used in this research the main terms and forms of “museum theatre” will be briefly stated as they are described bibliographically and as they were observed at the preliminary stage of the research (For a list of the museums visited see Table 1, for a list of interviews conducted with museum and “museum-theatre” professionals see Appendix 1).

*Live interpretation* is a broad term usually used to denote activities that provide “active, face-to-face contact between the interpreter and the visitor” (Risk, 1993:320). When the activities have a theatrical character focusing on historical and cultural interpretation then they can be identified with the term *living history*. The historian Jay Anderson interprets living history as simulation of life in the past and describes three main uses of the medium/approach: a) for interpretive purposes, b) as a research tool, c) for personal entertainment by nostalgic enthusiasts (Anderson, 1984). It is within the context of the first and the last approach that the term is utilised within the museum world to describe historically authentic activities that take place in an appropriate context and often in heritage sites and open-air museums.\textsuperscript{11} Within the key definitions provided by organisations such as IMTAL and AATE, living history appears as a form of “museum-theatre”\textsuperscript{12} while in earlier papers it is used as a synonym for re-enactments to denote the


\textsuperscript{11} For an example of the use of the term in published papers see Camp, 1994:7-8; Burcaw, 1980;

recreation of a variety of activities ranging from domestic life to military services\textsuperscript{13}. Re-enactments are also usually characterised by their non-verbal interaction with the visitors and large-scale form (Sansom, 1996:124).

In writings prior to the end of the 1990s\textsuperscript{14} demonstrations are described as an independent style of living history and the term is used to denote programmes that use artisans or interpreters providing straightforward explanations to demonstrate craft skills from the past. When dressed in period costume they incorporate storytelling in their narratives and then the demonstration takes on a theatrical character. This theatrical character is even more prominent when they act as persons living in the past in a “they were, they did” style of presentation known as \textit{third person interpretation} (Risk, 1993:325).

In \textit{first person interpretation} programmes, the interpreters, by adopting the role of a historically documented or a fictional character, act as if they live in a different historical time and either acknowledge that the visitors are in the present or that they have moved to the characters’ time. Key elements of the form are its partially improvisational and interactive nature as the actors, without breaking out of role, might encourage the visitors’ participation\textsuperscript{15}. It has also been suggested that first person interpretation might be a form of theatre itself due to analogies drawn with other theatrical methods and genres such as the environmental theatre and the Stanislavskian method (See Roth, 1998:51).

\textsuperscript{13} (Indicative of the use of the term of living history with the term re-enactment as also of the range of activities performing by re-enactment societies see Robertshaw, 1990; Robersthaw, 1992; Malcom-Davies, 1989).

\textsuperscript{14} Demonstrations are mentioned as part of the live interpretation techniques in earlier papers (Malcom-Davies 1990; Runyard, 1996; Malcom-Davies, 1989; Risk, 1993;Greenough, 1986). Within more recent definitions demonstrations are considered as one of the foundation styles that might have shaped the field of “museum theatre” but not perceived as a style of museum theatre itself (Hughes, 1998:33-39).

\textsuperscript{15} This broad definition emerges from various sources such as IMTAL-web site; AATE- website ; Risk 1993:324 ; Beck 1999; Roth 1998:50-53.
A widely used form of "museum theatre", especially popular with primary school groups, is usually termed as role-play\(^\text{16}\) to denote programmes in which the audience takes on a role within the fictional context. A common example found in many museums and heritage sites in the UK is the recreation of a Victorian classroom where the visitors are endowed with the role of pupils\(^\text{17}\). The practitioners, to denote the form and its elaborated versions, use various terms such as drama, theatre-in-education, process drama, creative drama, developmental drama and drama-in-education, interactive or participatory theatre\(^\text{18}\). A few of these terms are used interchangeably although they might have some differences depending on one's theoretical perspective and the characteristics of the specific programmes they intend to describe. A few of these terms will be explained to provide the wider picture.

The terms mainly derive from the theoretical field designated as drama-in-education and theatre-in-education movements in the UK in the 1970s. The theatre-in-education movement derived from the development of the professional theatre and searching for a new form of communication within a socio-political context. Its main concern was its use as a learning medium via follow-up work and workshops that would extend the event beyond the theatrical play (Jackson, 1993: 8). The drama-in-education movement associated with the ideals of the New Education Movement of "self-expression" and "learning by doing", viewed drama as process that having an improvisational character could change the participants' understanding of themselves and the world\(^\text{19}\). From its inception until the end of the 1990s a polarisation characterised the field in regard to the importance given to theatrical aspects of an experience at the expense of its educational principles. It should be stated that there was not a single definition among the exponents. Terms such as creative drama, process drama and developmental drama were used to emphasise its


\(^{17}\) Bradford Industrial Museum, for school children (Wigan Pier, Black Living History Museum in Dudley, Ironbridge Gorge Museums in Shropshire

\(^{18}\) A few of these terms appear at the following sources: AATE web site, Hayes & Schindel (1994), Landy (1993), Sternberg (1993)

\(^{19}\) For a historical review of the movement's development see Bolton (1998)
educational nature in contrast to the term *theatre* that denotes a product-orientated activity. Reflecting the polarisation that characterised the two approaches, they could be presented in a continuum along which any event according to the extent of its characteristics and purposes could be located (See Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Drama continuum

Drama as process  Drama as product (theatre)

Although the history of drama-in-education has been marked by the practitioners' concern to differentiate drama from theatre, since the beginning of 2000 it has been stated that the common basis for practice that drama and theatre share should be acknowledged (Bolton, 2000). In particular, in the 10th National Drama conference “The Shape of Things to Come” that took place in York (2000), Gavin Bolton, who is a pioneer in the field of drama-in-education, stressed that the acknowledgement that dramatic activities are rooted in theatre will lead to a greater tolerance of diversity in the field and experimentation beyond the boundaries of the process-product approach. The common basis between drama and theatre lies not only in the use of similar techniques (e.g. still images, suspension of disbelief, suspension of time) but also the participants’ positioning in a theatrical (or dramatic) event. Independent of the extent to which a conventional stage is used, the participants are all spectators and “self-spectators” who actively construct meaning (Bolton, 2000:24). The “meaning” or otherwise “reading” of an action and/or object is placed within a fictional context that characterises all theatre/drama events (Bolton, 2000).

The development of “museum theatre” in UK

Dressing up, play acting and participating in hands on activities can be traced back to the late 60s mainly in historic houses. Although this kind of interpretation cannot be easily classified as theatre it could still be considered as the precursor of future developments in
the field that took place within the 1970s with the emphasis placed on the use of the country’s heritage as an educational resource for organized school groups. In the year 1975 organizations such as The Association for Heritage Interpretation and the Heritage Trust\(^\text{21}\) were founded to encourage high standards of educational provision including also more dramatic approaches (Dyer, 1986:25-188; Association for Heritage Interpretation\(^\text{22}\)). However, the widespread interest in heritage education was better established in the 1980s during which a variety of school services was developed across museums and heritage sites in the UK including demonstrations, direct teaching, hands-on sessions and the use of drama (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 243). The National Trust sites demonstrated a real interest with the establishment of the Young National Trust theatre (1976) that during the 1980s toured various sites to perform pieces of theatre-in-education for primary school children in relation to the sites’ periods of history (Woodhead, S. & Tinniswood A. 1996:4-7; Mayo 1993:7-8). Also with the English Heritage sites’ interest in hosting re-enactment events various societies and groups were performing all over the country. It was this enthusiasm for the medium and interest in historical accuracy that gave rise to professional companies being established such as the White Company\(^\text{23}\) and the History Re-enactment workshop which perform for a wide range of visitors (Malcom-Davies 1989:12-14, Andrew Robertshaw, 1999, personal communication).

It was by the end of the 1980s that the first residential\(^\text{24}\) and non residential companies were established in the UK, orientated to the use of more interactive techniques and in

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21 http://www.heritageeducationtrust.org.uk/het_ssi/philosophy.shtml, [online], The Heritage Education Prospectus, 2001, last accessed on 05/05/04

22 http://heritageinterpretation.org.uk [online], Association for Heritage Interpretation, updated on 23\(^\text{rd}\) April 2004, last accessed on 05/05/04

23 The company’s focus on developing programs based on historical accuracy and research is particularly illustrated in the company’s web site (The White Company 1450-1485, Living history during the Wars of the Roses, http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/3639/index.html. Last accessed on 06/04/2000

24 Residential companies are companies which, although formed independently, were resident and contracted by a specific museum (s).
particular first person interpretation. The MOMI Actors’ Company performing at the Museum of Moving Image since its opening in 1988, the Spectrum Company resident in the Science Museum in London since 1987, and the Past Pleasures Company founded in 1987, were the first professional companies created in the UK that shaped the future development of “museum theatre” in the country\textsuperscript{25}. Their founders, having a background in the theatre-in-education and drama-in-education movements and/or being trained in North American Museums, employed and trained actors and educators who over the years developed projects in a wider range of museums.

The expansion of the medium at the beginning of the 1990s is illustrated in a survey conducted for a Ph.D. thesis in 1993 which attempted to find out if the use of theatre in museums could be seen as a national movement. It pointed out that within a sample of 1299 museums in the British Isles, over one third of museums were using theatre, with an accelerated pace of expansion since 1980 (Ford, 1998:38-41). However, the development of the medium in the UK cannot be traced in a linear path. For many years the use of the medium as an interpretive means was perceived as a controversial one by many museum professionals, whereas the diversity of professional backgrounds of the “museum theatre” practitioners posed difficulties in finding a common grounding for discussion in regard to the nature of the medium (Price, 1992:20-21). This scepticism and diversity was particularly reflected in the first conference organized in Liverpool in 1991 to examine issues surrounding “museum theatre”. From the museum professionals’ side, as also occurred in North America, questions were posed about the actors’ appropriateness as interpreters, the entertaining nature of the medium and its potentiality to trivialise history (Ford, 1998; Cannizzo & Parry, 1994; Alsford & Parry, 1991). From the practitioners’ side disagreements were expressed mainly in terms of the background that one should have to develop theatrical programmes in museums reflecting the separate traditions of drama and theatre in education from which the majority of the practitioners were coming (Price, 1992; Kinsey 1999, personal communication).

\textsuperscript{25} Ford 1998; Interviews with the companies’ directors: Andrew Ashmore 1999, Gerant Thomas, 2000 and the Past Pleasures Company’s web site: \url{http://www.pastpleasures.co.uk/frameset.htm}, Last accessed on 29/10/04
The disputes amongst the practitioners partially subsided during the 1990s with the expanded work of the “museum theatre” companies and the establishment of the European Affiliation to the International Museum Theatre Association in 1999. Aiming to share best practice and to promote its members to potential museum clients, it laid the foundations for the rise of the “museum theatre professional” (Ford, 1998). Since its foundation, the co-operation between North America and the UK has strengthened. Every two years an international conference takes place, while the theatrical companies and museums from European countries that join the association are increasing.

The tension regarding the validity of the medium as an educational medium was illustrated within an international perspective in the first International Conference in Boston in 1999. Views were expressed regarding the design of programmes that would be flexible to the visitors’ needs beyond the typified styles that were established by the companies during the past decade (Ford, 1999). Evaluation was perceived as the main path via which the “museum-theatre” professionals would persuade the museum world about the medium’s potentiality (Silber, 1999; Roberson, 1999). In particular, the need was stressed for evaluation in regard to the interpretive potential of different styles of museum-theatre (Jones, 1999).

The need for research
In 2000, at the preliminary stage of this research, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with museum professionals (either IMTAL members or not) in order to illustrate the (then) current status of theatre in museums (See Appendix 1). Conducting these interviews was not an easy task. Using the vocabulary as it was established by the current bibliography, I could not really communicate with the respondents. There was a lack of a common ground regarding not only the definitions of the different forms of theatre but also the methodological framework employed for the design of the “museum-theatre” programmes. The vocabulary used to describe the programmes and their objectives was various reflecting the different professional backgrounds that the respondents had and their awareness of the medium and its potentiality. The assumption
about the lack of a common vocabulary and a theoretical background was later confirmed when attending one of the annual meetings organized by IMTAL\textsuperscript{26}. The aim of these meetings, apart from administrative purposes, was to attend "museum-theatre" programmes and to comment on their function as interpretive means. During the feedback sessions, conflicting opinions were expressed regarding the style of the programmes and the elements they should possess as effective interpretive tools, such as responding to the schools' learning needs and being enjoyable.

The lack of agreement amongst the practitioners in terms of the characteristics that make the medium an effective interpretive tool for the visitors might reflect and (also) result from the lack of depth of visitor studies in the field that would show how the visitors interpret their "museum theatre" experience. The evaluations of "museum theatre" located during this research's literature review and during the preliminary fieldwork were found to be limited in comparison to the expanded use of the medium. In the year 1999-2000 observations conducted in five museums and eight heritage sites of theatrical events for primary school groups indicated that either the programmes were not evaluated at any stage of the programmes' development or, when evaluated, questionnaires (evaluation sheets\textsuperscript{27}) were given to the class teachers to complete in regard to their overall satisfaction of the museum visit (For a list of museums see Table 1). The children's voices are not heard in these evaluations as they invite the class teachers to comment in regard to the children's enjoyment and learning from the theatrical event. Given also the standardised format of the thankful letters sent to the museum following the museum visit one could not suggest with certainty that the letters reflect the children's views.

Awareness of the lack of depth of visitor studies in the field has also been expressed amongst the practitioners. At the 2\textsuperscript{nd} International Museum Theatre Conference that took place in London in 2001 the necessity for research that would show the weaknesses and the strengths of the medium was also expressed, while the issues of the common vocabulary and theoretical grounding came to the fore. Questionnaires were given to the

\textsuperscript{26} Bradford Industrial Museum, October 16\textsuperscript{th} 1999, Milestones, 5\textsuperscript{th} July 2000

\textsuperscript{27} For a sample of the evaluation sheets see Appendix 2
delegates seeking to define different types of “museum theatre”, and “problem-solving” activities took place in small groups to enable the delegates to share their professional expertise in developing “museum-theatre” projects. The conference ended with a plea for qualitative evaluation in the field and the announcement of quasi-experimental research undertaken by a research team28 aiming to show the strengths and the weaknesses of the medium via comparison between the best educational provision for school groups and first person interpretation in museums (Jackson et al, 2002).

Reviewing previous researches

An insight into the visitors’ “museum-theatre” experiences, which laid the grounding for further research, is provided by evaluations conducted for pioneer North American museums, for the Science Museum of London and within the context of postgraduate studies. In their majority they are quantitative and semi-experimental studies focusing on behavioural and cognitive aspects of the experience without, however, always portraying in a clear manner the style of the theatrical event they evaluate. They attempt to find evidence of the medium’s effects and overall they suggest that “museum theatre” is considered by the visitors as an effective tool for communicating ideas and information.

One of the first studies conducted was the evaluation of “Buyin’ freedom” in 1982 to evaluate the very first programme (a play) staged at the National Museum of American history. It focused both on the visitors and the museum staff and used observations, questionnaires and “conversational interviewing” to elicit responses. Behavioural aspects of the experience (time spent, attendance, size of groups, visitors’ profile, visiting patterns) were derived from the conduct of observations, whereas the interview data provided a focus on the visitors’ meaning making of the programme’s “message” (Munley, 1993: 78). Half of the visitors mentioned that they learned “how people really lived” while the experience was appreciated for its immediacy and intensity. Around 80% of the visitors commented on the play’s ability to place them in a different time and place, while 25% of the visitors reported making a connection between the play and their real life. Comparison between the visitors’ group that attended the theatrical event in the

28 Centre for Applied Theatre Research (CATR), University of Manchester
### Table 1
List of Museums where observations of programmes with school groups were conducted in 1999-2000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Museum/site</th>
<th>Programme (s) attended</th>
<th>Contact with the schools before the visit</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Staff involved/ background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PumpHouse: People’s History Museum, Manchester</td>
<td>First person interpretation</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>Ex-DIE company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Museum, London</td>
<td>Theatre workshops</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>Actors, teaching background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Museum, London</td>
<td>First person interpretation (with one or more actors)</td>
<td>Brief performances integrated in INSET sessions</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>Spectrum (Museum theatre company) TIE background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court House / Guildhall Leicester</td>
<td>Children in scripted role</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>Children’s letters</td>
<td>Teaching background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgrave Hall</td>
<td>Children in costume participating in hands-on activities</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>Teaching background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke Hall</td>
<td>Drama, children in costume participating in hands-on activities</td>
<td>Teacher pack, INSET sessions</td>
<td>Children’s letters</td>
<td>Teaching background, DIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford Industrial Museum</td>
<td>Children in costume participating in hands-on activities</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>Questionnaire for teachers, children’s letters</td>
<td>Teaching background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galleries of Justice, Nottingham</td>
<td>Scripted role play</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>Teaching background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of London</td>
<td>First person interpretation, storytelling</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>Questionnaire for teachers</td>
<td>Spectrum (Museum theatre company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calke Abbey, Derby</td>
<td>Children attending a play with elements of participation</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>Questionnaire for teachers</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak House Museum, West Bromwich</td>
<td>Children in costume participating in hands on activities</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>Questionnaire for teachers / Formal evaluation</td>
<td>Ex-primary class teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston Mannor, Brighton</td>
<td>Children in costume participating in hands on activities</td>
<td>Teacher pack</td>
<td>Questionnaire for teachers</td>
<td>Teaching background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Army Museum</td>
<td>First person interpretation</td>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Questionnaire for teachers</td>
<td>Teaching background, museum theatre training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A quantitative and semi-experimental study was conducted in 1988 at the Science Museum of Minnesota aiming to explore the effect of “interpretive theatre” on children in the museum setting. The research used pre/post-tests and observations, which aimed to test hypotheses in regard to the cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural impact that the event would have on 9-12 years old children. The research, analyzed statistically, indicated that the children attending the theatrical event gained cognitively, enjoyed the relevant exhibits, increased the time spent in the gallery, and changed their attitudes to science in comparison to the control group. The results suggested that further research was essential especially in terms of the learning merits of the experience (Miller, 1988).

Another major evaluation that provides an insight into the visitors’ perception of theatrical events in the museum was conducted in 1992 by the Canadian Museum of Civilisation (CMC). The evaluation, perhaps influenced by the behavioural nature of visitor studies at the time, used observation and questionnaires to find out if the programmes fulfilled their objectives and to measure the behavioural traits of the experience (e.g. holding power, attracting power). The evaluation suggested that 96% of the respondents felt that the experience was entertaining, 63% that they learned something new while 95% commented that the live interpretation enhanced their visit (CMC, 1993:122).

Positive outcomes from the use of the medium have been also illustrated in a range of independent and internal evaluations conducted for ten years at the Museum of Science Boston (MSB) (1990-2000). The researches were conducted mainly with adult visitors by employing questionnaires while in some cases “comment cards” and participant observation are used as data collection tools. They present the medium as an effective communication tool that can promote short-term cognitive change, widen the visitors’ perspectives on familiar themes, facilitate affective outcomes and the understanding of complex and abstract ideas (Baum & Hughes, 2001). An evaluation conducted in 1998
with secondary and mainly high school students provided an insight into the young peoples' perception of an interactive theatrical play performed at the museum. The study, involving pre and post performance surveys and interviews, showed that 46% of the 745 students perceived the play as a "learning" rather than an "entertaining" tool. Furthermore, in comparison to learning in the classroom the play was perceived as more "interesting", "entertaining", "giving a sense of real life". Although only 25% participated in a discussion with the actors following the play, the majority of the students rated participation positively as a technique (Black & Goldowsky, 1998).

Perhaps the most well known evaluation in the UK was conducted in 1993 at the Science Museum in London. Including various groups of visitors (also children) it aimed to find out how the visitors perceived the actors' in the gallery and behaved in first person interpretation programmes with the intention to improve the museum's provision for its visitors. The study used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods including questionnaires, observations and interviews. The research findings pointed out that a paradox occurs in the visitors' perception of the theatrical events. On the one hand, the medium is endorsed as an interpretive means in the museum space. Almost 90% of the visitors felt that the actors facilitated understanding of life in the past and made the exhibits more memorable. On the other, almost half of the visitors that participated in the research, depending on their familiarity with the topic and frame of mind, felt embarrassed and uncomfortable to interact with the actors (Bicknell & Fisher, 1993). The research suggested that children are more eager than the adults to participate in the event while further research was recommended to examine issues of learning and suspension of disbelief (Bicknell & Mazda, 1993).

More emphasis on children as an audience in theatrical events is given within the context of postgraduate studies. Two studies will be mentioned here for their qualitative approach. The first one took place in 1997 at the Midland Railway Centre with a sample of 42 children (6 – 14 years old). The study using interviews and drawings was concerned with the retention of information offered during the performances and the meaning that children make of incidents in a play. The research mainly indicated that storytelling
within the context of a theatrical play can be a successful medium in “transmitting bodies of factual knowledge” while especially younger children perceived the play as a “true” representation of life (Ford, 1997:47). A qualitative research that also aims to demonstrate that children learn through theatrical events by being intrinsically motivated was conducted in 1999 in two museums29 in the north-east of England. Open-ended questionnaires were given to children (10-11 years old) following the event while the children’s views were triangulated with the class teachers’ views and the researcher’s observations. The research pointed that the children appreciated the experience especially for its realism and active style of learning when engaged in hands-on activities (Davies, 1999).

Reviewing the major evaluations conducted in regard to the visitors’ responses to the medium, one could suggest that further research is required that will move beyond the “measurement” of the programmes’ potentiality to fulfil their objectives and the effectiveness of the medium and that will focus on the process and the parameters involved in the way participants make sense of the theatrical events. Given the variety of styles of “museum theatre” it is necessary that the specific characteristics of the theatrical event are taken into account and that the participants’ understanding of the programmes is examined in relation to these characteristics. Given also the constructivist nature of the way we make sense of the world, a comprehensive understanding of the participants’ experiences would take into consideration the participants’ prior-to and following-the-museum visit agenda (e.g. attitudes, expectations, cognitive background).

The scope of the research - Stating the research questions

The shift from behaviourist and positivist paradigms to the use of more interpretive research methods and constructive philosophies that acknowledge the active character of the individual is an ongoing process in the field of visitor studies, which requires further in-depth research in tune with the nature of the meaning-making process as contingent,

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29 The Hancock Museum in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery.
variable and fluid (Hooper-Greenhill, in press\textsuperscript{30}). This research, in agreement with the shifting paradigm in the field of visitor studies and by taking into account the need for the children’s voices to be heard, intends to explore how primary school children make meaning of theatrical events in museums and heritage sites.

The research’s focus on primary school groups derives from my own interest and background as a primary class teacher and from my assumption, formulated at the preliminary stage of this research, that Key Stage Two groups constitute the majority of the organised school groups that participate in theatrical events in museums. Based on the constructivist view of meaning-making as an active and constantly evolving construction that depends on one’s previous expectations, understandings and experiences, the research will explore the children’s “meaning making” of the theatrical events in association with their prior-to-the-museum learning agenda. Also, by taking into consideration that “meaning-making” is not a static process, the research attempts to trace the children’s generated understanding as it is shaped by the time element (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Thus, the children’s learning agenda and interpretation of the “museum theatre” experience is traced both the day after and a few months following the museum visit.

Throughout this research the theatrical event, independently of its style, is considered as text while the children’s understanding of the experience is viewed in terms of the text’s content and format. The term content denotes the event’s interpretive points integrated in the fictional context while the term format refers to the practices and the theatrical components employed for the construction of the event. Also within the context of this research the terms fictional and real context are used as introduced in O’Toole’s “Dramawise model”\textsuperscript{31} (O’Toole, 1992). The fictional context denotes the “comprising situations embodying characters who interact with each other, and their physical, social and cultural environment as presented in the fiction” while the term real context refers to

\textsuperscript{30} Hooper-Greenhill E., “studying visitors”, in Macdonald, S. (ed) Companion to museum studies, Blackwell

\textsuperscript{31} The “Dramawise” model intends to present and explain the elements which are and should be present in an event to be called “drama” (O’ Toole, 1992:5).
the participants own background, relationships and situation brought to any theatrical experience (O’Toole, 1992:14, 48).

The text is not considered as an autonomous entity itself but as a product of relationships amongst the involved parties: the museums’ agenda and the schools’ agenda. Thus, the views, expectations and intentions of all the participants in the construction of the event are taken into account to provide an insight into how the meaning emerges and consequently how the event is used as a learning medium. Perhaps, by viewing the participants in the event within the context of reader –response theory, the museum staff involved in the design and development of the event could be considered as the author of the text while the children and the schoolteachers as the readers of the experience (See Fig. 2).

Thus, to summarise and state the research’s questions, the current inquiry intends to illustrate how the participants, and in particular the school children, in a first-person interpretation and a participatory “museum theatre” event, make sense of the event. To what extent do the participants’ prior and following-to-the-museum visit agenda shape children’s understanding? How do they understand and view the events’ format and content? Within the limits of the current research, the inquiry aspires to trace the main parameters that shape the theatrical event and its use as a learning/interpretive means.
A naturalistic inquiry

The choice of the qualitative inquiry that involves an interpretive naturalistic approach is based on the purposes and context of this research. The naturalistic inquiry, which seeks to understand how visitors construct meanings and to describe the "emergent themes" of the inquiry rather than measure change, is considered appropriate for the research's scope (Hein, 1997). It facilitates the exploration of the research participants' understandings within the naturalistic context from which they emerge: the museum and the classroom context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:16). By being a "situated activity" that locates the researcher in the world without advocating "value-free" research, the naturalistic inquiry would allow me to participate and interact with the research participants in the museum and classroom context and to make explicit the values to be found in the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:38). Also, by legitimising tacit knowledge in addition to verbally expressed knowledge, it would allow me to identify multiple realities and to be sensitive to the values and influences that mutually shape the event and the participants' meaning making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:40).
The naturalistic inquiry, with its potentiality to facilitate the study of multiple constructed realities, is also in tune with the nature of theatre as an ephemeral art form. Within the theatrical context there is a story framework that has the power to transform people and events and present ambiguous meanings and multiple realities (Taylor, 1996). The qualitative perspective, which offers an internal approach to the understanding of culture and examines meaning not as a product but as a process integrated within wider social and cultural perspectives, can allow the shifting of meaning and the multiple realities embedded in the theatrical event to emerge (Jensen, 1991:4; Taylor, 1996:272).

Case studies
For the purposes of this research each theatrical event with its distinctive characteristics as they are illustrated by the author of the event is defined as a case study32. Two case studies have been selected for their format: a) a participatory theatrical event that takes place in the heritage site of “Clarke Hall” in Wakefield and b) a first person interpretation programme that takes place in the Roman Gallery at the Museum of London. The case studies have been selected for their potentiality to provide a wider perspective on the use of theatre as a learning/interpretive means in museum and heritage settings. Each case study is understood as a “bounded system” and it is viewed in relation to two (Key Stage 2) school classes’ participation (Platt, 1988:3). The selection of the schools and the year groups depended on issues of accessibility and practicality.

The first case study has been selected for its intrinsic characteristics in comparison to other similar kind of programmes either observed within the context of this study or traced bibliographically. Usually called “role-play” within the museum world, it typically involves school children’s hands-on involvement in activities while they are dressed in costume in order to experience life in the past. This description mainly derives from my observations in eight heritage sites that were conducted by following suggestions of key informants for best practice in the field (See Table 1). The theatrical event at Clarke Hall

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32 The term case study is used here as “a choice of what is to be studied” rather than as a form of inquiry itself with further methodological implications (Stake, 2000:435).
was selected for being the only programme that invited up to a certain extent the children’s verbal participation and incorporated elements of a theatrical performance.

The second case study at the Museum of London is selected for its characteristics as a “typical” first person interpretation event and also by taking into account issues of accessibility. Due to the number of school bookings and the availability of the programmes two first person interpretation events were selected as a case study. During the research analysis the differences and commonalities between the two events are traced in order to point out the children’s interpretation and the parameters that shape the first person interpretation events.

Gaining access

Negotiating access was an important parameter for the accomplishment of this research. I had to endure unsuccessful negotiations before I could commence fieldwork. Potential explanations for having restricted access to conduct fieldwork might be inter-linked with the status of “museum theatre”. Refusal to be interviewed and the setting of limits to access might reflect a fear of evaluation deriving from insecurity of the professional background and the lack of methodological framework employed for the development of the programmes. The lack of access might also have been associated with the researcher’s characteristics: sex, age and ethnicity. As a result during the initial stages of the research I reconsidered my self-presentation. Was my self-presentation a convincing one? Was I presenting myself as a researcher having connotations that I am a professional? Should I be presented as the ignorant student with naïve curiosity?

Having identified that access will be a problem I had to develop an access strategy. Burgess suggests that friendships can affect which avenues will open the door (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). Becoming friends with the museum staff was one of the strategies developed which, however, was limited due to time and resources constraints. Thus, I approached museums working as a volunteer33, became a member of IMTAL and

33 Belgrave Hall & Court House, Leicester
approached the key informants\textsuperscript{34} that were willing at the initial stage of this research to be more involved and had a genuine interest in the field. Anonymity was offered as an option that museums could have selected at any phase of the research. The potential participants were informed in depth about the research process, aiming to position them during the research process as co-researchers. Also, taking into account that the possible “fear of evaluation” might be one of the reasons that posed limits for the continuation of the research, the participants were informed that the programme would not be judged for its efficacy to accomplish its objectives.

After ensuring access to the museums, the next step was to gain access to the schools that would participate in the case study research. The number of schools contacted depended on the number of bookings that the museum had received a month in advance. I considered that a month was required in order to gain access at the school and to proceed with the research requirements prior to the museum visit. To a certain extent the number of bookings made well in advance was an important factor that affected the choice of the museum with the first person interpretation event.

Gaining access to schools was a process that involved negotiation. Initially, when the class teachers were informed about the whole process that the research would involve they were not eager to participate due to the time required on their part. The decision to approach the class teachers instead of the head teachers was based on a desire to interact with the school on a teaching level as opposed to a managerial level. However, as it became evident during the pilot study research, even when I had the class teacher’s consent, limits were set by the head teacher in relation to time, access to documents, and duration of interviews. As a result, for the next case studies, as soon as I gained access at the school I arranged an interview with the head teacher to gain also her informed consent. This step had positive results as none of the head teachers set limits during the course of the research, as had happened with the pilot study. Anonymity was also suggested to the schools not only for ethical purposes but also as part of the access strategy. Working as a supply teacher I have witnessed first-hand the fear of evaluation

\textsuperscript{34} key informants: Andy Robertshaw, (National Army Museum) and Andrew Ashmore, (MOMI)
that characterizes schools when they go through evaluation reports with publicized outcomes.

**Thesis structure**

This chapter attempts to set the background of this thesis and to present the research’s scope. It traces briefly the profile of the use of theatre in museums and points out the main definitions and forms of theatre in museums as they have been presented bibliographically and employed by “museum theatre” practitioners. By reviewing previous researches conducted in the field it highlights the need for further research that will provide an insight into the children’s “museum theatre” experiences. Also, it outlines the nature of the inquiry and discusses the issue of accessibility that was central to this research.

After this introductory chapter, Chapter Two presents the research’s theoretical framework. It provides the rationale underpinning the viewing of the children’s theatrical experiences in relation to their prior-to-the event classroom-based agenda (expectations, objectives, and learning background) and discusses the implications of the constructivist perspective on the interpretation of the theatrical events. In the final part of this chapter, references are made to various reader-response theories that also informed the research’s focus. Chapter Three is a methodological chapter. The issues that arose when conducting research with children, the data generation techniques employed and the data analysis process followed are presented in detail.

The empirical research is presented and discussed in the following four chapters. Two types of events constitute the focus of the research: a participatory theatrical event that takes place in the Heritage site of Clarke Hall and first person interpretation events at the Museum of London. Each type of event is viewed in relation to two primary school classes. Chapters Four and Six present the participants’ prior-to-the-event agenda as illustrated based mainly on observations in the classroom and the museum, group interviews with the children and interviews with the museums’ and the school’s staff. Following the presentation of the participants’ (for each type of event) prior-to-the-event
agenda, the event itself is described based mainly in terms of the school children’s interpretation of it. Therefore, Chapter Five describes the participatory theatrical event and Chapter Seven presents the themes that emerged from the participants’ interpretation of the first-person interpretation events. It is hoped that the research will point out the parameters that shape the theatrical events under investigation.

The concluding chapter reviews the research’s key findings, discusses the value of the research and issues of criteriology and makes recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2
Theoretical Framework

Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to describe the theoretical framework that underpins the focus of the research and the formulation of the research questions. First the inquiry's ontological and epistemological perspectives are presented to illustrate what counts as knowledge within the context of this research and to provide a theoretical grounding for any choices made later during the data collection and analysis. The theoretical frameworks of cognitive and social constructivism, which also underpin the research's epistemology, are discussed to illustrate the research's focus on the participants' "meaning making" and especially on their prior agenda and expectations. The implications that constructivism has as a theory of pedagogy, communication and interpretation are briefly discussed with references to the field of theatre studies in order to provide a perspective on the research's focus on the interpretation of the theatrical event.

An interpretive approach
The interpretive sociological approach, which regards meaning and action as the central components of the social world, is the ontological perspective that suits the nature and

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1 The terms interpretive, constructivist, hermeneutic and naturalistic paradigms have been used, to a certain extent, interchangeably in research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:23; Smith, 1989). However, there is a fine line between the interpretivist and the constructivist approach although they share a common intellectual heritage and orientation: to understand lived experience from the point of view of those that live the experience (Schwandt, 2003:222). Blumer (1954) has described the terms of constructivism and interpretivism as "sensitizing concepts" that suggest directions along which to look and obtain their particular meanings by the intentions of their users (Schwandt, 2003:221). Within the context of this research the term "interpretivist paradigm" will be considered as a wider approach that is built on various ideological strands such as phenomenology and existentialism. The term "constructivist paradigm" will be used as mainly it has been introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1989), while specific references will be made in regard to the research's drawings upon the fields of social and cognitive constructivism.
essence of the research topic (Jary & Jary, 1995:326). The realist ontology position\(^2\) that views the nature of reality as objective and independent of the researcher would entail prediction and discovery of the underlying laws that govern the theatrical events via a cause-effect relationship. Such a perspective would limit the research’s scope and the significance of the participants’ constructions in the shaping of the theatrical and learning experience. A relativist ontology that asserts the existence of multiple social constructed realities, which are devised by the individuals as they make sense of their interactive experiences, is considered to be in tune with the research’s focus on individual and collective constructions of meaning in regard to the theatrical event.

A realist or relativist position accordingly places demands on the way the epistemological question regarding the relationship of the knower to the known is approached. On the one hand the empiricists’ and rationalists’ campuses, based on a realist ontology, assert that reality exists as an independent entity. Within this perspective, also known as “externalism”, a dualism is maintained in respect of the phenomenon being studied: the object of investigation is separate from the investigator (Smith, 1989:69). The inquiry is considered valid when it describes the existing reality with accuracy. The researcher’s role in the inquiry is viewed as neutral for the inquiry to be free from subjectivity and bias.

On the other hand, the adherents of the interpretivist paradigm postulate that there is no value-free research, as the researcher is located in the world and cannot be separated from the inquiry. The empiricists’ claims for a value-free inquiry are criticized for implying that the researcher can have an independent access both to an independently existing world and to his/her own mind (Smith, 1989:164). This view of objectivity being contradictory with our nature as finite historical beings\(^3\) also implies that the research and

\(^2\) The term realist ontology position is used here to include the various versions of realism such as naïve realism, deterministic realism and critical realism. The early rejected naïve realism postulated that physical objects continue to exist when not perceived. The deterministic position advocated that the real world is governed by certain natural laws while the critical version of realism held the view that reality can be discovered via a disciplinary inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:85).

\(^3\) (Schwandt, 1996:59)
the research participants are passive beings (Lincoln & Guba, 1989:98-99). On the contrary, within the interpretivist perspective the researcher and the process of inquiry are inseparable from what is or can be known. It is within the researcher’s interaction during the course of inquiry that data will be generated. Having a relativist ontology, which views the reality as “somehow mind-correlative”, the social inquiry is perceived as a process of interpretation based on one’s interests, motives, prior schemata and frameworks (Jary & Jary, 1995:335). Thus, since as knowing subjects we are part of any understanding of what counts as knowledge, the ontological question “what is there that can be known?” cannot be asked independently of the epistemological question “what is the relationship of the knower to the known?”. Hence, within the interpretivist perspective the distinction between epistemology and ontology is eliminated (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:88; see Figure 3, for a graphic summary of the characteristics of its approach).

Fig. 3 Summary of the characteristics of each approach as they have been presented in Smith, 1989 and Lincoln & Guba, 1989.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empiricist paradigm</th>
<th>Interpretivist paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realist ontology</td>
<td>Relativist ontology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality as objective and independent</td>
<td>Reality is subjective and mind dependant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts a correspondence theory of truth</td>
<td>Multiple socially constructed realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of inquiry</td>
<td>Nature of Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher as neutral</td>
<td>Researcher as an interpreter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-free inquiry</td>
<td>Value context inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Subjectivity (a process of interpretation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in the previous chapter the research intends to gain an insight into the interpretations the participants in the theatrical event give to their own subjective experiences. Being located under the realm of the interpretivist paradigm, the research views the participants in the event as intentional actors that interpret their own and
others' actions (Smith, 1989:124; Schwandt, 1998:225). Within the stance of the multiple socially constructed realities, the element of subjectivity that underpins the processes of interpretation (both the participants' interpretation of the event and my interpretation of their interpretations) will be embraced. Constructivism as an epistemological position and a theory of knowing that postulates subjectivity and active construction of knowledge has been employed to explore the children's understanding of their theatrical experience within three stages: before, during and following participation in the event. The theoretical framework of constructivism that informed the design of this research will be discussed in the following section.

Constructivism

There is a broad spectrum of authors that have developed constructivism in psychological, epistemological, sociological, and historical directions⁴. Overall, as an interpretive approach, constructivism believes that the world of lived reality is constructed by social actors, and one must interpret the social actors' readings to understand this world of meaning (Schwandt, 2003:221-222). Two main versions of constructivism can be traced since its inception until today: cognitive and social constructivism. As a cognitive position, constructivism was founded mainly by Jean Piaget (1953, 1970) and developed later by Ernst von Glasersfeld (1990) in an extreme form he terms "radical constructivism". Radical constructivism places emphasis on the cognitive and subjective character of knowing, whereas the social constructivist stance perceives knowledge as a process of social construction. Although there are conceptual differences⁵ amongst constructivists, all of them share the same viewpoint that knowledge is constructed.

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⁵ The conceptual differences between cognitive and social constructivism are analyzed in the following subsections.
The basic principle of knowledge construction as a framework of learning constitutes constructivism as a learning approach that is applicable both in formal and informal settings. For example, within the boundaries of formal education it has been applied to explore learning in regard to various curriculum subjects and to suggest effective strategies (Selley, 1999; Larochelle et al., 1998). It has also been an approach widely used within the museum context for understanding free-choice learning, designing exhibitions and evaluating learning in museums, since it provided a perspective beyond the behaviourist research model of learning and highlighted social, emotional and subjective aspects of the museum learning experience (Silverman, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1997, 1999; Hein 1991; Falk & Dierking, 1992).

The constructivist “theory of knowing”
The emergence of constructivism challenged radically traditional epistemology as it claimed that the concepts in terms of which we perceive the world are constructed by ourselves. It replaced the notion that knowledge should be the representation of an external objective world with the demand that the conceptual constructs we call knowledge should “be viable within the knowing subject’s range of experience” (Glasersfeld, 1989: 125). The roots of this different view of knowledge that suggested that there is not an objective truth that corresponds to an external reality can be traced back to the beginning of the 18th century when the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico published his epistemological treatise. Given our finite nature and that we cannot have a “God’s eye” view, he challenged the notion that knowledge is a reflection of an independent reality and postulated the key concept of constructivism that “we can only know what we can construct” (Glasersfeld, 1983: 212).

6 This new “relationship of viability” between knowledge and reality is mainly defined by Von Glasersfeld (the main developer of radical constructivism):
“an action, operation, conceptual structure, or even a theory, is considered “viable” as long as it is useful in accomplishing a task or in achieving a goal that one has set for oneself” (Von Glasersfeld, 1998: 24).

7 De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientia, Naples, 1710
Constructivism is challenged to show how its claims about knowledge and meaning can be proved within the limits the movement accepts. Since its early traces until today, like any relativist stance, it has been criticized for being self-refuting: arguing that everything is relative is a non-relative statement itself (Smith & Deemer, 2003). It has been criticized for solipsism with the argument that one can be sure only of his/her own mental states while in its attempt to provide an explanation of the function of knowledge it has been criticized for implying the existence of an independent reality (Fox, 2001). To criticisms in regard to the self-refuting nature of relativism Gadamer (1995) has responded that such arguments do not offer a valuable insight, while Rorty (1985) has argued that in essence relativism is not a theory of knowledge (Smith & Deemer, 2003:439). Similar responses have been also expressed from the advocates of constructivism. Glasersfeld has argued that for a constructivist to prove that one's theory of knowing is true, it would be in opposition to the theory's main principle and highlights that constructivists do not claim that they have found an ontological truth (Glasersfeld, 1990:19; Glasersfeld, 1995:2). They propose constructivism as a hypothetical model, as “a theory of knowing” instead of a theory of knowledge (Glasersfeld, 1995:2).

From the constructivist point of view the term “theory of knowledge” implies that knowledge is a commodity that describes an independent reality and can be transmitted from person to person or from generation to generation. Hence, the term “theory of knowledge” has been criticized for propounding an ontological position, which is compatible with the traditional paradigm of epistemology. Alternatively, the constructivists interpret epistemology as a “theory of knowing” or “theory of knowledge acquisition” that refers to the process through which knowledge is generated (Glasersfeld, 1990:20; Foester, 1990:13; Smith, 1995:24). In fact, they take an ontogenetic position which combines “the seeking of knowledge” with “the knowledge

8 The anonymous reviewer who in 1711 criticized Vico’s treatise expressed an objection that brings out the problem that constructivists still face today: the request to prove that what is asserted is true (Von Glasersfeld, 1989:123).

9 The term epistemology derives from the Greek root episteme, knowledge and it is interpreted in different ways that transcend its root. The ontogenetic position is more related to the Greek words on knowing
acquisition by doing and acting” (Foester, 1990:13). This combination is well illustrated in Jean Piaget’s work who independently, two hundred years later than Vico, proposed that knowledge is primarily a subjective matter that depends on the way we segment our experience and relate the pieces we have isolated according to our previous mental structures. By posing questions from the point of view of genetic epistemology he criticized the empiricist interpretation of experience as insufficient due to its behaviourist nature and suggested constructivism as the only acceptable epistemology:

“ [...] an epistemology [...] could be neither empiricist nor preformationist, but could consist only of a constructivism, with a continual elaboration of new operations and structures” (Piaget, 1980:23).

Piaget’s epistemological position was established with the analysis of the mental mechanisms in regard to the formation of knowledge.

Constructivism as theory of cognition
Piaget’s work, spread over more than half a century, is considered as the principal source of the constructivist theory of knowing. Piaget’s psychological theory can be understood in the light of his biological perspective, as in his early work his main concern was to examine the process of adaptation of a species to its environment. Based on developmental observations he rejected the commonly held views of evolution of his time that attributed evolution either exclusively to the organism\(^\text{10}\) or to environmental\(^\text{11}\) events and viewed adaptation "as an ongoing process of biological organization that evolves or develops in interaction with the environment" (Furth, 1969:169). He placed behaviour

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\(\text{gnosis and praxis. Gnosis} \) refers to the acquisition of knowledge through cognitive processes and \(\text{praxis} \) to the acquisition of knowledge by doing (Foester, 1990:13).

\(^\text{10} \) Various versions of this view posit evolution as a predetermined mechanism that slowly unwinds itself due to an internal force (Furth, 1969:169).

\(^\text{11} \) There are two principal positions that consider the environmental changes as the basic reason for evolutionary changes: a) Lamarck’s theory proposed that species made structural and genetic changes in order to adapt in the environment, b) Darwin’s theory suggests as an explanatory view for evolutionary development the random mutations within a species from which the fittest to the environment would carry on (Fosnot, 1996:12).
under the law of biological evolution and postulated that behaviour drives the evolution of new structures as it balances between the structure of the organism and the environment. The development of a new behaviour would cause an imbalance in the organism’s regulatory system of genetic structure. This perturbation, in turn, would result in a series of changes in the genome in order to maintain the integrity of the organism. Gradually a new adaptation to the environment would be constructed.

Piaget viewed the organism as a self-regulatory system that controls the organism’s opposite tendencies to conserve and at the same time to extend its own structure (Furth, 1969:18). Any change in one part of the system would result an imbalance, which in turn would cause other changes in order to keep the organism in a state of equilibrium. Piaget described equilibration as a dynamic process of self-regulated behaviour that balances the two intrinsic activities that take place in any adaptive pattern: assimilation and accommodation (Fosnot, 1996:13). Assimilation is a function intrinsic to the organism’s structure that makes it possible for the organism to describe the nature of the stimulus and to respond to it (Furth, 1969:14). In contrast to logical empiricism the stimulus is not perceived as something external to the organism that belongs to an independent reality but as intrinsically related to the structure of the organism, something that can be assimilated. In other words, the organism does not assimilate a stimulus if it does not recognize it. For biologists, this means that the organism has some specific information about its milieu. From a psychological perspective it means that the knowing subject responds to the stimulus only if it is meaningful to it. The assimilation of the stimulus causes a perturbation that necessitates an accommodation of the organism’s own structure to re-establish its internal equilibrium. In essence, when the organism responds to a stimulus it applies its general structures to a particular case. Thus, it constructs something new according to determinants that are intrinsic to the organism’s own structure (Furth, 1969:13 & 259).

In his later work on the genesis of cognitive structures Piaget demonstrated that the mechanism of equilibration that promotes changes in evolution is the same mechanism that promotes changes in cognition (Fosnot, 1996:13). He identified “the structuring of
behaviour as interchange between the organism and the environment” with knowledge and showed that the assimilation-accommodation paradigm applies to the understanding of human knowledge (Furth, 1969: 263). In Piaget’s cognitive theory the activity of assimilation is interpreted as “the organization of experience with one’s own logical structures or understandings” (Fosnot, 1996: 13). The individual views the world through his/her own constructs in order to preserve one’s autonomy as a part within the whole system. When new experiences contradict previous understandings then the individual changes through successive constructions her/his own self (accommodation) to achieve equilibrium in relation to the new experience. In the genesis of cognitive structures, as illustrated in the biological perspective, the achievement of equilibration is not a sequential process or a static state. It is a constantly active system that leads to a progression from lower to higher forms of mental development (Inhelder, 1969: 33).

Today, Piaget is mainly known as a psychologist who formulated a developmental theory from birth to maturity and not as a genetic epistemologist whose theory challenged the traditional notions about knowledge. As a corollary to this, his stage theory is perceived as compatible with the traditional epistemology. However, given his interest in epistemology\(^{12}\) and his denial of knowledge as a copy of reality, constructivists assume that his stage theory does not suggest an objective reality, which the subjects reach through successive stages, but it is rather “a conceptual tool for systematizing the investigator’s experiences with the subjects” (Glasersfeld, 1995: 71).

Constructivism as a theory of knowing has important implications in education and communication. It suggests some general principles of learning without, however, proposing a fixed method of teaching (Glasersfeld, 1995: 177; Fosnot, 1996: 29). Recognizing that learning is active and related to one’s prior schemata, it encourages a learning environment that triggers active participation and invites the learners to extend

\(^{12}\) Characteristically Piaget writes in one of his autobiographies:

“While I wanted to devote myself to biology, I had an equal interest in the problems of objective knowledge and in epistemology. My decision to study the development of cognitive functions was related to my desire to satisfy the two interests in one activity” (Furth, 1969: 153).
their understanding. In a teaching–learning situation the learners are not directed towards the “right answers” but as active and responsible meaning-makers they are encouraged to formulate hypotheses, reflect on their previous constructions of meaning and explore affirming and contradictory possibilities (Fosnot, 1996). The challenge for the educator lies in the provision of a meaningful context for the learner since the learner’s conceptual world might differ from the educator’s intentions (Glaserfeld, 1996). Thus, the educator needs to form a model of the students’ way of viewing an idea in order to facilitate the structuring of these views and the generation of a new understanding. Flexibility is a key principle in this process. Given that ideas do not correspond with an objective reality, it is essential that unexpected ideas are approached with genuine interest in exploring their story and origins (Confrey, 1990).

However, constructivism based on Piaget’s theory has been criticized for overemphasizing cognitive processes at the expense of the social and cultural dimensions of learning (Bodner et al., 2001, Ernest, 1994). In particular cognitive constructivism has been criticized that viewing the learner as an “isolated subject”, alone in face-to-face interaction with the world, promotes a “student-centred” pedagogy in line with the individualistic ideology in Western societies (Désautels et al, 1998:253). It is suggested that the idiosyncratic character of learning which emphasizes a subjective understanding of the world and other people might make it hard to establish a social basis for shared values, concerns and interpersonal communication (Ernest, 1994:7-8). Social constructivism responds to these criticisms and advocates the social nature of learning.

Social constructivism

Although it is difficult to identify a single social constructionist model due to its multidisciplinary nature, as it draws influences from philosophy, linguistics, psychology and sociology, key features could be pointed to that usually characterise social constructivism as an approach (Burr, 1995). Social constructivism, like cognitive

13 Bibliographically the terms “social constructionism” and “social constructivism” are used interchangeably. Usually, the term constructionism is preferable to avoid implications related to the Piagetian theory of learning (Gergen, 1985; Hacking, 1999).
constructivism is characterised for its relativist approach to the world. It takes a critical stance towards the view that knowledge is based upon objective observation of the world and, as a response to the empiricist and rationalist dualism, it places knowledge within the social sphere arguing that knowledge is not something people possess individually depending on a cognitive process, but something they construct together as a shared activity (Gergen, 1985: 266). Within this activity language is of particular importance as it is through interaction that we negotiate meaning and construct shared versions of knowledge (Burr, 1995:5). Therefore our understanding of the world is not a product of objective observation but a culturally and historically situated construction deriving from interactions in the course of social life. Thus, within the constructionist mode the notion of truth becomes problematic. In a way we construct our versions of reality, which are sustained by social process (Burr, 1995:4).

Social constructivism shifts the focus from the individual and the interior region of mind to the social interaction among the individuals in order to understand human action. As illustrated by the mathematical philosopher Ernest Paul within the mode of social constructionism the underlying metaphor of the “wholly isolated mind” that characterises cognitive constructivism becomes the metaphor of “persons in conversation” (Ernest, 1994:8). It is considered that by perceiving knowledge solely via the lenses of a cognitive process there is an implicit objectivity that underlines the nature of knowledge (Gergen, 1985:269). Social constructivism, to overcome the contradiction inherent in the cognitive perspectives of knowledge and to challenge the notions of objectivity and truth, locates knowledge within the social context and relationships. For example, the psychological expressions of emotions that used to be taken for granted as universal and cognitively based and to form the basis in psychological inquiry, within the constructionist mode, become themselves subjects of analytic interest. They are not viewed as reflectors of an internal reality but as specific to the cultural and linguistic group within which they are used (Hacking, 1999:18; Gergen, 1985:271).

As a psychologically developmental approach, social constructivism can be traced back to the theories of Vygotsky that placed emphasis on the dialogic nature of learning.
Whereas Piaget studied the role of contradiction and equilibration in learning, Vygotsky suggested that biological and cultural development do not occur in isolation. He argued that all cognitive functions originate in social interactions and that learning was not merely the assimilation and accommodation process of new knowledge. He believed that the role of language and culture are central in cognitive development, as they are the frameworks via which we experience, communicate and understand reality (Vygotsky, 1978). From a pedagogical perspective, this socio-cultural perspective requires an educational environment in which the students play an active role in their own and their peers' learning. The position of the teacher could be occupied by any adult or peer who understands the logic of the “scientific concept” and provides the opportunity for the learner to extend her/his current skills and knowledge. Within this perspective, learning occurs in what has been defined by Vygotsky as the “zone of proximal development” that bridges the gap between the “actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

Vygotsky’s theory of development and learning has been influential to the field of drama in education. Various theoreticians and practitioners in drama in education have recognized Vygotsky’s ideas of the role that play has in a child’s development as the embryo of educational drama (O’Toole, 1992:97). Play is viewed as a purposeful activity via which the child’s actions are free and simultaneously subordinated to the meanings of real situations and objects (Vygotsky, 1978). Through this dualism between the real and the imaginary the child’s actions develop from imitation into symbolization (O’Toole, 1992:97). This notion of play provided a conceptual basis for the development

14 The culturally agreed concepts that one could socially construct are termed by Vygotsky as “scientific concepts” (Kozulin, 1999:xxxiii-xxxiv).
15 Peter Slade (1954), Brian Way (1967), and Richard Courtney are the main the theoreticians in drama in education that explored dramatic play from a development perspective influenced by Vygotksy’s and Piaget’s notion of play. For an extensive presentation of writers who explored developmentally the dramatic play see Bolton G. (1989) “Drama” in Hargreaves D. (ed) Children and the Arts. Milton Keynes & Philadelphia: Open University Press
of dramatic play. As stated by Dorothy Heathcote, a pioneer in the field of drama in education, as the child faces challenges and crisis in imagination they gain a feeling of mastery over events before they find themselves overwhelmed by the challenges in real life (Wagner, 1999:237). However, it is Vygotsky’s notion of the “zone of proximal development” that can be influential in the use of drama as a learning medium within the classroom context (Wagner, 1999). The teacher in role of the facilitator, and being aware of the pupils' actual potential level, structures the drama session in such a way so that the pupils via their participation can reach the level of potential development. The social interactions that the participants have with each other and the fictional context within which they operate are of particular importance in facilitating the creation of a zone of proximal development.

Although Vygotsky’s perspective of learning has provided a theoretical basis for the field of drama in education, within the context of this research it is taken into account only in terms of its contribution to the broader social constructionist perspective. Adopting an entirely social constructionist approach and in particular Vygotsky’s theories of learning would have proposed a discursive analysis of verbal interaction between the participants (Burr, 1995). The verbal interaction amongst the participants is taken into account within the context of this research without however following the Vygotskian dialectic process to describe the internalization of concepts (John-Steiner & Holbrook, 1996). Adopting the Vygotskian approach as a theoretical framework for research would have also presupposed a different ontological approach to the one taken for this thesis. Vygotsky’s theories are grounded philosophically on dialectical materialism which rests on a branch

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16 In the last few decades there has been an increasing interest in his theory and its implications for research on learning within the field of drama-in-education. For example Vygotsky’s theory has provided the theoretical and methodological framework for drama researchers to explore how teachers or /and drama practitioners frame learners within the as if context in order to activate scaffolding and allow the participation of learners in roles that are developmentally appropriate (Andersen, 2004; Vassilopoulou, personal communication).
of realism (Dahl, 2003:8). Such an approach would not have been compatible with the epistemological perspective of multiple realities which is advocated for this research.

The following subsection discusses the relationship of the social constructionist perspective with cognitive constructivism as a theoretical framework and the theoretical view taken for this research. The implications that the theoretical framework has for the research’s design is also exemplified.

**A complementary approach - Implications for this research**

There is an apparent conflict between the cognitive and the socio-cultural perspectives of learning, with adherents on each side placing emphasis on the cognitive or the socio-cultural process of knowledge, respectively. These two perspectives, however, can be seen as "complementary" rather than as competitive (Smith, 1995:23). Within even the two extreme realms there are many versions of constructivism as the interplay between the cognitive and the social varies (Fosnot, 1996:23). Authors such as Cobb and Fosnot have advocated that the cognitive and socio-cultural realm should be seen in interaction when emphasis is placed either on individual or social constructions. We could not understand an individual’s cognitive structure without observing it in a context and at the same time we could not perceive culture as an isolated entity since all cultural knowledge is “taken-as-shared” (Cobb, Yakel & Wood, 1992).

A complementary approach between cognitive and social constructivism, as the former one has been postulated by Piaget and the later by Vygotsky, has been suggested by authors who examined the common points between the two approaches (see Fosnot, 1996; Dahl, 2003). Fosnot by viewing the two theories as complementary argues that there is a dynamic “interplay between individual structures and culture” (Fosnot, 1996:25). By taking into account that according to Piaget’s theoretical framework the

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17 Dialectical materialism is “a particular type of metaphysical realism that stands for everything that exists does have physical characteristics, but there are also several levels in reality such as the physical, the organic, the conscious, the socio-economical” (Dahl, 2003:9).
process of construction is adaptive in nature and requires self-organization, Fosnot suggests that cultural knowledge could be viewed as a “dynamically evolving, negotiated interaction of individual interpretations” (Fosnot, 1996:24). Piaget’s biological model provides a perspective in understanding that the structure of the mind and the knowledge we construct are part of an open system. They are developed from a dialectical interaction between the subject and the world around him or her. Also, Vygotsky’s emphasis on the socio historical aspect of knowledge contributes also to the perspective of the interplay between the culture and the individual. It is via the interplay between the culture and collective individuals that more intuitive notions give way to more culturally accepted notions. As the culture and the individual create a dialectic within which the individual is disequilibrated, “reciprocally the whole is disequilibrated by individuals as they construct their environment” (Fosnot, 1996:26). Thus, according to Fosnot it is via this synthesis between Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s perspectives on knowledge that we can explain how “the individual thought progresses toward culturally accepted ideas but always in an open dynamic structure capable of creative innovation” (Fosnot, 1996:26).

A similar proposition is also reached by Dahl (2003) who examines Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s psychological theories of learning. Dahl argues that there is an agreement between Piaget and Vygotsky in the sense that “what the individual must learn is a product of past generations” (Dahl, 2003:6). Knowledge and concepts are not seen as constructions entirely created by the individual but as historically and culturally formulated concepts that the individual makes his/her own. Thus, the dualism between Piaget’s emphasis on the individual as the source of learning and Vygostsky’s focus on the verbal interaction and social activity as a source for learning is still there but not as distinct as it initially appears. The two theories, although they imply a different ontological commitment (constructivism postulates relativism while Vygotsky’s theories advocate dialectical materialism), can still be perceived as complementary when it comes to one’s interaction with the surrounding world’s knowledge (Dahl, 2003:6).

However, a harmonic synthesis between the two theories could not be achieved at every level. Although a complementary view could be taken in terms of the interaction between
the individual and the social elements, it is Piaget’s notion of learning that seems to address both aspects more adequately. Dahl continues, arguing that Piaget’s theory of learning seems to balance the two aspects of the individual and social more equally than Vygotsky’s theory of learning:

“in the Vygotskian school, knowledge comes from the outside, as a transition whereas Piaget talks about the man’s innate capability of learning” (Dahl, 2003:7).

Authors such as Cobb & Yackel (1996) and Cole & Wertsch (1996) have also expressed similar views that place Piaget’s theory on a more balanced basis. In their attempt to examine the two theories synthetically they express concerns about the potential of Vygotsky’s learning theory to explain the generation of knowledge on an individualistic basis. Codd and Yackel, although they advocate a social constructionist position on learning, have characterized the Vygotskian framework as a transmission model through which students inherit the cultural meanings that have been created from previous generations (Cobb and Yackel, 1996). Another pair of authors that expressed similar concerns is Cole and Wertsch. They argue that although “the relationship between the individual and the social is necessarily relational”, Vygotsky’s theory by placing cognitive development only within the social realm is less symmetrical than Piaget’s notion of social equilibration (Cole & Wertsch, 1996:3). Piaget’s theory provides an insight into cognitive development by locating it in the social context while Vygotsky’s theory perceives the social world as a “bearer of the cultural heritage without which the development of mind is impossible” (Cole & Wertsch, 1996:3).

This research takes a complementary position with the social constructionist position in the sense that the cognitive and the social realms are seen in interaction, rather than advocating a theoretical position, which is placed equally in between cognitive and social constructivism. Therefore, by drawing upon Glasersfeld’s constructivist “theory of knowing” and by taking into account Piaget’s assimilation-accommodation paradigm the research is designed to take place at different stages. Exploring the participants’ “meaning making” before the museum visit will provide an insight into the participants’ prior-to-the-event agenda and in particular into the children’s expectations, attitudes and
cognitive agenda. If, according to Piaget’s theory of knowing, the children’s prior-to-the-event agenda can be considered as the children’s “own structure” then the examination of their following-the-event agenda will provide an insight into the extent to which perturbation has taken place. The event itself might be considered as the stimulus read by the participants that can cause perturbation in their current agenda. If perturbation is caused then changes will take place in the children’s own agenda in order to accommodate the new experience. In order to explore this process the research also takes place during and following the event. It is hoped that by tracing the children’s “meaning making” before, during and following the event an insight will be provided into the way children experience the content and the format of “museum theatre” events.

The complementary view between individual construction and social interaction lies in the exploration of “meaning making” as personally constructed in interaction with the social context. Via this position emphasis can be placed on the schoolchildren’s social context within which they construct meaning and also on the social interaction during the “museum theatre” event. In tune with the pedagogical implications suggested by radical and social constructivism the participants’ constructions of the event are not merely seen as cognition but also in association with beliefs and values (Ernest, 1994:12). The focus of the participants’ interpretation will go beyond their cognition to include tacit aspects of the experience and the “context-bound nature of thought” (Ernest, 1994:12). The viewing of the process of understanding not only as a cognitive process but also as a “co-operative enterprise of persons in relationship” facilitates the tracing of the participants’ “meaning making” within the group context (Gergen, 1985:267). Thus, emphasis is placed on the way understanding is negotiated and shared by conducting group interviews and observations before and after the theatrical event. During the event the participants’ verbal and non-verbal interactions are taken into account. However, they are taken into consideration not within the context of discursive analysis, as would have been the case exclusively following the model of social constructionism, but as a means for understanding the realities of the participants and their interpretation of the event.
Furthermore by taking into account that the children’s “meaning making” is explored in relation to their participation in theatrical events, it was also considered necessary to explore the implications that the constructivist perspective on communication would have to offer when researching the children’s reading of a theatrical event. As the children read a theatrical experience, which is designed and performed by museum professionals, the theatrical events can be perceived as texts written by an author and interpreted by its readers. What could the constructive perspective offer when researching these readings? Would the constructivist perspective provide a holistic grounding when it comes to communication and interpretation of a theatrical event?

A constructivist perspective on communication and interpretation

The constructivist stance on communication and interpretation could be considered as an extension of the constructivist stance as a theory of knowing. It perceives interpretation as a cognitive activity that involves experience and co-ordination of conceptual structures, and rejects the notion, mainly postulated via the linear traditional model of communication, that language is the means of transferring ideas or knowledge.

The traditional model of communication based on the mathematical theory of information, which was developed by Shannon and Weaver in the late 1940s, conceptualizes human communication in terms of the transmission of information. According to this model, a sender who transmits the signal to a receiver encodes an idea into a signal. The receiver, in turn, decodes the signal into a message. This model of communication is applicable to the behaviourist approach to teaching and learning. Its success depends on providing the right stimuli and reinforcements to the receiver in order to emit the appropriate behavioural responses (Shannon & Weaver, 1959). Within the frame of the traditional model of communication the theatrical text could be considered as the medium that encompasses the meaning intended by the author. Given the approach’s behaviourist perspective one could assume, especially when theatre is used as a vehicle of learning, that the performance will be successful only when the audience receives the “correct” intended meaning. This communication model of “sender-receiver”
might have informed studies that assess the medium's effectiveness by measuring the
degree to which the audience's responses replicate the author's intended meaning.

From a constructivist point of view the signals themselves (independently of their
physical form) do not contain an inherent meaning (Von Glasersfeld, 1989:132). Instead
constructivism perceives meaning as individually constructed by the subjects involved in
a communicative process. As a perspective on communication and interpretation, in tune
with its view of learning as internal structuring, it postulates that when we participate in a
communicative process we interpret (as listeners) and formulate (as speakers) signals
according to our experiences and conceptual structures. Thus, the use of language in this
process might be purposive as we speak with a specific intention. However, the intention
of the speaker (or author when it comes to a written text) does not determine the meaning
the receiver (reader) will construct. A piece of language, be it a word or sentence, directs
the receiver to build up conceptual structures that originate in one's experiential field.
The formulation of signals though does not have to start from scratch. Once certain
patterns have been established in interaction with the speakers of a language, they can be
used to trigger conceptual formulations.

Therefore, we cannot take for granted that we all share automatically the same
construction of meaning. It is via successive interactions that we test each other's
meanings for relative "compatibility" and accordingly we modify our conceptualizations
to reach a level of "viability" (Glasersfeld, 1983:213). This view of communication
brings out the subjective character of interpretation. Within a teaching–learning situation
the educators will constantly test, to orient the learners to fruitful constructions without
expecting the learners' interpretations to coincide with their own. How, however, could
the constructivist notions of communication be achieved in forms of communication that
do not involve a continuous interaction between the involved parties such as in the
reader-text relationship?

Radical constructivism suggests that there are three elements involved in the process of
the interpretation of texts, all originating in the interpreter's experiential field and
conceptual structures: a) "the conceptual structures that constitute the linguistic understanding of the text", b) "the over-all conceptual fabric that constitutes what we call our experiential world" and c) the conceptual links between the linguistic understanding of the text and the conceptual fabric of our world (Glasersfeld, 1983:215). Analogous to the way we interact with each other to test the viability of our interpretations, we interact with the "conceptual structures called forth by the text" (Glasersfeld, 1983:215). These relations are considered as subjective as in essence "they connect [...] the reader's own conceptual structures with the reader's own experiential world" (Glasersfeld, 1983:215). Accordingly the author's intended meaning can be traced only in relation to her or his interpretation, which is by no means reflected or embedded within the text. Hence, the element of direct interaction that occurs within the context of dual communication (speaker-listener) is of a different form from the "author-reader" relationship the viability of the reader's understanding is liable to be tested by further individual readings, experiences and/or interaction within a social context. However, as discussed earlier, the importance of the social context depends on the extent to which a constructivist stance has a social or cognitive perspective. While within a social perspective emphasis is placed on the socio-cultural process of acquiring knowledge and an interpretation of a text is perceived as mutually constructed and "shared", within the stance of cognitive constructivism priority is given to the individual construction of knowledge. The viability with a social context is viewed as a conventionally established "consensus" which requires that the manifestations of the individual readings are "mutually compatible and do not give rise to perceptible clashes" (Glasersfeld, 1983:216).

Thus, the constructivist perspective on communication could point to certain parameters that provide a direction within the context of this research. This research, as stated in the introduction of this thesis, does not intend to measure the effectiveness of the use of "museum theatre" as a learning medium by tracing whether the readers of the event received the author’s intended meaning. Instead, being informed by the constructivist paradigm, it attempts to trace the “meaning making” of the readers in relation to their own experiences and conceptual structures. It acknowledges the element of subjectivity
in the process of “meaning making” and takes into account that, within the perspective of communication, such as the communication that takes place during the theatrical event, the participants test each other’s meaning for relative “compatibility” and accordingly modify their conceptualizations to reach a level of “viability”. The notion of viability is taken into account here as it has been postulated within the cognitive constructivist theory: via successive interaction the involved parties in the communication process formulate interpretations that are “viable” within one’s and also each other’s understandings. It is within the context of the viability of each other’s understandings that social constructivism could offer a perspective as it places emphasis on the socio-cultural process of formulating interpretations. Thus, from a theoretical point of view the paradigm of the cognitive constructivism in association also with a complementary view of social constructionism provides a perspective for researching the participants’ “meaning making” of the theatrical events. Although within the constructivist paradigm there are not specific references on the communication and interpretation in theatrical events, the main principles of the paradigm, as these have been postulated for every communicative context and in particular for the reading of literal texts, can still be transferable with the theatrical context. However, it should be stated that the theatrical events are perceived as “texts” in the sense not of playwright but as performative events encompassing verbal and non-verbal communication. Thus, this study in order to obtain a wider perspective on the interpretation of theatrical texts is also informed by the considerations of reader-response theories that have been pointed out by researchers and theoreticians as applicable with the theatrical context (Fortier, 1997; Bennett, 1997). These theories opened the variety of possibilities for studying the author–text-reader-meaning relationship and provided a perspective on the exploration of meaning within the context of a theatrical event.

Interpreting text

Questions such as “what is theatre text”, “what is the relationship of play and performance”, “what does making sense of the text mean” are at the heart of contemporary theatre theory, whereas the theoretical concern of the literary aspects of
these questions extends beyond the realm of the theatre discourse (MacDonald, 1993; Fortier, 1997; Rabinowitz, 1997; Rabkin, 1985).

In literary theory, the thinking about the process involved when a reader encounters a text has led to the “reader-response criticism”. The “reader-response criticism” might not be easily identified as a movement due to the diverse ways of conceptualising the reader and the purpose of the critical activity. However, all the critics do have a common point: they criticise the traditional formative practice that privileges the text over the reader and postulates that the meaning resides in the text itself (Rabinowitz, 1997; Bennett, 1997:34). The reader-response criticism emerged in opposition to the formalist perspective which, established in literary theory via essays known as the “affective” and the “intentional” fallacies, argued that the text is the only stable and objective source of meaning and that “the” interpretation of the text mirrors the textual features (Fish, 1980:2; Rabinowitz, 1997). As an alternative to the formalist stance, the reader-response critics claimed that “the meaning of the text is the experience of the reader” (Culler, 1997:59). This stance, which appeared in literary studies under the umbrella terms “reader-response” and “reception theory”, is expressed via different theoretical approaches and constitutes the basis for discussion in regard to the relationship amongst author, reader and text.

One of the earlier approaches that affected the theatrical field is Wolfang Iser’s phenomenological approach that perceives the text as a phenomenon that “manifests itself to the consciousness of the reader in the time of reading” (Fortier, 1997:88). He is interested in the way the mind processes texts without, however, disregarding the text itself as a means of controlling the reading. This act of controlling is achieved through blanks and negations in the text that allow the reader to make connections that bring a story to life. It is via this interaction between the reader and the text that, during the act of reading, the reader’s past experiences and future expectations create a new synthesis which is “neither manifested in the printed text, nor produced solely by the reader’s imagination” (Iser, 1978:135). And it is from this “virtuality” in character that the act of reading derives its dynamism (Iser, 1980:106). The reader composes his/her own
meaning in interaction with the schemes exercised by the text rather than residing within it. Thus, to analyze only the author’s text or the reader’s psychology one would lose sight of the virtual relationship. When it comes to a performative event, Susan Bennett points out in her analyses of the role of the audience from various theoretical perspectives, that this approach suggests that the audiences’ reading can be viewed in interaction between the on-stage world and the spectator’s “cognitive and emotive capabilities” (Bennett, 1997:46).

Attention to the reader and the act of reading has been also expressed via Barthes’ theory. He suggested, in his work “s/z” in 1974, a semiotic approach that distinguishes texts between “readerly” (closed) and “writerly” (open) texts and expresses his preference for the open texts that encourage the reader to recreate the text during the act of reading rather than imposing a certain meaning (Fortier, 1997:88). A similar approach in regard to the character of the text, and as a result of its reading, is also postulated via Umberto Eco’s semiotic approach of reading. He proposed that in the reading process the reader, via selection of frames that can be taken from the text, proceeds from the activation of basic vocabulary to the establishment of relations between texts. However, although he viewed the reader as an active agent that makes interpretive choices, he proposed that the interpretive choices are not infinite (Eco, 1984:4). It is by playing upon a text’s codes and sub-codes and foreseeing the reader’s interpretation of the text that an “open” or “closed” text can be generated. Eco defines as “closed text” the text that aims at “pulling the reader along a predetermined path”, without taking into account the codes that the potential reader would employ for the interpretation of the text. On the other hand, when an author creates a text having in mind an ideal reader and the strategies he/she might employ the author produces an open text for the reader.

Within the realm of theatre though, the shift from the view of texts as containers of meaning to the processes of reading and interpretation gains additional dimensions due to the complexity of the theatrical event. Given that there are multiple forces involved for the creation of the event (e.g. playwright, director, critics, audience, actors), questions are posed about the nature of the theatrical text and especially about the relationship between
the written text and the performance: "is the text identical with the playwright's script", "does the script have the privileged authority over the performance interpretation"? The division in regard to the nature of the theatrical text is also reflected in the vocabulary used by theatre critics. For example, MacDonald (1993) and Fortier (1997) in their works draw a difference between "dramatic" text, that refers to the written words, and the "scenographic" text, that encompasses the aural structures of the theatrical event. The congruent debate about the authorship of the text (the playwright or the director) can be traced back to 1932 in the ideas of Artaud with the introduction of the theatre of "cruelty". Artaud challenged the idea that the play is the medium that reveals the author's thought to the audience and argued that the theatre "must be freed from subordination to text" (Carlson, 1984:394). His ideas privileging the play over the text and challenging the notion of who has the right to be called an author influenced the development of the experimental theatre and are still central when issues of textual interpretation arise.18

Perhaps the strongest argument has been made by Stanley Fish who reversed the relationship between text and interpretation as he suggested that the interpretive strategies we employ as members of an "interpretive community" shape the text rather than arise from it (Fish, 1980:13). He views readers and writers not as independent agents but as members of a community that share common goals, perspectives and as an extension "ways of reading" (Fish, 1984:16). It follows then that the strategies the readers share as members of an interpretive community "exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read" (Fish, 1984:14). Fish suggests that if one takes into account that the developing meaning actualises in a dynamic relationship with the reader's expectations, judgements and assumptions, then one could not argue for the "right" way of reading. Instead one would advocate for ways of reading dependent on the context or situation or interpretive community within which they occur (Fish, 1984:304).

18 The debate regarding the right of authorship between the director and the playwright is particularly illustrated in two examples discussed by Gerald Rabkin in his work which echoing Stanley Fish's "Is there a text in this class" is entitled as "Is there a text on this stage"? He discusses the authors' reactions (Arthur Miller and Samuel Beckett) when theatrical companies performed their plays ("The Crucible", "The Endgame") without interpreting with fidelity "the text and the spirit of the play" as these are defined according to the authors' intentions (Rabkin, 1985:146).
Thus, although he postulates that meaning is "context-dependent" by introducing the notion of the "interpretive communities", he takes a radical stance in comparison to other theories that prioritise the context of the meaning according to the perspective that each theory postulates (e.g. feminist, psychoanalytic, and historical perspectives).

Concluding remarks
This study is located at the intersection between several theoretical arenas that facilitate the examination of the complex relationship between the construction of a theatrical experience and the possible meanings of this experience. This research, drawing upon the constructivist paradigm and the emphasis placed by the "reader-response criticism" on the experience of the reader, attempts to explore the participants' interpretation of the event. The differentiation between the reader (the schoolchildren) and the author (the museum staff responsible for the design of the event) is used within the frame of the "interpretive communities" rather than within the traditional formalist perspective that prioritises the author's intentions over the reader's interpretation. Thus, the intentions and expectations of the authors are traced in order to illustrate the ways of reading they bring to the experience as members of an "interpretive community" and not to determine the "right" meaning that the readers should embrace as consumers. The readers of the event are viewed, as described by the constructivist paradigm, as active constructors of meaning. The subjectivity of their interpretation is highlighted in tune with the research's epistemological perspective. When appropriate the social processes via which the children construct their interpretation are also indicated.
Chapter 3
Research, Methods and Analysis

Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the methodological framework employed for the design and conduct of the fieldwork and the data analysis. First this chapter outlines the practical steps taken during the fieldwork and focuses on the issues that emerged by conducting research with children. Then it describes the data generation techniques employed in order to meet the research’s objectives. Finally it presents the theoretical framework and the processes employed for the interpretation of data.

Conducting research with children
Locating the children’s experiences and perceptions at the centre of the research focus requires the development of method that on the one side is not different from any other research practice and, on the other side, recognizes “difference” (France et al, 2000:152). Children perceive and understand the world in a different way. It is important to acknowledge this difference without, however, considering the children as incompetent and immature and to understand that between the adult researcher and the child participant there is an unequal relation of power. Within the context of this research, which views the children as “research participants” that “should be informed, involved and consulted about all activities that affect their lives” (including this research), a number of issues were taken into account during the conduct of the research such as the gaining of the children’s informed consent, issues of confidentiality and power (Robinson & Kellett, 2004: 86).

Conducting qualitative research that involves exploration of subjective experiences and meaning, understanding of attitudes and events through the eyes or words of the research participants, requires ethical responsibility on the researcher’s part (Lincoln, 1995). By reviewing the content of ethical codes and guidelines for research with children and young people, one could suggest that there is a lack of a unified ethical code for researchers that is independent of the researchers’ professional background (Lindsay,
2000:17). Instead of a coherent ethical code, various bodies that address research as one of the activities of the professional body have developed their own ethical codes with which their members have to comply. According to Lindsay, the American Educational Research Association and British Educational Research Association (BERA) are the only professional bodies that set out guidelines exclusively for research, and they also include an extensive reference to children and vulnerable young people as research participants (Lindsay, 2000:10).

Workings as a primary schoolteather I was subjected to guidelines of good practice, which, however, do not provide an ethical framework for research. By taking into account the educational context of the research, and that BERA’s ethical guidelines were devised for the research community independently of the researchers’ professional background, I decided to consolidate BERA’s guidelines as support material for the planning and the conduct of the fieldwork. They provided an ethical framework for conducting research both with adults and children and set the researcher’s responsibilities to the participants. The first step, therefore, was to consider the principles underpinning the guidelines:

“all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for democratic values; and the quality of educational research” (BERA, 1992:1)

and then, to implement the relevant guidelines to the extent possible throughout the research. The issue of informed consent arose from this process.

All research participants (children, class teachers, head teachers and museum staff) were informed about the overall aims and the nature of the research (BERA, 1992:1). Their informed consent was obtained to ensure their informed participation in the research and

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The British Educational Research Association (BERA) founded in 1974 is committed to enhancing the quality of educational research and to promoting a research culture that will have an impact on both policy-making and practice in UK. Web site, http://www.bera.ac.uk/welcome/aims.php. Last accessed on 05/07/03
the data generation methods. At first a letter was sent to the relevant museums asking for their consent to participate at the preliminary stage of the research by informing them about the overall aims of the project and the possible requirements on their part (See Appendix 3). As soon as "museum-theatre" programmes were found to meet the criteria set for the selection of the case study events, a letter was sent to the museum staff asking for their consent to proceed with the second part of the research. The letter included information about the research process and highlighted the significance of their participation (See Appendix 4).

A letter of similar content to the one sent to the museum was sent to the class teachers. Current concerns about the victimisation of children and also Clause 17 from the revised BERA guidelines, which refers to the researcher's obligation to "comply with legal requirements in relation to working with schoolchildren", made me consider as important that the school be informed about my compliance with legal requirements before obtaining their consent (BERA, 2000:4; See Appendix 5). The participants were informed that they could "withdraw from the study at any time" while, when considered as necessary, a meeting would take place providing further details about the research (BERA, 1992:1). A supportive letter introducing the researcher and the significance of the research project was also sent to the schools by my supervisor.

By taking into account the BERA's guidelines which suggest that:

"Care should be taken when interviewing children and students up to school leaving age; permission should be obtained from the school and, if they so suggest, the parents" (BERA, 1992:2)

informed consent was asked initially from the school. In case the school deemed it necessary for the researcher to obtain further parental consent, a relevant letter was submitted to the school to be distributed to the parents (see Appendix 6). Especially when the research involved videotaped interviews, the schools asked for parental consent by distributing either the letter submitted originally by the researcher or a revised version. Relying only on the school or parental consent would be against the ethos of the research.
that perceives children as active participants having equal rights for participation as adults².

Children were informed about the aims of the research, which were rephrased to be understandable. When obtaining informed consent from children, Lindsay poses the question to what extent the information the researcher provides is enough or insufficient and expresses doubts about the children's power to withdraw at any time (Lindsay, 2000:12). Although it was emphasised to the children that the decision for their participation was entirely theirs, the number of children that were agreeing to participate in the research decreased when the children's informed consent was obtained in a written form rather than oral form. For example, in N school, from the total of 30 children who were asked for their written consent to participate in the interviews, 10 children initially did not give their consent for participation. It was also common across the classes children not to be willing to participate in the drawing activity. The children, however, were not initially informed extensively about the research procedure. It was considered by the researcher that being aware in advance about the drawing activity and the follow up individual interviews five months following the event would affect the research data. Thus, their consent was asked each stage of the research while it was made clear to the children that they could withdraw at any time from the study³.

Furthermore both for ethical issues and purposes of access (at the beginning of the research) the participants were informed of their right to remain anonymous (BERA, 1992:2). None of the museums, however, wished to keep their anonymity under the condition that they would be informed about any relevant research publications while

² There is a long-running debate regarding who has the right to consent to research participation by a child (Alderson, 1995:22). Masson suggests that until the 1990s the research community was divided into two groups: those that conducted research with children relying exclusively on the parental consent and those who excluded children from research as they consider them as unreliable (Masson, 2000:39).

³ Alderson in her discussion about informed consent when conducting research with children suggested that children should be allowed to change their minds and to refuse further involvement at all stages of the work (France et al, 2000:154)
four out of five schools expressed their wish to remain anonymous. Irrespective of the
schools' stance the children's anonymity is protected from any form of publicity.

From an ethical perspective the right to anonymity was linked to the notion of
confidentiality. Discussing moral attitudes and values within the classroom and asking
the children to participate in the creation of socio-grams were deemed as sensitive
matters that might embarrass the participants. Thus, confidentiality was promised to the
participants at every stage of the research. That was communicated to the children by
explaining that the teacher and the peer group would not be informed about their personal
responses. However, considering the type of interviews (either group or individual
interviews) confidentiality could not always be guaranteed. Within the context of the
group interviews confidentiality within the peer group could not be easily achieved. By
taking into account the possibility of the children's anonymity being jeopardised within
the class context the group was asked to keep confidential the content of the interviews.
Also, in one case (G school), in order to ensure that professional standards were
maintained, the individual interviews were conducted in the presence of a teaching
assistant. Although it was suggested to the teaching assistants to have a discrete presence
in the room in order not to affect the children's responses, their presence may have
compromised confidentiality.

Also, gaining access and understanding the children's world was a factor that had to be
considered during the research design. Would I understand the complexity of children's
world being an adult myself and, at the same time, how would children perceive me
within their class culture? Undoubtedly, the age difference and the potential status of
authority that I could have in the classroom as an adult were issues that could not be
ignored. Past researches with children suggest that the children's perception of the
researcher's personality is an important factor for the establishment of trust and
collaboration, which also results in high quality data (Butler & Williamson, 1994:103;
Pollard, 1987:102-103). What kind of identity should I project and what kind of action
should I undertake in order to gain children's rapport and "bridge the gap" between our
social worlds (Pollard, 1987)?
During the research design my intention was to project an identity of someone who is not a teacher. Drawing on my classroom teaching experience I assumed that introducing myself as a teacher would have direct implications of the children’s perception of my role and status in the class and result in certain types of behaviour. Thus, although during the procedure of obtaining the schools’ consent I introduced myself as a class teacher and a researcher, I decided to introduce only my researcher identity to the children. During the pilot case study, I experienced positive impact by introducing myself and explaining the aims and nature of the research in a form of discussion that lasted approximately ten to fifteen minutes. The children were eager to ask questions in order to find out more about what research is, what a university is and who a researcher is. This procedure was followed to the extent possible in every school\(^4\). The positive effect that this friendly, non-authoritative approach had of introducing myself as “a researcher” could be also illustrated through contrast to an incident that happened in S school. The teacher undertook the initiative to introduce me as an important and intelligent person. This introduction had the opposite effect of that which I intended to achieve. The children were not willing to interact with me during playtime and it took a significantly longer time in comparison to the other schools to approach the children and build with them a relationship of trust.

However, what exactly did it mean to be seen as a researcher? Was I seen as a proper adult, a neutral stranger, or as equal to the children (Pollard, 1987)? Maybe the answer to that question lies in between the above options. Being positioned at the back of the class for most of the day’s timetable favoured the possibility of being seen as a neutral stranger and gradually increased the distance between the researcher and the children. To overcome that distance, when allowed by the class teacher, I joined children’s groups in their activities, co-operated in pairs with them and tried to compensate by increasing familiarity during playtime. To avoid projecting the image of the proper adult that has the same authority as every adult in the class, I also undertook some active steps: a) I did not

\(^4\) Due to the class’s tight timetable it was not always possible to apply the same procedure. In these cases, I introduced myself briefly at the beginning of the school day and responded to the children’s questions in-groups later during playtime.
follow the schools’ dressing code for teachers, b) I spent the playtime interacting with the children within and outside the classroom setting, c) I did not adopt a position of adult responsibility when children the first day experimented to monitor my responses and assess my position in the class. The above actions were rooted in an honest and empathetic approach anticipating that I would be accepted as somebody that they could trust and be willing to collaborate with.

5 Incidents where the children test the researcher’s status in the class are common amongst educational researchers (Hartill, 1995, appendix). Based also on my teaching experience I was prepared for events to take place for the children to test my authority status within the class or the playground. During the period of getting familiar with the children the class teacher (in G school) left the class for a moment. As soon as she left the class an incident happened between two children while the whole class including the two children turned to me expecting my reaction. I knew that any attempt to take a position in the incident would have an effect on my role as researcher.
Data generation techniques

This section will describe the data generation techniques (DGT) used throughout all research stages in order to accomplish the research’s objectives. Qualitative methods, being adaptable to dealing with multiple realities and mutually shaped influences, are considered appropriate for the research’s scope: to provide an insight into the research participants’ understanding of the format and content of the theatrical events aiming to illustrate the use of the medium as a learning means (Lincoln & Guba, 1987:40). Before introducing each technique separately, the following table (Table 2) presents the main DGT used at various research stages in order to trace the participants’ agenda and understanding in relation to the research’s scope.

Table 2. Data Generation Techniques Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. G. T.</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Drawings</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Socio-grams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Stages/Settings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary stage/museum setting</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the event/Classroom</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td></td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the event/Museum</td>
<td>CA-ChA-MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the event/Classroom</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA-Ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four/five months following the event</td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td></td>
<td>ChA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MA – Museum Agenda
CA - Classroom Agenda
ChA – Children’s Agenda

6 The term data generation techniques (DGT) is used here in tune with the research’s epistemological perspective that knowledge about the social world will be generated rather than discovered (Mason, 1996:13)

7 Observations, interviews, drawings and writing activities were DGT that were initially employed for the conduct of a pilot study (10/2001-02/2002). The pilot study took place with the cooperation of a year three class that participated in a first person interpretation event (“Meet the ATS”) at the National Army Museum in London. When appropriate the impact that the findings of the pilot study had later in the DGT employed for the conduct of the case studies in the Clarke Hall and the Museum of London is highlighted.
Observations

The selection of observation as a method of generating data has been based on the research’s rationale and its ethnographic features. Observations were conducted both in the school and the museum setting while the type of observational research followed varied according to the stage of the research at which it had been used, the setting with its social dynamics and the nature of the drama/theatre event.

Traditionally naturalistic observation has been analogous with non-interventionism. The observers should follow the flow of the events without interacting with and altering in any way the situation they are observing. This view, rooted in the quantitative observational paradigm, is allied with standardization, control and measurement of variables. With the postmodernist turn in social and cultural studies there is a shift from perceiving observation as a data collection technique that has to achieve objectivity and truth to understanding observation as a context for interaction among those involved in the research. Contemporary social research focuses on the ethnographer’s identity within the community they study, perceives that “ethnographic truth” might not be feasible and is interested in transforming the research “subjects” into “collaborative partners.”

Observations conducted at the preliminary stage of the research aimed to describe a range of theatre / drama events that take place in museums and historic houses. The type of observations conducted initially could be characterized as “descriptive observation” (Angrosino & Perez, 2000:677). I assumed the attitude that I knew nothing about what is going on and took nothing for granted. As the visits progressed, understanding key

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8 Atkinson and Hammersley refer to a number of features that characterize ethnography and seem to be also identified in this research: emphasis on the nature of the phenomenon without testing hypothesis, tendency to work with unstructured data, investigation of small number of cases and emphasis on qualitative interpretation (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998:110)

9 Werner & Schoepfle suggest a typology focusing on the nature of observation as a process rather than on the role of the observer. As “descriptive observation” is identified as the first stage of observational process where the researcher “assumes a childlike attitude”. To all intents and purposes he/she observes everything (Angrosino & Perez, 2000:677).
features of a theatre event via observation invited further comparison with other programs that might or might have the key features. While this "conceptually-driven sequential sampling" progressed, the type of observations were gradually redirected from descriptive to "focused observation" (Angrosino & Perez, 2000:677). My observations were directed towards certain parameters, which also shaped the questions for interviews in the setting. The field notes kept had the form of an open-ended narrative, which would be altered each time new parameters/ key features were conceptualized through observation.

My position in these preliminary observations varied according the nature of the programme and the dynamics of the setting. My intention was to observe every programme as an active participant, assuming either a peripheral role of one of the museum actors or a member of the audience that has the opportunity to be involved in the activities and interact casually with the actors. Being a "participant as an observer" would allow me to gain an insight of the event through the participants' eyes and at the same time, through the naturalness of the role coupled with non-directed intervention make my role in the field less intrusive (Adler & Adler, 1994:379 & 382). In the historic sites where I worked as a volunteer for a brief period, assuming a peripheral role as one of the servants of the house enabled me to observe unobtrusively and at a later stage experiment with my degree of involvement. However, being a participant as observer was a role that had to be gained with the museum's consent and collaboration. When it was

10 According to Miles & Huberman "conceptually-driven sequential sampling" is one of the key features of qualitative sampling. Initial choices of studies can evolve as the fieldwork proceeds. The outcomes of observations of one study can inform what facets to be studied in the next ones (Miles & Huberman, 1984:27).

11 The term "participant-as-observer" is used here based on Gold's typology. Gold in his typology of naturalistic research roles outlines four roles that the observer could have in terms of his/her involvement in the situation under study: the "complete participant", "the participant-as-observer", "the observer-as-participant", and the "complete observer" (Alder & Alder, 1994:379).

12 Being able to interact in role with the participants provided me with first-hand data of the event and enabled me to experiment with the type of questions that I could use at a later stage for the case study research.
considered by the museum that, due to practicalities (lack of costume, lack of time for preparation) or due to the theatrical form of the programme that involves interaction only between the actor and the children, I could not be a participant, then my role would be one of the “observer as participant” without, however, actively participating in any form in the event under study. I decided to define the type of observation as “observer as participant” instead of “complete observer” by having in mind that my presence during the event would “be interpreted and responded to in some way” (Mason, 1996:64) and also the fact that being a member of the audience in a theatrical event could be a form of participation itself.

Participant observations were also extensively conducted during the three stages of the case study research: before, during and following the museum visit to illustrate the participants’ agenda. Prior to the visit, where applicable, I attended the preparatory sessions for schoolteachers, collected relevant preparatory material for schools and participated as an observer in each class’s activities for a week. Considering that the group size might influence the nature of data collected, between ten to fifteen children were selected for each case study (Dockrell et al, 2000: 52). Being also interested in dimensions of the social world of the participants and the event itself as a social phenomenon including verbal and non-verbal interactions, I considered that I needed to be present and conceptualize these interactions within their natural setting as they occur rather than rely exclusively on their post hoc reconstruction via the participants’ accounts. It would allow me to explore the nature, and facilitate the collection, of first hand data by gaining a perspective in the situation as an active, reflective investigator. Thus, on the day of the museum visit, I joined the class on the way to the museum, participated as an observer during the event and followed the class back to the school. Following the event, I spent a week back in the class participating in any follow-up work.13

13 The time spent in the classes prior to or after the visit was more or less extensive than a week depending on the school’s planning for lessons related to the subject matter of the museum visit.
As it would have been impossible to produce a neutral and holistic account of everything that was happening, inevitably I had to be selective about what I would observe in the classroom setting. I focused on the lessons that were regarded as relevant ones to the museum visit while the field notes kept had the form of a narrative account of what was happening in the classroom. Taking into consideration that written ethnography entails the risk that the researcher will see the aspects of classroom practice that he/she is familiar with, certain aspects were also taken into account: the lessons' objectives, the nature of the learning tasks, the use of teaching-learning aids, aspects of hidden curriculum (spatial arrangements, behaviour, class's visual data). The children's responses in the class context were recorded in detail and they were seen not as a reaction but as a transaction with the teacher. How, though, could the children's responses be recorded while they were involved in a group or in pair task? By having the overt role of the researcher who was genuinely interested in what “people are thinking and feeling” I could, when necessary, move around and observe-record discretely the targeted children's interactions. The outcomes of their task were also taken into account either by having access to the documents produced or by observing their feedback in the class following the learning task.

At the museum setting during the event I recorded my observations in a mixed manner: literal, interpretive and reflective notes of my own experience as a participant. The aim was that the amount of notes should be enough to recreate a reasonably vivid picture of the described event. Although the data were gathered openly without generating hypotheses, the observations focused on the participants' verbal and non-verbal communication: facial expressions, body language and movement. Audio recording was used in all events to provide me with transcriptions of verbal communication. Video recording was used selectively for the participatory theatrical event (Clarke Hall) to provide me with an in-depth view of the actors-children interaction and non-verbal communication. The camera either was positioned discretely in the room not to distract
the participants’ attention and when necessary was manipulated by me being sat on the floor in order not to exceed the children’s height\textsuperscript{14}.

Non “text-based” forms of data such as video-recording of parts of the theatrical events, cognitive maps produced in the classroom, and children’s drawings were used in conjunction with the data generated from other sources (Mason, 1996: 71). For example, the visual recordings of the event were used in combination with the participants’ verbal interaction during the event, my observations during the event and also in relation to the participants’ comments following or prior to the event. The non-verbal signals are taken into account in various points: children raising hands to communicate, lack of eye contact, body posture, facial expressions, gestures, movement as complementary to the actors’ and the children’s verbal communication. For example, based on the participants’ verbal interaction during the storytelling session (Clarke Hall case study) it was assumed that the children’s responses were deepened in the expressive frame when the actor addresses the children in the role of the fictional character in the story. Referring to the video-recorded session and observing the participants’ non-verbal signals (body posture, facial expression, gestures) and also taking into account their tone of voice, the initial assumption was confirmed and viewed in relation to the children’s follow-up comments and the relevant theoretical framework.

In order to ensure that the data generated via observation reflected the participants’ subjective experience, reflections of my observations were assessed through informal discussions with the class teachers, sequential interviews with the actors and comments from children during and at the end of the research process. The data also derived from observations are viewed in relation to data generated with other techniques.

\textsuperscript{14} For the G school I did not use video recording for the final part of the event as the school was video recording the whole event for their own purposes. Permission was given to me to watch and transcribe the video recording within the school premises. Watching the event through the view of the teaching assistant who was behind the camera during the event provided me with an insight of her own interpretation of the event.
Qualitative interviews

Interviewing includes a wide variety of forms and has both qualitative and quantitative origins depending on the purpose for which it is used. Qualitative interviews used to provide an understanding of an individual or a group perspective are frequently employed in conjunction with the technique of the participant as an observer. There is an inherent assumption that interviews will give trustworthy results and they will depict a “true and accurate picture of the respondents’ selves and lives” (Fontana & Frey, 2000:646). However, increasingly, emphasis is placed on the contextual elements of the interview and its social dynamics. Postmodernist ethnographers are concerned about the interviewer–interviewee relationship, the ethical dilemmas during the interviewing process and the significance of giving voice to the participants’ feelings and thoughts (Madriz, 2000: 835). There is a growing realisation that interviews might not be “neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Fontana & Frey, 2000: 646).

Table 3. Interviews Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Interviews</th>
<th>Research Stages</th>
<th>Preliminary research stage</th>
<th>Before the event</th>
<th>After the event</th>
<th>Five months following the event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>HT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C - Children
MP - Museum Professionals
CT - Class Teachers
HT - Head Teachers
CA - Classroom Assistants
Qualitative interviews were employed at various research stages with all research participants (see Table 3). The rationale for each type of interviewing and their location within the fieldwork is explained at the following sub sections.

**Informal unstructured interviewing**

Although participant observation and unstructured interviews are two distinctive data generation techniques, to some extent they could be seen as interrelated. Lofland pointed out that the method of participant observation and informal interviewing go hand in hand as the data gathered in participant observation in essence derive from informal interviewing (Fontana et al, 2000:652). Informal unstructured interviewing was used in the school setting in combination with the method of the participant observer. It took place, both before and after the participation in the drama event, with classroom assistants and partly with class teachers. They allowed the interviewees to talk about school life and their experiences in the event on their own terms, in an informal context. As the use of a tape recorder would defeat the purpose and the nature of the interviews, key notes were kept during or after the discussion. Given also the nature of the participant observation that involves interaction with the participants, unstructured informal interviews took place within the museum context during the exploratory stage of the research.

**Semi-structured interviews**

The unstructured interviews with museum professionals became gradually more structured as the observations were becoming more focused. Open-ended questions devised for the interviews with museum professionals that were either involved in the devising or performance of theatre/drama programs (for the list of interviews see Appendix 1). As the interviews progressed and it became evident that I did not share the

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15 Angrosino & Perez recognizing that there is a link between focused observations and interviewing, comment that “focused observation necessarily entails interviewing, because the insights gleaned from the experience of “natives” guide the ethnographer in his or her decisions about what is more or less important in the culture” (Angrosino & Perez, 2000:677).
same vocabulary with the museum professionals, particular emphasis was placed on the use of language and the establishment of rapport with the participants.

Semi-structured interviews with non-directive questions took place with the museum staff and the class teachers both before and after participation in the event. The interviews were structured around certain themes (expectations, objectives, perception of the content and format of the event) that were similar for all participants in the event. However, as "there is no single interview style that fits every occasion or all respondents", the questions and the language varied according to the interviewee's background to create a "sharedness of meanings" (Converse & Schuman, 1974:53; Fontana & Frey, 2000:660; for a list of interviewees see Appendix 1). My intention was not to treat the interview as a questionnaire in a straightforward sequential manner. A degree of flexibility would involve improvisation and allow me to give and ask for clarifications, to interpret the meaning of the responses and to ask for the participants' feedback to my interpretation. I was careful not to evaluate any responses that would compromise the "intersubjective understanding" between the interviewer and interviewee (May, 1997:115). As the interview had the format of a discussion, I faced the dilemma of providing my own opinions of the subject matter or discarding the relevance of my opinions when asked by the interview participants. Traditional techniques of research suggest to the researcher that, to avoid "getting trapped" when asked by the interviewees to provide his/her opinions and beliefs, he/she can feign ignorance or cast off his/her opinions as non important (Fontana & Frey, 2000:660). Pretending to be ignorant would reduce the interview to a pseudo conversation, so I preferred to be engaged in a real conversation with shared empathetic understanding.

The establishment of rapport was pursued via "sequential interviewing" that allowed the participants (both the museum staff and the class teachers) to reflect on or project their experiences in terms of the events under study. The aim was to obtain a rich experiential account of the event and view the programs from the research participants' point of view rather than imposing on them a certain theoretical frame.
Focus Groups interview

The term group interview and focus group interview are used to denote what is defined as a qualitative data gathering technique that “relies upon systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting” (Fontana et al, 2000:651; Madriz, 2000:835). Within a feminist/post-modern framework the focus group is seen as a “collectivistic” research method that “focuses on the multivocality of participants’ attitudes, experiences and beliefs” (Madriz, 2000:836). It is viewed as a qualitative data generating technique that has a flexible format and has the potentiality to aid recall and to be stimulating for the respondents (Fontana et al, 2000:651). The focus group is also seen as a distinctive type of group interviewing. What differentiates it is that data emerge from the interaction amongst the group members rather than with the interviewer (Cohen, 2000:288). Hence, by creating multiple lines of communication one might yield insights that would not be available in an individual one-to-one- basis interview, and it offers a safe environment for participation (Madriz, 2000:835).

Focus group interviews were used both before and following the children’s participation in the event. By taking into account that asking direct questions containing leading statements might influence the children’s responses, I developed a loose interview format based on the key topics as derived from research objectives. The reasons that guided the selection of focus groups as a data generation technique, with the children before and after their participation in the drama event, are mainly rooted in the research’s objectives in relation to the technique’s potentiality. As the research focuses both on the individual and social construction of meaning making, focus groups interviews were selected as a data generation technique that could offer an insight both into the children’s individual and shared meaning of the experience. Characteristically, Fontana and Frey comment about the technique’s potentiality to offer such an insight:

“Group interviews can also be used successfully to aid respondents’ recall of specific events or to stimulate embellished descriptions of events [...] or experiences shared by members of a group” (Fontana & Frey, 2000:651).
They were also selected for their potential to stimulate discussion and elicit a wide range of responses (Cohen, 2000:287). Because they emphasise the collective, they are believed to foster spontaneous responses and encourage members to speak up (Madriz, 2000:838). Especially when used with primary school children it is argued that, due to their social context of interaction, focus group interviews can stimulate new ideas, challenge individuals' responses within the group and extend each other's ideas (Lewis, 1992:414). By prompting each other with reference to things that the researcher does not know, the children might provide information that would not be available in individual interviews (Lewis, 1992:415). As a technique it facilitates a natural way of talking that gives "thinking time" to the group (while a child is talking) and provides a supportive environment for the less confident children16 (Lewis, 1992:417). The decision to use focus groups interviews was also based on their organisational advantage as they would be less disruptive to the class' timetable and routine.

The aim of the focus group interviews before the museum visit was to gain an insight into the groups' prior agenda (expectations, previous experiences, prior understanding - preconceptions, social norms, interests). Open-ended questions were devised for each topic with a series of prompting questions (why, how do you know that, mention an example) sensitive to the emerging patterns of interaction aiming to elicit responses from the entire group17. A less directive approach was followed when by adopting the role of the "one who does not know" and by using photographs as props, I aimed to elicit a wide

16 Also, during the pilot study of this research five out of thirteen children were interviewed participating both in individual and groups interviews. It was noticed that the less confident children in the one-to-one basis interviews were more talkative when participating in the group interviews.

17 The prompting questions had an "open-ended" explanatory form. Research has shown that the repetition of specific questions within interviews might influence the accuracy of children's reports. Especially younger children in their attempt to be co-operative participants in verbal interaction with adults might interpret the repetition of a question as an indication that they have not provided the correct response and change their answer in order to please the interviewer rather than reflecting their own opinion. Poole and White (1991) examining the effects of repeating questioning with adults, 4, 6 and 8 year old children found that repeated open ended questions had little effect on children's and adults responses in comparison to their responses to specific questions that required a yes or no answer (Ceci & Bruck, 2000:119).
range of responses regarding the history - learning agenda. The stance of constructing an identity unfamiliar with the "others" culture has been suggested by the drama practitioner Dorothy Heathcote and used by researchers within the context of interviews in drama research to allow the research participants to select their topics of discussion (Grady, 1995:8). It situates the children as experts that can provide information to the ignorant researcher and gives them the flexibility to discuss the themes that they consider as important.

A similar format to the group interviews before the museum visit was also followed for the follow up interviews, which in most classes were conducted the day following the children's participation in the event. The follow up interviews that aimed to gain an insight into the children's meaning making of the experience, open-ended questions were used inviting children to describe the event as it unfolded. They were organized around certain themes (expectations, children's roles, perception of actors- time-plot, ownership of solution) and a series of probes were devised within each theme that would challenge the participants to justify their opinion and elicit more specific responses (why, how, what). As the intention was to encourage a discussion that would have a natural flow and facilitate interaction between children, it was intended that the questions should emerge as a logical progression of the discussion, as close as possible to the children's own accounts rather than posed as a predetermined path. Having in mind that one of the disadvantages of the use of group interviews with children is that children can be easily distracted (Cohen, 2000:287), an inference that also derived from the pilot study, a collective drawing activity was integrated into the follow up group interviews.

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18 Initially, it was planned to use objects as props from the museums' collection related to the theatre event. The use of objects as props during the pilot group interviews attracted children's interest to such an extent that they had a greater effect on children's prior-to-the visit agenda than any preparation in the classroom. Due also to the fact that they attracted so much interest, they distracted children's focus on the interview.

19 When conducting a pilot study at the National Army Museum, at the end of the group interviews the children were asked for feedback regarding their participation in the interview. All groups commented that it would have been more enjoyable to participate if they were engaged in an activity.
A standard format was followed at the initial stage of each interview. Children were asked for their consent and were encouraged to ask questions related to the interview process and familiarize themselves with the recording means. Taking into account the possibility that children, in their attempt to provide an answer when questioned by an adult, would provide an answer consistent to the question in order to fulfil the interviewer's expectations, it was made explicit to the children that they do not have to respond to questions they do not know anything about or try to guess the answer. During the interview I tried to balance my role as a non-directive interviewer and moderator of the discussion. Verbal and non-verbal probing was used either to encourage participation or, when necessary, to refocus the discussion. Sometimes I would attempt to refocus the discussion by rephrasing the initial open-ended question via the position of the non-native speaker.

The interviews with the children both before and after the event were conducted within the school setting. Being in a natural setting certain parameters and unexpected events had to be taken into account such as the available space, absences, illness and changes in the class' teaching plan. These mainly affected the groups' composition, which was intended to be kept similar in the group interviews conducted before and following the drama event. When the interviews were conducted in the staff room or the head teacher's office, time was given to the children to settle into the interview and feel comfortable as they might have particular associations with the setting that could influence their participation in the interview. Attention was paid to the layout, as it was intended that everyone should sit in a circle giving the feeling of a group activity with the researcher as part of the group. When appropriate parental consent was given, the focus group

20 I was aware that repeating a question might be interpreted by the children as a prompt to give an alternative reply (Ceci & Bruck, 2000:79).

21 The decision was based on the outcomes of the pilot study. Conducting interviews following the drama event at the lecture theatre of the NAM proved to be the inappropriate time and setting as the children were overexcited by being in an unfamiliar setting which they wanted to explore. As a result the interviews at least for the first half did not run smoothly and having the children's consent they were repeated the following day at school.
interviews were both tape and video-recorded. Having visual data from the focus groups enabled me during the data analysis to reflect on my own presence within the group.

*Individual interviews with children four/five months after the event*

The follow up interviews were divided into four phases: a) the free recall stage where children were asked the open-ended question "what do you remember?", b) the direct recall where the children were invited to answer questions of "how", "why", "what", .... aiming to find more specific information about the children's interpretation of the format and content of the event, c) direct questions were posed attempting to trace any impact that the experience had on children's learning and attitudes, d) a drawing activity (about the structure of the interview see Appendix 7, for an example see Appendix 8).

The duration of the interviews varied between fifteen to thirty minutes depending on the children's comments. Although the questions had been devised in advance, not all of them were posed in each individual interview. It was attempted to give the interview a naturalistic rate. Thus, the questions were posed involving a degree of improvisation based on the children's former comments. Head nodding and smiling was used to provide a supportive environment and to give to the conversation a natural flow. The tone of voice varied in favour of a free conversation flow but it was intended throughout the interview to be kept non-suggestive.

It was also attempted to give to the children a sense of control during the conduct of the interviews. Pollard argues that the quality of data is affected by the degree of control that

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22 There are a number of studies that support that children provide more information when they respond to direct questioning rather than to free recall (Butler *et al*., 1995:605).

23 Butler et all research showed that there is a direct relationship between the information provided during direct or photo recall in an interview and the interview's duration. The longer the duration the more information provided by children. There were no indications, however, that there is a relationship between time duration and free recall (Butler *et al*., 1995:605). Having this research outcome in mind, I asked permission from the class teachers for conducting interviews that would last between twenty and thirty minutes.
children have on the research process. If they mistrust the researcher, feel pressured or have the sense that they have been used, then the data’s validity may be called into question (Pollard, 1987:108). Children operated the tape recorder, they advised me about which child would be available for the next interviews, and at the end of the individual semi-structured interviews were asked about their reflections on my interpretation of data so far. The children’s reflections were not requested at an earlier research stage as it was thought that doing so might have affected their recalling of the event after four/five months.

Children’s Drawings
It was not until the end of the 19th century with the growing interest in the development of the mind that children’s graphic activity was taken seriously into consideration. Within this scope, a number of studies that perceived children’s drawings as realistic in intention attempted to describe the developmental stages of children’s drawings24 and assess children’s cognitive development25. Also, the perception of drawings as a self-expressive mode gave a new perspective in the use of drawings as a means to assess children’s personality and emotional states within a clinical context (Thomas & Jolly, 1998:128-136). Concerns have been expressed about the reliability of the medium as an indicator of the children’s emotional and cognitive status given, that a series of mechanisms and processes would lead to the final form of drawing (Freeman, 1976:347; Cox, 1992; Coates, 2004). Criticism has been also expressed in regard to the use of drawings to draw inferences about children’s emotional and cognitive statuses in a clinical sense, due to the medium’s openness to subjective interpretations (Gardner, 1980; Thomas & Jolly, 1998:136).

In recent years children’s drawings have been used as a research tool in various fields, including museum and drama education. The popularity of the medium as a research tool might be grounded in the belief that drawings are popular amongst the children, the opportunities it provides for questions and observations, and also on its function as an

25 Goodenough (1926), Harris (1963)
“icebreaker” that can make children feel comfortable and engage their interest. Within the context of this research, children’s drawings are used to offer an insight into the children’s meaning making of the experience and show possible aspects of tacit learning that would not be available through other data generation techniques. In this research children’s drawings were used within different contexts following the participation in the drama event: a) immediately after or the following day of their museum visit, b) during the group interviews, c) at the individual five-months-after interviews. Given the subjective nature of the medium the drawings were interpreted in relation to the children’s comments during and/or following the drawing. During the data analysis the children’s individual drawings were interpreted in relation to the children’s comments and also up to a certain extent in relation to the topic depicted given that “drawings can be influenced by children’s emotional attitudes towards the topics depicted” (Thomas & Jolly, 1998:127). Although the medium has been criticized for its reliability within the context of empirical psychological research, Thomas and Jolly by reviewing evidence about the use of drawings as a clue to the emotional significance of the topic depicted, argued that when subjectivity is desirable within the research children’s drawings can provide a form of expression that will be personal and idiosyncratic.

Immediately after participating in the event
Returning to school the children were asked if they wanted to “make a drawing” regarding their day trip. The activity was introduced by me while, following communication with the class teacher, it was agreed that no clues would be given to the class that would influence the children’s choice of their drawing. Taking into account that children at the age of eight and older might feel intimidated to draw, it was emphasised that the children should feel free to participate in the activity without being troubled about the outcome from an artistic perspective26. It was emphasised that the idea of drawing was important rather than the aesthetic outcome.

26 Studies that focus on the developmental aspects of the drawing activity have indicated that children from eight year old to adolescence might appear dissatisfied with their drawing for not achieving the effects they desire and as a result no longer pursue the activity (Thomas & Silk, 1990:39).
The time given for the activity varied between ten and twenty minutes according to the class’s available time for the activity. Taking into account that every drawing could support different interpretations, the children were asked following the activity to comment either verbally or in writing on their drawing and explain the reasons behind their choice to represent a certain subject and characteristics. Their comments would provide an insight into the process involved for the production of the drawing and indicate the significance of the topic depicted for the child. Their comments not only provided their own interpretation of the data, but also offered an insight into the validity of the activity as a research tool. It was common across the classes that participated in the research for children to comment that they selected to draw something easy to finish the activity quickly. These kind of comments, in association with the decreased numbers of children who were willing to draw when asked for their informed consent, might suggest that the researchers’ assumptions that drawing activities are popular and enjoyable amongst children do not always lie on solid grounding.

During the focus group interviews
Collective drawings were used as a research tool during the follow up focus interviews. The children were encouraged to produce a collective drawing regarding the drama event as if they were preparing illustrations for a book. The activity facilitated natural interaction among the group members, provided a context for questions regarding the children’s meaning making of the drama event, and kept the children constantly focused in the subject of discussion. However, collective drawings were not integrated in the focus group interviews when researching the first person interpretation events due to the classes’ tight timetable.

Four/five months after
The children that participated in the individual five-months-follow-up interviews were encouraged to produce during the fourth phase of the interview a drawing related to the event. The decision to incorporate drawings at this stage of research was influenced by the findings of Butler et al.’s research regarding the effect of drawing on memory performance of children. In the repeated experimental study conducted in regard to the
effect that drawing has on memory performance in young children, groups of 5 to 6 year olds participated in an event. They were asked to recall the event the same day that the event took place while in the second experiment they were asked to recall the event a month later. Children, who during the interview were asked to draw in association with the use of direct questions, recalled overall more information than children who were interviewed without participating in a drawing activity (Butler et al., 1995).

The use of drawing during the individual interviews conducted four/five months following the event proved useful with the children that had difficulties recalling their experience. Especially when open-ended questions did not trigger any answers, direct questions in association with the drawing activity facilitated the recalling of aspects of the event. All children narrated as they drew. In this case, to adopt Butler's et al's hypothesis to explain the positive impact of drawing on memory performance, the activity might have acted as “a source of additional retrieval cues” (Butler et al, 1995:606). Most of the children by the end of the interview were offered the choice to draw a second drawing if they wished so. The aim was to find out the range of possible choices that children had and also to detect if any performance factors affected their previous choices. The majority of children of the children were eager to draw the same subject.

"Socio-grams"

"Socio-grams" were used as a DGT to provide an insight in the classes' social profile. The devising of socio-grams can be traced back into the 1930s, when the psychologist/sociologist J. L. Moreno, being interested in social relationships and inter-group conflict, developed quantifiable measuring techniques that can trace how group members associate with each other. Sociometry is the term coined to characterize the collection of methods used to investigate social networks within groups. Social networks, "socio-grams", role diagrams, social atoms and interpersonal relations are some of the exploratory methods through which sociometry can achieve its goals. It is a phenomenological study of people's interpersonal choices according to pre-selected criteria posed by the researcher (Hoffman, 2001:1).
In the school context, sociometric techniques have been used as a means of assessing children’s peer relations. They can provide information regarding the structure of a class group, patterns of interaction within the group, and one child’s relationship to the rest of the class group. There are three major types that apply within a classroom context: “nomination”, “paired-comparison” and “rating scale techniques” (Hymel, 1983:238).

“Nomination sociometrics”, developed by Moreno, involve a survey given to the children where they are asked to identify a specific number of pupils according to predetermined criteria, such as “whom would you like to work with, play with, sit with, ....etc”. (Hymel, 1983:239). When the questions asked prompt children to make choices based on what they like, then the technique is termed as “positive nomination technique”. Accordingly when the children are called to make choices based on what they would not like or would like least the technique is defined as “negative nomination” (Sherman, 2002:1). Thus, depending upon the criteria posed, one could derive acceptance and rejection scores. “Paired-comparison measures” is the term for the sociometric technique where a child is presented in turn with a possible pair of peers and has to state a preference according to selected criteria. Although the technique is considered advantageous, as it entails equal consideration of all members of group and provides a larger number of data, it is less frequently used due to its time demands. The third major sociometric technique is the “rating-scale measure” which also offers an indication of the child’s attitude towards each member of the group as each child rates each peer on a type of scale according to specified interpersonal criteria (e.g. how much would you like to play with the x person) (Hymel, 1983:241-243).

The technique followed in the context of this research is not sociometric in a quantitative sense. Although it shares similarities with the nomination technique described above, it cannot be exactly identified as such. The aim was to provide an insight into the children’s relations (in a play context) from the perspective of the children taking also into account the limitation of the technique to illustrate a holistic picture of social cohesion within the class given that the children nominated peers only in the context of interaction in the playground. The technique was selected for its simplicity and potential to generate data in
a short period of time. In three out of four classes that participated in the research, the children were asked to write the names of the friends/children they play with during playtime\(^{27}\). No limits were set on the number of children's choices, while negative nomination was used only when my observations in the classroom indicated conflict relationships within the class group (class G). In these cases, children were asked to write the names of their peers that they would prefer not to be in the classroom. Taking into account that such an exercise might hurt children's feelings, especially when it involved negative nomination, before the exercise the children were assured of strict confidentiality on my behalf while by the end of the task they were reminded of the importance of not discussing their responses with their peers.

Two steps were followed for the analysis of children's responses:

a) Tally the responses: Having a list of each class's names I wrote next to a student's name the number of times he/she has been positively or negatively nominated. The outcome was a nomination chart for each class. Based on this chart I proceeded to the second step (see Appendix 9).

b) Create the sociogram: A "socio-gram" is defined as the graphical representation of children's responses. The aim of creating socio-grams was to generate visual data regarding the class's networks. Each student's name was written in a square. Single pointed arrows were drawn from each student to the student selected by them. Double arrows were used as indicative of mutual choices (see Appendix 14).

The data generated from the use of the sociograms provided an insight into the classes' social profile. They facilitated the formulation of the interview groups and, in association with the data that derived from the observations, they provided a social perspective in the children's interpretations of their "museum-theatre" experience.

\(^{27}\) In the schools were observations in the playground were conducted, the children were presented with a sketch of the school's playground and were also asked to mark on the sketch the areas in the playground where they usually play/spend most of their time (see Plate 1).
This section attempted to present the DGT selected throughout the research. The rationale of each technique is briefly discussed and examined in terms of its use within the context of this research's stages and purposes. Overall it was attempted to select DGT that would provide an insight into the research participants' voice in tune with the research's interpretive stance. The following section attempts to explain the methodological approach followed for the data analysis in the researched case studies.

Plate 1 Sample of sheets given to children (G School) for nomination
Data Analysis

A constructivist grounded theory approach was considered appropriate for the data analysis process. It was believed that it would facilitate a data analysis that would not be prescriptive as a process and would focus on the interpretive understandings of the research participants without limiting theorizing (Charmaz, 2000:510). In congruence with the research’s epistemological paradigm the constructivist stance would facilitate an analysis sensitive to the multiple realities within the event. The stance of the constructivist grounded theory that is employed to provide an insight into the participants’ experiences is described below on a theoretical level while the data analysis process is presented briefly.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was originally developed as a methodological stance by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s against the backdrop of a debate related to the merits of qualitative and quantitative research (Pidgeon, 1996:76). It challenged prevailing views that qualitative research is unsystematic and can be used primarily as a precursor to quantitative research. It challenged assumptions that qualitative research has the potentiality only to produce descriptive case studies and not theory (Charmaz, 2000:511; Charmaz, 1995:29). The ideological roots of grounded theory being rooted in interpretive phenomenology and the symbolic interactionist perspective of Herbert Blumer led to the development of a flexible model of research that is carried out in everyday contexts. It intends to bridge the gap between theory and empirical research and generate theory that unravels multiple perspectives and common sense realities of the research participants. (Pidgeon, 1996:76-77).

The value of the grounded theory as a research method lies in the nature of the theory it offers. Strauss and Corbin defined the term grounded theory to mean “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12). They argued that the theory that emerges from data is more likely to offer an insight and enhance the understanding of the social reality under
study, rather than the theory that is based merely on speculations or on the researcher's experience (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12).

Although the grounded theory approach is considered as revolutionary, it is also criticized both in its early and latest versions for resting upon a positivist, empiricist epistemology (Pidgeon, 1996:81). Especially, it is criticized for its reference to theory discovered from data, since this notion of discovery implies that the human experience exists independently in the word and can be captured by the researcher (Charmaz, 2000:513). Also, this notion is noted to be contradictory to the principles of symbolic interactionism (in which grounded theory is rooted ideologically), which views the social world as a constant interplay of individuals' symbolic worlds and systems of meaning (Pidgeon, 1996:81). The view of the researcher capturing "lived experience" has been widely criticized, especially within the context of post modernity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 11).

The grounded theory approach has been also criticized for its empiricist epistemology (Layder, 1982:113). Layder has argued that grounded theory, by taking into account only the generative conditions that are produced by the phenomena themselves, reduces social reality to its phenomenal forms (Layder, 1982:114). By focusing entirely on phenomena and interactive realities without theorizing these realities within a wider social contextual environment it deprives the study of phenomena from the parameters that facilitated their emergence in the first place. A common criticism especially for novice researchers is that when applying grounded theory as an analysis, method might not move beyond the

28 Strauss and Corbin in their work "Basics" have been criticized for their references to the researcher's aim to maintain objectivity (Charmaz, 2000:513)

29 According to Strauss the discovering of data takes place step by step through systematic comparisons while according to Corbin and Glaser through analytic questions. They both imply that "reality is independent of the observer" while the position of "silent authorship" they assume places them as "distant experts" (Charmaz, 2000:513).

30 The "crisis of representation" challenges the link between lived experience and the text. Lived experience rather than being "captured" is "created in the social text written by the researcher" (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994:11).
“everyday” and instead of theory the analysis takes the form of a “glorified [...] re-
description or content analysis” (Pidgeon, 1996:83).

By taking into account the challenges that grounded theory has to face as a qualitative approach within the post-positivist era, a few researchers attempt to offer a new vision of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000:510; Charmaz, 1990; Layder, 1993). Layder has argued for an “open” grounded theory approach that takes into account macro aspects in the analysis, is open to developments in social theory and it is not “limited” to empirical evidence but can be also “guided” by empirical data (Layder, 1993:55;60). Charmaz suggests the stance of “the constructivist grounded theory” that takes the elements of the grounded theory that are considering as positivist and adopts them within the context of a more open-ended practice. Via a relativist perspective, the constructivist stance postulates that “social reality does not exist independent of human action”. Thus, it recognizes that the categories which emerged from the analysis do not tell a story that unfolds independently but they also emerge from the researcher’s interaction within the field and questions about the data (Charmaz, 2000:513-522).

Within the context of this research, the constructivist stance is viewed as appropriate for the research’s scope and theoretical perspective. In tune with the research’s epistemological stance it values the nature of the reality as multiple social constructions and considers the researcher as an integral constituent of the research process. The notion of discovering, which is postulated via the founders of the grounded theory, would contradict the research’s theoretical stance since it is not deemed within the context of this research that the researcher can assess directly the participants’ lived experience. A constructivist grounded theory approach was considered appropriate for the data analysis process due to its open-ended nature. It was believed that it would facilitate a data analysis that would not be prescriptive as a process and would focus on the interpretive understandings of the research participants without discouraging theorizing (Charmaz, 2000:510). Based on the principles of the constructivist grounded theory, the data analysis process would be flexible according to the nature of each case study. Below are
presented the processes via which the data were analyzed, which did not unfold in a straightforward linear path of set procedures.

**Theoretical sampling**

Given the interrelation of data collection and analysis that characterizes the grounded theory approach it was attempted to undertake data analysis simultaneously with the process of data generation in order to guide further data collection in the field. A preliminary analysis of data took place either while I was still in the setting by interpreting the participants' responses during the interviews or by returning later to the setting so that I could ask for further clarifications. Up to a certain extent the initial interpretations guided further data generation. For example, preliminary analysis of the observations conducted in regard to the theatrical event may inform the key themes addressed in the group interviews with the children. Taking into consideration the children's responses within one group may inform the themes asked in a following group interview, or redirect my observations in the classroom, or inform informal interviewing with the class teachers in order to generate further data.

However, theoretical sampling did not take place in the sense of selecting places, persons and situations based on structured theoretical conceptions. "Open sampling"\(^\text{31}\) was used with the children who gave consent to participate in the research and in the case of the participatory event were allocated in the specific groups under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:208). Further theatrical events and/or participants could not be sampled due to the research's time frame and limits posed by the field itself. As a result the categories which emerged in regard to one theatrical event could not be saturated. Following the data analysis (where feasible) observations of further events were conducted in order to validate the initial categories which emerged. By selecting also initially two theatrical events that appeared to have different characteristics (a participatory and a non-

\(^\text{31}\) During "Open sampling" the random or systematic selection of interviewees and/or observational sites is quite open in the sense that the researcher is open to all possibilities and wants to take advantage of every opportunity that comes up (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:206).
participatory one) it was hoped that comparative analysis could be conducted offering an insight into the emerging theory.

The data analysis was a constant "flip-flop" between the data and the conceptualisation in order to "fit" the latter to the data (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1996:88). When sorting out data according to the occurring themes the aim was to seek similarities and differences that could point to multiple facets of a concept and in some instances to accumulate together all the occurring themes in data with the perspective of looking at the frequency of occurrence. Such an approach might have been closer to content analysis than to grounded theory if not used within the context of theoretical sampling (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1996:93). The tool through which similarities and differences were looked for was the constant comparison between the research participants' responses that accordingly would lead to further sampling. For example, when the themes which occurred in children's responses regarding their expectations for the museum visit indicated that they expected an entirely visual experience then the next step was to search for the reasons for the formulated children's expectations. The children's responses posed questions about the nature of the class's previous museum visits and accordingly redirected further data collection.

**Coding**

As the research progressed the interviews were transcribed, aiming to create a permanent record and also a second version of data in order to process the material into similar themes. The group interviews were transcribed in a manner that would allow me to trace the group dynamics, isolate individual responses and locate them within the group context32. When necessary for the handling of data the lines in the transcription were numbered (For examples of transcriptions see Appendix 10 &11). The theatrical events

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32 Gillian Brown suggests that in transcriptions of multi-party conversations the allocation of a line for each participant carrying on from where the last speaker left off creates an impression of a cooperative enterprise. Instead, the allocation of a column for each participant, within which that participant's speech is transcribed, creates a lay out more appropriate to the nature of the conversation (Brown, 1995:40).
were transcribed in terms of the participants’ verbal and non-verbal communication integrating also in italics my observations as a participant in the event.

The process of coding took place both at the initial stage of the analysis and throughout the whole process. Initially “Line-by-line coding” was used as a process of labelling the data that provided me on a practical level with a basis for storage and retrieval (Punch, 1998:204). In vivo codes and descriptive labels were used that summarized segments of data and enabled me to get a feel of the data (See Appendix 11). Via this process I familiarized myself with the data, posed questions and made assumptions about the meaning underlying them. Hypothetical questions (who, when, how, why), which were posed regarding the “conditions” and the “process” within the event and the participants’ “meaning making”, enabled me to identify patterns and pull out themes that were grouped in card-themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:127; for an example of card-themes see Appendix 12).

Constant comparison

A degree of inference beyond the data was required in order to bring together the more descriptive codes (Punch, 1998:205; Charamaz, 2000:516). This was achieved via an interplay that took place amongst data deriving from the “reader’s” side, the “author’s” side and the “text” as the participants and the researcher interpreted it. Overall the participants’ views, intentions, actions and accounts were compared in order to draw similarities or differences between a) the two year groups for each case study, b) the

33 The codes whose name is taken from the words of the respondents themselves are termed as “in vivo codes” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:105).

34 Strauss and Corbin define as structure or conditions the “circumstances in which problems, issues, happenings, or events pertaining to a phenomenon are situated or arise (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:127). They are inextricably linked and when studied together they have the potentiality to capture the evolving nature of events.

35 Strauss and Corbin define as “process” the “action/interaction over time of persons, organizations, and communities in response to certain problems and issues” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:127). They are inextricably linked and when studied together they have the potentiality to capture the evolving nature of events.
children's accounts and the actors' intentions, c) children's individual accounts, d) children's accounts within a group context. In order to trace the children's meaning making and the parameters that possibly shaped it, the data from the same individuals were compared at different points in time (Charmaz, 2000:515). The children's accounts when possible due to the interview questions were compared at the various research stages while up to a certain extent comparisons were also made between the two classes that participated in a similar event (participatory or first person interpretation). The differences or similarities noticed between the two classes’ interpretation highlighted the main elements of the theatrical event and indicated “incidents” that might be shaped in relation to the class's own agenda. Comparisons were also drawn between the data and a category. When a category emerged within a particular data generation technique then the data from other sources would be compared with the category. Also, attempts were made to compare a category with other categories in order to trace their relationship. The process of comparison was facilitated by the writing of memos, reports and the drawing of relevant tables (See Appendix 13).

Creating a theoretical scheme

Writing was an interrelated process with the research analysis and an act of interpretation itself (Richardson, 2000:923; Whyte, 1991:270). Via immersion in the data and the memos, relational statements were abstracted from the data and were presented in a narrative. Also, the central categories emerged by taking into account the research's conceptual framework and questions. The first organisational scheme used for the description was the chronological order of the event and the research stages. The description proceeded to conceptual ordering by going back to the transcriptions, rereading them, and attempting to code and find patterns. When a pattern emerged (e.g. “accepting the big lie”) then I would go back to the description and accordingly add raw data, or reorganize the description according to the data's dimensions and properties. Throughout this process I posed questions, made assumptions and interacted with the
data. Gradually the first description changed format to “conceptual ordering” to illustrate the emerged categories36 (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:19).

Once a theoretical scheme was created it was reviewed for its internal consistency (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:156). Questions were posed about the properties of categories and the extent to which can they be built into a scheme. Did I look at the data from my perspective or the participants’ stance? It was also attempted to validate the scheme via the participants’ comments. Up to a certain extent the criterion of “respondent validation” was applied in order to find out if my interpretation of data when presented to the participants would be recognizable (Pidgeon, 1996:84). This process was applied at various stages of the research mainly with the adult participants in the research37. Either brief reports were supplied to the participants or brief oral presentations were given to confirm my interpretation of data at both research stages (before and following the event).

Concluding remarks
In this chapter the research’s methodological framework employed for the conduct of the research was presented. The ethical considerations that were taken into account during the design and implementation of the research were discussed, as were the practical steps followed and the issues that arose in order to conduct research with children. Also, an overview was provided of the data generation techniques that were employed for the exploration of the participants’ prior-to-the event agenda and the children’s collective and individual interpretation of their “museum theatre” experience. The children might not be

36 According to Strauss and Corbin conceptual ordering refers to “the organization of data into discrete categories [...] according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate those categories” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:19). At that point the description could be considered according to Strauss and Corbin’s as an ethnographic account “they reflect attempts to depict the perspectives and actions of the portrayed actors, combined with an explicit ordering of those into plausible non-fictional accounts” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:20).

37 However, due to practical reasons the approach of “respondent validation” was not widely used with the children.
involved in the research’s design; however, it is attempted via selected data generation techniques to provide an insight into the children’s perspectives. The data analysis process followed was also informed by the research’s theoretical stance and focus on the research participants’ interpretive understandings. Based on this methodological framework a participatory and a first person interpretation event are researched with the participation of two school classes in each case study event. The research outcomes are presented in the following chapters.
Chapter 4 Case Study- Clarke Hall

The participants’ prior-to-the-event agenda

Introduction

This chapter is the first of the two chapters that deal with the first case study: the participatory event in Clarke Hall. The aim of this chapter is to describe the “real context” of the participants in the event. The term “real context” encompasses the aims and objectives, the previous experiences, the prior cognitive schemes, feelings and values that the participants bring to the event. By “participants” I mean both the museum staff who devised the programme and the schools that participated in the dramatic event. Thus, the chapter is divided into two sections: the museum’s and the classes’ agendas.

The first section focuses on the museum agenda and deals with questions such as “who are the people involved in the creation of the event?”, “what is their professional background?”, “what are their perceptions about the programme?” and “what they try to achieve?”. The answers to these questions lie in trying to find the real context of the “author” of the event. The data derive from a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with the museum staff (10/2001-01/2002), relevant published and unpublished material, and the preparatory session for schoolteachers (24/11/2001). Following the research analysis, a discussion took place with the three main actors/educators that participated in the event (29/06/2002).

The second section outlines the year groups’ agendas that participated in the event. Background information is given regarding the aims, the priorities of the school and the consistency of the classes in order to illustrate briefly their profile. The aims for the year groups’ participation in the event are described, as they are perceived by the class teacher and where appropriate by the head of the school. These data derive from interviews conducted with the school staff (S School, 11/01/2002 and G School, 04/03/2002) and also from the recent Ofsted reports and the schools’ unpublished material. The pupils’ expectations regarding the visit and their context for interpretation are described extensively through data that derive from group interviews (S School, 28/01/2002 and G School, 04/03/2002).
School, 07/03/2002). Their previous drama/theatre experiences and, where appropriate, the groups' preparatory activities are also taken into consideration as possible factors that affect their perception of the event. These data derive mainly from observations in the class prior to the visit (S School, 14/01/2002-28/01/2002 and G School, 26/02/2002-07/03/2002).

Overall, it is anticipated that the description of the participants' prior agenda will offer insights into the description of the dramatic event as it is shaped through the interaction of both the fictional and real context. It will also provide the grounding for the examination of the meaning that the children make regarding the content and the format of the dramatic event.
The museum's agenda

Clarke Hall – A brief historical perspective

Clarke Hall is a 16th century Grade II listed building located in Wakefield, West Yorkshire1 (See Plate 3). It was built in 1542 on the site of an older Hall and since then various proprietors including the Clarke family have owned it. In 1971 Clarke Hall was sold to the West Riding County Council’s Education Committee. The Chief Education Officer at the time Clarke Hall was purchased was Sir Alec Clegg. He believed that children should learn through practical experience and it was thought that Clarke Hall could be used as an educational museum2. Thus, between 1971 and 1973 the Hall was restored and furnished with 17th century authentic and reproduction items. In 1974 it was passed to Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. It was initially viewed as a resource that teachers could use for teaching the subject of history that would offer a high level of practical and sensory involvement. Today, Clarke Hall is an accredited educational living history museum within the Museums and Art Department of Wakefield.

The establishment of Clarke Hall as an educational resource for school groups in the 1970s reflected both the then interest in fostering the links between historic houses and schools, and in using drama as a learning medium (Dyer, 1986:25). At the time of the Clarke Hall’s establishment as an educational resource, there were still echoes from the New Education movement that spoke for child-centredness, self-expression and learning by doing. Under this new spirit of progressivism, drama was perceived as a medium for personal development and learning while the development of the Theatre in Education (TIE) movement was at its most expansive phase. Within this frame museum education did not remain unaffected. Influenced by Dorothy Heathcote, one of the pioneers of Drama in Education in U.K. who was teaching at the University of Newcastle at the time,

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1 It was one of the first smaller houses in England to be listed as a building of historic architectural interest. Today it is the only house of its period and style in the Wakefield district (http://www.wakwfield.gov.uk/community/museumsarts/clarke.htm, last accessed on 5th Jan. 2002)

2 The information are provided by Tony Stevens (former Director of Studies in Clarke Hall) in Using Museums for primary and secondary schools and reviewed by the current Education Officer Margaret Beaumont.
Clarke Hall experimented with many dramatic approaches. The Hall’s staff, by taking also into account that the class teachers are the ones that know primarily the learning needs of their students and are aware of the school’s curriculum, intended to make the class teachers responsible for devising activities for the class’s museum visit. The museum educators’ input focused on advising and supporting the teachers to prepare the session, and then during the museum visit, on enabling the maximum educational use of the hall. Clarke Hall’s orientation as an educational resource influenced by the developments at the time might be reflected in the comments of the former director of Clarke Hall, Tony Stevens:

“... In the past two years, in conjunction with Dorothy Heathcote of the University of Newcastle, experimental work with educational drama has been carried out with children and students. [...] This has caused the Clarke Hall staff to reconsider their methods of work and following in-service work with teachers, on residential courses and on preparation sessions, an increasing number of visits are being made where true educational drama is being used as an effective method." (Stevens, 1981:32)

Clarke Hall’s use as an educational museum that provides living history programmes for schools was consistent over the last decades\(^3\). As estimated by the museum in 1997 approximately 6000 pupils visit the Clarke Hall every year from the area of Yorkshire and Greater Manchester (Internal Document, 1997). The most common format of visit provided for school classes is a five hours visit in the Clarke Hall were the children participate in a living history programme and are actively engaged in hands-on or any other activities set in advance with the museum educator and the class teacher. The activities might be entirely related to the subject of history\(^4\) or combine a cross-curriculum focus. The programmes developed also vary in terms of the story line, the number of actors that participate in the programme and the degree of children’s participation.

\(^3\) The term living history will be used here as it encompasses both theatre and drama programmes that have been developed in the museum.

\(^4\) The children are usually engaged in activities such as preparing meals using recipes of the time, cooking on the spit, spinning, weaving and making butter.
Primary schools are the main audience in Clarke Hall but not the only one. Secondary schools also visit the Hall either to participate in a living history session led by the museum staff or to follow their own agenda such as enacting plays, poetry and prose of the times (Interview, Beamount, 2002). The Hall also organises open days for the wider public and community groups. Since January 2002, a new interpretation centre opened that hosts exhibitions related to the history of the setting and the local history. It is believed that the new interpretive centre will enhance the historic work in the house and accommodate demonstrations, interactive exhibitions and artists in residence\(^5\).

\(^5\) The information is provided by the museum staff. Also provided online at http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/community/museumsarts/clarke_refurb.htm. Last accessed on 17/07/2002
The case study event

The event selected as a case study for this research is a two hours session that has been developed at Clarke Hall on a sporadic basis. It is different from the five-hours living history visits that are usually organised at Clarke Hall in terms of the storyline, the objectives, the nature of the teachers' participation and the activities the children are involved with. It was selected as a case study due to its educational focus and particular format. In comparison to other events/living history programmes, which were observed within the context of this research, the case study event was the only one that attempted to encourage the children's participation beyond the hands-on activities and integrated into its format a theatrical character. The event, partly funded by the Local Education Authority, focuses on the subject of literacy and is offered for both Key Stage One and Two primary schools. In terms of its funding support it is considered as an indirect continuation of a previous initiative, taken in Autumn term 2001 by Clarke Hall and the Wakefield Education Action Zone (E A Z), to raise the standards in literacy for year 6 classes of certain schools in the area.

The structure, the storyline and the objectives of the programme were initially devised by Margaret Beaumont, the deputy director of Clarke Hall, and later revised by all members of the programme as the performances continue and receive informal feedback by the class teachers. During the planning of the programme there was a very distinctive line drawn between fact and fiction in order to devise a fictional scenario that could be based on historical facts: the event takes place in the year 1680. Known as the Restoration period (1660-80), the years of Charle's II reign were characterised by a relaxation of the Puritan morality and excitement for new fashions, arts and entertainment. Within the fictional context the schoolchildren are in the role of entertainers (poets, writers, musicians, storytellers) that are on the way to London to perform for the King. Unexpectedly, they arrive at Clarke Hall to rest. During their visit to Clarke Hall they meet five characters: the owner of the house (Priscilla Clarke— the role is based on a real character) and her two cousins, a soldier (William Titus) who is searching for someone who stole a lantern, and a traveller (Nathaniel Marsh) who is asking for work at Clarke Hall and has amongst his possessions a lantern. At some point
the children are divided into groups to perform tasks according to their role. The visit ends with a "dramatic debate" between the children that argue that the traveller is the thief the soldier is looking for and the children who defend him from the accusations.

All the professionals performing have teaching backgrounds and they are either working on a full time basis at the museum or being contracted for the specific programme. Margaret Beaumont, who is in the role of the mistress of the house, has taught at the museum for over 20 years. Paul Mackintosh, who performs in the fictional role of the seventeenth century soldier, is a history teacher and member of the English Civil War Society who works on a full time basis in the museum. Kevin Walker, who is in the role of the traveller, is an ex Head teacher and currently a professional storyteller. Joe Walters and Margaret Denvars are also teachers specialising in poetry and music. They are especially contracted for the programme performing in the fictional role of Priscilla’s cousins.

A briefing session with all class teachers that have booked the programme takes place two months in advance. The teachers are informed about the structure of the day, the educational objectives and potential of the programme, and are provided with supportive material and ideas for a preparatory session so that the class will visit the museum being in role of 17th century entertainers. The distinction between fiction and historical facts is highlighted as a point that should be made clear to the children during the preparatory session to avoid misconceptions, while emphasis is placed on the children's costumes and their arrival in Clarke Hall being aware of their fictional role. As the main objectives of the programme are focused on literacy, historical knowledge of the 17th century it is not set as a requirement for the participating classes.

The event’s format
As stated in the introduction of this thesis, the case study event in Clarke Hall is selected for its participatory format. In contrast to other "museum theatre" programmes that encourage the children’s arrival in costume and participation in hands-on tasks, the selected case study event advocates the children’s active verbal participation in the event.
The author of the event intended to design a programme that would share characteristics with the form of drama as process, in the way that it is advocated by the field of drama in education. It is intended to create a programme that would involve the children both emotionally and cognitively and would give opportunities to the participants to negotiate and renegotiate the elements of the form according to their content and purposes (O 'Toole, 1992:3). This intention is illustrated in the comments of the Deputy Director of Clarke Hall and designer of the events. Beaumont’s comments reflect her assumption that TIE programmes do not advocate a participatory format. This belief is rooted in the polarisation that used to characterise many of the drama/theatre debates at least a decade ago (see introduction, section “Various definitions and forms”):

If you look at drama in terms of theatre in education where children do not necessarily have to participate, they can come along with their own school uniform in the historic setting and watch simply what is happening. [...] It is immediate. It does engage the intellect of the audience. They can be drawn in it so much that they feel that they are part of it. However with theatre-in-education you have a passive pupil. Theatre-in-education is controlled by the people who are in the drama, in the costume and the doing. Drama in education on the other hand is where the students are active and they can alter the path of drama. It is not controlled [meaning controlled by the actors] I believe in children’s participation. (Beaumont, Deputy Director, Interview, 2002)

By taking into account the objectives of the programme, the setting, the number of teachers-actors involved and the available time for the school visit she developed a fictional scenario that functions as a skeleton of the programme without having the form of a scripted dialogue. She devised the roles, the series of events to happen and directed the event in terms of stage management. The decision for a non-scripted text is based on the belief that a scripted dialogue would diminish the element of improvisation from the fictional role-play and it would also be in opposition with the element of negotiability between the participants that characterises the process drama:

There is no script because there is not scripted role play. When you are involved with children you do not know what their responses will be. You have got to work on their responses. Although one day might be very similar to the other one, it might not be. That depends on how children respond. (Beaumont, Deputy Director, Interview, 2002)
In that context children's participation is not perceived as internalisation of the text's key points, a perception that could apply in terms of conventional theatrical plays, but as an active intervention that has the power to control what is happening. Especially in the process drama, which lacks a separate audience, the participants during the drama simultaneously evaluate their experience, connect it with their own sub-text and reorganise the experience within the dramatic event itself (O'Neill 1995:xiii). However, allowing the decision-making process to lie in children's hands, there is always the risk for the drama to shift from its original focus. This risk can be prevented with the use of the teacher-in-role technique that enables the teacher or the person in control of the medium to direct the dramatic event by being in role:

[...] It is an impassive or a passive audience that is going to rout the direction any way it goes. As a larger group they make some commitments which way should we go or what should we do now. And the adult in the drama has to go with it. You have to think on your feet. You can steer and manoeuvre your pupils in different ways. We sometimes have to do that here by offering them choices (Beaumont, Deputy Director, Interview, 2002).

Objectives of the event

The overall objective of the programme is "to provide a development of literacy for year 2 to year 6 pupils in the Wakefield Authority through the historic setting of Clarke hall" (Beaumont 2002). Although the programme takes place within historical perspective and setting, its objectives are not focused on the historical content of the programme but on the development of the children's speaking and listening skills and, as an extension of the session, on improving children's extended writing. The following comment illustrates this point:

They [meaning the children] have got to listen very carefully, they have got to communicate with us, to communicate with them and encourage pupils to have the confidence to speak out, to ask questions to respond to my questions, to give their opinions, to deduce things and to have the confidence to the whole class, teacher and adults there to say what they think. That was one of my major aims. Speaking and listening (Beaumont, Deputy Director, Interview, 2002).
During the dramatic event the children are expected to listen and respond appropriately both to the actors and to each other by formulating questions, expressing opinions and deducing conclusions (Beaumont, 2001). Within the safety of the dramatic event the participants are encouraged to develop the necessary confidence that will enable them to present their group work to their peers and to organise and express their thought within a broader social context and environment than the school classroom.

These aims are immediately linked with the current National Curriculum’s teaching objectives in the subject area of Literacy for both the key stages One and Two. The National Curriculum divides the subject of literacy into four areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Although it is highlighted that these areas should be treated by the teacher as an integrated entity, the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils are expected to develop in each area throughout each Key Stage are subdivided into certain learning targets. For example, during the Key Stage One years in the area of speaking and listening children are expected to learn to “speak clearly, thinking about the needs of their listeners [...] work in small groups and as a class, joining in discussions and making relevant points”\(^6\). Participation in a range of drama activities and working in role are suggested as educational activities within which the children “use language in imaginative ways and express their ideas and feelings”\(^7\). The link between the session’s educational objectives and the National Curriculum is also traceable in the equivalent areas of the Key Stage Two curriculum. Group interaction and dramatic techniques that encourage children to explore characters and issues and sustain different roles both on an individual and a collective level are considered as learning means via which children learn how to speak in a range of contexts and respond appropriately to others\(^8\).

\(^6\) The National Curriculum online. English, Key Stage 1, EN1 speaking and listening. Website: http://www.nc.uk.net. Last accessed on 30/07/2002
\(^7\) National Curriculum, UK. English, Key Stage 1, EN1 speaking and listening. Website: http://www.nc.uk.net. Last accessed on 16/02/05
\(^8\) National Curriculum, UK. English, Key Stage 2, EN2 speaking and listening. Website: http://www.nc.uk.net. Last accessed on 16/02/05
Related to the programme’s educational objectives in literacy is its potentiality to improve children’s writing skills. The use of the program as an opportunity for creative writing had been stressed at the preparatory visit for the class teachers. It was recommended that as a follow up work in the classroom the children could write their own version of the end of the story. Based also on the informal feedback received by class teachers, which participated in the programme last year, the dramatic event by dealing with moral and citizenship issues could be used as a basis for discussion and extended writing in the classroom. The program’s strong link to the subject of literacy can be also highlighted if one takes into account the objectives for writing composition set in the National Literacy Strategy for the year 2 – 6 classes during the second term. Particularly the linkage to the students’ expected “text level work” is traceable in the area of fictional writing. For example, the effective description of story settings and character profiles are key points that underpin the National Literacy Framework for all year groups at this time of the school year.

Potent links can be also traced between the content, the format of the programme, and the subjects of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship. Reflecting on moral, social, and cultural issues, facing challenges and taking action, debating issues and thinking “about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs” are some of the key points that Key Stage Two children should be taught within the subject of PSHE. The museum professionals being aware of the limited time available for the subject PSHE tight timetable and by receiving positive feedback from the class teachers intended to integrate in the programme the aforementioned social, moral, cultural and citizenship dimensions. Thus, the participants were invited to work in groups, to consider aspects of justice in the 17th century and to participate actively in a moral debate:

9 Only the second term’s objectives are taken into account as the program takes place during the second school term (January – April)

10 The National Literacy Strategy’s framework is structured around three areas: the “word level work” that includes phoenics, spelling and vocabulary, the “sentence level work” which involves grammar and punctuation and third the “text level work” which refers to comprehension and composition (Dfes, 2002:6)
The programme underpins the history, the literacy and the very strongly personal, social, moral, cultural education and citizenship education. These particular aspects that are not fully integrated in the school’s curriculum and teachers’ are expected to do and that is the issues of citizenship, the issues of moral education, social and cultural education. Here the cultural aspect is connected with a period of time that is quite different from the 20th century culture. How that compares to what is going on in the 17th century, about putting people in prison because they found in possession of a lantern that once was stolen and having to stay in a prison for a month, when the magistrate comes to see whether they are guilty or not. There are comparisons to make. It is social education in terms of real group collaboration working together. (Beaumont, 2002, interview extract)

Concluding remarks
This section introduced the case study event in association with the museum’s agenda and in particular in relation to the objectives and format of the event, as these are perceived by the “author” of the event. Clarke Hall, having a long history in the use of educational drama and theatre within the environment of a heritage site, developed an event that seems to share similarities with the drama as process and is immediately linked to the schools’ official curriculum. To what extent, however, would the author’s perception of the event be compatible with the school groups’ perception of the event? The following section will describe the schools’ agenda (objectives, expectations) in regard to the museum visit and the participation in the theatrical event in order to provide a first insight into the compatibility of the author’s-reader’s agenda and a basis for the examination of the school groups’ “meaning making” following their participation in the event.
The Classes' agenda
The case study consists of two different school visits that took place on the 29th of January (S school) and 8th of March 2002 (G school). Following negotiations with the classes and head teachers and to protect the children's right to anonymity, information that could identify the participants will be concealed. Thus the letter S will stand for the primary school of the year 6 class and the letter G for the school of the year 4 class. Accordingly the participants' names throughout the study are fictional. Classroom-based observations and interviews were conducted with the children, the class teachers and the head teachers to provide an insight into the classes' prior-to-the-event agenda.

The S School - Background information
The year 6 class from the S. C. E. controlled junior mixed school was the first one that participated in the research. The school is located half a mile from the centre of the town Ossett in the area of Wakefield. In the school year 2001/2 the school had 220 pupils on roll of which 6 pupils were enrolled with statements of Special Education Needs (SEN). All pupils have English as their first language and are of white ethnic origin. The pupils come from various socio-economic backgrounds and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is 16.

The school aims by establishing schemes of work and adopting approaches to teaching in line with the National Curriculum to maintain and extend the children's progress as well as keeping a balance of all the subjects (Head teacher, 2002, interview). Attainment in 1998 at the end of Key Stage 2 was above average in English and close to the national average in mathematics and science (Ofsted, 1999:10). The pupils' attainment in the subject of English seems to be one of the school's strengths as also in 2001 national tests 79% of pupils that achieved Level 4 or above was in excess of the national average 75% and the LEA average 72.9% (Department for Education and Skills, Performance tables 2001).

The number of pupils entitled to free school meals has decreased as in the 1999 Ofsted report 261 pupils were on role from which 43 were eligible for free school meals (Ofsted 1999:34).
The class

According to the school’s policy the year 6 children are divided into classes in terms of their ability in each subject. The year 6 class that visited Clarke Hall and participated in the research was the group that consisted of the below average and lower group in literacy. The class comprised of twenty-seven children; fifteen boys and twelve girls. During the literacy hour two classroom assistants are in the class, one of whom supports exclusively the five children that belong to the lower group of ability in literacy. As the interviews and the children’s participation in the event would be video recorded the children were asked for their own and their parents’ consent to participate in the research. Ten children gained the parental consent and participated in the interviews conducted before the museum visit.

Expectations and the official curriculum

Educational visits in museums are organised by the school for each year group in association with the specific periods they study in the subject of history. Every year, two classes visit Clarke hall in connection either with the study of Tudor times or with local history. This year the school decided that a year four group should visit Clarke Hall in relation to the study of Tudors and the lower ability in literacy year 6 class should participate in the Clarke Hall’s programme that has been claimed to promote the links between literacy and history.

The decision was made by the school’s literacy co-ordinator and in retrospect was endorsed by the schoolteacher. The school, following the national targets for the increase of standards in education, has set a target of “having 80 per cent of pupils at the nationally-expected level in English by 2002” (Ofsted 1999:6). Although the proportion of students that attained the national standards in literacy (Level 4) in 1998 was above the

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12 The decision for the visit was perceived more as an opportunity offered by the Clarke Hall than an active pursuit on behalf of the school. During the interview the class teacher emphasizes this point with her tone of voice: “I have to say we did not select Clarke Hall for our visit. Clarke Hall contacted us […] It was not something we selected. It was offered and we took it” (Class teacher 2002, interview)
average, the achievement specifically in writing was average. Thus for this year the target for the school improvement was to work for level 5 and beyond in the written exams. However, as the majority of the children in the specific class had been evaluated at the end of the autumn term with respect to their writing at level two, the teacher felt that they had to accomplish a lot in order to fulfil the school’s expectations. The selection of the specific year group to participate in the Clarke Hall project was made on the expectation that the first hand experience and the active participation in drama would stimulate the children’s imagination and as a result would improve the group’s writing skills and enable the school to achieve its literacy targets:

My group is the one with the lowest ability. And this is one of reasons we are going to Clarke Hall. Sometimes lower ability groups find it difficult to visualise things or imagine things and we think that the actual experience will help them with their imagination and the role play, the drama things will have to do that as well. I am sure they will gain very vivid experiences. They need extra stimulation for their imagination to improve their writing for the exams (Class teacher, 2002, interview).

Although the time of the visit was not deliberately scheduled to coincide with the class’s curriculum in literacy, in the event it turned out that the programme corresponded to what was being taught in the curriculum at that period of time. The class’s half term planning in English, based on the National Literacy Strategy, focused on the teaching of fiction and poetry. The visit to Clarke Hall was located approximately in the middle of a two-week unit on the genre of historical fiction and writing, and was integrated by the teacher into the class’s official curriculum. During the week before the visit the class established what historical fiction is by identifying how published authors present a clear point of view about a period in history and introduce the characters, plot and setting in a plausible and realistic way. The aim of this work was for the children to write their own historical fiction based on their experience in Clarke hall. According to the teacher, the programme would function as a real grounding from which the pupils would draw elements to compose their extended writing.

13 “Luckily it fits exactly with what we are doing at the moment, story writing and particularly the history genre. We are looking at different fiction genres. If it was another term we would do Shakespeare or non fiction writing, it would be more difficult to fit” (Teacher 2002, interview).
I think it will help them with the historic comment because it will give them a real experience to draw from. Real writers produce more from the actual experience. And the children might need something like that to be able to draw from within (Teacher, interview, 2002).

On a writing level, during the autumn and the beginning of the spring term, the group had worked on the building up of narrative writing in terms of the introduction of the characters and setting, the techniques of introducing a problem, building up an event and resolution. The current focus on the writing composition was on the use of dialogue. The programme was expected to provide the pupils with an experience that would involve them emotionally and conversationally. Through a planned brainstorming and shared writing session based on the pupils' feedback the teacher intended on a general level to advance the pupils' writing skills and more specifically to facilitate their understanding of dialogue as a means of portraying the characters and enhancement of the text.

I want them to involve their feelings and their reactions because we can bring them back and chat about how did they respond about and how did they feel. It is important. We are looking at dialogue and how it enhances the speech, so they will be ale to draw in the conversations in Clarke Hall and built in them (Class teacher, 2002, interview).

The teacher's expectations regarding the visit were also shaped by her participation in the Clarke Hall meeting for the schoolteachers a month before the school visit.

Being aware of the aims and the structure of the programme, as presented in Clarke Hall's preparatory material and teachers' meeting, she commented that the programme would be an opportunity for the pupils to practice their speaking, listening and social skills "through a structured experience where they can all interact" (school teacher 2002,interview). She considered that such an experience was of particular importance for the specific group as there were not many opportunities offered within the school context to practice speaking and listening. She commented that although speaking and listening are set targets in the curriculum there is not enough provision for the practice of speaking and listening in the school classrooms due to the national literacy strategy, which shifted
the focus onto reading and writing. She hoped that the children's participation in Clarke Hall's programme would fill partially the curriculum gap:

Since the National literacy strategy came in there is little or no provision for speaking and listening. The focus has shifted very much to writing and reading. It is a shame because the speaking and listening has been pushed down to an extent and children do not get as much experience of speaking and listening now as they used to before the National Literacy strategy was brought in. I think that participating in the Clarke Hall project, the speaking and listening will be developed. It sounds promising for that (school teacher 2002, interview).

The expectation of practising the speaking and listening skills was also linked with the anticipation that the social side of the visit and the interaction through the programme would contribute to the pupils' development of social skills:

The social education, ...that's something that a lot of children might need. They spend a lot of time in front of a computer and the t.v. and it's amazing how many of them have really developed their social, speaking and listening skills. Because they [meaning the children] do not go away with their children to give them an opportunity where they can all interact, practice the speaking and listening (school teacher 2002, interview).

Previous experiences
The year 6 class had visited Clarke Hall two years previously in connection with the subject of Tudor history. They participated in a five hours programme that focused on the subject of history while the activities in which children were involved were decided in advance by the schoolteacher and the museum educator. Knowing that the year 6 class had visited Clarke Hall two years ago I intended to find out what the children remembered from the previous visit as that could be a parameter that would form their expectations about the current visit. For that purpose seven children were asked on an individual basis to comment on what they remembered from the visit while the same question was later posed in the focus group interviews. The following section extracted from my notes kept when, during the preliminary stages of the research, I participated in the five hours programme, is presented here (in italics) to provide an insight into the structure of the visit and my personal memories as a participant:
Initially the school group arrives at the museum dressed in costume and being in role, according to the school’s preparation for the visit. They knock at the door of the Hall. The door opens after a slight delay and Mistress Priscilla, the owner of the house, welcomes the children in role. They gather around the table where there is an answer/question session that establishes the role and the mood. Then they move to the dining room for an answer/question session, this time focused on the objects and the furniture. The children are divided into groups. Each group, working with a teacher or support staff, is involved in activities in different rooms in the Hall. The tasks involved vary from observing and drawing to creating menus, making butter, sugar, preparing the class lunch. They are mainly hands on activities. The “as if” context usually is that the owner of the house wants to test the new servants’ (the schoolchildren who are asking for a job) ability to perform the tasks given to them in order to decide if she is going to employ them. They all have lunch at the kitchen. Following that they gather at the room upstairs where Priscilla tells them a story and shows to them a secret cupboard relevant to the story.

All the responses elicited in relation to the earlier visit (both on an individual and a group basis) shared a common element: they were focused on the activities in which the children were involved: “I spin the chicken and did an apple pie”, “I made sweets and then I remember I drew the decoration on the ceiling”, “I remember we were making the beds”, “…played an instrument”, “I made the bed upstairs”, “spin the chicken and then made ginger bread”, “dancing”. The responses were immediate and spontaneous. With probing, some of the respondents remembered Mrs Priscilla as “a lady with a dress” or “the owner of the house” and “the secret cupboard in the chamber room” without, however, making any connection with the storytelling that took place during the visit. The emphasis placed by the children on the activities they were involved in might indicate that active sensual participation remains vivid in the children’s long-term memory. Nevertheless, these memories did not shape the children’s expectations in regard to their museum visit due to the class’s preparatory session that is described in the following sections.
Context for interpretation

In order to gain an insight into the children’s prior-to-the visit background, group interviews were conducted. Although two group interviews were initially arranged to be conducted, due to the class’s tight timetable it was only possible to conduct one group interview while the rest of the research participants were interviewed in pairs at the class’s convenient time. Visual material including houses and figures from the 17th century was used as starting point in combination with the stance of the “one who does not know” to elicit the children’s responses in regard to the relevant period of time.

The year 6 group responded initially to the visual material by making assumptions regarding the status of the houses (“it is old”, “it might be rich or poor”, “the one in the middle looks nice”, “maybe it is haunted”) while with further observation they perceived features such as the “diamond widows” and the “external supportive beams”14 as indicative of architectural features of Tudor houses, recalling (as they said) their history learning in year four about Tudors15. The visual material triggered the children’s cognitive background about the period and stimulated further discussion.

The first topic that emerged from this discussion was related to the division between poor and rich. The entire group was well aware of the difference between the wealthy upper social class and the poor people in Tudor time. They characterised the rich people as “mean”, “snobbish”, “selfish” that “did not care about the poor and people at the street”. As the interview progressed the children’s comments focused on Henry VIII and the story with his wives. This topic also emerged in the interviews conducted in pairs. The Tudors were characterised as “severe because they were chopping people’s heads

14 The quotations used here are taken from the children’s comments in the group interviews.
15 Research in children’s understanding of historical time has indicated that 9-10 years old children and above can assess the actual dates of visual material (pictures) by relating them to their personal background historical knowledge while the qualitative descriptions of time that characterise younger children are substituted with dates or specific periods (Barton & Levstik, 1996:437-438).
off'. However, further probing for more historical context did not elicit more information.

Also, a topic that emerged in the children's comments was the severe justice system. They explained that if somebody was found guilty for a crime then they would punish him by using the guillotine. The children that did not respond verbally made gestures of chopping heads off. Joe compared the system with nowadays: "Nowadays he would be taken in custody and then in jail. The jury makes the decision and if you are guilty you go to jail [...] I think they had a court but not like the ones today" and then Robert drew a parallel between the justice system in Tudor times and the "chair" in U.S.: "He might have the same treatment in America because they might put him in the chair".

Overall, the children might not be aware of the 17th century and the specific historical context related to the time within which the theatre event will take place but they demonstrated that they were aware of the historical period of Tudors. They seemed aware of the buildings' architectural characteristics at the time and their responses demonstrated a dislike towards Tudors. Especially rich Tudors were perceived as "snobbish" and "mean" while the severe justice system was prominent in children's responses. The children's preconceptions about the Tudors and the severe justice system were expected to play a significant role in the children's interpretation of the theatrical event in Clarke Hall since these are topics immediately linked to the case study event's storyline.

Preparatory session

The same morning before the museum visit the teacher prepared the students for the visit through a "role play" session as it was suggested to the class teachers by the Clarke Hall staff. The aim of the preparatory session was to endow the children with group roles and to prepare them for the fictional context of the event. The class teacher followed the Clarke Hall instructions and added extra improvisation elements that would help the students to build into the fictional context of the role and to increase their personal motivation for acting in role. The session was also integrated in the class's teaching plan.
(literacy hour) aiming to improve the children’s skills in writing dialogues by showing action and using adverbs.

Following the Clarke Hall suggestions “[...] encourage discussion about life and what it might have been like” the session started with a brainstorming session regarding the everyday life in the period of time after Tudors. Three questions were asked: “What sort of jobs did people have?”, “How would people travel in these days?”, “what sort of clothes would they wear?” Most of the pupils were willing to reply perhaps reflecting upon their previous visit to Clarke Hall two years ago. The children mentioned the jobs that they either actually did at their previous visit in Clarke Hall or they imagined from that period of time: “make flour”, “made sugar cubes”, “cleaning the house”, “collecting wood for the fire”, “chimney cleaning”. The class teacher extended the Clarke Hall’s preparatory suggestions by using improvisation with dialogue and still images. First, by having the role of the facilitator outside the drama herself, she created the background and invited the children to think what job they would like to have for themselves:

Now close your eyes and imagine you live in the S village. You have to work everyday. Some of you work on the land-ploughing, sowing seeds, [...] some of you mend shoes, spin and weave and help the blacksmith shoe horses and help the potter make clay pots. You will see other people from the village. What job would you like to have?

Following the introduction and contextualization of roles the class teacher gave the signal that prompted the children to act as if they are in role:

“When I say “action” you stop being you and start being that person”

The children, although they have not participated in a drama session in the past apart from Mark who is a member of a private drama club (as it was revealed from the interviews the previous day and the interview with the teacher), stood up and started improvising doing certain jobs. The most confident ones initiated the element of dialogue. The class teacher gave the signal of freezing the action in a position that indicated the jobs the children were performing in fiction. By keeping the whole class in
still images they said in turns to the group what was their fictional job. The girls had mainly chosen domestic jobs while most of the boys were blacksmiths and farmers.

More information about the historical time of the event in Clarke Hall was provided when the children’s action stopped. By following the Clarke Hall suggestions the teacher did not provide an extensive historical context, as history was not the objective of the session. Via narration she also endowed the children with their roles while the shift from the narration to the fictional context within which the class teacher was also in role was explained and clearly signalled: the narration stopped and the class teacher changed her tone of voice as if she was in role. She addressed the children in the imaginative context in first-person and informed them indirectly about the background context of their role:

It is 300 years ago, after the plague and fire of London. [...] People entertained themselves in local festivals [...] you are the S players that provide entertainment for the rest of the village. You are those people back in time. [...] But all of you here have great talents and skills as well as musicians, poets. [...] Last Christmas you were very busy entertaining [...] let’s still pretend that we are people living in these times and that I’ve gathered you all together in my little cottage after a hard day’s work

In order to build ownership in the role and to receive feedback regarding the children’s willingness to go along with the fiction she asked them to confirm the supplied information:

Last Christmas there was a fine gentleman that was travelling to London and he was absolutely astonished with your performance. Do you remember him? Do you remember the clothes he was wearing? When he went to London he told the king about you and he wants you to perform for the king.

Following the children’s positive responses, the class teacher allocated the roles by addressing each child individually:

“Master Robert I apologise for leaving you last. He had listened to some of the tales you told in the festival and he wants you to perform as a storyteller”
From this point on the preparation session continued without following the lines of the museum’s suggestions. The children, divided into groups, were asked for their consent to perform for the king. The pupils unanimously agreed enthusiastically. The drama progressed in pairs by setting a constraint on the children’s roles: they were asked to improvise a dialogue where one wants to travel to London for the performance and the other does not because he will have to leave his job. The class teacher as a facilitator from outside suggested to them that they select one of the roles and think about their motivation for their decision. The children for ten minutes improvised their dialogue. The ones that did not feel comfortable improvised in-groups of four. At the end, the class teacher asked them to perform their improvised dialogue. Two groups felt uncomfortable to perform their dialogue in front of their peers while the majority of the pairs seemed to enjoy the whole process by adding movement to the words. The children’s responses seemed also to have taken into account the historical context of the time confirming, up to a certain extent, the patterns that emerged earlier during the group interviews in regard to the children’s perception of Tudors. They incorporated into the dialogue their poor status as working people in opposition to the rich and luxurious life that they would see in the palace by visiting the King. To what extent though did the preparatory session shape the children’s expectations for the museum visit?

By following the school class in their journey to Clarke Hall I had the opportunity to ask them further questions in an informal way regarding their role and the purpose of their travelling. Although the children had such a strong agenda from their previous visit, as it was indicated in the focus groups interviews, their memories of their previous visit did not shape their expectation for the current visit. The preparatory drama session with their class teacher the same morning before the visit was the main parameter that shaped their expectations not only about their fictional role but also their expectations concerning the format. Being aware that this was a preparatory part for their visit they expected that the same form of drama would be continued in Clarke hall:

Claire: We will continue acting as we did earlier today. We are supposed to entertain the king...[...]

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In the fictional context they were aware of their role as entertainers and the “as if” scenario of having London as their destination. In their responses most of the children mentioned the background of their role such as his/her motivation for the journey, his/her working and social background, giving the impression that they had not been simply endowed with a role but they had built a character. Steven’s response when asked who is he in the role, illustrates this point:

“I am a blacksmith. This is my everyday job for my living....and occasionally I am an entertainer. I write stories and tell them in weddings and celebrations. Now, we are travelling to London ...we pretend we do of course to perform for the king. I wanted to go because I thought it was a good opportunity to meet the king but my partner did not want to go because we had a lot to do in the shop”

Summary
The S school’s decision to participate in the theatrical event at the museum was rooted in the class’s agenda in regard to the subject of literacy. Although the class teacher recognized the merits regarding the practicing of speaking and listening skills, the museum visit was mainly integrated in the class’s agenda in regard to benefits it would have on improving the children’s writing skills in the genre of historical fiction. Thus, the class teacher valuing the children’s participation in the theatrical event as a learning means placed particular emphasis on the class’s preparation for the visit. She took into account the guidelines and suggestions provided by Clarke Hall and devised a preparatory session that endowed the children with fictional roles. Although the children had visited Clarke Hall two years ago within the context of the subject of history and they had vivid memories in regard to their hands-on involvement at the museum, the preparatory session re-shaped their expectations for the visit: they would participate actively within a fictional context. The children also demonstrated a specific agenda for interpretation of the event from a historical perspective. Being aware of the social division in Tudor times and the severe system of justice they expressed a negative opinion for the wealthy Tudors. The extent to which the children’s prior-to-the-event understanding and preconceptions influenced the children’s interpretation of the event is discussed in the following chapter.
The particularity of the S school’s agenda is highlighted in comparison with the G school’s agenda that almost a month later also participated in the event, while the role that each school’s agenda had in the children’s “meaning making” of the event is illustrated in the following chapter.
The G School - Background information

The G School is a mixed school that in the year 2001 had 26116 pupils on roll. Five pupils were enrolled having statements of SEN while the number of pupils with SEN without statements was raised to 58. The school has a high turn over of pupils in comparison to similar schools in the area that have a stable population. According to the last inspection report, few pupils have English as an additional language and the vast majority of students come from the local area where the socio economic circumstances are less advantageous than nationally (Ofsted, 2000:7). A portion of students is accommodated in council estates while the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 19%.

In the 1998 inspection report the school was found to have “serious weaknesses in leadership and management” (Ofsted, 2000:7). Three years later the school received the “School achievement award” from the DfEE as a new inspection report revealed significant improvements in the school and in standards in English, Maths and Science between 1997 and 2000 (School prospectus (b), 2002:15). “Good leadership”, “good quality teaching”, “a challenging curriculum” and a “genuine partnership with parents” were pointed as the main parameters for the school’s improvement (York, 2001:22). Although overall there was an improvement since the last inspection report, the children’s performance at the national exams was below the national and the Local Education Authority average. In the Key stage 2 test results in 2001, the percentage of pupils that achieved Level 4 in English was 65%, in Maths 56% and in science 76% when the national averages in the same subjects were accordingly 75%, 70.7% and 87.1% and the LEA average 72.9%, 70.7%, and 87.1% (Department for Education and Skills, Performance tables 2001).

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16 This is the total number of pupils including juniors and infants.

17 This information is provided by Paulin Thorburn. She is the Education Officer at the Local Education Authority who is responsible for the area of Ossett and Gawthorpe.

18 The percentage is quite high in comparison to the 11.6% percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in S School (Paulin Thorburn 2002, personal communication)
The class

There is only one year 4 group class in the school. The class comprised 26 children, 14 boys and 12 girls. The majority of the children live within the school’s catchment area and have a poor socio-economic background. English is the first language for all the children apart from a Turkish boy who moved to England five months ago. Two children are registered as special education needs and five children are considered as having learning difficulties in the majority of the subjects. In the classroom there is a permanent teaching assistant that in literacy and maths supports the children with learning and special educational needs on a group basis, and for the other subjects she offers support for the whole class on an individual basis. Occasionally, when considered as necessary by the class teacher, a second teaching assistant supports the lower ability pupils in an individual basis.

The class teacher is a newly qualified one that had been teaching for the last two years. She started her teaching career with the current pupils, as she had also been their teacher during the last year (year 3). Being familiar with the learning needs of the class for more than one year she comments that, although there is a wide range of abilities in the class, the performance of the majority of the children is either below or approaches the average. It was the children’s below the average performance in maths (according to the National Curriculum standards) that placed the teacher’s and the head teacher’s focus on maths and numeracy for the class’s future improvement.

Expectations and the official curriculum

In the last inspection report the school received positive comments regarding the school’s provision for educational trips and participation in community and cultural

19 The following extract from the Ofsted report shows the relevant comments:

"Pupils take part in a number of community events ...this increases their self-confidence and develops their social and citizenship awareness. The school’s provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. [...] A wide range of exciting cultural and educational outings and trips are arranged during the school year. These include visits to theatre, a sculpture park, a Victorian museum and a Viking village" (Ofsted, 2000:18)
events (Ofsted, 2000:18). In terms of museum visits the school targets to carry out two museum visits per year for each class. Within the year 2001/2 the year four group had visited the Transport Museum in Leeds during the autumn term and planned to visit Clarke Hall during the spring term in relation to the subject of history. To what extent the school values educational visits is reflected in the school’s policy regarding the charges for educational visits and school journeys, according to which, the families that receive social/financial benefits are exempted from the charges for school trips that take place in school hours or are related to the National Curriculum (School prospectus (b), 2002:19). It was due to this policy that the year four group managed to visit the Clarke Hall. The teacher’s comment during an informal discussion during the playtime illustrates this point:

The majority of the children come from poor families that either cannot afford to pay the cost of the museum visits or do not realise the educational value of such kind of trips. For the Clarke Hall visit the school had to pay for the expenses for almost the half of the children. We do not want to exclude anyone from this educational trip (Teacher, informal communication, 2002)

The decision for the year four class to visit Clarke Hall had been undertaken by the head teacher in co-operation with the class teacher. The head teacher has insisted upon school visits to Clarke Hall as she considers it a “unique resource” (Head teacher, interview, 2002). As this year only one class was offered a visit to Clarke hall, she selected for the visit the year four group. Her decision was based on the fact that this class had not visited Clarke Hall in the past and on the belief that the visit would be beneficial for them in relation to their learning about Tudors. Reflecting on her own experience as a class teacher she thought that a first hand experience within a historic setting can enhance the children’s historical understanding and consequently their attainment in the subject of history. Although she was also aware that the Clarke Hall’s project this time was interrelated with the subject of literacy, still she believed that the programme would have an educational value and assist children to contextualise their historical understanding.

As a class teacher I have seen the benefits for the pupils when they visit an original historical site. Clarke Hall is a unique resource. We are very fortunate at this area to be able to offer our students the opportunity to experience how life was 300 years ago. [...]
think that the year 4 class should not miss the chance of a living history programme. It will help them to improve their understanding of history and to progress in the subject (Head teacher 2002, interview)

The class teacher also shared the same point of view about the focus of the visit and the value of a historical resource. Her following comment reflects that point and also indicates how strong is the school’s agenda in relation to the historical focus. Although the teacher was informed that the programme was related to literacy she decided to pursue the visit. Her comment expresses also dissatisfaction about the Clarke Hall’s inflexibility to offer them a historical programme and at the same time creates a basis for discussion regarding the school’s inflexibility to tailor their literacy planning in order to take also advantage of the literacy focus of the programme:

For us, the visit to Clarke Hall links to the teaching of Tudors and not to literacy. We cannot link it to literacy as we are doing adjectives at the moment. We knew that the programme would not have a historic focus but we did not want to miss the opportunity of visiting a historical resource. Unfortunately the Clarke hall could not offer us a different programme so we had to go for the literacy one (Teacher, 2002, interview).

According to the year 3 and 4 classes’ half term planning, the subject of Tudors was taught in thematic units for five weeks. The visit was going to take place during the fourth week after the pupils had been taught about Henry VIII, Tudor food, crime and punishment and the distinction between poor and rich Tudors. The teacher expected that the Clarke Hall experience would be a source for reflection on what the pupils learnt during the term and function as a resource for the teaching of the last unit about Tudor buildings. The following teacher’s response during the interview demonstrates her expectations regarding the class’s curriculum and also the emphasis given on the setting itself rather than on the drama event:

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20 Clarke Hall is the only educational museum in the area that co-operates only with schools from the area of Wakefield. Thus it has a limited number of programmes to offer for each school. So, in order to enable schools to carry out a visit by selecting the type of program they desire they have to book two years in advance.
Visiting a historical setting is an excellent resource for the teaching of features of Tudor houses and for reflecting on their learning on Tudors (Teacher 2002, interview).

Neither the head nor the class teacher shared the literacy objectives in speaking and listening set by Clarke Hall for the project’s development. The school appeared to have a strong agenda in relation to the subject of history. The emphasis for them was the museum as a resource and the living history as a first hand experience and not the drama programme.

At the same time it would be beneficial if the children could practice their speaking and listening skills, an area which according to the head teacher’s opinion has not been covered well in the National Curriculum. The school’s attempt to increase the children’s speaking and listening skills rely on the teachers’ initiative to develop these skills during the classroom teaching without having devised a coherent speaking and listening policy.

Children’s expectations

In order to trace the children’s expectations for the museum visit two group-interviews were conducted with nine children (divided into groups of five and four) one day before the visit. Initially it was intended for the consistency of the groups to be kept similar to that of the groups in which the children were going to participate at Clarke Hall. However, due to the lack of parental consent for video recording for all the participants and the class’s restricted timetable, the groups had a mixed synthesis. The questions posed during the interviews and the visual material, used as a prop, were similar to the interviews conducted with the G school.

The year four class children were going to visit Clarke Hall for first time. A letter was sent to the children’s parents informing them that the visit to Clarke Hall museum was related to the classroom’s study on the Tudors period and that the children had to be dressed in costume appropriate to that period of time21. Hence, since also a preparatory

21 The following extracts are taken from the school letter given to the parents:
session for the museum visit did not take place in the classroom, the children's expectations were mainly shaped by the information provided from the school letter and their previous experiences from museum visits. Thus, two main expectations emerged in both group interviews.

Although the dramatic event at Clarke hall was related chronologically to the Restoration period, the children reflecting upon the information provided by the school expected “to be dressed as Tudors” for their museum visit. The children’s responses were elicited either when asked to comment about their museum visit or when presented with portraits from the 17th century. The following extracts illustrate the children’s responses from both group interviews:

Group 1
Darcee: (pointing at the picture) this is a Victorian.., no it's a Tudor, he wears a collar. Yes, that is what we are going to wear for Clarke Hall to be Tudors. Yes, it looks exactly like what we are going to wear.

Group 2
Charlotte: we are going to be dressed as Tudors tomorrow
Robert: The boys have to wear long white shocks
Zoe: they send us a letter that the girls have to wear long black skirts and blouses

Perhaps, it is worth comparing the responses regarding the dressing up between the children who had or had not participated in a living history programme in a previous museum visit. From the year four-class Darcee had visited last year the Bradford Industrial Museum where, dressed up appropriately, he participated in role in the recreation of a Victorian classroom. A difference was noticed between his response and the other children’s comments when commenting about their visit to Clarke Hall. As it is...

“Miss C. class will be visiting Clarke Hall Museum in connection with work being studied as part of our topic on Tudors. [...] The children will travel by coach, dressed in costume relevant to the period of history” (extract from the letter)

22 It was only before getting on the bus that the teacher having read the preparatory material given by the Clarke Hall realized that the programme was related to the Restoration period and not to Tudors.
highlighted above in italics, Charlotte expects “to be dressed up as a Tudor” without however knowing that the dressing up is associated with her being in role. Whereas Darcee, having been in role in the past as Victorian school child, when he responds about the dressing up (see above extract), he prefers to use the expression “to be a Tudor” rather than to be dressed as a Tudor.

The children that did not have a similar museum visiting experience in the past expected to “see people dressed up as Tudors” and to “listen to the professionals talking”. The influence of the children’s previous museum visits and living history experiences was also indicated in their expectations in regard to their visit at Clarke Hall. In the first group when a photograph from Clarke Hall was presented to find out what the group would think or expect to find out in Clarke Hall just by looking at its exterior, the children commented that it is “old” because of its wooden door. Based on the feature of big chimneys they thought that it is a factory or a mill. Only Nathan, who visited Clarke Hall with his previous school, recognised the building. When asked what he remembered from his previous visit, he referred to the task he performed during the visit as (“we did sugar”) confirming the pattern that emerged from the S schoolchildren’s responses. The following extract illustrates this point and also shows what the rest of the group thought of Clarke Hall just by looking at its exterior:

Extract, group interview G class

R: What do you think about this picture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maikl</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Nathan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It looks quite</td>
<td>It looks like a</td>
<td>It looks like an</td>
<td>Yes, big chimneys</td>
<td>I know where it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old-ish because</td>
<td>mill</td>
<td>old factory to me</td>
<td></td>
<td>is...it is in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it has a wooden</td>
<td></td>
<td>because it has</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>door</td>
<td>Big chimneys</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

118
Wakefield. I have been there with my old school. We did sugar, me and my teacher

When asked what do they think they will find inside if the door opens, only Nathan who had been in Clarke Hall in the past and Darcee were familiar with the use of living history in museums\(^{23}\), responded that they will find people “dressed up as Tudors”. The specific reference also to the period of Tudors was based on the information received by the class teacher that in tomorrow’s trip they will be dressed up as Tudors. The following quotation presents Darcee’s response:

| Researcher: If this door opens what do you think you will see inside? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maikl | Darcee | Joshua | Scott | Nathan |
| | Dressed up as Tudors | | | People |
| | | | | Tudors |

What makes you think that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maikl</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Nathan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because we were going there tomorrow and the other school and my old school did dressing up And Miss Child told us that we will dress up as Tudors and we have to be in best behaviour because the other school was the best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Miss Child told us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{23}\) Darcee visited Bradford Industrial Museum where he participated in role of a Victorian school child in a Victorian school classroom.
How do you know that you will find other people there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maikl</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Nathan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because they were probably live or work there and we are learning about Tudors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is illustrated in the above extract, the rest of the group did not participate at any point in the discussion. The lack of a specific agenda regarding the living history aspect of the visit was also indicated in the second group’s responses. Their expectations being shaped by their previous museum visit at the Leeds Transport Museum, their subject area in history and the information received by the class teacher (to be dressed in costume relevant to the period of Tudors) expected that they would visit a museum related to Tudor history. Thus, they expected Clarke hall to be a museum where they will “see things” and “listen to the professionals”:

Researcher: what do you expect your visit to be tomorrow?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Chelsea</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarke Hall is a museum</td>
<td></td>
<td>We will see things about Tudors</td>
<td>It is a museum about Tudor things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researcher: How do you know that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Chelsea</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because we are learning about Tudors and we are going there tomorrow</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>And we went to a museum about cars, buses and planes</td>
<td>Last time we were learning about cars, buses and planes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is possible that these expectations changed during the five minutes before the boarding on the bus as, while some children were still getting dressed in costume, the teacher explained to the class that they were going to visit Clarke Hall pretending that they were going back in time and imagining that the purpose of their traveling was to visit King Charles in London. It was explained that the historical time was after the Tudor’s time, when King Charles was on the throne. Then the teacher informed the group that in Clarke Hall they were going to form smaller groups, and read the list of names in order to let the pupils know which group they belonged to.

To trace any changes in children’s expectations, informal interviews were conducted with pairs of children (eight children in total) on the way to Clarke Hall. In order to minimise the influence that the interviews could have on shaping indirectly the children’s expectations for the visit, the interviews were conducted with a limited number of children in an informal way. When asked “where are we supposed to be going?” four children replied that they are going to Clarke Hall to see things about Tudors, while further probing to remember what the teacher had invited the class to imagine did not have any outcome. Only two children responded: “the teacher said that we are supposed to go to London to entertain the king”. This response might indicate that the children’s agenda had changed due to the last minute preparation, without however providing evidence that the children were in role expecting to participate in a drama event. If one takes into account the majority of the responses and compares with the groups’ responses during the interviews, then one could conclude that the influence that the last minute preparation had on children’s expectation was not powerful enough to reshape their initial expectations. Characteristic was a girl’s response that reflects the emphasis placed on the dressing up; she expected, even on the way to Clarke Hall, that the class was going to “do fashion modelling of Tudor clothes”.

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The social context

A new parameter however was added into the class’s agenda following the brief preparation for the visit. While the teacher was allocating the pupils into groups many pupils expressed their dissatisfaction about the constituency of their group. The groups were formed according to the teacher’s preference to create mixed gender groups and the research’s focus on the storytellers and storywriters groups. As half of the children had parental consent to participate in the research, there was a limit on the selection of children that were going to form the targeted groups. The children’s reaction could be understood if one takes into the social context of the class.

Being an observer in the class I witnessed that the social interaction within the classroom was not smooth. During the playtime there was much jostling and, during the entire three days, the class never engaged in a group game. The lack of smooth interaction was also observed in the classroom as, during the lessons, the teacher had to deal frequently with the children’s behaviour. These observations led the researcher to introduce a new element in the research methodology. The children were asked, apart from writing the names of the children that are their friends and whom they play with, also to write the names of the children that they minded being in the classroom/ did not want to be in the same group. As a result two socio-grams were drawn based on the children’s responses that indicated the non-homogeneous mixing within the class and explained the pupils’ reactions about the social constituency of their groups for the visit. The first gram shows that the mutually nominated children formed three main groups while the pupils with learning difficulties tended either to be isolated in the class or to gather fewer nominations. It also depicts the gender division in-groups which is further illustrated in the second gram. Girls expressed their dislike for some of the boys and vice versa while the pupil that gathers the majority of negative nominations is a child with special education needs (see Appendix 15).

The role that the class’s social profile might have had on the children’s interpretation of their experience at the museum is illustrated in the following chapter.
Context for interpretation

In order to describe the class’s agenda before their participation in the drama event and to trace any possible changes following it, observations and interviews took place related to the subject of history since it was linked to the class’s objectives for the visit. The observations took place for four weeks before the visit aiming to find out the teaching themes in the subject of history and the targeted children’s participation and responses.

The class based on the study unit “Life in Tudor times” and specifically on the schemes of work prepared by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) focused on the story of Henry VIII’s marriages and the differences between the lives of rich and poor Tudors in regard to housing, clothing, occupation and food. Initially it was planned that the history lesson that took place the same week with the visit would focus on the area of crime and punishment. However, the teacher (remembering from the preparatory session for teachers in Clarke hall that the children would be in the role of entertainers) shifted the focus of the lesson to games, entertainment and sport in order to prepare the pupils for the visit. The children were invited to compare entertainment in the present with that in Tudor times. The activity for the lesson was the planning of entertaining activities for people in a Tudors’ village.

In the two group interviews conducted to trace the children’s agenda for historical interpretation the children reflected upon their classroom learning without however making detailed references. The themes that emerged during the interviews were common for both groups.

The first theme that emerged was the story of Henry VIII and his wives. The majority of the children referred to the beheading of two wives as a proof of Henry’s “nastiness” and “horrible character”. However, none of the participants recalled the names of the wives or presented them in order or mentioned other events in Henry’s life. Although the children had produced a time line regarding Henry’s lifetime and the main events during the history lesson, when asked to locate the story in time, it was only Darcee and Robert (two of the children that were also actively involved in the question-answer session in the
classroom) that attempted to locate the story in time. The rest of the children, although they connected Henry VIII with Tudors time, located it in time qualitatively as "a long time ago".

Although food emerged as a theme in both groups, none of the participants could provide further details. Characteristically when prompted by the researcher to provide more information, children in both groups commented that although they have been studying about Tudors' food they did not remember more. Only one point emerged related to their classroom learning, that "rich people had sugar":

Researcher: you just mentioned food in Tudor times...Could you tell me what Tudor people used to eat?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Chelsea</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh yes! Sweets and cakes. Only rich people had sugar</td>
<td>Yes, it's difficult to remember</td>
<td>We have done that in history........but it I do not remember</td>
<td>Rich people eat sugar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entertainment was also a theme that emerged in both group interviews. During the interview the majority of the children mentioned in detail sports and games in Tudor times as they had been taught in the history lesson. However, the focus of this unit was not actually related to the fictional context of the visit.

Although the majority of the themes discussed in the class emerged during the interviews, there were no comments regarding the differences between wealthy and poor Tudors. The children's agenda in regard to the theme is illustrated only in their responses in the classroom when, by using as evidence, and comparing, pictures in children's books about the Tudors, they drew conclusions about the differences between rich and poor Tudors. A question-answer session followed the task so that the children would share their findings with the rest of the class. From the children observed, Scott and Nathan were reluctant to share their findings whereas Darcee, Robert, Charlotte and Joshua showed that they were
aware of social division in Tudor times in terms of housing. The following extract is indicative of their response:

Teacher: what was different in rich and poor Tudors’ lives? Did you find something interesting?  
Darcee: The rich people like Henry VIII lived in palaces and poor people lived in small houses  
Robert: some of them did not have houses at all! They were homeless  
[...]  
Joshua: “Lords, ladies and rich people lived in nice houses and poor people lived in houses made of straw”.

Summary
The class from the G school appeared to have its own agenda though not related to the subject of literacy. Although the class teacher was aware about the programme’s educational focus as she attended the preparatory session for class teacher, both head and class teachers decided to participate in the drama session from a historical perspective. Studying the subject of Tudors and having limited authentic resources in the area they decided to visit Clarke Hall despite of the programme it offers. The drama event was viewed as a living history resource that in relation to the authentic building could offer a first hand experience.

Due to work and time pressure (as it was commented later by the class teacher) a preparatory session as suggested by Clarke Hall did not take place to prepare the children in terms of their role and the fictional context of the event. The lack of appropriate preparation in the G school resulted in the children’s expectations being shaped mainly by their previous museum visiting experiences. Thus, apart from the a child that had participated in a living history programme in the past and accordingly expected a similar experience to take place in Clarke Hall, the class expected to visit a museum about Tudors. The class’s context for interpretation, illustrated both in the children’s comments during the group interviews and question-answer sessions in the classroom, was mainly orientated in the division between poor and rich Tudors in terms of housing.
Concluding remarks

Between 1999 and 2002 the DfEE in conjunction with the National Heritage Fund made available approximately £3m to support the dissemination of good practice and development of new approaches within museum and gallery education in UK (DfEE, 1999:2, Hooper-Greenhill, 2004). Effective partnerships between museums/galleries, schools and families would be a desirable outcome of this initiative so that, amongst other positive outcomes, particular areas of the curriculum could be enhanced such as the subjects of literacy and numeracy (DfEE, 1999:3-4).

Within this prominent interest in the subject of literacy, Clarke Hall, having more than twenty years tradition in employing drama and theatre and offering opportunities for experiential learning, developed a drama event mainly for Key Stage Two Primary Schools. The programme, developed along the lines of process drama, relies on children’s effective participation both on a collective and individual level. The children are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills via decision-making processes and interaction with the actors and their peers. To a great extent the programme’s format is associated with its educational objectives that focus primarily on the development of speaking and listening skills, attempt to contribute to the children’s personal, social and citizenship education and aspire for the programme to be used as an opportunity for fictional writing back in the classroom. To what extent, however, are these educational objectives shared by the class teachers that participated in this research?

Both schools had their own educational objectives for the visit via which they also valued their class’s participation in a theatrical event. In the case of the S school, although the class teacher acknowledged the importance of practising the listening, speaking and social skills, the main focus of the visit was dictated by the Ofsted requirements for the improvement of standards in Literacy at the National Standard Assessment Tasks at the end of the school year. The improvement of the year 6 group’s performance in literacy was also set by the Local Education Authority as one of the targets for the school’s overall improvement. Thus, from the year 6 group the lower ability children were selected to participate in the visit. Particular emphases was placed on the class’s
participation in the theatrical event since it was expected that the visual experience with its realistic and emotional dimensions would trigger children's imagination and enrich their writing on the genre of historical fiction, whereas the merits regarding the practising of speaking and listening skills were planned to be integrated into the area of writing composition.

In general terms, provision for the areas of speaking and listening within the suggested literacy framework for the Key Stage Two has been criticised for devaluing the areas on a functional level as a means that could only enhance children's writing and reading skills (Wyse and Jones, 2001: 193). The functional use of the areas of speaking and listening as a means for improving the children's performance in writing is also illustrated within the context of this research in the agenda of the S school. Perhaps in this respect, given also the format of the programme as drama process, the objectives set by the Clarke Hall could be viewed as complementary to the children's needs in the area of speaking and listening. As commented also by the class teacher, although the use of educational drama is a medium that facilitates the development of the children's speaking skills, it is not used as a teaching medium in the class's curriculum (Baldwin & Fleming, 2003). Thus, the programme itself could offer an educational opportunity for the children while the guidelines provided by Clarke Hall constituted in the case of the S school the basis for a drama lesson integrated in the class's curriculum. Perhaps, the complementary nature of the programme as conceptualised by the Clarke Hall could be attributed not only to the museum's initiative to devise a programme that supports the schools' efforts in literacy\(^{24}\), but also to the museum educators' perception of the primary schools' reality as this has been shaped by their own reflections on their teaching background in mainstream primary education.

The programme's links with the educational reality was also expressed in the programme's orientation to objectives associated with PSHE. The museum educators,

\(^{24}\) The need for museums to develop programmes that are either directly linked to the National Literacy Strategy or focus on a combination of foundation subjects had been particularly stressed in 1998 following the changes to the primary school curriculum in England (Wilkinson, 1998)
embracing the view that with the introduction of the primary school curriculum at the end of the 1990s the "school’s available time for the teaching of the non-core subjects was reduced, however, yet the class teachers had to provide a balanced and broad curriculum", integrated into the programme objectives related to the children’s personal and social education (Wilkinson, 1998:1). However, although emphasis was placed on the schools’ prospectus (that participated in this research) in regard to the schools’ intention to provide a balanced curriculum, the class teachers did not particularly value the Clarke Hall’s orientation to the subject of PSHE. Perhaps, this lack of attention could be considered as a reflection of an educational reality subjugated to the teaching of numeracy and literacy as that was also partially illustrated in both classes’ objectives.

Especially in the case of G school, the described educational agenda did not share commonalities with any of the Clarke Hall’s educational objectives. The class teacher viewed the museum as a living history source relevant to the class’s learning in history. However, if one takes into account that the class did not use drama as a teaching medium within the classroom and that the opportunities for group collaboration and dialogue (at least as I experienced them during the conduct of the research and illustrated in the class’s social agenda) were limited, one could suggest that the educational objectives and the format of the programme could be also considered complementary to the year 4 children’s learning agenda. Perhaps it was due to a number of parameters, such as the class teacher’s limited teaching experience (and training in the subject of drama), the mismatch between the programme’s objectives and the school’s educational agenda and the overload that class teachers might experience had as a result that the class was not prepared appropriately to participate in the drama event.

The impact that the preparatory session could have in shaping the children’s expectations regarding their participation in the drama event can be illustrated if one compares the children’s responses between the two classes. On one hand the children from the class S left the school being in role of 17th century entertainers expecting to be actively engaged in a dramatic event. The impact of the dramatic preparatory session was a powerful one if one takes into account that before the preparation the children had vivid memories of
their hands on experience in Clarke Hall two years ago. On the other hand, the lack of appropriate preparation in the G school resulted in the children's expectations being shaped by their own experiential field: their previous museum visiting experiences. Thus, in the case of a child that had participated in a living history programme in the past, when he found out that the class would visit Clarke Hall dressed in costume, expected that an experience similar to his previous one would take place in Clarke Hall. Accordingly the rest of the class, reflecting upon their previous museum visits and the information provided by the school, expected to visit a museum about Tudors.

The aim of this chapter was to provide an insight into the participants' agenda in the theatrical event. The potential relationship between the museum's (author's) and the school's (reader's) agendas was discussed whereas the extent to which both agendas (expectations, experiences, objectives, attitudes and historical context for interpretation) would shape the interaction during the theatrical event and its interpretation in terms of content and format will be examined in the next chapter.
Chapter 5 The participatory theatre event,
The Clarke Hall case study

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is not to reconstruct the totality of the dramatic experience but to describe the event as it was experienced and interpreted by the participants. The data derive from observations conducted during the event in the museum and following the event within the classroom setting\(^1\), group interviews conducted with the children following their participation in the event (S School, 30/01/2002, G School, 11/03/2002) and individual interviews conducted almost five months after the museum visit (S School, 27/06/2002 and G School, 08/07/2002-09/07/2002). Through this description, which is based on observations, interviews, individual/collective drawings and writing activities, it will be attempted to highlight the basic explicit or implicit elements of the event. When appropriate the (museum’s) "author’s" intentions and perception of the experience are juxtaposed with the (school children’s) "readers" verbal and non-verbal perceptions.

The event is presented in a chronological and thematic order. Based on the "author’s" intention to divide the event into three parts, each part is presented here separately while the themes described in each part derive from the participants’ experience. The themes that emerged from the participants’ accounts are presented in an open-ended way that allows the description of the event rather than in a format of generated theory. During the second and third part of the event the analysis moves into a more discursive form, as emphasis is placed on verbal and non-verbal interaction amongst the participants to trace difference in meaning. Also, as the author’s intentions are rooted in the field of drama in education, up to a certain extent, the event is described by drawing upon the theoretical framework of educational drama and theatre. A conclusion for the case study of the participatory event in Clarke Hall completes this chapter.

\(^1\) The observations were conducted in regard to the S School’s participation from 29/01/2002 to 01/02/2002 and in regard to the G School’s participation from 08/03/2002-12/03/2002.
The first part - Entering the “as if” situation

The first part of the event extends from the children’s arrival at the museum to the moment they split into four groups according to the role given to them. They enter the setting and, while they interact with the actor who plays the owner of the house (Priscilla), they hear a knock at the door. A traveller (Nathaniel) enters asking for a job. In a while they all see a soldier (William Titus) searching in the garden. A few minutes later while they have breakfast, the soldier enters the kitchen informing everyone that he is searching for somebody who stole a lantern. When the children finish their breakfast they split into four groups.

In this section, themes are presented that are related to the children’s understanding of the event’s format and content and in particular are associated with the event’s first part. They point to the parameters that might affect the children’s introduction in an “as if” situation and as an extension shape the theatrical event.

The “unexpected”

The school groups arrive by bus at Clarke Hall dressed in costume. The museum educator (author) expects that the class teachers have set the story line and endowed children with their roles in advance. Taking also into account that the drama session at school will be disrupted because of the bus travelling it is suggested to the teachers to help children sustain their roles by continuing the drama activity on their arrival outside Clarke Hall. The difference in the two classes’ agenda, described in chapter four, is particularly reflected on the very first collective action through which each year group enters the “as if” situation.

The year 6 class (S school), having had the preparatory drama session at school the same morning, continued the establishment of their roles and the story line outside Clarke Hall as soon as they got off the bus. The teacher invited the children to remember their roles and by being herself in role as a member of the entertainers group pretended that she was tired, as they had been walking along the muddy roads for a few hours. As a response the children’s body language changed. They look tired and cold. The teacher still in role with excited voice pointed at Clarke Hall and following the museum’s suggestive material said:
"Look over there. I think that's a large house in the distance. It must be Wakefield. Shall we knock at the door and ask if we can rest for a while?"

Then the teacher, by getting out of role, used the first gate that somebody crosses to enter The Hall’s front yard as the distinctive sign between reality and fiction:

You will be back in time as you get through this gate. You are cold and tired and we stop to rest before we continue to London.

The children, having already established their in role motivation for the visit at the school’s preparatory session, seemed willing to pretend that they were shivering and tired and looked concentrated in their role as they crossed the gate. This observation was later confirmed by the children’s responses at the focus groups interviews. They were aware of the fictional context before the actual entering at the setting: they were supposed to travel to London in order to perform for the king but being tired from walking they needed to have a rest. When asked how they were supposed to feel in the imaginary world they responded “tired”, “thirsty”, “cold” and “excited because at the end of our journey we were going to meet the king”. For some children their investment in role pretending that they were tired was also rooted in their real context. They explained that although they were pretending for the story they really felt “tired”, “hungry”, and “thirsty” from the bus travelling.

Knocking on the Hall’s door two or three times without receiving a response from inside is a common practice for the majority of the dramatic events in Clarke Hall as the museum staff intends to give time to the schools to settle and to create tension. The following extract from the museum educator’s comments, when asked to comment on what is expected from the schools before arriving in the museum, illustrate the author’s intention to create a feeling of “the unexpected”:

They [the class teachers] are getting the children to how they actually feel having come all this distance. How are you going to feel knocking at this door? Because if Priscilla Benjamin is not expecting them they might feel a little bit apprehensive,

---

2 As it has been pointed by Folk and Dierking the “physical context” in association with the visitors’ “personal” and “social context” can affect the museum visiting experience (Falk & Dierking, 2000)
nervous and worried, who lives here, are they going to let us in, will they send us on our way? (Margaret Beaumont, 2002, extract interview).

Thus, only when the year 6 class teacher knocked on the door twice it opened with a delay and the museum educator addressed the class being herself in role: “What is thy name mistress?” The year 6 class, having a similar experience at their previous visit, explained during the follow up interviews that they were feeling “excited” and “nervous” because they did not know what was going to happen. Although the class’s collective memory from their previous visit two years ago was that Priscilla tried to close the door to them, the element of the unexpected was appreciated anew within the fictional context. The class, being in role due to their earlier preparation by the class teacher, appreciated the element from a functional view. The museum educator’s action was justified by the children as necessary in order to make them believe in the fictional historical time. The following extract illustrates this point:

(The children have explained that they felt nervous and excited)

R: Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Joe</th>
<th>Rob</th>
<th>Hanad</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Mekaela</th>
<th>Jeinna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because we did not know what was going to happen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(nodding yes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First time we went, she was</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Because last time we went she tried to turn us down, to close the door to us, did not she?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About to close the door</td>
<td></td>
<td>(nodding yes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To close the door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: She tried to close the door? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Joe</th>
<th>Rob</th>
<th>Hanad</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Mekaela</th>
<th>Jeinna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The element of the "unexpected" also emerged in the year 4 (G school) children’s responses. As it is indicated in chapter four, the main focus of the class’s agenda was the dressing up in Tudor’s costumes, while the majority of the children expected to visit a museum about Tudors. In the informal interviews conducted with the children on the bus on the way to the museum it was demonstrated that the children did not have any commitment to the fictional context of the event. The lack of preparation and ownership of the children’s roles was also reflected in the class’s verbal and non-verbal responses while they were getting off the bus and knocking the Hall’s door. Some children were impressed with the view of Clarke Hall, others were laughing about each other’s costumes while some children were complaining about being tired from the bus travelling. The children’s behaviour, perceived as misbehaviour by the teaching assistants, resulted in raising their voices in order for the children to be quiet. Within this increased level of noise the schoolteacher asked the children if they remembered who they were. Without receiving any reply as she was hardly heard, she knocked on the Hall’s door. This was the turning point for introducing the children in the fictional context. With the knocking of the door the laughing partially stopped and one could hear comments such as “who is in?” “are they in?”, “look at that handle”…When the teacher knocked third time everyone was quiet standing still looking at the door. The door opened slowly and some of the children moved one step backwards with exclamations of excitement.

Priscilla to teacher: Who is this travelling company knocking at my door?
Class teacher in role: “We are travelling to London, we are entertainers that want to perform for the king

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Priscilla to children: “You must be tired, it’s rather a cold day. Why do not you enter for a while to rest and then you have to be on your way”

The element of the unexpected created tension as there was a mismatch between the “text” (the museum educator and the class teacher addressed each other directly in role) and the children’s “subtext” (their expectation that the door will open and they will enter a museum). Perhaps, according to O’Toole this tension could be termed as the “tension of surprise” given that there is “a mismatch between the expectation and the reality” (O’Toole, 1992:30). This tension observed during the event was later confirmed by the children’s feedback. Both focus groups, when asked what they remembered and how they felt before entering the Hall, immediately mentioned the knocking of the door and commented without any probing on their expectations. Some children commented that they felt scared while others said that they were feeling nervous and confused about what was going to happen as they were expecting to be turned down. The following extract from the children’s group interviews following the event is characteristic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcey</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we got off the bus, we are outside the house. What do you remember?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(shows that he is knocking the door)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, because it sounded like boom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We heard this noise from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was nervous I did not know what would happen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we knocked the door I was scared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought a scary man would answer the door</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, knocking the door</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The element of the unexpected as expressed in the case of the year 4 class might have had the potential to evoke emotional reactions and to shatter the children’s prior-to-the-visit expectations. As also indicated in the interviews conducted five months following the event, the children’s first encounter with the museum educator was a memorable one. For example, Tanya when asked what does she remember from the visit commented:

T: I remember when the door we knocked we went in and the people who lived there they did not recognize us and they did not expect us to be there

In both year groups an association is noticed between the children’s prior-to-the-event agenda, the element of the “unexpected” and its potentiality to function as a means that can suspend disbelief. In the case of the year 6 (S school), when the children have established a commitment to the event’s fictional context, they accept the element of the “unexpected” for its functional purpose and perceive it as a means for the establishment of belief in the event. A similar function was also illustrated in the case of the year 4 class (G school) that had not prepared appropriately for the visit. The element of the unexpected shattered the children’s previous expectations and in association with other parameters (mainly related to the setting where the event takes place) facilitated the children’s re-negotiation of their expectations and perhaps willingness to suspend their disbelief.

The setting
The setting is dominant both in the development and perception of the dramatic event. It dictates the time in which the theatrical event occurs (17th century), the costumes and to some extent the language used by the actors during the event. Based on the
children’s responses four themes emerged related to the setting: a) the perception of historical time, b) the appreciation of the setting as “real” c) the setting as an interpretive point, d) the setting as stage that can facilitate tension.

Setting and the perception of time

The setting played an important role in the children’s perception that the event takes place in the past and perhaps contributed to the children’s suspension of disbelief. Irrespective of the class’s agenda (having or not having historical understanding as the focus of the visit) the Hall itself with its artifacts was perceived as a source of evidence about Tudors’ time and their way of living. For both year groups this perception was mainly established through comparisons with contemporary households that focused on technological and fashion features (“tv”, “radio”, “gas-cook”, “wooden furniture”, “keys”) 3. The following brief extract taken from the follow-up group interviews with the year 4 class might illustrate the children’s perception of the event’s historical time based on the setting’s features and furniture:

Group 1, year 4 class, G school

R: At which period of time did you go?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tudor</td>
<td></td>
<td>I suppose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>200 years ago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: Did you believe that you really went in different time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, because they did not have gas fires</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And they had this handle that you had to knock to get in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The children’s focus on technological and fashion features shares similarities with a research conducted by Downey (1994) investigating children’s perception of historical time. The research suggested that children rely on visual fashion and technology clues in order to establish a chronological sequence in regard to various periods of history (Barton & Levstik, 1996:424).
R: What else made you believe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It was very old. They had wooden things but they were not like today. They had long wooden tables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A massive doll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which the setting contributed to the establishment of the historical time and as a result in the children’s belief in the fictional context is also illustrated by the year 6 class’s comments following the event. The majority of the children were aware that the fictional time of the event was the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. When they were asked what made them believe it was this time, although they were initially informed about the fictional time in the preparatory activity with the class teacher, they responded that it was the setting that made them believe that it was another century. Responses such as “it’s like stepping into another dimension when you go in there...” (that were expressed both in the group interviews and in the children’s writing activities following the event) are indicative of the setting’s significance in the children’s perception of time and belief in the fictional context. The costumes and the language used, which have been developed by the author of the event in relation to the setting, have also affected the year 6 class’s perception of time. The following extract taken from the interviews conducted with the year 6 children might illustrate this point:

Group 2, year 6, S school
R: What made you believe that it was a different time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steven</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a different house</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Because it’s like stepping into another dimension when you go in there...because it is so old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is not like our</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138
Yes, because it was during Tudor times.

Yes, the clothes were different.

And they were saying, 'thou', and 'thy'.

And the song was different. It was something like:

The setting was perceived in association with the element of time by both classes that participated in the research. However, further themes related to the setting emerged mainly from the year 4 children’s responses that could be viewed by taking into account the class’s prior-to-the event agenda.

**Setting - the quality of the “real”**

The data that emerged from the year 4 children (G school) indicated that they perceived the setting within its realistic dimensions. Most of the children commented that they were impressed with the size of the house as they compared it with their own houses: Charlotte: “our houses are that big (show with the hands) and theirs is like that (show with the hands)”, Joshua: “You have to see the bedrooms they have got, it’s like a palace compared to ours”. A possible explanation for this comparison, given the constructivist view that we perceive and organize our experiences based on our previous understanding, could be that the children assimilated the new experience via comparison to what was familiar to them (Fosnot, 1996:13). Hence, a possible reason for the lack of similar responses within the year 6 group (S school) might be that the children were already aware of the setting’s realistic dimensions due to their visit in Clarke Hall two years ago.

The impression that the setting had on the year 4 children was also expressed in the drawings conducted following the event. Overall from the 21 individual drawings conducted by the year 4 children, 14 drawings had as subject the setting. This number could be considered particularly high if one takes into account that only one child from the year 6 group drew a similar theme. The children’s comments suggested that
the dominance of the setting in their drawings could be attributed mainly to two parameters: a) the setting’s size, b) its perception as “real” evidence from the Tudor times. Charlotte’s and Joshua’s comments regarding their drawings might illustrate accordingly the two parameters (see Plates 3 & 4) while the possible interrelation between the two parameters is illustrated in the children’s comments and drawings in the individual interviews five months following the event (See Plates 5 & 6):

**Plate 3** Drawing conducted following the museum visit—Charlotte, Year 4, G school

Charlotte’s comment: “I drew the door because of the size of it” is indicative of the children’s impression regarding the size of the setting.”
Joshua: “There were a lot of things that come into my head. One explanation is that they were things that you would not see much today”

Robert: “I am going to draw the house because it was big enough. It was a castle. It looked very old fashioned. It looked like being from Tudor times. It probably was from Tudor times”.

Plate 4 Drawing conducted following the museum visit-Joshua, Year 4, G school

Plate 5 Drawing conducted in the individual interviews five months following the event, Robert, year 4, G School
Plate 6 Drawing conducted in the individual interviews five months following the event, Nathan, year 4, G School

Nathan: “How do not you remember that? We passed through the first door and then there was another one... quite strange as we don’t have now houses with two doors... but this was a Tudor house”

The emphasis given by the year 4 children on the setting as a “Tudor house” might be rooted in the children’s expectations that the visit would link to their learning in the subject of Tudors. The extent to which the children perceived the setting as an interpretive point is illustrated in the following section.

Rob: we learned a lot about Tudor times when we went to Clarke Hall. We learned what the people would be like in Tudor times.

Setting – as an interpretive point

The setting was also a parameter related to the year 4 children’s perception of the character of Priscilla (the owner of the house). As indicated earlier, the majority of the children were impressed with the setting’s size and perceived it as evidence of Tudor times. The children’s prior-to-the-event agenda for historical interpretation determined the perception of the character’s social status and as a result affected their historical understanding. In particular the children who considered that Priscilla’s social status was on the same level as the majority of people at the time regarded
Clarke Hall as a representative sample of the house that the average person would have in Tudor times. For example, Darcy, Robert and Charlotte who in the prior-to-the event agenda demonstrated that overall they were aware of the social division in Tudor times, did not perceive Priscilla as a character from the upper social strata. Perhaps to this understanding have contributed the images of the palace with references to Kings and Queens that were shown in the classroom as an example of rich people’s houses, the images of little cottages and thatched houses that were depicted in the class’s books, and the lack of a detailed understanding of the social classes in Tudors' and Stuarts' time. Thus the children, not having received in advance information about the character’s background and not being able to classify Priscilla amongst the Kings and the Queen, interpreted Priscilla as one of the “others”, the “poor” people. The following extract taken from the group interview illustrates this point:

**Year 4, G school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcey</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before I went to Clarke Hall I thought that the others were poor but now no I do not think so...with all these stuff at the house</td>
<td>[...]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>(nodding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, you tell me that you had a different idea about Tudors before you went there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcey</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not think they would have houses. I thought they would</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where did you see these pictures?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darce</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>On tv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An exception was Joshua’s interpretation of Priscilla as “quite rich” due to the Clarke Hall’s size. During the group interview Joshua demonstrated that he was aware of Priscilla’s social status. His prior-to-the-event learning agenda might have provided the appropriate context to interpret the setting and the character in Clarke Hall. The following extract taken from the group interview with the year 4 children (G school) indicates Joshua’s response in juxtaposition to his peers’ comments:

**Was she like the rich people you were learning about at school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darce</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No, she was different</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes but she was a lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I thought only the Queens would have houses like that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I thought that they were all poor in books before we went to Clarke Hall.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perhaps the antithesis between Joshua’s and the rest of the group’s interpretation could illustrate the need for the children to have the appropriate cognitive background in order to make sense of their new learning experiences. This need is highlighted if one takes into account that the children’s new learning experience can affect their historical understanding in the long term. For example, Joshua’s generated understanding from his experience at Clarke Hall constituted the basis for generalizations as it is indicated in his comments five months after the event:

R: Do you think that you learned something by being in Clarke Hall?

[...] J: I learnt about the old way of living. It might seem strange the way people lived in their houses.

R: What do you mean strange?

J: People living in these houses were powerful people but these people that were sick they did not have houses and they had to live in the street. Sometimes you can tell by the house how rich somebody is. The bigger the house the richer somebody is.

The children’s historical understanding in terms of housing and social division in Tudor times and also the way in which the actress established her role as Priscilla have contributed to the children’s interpretation. As stated by Goodacre and Baldwin (2002), the interpreters are expected either to immerse themselves in a historical persona or to be themselves in a period costume in order to establish a role (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:122). Within the context of this study, the actors assumed roles of “authentic” personas without however claiming that they intended to develop specifically historical personas. The available evidence associated with the life events, attitudes and values of the real people that once lived in Clarke Hall did not provide an adequate basis for the development of historically documented personas. However, even when the actors are themselves in a period costume, the characters still need to convey certain social and physical features in order to create an “authentic ‘sort of person’ who might have lived in a particular time and place” (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:123). Although the characters that participated in the event were in costume and filtered their communication with the children via the historical context, it should be stated that the social and status characteristics of their roles were not clearly signalled during their interaction either with each other or with the children. Thus, as indicated
in the above extracts, only the children who had relevant background knowledge read the character (in association with the setting) within the given historical context. The majority of the children expected that upper social class people in the Tudors' and Stuarts' time were “snobbish” and “arrogant” and did not have a detailed understanding of social division at that time. As a result, when they encountered a character that did not demonstrate the expected characteristics or any social features to denote clearly the character’s social background, the children read the character’s status based only on their own understanding. Also, the lack of theatricality and clearly signalled characters is indirectly demonstrated by the centrality that the setting itself had on the children’s reading of the event. Although the children participated in a live experience during which they interacted with “real” people, it was the setting itself that dominated their reading of the characters.

Tension

A few moments following the children’s entrance in the setting, an unexpected traveler knocks the door and joins the class in the Great Chamber. In a while they all see a soldier in the garden who a few minutes later knocks the kitchen door and also enters the setting.

The museum educator and developer of the event while explaining how she devised the session referred to the term “stage managing”. The setting functions as the entry and exit point of the fiction. If one takes into account the children’s reaction every time they heard a knocking at the door and their comments following the event, one could suggest that the setting as a stage facilitated the element of the unexpected and was used as a means for creating tension. Tension in that case perhaps could have a double meaning: as an element of the dramatic form and as an emotional reaction. The traveller’s sudden knocking at the door in both sessions surprised or almost shocked the children as indicated in the rapid change of their body posture. They all stood straight and still looking intensely at the door. Within the “as if” situation the knocking at the door was also unexpected for the owner of the house (Priscilla). Priscilla, when she realized that somebody knocked the door, took the big key and

\[4 \text{ O'Toole uses tension also as a construction in order to define the emotional reactions of the group of participants (O'Toole, 1992:133) }\]
with slow steps moved towards the door. The children’s eyes followed her and when she opened the door the children leaned forwards in order to have a better view. In the follow-up group interviews the children’s comments confirmed that the knocking at the door was something unexpected that initiated very strong feelings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We were talking about what we would be doing, there was this great big knock on the door and we were frightened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought I might be scared but I was not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I was scared the worst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The unexpected knocking of the door and the introduction of a new character coming from outside the setting might have affected the children’s belief in the fictional context, as indicated in the year 4 children’s responses: Joshua (year 4, G school): “I felt I was properly in that part like in Tudor times”.

Tension was also created for the year 6 children that had established their belief in the fiction. The tension as an emotional reaction was expressed in the year 6 children’s writing activity (Rob: “We feel nervous because we do not know what is happening”) and comments during the group interviews. Perhaps, one possible explanation could be the children’s identification of the fictional world with the real setting. The knocking on the door is the means through which somebody asks to become a member of the fiction. When they see an unexpected soldier in the garden they are surprised and a few minutes later, although they could expect that the one that knocks on the door is the soldier they have seen in the garden, they are still surprised. If they
believe that this other is part of the fiction, but they are surprised because he knocks from outside, then one could conclude that this surprise indicates the extent to which they have identified the fictional world only with the real setting. The following comment might illustrate the year 6 children’s identification of the real setting with the fictional context:

Why on earth is that soldier in that woman’s garden, it was only us and him over there? He is a worker he came from the front door and he is in the garden? That’s weird

The contract
Unavoidably in every learning situation there is a contract that enables both parties to know what to invest in the learning process and expect from each other. The contract, if not explicitly verbalized in the form of an agreement or negotiation takes place implicitly. The children decipher the signals available such as the “teacher’s language, questioning, decision-making, forms of individual and group negotiation”, as indications of who will make decisions about the learning agenda (Neelands, 1984:31). Within the context of the drama event under study the contract between the actors and the children was shaped by the class’s preparatory agenda. It was an implicit contract that obtained the form of an explicit agreement only during the second part of the event, when the children worked in-groups. A difference was noticed between the year 6 and the year 4 children’s responses to the open questions posed by the actors.

On the one hand the year 6 class (S school), having established fictional roles and expecting to participate actively in a drama, responded to the actors’ open questions spontaneously and, when appropriate, replied in an improvisation mode based on the preparatory session at school: “Priscilla: are you well known entertainers in O”? Child: “Yes, we play in feasts. And we also have our own jobs. I am a blacksmith and also a poet”. The class’s prior-to-the event agenda was also expressed when an explicit contract was drawn regarding the story: they would create as a group during the second part of the event. The year 6 class was willing to act out physically the story. However, contrary to the group’s expectations, the expressive form of the
drama was not negotiable (Michaela: “we could act it out as well”, Soldier: “I think we will do it solely in our head, we cannot act it out”).

On the other hand the year 4 children (G school), having no experience of participatory drama in the past and non-specific expectations regarding the format of the event, responded to questions that required an improvised answer within the classroom’s contract for interaction. They raised their hands to reply and agreed to go along with the actor’s lines regarding the content and the format of the story without any negotiation. Chelsea’s comments at the follow-up interviews is illustrative of the children’s agreement:

Chelsea: And then William Titus [the soldier] said to us that he was going to tell us a story and we agreed that if he can told us about his life we could make a story and we agreed to catch John Nevison [fictional character]

The actors consider the act of raising hands during the event as a counteractive signal to their intention to develop the children’s confidence to speak within a group context. They developed strategies to deal with this mode of interaction such as to acknowledge in a humorous manner the children’s raised hands as “pointing at the ceiling” and to create an atmosphere for a “free-flow” conversation. Within educational drama, among other tools, language can be used as a technique for creating the right atmosphere that supports the meaning and the context of the situation created. The teacher in role, by using the appropriate intonation and vocabulary to the situation, can function as a model for the establishment of the desirable social context and atmosphere (Saxton and Morgan, 1987:139; Neelands, 1992:18-19). The actor being always in role, approached, looked directly and addressed the question with a subtle tone to a child at a time. However, the school contract seems to be more powerful than the attempted implicit contract for a natural flow interaction.

The class teacher’s role during the event might have also contributed to the emergence of the classroom contract. Even though the class teacher’s role is a peripheral one and there is no direct verbal interaction between the class teacher and the pupils, their role in terms of its power connotations remains unaltered to the one in the school context. During the first part of the event the class teacher takes the
initiative to knock the Clarke Hall’s door, interact first with the museum educator in the fictional context and respond as the leader of the group. As the event proceeds the class teacher becomes an observer of the interaction between the actors and the children without herself having a role within the fiction. However, her presence affects the children’s participation in the event. For example, when during the second part of the event the class teacher from the year 6 (S school) joined the group that worked as storytellers as an observer, the children’s attitude changed. The children, acknowledging with eye contact the class teacher, raised hands as an indication that they wanted to speak. The presence of the class-teaching assistants that joined the trip might also have a similar impact. Although they did not actively participate at any point during the event their presence was perceived within the framework of the school context. Charlotte’s comment (G school, year 4) in the five months after individual interview illustrates the implicit role that the class-teaching assistants had during the event:

CH: Ms B...and in our class Robert’s mum. She came with us she works in year two but she came with us
R: and was she with the storytellers group?
CH: she was the boss in the story because always in groups she is the boss.
R: did she speak in the story?
CH: yes, because he said child x says this and another one says that...and she saw if we were good.

The children’s interaction during the event and responses, such as the one above, suggest that the school frame with its power relations might still operate during the drama event. The unaltered class teachers’ and teaching assistants’ role during the event might have an impact on the quality of the children’s participation. It might influence the children’s feeling of being protected by the safety net of the fictional and as a result have an impact on the children’s experimentation with new ideas, values and roles.

Ritual - Social context – Real

Priscilla: “It seems sensible to me to let this company have a drink and eat something and then go to the town before it is dark to be safe. Charity has prepared some drinks and biscuits”. We are moving to the kitchen. Everybody walking slowly enters the kitchen and following Priscilla’s prompt, position themselves around the big table.
The children sit down on the bench around the table while the teacher, the helpers and Charity (housemaid) serve drinks and distribute the biscuits.

(Extract from the observations during the event, G class)

A pattern that emerged from the year 4 (G school) children's responses at both follow-up stages of the research indicated that the part of the event when the class gathered around the kitchen table was significant for the children. Of the 21 drawings conducted the following day of the event, six drawings either depicted the kitchen table and the benches or included a theme related to the breakfast the class had during the visit (Tanya, Joshua, Gemma, Chelsea, Scott, Joe). The theme, although it did not emerge in the two group interviews following the museum visit, emerged in both the children’s comments and their drawings five months following the event. Seven children mentioned the moment during the individual interviews (Darcee, Scott, Chelsea, Robert, Matthew, Tanya, Andrew) four of whom also conducted a relevant drawing by the end of the interview (Darcee, Scott, Chelsea, Andrew).

Why did the year 4 class consider the experience as significant? What are the parameters involved in the shaping of the experience? By taking into account the data deriving from the participatory observations, the children’s comments and drawings and the class’s real agenda, it will be attempted to trace the significance given to the moment by the children.

Overall the event unfolded via a similar path for both classes that participated in the research. A variation noted between the two events was that when the year 4 group sat around the kitchen table ready to have breakfast Priscilla invited the class to participate in a prayer. Given that the act of praying took place only in the event with the year 4 class it was speculated that it contributed to the significance given to the moment by the class. The action of praying could be considered to an extent as a ritual if one takes into account that the action takes place collectively, every word and gesture requires commitment while the action itself is bound by a certain code5. The

5 There are various definitions regarding the term “ritual”. Within the context of educational drama ritual is defined as a “stylized enactment bound by traditional rules and codes, usually repetitious and requiring individuals to submit to a group culture or ethic through their participation” (Neelands &
use of the teacher in role technique might have also facilitated the ritual. The museum educator through the teacher in role technique instructed the group with clear, quiet voice that supported her role and the meaning of the action. She has a double advanced status in comparison to the school group. She is the owner of the house that offers them hospitality and also (up to the moment that the class has breakfast) she is the one who controls the action. She decides who will enter the fiction by controlling the setting and she is the initiator of any dialogue or action. Being also perceived as a character in relation to the setting, she possesses a quality of real historical evidence and, accordingly, she is acting as a legitimate agent who can attribute to the action the quality of the real.

The children’s commitment to the action is indicated by the full participation in the moment as recorded during the observations conducted during the event. It is the moment that the action portrayed by the actors stops and the children are focused and actively involved in a collective action. The children’s commitment might also derive from their real learning agenda as they expect that their visit links to their learning about Tudors. Their learning agenda, being reinforced by the setting, led to the acceptance that anything that takes place within the setting is evidence of what was really happening in Tudor times. The children’s responses at the individual interviews and comments regarding their drawings indicate this point (See Plate 7).

Goode, 2000:69). Especially within the context of educational drama the “ritual” is used as a strategy for facilitating internalisation, commitment to the action and binding the meaning together for the group (Saxton & Morgan, 1987:131-132).

6 Within the context of the educational drama the teacher in role technique can be used to facilitate the creation of rituals. Especially when the participants are inexperienced it is suggested that the teacher takes on a role that implies authority “the one who knows” so he/she is at the centre of the action and can facilitate the children’s active participation (Saxton and Morgan, 1987:132-133).
Andrew commented regarding his drawing: “because it so different the meal table and different seats and the biscuits. Tudor time, interesting facts, what they were doing at Tudor times when they were eating”

Gemma’s comments also indicate the children’s perception of the objects and indirectly of the act they performed as factual evidence (See Plate 8).

Plate 7 Drawing conducted in the individual interviews five months following the event, Andrew, Year 4, G School

Plate 8 Drawing conducted in the individual interviews five months following the event, Gemma, Year 4, G School

Gemma: “I drew a cup of orange to show what they drink in Tudor time”
Thus, as an extension of the children's perception of the moment as historically authentic it could be assumed that their participation in the collective action of praying and having breakfast was bound by a certain code: the quality of the authentic. Looking also at the children's comments and taking into account the class's hidden curriculum one could assume that the moment was significant for the children due to its collective nature. The class, as it has been indicated during the observations conducted in the classroom setting and also illustrated in the class's socio-gram, has poor social cohesion. Especially if one takes into account the spatial arrangement in the classroom where rows of desks face the teacher as a behavioural strategy that would minimize children's interaction with each other, one could understand why the experience of the whole class sitting around the table could be memorable. The children's comments and illustrations might elucidate this point. It is worth noticing that the children refer to the moment by using the first plural person ("we") rather than describing the moment on an individual level. The comments cannot also be seen in isolation regarding the importance of the social context as they are interwoven with the factual quality of the experience. For example, Scott commenting on his drawing that depicted the double-handed cups used by the children during the event (See Plate 9).

**Plate 9** Drawing conducted in the individual interviews five months following the event, Scott, Year 4, G School

Scott: "We had some juice and biscuits. I cannot draw people. I would like to draw the class"

Chelsea also depicted in her drawing the table with the double-handed cups and in the background the staircase with children going upstairs in pairs (See Plate 10). During the interview she commented on her drawing:
Darcee depicted the children sitting on the benches around the table happily and some of them are drinking (See Plate 11).
Darcee: “when we were sitting around the table and we were drinking and eating the biscuit”

Robert’s comment could be interpreted as indicative of the social aspect of the experience and the value of the setting as historical evidence. He also described the moment by referring to the moment on a collective level while the experience, as a learning source, was so powerful for him that motivated him to search for more information about the subject of Tudors. During the individual interviews five months following the event he commented:

Rob: there was a long table, where all our class sat down, had a drink and a biscuit and the cups were...I looked in a book and they looked like it. The book actually told you about Tudor times.
R: Did you do that after C.H.?
Rob: yes I went to have a look to see what can I find. I did that at school but by myself at reading time

The value given to the experience as an authentic one might be related to the dramatic context of the moment. Although the author did not intend to create a ritual but to give the opportunity to the group to have a rest and to feel comfortable in the setting,
the fact that the actor said a prayer could have placed the children into a ritualistic context. They joined hands and they seemed fully committed to the activity. From a drama theory perspective, ritual is considered as a powerful device for facilitating levels of engagement, binding the meaning collectively for the group and making the moment significant (Saxton & Morgan, 1987). Research shows that the more significant an experience is for us the more likely we are to remember the episodes occurring at that time. Museums have the power to enhance the episodic memory just by offering a learning experience outside the classroom-learning environment. "Doing by acting out" also lays the foundations for episodic memories that will be memorable in the long-term (Bristow et al, 1999). The shared emotional experience in relation to the value given to the experience as an authentic one formed the basis for an episodic memory linked to a semantic experience. The children’s episodic memory is linked to the meaning attributed to the action and the use of objects.

**Concluding remark**

So far, the themes that emerged in relation to the first part of the event have been presented. The element of the unexpected that constitutes part of the event’s format seems to be an important parameter for shaping the children’s expectations and participation in the event. Also, various themes emerged from the children’s comments that are related to the setting itself. The setting affects the children’s perception that the event takes place in a different time and it is directly linked to the children’s learning agenda. The themes that emerged also suggest that the children’s prior-to-the-event class agenda plays a significant role in the way the children experience and interpret the event. These themes are explored further by the end of this chapter where they are also presented diagrammatically in figure 6 (See page 179).
The second part of the event - working in groups

Following the class's breakfast in the kitchen the children are divided into four groups according to their given roles: poets, musicians, storytellers and storywriters. Each group, led by an actor, has pre-set learning objectives to achieve (See Fig. 4). Within the context of this research emphasis will be placed upon the storytellers' and the storywriters' group since the set objectives for these two groups are interrelated with the final part of the event.

Figure 4. Structure of the theatrical event in Clarke hall

First Part
Entering the "as if" situation

➢ Meeting the actors (Priscilla, Soldier, Traveller, Cousins)

➢ Having Breakfast

Second Part
4 Groups

Storywriters
Aim: to discover if the traveler is a thief
Working with the traveler

Poets
Aim: to create a poem
Working with one of Priscilla's cousins

Storytellers
Aim: to set via storytelling a false moral
Working with the soldier

Musicians
Aim: to compose a song
Working with one of Priscilla's cousins

Third part
Poets & Musicians: Perform their group work
Storytellers & Storywriters: Participate in a debate
The double frame

Applying the notion of framing the action that is used in semiotics, film studies and in literary theory as the "narrative viewpoint" (O‘Toole, 1992:109), the action that takes place in the event unfolds within two frames: that is, the children, through their interactions with different people in different contexts, will be provided with two different perspectives on the dramatic event.

The first frame takes place during the first part of the event. In the first frame, the children are positioned as an audience viewing the action unfolding through the actors' interplay. The messages that the actors playing the "soldier" and the "traveler" intend to convey by their verbal and non-verbal communication, are: a) the traveler looks suspicious; b) the soldier is doing his duty. The second frame emerges when the children are split into groups. Only the children that accordingly interact with one of the two actors (the traveller and the soldier) discover the dramatic logic within the second frame. The traveller's group (storywriters) is endowed secretly by Priscilla with the role of investigators to discover the truth about the traveller. They question the character who, through storytelling and the use of objects, narrates his life. The message that the actor intends the children to construct is that: "He is an honest man, mistreated in life, poor and homeless."7 The soldier's group (storytellers), endowed with the role of soldiers, participates in a drama role-play session that, led by the actor, intends to set up of a "false moral": not to trust anyone's stories. The moral is set up by the soldier's personal story: "He has been tricked in the past, so he does not believe people's stories for sympathy any more."8 (See Fig. 5).

Both groups' work relates to the final part of the event in the sense that the children, having embraced different messages via their group work, will confront each other: the storywriters will defend the traveller believing that the lantern belongs to him, whereas the storytellers will support the "false moral" set by the soldier.

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7 The phrase is taken from the actor’s comments during the interview conducted before the event (Kevin Walker, interview, 2002)
Meaning making within the First frame

The selection of the frame delineates the dramatic meanings, which are available for the participants to construct. The children reading the actor's non-verbal communication (movement, costume and props) shared a collective meaning analogous to the meaning that the "author" of the event intended to create for the characters of the soldier and the traveller within the first frame. For instance, it is prearranged by the actors that when the soldier enters the setting the traveller should discreetly hide since the direct meeting of the two actors could lead to the immediate resolution of the event. Both year groups interpreted the moment as indicative of the traveller's "guilt", if not "suspiciousness". Also, the two bags the traveller was carrying reinforced the children's interpretation. As was illustrated by the children's comments during the group work (storytellers) they believed that the traveller was hiding in the bags the stolen item (Storytellers-S school-Michaela: "it was him, he had..."

8 The phrase is taken from the actor's comments during the interview conducted before the event (Paul
this yellow bag and had the lantern in", Storytellers-S school, Robert: “he carried it in his bag”). The following extract taken from the follow-up group interviews illustrates the children’s constructed meaning based on the traveller’s movement:

Year 6 class, S school, Storytellers
Robert: When the soldier was asking us right, what we did not say and which proves that he did it is the hiding from the soldier. It proves that he did do it.

R: Where was he hiding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Joe</th>
<th>Rob</th>
<th>Hanad</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Mekaela</th>
<th>Jeinna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the kitchen</td>
<td>In the fire in the kitchen when the soldier came in from the garden</td>
<td>If he is not guilty how can he be hiding himself?</td>
<td>(Nods yes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Joe nods yes)</td>
<td>He was sat next to the fire and when the soldier came in he moved (when the soldier sat next to the fire) to the other side of the room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When the soldier said we are looking for someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, the children did not express openly their interpretation the moment they observed the actor’s movement (during the first part of the event). They whispered to each other as they were sitting as a group around the kitchen table but did not communicate their reaction directly to the actors. A possible explanation would be the children’s positioning during the first part of the event as an audience of the dialogue that took place between the actors rather than as participants that could have an input in the event’s action. The following comment from the five months following the event interviews might illustrate this point:

Year 6, S school, Robert, Storyteller: “yes because when he was in the kitchen because he moved from the fire. [...] We did not ask him because they did not answer us”

The Second frame
The children’s “meaning-making” within the second frame is shaped during their participation in the groups led by the soldier (storytellers) and the traveler (storywriters) (See Table. 4 for the groups’ composition). There were two main themes that emerged in regard to the children’s “meaning-making” and the techniques and practices used within the group work. For the analysis the participants’ verbal interaction is taken into account. The questions and responses expressed during the group work are examined not in a linguistic sense but in terms of the function they perform in the shaping of meaning and the context within which they emerge.
Table. 4 The groups of the storytellers and storywriters that participated in this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storytellers (group led by the soldier)</th>
<th>Storywriters (group led by the traveler)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In role of “soldiers”</td>
<td>In role of “detectives”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6 – S school</td>
<td>Year 6 – S school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Steven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Gemma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanad</td>
<td>Sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Shara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaela</td>
<td>George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeinna</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 4 – G school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matthew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tanya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lorna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allocating roles
The children participate in the event having been allocated by their class teacher with the roles of “entertainers”. These roles however, as it suggested by the children’s responses, are not maintained within the second frame of the event. The children in the group which is led by the soldier (storytellers) are allocated with the fictional role of “soldiers” while the children in the group led by the traveler (storywriters) are endowed with the role of “detectives”. Below it will be briefly presented how these roles have been allocated to and perceived by the children.

Children as “detectives”
When the three other groups in the event leave the Hall’s kitchen, Priscilla (the owner of the house) invites the group that participates in the traveller’s group to gather secretly around her. She endows the group with a secret mission: to find the truth about the traveller. The mission posed within the context of event demonstrates genuine interest in the character. The importance of the mission and of the children’s role is supported by the actor’s voice via whispering and intonation that function as a challenge:
I’ve got a soldier in my house searching for a thief that stole a lantern. He maybe did, he maybe did not. Because you should never point your finger if you are not sure. Will you do something for me? Talk to him and find out if he has the lantern.

Nathan: I will do.

Priscilla: “Go and find out if he is a thief and go to the soldier

Perhaps the format via which the roles are allocated to the children could be characterized as a “drama question” since, according to the characteristics of a drama question suggested by Saxton and Morgan, it expressively demonstrates “genuine curiosity”, has a “purpose within the fiction”, relates to the children’s experience and it is supported by intonation and the appropriate pace for the situation (Saxton & Morgan, 1987:70-71).

The children’s comments following the event suggested that the children had a commitment in their role as “detectives” during the group work. The following comment that was elicited in the individual interviews conducted four months following the event might illustrate this point:

Tanya: “I was feeling like a detective, Priscilla trusted us and I wanted to find out the truth”

Also, the children’s commitment to their new role was illustrated during the group work. They posed questions about the character’s personal story and the objects presented to them as evidence of the character’s innocence (e.g. Actor-traveler: “My dad made it”, Loorna: “How did he make it?”). The children’s commitment in their roles might be also illustrated in their mode of interaction during the group work. In comparison to the first part of the event the children’s interaction with the actor does not seem to be filtered via the school context. They pose questions to the character spontaneously (e.g. Loorna: “How do we know [...]”), interact freely with their peers in the group (e.g. Tanya: “Can we make something with this bit of metal? ”), and respond to the actor’s comments and questions as if they participate in a free flow conversation (e.g. Actor-Traveler: “What do you think it is”, Tanya: “No one in G [area] can do things like this.”
Children as “soldiers”

In the storytellers’ group the children endowed with the fictional role of soldiers participate in a “role drama” during which a series of fictional events unfold to make up a story (Saxton & Morgan, 1987:119). The aim of the story, within the second frame, is to set up the “false” moral: not to believe one’s stories because he/she could be lying. The actor being in a triple role of a “soldier”, “a fictional character within the story” and a teacher in a “fringe role”9 directs the story in a mode that gives the impression to the children that they created the story. They are endowed with the role of soldiers within the story and they have always to take decisions and act within the fictional context of the story. The allocation of the roles takes place mainly with the use of two techniques that are also systematically applied throughout the creation of the story: a) the technique of “voice over” during which “the teacher instructs in the present tense and the students carry out the instructions” and b) the technique of “imaging” that involves visualization and invitation for the children to “put into words what they see in their mind’s eye” (Saxton & Morgan, 1987:145). The first one has the potentiality to infuse tension in the story and to put the fictional roles on a realistic basis, whilst the second one can facilitate the children’s ownership of the story.

Table 5. Examples that might illustrate the use of the “voice over” and “imaging” techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of “voice over”, Year 6 group (S school), extract from the group work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Soldier-actor: you have lanterns with candles inside. You would need to light them on before you go, would you not? Three of us have cloaks as well. Which one do you want to give cloaks to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Robert: Jenna, Michaela and Laura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of “imaging”, Year 6 group (S school), extract from the group work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Soldier-actor: I tell you what you are seeing there. [...] Big black horse with a white stripe… and stood by that horse is the little lad. [...] There are four of you [the children]. What are you going to do peeping through a crack in the barn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. James: I am going to say [change voice] “we are peeping through a gap and we saw you pointing up to something, what was it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 In the drama-in-education theoretical framework the “fringe” or otherwise “shadowy” role is described as the stance during which the teacher is in between her fictional role as a character and her real role as a teacher. It allows the teacher to ask questions and weave the children’s responses in order to build meaning on a collective level (Wagner, 1999:128 & Saxton & Morgan, 1987:153).
If one takes into account O'Toole's suggestion that taking on a role is in essence taking on a task, constraints and characteristics (O'Toole, 1992:19), then one could assume that the children accepted the roles they had been endowed with. During the story the majority of the children's responses indicated that they accepted responsibility, took decisions and responded within the context of their role (e.g. see above table: 5). Following the event in the collective drawings regarding their group work the children depicted also themselves in the story (See Plate 12, page 161) while in the group interviews they recalled vividly the story and the task that they and/or other members in the group had to perform within the fictional story. The following extract is taken from the follow-up group interview with the year 6 (S school):

Who were you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Joe</th>
<th>Rob</th>
<th>Hanad</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Mekaela</th>
<th>Jeinna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was master</td>
<td></td>
<td>I give the orders</td>
<td>We were soldiers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Robert was the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sergeant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We did them
Like when we are outside
looking trough the
window, we shot
what?

[...] and then it
was me and Hanad
Yes, we walked
down the corridor

[...] We were
searching for the one
that looks guilty

Joe and Laura

166
Overall, in both groups ("soldiers", "detectives") the children seem to have a commitment in the role that they have been allocated with. The extent to which these roles might have shaped the children's "meaning making" of the event's fictional story is illustrated later in the final part of the event and the meaning that the children construct.
Objects

During the event objects are used to support the actors’ characterization and to have a functional purpose related to the event’s meaning framework. In this section the themes that emerged from the children’s comments in the follow up stages of the research will be presented to illustrate the significance of the objects in the children’s interpretation of the event.

Objects for characterization

The function of the military props used in the storytellers’ session is visual, aiming to attribute to the actor the features of a 17th century soldier and indirectly to facilitate the children’s visualization of themselves in role of soldiers on an imaginary level. Hence, during the group work the actor (soldier) intends to draw the children’s attention to the objects he is carrying:

“[...] I want to draw their attention to the objects I am carrying and to tell them about the soldiers from a social history perspective to build my role. I expect them to observe the objects. That’s why I take them off one after one pretending that they are heavy” (Interview, Mackintosh, 2002)
The extent to which the children from both year groups valued the actor's props in terms of characterization is indicated in the drawings conducted the day after participation in the event. In the year 4 group twenty-one children conducted drawings the day after of the event. Two drawings depicted the soldier carrying the musket (Gokan, Robert), three drawings depicted the soldier's musket as part of their drawing (Matthew, anonymous, Joshua) and two drew only the soldier's musket (Cristian, Charlotte: Charlotte: “I drew the gun because it reminds me of William Titus [the actor-soldier]”). The year 6 class conducted twenty-four drawings the day following the event: five drawings had as a theme either the soldier or the musket that he was carrying. Specifically, three boys that were members of the storytellers' group drew only the musket (Rob, Joe, James) and two girls (Charlotte and Zoe) drew the soldier holding the musket. However, it was the children's comments concerning their drawings that indicated that the children observed and perceived the objects in relation to the character (For an example, see Plate 13)

**Plate 13** Drawing conducted following the event, Robert, Year 6, S School

Robert (year 6) commented about his drawing: “A soldier would have a musket. It would not help him to have a sword. He had to use a gun. [...] The gun was the first thing I saw in the soldier. He has to have a gun. If the robber wants to run away he has to shoot him to catch him”
References in terms of the character’s objects were also made by the children that participated in the storytellers’ group (soldier) in the group-interviews conducted following the event:

Researcher: How would you describe the soldier?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Darcee</th>
<th>Robert</th>
<th>Zoe</th>
<th>Chelsey</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A musket</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>He had a musket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And back of bullets down here</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He had a big gun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A musket</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullets tied to him in this wooden thing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children’s perception of the objects as means for characterization was minimized in the long term. The children’s responses in the individual interviews five months following the event suggested that the objects in the long term were valued as objects, rather than as means for characterization, by children that were interested in them due to their personal agenda. For example, Christian and Joshua (year 4, G school) in their drawings expressed their interest in the “musket” that was reinforced by a museum visit with their families (See Plates 14 & 15, 164 p.).

Joshua also vividly described the soldier’s costume and his paraphernalia. His interest in the relevant objects perhaps was rooted in his personal interest in military:

“...a belt from thick black leather. He did not have shoelaces on. He had a vest where he was holding all his ammunition, gun powder, which how put down here, a sword, a knife. I think ...it was an old type of gun, I cannot pronounce its name. The trigger is here. You put the gun powder down here...the trigger has a kind of orange colour and when you pull back when you fire it, it comes forward up to here causing a burn and energy for the ball to move. My grand dad used to be in the RAF. I also have an obsession with guns since I was two. Its powder goes through and it passes...that was

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10 This number of drawings does not include the drawings conducted with a similar theme due to peer influence.
pretty much all his trousers, thick brown. That's what I can remember [...] I want to be one of those, because they defend their own country but I cannot be because of my asthma. So, I won't pass the medical test.”

Plate 14 Drawing conducted five months following the event, Christian, Year 4, G School

Cristian: “It is a musket. I drew a gun because it is interesting. It is similar to what an army soldier would have. I have seen that in a military place like a museum in London, I went there with my mum and my dad”.

The following subsection will examine how the village scene is connected to the work of the storytellers ("detectives") in which the objects were the key used for purposes of characterization but also performed a certain function.
Plate 15 Drawing conducted five months following the event, Joshua, Year 4, G School

Joshua: “it was my grandmother and aunt and I think it was somewhere in Bradford. It had a lot of things and reminded me of Clarke Hall. They had wax figures and dummies and things and the clothes they were wearing was like guard’s uniform”

Overall, the children’s comments following the event suggest that the children observe the objects that have been used for characterization during the event and interpret them in relation to this purpose. In the children’s recalling of the event five months following the event the children still remember the objects vividly especially if these are linked to their personal agenda and interests.

The following subsection will examine how the objects were interpreted by the group of the storywriters (“detectives”) in which the objects were not only used for purposes of characterization but also performed a certain function.

Objects-performing a function

The objects such as a seashell, horseshoes, a wooden plate, spoon and a lantern that were used in the storywriters’ group (traveller) were mainly selected for their functional purpose within the event’s second frame: to convince the children that although amongst the traveller’s belongings there is a lantern, it belongs to him and it is not stolen. They are used as prompts for the construction of stories that depict the character as an honest and unfortunate man. For example, a wooden plate and spoon
were given to the character as a reward for saving a rich person’s life. The following comment might illustrate the “author’s” intention in regard to the functional use of the objects within the meaning frame:

“The children [...] show suspicion. Inevitably they ask Nathaniel what is in these bags. He brings one at the time little items that you could not think that a travel man has. They are so precious because they have memories. So, the travel man has stories to tell about where he got them and why he was given them. Within his bag there is a lantern and they know that the soldier is searching for a lantern that is stolen. They fully believe Nathaniel that the lantern is his, is not stolen” (Interview, Beamount, 2002).

Via a series of questions and prompts the children are encouraged to observe the objects (Actor-traveler: “what do you think it is [...] Can you see the patterns”?) and to express opinions and value judgements (Actor-traveler: “what did you think?”). The object around which the session evolves, the lantern, is also used physically as evidence that would direct the children towards the intended construction of meaning. The engraved initials on the lantern stand for the character’s name. Also, when the lantern is lit, the reflection created in the dark is similar to small stars due to the lantern’s carved patterns. The children via the witnessing of the lantern’s physical signs are expected to shift the meaning created within the event’s first frame and to develop their empathy for the character. The significance given to the lantern was illustrated in the year 6 -S school’s drawing following the event. At least six children drew the lantern because of its use as evidence (Laura “because the others said you could see stars”) and its importance during the event (Hanad: “that is what the argument was about”, See Plate 16, 167 p.)

To what extent, however, did the use of objects in association with the interaction with the character affect the children’s meaning making? Based on the children’s

11 Perhaps it is worth mentioning that the size of the object was increased in comparison to its depiction in the drawings conducted a few months following the event (See Plate 17). The decline in the object’s size might be an affect of the time that has passed since the children’s participation in the event or vice versa it might suggest that the increased size of the object in the drawings conducted following the event is indicative of the significance given to the object. Experimental research suggests that children between four to eleven tend to increase the size of positively characterized figures and objects (Burkitt et al, 2003, 2004).
responses during the group work (year 4, G school) one could assume that the children’s negative attitude shaped within the event’s first frame was gradually shifted. They pose questions attempting to discover the truth (e.g. Andrew: “Why did you move quickly”) and express openly their negative judgement and suspicion towards the character (Actor-traveler: “[...] my mum died when I was a baby”, Andrew: “lie”, Tanya: “I do not believe him”). They took into account the first hand evidence (e.g. “you showed us stars”) and when asked by the traveller if they were going to stand up for him in front of the soldier responded positively. An exception was Tanya’s response (year 4- G school), who suggested to the actor that he should be polite and truthful and speak for himself. Tanya’s response, as indicated later in the five-months-after individual interviews, reflected her personal values and prior to the event agenda (“if you are not truthful it gets worse and you have to stay for your lunch time and explain why you stole it but I have not stolen anything yet. [...] I let the person who stole explain by themselves”). During an informal discussion the class teacher referred to an incident that happened between Tanya and her some weeks before the museum visit. Tanya returned a missing item to the class teacher who, in return for her courage to tell the truth, did not punish her.

Plate 16 Drawing conducted following the museum visit. Hand, Year 6, S School

Hanad: “that is what the argument was about”
The children’s (storywriter’s group) comments in the interviews conducted a few months following the event, could also confirm the role that the functional use of objects had on the construction of the children’s “meaning-making”. All children from the storywriters’ group that participated in the final stage of the research (6 children from the year 4 group and 3 from the year 6 group) recalled the objects and the stories associated with them. Perhaps it was due to the personalized context via which they were initially presented to the children in association with the children’s active involvement (posing questions, handling, observing) that facilitated their recalling in the long term. The following extract might illustrate the importance of the story framework for the recalling of the objects and also show the shift in the children’s “meaning-making” during the group work:

(Andrew, year 4, G school, storywriter)

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12 Differences were noticed in terms of the details the children mentioned when recalling the stories and also in terms of the amount of prompting set by the researcher.
Researcher (R): what happened in this group?
A: He was trying to make us believe that he did not do it. And some people believed
that he did do it and some people believed that he did not do it and then some people
thought he did do it and some people thought he did not do it.
R: from your group?
A: From my group and then they showed us to try to make us believe him. I did not
believe him from the beginning.
R: what was that that made you change your mind?
A: When he got right through the story and he kept telling us about the story
R: do you remember what kind of stories he told you?
A: He showed us some horse shoes and some nails, a spoon and a plate that he got
because he saved that man. He said that he used to be a blacksmith and he had to give
up his house to pay tax. His dad died. And then he told us a story when he was
working for Mr Brown. Oh, no when he was working for a farmer close to Mr Brown
and he had his lantern with the stars and [...]
Third part- When the two frames become one

Following his orders to arrest a stranger with a lantern, the soldier intends to arrest the traveler. The storywriters that listened to the traveler’s story and interrogated him to find the truth are expected to defend him and to attempt to convince the soldier and the rest of the school group that Nathaniel is innocent. On the other hand the storytellers’ group, having embraced the false moral set during their group work, are expected to support the soldier’s decision to arrest the travel man. It is anticipated that the two groups through this opposition will debate by expressing their personal beliefs, thoughts and emotions and finally will reach a fair solution based on facts:

[...] We then get two groups of children debating and producing some deductions and telling us what their feelings are because they get exasperated because of the soldier’s not understanding, they can get annoyed because they have their own beliefs [...] Usually children will make the decision that the soldier cannot take him to prison, we cannot let Nathaniel go and just take his word for it (extract from the interview, Beamont 2002)

The educational foci of the third part are intertwined: a) the development of speaking skills to express thoughts and feelings, b) the development of children’s morality, c) the comparison between the 17th century and nowadays’ justice system. How is the event framed in order to develop the educational foci? The actors perceive the programme as a non-scripted drama, which is based on children’s reactions. At the same time, trying to avoid the risk of the drama taking directions that do not coincide with the programme’s objectives, they attempt through their interaction and questioning to facilitate the process through which the children will resolve the dilemma fairly. How do the children participate within the final part of the event? What meaning do they construct regarding the event’s content?

Tracing the children’s meaning making

It is attempted to trace the children’s meaning making both on an individual and a collective level based on their responses during the second and third part of the event and their follow-up responses in the group and individual interviews. Emphasis is placed on the storytellers’ (soldier’s group) interpretation of the event’s content since it is anticipated that the storytellers, by listening to their peers supporting the traveler’s innocence and by taking into account the evidence presented, will change
their initial attitude. Eventually they would suggest that the soldier should take the traveler to the farmer to confirm that the missing lantern is not the one that the traveler posses.

[...] But what we found quite surprisingly is often my group who sees through my mistakes and realize [...] They knock the moral down. Ten minutes after I told them I do not want to be tricked, they are already questioning” (Mackintosh, actor playing the soldier, 2002, interview).

A significant difference was noticed in the storytellers’ and storywriters’ participation during the third part of the event. The action is directed by the character of the soldier, who initiates the dialogue amongst the characters and poses questions-prompts to the children for participation. In both events (third part), the questions posed to the storytellers (soldier’s group) were mainly closed questions that triggered one or two words replies (e.g. Soldier: “you’ve told me it was square with a window”, Storyteller: “yes, it is square”). The actors felt that they have to follow a predetermined structure to ensure the desirable resolution of the event compromising as a result to a great extent the children’s (storytellers) meaningful contribution in the action during the final part of the event.

On the other hand, the storywriters interacted spontaneously with the actors and their peers without being always prompted by the actors’ leading questions and statements. For example, when the soldier set the constraint that he should take the traveler to the jail, the storywriters defend verbally the traveler’s innocence by presenting the objects as evidence and retelling the stories associated with them to the rest of the class. (e.g. S: [...] “I decided since then not to believe in stories. What if his story is not true?” Andrew (G school): “yes but there are two doors, one and then another. When he opened one door it was dark there and he lit the candle. [...] He did not lie”). The children’s immediate responses expressed in both groups might indicate the storywriters’ commitment to the event as they accept responsibility and feel “empowered” to defend the traveller. Their participation in the event is also non-verbal as a few children take the initiative to stand up in front of everyone gathered in the room in order to present the relevant objects. Furthermore, their non-verbal participation was observed when sitting in close proximity with the character they tried to hide him from the soldier’s sight. Although there are no comments elicited by
the children in regard to their proximity with the actor perhaps it could be assumed that their non-verbal communication during the event expresses an affectionate dimension. This emotional side was vividly expressed via Nathan’s (G school) reaction, who during the third part of the event hugged the actor and shouted one of the supportive arguments:

The soldier: “[…] What have you got in these bags?”
Traveler: “I am an honest travel man Sir and travel men have to stay in dark places. I have got a lantern”
[Children from Nathaniel’s group react spontaneously expressing real disappointment] : “oh no”
Nathan: [loud] “His dad made it for him”

To what extent, however, did the storywriters’ participation in the third part of the event, which with the presentation of objects and stories would “prove” the traveler’s innocence, have an impact on the storytellers’ “meaning-making”?

*Storytellers*

In the third part of the event the children are expected via interaction with their peers (the storywriters’ group) and the presentation of “evidence” that support his innocence to realize that they have been unfairly accusing the traveler. However, contrary to the “author’s” expectations on a collective level the majority of the children embraced the “false moral” constructed within the second frame (not to believe anyone’s lies) and viewed with suspicion the stories presented to support the traveler’s innocence. From the fourteen children that in total participated in the event as “storytellers”, following the event, only three children commented that the traveler was “innocent”. The other eleven children, although they considered that the event ended with a “fair” solution, in essence they did not alter their own opinion in regard to the traveler’s innocence. It would have been an impossible task to discern patterns in regard to the processes via which the children constructed their meaning. However, based on the children’s comments, suggestions could be made concerning the parameters that might have affected the children’s interpretation of the final part of the event. Although these parameters are presented separately here, they do actually interrelate.
i) The meaning constructed within the first frame carried through until the end of the event. As illustrated in Michaela’s and James’ responses, they considered that the traveler was “guilty” based on the evidence they had witnessed themselves during the first part of the event (Michaela-S school: “I thought he did steal it because it was very weird that he was carrying a lantern and the farmer lost one that day”, James-S school: “He was suspicious and I still think very weird. I wonder who would carry a lantern around in a bag. Somebody I would think that is up to something”). The influence that their peers (storywriters) might have had in the interpretation of the event was not a determinant parameter as illustrated in both James’ and Michaela’s responses. They acknowledge that their peers might have had a different opinion and they also suggest why they might be persuaded by the traveler without, however, letting that affect their initial interpretation (R: why do you think they did not believe him? Michaela: “Because he took them into a room and then they got the lantern and he shined that into the corner [...] that’s what everybody said”). Perhaps, the children’s perseverance with the first frame would be an indication that the interaction that took place between the storywriters and the storytellers during the third part was not a meaningful one that could facilitate direct interchange and construction of arguments. Perhaps, it could be also suggested that the “author’s” expectation that the children have to go through various stages in order to reach a “fair” solution and to “knock down the false moral” did not respond to the children’s values and ability to “rationalize”. Michaela and James in their responses during the group work demonstrated that they were in a position to recommend a “fair” solution in regard to the fictional character of the story (James-S school: “it is a matter of innocence”, Michaela-S school: “We can take him home and see if you are right and if you are not we can arrest you”).

ii) The “false moral” set up during the group work. In both year groups a link was noticed between the children’s “meaning-making” during the storytelling session and their interpretation of the third part of the event. The fictional story developed during the storytellers’ group work is partially similar to the story that actually takes place in Clarke Hall: when soldiers are ready to arrest the famous highway man John Nevison he attempts to convince the soldiers of his innocence by presenting himself as poor

13 As it was later clarified James meant that it was a matter of justice.
and helpless and perhaps as another Robin Hood. Within the fictional story if the soldiers believe John Nevison and do not arrest him, they finally discover that they have been tricked. It was noticed that when the children within the context of the fictional story embraced the false moral “not to believe anyone’s stories”, they expressed it later in their attitude towards the traveller (Year 4 group- G school: Darcee, Joshua, Charlotte, year 6 group -S school: Rob and Joe). For example, Rob from the year 6 group (who was also the leader of the group during the storytelling in the role of a sergeant), when asked by the soldier within the fictional context if he was going to arrest John Nevison, replied after a brief consultation with Joe “I am afraid I have to”. In the follow up interviews, Rob commented that the traveler “is a thief” and that one should “never trust a thief and his tales”, while five months after, he supported his opinion with his own interpretation of the evidence presented during the event: “Yes that was his ... I do not think it was his initials because he said that his first name was .. I cannot remember but the farmer’s initials were SS. It did not have a candle in it. I think this proves that he was guilty”. Similar responses were also elicited by children from the year 4 group such as Charlotte’s response in the individual interview a few months following the event that illustrated the parallel drawn between the fictional character (John Nevison) and the traveler in the event (Charlotte: “He was lying because he might be like John Nevison, telling lies”). The line, however, that differentiated the two frames (the story created during the second part of the event and the fictional context of the event) was not always clear for some children (Year, 4: Chelsea, Zoe).

14 Joshua’s “meaning-making” might have been also influenced by his personal agenda and interest in military (see Chapter 5, Objects for characterization). During the storytelling session he demonstrated particular enthusiasm in participating as a soldier who is doing his duty.

15 For example, Chelsea, although she initially believed that the traveler was the thief that the soldier was searching for, during the third part of the event was influenced by the storytelling and the image presented of the traveler as “poor”, and believed that it was the fictional character John Nevison that stole the lantern. For Chelsea the two fictional contexts became one:

Chelsea: At the beginning we thought that he [...] stole it but then I did not ...”
R: What made you change your mind?
Chelsea: [...] then I thought the other man had a lantern in his bag because [...] the man said no, no my dad did it and it has an engraved M. The farmer’s Brown lantern got stolen by a thief who stole jewelers. Nathaniel was a poor person because he had old fashion Tudor clothes".
How did the children who did not embrace the false moral during the group work interpret the final part of the event? Either, as viewed earlier (I, page 172) their interpretation is shaped via the first frame of the event or perhaps, as occurred in the case of Robert (year 4), they take into account the evidence presented during the third part of the event. Robert was the only participant in the storytellers’ group (G school) who kept a skeptical attitude in regard to the arrest of the fictional character:

Soldier in the fictional character of John Nevison: “You would not throw me to jail would you”?
Robert “that depends if you are lying or telling the truth”
Soldier to the group: “do you think we should let him go to help the poorest?”
Robert: “I do”

Robert’s comments in the follow up group and individual interviews suggest that he differentiated himself from the storytellers’ group (“they had to look at his lantern”) and took into account the evidence presented by the storywriters as a proof of the traveler’s innocence (Robert-G school: “I did not really think he stole the lantern […] the group with the man with the lantern said that the lantern was his father’s […] and he actually showed to them the lantern and it showed stars”). The evidence presented during the third part of the event was also integrated in Robert’s fictional writing at school (See Appendix 14).

iii) Peer-group. The social context within which the children construct their meaning might have influenced the children’s interpretation of the event and even the way their interpretation is constructed (Solomon, 1987). It is common in the children’s responses, when referring to the meaning they constructed during the different parts of the event, to speak in the first-person plural “we” implying that their peers shared the same meaning with them. Accordingly they tend to highlight the difference in the interpretation when they do not share the same meaning with the other members of the group or other groups (Emily – G school: […] but we thought he had not. Other people think he did). To what extent though did the peer group, and specifically the interaction between the storytellers and the storywriters, shift the storytellers’ negative attitude towards the traveler? A shift in interpretation was noticed in Jeinna’s (year 6-S school) response in the individual interviews five months following the event. However, although Jeinna’s comments suggest that she took into account the evidence presented during the third part of the event, there are no specific references
to the positive influence that the peer group of the storywriters had on shaping her opinion:

JE: our group did think that he stole the lantern. I have a different opinion though. I thought it might be his.
R: when did you have this different opinion
JE: when we gathered altogether.
R: what made you change your mind?
JE: because he said it had his initials on it and he showed us the letters.
R: and then what happened
JE: the group that had been with him and some other groups believed him and I did as well but some of our group did not.

Perhaps, the social context in the shaping of meaning is more illustrated in Scott’s (year 4-G school) comments that were also elicited during the individual interviews. As noticed in the class’s socio-gram Scott has not been mutually positively nominated with any of the children that are also in the storytellers’ group (See Appendix 15). He has a mutual positive nomination though with Andrew, who is a member of the storywriters’ group. Perhaps given the social constituency of the groups in association with Scott’s comments, one could assume that the peer influence was a parameter that affected his interpretation of the event:

S: I did not think he is a thief
R: why?
S: the soldier thought that he was a thief because when Nathaniel came in...he told us upstairs that when he walked in he thought that this man stole the lantern and we said what lantern? Mr Brown’s lantern. When we were upstairs to talk about it with that woman in the bigger room some friends were with Nathaniel and Nathaniel went to show the lantern saying “you did ..” and “my dad made it for me”. And then he had to open it and Nathaniel said when you stick a candle you see a big star.
R: mmm
S: everyone supported Nathaniel. When we went upstairs with Nathaniel I did but no one from my team did. I do not know if others did. I did.

The peer group as a parameter that shaped the children’s “meaning-making” was also illustrated in James’ and Rob’s comments (year 6). As indicated in the relevant socio-gram and illustrated in James’ comments, James, Robert and Steven were friends (See Appendix 16). They formed the same meaning within the first frame of the event. When however in the third part Rob and James, who were both in the storytellers’ group, realized that their friend Steven, who participated in the storywriter’s group,
supported the traveler they were surprised about their friend’s shifted opinion. Their surprise, as illustrated in Rob’s comment, might be rooted in their personal values:

Rob, year 6: We could not believe that because Steve tried to stand up for him [...] they should not stick up for him because what he did was wrong breaking the law. If they are sticking up for him really it is like breaking the law themselves.

James, year 6, individual interview:
R: what happened at the end?
J: Nathaniel Marsh was taken to the ..that’s a point I do not get. One of our friends said, he was actually the first person to say that Nathaniel was the thief. He was in Nathaniel’s group right, and then he changed that Nathaniel was not a thief. I cannot understand that. At the beginning when we had the drinks I sat down next to my friend and he said that he is a thief and I said yes. Then at the end when we were doing all that talking that Nathaniel Marsh showed the lantern my friend actually starting sticking up for Nathaniel.

As suggested in the themes described above the children’s (storytellers) construction of meaning in regard to the fictional story of the event is affected by the framing of the event and the peer group. The majority of the children embraced the false moral constructed during the group work and/or transferred the meaning constructed within the event’s first frame to the final part of the event. It was indicated that in a few cases the children contrary to the “author’s” expectations could reason and suggest a fair solution before their participation in the group work. It was however, the embracing of the false moral in association with the children’s reading of the first part of the event that shaped the meaning constructed. Perhaps this point could suggest the power that storytelling could have on shaping the children’s understanding and at the same time highlight the importance of allowing the children to explore and construct their own meaning rather than direct them to a predetermined path. The peer group influence that the storywriters could have on the storytellers did not take place in a linear straightforward manner, as it was as expected to by the event’s “author”. As suggested by the children’s comments the social construction of meaning is an integral part of the children’s interpretation of the event and the influence that the peer group might have cannot be limited within the boundaries of certain groups.

From the “Particular” to the “Universal”

The dramatic focus provided an educational focus for action in the children’s “real” context. The year 6 children (S school) who participated in the event as the
storywriters and defended the traveller in front of their peers brought the focus of the fictional action back into the “real” context through analogy. Perhaps by reflecting on the shift of the initial interpretation (that the traveller was guilty because of his suspicious behaviour) and then on the “discovery” of the truth (i.e. that there was not any actual evidence against the traveller), they transferred this dramatic situation, by analogy, to their everyday context. For example Steven, who participated actively in the storywriters’ group, during the individual interviews conducted five months following the event commented:

Steven (year 6, S school): “I learned that you should not accuse people when you do not know if they have done it or not. Because you do not know if they have done it if somebody else told you that they’ve done it”

His understanding was generated by a personal reflection he had when an incident similar to the theatre event happened in the school’s playground.

[...] Arron lost his ball and everybody was accusing of Jeremy for doing it but the ball was actually in the flowers in the playground so Jeremy was actually accused of something that he did not do

A possible reason for this shift was the relevance the content of the event had to their own reality. The classroom’s hidden curriculum (S school), described via observations and interviews, indicated that the children are encouraged to “give names” to the teacher when a behavioural incident occurs in the classroom. The children either accept the school rules (and in this case are rejected by their classmates) or they purposefully misinform (“to tell lies”) the class teacher to “defend their friends”. During the event the children operated in a dual role: as classmates and as defenders of the actor. Within the fictional context they demonstrated a commitment in their role and actively participated to defend the traveller’s innocence. Perhaps, the tension between the real classroom agenda and the fictional context created what Augusto Boal calls “the metaxis phenomenon” (Boal, 1990:38 cited in O’Neill, 1995:119). A “metaxis” is used to denote the “total and simultaneous adherence to two different and autonomous worlds” (O’Neill, 1995:119). Perhaps, it was due to this duality between the real and fictional through which the shifting in understanding emerged and the children moved from the “Particular” (the specific focus of the event) to the “Universal” human experience. These terms have been introduced by the drama pioneer Dorothy Heathcote to denote accordingly the selected dramatic focus
which acquires significance when viewed within the Universal human experience (Wagner, 1999:53-54).

The transfer from the “particular” case to the “universal” was also illustrated in the storyteller’s comments from the G school. For example Emily, when asked in the individual interviews a few months following the event to comment if she felt that she learned something from her experience in Clarke hall, commented:

Emily: I think they were hard on people sometimes. I think that were accusing people without being sure.
R: why did you tell me that you learned to be honest?
E: because some people might said without knowing really, like Tudor times. So, to be honest and to tell if you know who exactly is

Unless the children reflected by themselves the event’s content, it could be assumed that the children’s participation in the research’s individual interviews functioned as a medium of reflection. Reflection is an integral part of the learning process, which however did not always take place within the classroom following the event. Also, viewing the long term impact that the children’s constructed meaning (storywriters) had on their “real” agenda, assumptions could be made about the negative impact that the storyteller’s embracing of the false moral could have on their everyday life. The acceptance of the “false moral” (not to believe anyone’s stories) could make the children cautious, having less empathy for others. For example, during the group interviews (year 6- S school) that were conducted following the children’s participation in the event, comments were expressed which indicated that the children read the event’s “false moral” as a didactic point of view that could be applicable in their real life: Matthew- year 6 “I learned that when somebody knocks on your door and tells you stories and that he needs your help you should not listen to his stories.”

Conclusion
This chapter attempts to offer an insight into the children’s interpretation of the theatrical event in Clarke Hall in terms of its content and format. Via the categories that emerged from the research analysis it is intended to highlight the theatrical event’s main characteristics and to indicate the parameters that might have shaped it.
The diagram in Figure 7 presents graphically the main characteristics of the event that will be also briefly discussed below.

The “pre-text” and the “unexpected”: The term “pre-text” is used here as it has been introduced by the educational drama theorist Cecily O’Neill to denote any occasion that initiates the dramatic action. In a way it is the preliminary frame of drama that locates the participants in regard to the potential action, determines the first moments of the action and activates the weaving of the theatrical text (O’Neill, 1995:19). The material and the suggestions provided to the school groups by the museum a few months before the museum visit could function as the basis for the creation of a “pre-text” in the sense that they can facilitate the children’s engagement in the fictional story. Also the negative first encounter with the actor, who is in role of the owner of the house, functions as a “pre-text” for every school visit. However standardised the “pre-text” might be, especially in the case of the process drama, it is explored differently by different groups. This variation is illustrated in the two school groups that participated in this research.
On the one hand, the year 6 children (S school) working upon and extending the preparatory material, which was provided by the museum, created a “pre-text” that located them into an imaginative world. Within this fictional world, details emerged as soon as the children developed their roles and improvised brief scenes at the school. On the other hand, in the case of the year 4 class (G school), that did not prepare for the participation in a theatrical event, the first encounter with the actor shattered the children’s expectation (that they would visit a museum), and by functioning as an element of the unexpected it facilitated the renegotiation of expectations. The unexpected encounter of the owner of the house operated as a “pre-text” that “[switched] on expectation and [bound] the group together in anticipation” (O’Neil, 1995:20). To what extent were the potential meanings that the “pre-text” might have carried explored by the children as the event proceeded?

The setting: In particular in the case of the year 6 class (S school) the imaginative world with fictional characters, locations and concerns became concrete as the class entered the museum setting. Contrary to what usually happens within the context of educational drama, in which the drama practitioner in order to facilitate the children’s establishment of disbelief has to transform the “context of the setting” into one congenial to the medium, the theatrical event in Clarke Hall develops within a realistic congruent setting (O’Toole, 1992:50). The centrality of the setting, that characterises “museum-theatre” events since they are developed for interpretive purposes related to the setting and its collections, is also evident in the theatrical event under study in Clarke hall. Although it is not aimed by the museum staff to develop an event with historical objectives related to the setting and its collections, the setting is the axis around which the main scenes of the event were devised. It functions to a certain extent as a “theatrical stage” which according to the children’s reading has the potentiality to create tension. It affects in combination with the classes’ learning agenda the children’s perception of the historical time and as a result their perception of the costumes and the language used by the actors. The children value the setting for its “authentic” quality and, especially in the case of the year 4 class, read it as an interpretive point related to their learning in the subject of history.

The objects: the relation between the children’s agenda and their perception of the setting as an authentic one was also expressed in the children’s interpretation of their
hands-on experience at the heritage site as an authentic Tudor experience. The objects used during the ritual were recalled (even five months following the event) as evidence of Tudor objects that attributed historical authenticity in the experience. Perhaps it should be noted that this was the only case in which objects were used without performing a function-role within the story context. The objects used within the dramatic context as props for storytelling and for characterization were read by the children in relation to the function they had to perform within the theatrical event. In the long term there were children who, perhaps due to their personal agenda and interest, recalled the objects used for characterization. When the objects were presented within the context of storytelling (the storywriters group) then in the long term they were recalled by the children in relation to their story context.

The framing: It was not within the scope of this research to examine the extent to which the readers embraced the author’s intentions, as such an approach would imply a producer-consumer relationship between the author and the reader. However, if one examines the children’s constructed meaning in association with the meaning that the author of the event intended for the participants to construct, it could be suggested that the structure of the event with its internal dramatic frames affected the potential meanings. The double dramatic framing of the event presented the event to two groups of participants from a different “narrative viewpoint” with the intention that this difference would function in favour of the event’s educational objectives. The intended meanings delineated by each frame were embraced on a collective group level.

Children, audience or participants? The children’s positioning throughout the event seems to vary from being the audience, who attends the action that unfolds by the actors without being able to interact with them in any substantial form, to being in the role of the “soldiers” or the “detectives” according to the dramatic framing. Each role was framed differently to the unfolding event in terms of its “distance” from the actual event and “authority” in connection with the event\textsuperscript{16}. Associated with different

\textsuperscript{16} Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote exploring the notion of framing in the dramatic action highlight that the participants in the dramatic event can view the event from different perspectives
forms of group work the allocated roles affected the construction of the children’s meaning, their degree of participation in the event’s resolution and finally the quality of their learning. The “soldiers” placed “on the edge of the event” participated in a fictional role-play/storytelling within which the elements of time, place and roles were actually altered. The authority given to the children within this frame may not have been a powerful one in terms of allowing them to change the outcome of the fictional story during the group work. However, the children’s responses indicated that they accepted responsibility within their role as “soldiers”. The effect that the group work and the framing of the roles had on their “meaning-making” in regard to the actual event was illustrated in the children’s comments who carried through the constructed meaning during the group work to the actual event (not to believe anyone’s stories).

The children in the role of “detectives” being framed “at the centre of the event” were allocated with (and also demonstrated) a high degree of responsibility as they were the ones that had to “discover” the truth to protect initially the owner of the house from a potential thief and later the traveller from being unfairly punished. Their positioning in the event was a central one as the impression was given that the children’s actions could alter the unfolding event. First, in role of “detectives” (storywriters) and via participation that mainly involved questioning and observation the meaning they had formed within the event’s first frame was shifted. Then placed in opposition to the actor-soldier they demonstrated a spontaneous interaction with the actors and their peers, an investment in their role as defenders and an emotional attachment to the defended character.

Perhaps it was due to the quality of their participation in the event and the level of personal engagement that a link was facilitated between the children’s fictional roles as defenders with their hidden classroom agenda. When within the context of “process drama” the participants “control significant aspects of what is taking place”,

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17 O’Toole extending Heathcote’s notion of framing classifies the possible dramatic frames into three main options in terms of the role-distance from the event itself: “at the centre of the event”, “on the edge of the event” where one or more parameters of the event are altered, and “outside the event” in roles such as that of the journalist who reports the event (O’Toole, 1992:111).
improvise and are personally engaged with the issues that emerged within the fiction, then they might make implicit or explicit connections with their own lives (O Neil, 1995:1). It is the safety of the fictional context within which the children confront issues and, as in any other learning situation where they are actively engaged, experience the drama event and simultaneously organise it by finding connections with their own experiences. Perhaps also, given the year 6 class's hidden curriculum, it was the analogy between the children's everyday reality and the fictional situation in the theatrical event that in the long-term facilitated the construction of a new understanding in the children's real-life agenda.

However, given the historical perspective within which the event takes place and the children's context for interpretation (as illustrated in Chapter 4), the children's participation within the event does not appear filtered via this context. For example, although they comment upon the strict punishment system during the Tudors' time in the interviews before the museum visit, the children do not seem to take this context into account when they make decisions during the event. The lack of demonstration of cultural and historical underpinnings in the children's roles during the event and later in their comments following the event might be a reflection of the lack of emphasis placed on the event's historical perspective by the museum and especially by the class teachers that participated in the event.

Reflection either during the event and/or following the drama is an integral part not only of the "drama as process" but also of any learning experience. It is the process via which the children distance themselves emotionally from the experience and by reflecting consciously upon it they assimilate their new understanding for later use (Dennison & Kirk, 1990; Sotto, 1994). The children's participation in the interviews, drawing and writing activities following the museum visit could be considered as a form of reflection as the children reviewed the event and articulated aspects of their participation. However, an opportunity for reflection within the classroom context (after the visit) could have provided the opportunity for all the participants to view the

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18 One of the most controversial techniques introduced by Heathcote is to stop the drama when it seems to be going well in order to allow the participants to reflect on what they have lived through and felt during the experience (Wagner, 1999:74-76).
experience from various angles, express their thoughts on the experience, make connections between their prior-to the visit agenda and their new experience and trigger the searching for further levels of meaning beyond the “action” that unfolded during the event19. Given also the storytellers’ embracing of the “false moral” (not to believe anyone’s stories) and the potential impact that it could have on the children’s “meaning-making” (Rob, year 6: “not to trust a thief and his tales”), one could suggest that the process of reflection would facilitate the exploration of such schemata and maximize the effect that might have had on the children’s attitudes in real-life.

The children’s “meaning-making”: The roots of “meaning-making” are inseparable from other individual (personal agenda, values, interests) or social contexts (class’s and school agenda, peer-group). The children’s construction of meaning during the event and interpretation of elements of the event (such as the setting and the objects) were filtered via their personal interests, agenda and values. For example, Joshua from the year 4 group, who had a personal agenda and interest in military, expressed particular enthusiasm during his participation in the storytellers’ group (soldier) and interest in the objects used for characterization. He embraced the “false moral” set during the storytelling session and applied this constructed meaning in his interpretation of the theatrical event that actually took place in Clarke Hall. The link also between his personal agenda and his interpretation of the event was illustrated both before and following the museum visit. He interpreted the setting and its characters in congruence with his learning background (shaped before his museum visit) while his comments five months following the event indicated that he could apply this learning in new contexts.

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19 Dorothy Heathcote suggests various levels for understanding an action or an event within the dramatic context. The “action” itself (real or fictional) is located within the first level while the “motivation” behind the action is situated within the second level of understanding the action. The degree of the actor’s “investment” in the action constitutes a further level understanding while at the last two levels of understanding an action are positioned the “role-model” and the “stance” in life associated with the action. The various levels can be understood as a prism of different perspectives from within which we can view an action and/or enter the dramatic context (Gillam, 1988:11-17).
The association between the children's prior-to the event agenda, as it was shaped within the class's and the school's context, was also in particular illustrated in the children's "pre-text" for entering the fictional situation and their expectations about the format of the event. However, although the children entered the event with a different agenda and degrees of willingness to act within the "as if" context, the event in both classes that participated in this research unfolded in a similar manner. The pre-arranged structure, in terms not only of the format but also of the potential meanings that the children would construct within the event, did not leave space for negotiation of the event's content and format. As a result, with the exception of the children that participated in the storywriters' group, the children's involvement in the event could not be considered as sufficiently powerful to alter the dramatic action. The decisions were actually made for the children. The event's unaltered structure determined the meaning that the participants could construct without allowing them to explore actively within the fictional context their own "real life" experiences and attitudes. Also, the need for the establishment of a new contract within the "museum-theatre" context, which would initiate a new grounding for those involved in the experience, might be highlighted, if one takes into account that the schools' framework with its behavioural and power connotations was still in operation within the event's context. Especially as the class teachers and the teaching assistants were not in essence allocated with a fictional role their presence in the event was read by the children via their familiar school context.

An important parameter also in shaping the children's constructed meaning might have been the context of the peer group within which the event unfolded. The impact that the interaction between the peer groups was expected to have on the children's "meaning-making" might not have been so obviously straightforward as indicated by the storytellers' non-shifted initial interpretation. However, the peer context might have played a role in the children's interpretation of the experience. As illustrated in the children's comments in the group and individual interviews the children, when they identified with the meaning constructed within their group, referred to the interpretation as commonly shared ("we") whereas when their personal interpretation was different to the collective they tended to differentiate themselves from the group ("they"). It would require further research in order to trace the impact that the social context has on the children's "meaning-making", however, suggestions could be made
of its importance as the children’s comments indicated that during the actual experiencing of the event they were aware of the friends’ “meaning-making”. For example, references were made by both classes to the shared meaning they constructed when in the position of the audience they all watched the unfolding action while sitting around the kitchen table to have their breakfast. The social aspect of this experience was in particular illustrated in the year 4 class’s comments who, due to their individual class agenda, valued the moment for its collective nature.

Before exploring further the participatory event in Clarke Hall and discussing its positioning within the wider context of “museum-theatre”, the case study of the first-person interpretation programs at the Museum of London will be presented as experienced by two primary school classes. By following the same structure that was applied for the Clarke Hall case study, the following chapter will present the participants’ prior-to-the event agenda.
Chapter 6 - Case study Museum of London

The agenda prior-to-the-event

This chapter is the first of two that deal with the case study in the Museum of London. The chapter aims to illustrate the museum's and the schools' agenda as they were presented via the participants' comments before their participation in the study events, in documentation and from observations in the classroom and museum setting. First, the museum's agenda is presented, based on the museum staff's comments, documentation material and unstructured observations of theatrical events similar to the ones under study. Following that, the two schools' agendas are presented in separate subsections. Information is given regarding the research context and the schools' characteristics, while it is intended to describe the participants' aims, expectations and context for interpretation.

The museum's agenda

Introduction

The selection of the theatre events in the Museum of London (MOL) is based on the research's wider context, that aims to find how the participants make meaning both in participatory and less participatory forms of theatre/drama. The theatre events in the MOL were considered as first person interpretation events as in each event an interpreter "assumes a particular role" in appropriate costume and acts as if "his/her audience has moved backwards through time to the past". It was expected that focusing on a first-person interpretation form of "museum-theatre" would provide data for further comparison and conceptualisation of both case studies.

According to the research's design, initially it was intended to examine only one theatrical event to be examined as experienced by two school classes. However, due to unforeseen practicalities that arose during the conduct of the research, a homogeneous

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1 International Museum Theatre Alliance - Europe. Key definitions [online], http://www.imtal-europe.org/keydefinitions.asp (last accessed 4 October 2004)
research design could not be achieved between the two case studies\(^2\). Thus, two theatre events were selected that took place in the Roman gallery at the MOL. For the purposes of this research the first event selected will be termed as event A. In this event the character of a housemaid called Martia Martina interacts with the school groups. The school group that participated in event A and in this research was a year 4 class from the BL School in London. The second event (event B) selected is performed by the character of a retired soldier called Markus. The research's school group that participated in event B was a year 5 class from the N school in London\(^3\). The choice of the theatre programmes in the MOL was based a) on their characteristics as first person interpretation programmes, b) on issues of accessibility such as the number of advanced school bookings, and c) on the availability of the programmes.

It is attempted to describe the museum's agenda via the museum staff's comments, internal documents, support educational material for school groups, and observations of the theatrical events. On 13/09/03 three sessions of event A were observed with the participation of different year groups. Before and during the intervals between the events, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the actor. On 21/10/03 an interview was conducted with the museum’s Learning and Access Officer, during which feedback was also given regarding the school’s responses following their participation in the event. A semi-structured interview with the actor (event B) was conducted on 24/11/03 (when the year 5 class from N school participated in the event) while two sessions of the event B were observed the following day. Following the research analysis, a discussion took place with the Deputy Head of the Education Department (Fraser Swift) in order to inform the museum about the research’s outcomes (19/03/04). The discussion validated the initial description of the museum’s agenda and also provided new insights.

\(^2\) During the schools' autumn term (2003-2004) the museum offered first person interpretation programmes for less than two weeks (One week in October: 13-17 Oct. and three days in November: 24-26). From the eight schools that booked the sessions in November, two schools cancelled their visit, four schools (independent schools) did not agree to participate in the research and it was impossible to access one school. The school that agreed on participating in the research was booked for event B.

\(^3\) Fictional initials are used for purposes of anonymity.
Live interpretation for school groups in the Museum of London

Key Stage Two school groups are one of the museum's top priority audiences. Every year 40,000 pupils in school groups visit the Museum of London, of which 60% are at Key Stage 2 (Schools Policy, 2003:4). The museum intends to provide sessions that “engage, actively involve, motivate and inspire pupils” (Schools Policy, 2003:2). Object handling sessions, storytelling and first person interpretation programs constitute a significant part of the educational provision for school groups.

The Museum of London has an established tradition in providing first person interpretation programs since 1995/6. Since the beginning of the museum's provision of live interpretation, all programmes are developed in co-operation with the Spectrum Drama and Theatre Projects Company4, which is one of the first companies created in the UK for the development of theatre programs in museums.

It is an independent company sharing a contract among various museums in London such as the London Science Museum, the London Transport Museum and the Museum of London. Although the company works for different institutions, there is a certain process followed for the development of programs. The process described at the preliminary stage of this research by the company's director, the drama co-ordinator in the Science Museum and more recently by the Deputy Head of the Education Department in the Museum of London is characterized as a “collaborative process” between the company and the institution5. The institution has a general idea about a character that they would like to develop (Needham, 2000 ; Frazer, 2004). A meeting takes place where the company liaises with the institution on a consultation level regarding usually the context, the style of the programme and the target groups (Thomas, 2000 ; Needham, 2000).

4 Occasionally the museum might employ freelancers for the development though of specific sessions (Frazer 2003, interview).
5 Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Drama co-ordinator in London Science Museum (Kathy Needham) and the Spectrum Company's director (Geraint Thomas) on 2/11/00 aiming to gain an insight into the status of theatre in museums at the time.
In the Museum of London the meeting takes place with the involvement of three parties: the education department, the curator of the period and the company’s director involved (Frazer, 2004). The next step is for the director to identify the company’s actor who would devise the script and develop the character. Information is provided to the actor by the curator regarding the historical period and the collections intended to be interpreted. What follows is a process of amendment and approval by the education department and the relevant curator. The script moves back and forth between the actor and the two involved parties in the museum. The input of the education department is mainly focused on the style of delivery while the curator ensures historical accuracy of the script’s content. Finally the script is rehearsed in the gallery where, with the contribution of all involved parties, final amendments might take place (Frazer, 2004; Thomas, 2000).

"The Roman Gallery Actor" sessions
The Roman London Gallery is particularly popular with the Key Stage 2 schools as learning about the Roman conquest of Britain is mandatory in the National Curriculum. The gallery receives twice as many pupil visits as any other gallery in the museum and the number of students rises to 15,500 in over 500 groups annually. As there is an increased interest, the teachers need to book a term in advance while the object handling and drama sessions related to the subject of Romans are over subscribed (Internal document, 2002).

Plate 18 Aspect of the Roman Gallery where the first person interpretation events take place
Three are three characters developed for the Roman Gallery: a retired soldier, a maidservant from a wealthy Roman household and a Roman merchant’s wife (Support material for school groups, Museum’s website). The sessions developed could be characterized as “first person interpretation” programs as the characters developed, being constantly in role, act as representatives of the past acknowledging that their audience has moved to their past. The characters, although fictional, are developed to be historically accurate via research conducted by the actor and the museum’s curator. Their development and performances are linked to the museum’s setting. They perform in a reconstruction of a wealthy house including an original mosaic and designs on the walls. The room is decorated with British pottery and pewter while the furniture is reconstructed from representations found in wall paintings and mosaics (See Plate 18).

The format
Three main characteristics in relation to the format of the first person interpretation programs emerged from the interviews with the museum staff: a) personalization, b) interactivity, and c) enjoyment. Although each one is presented in a separate section below, the three characteristics actually interrelate in the sense that they contribute towards the same objective: the creation of interactive and enjoyable sessions that will personalize the setting rather than impart information.

The personalization of the setting and the historical period for the children is the main objective for the development of first person interpretation sessions at the museum. It is believed that the use of actors in the setting will personalize the gallery and facilitate the children’s understanding of ideas and objects in the gallery by relating to a person within the period:

We use actors to personalize the galleries. Because in some galleries people do not come strongly in [meaning that the galleries exhibit collections], they are depersonalized. [...] We use actors in the museum, particularly with schools to give that feeling of context, so that people can relate to another person in that historical period that will help them to

understand the ideas and the objects in the gallery. So the primary purpose is not giving
information (Swift 2004, Interview following research analysis)⁷.

This personalization might be achieved via the development of characters with strong
personalities with whom the children can identify. The actor’s experience and confidence
appear to be significant parameters for the development of sessions that emphasize the
character’s personality. The significance placed by the museum on the development of
sessions that allow the projection of the characters’ personality might be illustrated in the
following comment by the Deputy Head of the Department referring to the development
of a past session:

Sometimes it depends on the experience of the actor. The actor that was doing that was
very new to Spectrum. She was taking it very seriously. It is as much as about
confidence. She was talking about the subject matter. It was not the personality coming
through. It is quite important for the characters to have personality so that the children
can identify with the person within rather than providing information. (Swift 2004,
Interview following research analysis).

The actors who perform the relevant sessions also placed emphasis on the element of
personalization. As stated by the actors the projection of a personality might establish the
children’s make-belief to the characters and, in combination with other elements such as
enjoyment, might reinforce the children’s feeling that they relate to a real person from the
past. The importance given to what might be called “personalization” is reflected in the
actors’ comments referring to their personal style of delivering the session. For example,
for the actor who performs the event B (Actor B) the projection of a negative attitude
towards the setting is the medium to establish children’s make believe in the character,
while for the actor who performs the event A (Actor A) the element of enjoyment seems
to be a priority:

My delivery style is I like to have an attitude towards the room. [...] A negative attitude
to allow them to believe it is a real person (Extract, Actor A, 2003).

⁷ This statement regarding the museum’s intention for using drama in the galleries was elicited as feedback
to the school’s N responses following participation in the event to the effect that it did not provide
historical information to extend the children’s learning.
Try to entertain them with information and also for them to think that this might be a real person with real feelings living 2000 years ago (Extract, Actor B, 2003).

*Interactivity* was a common theme that emerged from the museum’s publicised material and the museum staff’s comments. In a broad context the children are expected to gain an insight of how life was like for a particular person in the past and the various aspects of what life was like in an “interactive way”. First person interpretation programs are interactive in their nature since they entail an interchange of answers-questions between the actor and the visitors. What shape, however, does this interaction take for the programmes included in this case study?

In the support material provided by the museum to the schools the interactive learning is advocated via the form of “historical enquiry” through which “pupils will develop knowledge of the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of some Roman Londoners” (Museum of London, Support Material). The schoolteachers are advised by the museum to prepare questions with the children before the museum visit that the children could pose to the actors. However, although the museum advocates interaction with the actor via questioning, it seems that the desirable interaction is perceived through the frame of the traditional performance. One of the key practical points that children should be aware of before the visit is not to interrupt the gallery actor as such interruptions are perceived to disrupt the actor from being constantly in role. Only by the end of the session would children’s questions be welcomed by the actor. Such an approach is perceived by the museum as a two-way communication initiated by the actor, which on the one side overcomes the barrier between performance and audience, and on the other maintains the character of a performance without equating the session to a classroom lesson. The following comment summarises this point:

Researcher: when you say in an interactive way, is that an important element of the session being different from what is going on in the classroom? Could you explain further what do you mean by interactive?

Learning and access officer: Usually the sessions I have seen that the actor at the end if there is a bit of time she/he will ask the children to ask questions but I think the majority during the actual performance is one way the actor questioning them. ....So there is two-
way thing but the majority is coming from the actor. It is not just this barrier between performance and the audience. We ask that the children do not interrupt the actor: that is important in terms of keeping the role going, so it does not turn into a classroom session. It keeps that element of a performance (Rachel Stemp, Learning and Access Officer, interview, 2003).

Comments concerning the sessions' interactivity were also elicited from the actors who perform the sessions that constitute the focus of this research. Yet, the emphasis placed on the nature of interaction differed according to each actor's style of performance. For Actor B (in role of a retired Roman soldier) emphasis is placed on the questions posed by the school group believing that the questions' quality determines the learning themes of the session and the nature of interaction. The more substantial questions and informed answers to his questions the actor receives from the group, the more he will open up the learning themes and depth of information provided. The following extract might illustrate this point:

[...] the pack asks the teacher if they have time before coming to encourage the children to ask the actor questions.[...] when I ask them do they know what the floor is I am trying to gauge their knowledge of what the teacher has done with them already. If lots of them know about the mosaic and one of them knows it is tesserai or it is made of tiles then I would open it out. I have more questions because I would have known that the preparation work is done (Actor B, interview, 2003).

For actor A the interactive style of the performance lies in the medium's immediacy that allows direct responses to the children's questions from somebody who is supposed to be living in a historical time. This immediacy attributes to the historical world a real dimension on a human level, which, in association with the visual aspect of the experience, creates an interactive learning event within which the children participate actively. According to the actor's belief, this is the kind of experience that the children need, especially now that they are used to an "effortless" kind of learning. The actor's perception of the value of the interactivity of the experience is illustrated by the following comment:

R: What do you expect children to gain from the session? 
Actor A: [...] It is about going to that world through their own journey. Not just be told something where the concepts are so many thousands of years old. It is a direct response
that they get to their questions to that world of the period they are studying [...] And then they go back and remember because it is a visual thing. They need an interactive experience as opposed to just think something up. It is the immediacy of it. It is a process where they get involved and discover rather than sit still. I think with this tele-visual, video, dvd age, they are so used to it. They are used to that kind of learning. Computers as well...effortless.

In order to achieve the interactive style of performance the actor intends to create a certain behaviour that moves away from the framework of the traditional performance where the audience is expected to be silent and alerts the children’s mischievous side:

Sometimes children are very quiet because you have teachers that instruct the children to be absolutely silent because the performance is about to begin. As it usually happens with drama, the mischievous children in school are the ones that are more creative. You have to be creative to be mischievous. That’s one way for me to get to them information.

The characteristic of interactivity is also linked to the museum’s intention to provide sessions that would be enjoyable. The guiding principle, given to the actors for the development of the sessions, was that “what is enjoyable would be educational as well” (Actors A, B, interviews, 2003). Indeed, this perception was also reflected up to a certain extent into the Deputy Head’s and the Learning and Access officer’s comments at different stages of this research. For example, when at the beginning of this research the Learning and Access Officer asked what is it expected that schools could get out of the visit, the sessions were described as “a fun way of learning”. Later on, the Deputy Head of the Department emphasized that offering an enjoyable interactive experience would be also memorable:

R: What are the priorities in terms of style?
I think what is enjoyable is memorable. I think you need to have interaction. If it was only one way, the actor talking to people without encouraging them to talk back or do something then they would not remember. So, I look for these three or four times within a half an hour session where the audience is intensely involved by answering and asking questions, trying something on, whatever the involvement is, the opportunity for interaction. I think changing pace as well. We are looking for something fast moving and humorous as well. (Swift, interview 2004).
Overall there was congruence in the various views expressed by the parties involved in the development of the programs. The MOL intends to develop programs that can personalize the setting, are interactive and enjoyable. Each actor might have his/her own style of performing. However, the element of interactivity that characterizes first person interpretation programs is intended to be part of all the theatre events developed in the museum. The value of these approaches in terms of the events’ format is illustrated in the following chapter in direct relation to the children’s reading of the events’ format and content.

Expectations

The MOL also aspires to provide programmes that link to the National Curriculum. To ensure that it provides learning opportunities within the context of formal education, resource materials are provided for use before, during and after the visit supporting the events (Schools policy, 2003:3; School programme 2003/04). The museum expects the schools to have read the support materials so that they are aware of the practicalities of the museum visit, of what the museum expects from the school and of what they could expect from the museum and the gallery actor. Apart from the gallery worksheets, information is provided regarding the description of the character and his/her background8, the main themes that the actor would possibly discuss and the class could find in the displays in the Roman Galleries. In terms of the event’s format the children are expecting not to interrupt the actor and to prepare questions that could be posed by the end of the event. In terms of the sessions’ educational content the museum does not expect the classes to have a previous understanding of a specific theme for Romans (support material, MOL). The museum’s open attitude to the class’s level of preparation and previous understanding is also illustrated in the following comment from the Learning and Access officer:

R: what do you expect from the schools before their museum visit?
[...] We do not expect them to have secure understanding about a particular topic. We do not specify how much pre-knowledge to have, particular themes for Romans, and for

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8 They are informed about the character’s age, name, time of living, personal history, job, the setting, the imaginative characters that are mentioned in her story.
some sessions they may have a go with pre-visit activities suggested in the support materials. They do not have to do it. It is up to them (Stemp, 2003).

Concluding remarks

The MOL has developed live interpretation programs since the founding of the Spectrum Drama and Theatre Projects Company in 1995. The programs, integrated in this research, are performed in the museum's most popular gallery for Key Stage Two school groups. The Roman gallery is recommended to the class teachers by the National Curriculum Guidelines in the subject of history as a potential first-hand source related to the children's learning in the subject of Romans. The link with the schools' formal curriculum is also emphasised by the museum in the publicised and support material provided to the schools. The available programs though do not have a rigid set of educational objectives that they intend to convey. More emphasis is placed by the museum on the format of the sessions and in particular in its interactive and enjoyable form. It is deemed that via an interactive and enjoyable session the museum will accomplish the main objective for developing the first person interpretation sessions: to personalise the setting. This is an objective shared also by the actors who perform the relevant programmes. Each one with his/her individual style of performance intends to create an interactive session during which the children gain an insight into how life was in Roman times by relating to a "real" person. In a sense the educational objectives of the sessions are interrelated with their format.

The extent to which though the session will broaden its educational themes might also rely on each class's educational agenda since the children's questions and responses might, as explained by the actor B, affect the educational themes of the session. Thus, although there are no specific expectations expressed by the museum in terms of the schools' cognitive agenda, the schools are encouraged to prepare questions to pose to the actor at the end of the session. Before exploring further the first person interpretation events as experienced by their participants, the agendas of the schools that participated in the research will be traced.
The classes' agenda

The BL School - Background information about the school

The BL School is a mixed community school located at the Sadwell and Wapping area of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Local Education Authority. Currently the school has 330 pupils enrolled. The cultural origin of the pupils is rooted in the rural area of Sylhet in Bangladesh. The vast majority of the pupils live within the local area immediate to the school, which primarily provides public sector housing. The socio-economic background of the pupils is quite poor. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 75%. For all students, English is a second language.

Tower Hamlets is home to the largest Sylheti community outside Bangladesh. A survey conducted in 1998 for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets revealed that 61% of households have an annual income lower than £9,000 while the unemployment rate locally was 7% in comparison to the London average of 5%. The same survey showed that the living conditions are quite poor as 1 in 8 houses is overcrowded which is a double rate for the standards of London. The LEA statistics reveal that the Tower Hamlets area has the lowest levels of adults' literacy and numeracy in the country.

The school’s performance as indicated at the 2002 Key Stage 2 test results could be characterized as “well above average” in comparison with both the Local Education Authority and England average. Over the last five years there has been an improvement in the school’s performance which, according to the LEA research and statistic resources, goes hand in hand with the improvement of the whole area that is under the same LEA. For example the percentage of students that achieve the national requirement of level 4 at the end of the Key Stage Two has risen within the LEA area from 30% on 1995 to 68%.

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9 Tower Hamlets Education Website in http://www.towerhamletspdc.org.uk/policies. Last accessed on 27/10/2003
10 Specifically the percentages indicated at the performance tables 2002 (Key Stage 2 test results) of the Department for Education and Skills are: In English the National average is 75%, the LEA average 70.9%, while the BL school percentage of achievement is 89%. Accordingly in Mathematics the percentages are: LEA 68.2%, National average 73%, BL school 86%, and finally in Science the percentages are: LEA 83.3%, national average 86%, and BL School 89% (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performancestables)
in 2000 (Tower Hamlets Education Website). According to the Local Education statistic resources, this is a progress greater than any other LEA in the country. The BL school, therefore, while located in a poor area with families with low income, is itself a school of high achievement.

The class

The year four class that participated in the research has twenty-nine children for whom English is a second language. The children in this class being no exception from the rest of the school are also Bengali in their cultural origin. The proportion of pupils within the class that speak English fluently is 70% while 2% are beginners, and 28% are considered to be in a middle stage. The socio-economic background of the children in this class is exceptionally poor as 26 children out of 29 are entitled to free school meals. According also to the information provided by the class teacher there are children in the class that live in overcrowded houses with their families or/and relatives. A number of children have also moved from Bangladesh to live with relatives in London as their parents considered that the children would have better standards of education in UK. The children's background and orientation to learning agenda is also reflected in the classroom. Since the first day of observation it became evident that the children had a positive learning ethos.

Following the protocol of the research design the target was for fifteen children to participate in the research. At the initial stage of observations within the classroom setting the children were asked for their written informed consent. From the twenty-seven children that were present, eighteen gave their consent to participate in the research while nine children refused to participate. Three group interviews were conducted before the museum visit and each group consisted of five children. The children's allocation in

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11 This percentage is elevated in comparison to other case studies. It might indicate that offering children the option to give or withhold their consent in a written form gives them more freedom to decide rather than asking for their informed consent orally as happened in the classes that participated in the Clarke Hall cases study. The parental consent was not considered as necessary by the school since the children would not participate in any video recording.
groups was based on their ability level in the subject of history as this was traced in the observations conducted in the classroom, the class teacher's recommendations and documentation of the children's tasks in the classroom.

The school's expectations

At the last inspection report the school was found to make good use of the resources in the community that have a positive contribution to children's learning and broaden the school's curriculum (Ofsted (b), 2000: 13). Visits such as to the British Museum, to the National Portrait Gallery, Guildhall School of Music, and the Imperial War Museum are linked with various subjects across the curriculum. The school's positive attitude to museums and gallery visiting is primarily rooted to the head teacher's perception of the merits of museum visiting. The Head teacher intends every class to visit a cultural, educational institution in the community at least once every half term. Thus, six visits take place every year for each year group\(^1\). A specialist teacher is also employed, responsible for liaising between the school and the museum and for conducting preparatory and follow-up work in the classroom in relation to the museum visit. In particular, the value placed on the museum visits could be traced in the school's expectations and the class's agenda for the specific visit.

The museum visits have for the school both an educational and social dimension. The school by taking into account the children's poor social and educational background attempts through museum visits to broaden not only the pupils' educational agenda but also their social world\(^2\). The school, being informed by the Local Education Authority

\(^{12}\) The number of visits that the BL school conducts every year was the highest noticed in comparison to the other schools that participated in the research.

\(^{13}\) The Bangladeshi community from Shilet is considered as one of the most isolated communities in London. Jeremy Seabrook in his article regarding the living conditions of the Bangladeshi community in London presents the following quotation from a member of the community in order to illustrate to what extent the community feeling circumscribed by racism has re-established Bangladeshi society in "exile": "There is no need to go outside -- at the post office, the doctor's, social security offices, social services, the chemist's, you find Bengali speakers. It is a self-contained community", Ansar, a local authority worker (Seabrook, 1996).
that the community is isolated in the boundaries of their residential area, attempts to take the classes out of the school for educational visits and trips as frequently as possible. The following extracts highlight the importance placed by the school on the social aspect of the visit:

Extract 1, Head teacher, interview, 2002

This particular community they just live here. They are a very disadvantaged community. They are all immigrants. The level of parental education is very low so, they need to have their horizons expanded, because they are very superstitious and anything we can do to get them out in the world really is useful.

Researcher: So, museums and theatre would have a double dimension
Absolutely the parents would never take them to a gallery. Is a very different kind of experience.

Extract 2, specialist teacher, interview, 2002

It is important for the children to see London. They would talk about the visual stimulus. The trip is important. The children coming from the Bangali community live around the school. Their experience of London is limited to that area. It is learning out of school.

The school at the initial stages of their extended museum visiting had to face the parental attitude which, according to the head teacher's interpretation, was expressed against educational trips due to the parents' poor educational background and intention to preserve their own culture within the boarders of the community:

[… ] and I used to have parents saying that they would not go to the trip. Everytime there is a trip half of the class would not turn up. So I had to be really tough about that and make sure they do come and if the parents consistently had kept the child I would say to them that they have to go to a different school, this is the curriculum, it is part of our education and sometimes still parents would not let their children to go to the theatre, to a museum (Head teacher interview, 2002).

The Bangladeshi community’s negative attitude to museum visiting is also expressed in a research conducted by the British Market Research Bureau (commissioned by the Museums and Galleries Commission) aiming to investigate why people from ethnic minority populations are under-represented in museums and galleries in England. The outcomes of the focus groups pointed out that half of the research participants were non-museum visitors while especially the Bangladeshi and Black respondents perceived
museums as “white people’s territory” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1998:10). To what extent museum visiting is perceived negatively is also illustrated in the Bangladeshi women’s comments who participated in the research. They commented that they felt “uncomfortable” and “out of space” in the museum environment. The school experiencing the community’s negative perception of museums aspires via the organised museum visits with the schoolchildren to change also the parental attitude to museum visits:

 [...] The school hopes that later the children will go with their parents to the museums they visited with the school. The school visit can motivate the family (Specialist teacher, interview 2003).

The broad aim that the school attempts to achieve in every museum visit is for the children to focus on specific artefacts rather than on a wider context. Understanding that the children could be overwhelmed by the extra stimulation and the new impressions, both the head and the teachers responsible for the museum visits intend to achieve a directed in-depth focus on artefacts rather than on the wider content of the museum space. Drawing and writing activities within the museum context are the only activities that the classes perform when they visit a museum. The selection of these activities is based on the belief that they help the children concentrate, reflect on what they are observing and accordingly broaden their understanding. The Head teacher, by judging from her own museum visiting experience and preference for the use of audio guiding, places emphasis on focusing on parts rather than on the wider context:

 [...] [audio guided tours] still have the effect of slowing you down and just make you to pay attention to the picture, the statue while they are talking. The same is for the children they get so many impressions washing them really and they get very excited. The thing is all the time really to calm them down so they can reflect, and look and think of it and drawing as well, writing does that really well (interview, head teacher, 2002)

The choice of the above activities is linked to the school’s aim regarding the children’s behaviour in the museum. It is part of the school’s overall policy to cultivate a calming atmosphere in the school within which the children can reflect. The same ethos and atmosphere is intended to be transferred also in the museum.
Furthermore, the school has a strong agenda regarding what it intends to achieve via the museum visit. First, decisions taken for the museum visits are also based on their potential links to the classroom work. The visit to the Museum of London integrated in the school term's teaching plan usually takes place the 6th week of the year 4 class' study on the National Curriculum’s Unit 6a: “Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? Roman Case Study”. According to the school’s plan, the above unit is divided into eleven weeks of study units. Each study unit it is intended to be taught within two hours of the class's weekly timetable. The learning intention of the weekly unit was to learn to “use sources of information to answer questions about the past” by focusing specifically on artefacts linked to food and cookery in Roman Britain (see Appendix 17).

The specialist teacher’s intentions for the visit reflecting the class’s learning intentions are focused on the artefacts/setting and the interaction with the actor within the setting. The museum visiting experience is perceived, as it could be inferred from the specialist teacher's comments, as an opportunity for the children to be familiar with the “experience of Roman living”. On one hand the interaction with the actor is expected to “make things more real” as the class can listen and ask questions. On the other as the drama session takes place in a wealthy Roman household the children can observe the setting during the session so that when the session finishes the class is ready to continue with the school activities of drawing and writing in the setting. The following extract from the semi-structured interview with the specialist teacher might illustrate these expectations:

R: The aim of this discussion is to find out the class’s agenda for the museum visit.
Specialist teacher: [...] Part of the experience of Roman living [...] In doing that we are actually in the facsimile of a Roman room. So, you know they are looking at the

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14 It is worth mentioning that the history subject is taught two hours per week for the year 4 classes in comparison to other schools in the country that devote less time to teach history. When the head teacher was asked about this difference she commented that the school can afford to devote more time to the subject as the school is not struggling any more to increase the children’s performance in literacy and numeracy, as it was the case in the past.

15 The quotation is taken from the interview conducted with the specialist teacher (2002).

16 The quotation is taken from the interview conducted with the specialist teacher (2002).
environment. When it is finished, we have a drawing and writing activity of artefacts. [...] The interaction with the actor is important. It does make things more real, if you could listen and ask questions. So, it has an impact. It’s about learning (interview, specialist teacher, 2002).

The school seems to value museum visiting as a means for both social and educational purposes responding to the needs of the specific schoolchildren. An increased number of visits take place for each year group. A specialist teacher is employed for the smooth integration of the museum visit, while specific expectations are expressed in regard to the children’s learning attitude during the museum visit. This strong agenda on museum visiting is also reflected in the school’s intention to organise preparatory sessions before the museum visits.

Preparatory lesson

The preparatory session, constituting part of the class’s teaching plan, took place two days before the museum visit (on the 14th of October). The session was organized by the museum teacher who intended to provide the children with prior knowledge and vocabulary that would help the children understand the drama session in the museum and conceptualize the museum’s set up:

“We have a preparatory session to have prior knowledge. Otherwise they feel that they have no expertise, which is important for these children for whom English is a second language. The session focuses on food, as there is a kitchen set up in the museum. It’s a discussion about what sort of things we have today and see evidence of difference (ovens, glass). The museum’s set up makes the process clear” (Specialist teacher, Interview, 2002).

As the museum teacher understands that the content of the drama session at the museum evolved around the subject of Roman food and artefacts related to cookery, the preparatory session was also organised around this theme. A display of Roman food with replica and real objects was used for the preparatory session, which immediately

17 The learning objectives of the session can be seen at the school’s plan, study week 6 (Appendix 17)
18 The objects at the display belong at the Museum of London which during the year 2000 tested a pilot scheme for providing a “mini - museum” to 200 schools in the area of London. The “mini-museum” included real artefacts, replicas, teachers’ support packs and video material that the teachers could use in the class. The project was supported by the DfEE’s Museum and Galleries Education programme and
attracted children’s attention and interest (Photo, Plate 19). The intention of the visit became immediately known as “to study the Romans” while the aim of the preparatory session was also described as “[to] learn a few facts about Romans and cooking […] When you go you will know some things and that will help you learn more”.

The value of providing the children with vocabulary became immediately apparent during the preparatory session. When prompted by the specialist teacher to name the objects on display they had difficulties in naming most of them. Having English as a second language determines the children’s identity as learners. The children’s comments during the group interviews before the museum visit might be indicative of this. The first group wanted very strongly to communicate their identity and the difficulties they have as learners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>which language do you speak?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>we are trying to learn to speak in English because we are Bengali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aimed to make the museum’s collection accessible to a wider range of schools. The museum’s choice to provide real artefacts was based on the belief that learning with real artefacts can be effective particularly in increasing the skills required by the National Curriculum: concepts of chronology, historical enquiry and interpretation. Their decision to provide schools with objects related to the Roman period is also based on the increased interest that schools have expressed to visit the Roman Gallery and participate in an object handling session. The project has been evaluated by the museum by using questionnaires and observation. The outcome of the evaluation was that 92% of the teachers participating in the evaluation commented that the loan box improved their pupils understanding while 67% teachers found the box particularly effective when teaching students with special needs (Internal document, 2002).

19 The quotations are taken from the specialist teacher’s communication with the children during the preparatory session, as this was documented during the observations conducted within the classroom.

20 Having English as a second language was also a common point between the children and me, which might have facilitated gaining the children’s trust during the research process.
and it is difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes, Muslims</th>
<th>and we speak another language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but we are getting better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plate 19 Photo of the class’s “Roman” display

Throughout the session the objects provided by the MOL constituted the focal point of learning. The museum teacher directed the children’s attention to an object each time. As well as asking for the name of the object, she described it and, by asking prompting questions regarding the material, the use of the object or by giving information that contextualized the object, she invited the children to guess, to participate in hands-on demonstrations and to compare to what is familiar to them. The following extract taken from the recorded observations in the classroom might illustrate part of this process:

Linda: [shows picture] utensil to use for eating. Do you know?
Isaak: a spoon
Linda: what’s different about this spoon?
Children: They are….something looks dangerous
Children: yes, it got a hole, it has a sharp spike at the end
Linda: why do you think they have it?
Najim: they might crush it
Linda: [shows opening a snail]
Raheema: take it out, poking it out.
Linda: it is made of silver, design of fish. A special scoop using it for cooking in the kitchen. Romans had spoons, pointing things and units. You will see in the museum.

The preparatory session, apart from its cognitive targets, also indirectly shapes the children’s expectations about the format of the museum visit. The children are informed that they are going to “see” objects and the setting, “meet an actor who will pretend to be a Roman person” and that by the end of the visit that they are going to draw the objects on display, as usually happens in their museum visits. Although it is mentioned to the children that they are going to meet an actor there is no more information provided either in regard to the character they are going to meet or the format of the visit. The preparation for the visit remains focused on the objects and the usual activities the class carries out in museum visits.

Children’s expectations
The children’s expectations expressed in the three group interviews before the museum visit have been shaped by their previous museum visits and the classroom agenda as this has been traced during the preparatory session and the history lessons. Overall the children perceived the museum visit as a special event, expected that it would link to their history learning and that during their visit they would see objects and perform drawing and writing activities (see Table 6).

None of the children participating in the research had visited a museum or gallery with his/her parents (Group 1, Habiba: “it is much more expensive to go with the parents”, Tasmin: “it is not expensive, it’s just we don’t go or anything”). The children’s comments, reflecting the lack of parental museum visiting and their socio-economic background, suggest that they perceive the museum visit as a special event. For example, when asked what did they expect from the visit, Raheema (in group 2) commented “we are going to wear nice clothes”. As it was explained later, when Raheema’s mother knows that the class will visit a museum she dresses her daughter in better clothes. The perception of the visit as a special event was also expressed in the children’s enthusiasm.
for using public transportation to go to the museum. Transportation is usually an integral part of the museum visiting agenda since, as commented by the head and the specialist teachers, travelling by the London underground is a rare event for the children.

Table 6. Children’s expectations and possible parameters that shaped them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters that shaped them</th>
<th>To see</th>
<th>To draw and write</th>
<th>To learn</th>
<th>To get out of school / travel, have fun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory session</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History lessons / classroom learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous museum visits</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of museums</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the children participating in the research had visited a museum or gallery with his/her parents (Group 1, Habiba: “it is much more expensive to go with the parents”, Tasmin: “it is not expensive, it’s just we don’t go or anything”). The children’s comments, reflecting the lack of parental museum visiting and their socio-economic background, suggest that they perceive the museum visit as a special event. For example, when asked what did they expect from the visit, Raheema (in group 2) commented “we are going to wear nice clothes”. As it was explained later, when Raheema’s mother knows that the class will visit a museum she dresses her daughter in better clothes. The perception of the visit as a special event was also expressed in the children’s enthusiasm for using public transportation to go to the museum. Transportation is usually an integral part of the museum visiting agenda since, as commented by the head and the specialist teachers, travelling by the London underground is a rare event for the children.
Also, the children express a positive attitude towards museum visiting. It is viewed as an opportunity to “get out of the school”, “to have fun”, and in particular “to learn about the Romans”\(^{21}\). The immediate link between museum visits and history learning in the classroom has been possibly shaped via analogy to the class’s previous museum visits that were linked to their history subject at the time. For instance, during the interviews the children refer frequently to their visit to the British Museum in direct relation with their classroom learning in the subject of Ancient Greeks. The preparatory session in the class also affected the children’s learning expectation during which the class was informed that in the museum they would learn about Romans. The children’s learning expectation is illustrated in the following extract from the interview with group 2. Callam describes the museum as “part of history” where they learn about the current subject area they are studying in the classroom while the group’s comments suggest that the class’s previous museum visit might have shaped this expectation:

Extract from group 2
R: what is a museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a museum is a part of history that you learn about the Romans and where they come from, which country they come from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: how would you explain it to somebody who does not know?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>if somebody did not know you could explain like museum is like really old and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{21}\) The quotes are taken from the children’s comments during the group interviews before the museum visit (2002).
you dug things from the ground and you put them in the museum

we went when we were learning about Greece

we went to the British Museum

The children's expectation of history learning becomes more specific as the children expect that they will “see objects” they have seen in the preparatory session and the previous history lessons. The expectation to “see objects and statues” might be related to their previous museum visits and their perception that a museum is a place with “lots of ancient things and artefacts” and “stuff they dug from the underground”. Reflecting upon the preparatory session and the Roman objects they have observed and drawn in their history lesson the children expect to see what the Romans ate and specific objects such as a strigel, an amphora and a cochlear. Characteristic is the following extract from the third group:

Extract, interview group 3:
R: What will happen in the museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arafat</th>
<th>Joynal</th>
<th>Reehema</th>
<th>Rifna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>we are going to see what the Romans eat,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 The visit took place after the completion of the 7th week unit that set as learning intention the children to “identify ways in which the past is represented” and “to use sources of information to answer questions about the past”. The children looked at artefacts that linked to their visit to the London Museum. The children practiced asking questions related to the museum objects and being in the role of archaeologists drew information from the artifacts about Roman London.
we are going to see the skinny spoon. And we are going to see the strigent [meaning strigel] we have not see before.

R: what is that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arafat</th>
<th>Joynal</th>
<th>Reehema</th>
<th>Rifna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The thing, when you go into a hot bath</td>
<td>you get a strigent [meaning strigel]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and take the skin off</td>
<td>With oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: how do you know that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arafat</th>
<th>Joynal</th>
<th>Reehema</th>
<th>Rifna</th>
<th>Tasmina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosie</td>
<td>Joynal</td>
<td>Linda told us</td>
<td>And Linda</td>
<td>Rosie told us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman foods</td>
<td>the amphora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children, reflecting also on their previous museum visits where they performed activities of writing and drawing, also expect that during their visit to the Museum of London they will draw and write (Group 3, Arafat: “we are going to draw”, Joynal: “Roman statues and Roman snails”). The children understand that drawing in the museum involves precision and observation for long periods of time. Drawing is an activity, as also confirmed by the observations conducted during the museum visit, which is perceived by the children seriously. They also expect based on their previous museum visiting agenda that they will perform a writing activity that, in contrast to the writing activities in the classroom, won’t be assessed:
Extract from group interview 1

[...]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaaq</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drawing, it is different than drawing in the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: mmm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaaq</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because you have to be careful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes, because normally in school...test us. In the museum they do not test us. They give photographs. We look at the photographs and see. If we know we have to write down.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristic is the absence of any expectations regarding the group’s interaction with the actor, as this part of the museum visit seems that it had not been stressed enough during the preparatory session in the classroom, while also the children never before had a similar experience in a museum. Meeting the actor in the museum was only mentioned at the first group’ interview by Tasmin and Isaaq. Their comments, however, indicate that they are not aware of the character they will meet and the interactive format of the session. The existence of an actor is associated with the showing of objects, as happened in the classroom during the preparatory session:

Extract from the group interview 1:

Isaaq: like the museum we went last year and we saw lots of different boxes, ancient artefacts that look like squares. Some of them were broken. I think they had like plates
and boxes and the men I think will be acting like Romans and show us some things like Linda showed us.

R: what do you mean that there will be some men acting like Romans?

Isaaq: when the men act like Romans I think he is going to show many artefacts, like much older than the other ones.

The children's expectations seem to be congruent with the school's strong agenda in museum visiting. To what extent, however, could these expectations be realized during the class's museum visit and in particular via their participation in the "museum-theatre" event? Also, viewing within the school's overall strong museum visiting agenda the lack of emphasis placed on the children's preparation for their encounter with the actor/interpreter, questions might be posed about the school's willingness to integrate the "museum-theatre" event into its agenda. Perhaps the inflexibility of the class's agenda is not indicative of a lack of appreciation of the theatre/drama as a learning means but rather a reflection of high expectations about the format and content of the theatre event. As illustrated in the class teacher's and the specialist teacher's comments following the visit, it was expected that the actor/interpreter would have diagnosed the children's current understanding in the subject of Romans and accordingly expanded upon it. It was considered that it was the actor's rather than the children's responsibility in posing meaningful questions that would advance the children's learning.

What was however in general terms the children's understanding in the subject of the Romans before the museum visit? The following section attempts to describe the class's agenda in regard to the subject of Romans as this was illustrated in the interviews conducted before the museum visit.

The class's context for interpretation

One of the aims of the research that took place before the museum visit was to describe the class's agenda for the interpretation of the event. Thus, following the research design applied in all case studies, I adopted the stance of the "one-who-doesn't-know" researcher and prompted the children to inform me about what I should know about the Romans. The themes that emerged in the three interview groups are gathered together and
viewed in relation to the observations conducted during the history lessons and the outcomes of the children's writing activities.

The children were very eager to inform me that it is important to know "what the Romans ate, what they wear and what they do". Four themes emerged in all three groups. These were related to Roman food and armoury, to the children's perception of Romans as invaders and the differences between rich and poor.

The first theme that emerged was orientated towards Roman food perhaps due to the class's preparatory session. Especially children from groups 1 and 2 were eager to communicate what Romans used to eat:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1,</th>
<th>Isaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>onions,</td>
<td>They eat snails,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rats, dormice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pomegranate</td>
<td>slugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>oh that's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grapes</td>
<td></td>
<td>oh, they love</td>
<td></td>
<td>disgusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>walnuts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second theme that the children, especially those from groups 2 and 3, thought it was important to know was what the Romans wore. Although the class has studied the differences between the Roman and Celtic women's lifestyles, a unit that also includes the difference in clothing, the children when referring to the way the Romans are dressed focus only on the Roman armoury and the differences with the Celtic army: "shields", "sandals", "swords". A possible explanation for this emphasis might be the class's focus on the soldier's armoury at the beginning of the term in the art subject where the children constructed from paper Romans and Celt soldiers.

Also, the children considered it important to inform me about the relationship between British and Romans. The children from the 1st interview group (the highest ability group),
reflecting their classroom history learning, mention differences between the Roman and Celtic women in terms of their social status and education. The children from all groups are aware of the Romans' invasion of Britain, to which they refer as "take over", "the war" "the fights". The children’s comments seem to reflect what they have been taught during the 2nd and the 3rd week of the history lessons (See Appendix 17). The learning intention of the two weeks was to enhance the understanding of the difference between invasion and settlement, of the invasions of Britain and specifically of the reasons why the Romans invaded Britain. Thus, they do not mention specifics about the invasion in terms of names or dates but they focus on the reasons for the invasions: to exploit the country. Some children are aware of the slavery as a result of the invasion. The following extract illustrates the children’s understanding of Romans as invaders:

Group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romans do not like much British people. Rosie read us a story and a Roman soldier thought a British took his cloak. [...] because she was a Celt and then when both went to the underground.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: who were the Celts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the Celts were in Britain and the Romans arrived in Britain</td>
<td>and the Romans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to make war to take over other countries. You</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The children's perception of Romans as invaders might have also affected the children's negative predisposition towards the Romans. When asked at the group interviews if they would like to live in Roman times, with the exception of Arafat who would like in Roman times "because they had swords" all the children participating in the interviews replied negatively because in "those times there was lots of fighting".

The last theme that emerged in all groups was how rich the Romans were. The children based on the picture used as a prop in the interviews described the depicted people as rich (Group2: "they look rich because they wear nice clothes"). This description elicited further understandings about the Romans. They perceived the Romans as rich in comparison to the Celts since being invaders they took money, gold and iron. However, in comparison to nowadays Romans were less rich as for example they did not have
electricity. In group 1 references were also made to the preparatory session. The objects shown in the session made up from clay were from the poor people whereas the possession of objects made from glass was an indication of wealth. The following extract taken from the interview with group 1 might illustrate this understanding:

Extract- interview group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>some people have might be rich. May be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmin or Najima might be rich and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could live in Roman times.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: do you mean they will be rich in Roman times?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahi</th>
<th>Marja</th>
<th>Haliba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes, rich but less rich than they are now</td>
<td>yes, rich but less rich than they are now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because lot’s of things are expensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and they had so many money and who could</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they have made all these money if they</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>did not have taken all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>even very rich people can only afford this</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bit glass [shows small]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 The question was posed as an attempt to elicit responses related to the children’s feelings, beliefs, attitudes about Roman times. It also functioned as a prompt for further comments which are organized in themes in the analysis above.
| money, gold and iron and use them to make weapons | these countries and their money. |
|                                                                                             | [Referring to the objects on loan from the museum] They were copies, not the real ones. If they were made of clay, probably poor people would have. We saw this little glass like a bottle that would be for rich because it is made of glass.

The themes that emerged from the group interviews might not illustrate extensively the children’s cognitive agenda about the subject of Romans. Nonetheless, they provide a broad frame of the children’s prior-to-the-event understanding and preconceptions about Romans. This understanding is taken into account in the following chapter when exploring the children’s interpretation of the event’s content.
The N School - Background information about the school

The N Primary School is located at the central east area of London. It has 409 children on roll from which 67% are of Bangladeshi cultural origin, 23% are white British, and the remaining 10% originates from smaller ethnic groups such as Somali, Afro-Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani. All children live within the catchment area and almost 70% receive free school dinners due to their family's poor financial background. Socio-economic statistics depict the area as one of the highest rates of unemployment and of council rented accommodation in London 24.

As it is indicated in the last Ofsted report 25 (2002) and the national performance tables, the school achieves high scores that are well above the average in the three main subjects. For example, the school's average point score 26 in the national performance tables is 29.8 when the national average is 27.4 and the local Authority average is 26.9. The school's high performance in the main subjects at the end of the Key Stage Two is also illustrated if one takes into account that the children enter the school having very poor skills in all areas of learning (Ofsted, 2002:5; Head teacher 2004). According to the head teacher there are two parameters that contribute to the school's successful performance: a) early identification of the children's problems b) well targeted work in the main three subjects (Head teacher, interview 2004).

The class

The year 5 class that participated in the research is a multi-cultural class that has 24 children. The majority of the children are of Bangladeshi cultural origin, three are British, two are Somali and two children are of African origin. Although for the majority of the class English is a second language, almost 80% of the children are fluent English.

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24 http://www.bbc.co.uk/election97/constituencies/47.htm
25 In the year 2001 the percentage of pupils that achieved in the literacy SATs exams was 89% when the national average was 75%, in maths 93% when the national average was 71% and in science 98% when the national average was 87%.
26 The average point score that is presented in the performance tables derives from the total points of achievement for each one of the main subjects (literacy, numeracy, science) by taking into account the total number of pupils eligible for each subject. Performance Tables. Online source: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cgiin/performancetables. Last accessed on 8/10/2004
speakers (Class teacher 2004, interview). The class is characterised by the teachers as a “special year group” as there are an increased number of children with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties. Eight children are characterised as children with behavioural difficulties, without however having an official statement, while from the eleven children with registered special educational needs in the school, seven of them attend the year five class. In comparison to other classes the size of the class has been kept small in order to respond to the children’s needs while for the main subjects the class splits into two. Thus there are two class teachers to support accordingly the higher and the average-lower ability groups, while the latter group is also supported by a full time teaching assistant.

From the twenty-one children that were asked for their informed consent, two children did not agree to participate in the research. The consent was asked in a written form while the children were also invited to write the “names of their friends/people would like to be with in the same group”. The aim of asking the children to provide the names of peers with whom they would like to be in the same group was based on my feeling that I was not familiar enough with the class’s social agenda in order to form groups that could work together and feel comfortable. Also by reflecting upon the group interviews conducted in BL school following the event, where a feeling of competitiveness had emerged in one group, and by taking into account that a significant number of children in the class were characterized as children with behavioral difficulties, I thought that it was important to form groups of friends/peers.

It was also attempted, based on the class teachers’ suggestions and the observations conducted in the classroom, to formulate groups that would be on a similar ability level if possible. Three groups were formed to participate in the group interviews before the museum visit, two of which had five members and one of which had four. As the visit was planned to take place on Monday 24th of November, the interviews were on Friday before the museum visit.
The school’s attitude to museum visiting

As illustrated in the school’s prospectus, the head and class teachers’ comments, educational trips are an important part of the school life. Educational trips and outreach activities within the school that link to foundation subjects and offer first hand experiences are part of the school’s broader curriculum. The school has found that a broad curriculum will revitalise the children’s learning and bring energy to the school that, in return, contributes to the children’s and the school’s successful performance in the main subjects. The following comment might illustrate the school’s attitude to museum visiting from the head teacher’s perspective:

What we think is that if you have a very broad curriculum and you give energy to everything all the course skills benefit. [...] we provide a very broad curriculum where we do lots of interesting and exciting things [...] we will take them out to visit places so they can take a first hand experience as far as possible. We have somebody coming in [...] who is going to be a world war two persona to do a drama thing. All the foundation subjects take a high status because it brings energy to the school. The more energy you have got the more successful you are (Head teacher, interview, 2004).

Bringing history to life seems to be the primary aim in the school’s agenda, either when visiting museums or when bringing in the school relevant projects. Artefacts and human resources, either via drama or oral history, are valued as learning resources that can facilitate children’s learning by contributing to the realistic element of history. The following comments illustrate the priority given by the school on the realistic element of history learning whether it takes place in the classroom or in the museum:

to make it real, to bring the children as close as we can to the experience we want them to understand: use of artefacts, use of people which is a key resource in history either through drama or recent history (Head teacher, interview, 2004).

However, although a positive attitude to museum visiting is illustrated on a theoretical level, it is prearranged by the school for each class to visit only one museum per year and the visit was not actually integrated in the classes’ teaching plan. A financial budget of one hundred and fifty pounds is given to each class for educational trips. The set museum visits link to the subject of history for each year group and take place in museums that are relatively close to the school. Visits to the Museum of London are set to take place when
the year four classes study the Tudors (Head teacher, interview, 2004). The decision for more than one museum visit depends on each class teacher and the available budget (Class teacher, interview, 2003).

The class’s expectations
The school intends the history curriculum to start with the most recent history and to progress to ancient civilizations by the end of the Key Stage Two, as it is believed that the older the children can conceptualize history from a more distant chronological period (Head teacher, interview 2004). The study of the subject area of Romans in year five is associated with a visit to the Roman Gallery at the Museum of London. It is anticipated that a hands-on experience at the museum will make the children’s learning experience realistic. The participation in a theatrical event is an option that the class teachers value for its potentiality to “bring history in life”. However, it is not common in their museum visits for special programmes to be booked, perhaps due to the classes’ available budget for educational visits.

The year 5 class that participated in this research visited the MOL approximately at the middle of the autumn term. The class had completed the study of the Celts that lasted for six weeks and the children had been introduced for two weeks to the theme of Romans. As the visit took place after the second week of the class’s introduction to Romans, the class teachers expected that the visit would function as an introduction to the theme that will excite the children’s curiosity and stimulate further learning.

Initially the class had planned to visit the museum without participating in a booked gallery drama session. However, because of the class’s willingness to participate in the research, the Museum of London offered the session for free. Although participation in a booked session was not part of the class’s initial agenda, the class teachers in an informal discussion expressed their expectations regarding the drama session. As one of the teachers had in the past attended a drama event in the Roman Galleries during which the class met a maidservant, the class teacher thought it would have been more appropriate

27 On the 24 of November 2003
for the children's interests to meet a Roman soldier in the gallery. The class teacher believed that the theme of Roman soldiers stimulates children's imagination and is a particularly exciting subject for the Key Stage two boys:

It will be a good opportunity, especially for the boys, to see a real Roman soldier. It will make real what they have been imagining about the Roman army (Class teacher, interview, 2003).

However, although the session was intended to function as an introduction to the topic, no specific links were planned by the class's previous learning agenda or objectives regarding the learning content of the museum experience. The children were not acquainted with the learning content and format of the visit. Initially the children were informed that they would visit the MOL when they were asked for their informed consent to participate in the research. Later, the day of the visit, the instructions given to the children focused on the structure of the day without indicating a learning agenda:

We have a drama session booked. You will go to the shop before or after lunch. You will have to complete worksheets but don't worry if you don't finish. We will work on them when we come back to school (class teacher, extract from recorded observations in the classroom, 24/11/03)

However, although it was briefly mentioned to the class the day of the visit that the school had booked a drama session this information did not seem to have an impact on the children's expectations in regard to the format of the visit.

The children's expectations

Most of the children are familiar with the museum, as it is part of the school's curriculum for the year two and year four classes to visit the museum's galleries related to the subject of the great fire of London and the Tudors respectively. The children, reflecting upon their previous visits, which were conducted independently by the school's classes without participating in a booked session, did not expect that they would meet an actor in the galleries. By taking into account that the previous visits linked to what they were studying in history and that they were orientated towards viewing objects at the museum, they expected that the current visit would link to the study of Romans and Celts and
anticipated accordingly that they would be taken around in the museum to *see objects* related to the Roman army, "*statues*" and "*ruins*" from the past. The following extract taken from the interview with group 2 might illustrate the children's expectations shaped by their previous visits:

Extract from Group 2:
Researcher: What do you think will happen in the museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brandon</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Jalal</th>
<th>Wahidur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know ..</td>
<td>They will take us around</td>
<td>Mostly it will be about Romans and Celts</td>
<td>It could be a lot of statues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects like shields and facts, artifacts and a map shows what bits they took over</td>
<td>It could be ruins what they have discovered on the ground. A lot of resources</td>
<td>How they lived</td>
<td>Lots of Roman Armor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: How do you think that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brandon</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Jalal</th>
<th>Wahidur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because it's a lot of history things in a history museum so obviously</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
you are going to see about Romans because it is 2000 years and it does tell you about history, so you know actually

We have done because we have been there before

In history That is what I meant

In year 4

We have done the great fire of London

The children’s focus on objects and “left overs” from the past emerged as a theme in the three (out of four) group interviews. It might also have been shaped as an expectation from the watching of a video in the classroom related to the Roman Army\(^28\). The children, as they commented, were informed that the Roman Army “left lots of things behind” like shields and armoury that have been found today by archaeologists (Group 3, Nahida: “We watched a video about the left over from the ground”, Munni: “We watched it, and it said that Celtic and Romans left lots of things behind, the army left a record behind”).

The children’s expectation that their visit would link to their history learning and that they would see objects was also expressed in the classroom when asked by the class teacher to comment on what did they expect to see at their visit. The following extract taken from the recorded observations in the classroom might illustrate this point:

Teacher: What do you expect to see?
Children: swords and shields
Teacher: Do you expect reproductions or the real thing?
Jallal: I think the real thing

\(^{28}\) The video programmes were part of the BBC educational series for schools. Video plus Invaders (1998) BBC and Video Plus: Roman Britain, BBC (1993) for children 8-10.
The children expect that their visit would link to their history learning. What was, however, their prior-to-the-event understanding given that the children had been introduced to the subject of Romans for two weeks before the museum visit mainly via the watching of video programmes? The following section attempts to explore the children’s prior-to-the-event understanding.

The class’s context for interpretation

Following the research’s protocol, the children were prompted during the three group interviews before the museum visit to comment on what they considered important for one to know about the Romans. The questions aimed to trace the children’s agenda for the interpretation of the event via a historical perspective. Overall the themes that emerged reflected the content of the video programs about Romans that the class had watched at various occasions in the classroom. The themes that the video programme dealt with focused on the techniques of fighting of the Roman Army, introduced children to the war machines and presented aspects of living in Roman Britain. The children’s responses are interpreted as an indication of their understanding of the subject of Romans, with the caution though that the interviews might be an indication of the interesting things that children could recall about Romans without drawing the boundaries of their understanding in a deterministic sense. The main themes that emerged suggested that the children viewed the “Romans as invaders and warriors” and appreciated them for “what Romans were good at”.

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29 The watching of video programmes, as the class teacher commented it later, is the main means for the teaching of history in the classroom. They provide information via various modes such as computer graphics, reconstruction and re-enactment footage and an actor portraying an “eye-witness”.

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A pattern that emerged in the three groups was that the children perceived the Romans as invaders. With an exemption of Brendon and Ben in group 2, who attempted to locate the invasion chronologically and topically (Brendon: “Romans tried to invade London but London beat them up”, [...] Ben: “55 b.c.”, Brendon: “…because they wanted to take over Dover”) and of Morgan and Adam in group 1 who commented on the reasons for the invasion (Morgan: “They used to trade slaves and they bought people and they did not have much space for these people so they wanted more land”), the children’s responses might not indicate that they had an understanding of the reasons of the invasion or historical facts around it. However, the perception of Romans as invaders was central in the children’s responses associated also with the understanding that life under the Roman rule was a period of fighting and war (Group 1, Morgan: “Romans were invaders”, Charlie: “they invaded other people’s land”, Group 3, Muni: “to take the land to rule the universe”). This was also the main reason for which the majority of the children (especially the girls) commented that they wouldn’t like living in that period of time (group 3, Sadjia: “No, you might die).

All groups when asked to expand their responses regarding their perception of Romans as invaders commented on aspects related to life in the Roman army. Thus, although they expressed a negative predisposition towards the Romans (Group 2, Jalal: “I hate them because they invaded Britain”), it was due to their understanding of the Roman army as “the most well-organized one” that shaped mainly the boys’ admiration for the Roman army (Group 2, Brendon: “I like them because they did things different to us and they were organized”). This point might be illustrated if one takes into account that three boys in the groups (Brendon - Group 2, Charlie and Adam - Group 3), when asked if they would like to live in Roman Britain, replied that they would prefer to identify with the Romans, rather than the Celts, because Romans were better soldiers (Group 1, Charlie: “I would like to be a Roman soldier because I could kill people”). This perception was also expressed by the boys in the interviews conducted following the museum visit (i.e. Brendon: “Celts were gong [meaning silly] because they did not fight properly. They tried to fight Romans but they got beat up”).
The information provided in regard to the Roman army varied within and across the interview groups. The children from group 1 and 2 provided more extensive information in regard to life in the army in comparison to group 3, which consisted only of girls and which according to the teacher’s comments was a lower ability group. In the first two groups, references were made in regard to armour and war techniques (i.e. testudo), hierarchy in the army, the soldiers’ payment, the number of years one had to serve in the Roman army in order to become a Roman citizen, the jobs that non-Roman soldiers had to perform when they were in auxiliaries, hygiene and to the building of the Hadrian’s wall. The following extract taken from the interview with group 1 might illustrate the children’s background in the thematic area:

Extract – interview group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morgan</th>
<th>Elle</th>
<th>Charlie</th>
<th>Adam</th>
<th>Khadija</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Roman army get 70 pounds a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The legionaries got triple money, the higher people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who were the soldiers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morgan</th>
<th>Elle</th>
<th>Charlie</th>
<th>Adam</th>
<th>Khadija</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s say that Romans invaded this country you had to be a slave or to become a citizen you had to be in the army.</td>
<td>They were people from other countries and they wanted to be citizens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If it was not a Roman person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is auxiliary?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morgan</th>
<th>Elle</th>
<th>Charlie</th>
<th>Adam</th>
<th>Khadija</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low people</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>They used to clean the poop, the toilets</td>
<td>And they used to attack people first</td>
<td>And they cleaned the toilets, the Romans were very hygienic, they used brushes and sponges and clean water to go to toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the group was asked to comment on what it is important for one to know about Romans, they commented also on the positive aspect of the Roman conquest (Group 2, Daniel “they helped us a lot”, “they gave us food”, Brendon: “they invaded us and they gave us roads”, Ben: “they invented things we have today”, Group 3: Nahida: “the Romans were really good in making roads”). However, their responses indicated a general and not a detailed understanding of the impact of the Roman’s conquest as the children could not provide relevant examples when prompted to do so neither in the group interviews nor in their history lesson.
Concluding Remarks

This chapter attempted to trace the real agenda of the participants involved in two first person interpretation programs developed in the MOL. The museum employing the medium of theatre as an interpretive means for primary school children (KS2) intends to personalize the galleries and offer an experience that will be different to classroom learning. The programs, promoted to schools being linked to the National Curriculum, do not expect the classes to arrive at the museum with any previous understanding of the historical period. Humor and interactivity are elements that are deemed by the museum to make the experience of a first person interpretation event memorable.

In this research, two classes participated in first person interpretation events at the MOL: a year 4 class from the BL school and a year 5 class from the N school. A similar background was evident for the two schools participating in the research given that a) they are both located in financially deprived areas of London having the majority of their pupils receiving free school meals, b) their performance in the National exams (in the three subjects of literacy, maths and science) as traced in the year 2002 was well above both the national and LEA average. However, within the context of this research significant differences have been traced in the schools’ attitude to museum visiting. In BL School it is intended for each class to visit a cultural/educational institution six times per year, since museum visits are valued as opportunities to broaden the children’s socio-cultural horizons. The number of visits the BL school intends to conduct every year can be considered very high if one takes into account that in N primary it is intended for at least one visit to be conducted for each year class per year. The difference in the schools’ attitude is particularly illustrated if one takes into account each class’s agenda for the visit at the MOL.

Every year in both schools when classes are studying the subject of Romans in history visit the Roman Gallery in the MOL without, however, always participating in a booked session at the museum. As indicated in both school staff’s comments, the classes’ participation in a theatre event during the museum visit was valued as a means that has the potentiality to make history alive and, in relation to the museum setting and its
collections, to provide a first hand experience of living in the past. In this respect, the schools’ expectations seem to share a common grounding with the museum’s expectations and objectives for the setting up of the programs. However, neither of the two classes that participated in this research prepared questions for the actors nor informed the children regarding the character’s background.

The year 4 class in BL School demonstrated a strong learning agenda in terms of their museum visit. The visit was planned to take place at the end of their study in the subject of Romans and specifically when learning about food in Roman times. Thus, having integrated the museum visit into the class’s teaching-learning plan, a preparatory session took place organized by the school’s specialist teacher aiming to provide prior knowledge and the relevant vocabulary for the museum visit. The specialist teacher having participated in INSET sessions at the museum a few years ago and also attended first person interpretation programs in the museum in the past decided to focus on the session’s content in relation to food. Also, the emphasis placed on the setting itself and the educational content of the experience rather than on the communicative mode with the actor might be a reflection of the school’s attitude to museum visits. Museum visits are perceived as time of reflection during which the children can observe and broaden their understanding. To achieve that, drawing activities performed by the children at the gallery setting are always part of the classes’ visits.

A less powerful learning agenda was traced in the year 5 class in N School. As the school was visiting the MOL at the beginning of their study in Romans it was expected that the visit might function as an introduction to the subject and stimulate further learning. Given that the museum deems that there is no need for the classes to have a prior understanding of the historical period to participate in the sessions, the museum visit could function as a stimulus for further learning. However, it should be noted that during the conduct of this research the year 5 class did not demonstrate a powerful learning agenda in the subject of history. That might be ascertained if one takes into account that the year group did not appear to have a teaching plan in the subject of history while educational videos in relation to the Romans and Celts were projected in the classroom either during the history
Lessons or on other occasions without most of the times accompanying the video watching with a discussion session. Apart from the lack of learning objectives for the visit the class did not also indicate any expectations regarding the format of the visit. An important factor that explains the lack of any emphasis placed on the first person interpretation program at the museum could be that the class participated in the first person interpretation event because of their involvement in this research. The class, before giving its consent to participate in this research, intended only to visit the museum and to work on the worksheets provided by the MOL.

The children’s agenda to an extent reflected the classes’ learning agenda in the classroom and the teachers’ expectations (or accordingly the lack of expectations) for the museum visit. For example, none of the children in either class expected to interact with an actor in the gallery. Instead, the children sharing the same agenda with their class teachers anticipated viewing objects at the museum setting. This was an expectation also shaped by the children’s memories of previous museum visits, their perception of what a museum is, the class’s preparatory session for the museum and the history lessons in the classroom. The common expectation in viewing objects that emerged in the two school groups perhaps could be seen within a wider context.

The children from the BL school demonstrated a learning attitude toward their visit in line with their learning curriculum (to see and to draw objects related to food), while the children from the N school placed emphasis on viewing objects related to the Roman Army, which was the main theme of the educational videos projected in the classroom. The association between the classes’ learning curriculum and the children’s agenda was also illustrated in their context for the interpretation of the theatrical event from a

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30 In a research conducted in 1999 aiming to find out how the teachers, pupils and parents responded to the English National Curriculum in history, 120 pupils were asked to value activities related to learning history: listening to teacher, using the computer, using library and other books, going on a visit, looking at objects and artefacts, watching a programme. Going on a visit and looking at objects and artefacts were categories highly valued by the children (both received 4 from the rank 1-6) although they did not reflect their classes’ reality in terms of numbers of museum visits and use of artefacts in the classroom (Bage & Grisdale & Lister, 1999:28-30).
historical perspective as illustrated mainly via the children's participation in group interviews. The children's agenda from the N school was mainly orientated towards the Roman Army and aspects of military life, while the children from the BL school demonstrated a wider learning agenda including themes from the Roman conquest and the domestic/every day life such as food, clothes, education, the role of women in society. A common pattern though emerged in both classes since in both groups Romans were seen as fighters and invaders and up to a certain extent a gender differentiation was noticed in terms of children's interest in Roman soldiers.\footnote{In the evaluation conducted in 1999 regarding the teachers, pupils and parents perception of the National Curriculum in History, a gender differentiation was noticed in the children's responses. From the 100 children that participated in the research the boys (50\%) drew more on themes related to the Roman conquest and its impact on Britain in comparison to the girls (37 \%), who found themes of everyday life more interesting.}

To what extent though did the participants' agenda shape their experience of the theatrical event? Are the differences illustrated in this chapter in regard to the children's prior-to-the visit agenda significant in shaping their interpretation of the format and content of the theatrical events at the MOL? The following chapter attempts to address this question while presenting the main themes that emerged from the children's participation in the event.
Chapter 7 – The theatrical events in the Museum of London

Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to present the themes that emerged from the children’s responses in regard to the format and content of the theatre events at the museum. The classes participated in two separate first person interpretation events and the main themes that emerged from the analysis are co-examined and presented here via comparison. Also, background information is provided about the two events and the research conducted in co-operation with the two school classes (BL school- year 4, N school- year 5). The children’s responses have been considered in relation to their verbal and non-verbal communication during the event and also their agenda prior to, and after, the museum visit. When appropriate, the actors’ intentions and feedback have been taken into account. It is intended that through co-examination of the main themes, which are viewed within the context of each class’s participation, the main parameters that could shape a first person interpretation event will be traced.

Background information
I joined both classes in their museum visit. Following the event, I returned with the school group to the class where individual drawings were conducted. Unstructured observations took place during the museum visit. The theatrical events could only be audio-recorded to avoid copyright infringement.

The year 4 class from the BL School visited the museum on 17th October 2003. Within a few minutes of the class’s arrival in the Roman gallery, the class met a female character called Martia Marina. The character is a Roman maidservant, 30 – 35 years of age, who lives in AD 300. When she was about eight, her mother, who could not afford to keep her, sold her into slavery and thought that she might save her life by selling her. In her mid twenties her master, Rufus Martius Comitalis, freed her. However, although she gained her freedom she is still working for Rufus and his family. She is in love with a Roman soldier. A maidservant in a nearby house, being jealous of Martia Martina’s good fortune, has put a curse on her by writing her name backwards on a piece of lead.
After the event the class remained for fifteen minutes in the Roman Galleries to draw the objects and observe the displays. As the visit took place on Friday the group interviews with the children were conducted on the following Monday, while it was made sure that the children would not have participated in a history lesson before the interviews as that might have affected their interpretation of the event. Three group interviews were conducted with five participants each. The interviews lasted between 35-45 minutes depending on the groups' comments and the available time given by the school. Due to children's illnesses the groups' consistency could not have been kept entirely the same in the two research stages (before and after the museum visit). Following the visit I participated as an observer in two history lessons in the classroom (21-10-03, 03-11-03) while, almost four months later, individual interviews were conducted with the children (13-02-04).

The year 5 class from the N school visited the museum on the 24th of November 2003. Twenty minutes were spent in the Roman Galleries before the actor's arrival during which the children were completing the worksheets provided by the museum. The session with the actor was unexpected for the children. It lasted 40 minutes and was attended by both classes simultaneously. Marcus Alpius Peregrinus is a 41 years old Roman army veteran who served for 25 years in the army. While he was in the army he was a citizen and he had many different postings. When the class meets him it is AD 300. It is a year after he retired. He stays at his friend Rufus Marius Comitalis' house whom he met when serving in London. Marcus intends to marry Martia Martina who works as a servant in Rufus's house.

On the 25th and 26th of November, the follow-up interviews were conducted with five small groups of children: three groups of three and two groups of pairs. Four of the participants in the interviews conducted prior to the museum visit did not participate in the follow up stage due to absence. The decision to form smaller groups was based on the attempt to form groups within which the children would feel comfortable and hence to facilitate interaction amongst the participants. The next two weeks following the museum visit I visited the school to participate as an observer in the history lessons set according to the class's timetable. However, in December, history lessons did not take place in the class. I revisited the school on the 29th and 30th of March to conduct individual interviews with 14 children.
Accepting the "big lie"
The children's interaction with the actors during the events and their comments in the follow-up interviews suggest that the children are not always willing to accept that the characters "come from the past" and interact within this fictional context. In both events the children were observed to attempt to push the boundaries between the real and the fictional. However, this was more evident in the event B. During the sessions, questions were posed in regard to the character's authenticity (e.g. N school-Adam: "Roman people did not have haircuts like that") and the setting's authenticity as a Roman one (e.g. BL school-Ishaq: "what about these lights...they are not Roman"). The research findings suggest that various parameters affect the children's willingness to accept the events' "big lie" such as the first contact with the actor, the children's preconceptions and the character's naturalistic plausibility.

The "first contact"
As the children were not particularly familiar with participating in drama and/or theatre programs either in the museum or the school setting, the participation in the first person interpretation event was an innovative experience for the children. Given also that the actors' and the museum's intention is to create theatrical events that have an interactive format, one could suggest that the audience (the school groups in this case) need to overcome their possible fear of interaction and feel invited to participate in the event (Wirth, 1994: 95-98). On that account, the "first contact" with the actor-interpreter was an important moment that has the potential to shape the children's eagerness or unwillingness to suspend disbelief. The extent to which the first contact is significant in building a relationship of trust between the children and the actor-interpreter is, in particular, illustrated in event B.

In event B the "first contact" between the actor and the class did not happen in an entirely fictional context. At the beginning of the event an explicit contract was drawn by the actor about the event's format. The actor informed the children that the session could be led by their questions (1). References were made to the class's real agenda (e.g. Actor: "How many of you have been here before?") and a series of direct questions were posed directing the children's attention to the setting (e.g. Actor: "I want you to look at the triclinium and look at the walls and count to five in your
head”). The children’s one-word responses to the questions posed did not indicate that the children were enthusiastic. When instructed to observe the setting simultaneously counting “in their head” some children counted aloud. As a result, the actor responded “out-of-role” within a schooling mode of communication, which was the breaking point of a relationship with the actor:

Actor: When I ask you to count in your head I expect you to do so. You are allowed to come in this space and you should be respectful. […] If you are going to ruin it for the rest I advise you to leave. I am not here to control you […] (extract taken from the recorded event).

The children, who were observed not following the interaction mode expected by the actor during the event, expressed later their disbelief and negative predisposition towards the actor/interpreter. As highlighted in Brendon’s comments below, the actor’s “out-of-role” response to the group provoked interpretations opposite to what he intended to achieve within the fictional context: that he is a real Roman. The children characterised the actor as “annoying” and the session as “boring” and when asked to provide an example they justified their opinion by stating that the actor “was not acting real” because he reprimanded them for their behaviour. The following quotations illustrate the inconsistency between the children’s reading and the actor’s intention to be perceived as “a real person”:

Extract 1 - Interview, Actor/Interpreter
[...] Try to entertain them with information and also for them to think that this might be a real person with real feelings living 2000 years ago […] (Actor B, extract, interview, 2003)

Extract 2 – Group interviews following the event, N school-year 5
[...]
R: For example?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes everybody knew that</td>
<td>They wore togas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You could tell he was not</td>
<td>The mosaics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acting real. It seemed that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he was not real. And he</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seemed he was not telling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the truth because it made it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

245
sound like if he would make himself seem that he was like a real Roman
And he was practically telling us that he was not a Roman because he shouted at us. We were a bit naughty and

He said I do not like people messing around
He had to wear basic stuff like armour

The building of a relationship of trust between the actor/interpreter and the audience is a prerequisite for the children’s meaningful participation in the theatrical event. In particular, in the form of the “interactive theatre”, which focuses on the creative participation of the audience, the creation of the experience “can be fulfilled only through the willing collaboration of the audience” (Wirth, 1994:87). The establishment of the “artistic trust” is part of the theatrical event’s aesthetic dimension through which the participants are creatively involved (Jackson, 1997). As indicated in the above example, the actor/interpreter’s interaction with the children within a didactic mode stripped the event from its theatrical mode and undermined the children’s genuine participation in the event. The children did not value the event for its educational content, while during the event, instead of posing questions that could expand their pre-understanding about the period in question, they focused on challenging the actor’s plausibility as a Roman character.

Children’s preconceptions
The children’s negative predisposition towards the actor was also rooted in the mismatch between the children’s preconception about Romans as fighters and the ex-soldier they met at the museum. As illustrated in the interviews conducted both before and following the museum visit, the children perceived the Romans as invaders and expressed moral undertones such as “they were nasty” and “they were killing people”. However, they also considered them as brave and, as indicated in the group interviews conducted before the museum visit, admired them for their military strategies. Thus, the meeting of an ex-Roman soldier who was not dressed in armour and according to the children “did not act supreme” did not appear to have contributed
to the establishment of children’s disbelief. The following extracts taken from the group interviews illustrate this point:

When you met this soldier, was he much different from what you had in mind about Romans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We thought he would be dressed in armour looking like ready to fight</td>
<td>Yes different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[...]

What about the character he was playing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He looked like a Celt</td>
<td>[...]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why did you say that he looked like a Celt?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He looked like a Roman with the clothes he wore but he did not act like a Roman</td>
<td>A gong</td>
<td>He acted like a Celt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does “gong” mean?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A gong means somebody silly, idiot Celts were gong because they did not fight properly. They tried to fight Romans but they got beat up.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children’s perception of the event’s content, together with the comparisons they made between their current first person interpretation experience and a previous one that they had at the Science Museum\(^2\), also contributed to the character’s lack of plausibility as a Roman. The event was characterised as “boring” because, according to a few children, it was repetitive and it did not offer something new to their previous

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1. These are quotations taken from the interviews conducted with the children.
2. When the class visited the Science Museum at the beginning of the term they came across an actor playing the character of an astronaut in the gallery.
understanding (e.g. Danniel: "He kept saying the same things and it was enough. We do not need to hear them all over again. He used to say the basic stuff that everybody knows"). Also, in comparison to the character (an astronaut) that the children met at the Science Museum the Roman character "acted [...] fake". The children’s perception of the event’s content contributed to this interpretation. The following extract illustrates this point:

When you went back home and your parents asked you how did you describe your day?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My mum did not ask me</td>
<td>My mum asked and me and James said that it was boring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why did you think it was boring?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brendon</th>
<th>Danniel</th>
<th>Ben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He acted so fake The astronaut was quite good. He made it bluntly clear that he was not real but the actor in the science museum was like real. Miss had to tell us that he was not real. We thought that he was real because he was really good.</td>
<td>It was the actor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He knew more. The man yesterday did not know that much about Romans.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So far, the children’s interpretation of the event B and comments regarding the acceptance of the fictional context provide an insight into the parameters that could affect negatively the children’s suspension of disbelief. They suggest that the children’s reading of the character for his/her plausibility as a person ‘coming from the past’ is filtered via their preconceptions about the period in question and
interpretation of the event's content. The establishment of a relationship of trust between the actor and the class, right from the beginning of the event, affects the children's belief in the event's fictional context. Also, the following parameter that emerged from the children's comments in regard to the event A illustrates the extent to which the character's plausibility can contribute positively to the children's suspension of disbelief.

**The character's naturalistic plausibility**

The actor/interpreter in event A (in contrast to event B) was noticed during the event employing theatrical non-verbal communication means to illustrate her narration and to communicate her character. She was noticed altering the pace of the session by quickening or slowing the tempo and/or the pitch of her voice. She was observed using the space by walking across the room, standing still, increasing or diminishing the distance with the audience and making use of an object (the chair) that constitutes part of the reconstructed living room. Non-verbal communication was used to illustrate the character's feelings, such as to communicate her secret that she is in love. The actor/interpreter presented signs that might be "non intentional" in real life and indicate embarrassment. However, what might appear as unintentional in the real world becomes an "iconic" representation in the fictional or reproduced reality (Esslin, 1987: 43-46). The gestures and voice of the actor operating within that basic iconic mimesis were read as such by the audience. The children placed emphasis on the actor's movement and voice. During the interviews they referred to and imitated the actor's non-verbal communication, which was interpreted as indicative of the character's personality (e.g. Arafat: "Because she was walking in a boasting way and was wearing jewellery stuff. She was acting like a Roman but she was English"). They also read the theatricality of the character in relation to the point that the actor wanted to communicate. For example, one of the children's favourite themes that was mentioned during the event was that the character was in love with a Roman soldier. The children perceived the moment as "funny" justifying their responses by reference to the actor's movement and voice. The following extract illustrates the children's responses:
Extract from Group 2

R: what was the most important part?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the most fun was the show</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: why was the show funny?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>because the woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>she was mmmmmmm [show movement]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of what she was doing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actor’s naturalistic plausibility as expressed via her movement and tone of voice appeared to have contributed to the establishment of the children’s “make-believe” that she is a person coming from the past. Frequently during the group and the individual interviews the children’s comments indicated their acceptance of the event’s fictional content (e.g. Sufia: [...] “She really acted like a Roman and she did look one”, Tasmin: “[...] She is not a real person but you felt like she was really like a real person”). In a few cases these comments were expressed in relation to the theatricality of the experience. For example, during the event the actor used the “space visualization” technique, which involves the actor looking over the heads of the visitors when describing a memory (Roth, 1998:98). The children read the moment for its theatricality and suggest that it contributed to the acceptance of the event’s “big lie”. The following extract that illustrates this point is taken from the interview with the Group 2:

Interview Extract, Group 2

R: what else do you remember?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She was like talking to the t.v.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, she was like talking to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The significance of the character's plausibility in the facilitation of the children's "make-believe" in the event is illustrated when compared with event B. The projection of an attitude was part of the actor's intention to establish the children's belief in the session (see chapter 6). However, the majority of the children did not read the character's attitude. When in the follow-up group interviews, two children commented that they noticed the character's attitude, still their comments were not indicative of the impact that the character's attitude had on the children's suspension of disbelief. For example, Daniel, who did not accept the event's "big lie," commented in regard to the character's attitude: "He was moaning, that was the only fun bit." The presentation of the character within a more theatrical context, in association with the establishment of a relationship of trust with the actor, could have facilitated the establishment of the "make-believe" and as a result challenge the children's preconceptions about the Romans. As indicated in event A, the children's preconceptions about the Romans do not remain unnoticed by the actor/interpreter's body language and theatricality. The children value the character for her plausibility as a person. On the contrary, the children value the character for her plausibility as a real person. The actor/interpreter's body language and theatricality does not remain unnoticed by the children, and their comments were indicative of the impact that the character's attitude had on the children's suspension of disbelief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>She is not a real person but you felt like she was really like a real person</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She was calling us master and the girls mistress.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can see her, I can see the soldier [...]</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought she was talking to a prince or something like that, that was the only fun bit.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was acting, may be she was imagining, she was really in love with the man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fictional persona and appreciate that the actor/interpreter’s interaction with the children unfolds within a fictional content. The extent to which the event’s theatrical format affected the children’s reading of the event from within an educational perspective is illustrated in the following themes.

**Reading the character**

As illustrated in Chapter 6, the museum intends to develop programs that will personalize the gallery rather than will convey factual information about the Roman period. However, although this might not be the museum’s priority, some factual information is integrated in both events. This constitutes part of the character’s personal story and narrative that, as intended by the museum, has been developed to be historically accurate. Within the context of this research this factual information will be termed as “interpretive points”. The children’s comments (from both classes) suggest that the children read the interpretive points that are interwoven in the character’s personal story within the relative historic context. In a few cases this interpretation appears to be fragmentary and/or individualistic as it depends on the children’s pre-understanding about the period in question.

For instance, Rifna did not indicate an in-depth learning agenda in the subject of Romans in the research stage prior to the visit. Following her participation in the theatre event she commented “I thought there were not such things as love in Roman times”. It might be assumed that meeting in the museum a Roman woman, who was in love, facilitated the perception of Romans via a humanized spectrum. Also, Sufia’s response could provide a further example that highlights the link between the children’s prior-to-the-visit agenda and their interpretation of the character’s fictional story. Three weeks before the museum visit the class had focused on the differences and similarities in the lives of Roman and Celtic women (See Appendix, weekly unit 4, date: 29/9/03). One of the differences pointed out during the history lesson was that in the Roman society a woman’s father could have chosen her husband. Sufia having identified the character as Roman and reflecting upon their previous understanding (that women in Roman society did not have the same status as women in the Celtic

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3 In the history lesson the differences had been introduced by the class teacher who was in role first of a Celtic and then of a Roman woman. The children had also participated in a role play activity in pairs.
society) interpreted the session's content within the context of her pre-understanding.

Three and a half months following the event she commented:

S: [...] She was a Roman girl and said she does not want to get married. Her father was going to choose who she is going to marry and she does not and she won’t be able to choose. Her father had to choose. [...] 
R: what do you mean when you say that her father decided for her? 
S: she has to because her father is forcing her [...] She really acted like a Roman woman and she did look one. I quite feel sorry for her because she is not going to marry the one she loves and they always had to do house cooking instead of going to schools and that is not fair. Because Roman times nothing was fair.

The children’s reading of the interpretive points related to the character had also an impact on the children’s understanding of the historical period. The children’s comments suggest that they read the interpretive points provided within the fictional context of the character’s story as information (factual points) about life in Roman times. The children’s learning lenses via which they viewed their museum visit (as illustrated in Chapter 6) might have facilitated the movement from the specific case (the actor) to the general level. Thus, during the group interviews the children would recall the interpretive points on a more general level and only when prompted to respond to questions referring directly to the character’s background (such as “who was he”, “what was his job”, “what do we know about him?”) would comment specifically on the character’s background (e.g. year 5-Charlie: “He was a citizen”, Shitu: “He is an army person”). For example, in event B the children interpreted the character’s comment that men in the army were not allowed to marry before the age of 40 as an interpretive point about Roman times. The following extract illustrates this point:

Kaire: You can only marry the Celts when you have finished the army 
Husna: Armies not allowed to marry until the war is finished

However, in the individual interviews conducted approximately four months following the event, almost none of the children recalled and commented on the interpretive points related to the character and/or his background. A few references were of a more fictional construction rather than a reflection of the character’s

where one child was in role of a Celtic woman and the other in role of a Roman woman. Following that the children performed individual tasks. For an outcome of their work see Appendix 18.
narrative (i.e. year 5 - Munni: “the man was alone in the house about he had his friends as well and they were going to have a big fight and the man cooked snails for his friend to eat”). This lack of references was mainly noticed in the children’s comments about event B. Perhaps, if one takes into account that a positive relationship between the actor and the children was not established, one could suggest that the children did not consider the information related to the character as important to be retained. Also, the non-recollection of the related interpretive points might indicate the importance of the follow up work in order to promote a longer term learning agenda and clarify any previous misconceptions. For example, in the children’s comments about event A there are no indications that they took into account the information communicated by the actor regarding the character’s status as an ex-slave who works in one of the wealthier houses in the town. If one takes into account that within the context of constructivism the process of reflection is integral in the learning experience and the way we make sense of past experiences, then it could be suggested that the class’s follow-up learning agenda could have affected the children’s “meaning making” (Glaserfeld, 1989). The class teachers’ awareness of the children’s level of understanding and also of the interpretive points that were mentioned during the theatre event could have facilitated the further exploration of the relevant interpretive points.

The setting
The setting with its objects is a central parameter for both the development and the perception of the program. It is an important part of the classes’ museum visit agenda in terms of the children’s expectations (to see objects). The impact that the setting had on the children’s interpretation of the event was illustrated in the children’s responses following the event. It was appreciated aesthetically (e.g. Shahara’s commented about her drawing: “I like this because it is beautiful”, Munna- “When we saw the man talking to us behind us there was a model house and I heard people talking about it. They were saying that it was nice”) and also for making “real” what perhaps was on an imaginative level before the museum visit (e.g. Henna: “there were some chairs and things. It was like in a real Roman place”, Callam: “it was more nice that I thought before”). Frequent references were also made in regard to the setting in the individual interviews conducted a few months following the event. The children in
both classes referred to the gallery’s reconstructed settings as “pictures” (e.g. “Usman: “you know this picture there is a bed and on the bed there is a booklet.[...].”). The schools might have spent some time before or following the theatre event in the Roman Galleries either to complete the activity sheets provided by the museum (N school) or to perform drawing tasks (BL school). However, the visual impact that the setting had on the children’s experiencing of the event should not be seen in isolation from the actor in the gallery.

In the interviews conducted in a few months following the event the actors are perceived as actually being the ones that “showed” the setting to the class⁴ (e.g. R: "did you meet somebody there?" Elle: "I think so. I think it was learning about Romans and we met this man and he was showing his house [...]"). “She showed us what they used to eat”). The children's comments suggest that they viewed the setting as a place where real people would have lived. For example, Jubair commented on his drawing:

“I think it’s important because poor people had to live there so I feel sorry for them”

Perhaps, it could be assumed that it was the visual aspect of the experience in combination with the interaction with a person pretending to “come from the past” that added a more humanized dimension to the children’s perception of the setting. In the individual interviews conducted a few months following the event, the children did not remember to a lesser or a greater extent the characters’ fictional story. However, the characters are central to the children’s recollection of the setting and, vice versa, the setting is an important parameter in the children’s interpretation of the character’s status. The effect that the character had on the children’s recollection of the setting is illustrated in the following comment elicited by Raheema in the individual interviews:

Raheema: I saw the kitchen
R: mmmmm

⁴ The children's perception of the actors “as being for them” in the gallery was also expressed in the evaluation conducted in the London Science Museum in by Bicknell and Mazda (Bicknell & Mazda, 1993:11).
Raheema: She showed us the place she used to live with her husband and she showed us the sofa and you know the floor with the tiles, different kinds, and she said to us there is a table of the small bottles […] 

The setting was also an important parameter for shaping the children’s reading of the characters. When the children were not sure about the characters’ status as described in the characters’ narrative then they drew assumptions about the characters’ status (rich or poor) based on their subjective reading of the setting. The children’s pre-understandings about life in the past played a significant role in this reading. As illustrated in the previous chapter, some of the children in the year 4 class demonstrated before the museum visit a learning background in regard to the differences between the rich and the poor in Roman times. This understanding was employed for the children’s interpretation of the museum setting and as an extension of the character’s status. For example, Mujahir before the museum visit was aware that the possession of glass was an indication of rich status (see Chapter 6, The class’s context for interpretation). This understanding affected the children’s interpretation of the character’s status via the children’s interaction during the group interviewing:

R: who do you think was living in this house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ishaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahir</th>
<th>Henna</th>
<th>Habbiba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>even the rich person can have only one window because it is really very expensive it took a long time to</td>
<td>very expensive that lady was rich they had six glasses on their window</td>
<td>[nodding]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact that the follow-up agenda could have had on the children’s interpretation of the event is illustrated in the case of the year 5 class. The children might have not participated in a follow-up history lesson in the classroom. However, a week before
the conduct of the individual interviews they participated in a theatrical event in the All Hallows Church related to the subject of Romans. One of the interpretive points during their visit to All Hallows was the distinction between rich and poor people, which in retrospect might have affected the children’s interpretation of the character that they met four months earlier in the Museum of London. For example, they recalled that under the floor there were servants working to keep the room warm (an interactive point from the session) and viewed them as an indication of the character’s rich status (e.g. Danniel: “he was just like Caesar because he was a rich man. He had slaves underneath turning a big wheel so heat would come on”). Amongst the points the children recalled the setting was an important parameter in this interpretation, as illustrated in the following extract:

Morgan: “He was quite rich because he had a colourful mosaic and only rich people could afford a colourful mosaic. We learnt that last week [referring to the visit in the All Hallows] and we saw it in London Museum”.

When the children did not have either a prior-to or following the event relevant agenda, they took into account the setting itself with its visual signals for the interpretation of the character. The character was considered either as “rich” or “poor” depending on the children’s reading of the setting. This point was mainly illustrated in the year 4 children’s responses who overall spent more time observing the Roman gallery in order to conduct a drawing activity and also had the theme of “rich-poor” as part of their learning agenda before the museum visit. The following extracts from the group interviews might illustrate the children’s assumptions about the character’s status as “rich” or “poor”:

Extract – Group 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arafat</th>
<th>Joynal</th>
<th>Raheema</th>
<th>Rifna</th>
<th>Tasmina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>she is a bit rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>because she had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>it was so nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I felt like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sleeping in it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Extract - Group 2
Showing the prop picture
R: is there something you want to tell me?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you know Martina she never wore a cap like that</td>
<td>she might be poor or something like that but they look really rich. Martina was quite poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rich</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and it was dirty, and in the toilet they had dormice</td>
<td>was poor because of the kitchen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The centrality of the setting in the children’s recollection of the event and interpretation of the character might indicate in a broader context the potentiality that “museum theatre” has as a medium for the interpretation of the setting and its collections. However, the extent to which the medium can be used as a means for the interpretation of the collections and the setting might depend on the integration of the setting and its collections in the character’s narrative and the children’s learning agenda either before or following the museum visit. When the children do not read a strong link between the character’s fictional story and the setting/objects they make assumptions about the character’s status based on the setting. As illustrated above the children’s learning agenda plays a significant role in the formulation of these assumptions.
The objects

The children's responses in the group interviews following the event suggest that the children in both year groups during the theatre events focused on the objects that they were familiar with before their museum visit. In the case of the year 4 class, the children focused on objects that had been introduced in the history lessons and the preparatory session in the classroom before the museum visit (artefacts made of glass, tablet/stylus, amphorae, Roman spoon for eating snails). As they had expected to see a strigel during their museum visit, they expressed their disappointment for not viewing one in the group interviews conducted following the event (e.g. year 4, Joynal: "we never saw a strigel"). Also, the year 5 class children focused on objects that they were familiar with before the museum visit. However, in comparison with the year 4 class their responses were limited perhaps due to the children's prior-to-the-event agenda on military aspects (see chapter 6).

Taking into account that familiarity is the basic framework via which we make meaning of our everyday experiences, one could justify why the children focused on the objects that they were familiar with during the session (Bristow et al, 1999:4). For example, the stylus/tablet were objects that the actor picked up at some point during the event A without however commenting about their use. Although the object was not integrated into the character's narrative, the children, being familiar with them because of their classroom learning, noticed the object and commented about it during the follow-up group interviews (either with or without prompting):

Interview extract, Group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She showed us, it's kind of notebook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it has wax</td>
<td></td>
<td>I forgot about that</td>
<td>If you want you can write</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 The main objects that the year 5 children were familiar with before the museum visit and accordingly observed and recalled following the event were the tablet/stylus and the Roman oil lamps. The tablet/stylus and its use was part of the video programs projected in the classroom while a few weeks before the museum visit the children had constructed Roman oil lamps during their art lessons.
your shopping list so you do not forget, yes, if you get it wrong you can go somewhere hot and scrape it over

R: how do you know that?
Group: Martina [the actor] and Ro [the class teacher] said

Familiarity and the children’s prior-to-the event agenda shaped the children’s focus on objects during the event. The interplay between the visual and the actors’ interaction with the children facilitated the objects’ presentation within a humanized context as the children recalled the objects in relation to their use. They either referred to the narrative via which the actor presented them or, especially in the year 4 class, the children referred to the objects’ use as explained during the preparatory session in the classroom. The objects also emerged as a theme in the individual interviews conducted a few months following the children’s participation in the events (Year 5-Adam: "yes, he was talking about tablets with the stylus, the wax. He told us that was his tablet"). In particular, five out of the ten drawings that were conducted in the individual interviews with the year 4 class children focused on objects (For an example, see Plate 20). The particular focus on the objects that the year 4 children demonstrated in comparison to the year 5 class could also be explained if one takes into account that following the event the children conducted drawing activities in the gallery.
Plate 20 Drawing conducted during the individual interview four months following the event, Shahara, year 4, BL School

Shahara: “This is the pointing bit [drawing the Roman spoon for eating snails] and this is the Roman woman that says that the slugs are delicious”

Interactivity

Interactivity is a basic characteristic along of which the first person interpretation events that have been developed in the museum. Three themes related to interactivity are presented here by taking into account the children’s and the actors’ comments: personal involvement, interaction based on the contrast between the real/present and the fictional/past framework, and challenging the boundaries of the real. They were used by the actors as a way of delivering the interpretive points of the event. The outcomes of this research show that the interpretive themes communicated via interactive modes were recalled by the children both in the interviews conducted the following day and four months after the event. Also, follow up work in the school on the relevant interpretive points facilitated the use of the appropriate vocabulary and supported the children’s long-term learning agenda.
**Personal involvement**

As illustrated earlier (chapter 6) the museum’s side (education department, actors) intends the first person interpretation programs to be interactive in their nature so that the children will be actively involved rather than “sit still and discover”. Especially for actor A, it is important to create an experience with immediacy during which the atmosphere will be “electric”. It is believed that by triggering the children’s “mischievous” side the children actively participate in the event and as a result they remember the event’s interpretive themes (Actor A, interview, 2003). As highlighted by the actor there is a particular moment in the event during which the atmosphere is always “electric”: when the character reveals confidentially to the children that she is in love. It is intended via the specific theme for the children to view Romans as humans. As indicated above (Reading the character) the children recalled the relevant theme in the follow up interviews, while the meaning they constructed of the theme varied according to their prior-to-the event individual learning agenda. The children considered the moment their favourite one, while the children placed emphasis on their participation for the communication of the theme. The following extract taken from the group interviews, which were conducted on the (school) day following the children’s participation in the event, illustrates the children’s choice of the moment as their favourite one:

**Group 1**

**R:** what was your favourite part?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ishaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahir</th>
<th>Henna</th>
<th>Halima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishaq said he loved his mummy and I said I love myself</td>
<td>and I said I love my family</td>
<td>I forgot her name but I liked it when she said who did she love.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When she said she is in love and to say the truth you know the lady she was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
wearing the clothes, she had a Roman soldier as a lover, that was the funny part, she was going in a circle putting her hands up and moving.

The year 4 children referred also to the specific moment in the individual interviews conducted almost three and a half months following the event:

R: I wonder if this lady said anything about her life....
Henna: She asked some questions about do you like anybody and then she asked who do you love and we had to whisper to her then she said that’s a nice person, that’s a nice person
R: Everyone was so shocked that this woman was in love. What do you think?
Henna: “Because it was a secret and she was asking if we can keep her secret”

To communicate the theme the actor posed questions that requested the children’s personal involvement (i.e. “can you keep a secret”, “do you promise to answer the question honestly”?). As it is indicated by Morgan and Saxton these type of questions can help the drama practitioner to establish the participants’ commitment and also the participants’ replies are indicative of their personal investment in the event (Morgan & Saxton, 1987:72 & 75-76). The class as a whole responded positively to the actor’s questions. However, a few children (such as Mujahir and Ishaq) responded negatively to the actor’s prompts for their personal investment in the event. During the event Mujahir and Ishaq posed questions that pushed the boundaries between the real and the fictional and following the event they commented that the actor said “boring things because she is a lady”. When the actor with the first three questions realized that the level of the commitment was not the expected one, she posed a question that required a demonstration of the children’s commitment: to show their hand if they promise that they will keep the secret. Then she asked the children if they have ever been in love and by shifting from a fast pace to a moment of silence she whispered her own secret, while she made it clear to the group that such information is confidential and valuable to her. The following extract is taken from the event:
Actor A: [...] I have heard Mithras asks for three things of the soldiers. Would you like to hear?
Children: Yes
Actor: But you must be honest? [Loud voice] Are you honest?
Children: yes
Actor: Pure? You must be pure. [Loud voice] Are you pure?
Children: yes
Actor: You must be courageous. [Loud voice] Are you brave?
Children: Yes
Actor: [silence] Do not actually say. [whispering] My master sometimes is very angry when he hears speak of these things. Can you keep a secret?
Children: Yes
Issaq : No
Actor: Who said no...then you must keep your fingers in your ears [Issaq is not willing to do so]
Actor: I have a secret. Should I tell you my secret?
Children: Yes
Actor: I must ask you a question first. Do you promise to answer the question honestly?
Children: Yes.
Actor: Show me your hand if you promise (children show hands)
Actor: I must see everybody's hands to promise...This is the question: have you ever been in love?
Children: Yes, no [The actor leans forward in order to listen each child’s confidential reply. Almost half of the children are willing to whisper in private to the actor]
Actor: As you have been honest with me ... I will tell you my secret. [smiling] I am also in love
Children: oh!
Actor: I am in love with a legionary soldier. He is here in Londinium and his name is Antonius. And he comes here for Cena, and he says that when he leaves the army he wishes me to be his wife.
Children: oh!

The children’s invitation to whisper confidentially to the actor whether they have ever been in love initially provoked the children’s intense reaction since they had to respond to the actor based on their real agenda. According to the class teacher the question challenged the children’s values and cultural agenda. Both the head and the class teacher came across incidents in the past that showed the children’s intense reaction to “anything that has to do with love” (Head teacher, interview 2003). Indeed, during the event the children were observed to react strongly to the actor’s references to the theme. Comparing the year 4 class’s reaction with three classes from

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6 The children’s responses via their real agenda was also illustrated in other parts of the event (i.e. “we are Muslims”, “we do not drink wine”)
different schools that were also observed participating in the event, it was noticed that the year 4 class (BL school) was the only class in which the children responded that they loved their parents. However, regardless of the content of the children’s actual replies the interaction with the actor provoked the children’s reaction and enthusiasm while most of the children were eager to whisper their secret to the actor.

This interactive mode during which both the character and the children reveal their secrets to each other also facilitated the children’s commitment to the event. The children stopped posing questions that challenged the character’s authenticity and took seriously the character’s prompting to search for a plate upon which a curse was put for her by another housemaid and to bring it to her.

Group 1 […]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ishaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahir</th>
<th>Henna</th>
<th>Halima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ishaq and I were looking for a board, it was written Martina backwards. I was looking for that but I never found it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: why did she tell you to search for her name backwards?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ishaq</th>
<th>Tasmin</th>
<th>Mujahir</th>
<th>Henna</th>
<th>Halima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because another lady was so jealous and she put her name backwards and she was</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She wrote her name backwards because if she takes to a Roman temple that means</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She will have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ishaq and I were looking for a board, it was written Martina backwards. I was looking for that but I never found it
The children's intense reaction during the event and recollection of the moment in the follow-up interviews also lies in the theatrical mode through which the interaction with the children took place. The children read the actor's body language, tone of voice and shift in the event's pace. In the follow-up interviews they reflected on the moment by imitating the actor's theatricality. The moment's theatrical mode in combination with the encouragement for the children's personal investment in the event appeared to have an "electric" atmosphere as it was initially intended by the actor. Also, comments were elicited about the actor's proximity to the children (e.g. Raheema: I liked it when she came close to us so that we could tell her our secret) indicating that the mode of interaction was particularly appreciated by the children.

The proximity with the children in combination with the actor's confession to the children might have placed the children in the position of being trustworthy and shifted their position from an audience to participants who are called to make a personal investment in the event. As a result, the aforementioned interactive moment facilitated the positive shift in some of children's attitude towards the actor and the event and overall was the children's favourite moment in their "museum theatre" experience.

*Present vs Past*

In first person interpretation programs interaction between visitors and actors usually takes place between the present and the past. The actors might develop a number of techniques to address the issue of time in their interaction with the visitors. Roles
might be allocated to the visitors that also situate them in the past, visitors might pass via time travel machines⁷, statements might be made by the actors hinting that the event takes place in a different time, or approaches such as the “my time/your time approach” might be developed, where the actors, although coming from the past, acknowledge the visitor’s time period and make comparisons (Roth, 1998:16 & 130).

The contrast between the characters’ and the children’s time was an integral part in the actors’- children’s interaction in both events under study. It was mainly used for the delivery of interpretive themes. By taking into account the actors’ comments and the observations conducted in the museum setting it was noticed that the actors A and B followed a slightly different approach. In event A the actor, although generally pretending that she did not recognize the children’s present, intended the delivery of the interpretive themes to follow the “my time/your time” approach by encouraging the children to interact via their time framework. Up to a certain extent a similar approach was also followed in event B. The contrast between present and past was emphasized by the actor B without, however, encouraging the children to describe their own reality. Each approach will be presented here in relation to the children’s recollection of the relevant interpretive themes.

In event A it was intended for the children to be given “the status of their time”: This in-vivo code is used here to denote the children’s encouragement to interact with the actor via their own time framework. The interaction is promoted with the initiation of a series of questions that were posed by the actor within the character’s time framework. Via these questions the children are encouraged to describe the present while the actor informs them about the same theme in the past. The actor’s intention, as it is illustrated in the following extract, is to facilitate the learning process via the children’s familiar framework and own understanding. It is deemed that through this path of communication learning is facilitated in a non-didactic manner:

R: How do you intend to communicate the session’s educational content? “I think it is important to give them the status of their time. So, hopefully it is not patronizing. It is taking on board what they are saying and empowering their own

⁷ An example could be the program “Timebus” Performed at the London Transport Museum for school children. Sited in a cinematic theatre they would travel via a time machine in the past to follow the development of transportation from its inception until today.
knowledge, their skill in communicating. And you can hear them talking, fighting with each other about their best description, the best way to do it. That's the way to make it understandable, through their own concepts of what food, relationships, slavery are. [...] In some cases children do not speak much in the class. Through drama, yes, they can speak” (Interview extract, Actor A)

In event A the interpretive themes that were communicated via the difference between the children’s and the character’s time frames were the themes of bathing and heating in wealthy Roman houses. These themes are linked to the museum setting since wealthy houses, as the one presented in the gallery's reconstruction, would have had a private bath and an underneath heating system (hypocaust). The year 4 children responded spontaneously to the actor's questions without however taking the initiative to describe what was familiar to them as it was expected by the actor. A possible explanation for the children’s limited verbal participation was the mode of interaction between the actor and the children. The actor, informed by the class teacher that English is a second language for the class, adjusted her questions to the class’s profile. As a result, she posed closed questions that encouraged one word replies. The following extract taken from the event illustrates this interaction:

Actor: [...] I will offer you the luxury of our private bath.
[Ro repeats, bath]
Actor: now what we do here in Londinium is as follows. After we remove our clothes, you move through the hot water and you steam and you stig off your sweat
Children: strigel
A: you leave the hot bath and you go to the cold bath to smooth your skin. Sweet smelly oil after your body. This is the point when my mistress is manicured and she wears her jewellery. Is that the manner you bath yourselves?
Children: no
A: you do not bath? [pretends they are smelly]
C: yes
A: you do bath and how many guests do you invite into your bath?
C: none, family
A: you do not like your guests to be clean before you eat?
C: no
A: do you have baths?
C: yes
A: how big is your bath?
C: this big
A: so you bath in a box
C: no

These are themes that also relate to the National Curriculum in history. The Unit’s 6A section “Who were the Celts and who were the Romans” includes themes such as the Romans lifestyle, houses and their interior design (QCA)
A: this is the size of a box
C: no
A: do you stand or sit in?
C: you sit in
A: then the dirt of your body goes in the water?
C: yes
A: then you sit in the dirty water
C: no, clean

Although the children's responses for their own time framework were limited, the relevant interpretive themes communicated with the aforementioned mode of interaction were recalled in all three group interviews conducted after the event. During the follow up group interviews the year 4 children were asked to comment if they felt that they learned something new during the event or if something they already knew became more clear to them. They referred to the interpretive points by miming the actor's non-verbal communication and also by recalling the responses they provided to the actor during the event. Also, the social context of the group interviews facilitated the interaction amongst the children and as a result the recollection of the interpretive points. The following extract taken from the interviews conducted with the second group illustrates the children's recollection of the interpretive theme of heating, which was not part of the children's learning agenda before the museum visit:

Extract - Group 2

R: anything else that became more clear to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>you know the tiles, so many people made them and it was quite hard, it was wooden I think, no it was glass</td>
<td>the mosaic</td>
<td>a heater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The tiles, the mosaic</td>
<td>And under the mosaic they had</td>
<td>fire and she was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

269
R: how do you know that there was heat under the mosaic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callam</th>
<th>Reynu</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
<th>Jaheda</th>
<th>Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martina</td>
<td></td>
<td>she told us, Martina</td>
<td>you know the lady</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>she told us everything and she acted how it was in the room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interaction through the contrast between the children’s and the actor’s timeframe appears to facilitate the recollection of the relevant interpretive themes. The actor’s intention to encourage the children’s participation via their frame of familiarity seems to be in tune with the radical constructivism’s perspective on the process of learning. Radical constructivism postulates that any process of interpretation originates in the interpreter’s experiential field and conceptual structures (Glasersfeld, 1983). The children’s encouragement to interact in the event through their context of familiarity highlighted the differences between present and past. Through this process they are encouraged to make comparisons and build a bridge between what they already know and the new information provided. Also, the class’s follow-up work in the classroom contributed to the integration of the event’s interpretive points into the children’s long term learning agenda. For example, the theme of heating was mentioned briefly during an question-answer session that took place in the classroom following the

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9 For example, the extent to which the children’s pre understandings were present during the unfolding of the event is illustrated in the children’s spontaneous reference to the strigel when they heard the actor mentioning the relevant theme. Viewing a strigel at the museum was one of the class’s expectations for their museum visit (See Chapter 6).
museum visit in order for the children to recall what they learned in the museum. The class teacher reinforced the point by explaining the heating system and introducing its name as the class’s word of the week. As a result, in the individual interviews conducted almost four months later, ten of the thirteen children that participated at this stage of the research appeared to be aware of the interpretive theme. Five children (Shahara, Rifna, Henna, Joynal, Sufia) mentioned the point without any prompting, while five participants commented on the theme with relevant prompting10 (Ishaq, Sufia, Kalla, Mujahir, Arafat). The following extracts from two individual interviews illustrate the learning potentiality of the event’s interactive mode and also indicate the extent to which the children’s learning from the event evolved though time and intersected with the class’s further learning agenda:

Extract from individual interview, Ishaq - year 4 BL school

R: is there anything else this woman said?
Ishaq: ......................
R: did she say anything about heating?
Is: what do you mean?
R: ....
Is: oh, yes, underneath the floor it was hot because there is pipes and fire is under in the basement. Pipes go under and make the floor really hot. So, the Romans could be warm and in windy days they would not feel cold when they were touching the ground in their houses.
R: how did it work?
Is: There were pipes from the fire running through and it got warmer and warmer by the time they lit it on. Make wind.
R: did Rosie say that in the classroom?
Is: just the actor.......... Rosie said a bit about that

Extract from individual interview, Henna - year 4 BL school

H: you know there was a lady inside and there was a big instruction [meaning construction?] that heat comes through and the lady told us as well and it goes all the way up the walls and if you have another house it goes up as well through the ceiling. But the Celtic never had that. They just lived in houses made out of wood. But Romans got stone
R: How do you know that?
H: you know there is a picture and we saw a big Roman building, when we saw a tape. We saw the Celts had wooden and hale on the top for roof and The Romans put fire on them.
[..] [drawing]

10 Prompting such as “is there anything you want to tell me about heating” was used by the end of the individual interviews. The aim was to facilitate the children’s implicit knowledge.
The heat comes out and there are patterns made out of stones. Because they are made of stone, the stone is conductor and the heat can travel that way so the heat goes up but if it was a Celtic house they would not have that.

A similar pattern also emerged in the children's responses from the year 5 group (N school) that participated in event B. During the event the actor B communicated via sequential questions on interpretive themes related to Romans' lifestyle: bathing, hygiene and having dinner. The communicative approach was analogous to the one followed in event A in the sense that the actor B posed questions that emphasised the contrast between present and past. However, the actor interacted with the group without encouraging the children to describe the present or recognising overtly that the children live in a different timeframe to his. The contrast between present and past was intensified and provoked the children's reaction and laughter as the actor communicated the themes by locating the children in the past (e.g. Actor B: “you will come to Cena tonight and we will all bath together” “tonight when we eat around the 8 (o' clock) you take your knife [...] would you like to eat with the hand you have been in the toilet?”). When in the follow up group and individual interviews, the children were asked to comment on what they remembered from the event\(^\text{11}\), they recalled the relative interpretive themes. The children read the event's interactive moments based on the differences between past and present as means for establishing the fictional context. The following extract taken from the follow up group interview (2) illustrates the children's reading:

R: What did you remember?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husna</th>
<th>Munna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In your time they did not have buttons and zips and when Markus saw Morgan's zip he said what is this. This is the Roman time not the modern time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said what is that</td>
<td>But he really knew, he was just faking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He made us think like he was like real Roman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) In the interviews the children's relevant responses were also elicited when the children were asked to comment about their favourite part of the event and to explain if there was something that they learned from the event.
The interactive mode via which the themes were communicated facilitated the recollection of the themes (i.e. Individual interviews - N school, Nimco: “He told us when we come for dinner”, Jallal: “we had to have a bath with him and that was so disgusting”). The majority of the children recalled the relevant interpretive themes both in the interviews that were conducted the day following the event and four months after. In a few cases, the recollection of the characters’ actual narrative seemed to be fragmentary with indications of misunderstanding. This was more evident in the children’s responses four months following the event and especially in the interpretive themes for which the children did not have any learning background/experiences before and/or after the museum visit. For example, during the event the actor communicates via an interactive mode that the Romans used to have spoons and knives which they needed to bring with them when invited for dinner. Since actor B interacts with the children only via the character’s time frame he pretends that he does not recognize what a fork is (Actor B: “[....] when you eat you use your right hand. You cut with your knife”, Brandon: “spoon and fork”, Actor B: we have spoons [he shows] and knives. Fork [mispronounced] what is it?”). The children were not familiar with this point before their museum visit. In the follow up interviews they recalled the theme, whereas four months after they also referred to the fork as necessary equipment that Romans had to bring with them to have a meal. Husna’s responses both in the follow up group and individual interviews illustrate this difference in the children’s recollection:

Extract from the group interview 2, year 5, N school

R: Did you know that before going to the museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husna</th>
<th>Munna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, because we saw it on the video we did not know that they bath together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was I about to say? I forgot ....Oh yes ...the man said that you have to have your own knife for the dinner, you do not share them</td>
<td>Yes, we had to have our own knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And they had snails to eat</td>
<td>Yiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And the man , what was his name?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extract from the individual interview-Husna, year 5 N school

R: what was his job?
Husna: I do not think so. He showed us how they ate. You had to bring their own knives and forks when they are having dinner. And he said at the evening you come here to have your lunch but he was joking.

The difference between past and present that characterizes the interaction between the actors/interpreters and the visitors in the first person interpretation events was addressed in both events in the MOL. The actors posed questions that emphasized the contrast between the present and the past while a minor differentiation was noticed between the two events in terms of the approach that the actors followed. In event A, it was overtly acknowledged that the children were living in a different time to the one that character was living in and were encouraged to describe their own time frame. In event B the actor did not acknowledge that the children were living in the present and via his narrative located the children in the past. Within this interactive mode it was intended for specific interpretive themes to be communicated. The children’s comments in both year groups do not refer directly to the event’s format with the exception of a few comments elicited in the year 5 group, suggesting that the highlighting of the different time frames might have facilitated the establishment of the “make believe”. The recollection of the interpretive themes within the format via which the actor initially communicated them suggests that the interactive mode based on the contrast between past and present facilitates the recollection of the relevant interpretive themes both in the short and long term. However, it should be mentioned that in the interviews conducted four months following the event, the children’s recollection of the character’s actual narrative was partially fragmentary due to the time passed. The children’s recollection of the interpretive themes was subjective depending on the children’s prior to and following the event agendas.

Challenging the boundaries of the real

One particular interactive moment during the event B that was delivered in a theatrical mode might also be located within the theme of interactivity. This interactive moment was used to communicate the interpretive theme of heating to the year 5 group (N school). The children were invited to place their hands well above
the mosaic to feel if there is warmth coming from the floor. The children that did not have any learning background in regard to the specific theme responded negatively. The children’s negative response was indicative of the realistic value they attribute to the experience, since if they were willing to respond within a fictional context they would have responded positively to the actor’s question. The actor, unexpectedly and in a loud voice, addressed the slave that was supposed to be taking care of the furnace underneath. The actor, by addressing a person that for the children belonged to the fictional world, added a theatrical dimension to the event. For the class the moment was unexpected, as indicated in their immediate reaction: they pulled their hands back and remained silent. The following extract taken from the observations conducted during the event B illustrates the moment:

Actor B: Put your hand, do you feel it?
Children: No
Actor B: It is cool down here isn’t it. Put your hands back. [Silence]
Actor B: [looking at the floor with loud voice] Wake up!
Children: [the children put their hands back]
Actor B: A few seconds, not yet. Do you feel the difference?
Children: No
Actor B: Oh, you would if you were here. Does any of you know to whom I was shouting at?
Children: down below
Actor B: What is below the floor?
Children: the mosaic
Actor B: under the floor is one of Rufius slaves and the furnace the fire. Obviously he stopped for a while that’s why it was so cold. And under the floor and the big fire there are barrels. Do you know what bellows are?
Children: no
Actor B: they have two hands for movement and you push the air through a small hole on the floor. Bellow is when we are breathing. Breathe in and bellow out.
[...]
You see under the floor when I shouted at him to wake him up he would start operating the bellows. And hot air would come through the fire and under the floor. This floor is heated because it is very cold at night and it is at night that we have our dinner.

Responses in regard to the specific moment were elicited in all four follow up group interviews, suggesting that the children interpreted the moment as “funny”, confirming the museum’s expectation that “what is enjoyable is memorable”. The following extract is taken from the follow up interview with the second group:

R: Did you know that he was going to be there?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jalal</th>
<th>Nimco</th>
<th>Shitu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, we never knew we were just drawing</td>
<td>It was really funny, we draw the mosaic and he said hello and he shouted at the floor “wake up”. You know the slaves were living downstairs they have to make the fire so he can get warm</td>
<td>No, I just saw somebody walked in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was really funny</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They pump like that</td>
<td>Yes, they pump like that the air and the fire gets bigger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children’s comments indicate that the moment was a memorable one (i.e. Shitu: “When he shouted my heart was beating fast”, Husna: “I really liked the bit when he was shouting and he said wake up”). It motivated the children to look at the relevant panel depicting the heating system (Husna: “And I saw the Roman heating in the glass while you were standing there. I read the little book, you know they were like chimneys”). Also, comments were elicited by the children that (as illustrated earlier) did not suspend disbelief and/or did not build a relationship with the actor (Adam: “His jokes were boring. He tried to make fun by shouting. He said that there was a servant downstairs”, Brendon: “And he said the slave was under the floor which was so fake as well”). Although Brendon’s and Adam’s comments were negative, reflecting the children’s disposition towards the actor, they still indicate that the moment was memorable especially in regard to the associated interpretive theme.

From the twelve children that participated in the individual interviews four months after, nine children remembered the interpretive point when prompted. The following extract taken from the individual interview with Danniel (year 5 – N school) illustrates the effect that the aforementioned moment had on the children’s recollection of the event and its interpretive themes in the long term:

R: What do you remember?
Danniel: I saw the plaster on the walls. It was …This man wearing sandals, he was just like Caesurae because he was a rich man. He had slaves underneath turning this big wheel so heat would come on. Every time it was cold when he was standing on the floor would shout them to turn the wheel harder.
Also, Danniel during the drawing activity described how the heating system might have looked (See Plate 21). The relevant panel in the gallery space, where the event is performed, might have facilitated the visualization of the system:

Plate 21 Drawing conducted in the individual interviews four months following the event, Danniel, Year 5, N School

Danniel: “It would be like that and the long stick would come out here…”

Overall the children’s responses in both year groups suggest that the interactive moments during the event and the interpretive themes associated with them are memorable both in the short and long term. Any follow up work in the school or in the museum setting is of particular importance since it gives the opportunity for reflections, clarifications and the establishment of further connections with the children’s learning agenda. Otherwise, it is possible for the children to carry through any misunderstandings that occurred during the participation in the event in the long term or not to integrate the relevant interpretive themes in their learning agenda.
Conclusion

This chapter presented the main themes that emerged from the children’s responses following their participation in the first person interpretation events. The participants’ (museum educators, actors, class) prior to the event agenda informed the presented themes, as did the observations conducted both in the museum and in the classroom setting. The aim was to trace, via the co-examination of the main themes for both events (A & B), the main parameters that shape first-person interpretation events.

As it is illustrated in Chapter 6, the children in both classes expect that their museum visit will link to the history learning in the classroom. They expect that they will learn about Romans and that they will view objects related to the Roman army and way of living. In this respect, the children arrived at the museum viewing the whole experience as an opportunity for learning. The reading of the theatre events was also affected by the children’s learning perspective. In both events the children viewed the characters as representatives of the past and perceived the information that was provided in the characters’ narratives as “facts” about life in Roman times. In the children’s reading, the move from the specific example (the character’s narratives) to the abstract level (as information about the period in question) seemed to have been affected positively by the learning perspective through which the children viewed their museum visiting experience. However, this reading was also shaped by other factors such as the degree to which the children accepted the event’s fictional context. Within the context of this research it is illustrated that not all of the children were willing to accept that the characters are “coming from the past” and to interact with them within this context. The reasons for the children’s unwillingness to accept the event’s fictional context appeared to be rooted in the children’s prior to the event agenda, their “first contact” with the actor and the character’s naturalistic plausibility.

The participation in drama/theatre events either in the school or the museum context was for the children an innovative experience. The children, not being prepared in regard to the event’s format, were not aware of the fictional lenses via which they could view the event. Thus, the first contact with the actor and the potential establishment of a relationship of trust was important in shaping the children’s predisposition towards the character and the fictional context of the event. This is a
point illustrated in both classes that participated in the theatrical events at the MOL. In the case of the year 5 class, the lack of the establishment of a relationship of trust between the actor and the class, right from the beginning of the event, affected the children's predisposition towards the actor. Breaking out of role and responding to the children within the real context of the present in a disciplinary mode made it more difficult for the children to establish belief in the session and to interact on a more meaningful level with the character rather than with the actor. As the event unfolded, the actor received more questions related to his plausibility as a character rather than questions focused on life in the Roman army (given that this was the area in which the children from the N school were more interested). The establishment of a relationship of trust with the actor/character was a prerequisite for an interaction that would have provided a wider and more in-depth context about life in the past. The significance for the actor to maintain and to interact only from within the event's fictional context was illustrated positively in event A. The establishment of a relationship of trust between the actor and the children facilitated the children's commitment to the event. The interaction only within the fictional context facilitated the children's genuine participation in the event, showing that the events' educational potential and theatrical format have to co-exist for the event to be a successful one.

Also the children's preconceptions and expectations shaped their perception of the character and the event. It is illustrated within the context of this research that the children would not accept the event's fictional context or demonstrate willingness to participate in the event when the character's profile was not in agreement with the children's preconceptions about the Romans. The character's theatricality was the element that determined the children's acceptance of the character as a real persona from the past and as a result facilitated the challenging of the children's preconceptions. For example, the year 4 children that read and appreciated the character A in terms of her theatricality also read the associated interpretive point: that Romans were also human beings that could be in love. The combination of the interpretive point with the theatricality with which it was communicated challenged some of the year 4 children's preconception of Romans as fighters. On the other hand, in event B where the theatrical performance did not always unfold within the fictional context and the children did not read the character for his theatricality, the children's preconceptions about Romans as fighters remained unaltered. The children
commented on the actor’s unsuccessful attempt to persuade them that he was a “real” Roman. During the event the actor was not observed to consistently employ a theatrical language in his interaction with the children. His movement with the performance space was limited while there was no variation in terms of the performance’s pace, the actor’s tone of voice and proximity with the children. Following the event the class teachers commented that the actor interacted with the children as a class teacher rather than as a character from the past.

The characters that both actors selected to take over were “composite” characters resembling real people in Roman times rather than roles of known historical personas (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:123). Goodacre and Baldwin comment that this type of character is demanding as it involves immersion in the character that moves beyond mere role-play (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:124). The actor/interpreter needs to “study and empathise with social and physical features of an unfamiliar way of life” to create an identity that has a temporal existence (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:123). It should be stated here that the way through which the actors establish their roles was not a theme that emerged from the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the actors before the children’s participation in the event. The actors commented on the process of the event’s development without however making explicit reference to the establishment of their role. The actor B commented that he intended to establish his role by expressing a negative attitude towards the setting and in particular towards the colour of the walls and the mosaic. The children read the moment without however commenting that it was this element that convinced them that the persona as a real one. Given that in a “museum theatre” event the visitors only sample the characters’ behaviour and personality through their interaction with them, it is important that this interaction takes place without breaking the event’s fictional context while the actor’s identity is clearly signalled through a theatrical mode.

The children read the characters for their theatricality and also for the “interpretive themes” that their narratives might encompass. As discussed above, the children’s reading of the integrated interpretive themes is rooted in their viewing of the museum as a place for learning and in their expectations that their visit would link with the class’s learning curriculum in history. Thus they recall the interpretive themes that were integrated into the narrative by making deductions from the specific (the
individual case of the actor) to the general (e.g. that the number of names one might have had is an indication of one’s social status). The extent to which the children’s learning lenses affected the reading of the events’ interpretive points is illustrated if one takes into account that the narrative, which entirely regards the character’s personal story, was not memorable for the children. The non-recollection of the character’s personal story was more evident in the case of the year 5 class that were negatively predisposed towards the actor. Especially in the interviews conducted four months after, the children did not recall the actor’s narrative that referred to his own story. Any references to the actor’s narratives concerning only his life were fictionally constructed by the children based on the setting in which the event took place (e.g. he had his friends as well and they were going to have a big fight and the man cooked snails for his friend to eat).

The setting was also an important parameter that affected the children’s reading of the event and the character. The children appreciated the setting aesthetically for making real what was perhaps on an imaginary level before the visit and viewed the actor in relation to the surroundings. The reading of the character in relation to the setting was more illustrated in the individual interviews conducted four months following the event. The actor was perceived as being there to show to the class the setting, while the character’s status (as rich or poor) was interpreted based on the children’s reading of the setting. The impact that the children’s prior to or following the event learning agenda had on the reading of the setting as an indication of a poor or a rich status was evident in both class’s responses. Of equal importance in the children’s reading of the event were the objects that were either on display or integrated in the character’s narrative. The children’s prior to the event agenda, which was mainly orientated towards the viewing of objects, played an important role in the children’s reading, since the children focused on objects with which they were familiar. However, the children’s focus on the objects should not be seen in isolation from the whole museum visit since the classes spent time in the gallery either by completing the work sheets provided by the museum or conducting drawing activities. The centrality that the setting and its objects have in the children’s recalling of the event and interpretation of the characters indicate within a broader context the potential of “museum theatre” as a means for the interpretation of the museum setting and its collections and suggest the importance of integrating such setting and objects in the characters’ narrative. In
the first person interpretation events the characters’ narrative could be a powerful medium for the communication of aspects of social history. The setting with its visual impact could facilitate the actors’ narrative rather than functioning as the primary source for deductions about the characters’ social status.

Also, the interactive mode via which the interpretive themes were communicated is of particular importance for the recalling of the event and its interpretive themes. Within the context of this research, the interactive modes were grouped into three main themes: a) interaction that involved the children’s personal investment in the event, b) interaction based on the difference between the event’s and the children’s time frame, and c) interaction that challenged the boundaries between the real and the fictional. A common characteristic in these three modes of interaction was that the linguistic initiative was left to the actor/interpreter. They interacted with the children either on one-to-one basis or addressed questions to the whole group. As it is indicated in Goodacre and Baldwin’s research, “the right to speak” in living history interaction lies in the interpreter’s side as through their experience and training they develop subtle ways to control this verbal exchange (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002:118). The actor/interpreters were the ones that initiated most of the questions that were posed during the event and, via the use of anachronisms and the differences between the characters and the children’s timeframe, encouraged the verbal interaction. To what extent could this interaction be considered effective in enhancing the children’s learning agenda?

In the event A, the interaction through the contrast between the present and the past appeared to be effective. The children responded with genuine enthusiasm to the actor’s invitation for participation. Through their invitation for a personal investment in the event and their re-positioning from an audience to participants was valued by the children and facilitated the children’s commitment to the event. Positive responses were also expressed when anachronisms were used in the interaction with the children in event B. The interactive moments attributed to the events a playful mood that was appreciated by the children as they were enjoyable and funny and were memorable even four months following their participation in the event. In previous research conducted in the field of theatre in education, “playfulness” has been pointed out as an important element in the positive reading of the theatre events (Jackson, 2002:168-
177). Also, an important parameter in this interactive mode was the theatricality via which the actor/interpreters communicated with the children. The children in both classes read the characters for their theatricality (or lack of it, as it was mainly illustrated in event B) and remembered even four months following the event the interpretive points that were communicated via an interactive theatrical mode. Although the event B was overall characterised for its lack of theatricality, the association between the communication of the interpretive theme and the theatricality via which it was communicated appeared as a pattern that appeared in both events. When the actor B challenged the boundaries between the real and the fictional and communicated the interpretive theme of heating via an interactive theatrical mode the associated interpretive point was recalled by the children both the following day and four months following their participation in the event.

However, if one takes into account the children’s learning agenda as shaped before the museum visit, one could assume that during the events the opportunities given to the children for the enhancement of their learning agenda were limited. The interpretive points mentioned during the event did not facilitate connections with all the children’s pre-understanding about the Roman’s way of living. As a result, not all children’s preconceptions about Romans as fighters and invaders were challenged. Perhaps the children’s meaningful participation in the event could have been facilitated via a two-way communication between the children and the actor as the former were not always encouraged to pose questions to the actor/interpreters that would have reflected their preconceptions and pre-understandings. The museum considers that via the current form of the events, they maintain their theatrical character and also encourage the children’s participation as by the end of the programs the children might be encouraged to pose questions (See Chapter 6). Nonetheless, in the two events that constituted the focus of this research, the children did not express at any point their learning agenda and preconceptions about the Roman time. Specifically, when the year 4 children following the museum visit were asked if they felt free to ask any questions to the actor they responded negatively:

R: did you feel free to ask her any questions while she was speaking?
G: no
Mujahir: last time you told us, we do not need to put our hand up we just ask, but she...with her we had to put our hands up. With her I did not feel that free.

Also, the questions that were posed by the actors/interpreters were not open in the sense that they could bring to the fore the children's prior schemata and understanding. From a constructivist perspective the challenge for the actors/interpreters, as in every teaching-learning situation, was to diagnose the children's previous constructions of meaning and then to encourage them via active participation to formulate and to test the hypothesis that would generate new understandings (Fosnot, 1996). Both events seemed to have a tight structure that directed the participants into the construction of certain meanings. According to Eco's approach to reading the events could be characterised as "closed"12 in the sense that the interpretive choices they offered were not infinite and they pulled the children towards a predetermined path of interaction and "meaning making". In further observations conducted within the museum setting with other classes that participated in both events, my initial assumption about the events' tight structure and the one-way communication that is controlled by the actors was confirmed. The museum seems to feel pressure to provide standardised events that deal with given interpretive themes within a certain time allocation in order to respond to the increased number of school visits. However, the provision of theatre events that invite the participants to make their own connections and to expand their pre-understandings would have yielded a more powerful learning experience.

Undoubtedly the classroom-based work both before or following the children's participation in the event had a significant role in shaping the children's "meaning making". The children's reading of the "museum theatre" experience can be considered as a dynamic entity which is constantly shaped via the interchange of the museum's and the schools' agenda. The children's recollection of the relevant interpretive themes was subjective based on their prior to the event agenda and their own pre-understandings. Any relevant experiences, such as follow up work in the classroom and/or further museum visits, also played significant role in the shaping of the children's meaning making. Through their further learning experiences

12 (Eco, 1984:4).
they had the opportunity to expand the meaning that was generated during their participation in the “museum theatre” event. The value of the follow-up work is also illustrated if one takes into account that when the children did not have the opportunity to reflect on their “museum theatre” experience and the interpretive points that were associated with it then in a few occasions there was evidence of misunderstanding.

Overall, the research findings suggest that the interplay between the visual and the verbal is one of the qualities that the “museum theatre” can offer as an educational means within the museum setting. The children read the character for his/her theatricality in relation to the setting within which the event is performed. The event’s interactive mode and theatricality, which differentiate the event from a didactic form of teaching, are of particular importance for the children’s recalling of the event and its interpretive points. Furthermore significant in the shaping of the children’s “meaning making” is the children’s prior to the event agenda as it provides the basis for the reading of the event and its interpretive points. Also, as the children’s reading of the event evolves through time, the children’s further learning experiences within or outside the classroom context affect in retrospect the interpretation of the event and the meaning constructed in regard to its interpretive points.

During the conduct of this research an AHRB-funded research was conducted investigating the effectiveness of theatre techniques in museums. The research conducted in two museums compared the children’s cognitive and affective aspects of learning between school groups that participated in museum theatre programmes (first person) and school groups that visited the relevant gallery by participating in museum education programmes that did not include theatre (Jackson et al., 2002). In the research, the first person events appeared to enhance the children’s understanding and recollection of the events, both in the short term and the long term (Jackson et al., 2002:6). Particularly, the research indicated that children who participated in the theatre group “showed a more empathetic grasp of the information imparted and sense of the period than did the non-theatre groups” (Jackson & Rees Leahy, 2005:134).

The current research on the first person interpretation events in the MOL also provides a further perspective on the internal quantitative evaluations that have been
carried by the MOL's Education Department. In the year 2000, 101 questionnaires were given to the class teachers, of which 36 forms were returned to the museum. Around 90% of the responses rated the sessions' relevance to the National Curriculum, the advance information provided to the schools and the presentation of history in a fun manner as good or excellent (Roman Actor Evaluation Report, Internal document). According to the museum's interpretation, the session had been also positively evaluated in the year 2003/04. From the 14 questionnaires returned, 13 teachers thought that the session was relevant to the National Curriculum and that the presentation of history and its relation to further teaching was either good or excellent. From the sample, only one school rated the session as poor due the actor's inexperience and background noise in the gallery (Internal document, Personal communication Frazer 2004).

The findings of the MOL's internal evaluation could be enriched by the findings of this qualitative research since they offer a wider perspective about the "museum theatre" events which are based on the children's views. Also, a qualitative perspective is offered in terms of the class teacher's perception of the event. On a first view one might not see a discrepancy between the museum's and the school's objectives since the relevant interpretive themes of the events follow the lines of the National Curriculum. However, both schools expressed their disappointment in terms either of the content or format of the event. In the case of the year 4 class (BL School) that had a strong learning agenda the session was criticised for underestimating the children's learning background and their potential to participate actively in the session. According to the class teachers, the class (being prepared for the session in regard to the vocabulary used and the main themes presented) could have participated on a more meaningful level. Specifically the museum specialist teacher considered that by limiting the children's participation to one word replies the class's participation was reduced to the level of "heckling". Similar comments regarding the format of the event were also elicited by the year 5 class teachers (N school). The class teachers pointed out that the event B could have offered more if it had taken into account the children's admiration for the Roman soldiers, and also commented negatively about the actor's pedagogical experience.
The findings of the case study of the first person interpretation events are also reviewed in combination with the findings from the participatory case study in the following concluding chapter.
Chapter 8 Conclusions and Reflections

Introduction
This research was conducted in the heritage site of Clarke Hall and in the Roman Galleries at the Museum of London and intended, with the participation of four school classes, to explore how the children “make meaning” from two types of “museum theatre” events: participatory theatrical event and first person interpretation. In particular, it attempted to explore the children’s “meaning making” in regard to the theatrical events’ format and content and to trace the impact that the participants’ prior-to-the event agenda might have had on shaping the participants’ understanding and as an extension of the event itself. In this final part, I will endeavour to examine, by reflecting upon the methodological framework employed, the extent to which the research achieved its initial objectives. Given also the research’s aspiration to provide a framework that might be useful for the “museum theatre” practitioners, the parameters and interpretations that emerged in each case study will be synthesized by taking into account the idiosyncratic character of each case study. Following that, I will discuss the value and the limitations of this research and consider its potential implications for further research in the area.

Key findings
“Making meaning” and “making sense” are terms that have been used interchangeably throughout the analysis to refer to the way the participants understand the “museum theatre” experience. The research participants’ interpretations emerged via grounded theory analysis, which was approached as an act of understanding the meaning of lived experience and not as a mechanical process bound to certain rules. In agreement with the constructivist paradigm, which postulates that reality is “pluralist” and “relativist” in its nature and constructed in the individuals’ minds, the research showed that multiple interpretations amongst the children were constructed, especially in regard to the content (interpretive points) of the event. Within also the research’s theoretical framework, that views the cognitive and social aspects of learning to operate in congruence with each other, the analysis process moved in parallel between the cycle of the individual to the collective experience and vice versa. The children’s individualistic perspective was traced by viewing the comments expressed within the group-interviews in association
with each child's individual agenda as illustrated in the classroom and museum-based observations, and in the individual drawings and interviews conducted following the event. On a collective level, the group interviews conducted before and following the event facilitated the social construction of meaning. In combination with the children's observed interaction during the "museum theatre", they offered an insight into the "taken-as-shared" aspects of the children's experience and interpretation of it.

It was hoped that through the patterns that emerged from the children's "meaning making", the parameters that shaped the theatrical events under study could be traced. These parameters have been presented within the context of each case study without mirroring an independent reality that stands apart from those who experience it. Claiming that the parameters, which emerged from the case-orientated analysis could correspond with further theatrical events, would be a statement that presupposes the existence of an objective reality that can be truly described and predicted within a form of cause-effect. Hence, the value of the research might not lie in the ability to generalise its findings but on the case studies' particularity and potential "transferability" to other "museum theatre" events. Guba and Lincoln suggest "transferability" as an alternative criterion to the ability to generalise for judging the research's quality when it is conducted within the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In order to meet this criterion, the case study narratives are enriched with an extensive description of the context and the circumstances within which the patterns and parameters that emerged were found to be significant. Thus, transferability judgments are facilitated if others wish to take into account the insights offered from this study for the development, study and evaluation of participatory and first-person interpretation "museum theatre" events. Therefore, the parameters that emerged from each case study, presented here in a synthesized format, are always viewed within the context via which they emerged. They are presented as suggestions and not as "law-like generalizations" that would predict in a deterministic sense the nature and use of the "museum theatre" events as a learning medium.

The format of the presentation in this chapter is driven by the research's aspiration to elucidate the parameters that shape the children's "museum theatre" experiences. The
patterns that emerged from both case studies suggest that the components of format and content and the contexts of the real (prior-to-the-event agenda) and fictional interrelate dynamically in shaping the children’s “meaning making”. This interrelation is shown below in each one of the common patterns that emerged from both case studies. Through the discussion of the common patterns, the parameters that shape the children’s “museum theatre” experiences are pointed out.

The children’s agenda affects the reading of the characters and their narratives, the setting and the children’s experiences within it.

The research findings suggest that the children’s learning and museum-visiting agenda, as this is shaped before their museum visit, affects the reading of the events’ content. The children, reflecting upon the school culture of visiting museums in relation to the class’s curriculum-learning, view museums as places for learning. This view, reinforced by their belief that real archaeological evidence of the past is kept in museums, affects the lenses via which they read the museum visiting experience including the theatrical events. The children perceive the theatrical events as an opportunity for learning about the past and in particular they read the characters (or would like to read them), the setting and their own experiences during the events as representations of the past. The impact that the children’s real agenda - and in particular their view of the museum visit as an opportunity for learning - is discussed below by focusing on the children’s interpretations of the characters and their narratives, the setting and the children’s own experiences within the setting.

The children reading the events through a learning perspective perceived the characters as representatives of the past and interpreted them in relation to the physical signs (costumes, setting) and the characters’ narratives. A key characteristic in the children’s reading of the event’s educational content was that the interpretive points that were associated with the characters’ personal fictional story were interpreted by the children as “facts” about life in the relevant period of time. The children’s understanding that the characters acted as representatives of the past (independently of the degree to which the

1 (For a definition please see Chapter 1, page 17)
children suspended their disbelief) facilitated the deductions made from the specific example presented within the characters’ narrative to a general level. For example, the children interpreted the information provided about the actor’s life in the Roman Army as indicative of the rules that would apply if one were a Roman soldier. Undoubtedly the children’s prior to the event agenda played a significant role in this reading.

This construction of meaning was subjective depending on the children’s prior knowledge. The degree upon which the children’s interpretation was related to their prior knowledge is briefly illustrated here in Sufia’s and Rifna’s (year 4, BL school) comments in the individual interviews conducted almost four months after their participation in the MOL event. During the event, the actor mentions that she is in love with a Roman soldier. The actor’s intention for the specific narrative was to humanize the past and to show that Roman time is about real people with feelings. Although the actor does not communicate the specific narrative within a historical context and it is not mentioned to the children that she might experience problems marrying the Roman soldier, the point was interpreted by Sufia within the wider historical context about women’s positioning in Roman society. By reflecting upon her previous classroom-based learning that Roman women, in contrast with Celtic women, were not allowed to choose their own husband she empathized with the character’s potential difficult situation (“I feel sorry for her because she is not going to marry the one she loves [...]”). Sufia’s prior understanding was put into practice for the interpretation of the event’s narrative and in association with her “museum theatre” experience, it triggered the affective understanding that pupils usually bring forward in a learning situation and in particular in history education. The depth of Sufia’s response and the degree to which it related to her prior understanding is illustrated when one examines the aforementioned interpretation with Rifna’s response. Rifna, who did not indicate ownership of a relevant historical context for interpretation

2 As argued by Husbands and Pendry (2000), in history teaching, of equal importance to cognitive tasks is the devise of tasks or strategies within the classroom that enable pupils to unpack the “emotional and affective complexity of learning about the past” (Husbands & Pendry, 2000:132). The pupils bring instinctive human, emotional and affective understandings, as well as their prior understanding or knowledge, which affect the way they make sense of the past.

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prior to the museum visit, still interpreted the character’s dress as representative of what people in Roman times would wear without however demonstrating a coherent recollection of the character's narrative and locating it within a wider historical framework.

The effect of the children’s real agenda, and in particular of their perception of the museum visit as an opportunity for learning about the past, is also illustrated in the children’s interpretation of the setting and their experiences within it. The setting is appreciated for its realistic dimensions and is valued as “real” evidence from the past. This pattern with small variations emerged in both case studies. In the case of the first person interpretation events at MOL, during which the children observed the setting as part of the museum’s displays, they interpreted the existence of actors in the gallery as a way to “show” the setting. The visual impact of the setting is valued for its authenticity and it affected the interpretation of the characters. Particularly when the children were not sure about the characters’ status as it was described in the characters’ narrative, then they drew assumptions about the characters’ status (rich or poor) based on their subjective reading of the setting. Also, the setting made “real” what the children had been visualizing about life in the past and triggered their imagination. Especially in the case of the participatory events where the children experience the setting from within, the setting facilitated the creation of atmosphere and tension and contributed to the establishment of make-believe. The children, physically viewing their museum visiting experience as an opportunity for learning, valued the setting as real and authentic as well as the first hand experiences that unfolded within it.

For instance, the year 4 class (G school), whose agenda prior to the visit was orientated towards history learning without including any expectations for participation in a theatrical event, interpreted their experience of having breakfast around the Hall’s kitchen table as a first hand Tudor experience. The furniture and the objects involved in their experience were valued as “real” Tudor objects and were memorable five months later. The children’s memories of the objects used during their “museum theatre” experience seem to confirm the theoretical assumption that first hand experiences are memorable in
the long term because they lay the foundations for episodic memories (Bristow et al., 1999). However, the children’s comments about the historical authenticity of their experience at Clarke Hall pose questions regarding the historical context within which the first hand experiences are offered by the museum. Debates about the nature of “museum theatre” as a medium that could trivialize history might have been resolved partially amongst the circles of “museum theatre” professionals (Cannizo & Parry, 1994; Alsford & Parry, 1991; Ford, 1998). Nonetheless, the development of well researched “museum theatre” events will always be of paramount importance. Given that the children value their museum visiting experiences as first hand historical authentic experiences, emphasis could be given to this aspect of the experience by the museums. The provision of experiences within the historical context should not be limited only to the selection of the objects presented during the experience and the use of well-researched costumes, but should also be taken into account in the performative context of the event.

The effects of this lack of historicity in the performance of the events, illustrated both in the events’ narratives and theatrical frame, were highlighted in the children’s “meaning making” and in particular in those children’s comments who did not demonstrate before their museum visit an in-depth context for historical understanding. For example, in the participatory event in Clarke Hall the majority of the year 4 (G school) children, lacking a detailed historical understanding of the social classes in the late Tudor’s time, interpreted the owner of the house as a “poor” person and accordingly made deductions about the status of living and housing in the period in question. The children’s inferences about the way that “poor people” lived in Tudor times, drawn from their “museum theatre” experience, were more powerful than the information received from books following their museum visit. Comments elicited from the children such as “in the books they show that poor people were living in thatched houses [...] this cannot be real [R: why?] Priscilla was living in a house better than mine, like a palace”, illustrate the impact that the museum visiting experience had on forming the children’s perceptions of life in the past. At the same time, if one takes into account that these perceptions are actual misinterpretations of the past since the children do not seem to consider that the character of the owner of the house was a representative of the wealthy class, then questions are
posed about the historical context within which the event was performed. Did the actor convey the character’s social class and status? What implications could the registration of the character as a person coming from a higher social class have had on the unfolding of the event and the children’s “meaning making”? The children’s prior to the visit knowledge seem to shape their construction of meaning. However, the event itself with its potential powerful impact should embrace a sense of historicity and function as a source of learning and historical inquiry. Otherwise the children recreate a historical context that draws entirely on their own explanatory frameworks. When these constructions are not challenged later through productive classroom talk then they are viable in the long term and affect the children’s further “meaning making”. As it was also indicated in the case study of the participatory event, the children’s constructed meanings that were produced during or soon after the museum experience were carried through in the children’s recalling of the events three/four months after the event. Also, the examples drawn from the first person interpretation events seem to reinforce the aforementioned pattern. The children read the characters in association with the setting. When the events’ narratives are lacking a clear historical perspective in their content and/or are not delivered within a theatrical frame that reflects the characters’ social status, then the children’s “meaning making” is shaped by their previous explanatory frameworks and understanding and the setting’s powerful visual impact. If this “meaning making” is not affected by further reflections and learning either within or outside the classroom context then it remains unaltered in the longer term.

The children’s real agenda affects the reading of the event’s format and fictional context

A further key finding of this research is the highlighting of the role that the children’s real (prior-to-the-event) agenda has on the reading of the events’ format and fictional context. If the children are going to enter a fictional context either as audience or participants it is essential that they believe in the world in which this fiction exists. A lack of belief would result in an absence of commitment to the fictional story that the characters embody. This research suggests that the first encounter with the actor and the unexpected nature of the experience might be important parameters for shaping the children’s expectations of the event and willingness to suspend their disbelief. Especially when, right at the beginning
of the event, the "museum theatre" practitioners do not facilitate the children's engagement in the fictional context, the children's expectations and prior understanding regarding the event's format play a significant role in shaping their willingness to suspend their disbelief. In the case of the first person interpretation events, the children's preconceptions about how a Roman soldier should act and look affected the children's perception of the character's plausibility. As a result, this shaped their commitment to the event's fictional context and perception of its content as "boring". Also, the children's lack of preparation in regard to the event's format contributed to the difficulty of suspending disbelief. The children were willing to view the event via a learning perspective: however, they were not provided with a frame through which to view the remote-in-time theatrical event and to participate in it.

The impact that the children's prior to the event agenda might have had on the children's reading of the event's format was in particular illustrated in the case of the participatory events. When the children participated in a drama within the classroom (e.g. the S school-Clarke Hall) they created a pretext within which they viewed their own roles. They transferred this prior to the event agenda in the museum where they were willing to accept the situation's fictional context and act within it. As a result, during the event they were willing to respond spontaneously in an improvisation mode and to negotiate the event's format. Conversely, when the children were not prepared to participate in the "as if" context, they would employ modes of interaction that they were familiar with from the school's context.

The degree to which the children's prior to the event agenda shapes the children's "meaning making" of the event's format and the content, as shown in both case studies in this research, suggests that the preparatory phase for the museum visit is significant for shaping the children's "meaning making" of the "museum theatre" experience. Drama as a subject does not constitute part of the national curriculum for primary school children, while its use as a teaching/learning medium depends entirely on the class teacher. Hence, with the exception of the classes that have a previous "museum theatre" experience, it cannot be assumed that every class that participates in a "museum theatre" event has the
appropriate lenses through which to view and participate in the theatrical event. Explicit preparatory material provided to the classes before their visit, as illustrated in the case of the Clarke Hall events, might be particularly useful in preparing the children to enter and act within the "as if" context. However, the children's preparation for participating in a fictional context could not function as a panacea for all "museum theatre" events. The event's format with its pedagogic and theatrical elements should possess the performative quality to facilitate the children's belief in the fiction and encourage their meaningful participation in the event. This point will be discussed in the next common theme that emerged from both case studies.

The events' pedagogical and theatrical format affects the children's interpretation of the experience.

The common themes that emerged between the two case studies suggest that there is interplay between the event's pedagogical format and its educational content in the shaping of the children's "meaning making". The interrelation between the pedagogical format and the educational content was in particular illustrated in reference to the degree of the children's participation in the event. For example, when in the participatory event in Clarke Hall, the children were encouraged to respond to open questions, act responsibly, make value judgements and personal investments, then the children's commitment to the session would increase and, as a result, would also increase the event's learning potential. This point was illustrated in the case of the children who were allocated the role of storywriter. In comparison with their peers, they demonstrated a spontaneous improvisation during the action. Perhaps, it was the "responsibility" of their fictional roles and the "format" of their engagement that contributed to the children's meaningful participation in the event and, in some cases, to the change of children's "real-life understanding" in the long term. Taking on responsibility and being actively engaged in the action are characteristics that, according to the constructivist perspective on learning, can trigger opportunities for the student's own thinking (Glaserfeld, 1998:28). Also, they are valued as features of the fictional role-play that constitute a form of pedagogy and not a mechanistic simulation exercise that would involve the
participants only in a behavioural manner (O’ Toole, 1992:71; Heathcote & Bolton, 1999:63).

The change that occurred in the children’s “real-life understanding” might have also been an outcome of other factors such as the potential link and tension between the children’s real (prior to the event) agenda and fictional agenda. The participatory event’s fictional agenda (to accuse somebody unfairly) shared similarities with the classes’ hidden curriculum. In this respect, the children that participated in the event as the traveller’s defenders, challenged the schemata with which they were familiar before their participation in the event. The format of their participation in the event might have contributed to the challenge of their prior agenda. Via their active engagement and gradual construction of meaning, protected also by the safety of the fictional context, they shifted their initial interpretation that was in tune with their current classroom hidden agenda (i.e. that the traveller was guilty). Following their participation in the event, they tallied their experience within the fictional context with their everyday reality and applied their new understanding when confronted with a new situation in their everyday classroom reality.

Although in the case of the first person events there are no examples to suggest that the relationship between the real and fictional provoked changes in the children’s real-life understanding, still the interplay between the real and the fictional contexts was evident in the children’s interpretation of their “museum theatre” experience. For example, one of the children’s favourite moments during the event A at MOL was the theme of love. The theatrical elements that shaped the moment, such as the change of rhythm and pace, the visualization, the actor’s body language and movement, could be defined as part of the

3 The term “hidden curriculum” is used in this thesis to refer to “those aspects of learning in schools that are unofficial, unintentional or undeclared consequences of the way teaching and learning are organized and performed in schools” (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997:21). Specifically it refers to the class’s unofficial policy to “give names” to the teacher when a behavioural incident occurs in the classroom. The year 6 children from the S school commented that sometimes they would purposefully misinform the class teacher by accusing classmates who are not actually “in trouble” in order to put their friends out of a difficult situation.
session's format. The theatrical elements were read by the children for their plausibility and interpreted in relation to the content of theme that the actor attempted to communicate. The theme presented within the fictional context was filtered via the peer-group's real values and affected the children's participation in the event. Some children reacted negatively to the actor's prompting while for others the moment, perhaps due to the requirements it posed for personal investment, shifted positively the children's commitment to the session's fictional context.

The importance of the theatrical and pedagogical skills that the "museum theatre" practitioner should possess in order to establish the children's make-believe and facilitate their meaningful participation in the event has been pointed out in both case studies in this research. Ideally, in the case of the first person events, the diagnosis of the children's learning agenda and needs takes place as the event unfolds. It is via the interaction between the actor and the children that the former reads the children's agenda and accordingly shapes the event's content. Given also the importance placed by the children on the actor's plausibility as a character located in the past, one could suggest that the skills which the actor/interpreter holds should be of a high complexity, combining both acting and pedagogical ability. Jackson, in referring to the skills that a "museum theatre" practitioner should possess in order to take the visitor on a journey, highlights the importance of possessing a "skilled character portrayal, naturalistic plausibility, an ability to tell a good tale, a Brechtian 'capacity' to demonstrate the character, and the TIE performer's ability to be both teacher and actor at the same time" (Jackson, 2000:212).

The importance for the actor-interpreter to have both theatrical and pedagogical skills has been highlighted in the interactive elements of the first person interpretation events. Interactivity between the characters and the children was a main element in both events that affected the events' learning potential since the children recalled the interpretive themes that were communicated via interactive modes in the short and long term. The actor-interpreter skills lay in the quality that this interactivity should possess in order to challenge the boundaries between the real and the fictional, to take advantage of the difference between the event's and the children's time frame, and to promote the
children's personal investment in the interaction. The extent to which this interactivity obtains a pedagogical character depends on the open-ended character of the questions that are posed by the actor-interpreters and their ability to register their characters as real personas located in the past. As it is indicated in this research the children read the actors’ theatrical presence and comment on the educational content of the experience. When the pedagogical and performative aspects of the experience are successfully combined, then the children empathize with the characters, enjoy the experience for its directness and are willing to challenge their own preconceptions and understanding about life in the past.

These research findings confirm the interrelationship between the theatrical event’s educational content and performativity, which has been also stressed in earlier research in the field of educational theatre. Jackson highlights the significance of the “aesthetic dimension” in the participants’ “meaning making” and argues that participatory forms of educational theatre are effective educationally if they are effective aesthetically (Jackson 1997:48 & 52); Jackson, 2002:168). However, it should be stated that in this argument the notion of the aesthetic dimension is used within a wider context rather than the artistry of the character-interpretation by the actors. Jackson, by drawing upon Wolfgang Iser’s concept of the aesthetic, uses the notion of the aesthetic dimension to refer to the totality of the performance event which encompasses “the artistry and the reception by and the engagement of the audience” (Jackson, 1997:52). He claims that particularly in TIE where the conventional divide between audience and participants is removed, the audience’s participation is part of this aesthetic (Jackson, 1997:52-53). The removal of the traditional notion of the aesthetic distance does not devalue the educational theatre as an art form. On the contrary, it is the combination of the art form with the event’s educative and participatory character that “allows the actors and audience to meet on metaphoric ground” and facilitates the challenge of assumptions and the development of understanding (Jackson, 1997:52). Through this aesthetic dimension the performance is communicated on many levels at once engaging actively the participants in the process of “meaning making” (Jackson 1997; Jackson, 2002).
Within the context of this research, the interrelationship between the event’s pedagogic and performative character is also illustrated in the counter effects that the event’s limited theatricality had on the children’s “meaning making”. In the case of the first person interpretation events, when the children would not read the events for their theatricality, they would not suspend their disbelief. As a result of the lack of belief in the event’s fictional context, the children would challenge the actors for their plausibility as characters instead of exploring the event as an opportunity to explore life in the past and, following the event, they would reinforce their preconceptions about the past (i.e. the view of Romans as fighters). Similar counteractive implications were also noticed in the case of the participatory events in Clarke Hall. Although it was intended by the actor-interpreters to facilitate the reflection of moral, social and cultural issues and to encourage the comparison between the life and people’s values in the present and Tudor’s time, the majority of the children did not view the characters’ actions within a historical perspective. The children had certain views about the life and the justice system in Tudor times (at least as these views were illustrated in the research that was conducted before the museum visit). However, these views were not expressed during the event or taken into account in the children’s “meaning making”. The event was read by the children via a historical perspective only in terms of its setting, the use of objects and its overall visual impact. In the children’s comments, the absence of references to any historical context in terms of the characters’ ideas, values and behaviours is indicative of a limited performative framework. The participatory events’ narratives embodied values from the represented period of time which, however, were not effectively signalled to the readers via the actor-interpreter’s performance.

The children’s “meaning making” depends on the quality of their participation in the event.

As discussed in chapter two, according to the critic Wolfgang Iser, exclusive concentration on either the artist pole of the text or the aesthetic pole of the text as “a process of signification materialized only in the practice of reading”\(^4\) would not provide an in-depth insight into the reading process itself (Iser, 1980:106-107). Hence, he

\(^4\) (Eagleton, 1996:65)
proposes that "there are discernible conditions that govern interaction generally, and some of these will certainly apply to the special reader-text relationship" (Iser, 1989:107). He suggests that in the process of social dyadic interaction it is the lack of ascertainability about the way we think that the others perceive us and the gaps in the way we experience each other that function as an inducement to communication. The asymmetry that characterizes social interaction also applies in the relationship between text-reader and gives rise to communication in the reading process. The reader's activity is controlled by the guiding devices that operate in the reading process, which although they do not reside in the text, are exercised by it. In the reading process the gaps in communication stimulate the reader into filling them with projections. In a way what is said obtains greater significance by what it is not said. The implications of what remains concealed stimulate the reader's imagination and give weight to the meaning. Communication becomes an "interaction between the implicit and explicit, between revelation and concealment" (Iser, 1980:111). Thus, the reader-text relationship evolves around the gaps stimulated by the blanks on the text. The reader is constantly constructing hypotheses about the meaning of the text, making implicit connections and testing out hypotheses. In a way, the text itself is no more that "a series of cues to the reader", which the reader puts together to fill the gaps and construct hypotheses (Eagleton, 1996:66).

In agreement with this position, the findings of this research establish that the class as an interpretive community brings forward a learning context for the reading of the events. The children read the theatrical event's "schemata" or cues via their own pre-understandings and expectations while their "meaning making" to a great extent depends on the interplay between the event's theatrical and pedagogical format. In a way, although the children's "meaning making" is individual depending on their own and the class's agenda, it also lies in the text itself and the opportunities the latter offers for the reader's creative participation. The museum's agenda and in particular in the museum's willingness to negotiate the events' format and to encourage the children's meaningful participation plays a significant role in the children's construction of meaning.
In both case studies, the events (participatory and first person) were based on a predetermined structure and framing that controlled the interaction between the participants and as an extension their "meaning making". The tight structure of the first person interpretation events and the questions posed by the actors did not allow enough creative gaps for the children's input into the event. In the case of the participatory events, the selected framing via which the children viewed the event and the opportunities given for ownership of action affected the children's interpretation of the event's content. Only when the children were positioned within an "involvement frame" in the centre of the action either to accomplish a task (e.g. to interrogate the traveller) or to influence the action as the event unfolds (i.e. to prove to the rest of the class that he is innocent) then the possibilities for self reflection and exploration of real life understanding were increased. Accordingly, when the children's participation was more token in terms of the impact that it had on the unfolding of the action, then contrary to the "author's" intention for the event to facilitate the reflection of the children's own values, the children reinforced their stereotypes and the values that pre-existed in the class's hidden curriculum (i.e. "to put somebody else in trouble in order to defend yourself or your friend"). These research findings corroborate Jackson's study on the way that framing strategies applied in theatre events affect the participants' generated meaning and pose questions about the case studies events' efficacy as mediums for enhancing learning for all children (Jackson, 1995:161-170).

If one takes into account Wolfgang Iser's position that effective text is the one that "forces the reader into a new critical awareness of his or her customary codes and expectations" then questions can be posed about the case study events' potential to

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5 Anthony Jackson suggests four main kinds of framing that could occur in educational theatre: the "narrative", the "investigative", the "presentational" and the "involvement" frame. These framing strategies offer a perspective on how the events' placement within a frame in association with the participants' relationship to the frame shape the participants' generated responses (Jackson, 1995:161-170). The "involvement frame" within which the participants interacting and influencing the shape of the events, seems to be the most effective in facilitating for the participants a degree of ownership and genuine investment in the outcome (Jackson, 1995:166).
challenge all children’s preconceptions and to enable them to act as self-reflectors in the construction of meaning (Eagleton, 1996:68). The events did not always transform the pre-understandings that the children brought with them for the interpretation of the action. The events’ inefficiency as interpretive means lay in the quality of the creative gaps offered to the participants through the event’s challenging educational content and participatory format. The opportunities that were provided to the participants to explore the controversial aspects of the past and to understand the subjective nature of historical interpretations of history were limited, while meaningful participation was not an option available to everyone. If the creative gaps are responsible for stimulating the reader’s imagination and provoking his/her meaning making, then the lack of creative gaps within the theatre texts suggest that the readers are called to internalize the positions given in the text (Iser, 1980 in Counsell & Wolf, 2001:184). As indicated above, this assumption is confirmed via the children’s reinforcement of preconceptions and internalization of the participatory events’ false moral. Moreover, in terms of the reader’s perspective, Iser’s reception theory postulates that in reading we should be “open minded, prepared to put our beliefs into question and allow them to be transformed” (Eagleton, 1996:69). However, even when the children had the appropriate “pre-text” to participate in the event, the event’s format was not negotiated. Hence, within the context of Barthes’ and Eco’s theories, the events might be characterized accordingly as “writerly” and “closed” texts given that they pulled the reader towards a predetermined path for “meaning-making”. Given that the theatrical events under study are developed for educational purposes, then one could suggest that such a “closed” approach that does not encourage the children’s meaningful participation and exploration of their own “meaning making” but perceives the children as passive recipients of predetermined messages.

The presentation of objects within a fictional mode can enhance the long-term recollection of objects

The interplay between the children’s pre-understanding and the objects’ interpretation was expressed in the children’s recalling of their “museum theatre” experience. Their

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6 This is a quotation extracted from the individual interviews that were conducted with the year 6 children (S school).
expectations that they would view certain objects during their visit directed their focus to specific objects within the museum setting. When they observed them within the museum context they employed their pre-understanding about the objects in order to interpret the museum setting and the presented characters. For example, some of the children in the case of the first person interpretation events demonstrated before the museum visit background knowledge about the objects that rich and poor people would possess in Roman times. This understanding was employed when observing the museum space where the theatre event took place in order to interpret the characters’ social status. However, comparing the children’s responses both immediately after their participation in the “museum theatre” event and five months following their museum visit, it was noticed in both case studies that the children recalled the objects that were integrated within the characters’ narratives during the event. The objects were recalled in relation to their function within the fictional context and the associated interpretive points. The event’s visual impact in association with the personalized context via which they were presented by the characters seem to have facilitated their recollection five months following the event. Particularly in the case of the participatory events, the objects were appreciated for their function of characterization and valued for their personal and emotional context through which they were initially introduced to the children.

The presentation of the objects within the fictional mode seem to respond to what has been pointed out by Susan Pearce as the process that takes place when a viewer encounters an object. Pearce, by discussing Wolfgang Iser’s ideas about the reading of text within the context of our understanding of objects, suggests that as the viewer stands in front of a showcase “creative urges are set in motion, his imagination is engaged, and the dynamic process of interpretation and reinterpretation begins, which extends far beyond the mere perception of what the object is” (Pearce, 1994:26). Thus, by taking into account the data that emerged within this research, it could be suggested that the objects’ presentation within a fictional mode and a personalized context offers the narratives that fill the viewer’s creative gaps and attribute to the objects a virtual dimension that actualizes in the viewer’s reading.
The events as products of relationships.

By viewing the events as products of relationships between the museum’s and the school’s agendas, the research highlights the importance of effective co-operation between the involved parties. During the theatrical events, two main frameworks appear to operate simultaneously shaping the theatrical event: the museums’ framework expressed through the museum educators’ and actors’ expectations about the events’ format and content, and the schools’ framework with the classes’ and children’s learning, social agendas and expectations. The extent to which the school’s agenda was related to the museum’s agenda might be illustrated if one takes into account that the class’s social context with their power connotations and relationships operated during the theatre events. The data that emerged from the study of the participatory events suggested that the children’s “meaning making” during the theatrical events was filtered via the peer context that operated either within the small groups or the whole-class contexts. Also, when it was not clear to the children what was expected from them in terms of their interaction within the fictional context, the school context would come to the fore affecting the children’s participation in the event.

The importance of the school’s agenda in shaping the children’s interpretation of the “museum theatre” experience’s educational content was also illustrated in the children’s individual “meaning making” as this was traced throughout the various stages of the research. The children’s understanding of the events’ educational content was subjective depending on their prior knowledge and preconceptions about how people lived/acted in the period in question as these were formulated through their classes’ learning agenda. In this respect, the preparatory work within the classroom could be vital in deepening the children’s perspective for interpreting the events, while for the museum of equal importance is the diagnosis of the children’s learning needs and pre-understanding. The constructivist approach as a pedagogy suggests that the diagnosis of the learners’ cognitive structures and schemata is essential in order to enable the teacher to orient the students accordingly to the formulation of new conceptual relations (Glasersfeld, 1995). As the museums and the schools are the ones who set the learning agenda for the children’s participation in the “museum theatre” events, then further co-operation
between the involved parties would have enriched the perspectives offered to the children via the events' educational content. This co-operation could take place not only in the preparatory stage for the museum visit but also following the children's participation in the event.

For example, as indicated earlier within the context of the two case studies of "museum theatre" events and in particular in relation to the participatory event the opportunities given to the children to explore the educational content of the event within a historical perspective were limited. As a result the children, especially those who did not have a preparatory agenda for participation in a theatrical event, embraced every aspect of their experience as a representation of the past and carried this "meaning making" in the long term. The school could have played a vital role in facilitating the educational use of the experience and in encouraging the exploration of the past and the children's first hand experiences in the museum. Since 1991, the promotion of an understanding that history has been written and dramatized in various ways for all kinds of reasons is an integral part of the National Curriculum in England and Wales (McAleavy, 2000). Hence, the class teachers, working in line with the National Curriculum, could use the children's "museum theatre" experiences as a baseline for reflection and follow up work in the classroom in order to challenge the children's view of the "museum theatre" events as an "authentic" representation of the past and to facilitate an understanding of history's subjective nature.

Also, within the context of this research, a parameter of equal importance in shaping the children's "meaning making" is the relevance of the events' content to the children's own agenda (expectations, values-attitudes, prior learning). The learning impact that the events could have on the children's real-life understanding was illustrated in the case of the participatory event. The relevance between the events' content to the children's agenda might have been a significant parameter in facilitating a change in the children's real-life understanding.
The value of this research

The value of this research should be discussed within the context of the constructivist research paradigm that underpinned the design and conduct of the research. Applying the criteria of internal validity, external validity, objectivity and reliability that are grounded within the frame of logical positivism is a task contradictory and inappropriate to the constructivist stance. The constructivist inquiry, having abandoned the quest for objectivity, does not share the view that research is a systematic and methodological process that needs to be consistent and replicated and to distinguish objective knowledge from interpretation and judgments (Schwandt, 1996:61). The question of which or whether a study’s findings are “true” is, as noted in Lincoln’s and Guba’s constructivist research paradigm, “sociohistorically relative” (Schwandt, 2003:243). Constructivism, postulating that knowledge is a process individually or socially constructed, perceives the relationship of knowledge and reality as “instrumental” and not “verificative” (Schwandt, 2003:240). The view of knowledge as valid in correspondence to an independently existing world would contradict the constructivist rejection of a realist ontology. Instead, the notion of knowledge validity is conceptualized more in terms of its viability and functional fit within a set framework (Glaserfeld, 1995:16; Cuba & Lincoln, 1989:104; Schwandt, 2003:243).

The outcomes of the inquiry are also not seen as “value-free” but as a construction of the inquiry process itself. Within the interpretive and constructivist stance the inquiry is conceptualised as an iterative process that brings to the fore a variety of interpretations, opens them to criticism, and reiterate the knowledge constructions in the light of new levels of sophistication which, in turn, are also open to interpretation and further criticism. Through this dialectic process we are successively led to “better understanding” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:89). Unavoidably, the values of the researcher and the research participants enter the inquiry process. Hence, in addition also to the absence of positivist criteria, the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms have been criticized for entailing solipsism and relativism. Would the adoption of the constructivist stance be interpreted as “anything goes” as there are no criteria on what is right within a
social inquiry? How can social inquiry take seriously the interpretivist paradigm without criteria that will define what is true or false?

Within the context of this research the issue of criteria was addressed by taking into account the quasi-foundational criteria of "trustworthiness" which Guba and Lincoln suggest as applicable for judging the quality of a constructivist inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:233). The criterion of "credibility", which seeks to establish a match between the constructed realities of the research participants and those realities as presented by the researcher, is addressed via the establishment of rapport with the research participants and the "prolonged engagement" in the field in order for the researcher to immerse him/herself in and understand the participants' culture (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:236-237). Throughout the research process, via "peer debriefing" (that took place via discussions within academic and professional circles) and a reflective stance on my own developing "meaning making", I attempted to monitor my own values, trace my own role in the inquiry, be open to the unexpected and foreground the participants' reality and constructions in my thesis. Formal and informal checks with the research participants (museum staff, class teachers) also took place during the data collection, analysis and writing of the case study’s narrative to ensure that the realities presented were those that the stakeholders provided. This was a process that provided additional information, illuminated the children’s constructions and indicated the extent to which the research

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7 As a parallel to the conventional criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity, Guba and Lincoln have suggested the "trustworthiness" criteria, otherwise called the "parallel" criteria, for judging the quality of post positivist research including constructivist inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:233). The "trustworthiness" criteria include "credibility", "transferability", and "dependability" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:233-243).

8 If the researcher's prolonged engagement in the field contains two main elements: the “human connection with the participants, and an investment of time”, then my engagement in the field should be viewed critically (Massey A., 1998, "The way we do things around here": the culture of ethnography”, Paper presented at the ethnography and Education Conference, Oxford University Department of Educational Studies (OUDES), 7-8 Sept. Website: http://www.voicewisdom.co.uk/htm/waywedo.htm [Last accessed on 23/11/05]. To what extent could I consider myself as an “insider” with respect to the classes' culture through my (in total) two weeks' presence within each classroom? A longer engagement in the classes’ culture would have increased my rapport with the participants and opened up the research’s enquiry.
provided a methodological framework and vocabulary in the existing “museum theatre” practices.

The criterion of “dependability”\(^9\) that might be seen in parallel with the conventional criterion of reliability was indirectly addressed in chapter three, which described the process and method decisions. In contrast to the conventional criterion of reliability any methodological changes during the conduct of the research does not expose the study to unreliability but are perceived as “hallmarks of a maturing [...] inquiry” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:242). It was attempted to make any changes in the methodological framework and processes traceable and justified within the given context. Also, the fieldwork data are available upon request.

This research aspired to “give voice” to children who are the main participants in the “museum theatre” events. The methodological framework employed viewed the children as active participants who “should be informed, involved, and consulted about all activities that affect their lives including research” (Robinson & Kellett, 2004:86). Ethical and power issues were taken into account during the design and conduct of research that would inform and consult the children as research participants. In tune also with this view, for the research’s exploratory inquiry, data generation techniques were employed that with the children’s participation would offer a better understanding of the parameters that might shape a “museum theatre” experience. It was also attempted to consult the children about the interpretation of the patterns that emerged via the data generation. However, in some occasions, the children’s involvement could be characterized as not highly developed if one takes into account that the children did not always have control of the produced knowledge\(^10\). For example, it was considered that

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\(^9\) “Dependability” is the parallel to the conventional criterion of reliability. In contrast to the criterion of reliability, which is concerned with the stability of data over time, the criterion of dependability suggests that methodological changes and shifts in constructions are expected products of a maturing inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:242).

\(^10\) Also, the children’s involvement in this research is compromised if one takes into account the asymmetrical power relationship between the children and the researcher and the potential beneficial outcomes that participation in this research could yield for both parties.
informing the children about the interpretation of the data that derived from the group interviews following the museum visit would have affected the children's individual interpretation of the experience in the long term. As a result, the individual interviews conducted a few months after the children's participation in the event would have been a direct reflection of the interpretive patterns discussed earlier with the children.

An open collaborative inquiry with the children that would involve them as researchers actively participating in the design of the research process, the formulation of the questions, the making and the communication of meaning, might have yielded further insights into the children's experience of a "museum theatre" event. A genuine sharing of power between the researcher and the researched might have illuminated aspects of the experience that remain implicit within the context of the current research. For instance, within the case studies of this research, the observations conducted in the museum setting were viewed in relation to the data that derived from the children's interviews, without however, the children always commenting themselves on their non-verbal communication during the event. A participatory methodology that sets the participants in the event as co-researchers would empower them to document their experience by selecting a mode that might have been appropriate to their own learning style and reflect within their own timing on the implicit aspects of the experience. Considering also the difference noticed on an individual level in terms of the events' long-term learning "impact", further research that focuses extensively on each student's learning profile might yield insights into the potentiality of the medium as a learning tool. For example, could "museum theatre" be a learning medium particularly appropriate for children with highly developed interpersonal skills? Class teachers' comments (when informed about the research findings) suggested that the session's learning potentiality might have differed for the children who - at least within the school context - are noticed to have increased interpersonal skills in comparison with their peers. Perhaps, the human element of the learning experience and potential gender identification with the actor facilitated these children's learning experiences.
“Meaning making” is an ongoing process. It evolves through repeated cycles of action and reflection. Further studies examining the children’s “meaning making” within and also out of the context of the organized school groups might strengthen and/or offer alternative conceptualizations of the parameters that shape the “museum theatre” experience given that alternative conditions might operate within different social contexts. Moreover, future exploration of the children’s “meaning making” in other styles of “museum theatre” events within the scope of a longitudinal research might enrich the understanding we have of what constitutes “museum theatre” as an interpretive tool.

The current research is limited in its timescale, number of school classes and range of “museum theatre” events it explored. However, it provides an insight into the processes whereby the children make meaning of participatory and first person interpretation programs. By conceptualizing the museum theatre events as products of the relationship between the author-reader and their own agendas and tracing the children’s reading of the events it highlights the parameters and processes that shape the “museum theatre” event as an interpretive means. The value of this research lies in its constructivist open-ended approach that aspires to give voice to the children’s understanding rather than to impose predetermined categories and sets of criteria that would evaluate the “effectiveness” of the “museum theatre” events as products for consumption. Also, the research’s potential contribution to the field of “museum theatre” lies in the viewing of the theatrical events not only in terms of their educational content but also in relation to the theatrical elements and practices they employ as interpreted from the children’s perspective.

The research highlights the importance of the children’s prior to the event agenda in shaping the children’s reading of the experience’s form and content and suggests that the interplay between the format/content and the fictional/real contexts is evident in the children’s interpretation of their “museum theatre” experience. Also, the research points out that the setting and the objects are prominent in the children’s reading and recalling of the experience, justifying in a way the definition of the theatre events that take place in museums and heritage sites as “museum theatre” events. Finally, by viewing the
children's experiences as products of relationships between the museum's and the school's agendas the research outlines the importance for effective co-operation between the school and the museums for the facilitation of powerful learning "museum theatre" experiences.
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<td>Tables facilitating comparison</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Robert’s fictional writing following the museum visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The year 4 class’s “Socio-gram”, G school, Gender division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The year 6 class’s “Socio-gram” – S school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>History Teaching Plan, BL School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A sample of the year 4 children’s work in the classroom before the museum visit (BL school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1 - List of interviews with museum and "museum-theatre" professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celia Gregory,</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Education Officer, Calke Abbey, National Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Ford,</td>
<td>1999, 2001</td>
<td>Head of Education at the National Railway Museum, York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Desmond</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Head of Education, Galleries of Justice, Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthia Brown</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Education Officer, Leicester Museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma,</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Education Officer, PumpHouse People's History Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicity Austin,</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Project leader, Leicester Museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Gard,</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Artistic Director Carpenters Theatre Company / Science Museum of Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerant Thomas,</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Director Spectrum Drama and Theatre projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Davidson,</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Education Officer, Bradford Industrial Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Kingston,</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Education and Exhibitions Officer, Oak House Museum, West Bromwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Leger,</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Artistic Director Canadian Museum of Civilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Robertshaw</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>National Army Museum, Head of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Dotty,</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>National Army Museum, Education Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARTS, MUSEUMS & LIBRARIES SERVICE
MUSEUMS EDUCATION EVALUATION FORM

Would you please assist us to evaluate the Museums Education Service by taking a few moments to complete the sections below. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Gallery or Museum</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your school/group (optional)</th>
<th>Your name (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Overall, the quality of the workshop/session was (please circle a number) -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:

2. Workshop/session objectives: Were your expectations met?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

a) What could have been better?

b) What was most useful?

3. Presentations: Was the workshop/session presented in a clear and helpful manner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear and helpful</th>
<th>Unclear and not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:

4. Content: Was the content of the workshop/session appropriate for your group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Inappropriate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment:

5. Facilities and comfort:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:

6. How did you hear about the Education Service? (Please tick as appropriate)

- Leaflet
- Word of Mouth
- Visited before
- Personal enquiry
- Website
- Media (e.g. Press/TV)

7. Did you use school transport, hired coach or public transport?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is ease of transport an important factor when considering a school visit?

8. Any other comments:

Please hand this completed form to the Session Leader or post to the Museums Education Service, Bradford Industrial Museum, Moorside Mills, Moorside Road, Bradford BD2 3HP. Tel. 01274 631756/Fax: 01274 636362.
Appendix 3 – Letter sent to museums at the preliminary stage of research

Susan Morton
Clarke Hall
Aberford Road
West Yorks, WF1 4AL

Dear Ms Morton

Date: 20/11/99

I am a PhD student at the Museum Studies Department of Leicester University. My research is at a preliminary stage and focuses on the use of theatre/drama in museums as an interpretive means. In order to describe the status of the medium in the UK and to familiarize with the variety of forms of theatre/drama in museums, I visit museums and historic houses and observe the relevant programs for school groups.

It would be of invaluable help if I could participate as an observer in an educational programme in Clarke Hall for schoolchildren and later have a discussion with you reflecting on the programme.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely
Dear Susan

I am conducting my PhD thesis at the Museum Studies Department of Leicester University (supervised by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill). I am particularly thankful to you and Mrs Margaret Beaumont for your help, when I visited Clarke Hall at the beginning of the year 2000 and participated in the drama session with primary schoolchildren.

During the last year I formulated the theoretical framework of my research and kept visiting museums researching at a preliminary level the different forms of drama in museums. The next step for my research will be to select four case studies representing various styles of theatre and finding out how the participants make meaning of the program. The aim is not to compare or to "evaluate" but to provide an insight of the way the program is interpreted by its participants involving the schoolchildren, teachers and the museum personnel.

I would be more than indebted to you if you would allow me to conduct this piece of research in Clarke Hall as it is the pioneer site in the field providing such a variety of learning situations and a unique example of best practice.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Vasiliki Tzibazi
Appendix 5 – A) Letter asking for the schools’ informed consent

Ms J T
S Junior School

Date: 09/01/02

Dear Ms T,

Following our meeting I am writing to you regarding the design of the research project at the Clarke Hall. The research focuses on different forms of drama/theatre for school groups as a learning medium in museums and heritage sites. It constitutes the most important part of my PhD project, which is supervised by Prof. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill from the Museum Studies Department of Leicester University.

It is an in-depth case study research that aims to develop a theoretical framework by finding out how the participants (museum staff, schoolteachers, schoolchildren) perceive the content and the form of the drama sessions. The outcomes of the research will contribute to improvement of the use of museum theatre for school groups, which is an area that has not been researched in depth in the past.

It would be of invaluable help to me if I could integrate the S Junior School into the research and:

- conduct focus group interviews with the children before the museum visit. The interviews should be conducted in two groups of five children that are going to be in the storytellers’ role during the visit. Objects from the Clarke Hall and relevant photographs may be used as props to initiate discussion during the interviews. The duration of the interviews should be 35 min for each group.
- attend any preparatory activity that will take place in the classroom
- follow the class during the live interpretation program in the museum
- conduct interviews with the children the following day of the museum visit. The children will be asked to recall the content of the programme and to comment on the character that they encountered there
- introduce to the whole classroom a writing-up activity accompanied by a drawing relevant to the content of the live interpretation programme. The estimated time for the activity is 30-40 min. while the activity should take place as soon as possible after the museum visit
- receive feedback from the teacher about the value of the visit and observe some of the follow up work at the school
- I may visit the school in three months time to conduct some individual interviews with children in order to find out the impact of the programme on their long term memory

As the research methodology is exclusively qualitative it is important that the interviews both at the school and in the museum setting be audio and video recorded. This will help with the transcription and analysis of data while it will assure research validity. The existing British Educational Research Association Guidelines for conducting research among children and young people have been taken into account for the protection of the children that will participate in the research. The content and the language used during the interviews will be sensitive to the needs and feelings of the age group while no issues will be discussed that will upset or worry the children.
The researcher (who currently is working part time as a supply teaching assistant) has signed a Home Office Circular Hoc/ Protection of Children: Disclosure of Criminal Background of those with Access to Children form and submitted it to the City of Nottingham. The research participants can keep their anonymity if it is preferred.

Your consent for the continuation of the research will be very much appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Vasiliki Tzibazi

B) Letter to schools for the second stage of the research

Ms J T
S Junior School

Date: 17/06/02

Dear Ms T

Your help has been really invaluable and the children's comments provided an insight into the educational and social impact of the experience at Clarke Hall.

I would be particularly indebted to you if I could complete the second part of the research by interviewing the children who initially participated in the research, and possibly two children that did not participate at the previous stage of the research. The interviews will be individual (tape recorded) and won't exceed the twenty-thirty minutes each. They aim to find out what the children remember from the museum visit.

I understand that your timetable is quite heavy. Any day and time by the end of the summer term (please apart from Tuesdays and Friday the 5th of July) would be fine for me. I will be in telephone contact to arrange details.

Thank you for your help.
Appendix 6 – Letter for parental consent

Dear Parent,

I would kindly request your consent for your child’s participation in a PhD research project that has been developed at the Museum Studies Department of Leicester University. The purpose of this project is to research the effectiveness of the use of theatre in museums as a learning medium.

This particular part of the project is related to the school visit at the Clarke Hall on the 29th of January. This would involve your child participating in group/individual interviews that will be audio and video recorded for research purposes. This research will be conducted in accordance with legal guidelines for the protection of children.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Signature ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Appendix 7 - Questions posed at the interviews five months following the event

Phase One
1) What do you remember from your visit to ....?

Phase Two
a) Do you remember what happened while we were at house?
   i) What happened at the end?
   ii) Do you think it was fair?
   iii) Who decided what?

b) In which group were you? What happened in this group?
   iv) What was the story about?
   v) Who were you in the story? What did you do? Who did ....what
   vi) How did you feel?

Phase Three
2) If a character was living today, what kind of person do you think could be?

3) All these months did you come across to something (did you hear, see, spoke,..) that reminded you that day or something from that day?

4) Did you search for more information?

5) Do you feel that you learned something?

6) Would you like to live in Tudor times?

7) how do you think they were giving justice in Tudor times?

8) dilemma: Something is missing in the classroom. During playtime a classmate approaches you and says that knows who took what is missing. When you go back in the classroom the teacher asks if anyone knows how took what is missing. What would you do?

Phase Four
1) Would you like to make a drawing?

2) Could you explain please what did you draw and why?
Appendix 8 – Example of interviews conducted four/five months following the event

G school / A
Date: 08/07/04
R stands for researcher
A stands for the child’s name

R: What do you remember from that day?
A: We walked and went in between the two doors where he showed us the lantern and the stars.
R: anything else?
A: when we saw the soldier in the garden and when we went in the house drinking and eating biscuits....When that man came in and asked for more ale
R: (nodding)
A: We knocked at the door and someone come to the door and she invited us to stay and then we went around this table and we went in the kitchen and had drinking and biscuits and they split us into groups and we all went into different places
R: Do you remember what happened while we were at house?
A: A soldier was at the house, looking for the man that stole the lantern
R: (nodding)
A: He kept wanting more ale and he took his shoes off and he took Nathaniel away to Mr Brown’s farmer and ask him if he took the lantern
R: Do you remember who suggested taking him to the farmer?
A: That lady and then we all decided that he did the right think.
R: In which group where you?
A: I was with Nathaniel and Nathan
R: and Nathan and who else?
A: .....I cannot remember.
R: what happened in this group?
A: He was trying to make us believe that he did not do it. And some people believed that he did do it and some people believed that he did not do it and then some people thought he did do it and some people thought he did not do it.
R: from your group?
A: From my group and then they showed us to try to make us believe him
R: did you believe him?
A: No, not from the beginning
R: what was that that made you change your mind?
A: When he got right through the story and he kept telling us about the story
R: do you remember what kind of stories did he tell you?
A: He showed us some horseshoes and some nails, a spoon and a plate that he got because he saved that man. He said that he used to be a blacksmith and he had to give up his house to pay tax. His dad died. And then he told us a story when he was working for Mr Brown. Oh, no ...When he was working for a farmer close to Mr Brown and he had his lantern with the stars and he scared this man. He kept like scared and when he put it away he was ok and again was scared and people popped into each other and it was the farmer and Nathaniel who was going to sleep in the barn and Nathaniel working for farmer.
R: what was that scared him?
A: It was like stars
R: All these months did you come across to something that reminded you that day or something from that day?
A: No, not really
R: did you search for more information?
A: I wanted to know if Nathaniel was found guilty or not guilty. I was worried.
R: what do you think now?
A: Not guilty
R: if Nathaniel was living today what kind of person do you think he would be?
A: Kind person
R: why do you think that?
A: Because once he told us he helped somebody that fell from his horse. He saved his life and then this person gave him a wooden spoon and a plate to thank him.
R: what else do we know about him?
....(silence)....I think he had a very good memory
R: why
A: Because he remembered all these stories
R: did you go there as Andrew?
A: As a Tudor person
R: what about the soldier, what kind of character could he be?
A: Evil
R: why do you think he was evil?
A: because he wanted to put in jail somebody who was innocent
R: do you feel that you learned something?
A: How hard it was to live in Tudor
R: how hard was it living at Tudor times?
A: Because people were knocking at the door and all that stealing that was going on. I bet it was hard living because ...it was like....scary people knocking at doors
R: how do you think they were giving justice in Tudor times?
A: They would be executed or put them in jail
R: Something is missing in the classroom. During playtime a classmate approaches you and says that knows who took what is missing. When you go back in the classroom the teacher asks if anyone knows who took what is missing. What would you do?
A: I would not tell anything.
R: why?
A: because they might say lies to get me in trouble
R: what do you mean?
A: sometimes, people say lies about other people that they did something, to get everyone in trouble.

Drawing
R: Would you like to make a drawing?
A: yes, (while he starts drawing) ...I want to draw the table in the kitchen
R: Would you please explain why did you make this drawing?
A: Because it so different the meal table and different sits and the biscuits. It was like Tudor time interesting facts what they were doing at Tudors times when they were eating
R: what do you mean what they were doing?
A: I cannot remember
### Appendix 9 - Nomination Chart – G School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative nominations</th>
<th>Positive nominations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rob</strong></td>
<td>X        X  x  x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gem</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lorn</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scot</strong></td>
<td>x  X  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joe</strong></td>
<td>x  X  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emil</strong></td>
<td>x  x  X  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cog</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lia</strong></td>
<td>x  X  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>And</strong></td>
<td>x  x  X  x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Car</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoe</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hop</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bet</strong></td>
<td>x  X  x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Char</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ch, b</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tan</strong></td>
<td>x  X  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chr</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mat</strong></td>
<td>x  x  X  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jos</strong></td>
<td>X  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Che</strong></td>
<td>X  x</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nic</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aar</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kie</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dar</strong></td>
<td>x  X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mic</strong></td>
<td>X  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nat</strong></td>
<td>x  x  X  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 10- Sample of transcriptions with the focus groups

What happened in the story?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Joe</th>
<th>Rob</th>
<th>Hanad</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Mekaela</th>
<th>Jeinna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Navison stole from the Duke and Duchess</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(he saws)</td>
<td>all his rings, his wife necklace and earrings and he said thanks</td>
<td>John Navison had stole the Duke and his wife</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why did he do that?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James</th>
<th>Joe</th>
<th>Rob</th>
<th>Hanad</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Mekaela</th>
<th>Jeinna</th>
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</table>
1. Calam: we will see every picture [displays] that Linda showed to us [preparatory session]
2. Sofia: we are going to see status [status] and modern staff [photographs of artefacts]
3. R: what do you mean with modern staff?
4. Sofia: like a picture about old things about Romans like [photographs of artefacts]
5. Jaheda: money [objects]
6. Sofia: status [objects]
7. Calam: status [objects]
8. Reynu: we may see all sort of stuff and stuff they digged from the underground [archaeological objects].
9. R: like for example?
10. Sofia: in Roman times what they did [archaeological objects – artefacts], in London, some staff in the museum [objects] and we draw and wrote what they mean [preparatory, history session]
11. R: do you remember any other staff that you draw in the pictures?
12. Sofia: each one had to draw something else, is not it?
13. C: yes
14. Sofia: we draw the oil lamp, is not it?
15. Jaheda: we draw the candle
16. Calam: we draw some object
17. R: do you remember what the objects were?
18. Sofia: oil lamp, book, a coin
19. Jaheda: you know the oil lamp, is like ... and there is a rope and you can put rope in it
20. R: so, you expect to see objects and photographs, what kind?
21. status, coins, all kind of things like vases [objects]
22. R: why do you think that?
23. Reynu: because last time in year three we went to the museum and we saw vases and staff [previous visits]
24. Jaheda: (confirms), we saw a picture [displays], and there were other people and we went upstairs
25. Ibrahim: London British Museum
26. Jaheda, Calam: British Museum
27. Jaheda: we saw some vase [museum artefact]
28. Sofia: and there were these square things and you had to draw a picture [previous activities in the museum] a man with a horse
29. C: yes
30. Jaheda: and he told us a story [museum, listen]
31. R: so this is what you think you will see tomorrow because you saw similar things in the British Museum is there another reason you think you will see artefacts?
32. Sofia: we are going there for history [history] and we are going to write staff what we can see, what it is [previous activities in the museum] and staff like that
33. R: how do you know that?
34. C: Rosie told us [classroom learning]
35. Reynu: in the museum you can see all these artefacts and old things dag from the underground
36. Jaheda: you know you can see all things and oil lamps, we might see them in the museum
37. Calam: because in history we are learning about Romans [classroom learning] (others agree)
Appendix 12- Sample of “card-themes”

Expectations

Group 2

The preparatory session’s orientation to objects and artifacts seem to have shaped the children’s expectation of the visit (32-34). The 2nd group expects to see what the museum teacher showed to them in the classroom (1,36). Calam’s and Sofia’s comment, however, that they will see photographs of the objects rather than the real objects might indicate that he has not realized that they will see the real objects at the museum or it might reflect previous visits to galleries or museums where the children saw photographs of objects.

Their expectations are shaped by their previous museum visits. They expect to see money, statues and artifacts things that they saw in the previous visit to the British Museum (5,6,7,8, 21-27). When asked to present an example, Sufia explains that what they will see will be related to Romans in London while she also expects that they will draw the objects and write down what they see (4,10). An expectation that must be shaped form their previous museum visits, as these are the two activities that are always part of the school’s museum visiting agenda (10, 27-28, 32), and also have been shaped by what the children have been doing in the classroom both in the preparatory (10) and the history lessons (10, 14-19,32). The link between learning or learning that takes place in the classroom and the museum has been shaped by the previous museum visit (44-46). This link is so steadily there that they use it to justify their current expectations (36-37).
### Appendix 13- Tables facilitating comparison

#### A) Drawings

**Year 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>5 moths after</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>A modern gun</td>
<td>A soldier would have a musket. It would not help him to have a sward. He had to use a gun, my dad has a gun. The gun was the first thing I saw in the soldier. He has to have a gun. If the robber wants to run away he has to shoot him to catch him. A sward would not help. I wanted to draw also an arm holding the gun.</td>
<td>The table</td>
<td>The table is what I remember when I came in. I would draw the musket but I cannot remember it. So, I will do the table is easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>A gun</td>
<td>The gun belonged to the soldier</td>
<td>A bowl with patterns</td>
<td>This is what I remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>A musket</td>
<td>A soldier would have a musket</td>
<td>A soldier wearing a red jacket, holding a sward, carrying a musket, wearing a hat with a feather</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>Teacher in costume, the soldier without the gun</td>
<td>Mrs T. beautiful, pretty, kind Soldier-tall, brave, smart</td>
<td>The soldier (without the props)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michae</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>The teacher</td>
<td>Because it was easy</td>
<td>Table with cups on the top</td>
<td>Is it all right to draw the table in the dining room where we eat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanad</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>Lantern</td>
<td>Because the others said you could see stars</td>
<td>Lantern (small)</td>
<td>I am drawing the lantern because that is what the argument was about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Storytellers</td>
<td>Lantern</td>
<td>Because the others said you could see stars</td>
<td>Priscilla</td>
<td>Because I remember she was wearing this blue dress and her hair were up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Storywriters</td>
<td>Lantern</td>
<td>This is important because it was the 1. The lantern</td>
<td>1. That's the lantern he showed us with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B) Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>During the session B part</th>
<th>Focus group Interview, Guilty or not?</th>
<th>5 months</th>
<th>5-Individ Dilemma, did you learn sthg?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>[he does not participate]</td>
<td>[he agrees that the shopkeeper should be informed if it was something valuable]</td>
<td>I would not tell the teacher but I would keep an eye on him. I would not like to be in trouble but if he does that again then I would</td>
<td>At the group interview he differentiates his position from the others. &quot;I said it was a matter of innocence&quot; But then he changed his mind as he learned &quot;never trust a thief and his tales. If the thief will try to get away do not believe him, the soldier said that&quot; [He seems to be in role during the storytelling, when asked from whom did he receive commands he replies &quot;By captain Backs&quot;, we</td>
<td>James thinks he is a robber &quot;because otherwise he would not be in Mistress Priscilla’s house and try to hide&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Well as soon as he came in I knew he was quite suspicious. When the soldier he moved to the other side of the room. I do not know how but I could tell that this was the person the soldier was looking for&quot;. [he is surprised like Robert how steven changed his mind. He is using the evidence of the initials against N. “Actually had Nathaniel’s Marsh initials on it. But I actually think he carved them in. I never trusted him as soon when he got away from the soldier&quot;.</td>
<td>“One of the things I learned is how to tell a thief from another person because there is a difference. You can tell by the way the thief looks, but sometimes you can be proved wrong. On Harry potter,”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The floor opened up but I saw a giant twirl under 10 times as big as me!

Monday 11th March

Nathaniel the thief

William Fitton and Nathaniel marched off to Farmer Brown's farm to find out if Nathaniel stole the lantern. On the way to the farm, Nathaniel said, "So what will you do if I'm innocent?" "I don't really know, most likely try and find the lantern," William answered. And if I'm guilty? Nathaniel questioned. You'll have to go to jail, I'm afraid. William replied.

When they finally got to the farm it was pitch black. Nathaniel lit the lantern. Nathaniel was telling the truth, it was a wonderful display of lantern lighting in the dark sky.

Farmer Brown shot out of his barn in the exact time his watch had.
PAGE MISSING IN ORIGINAL
Appendix 15-The year 4 class's "Socio-gram", G school
Girls, mutual nominations

Negative nominations

Boys, mutual nominations

mutual nominations between Boys and Girls
Appendix 16 - The year 6 class's "Socio-gram", S School
Girls, mutual nominations

One-way nominations

Boys, mutual nominations
### Appendix 17. Table of the actual teaching plan. Bluegate Fields School, Year 4 class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly units</th>
<th>Actual date</th>
<th>Learning Intention</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>The romans.</td>
<td>Brainstorm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>Learning to use words linked to emigration</td>
<td>Write one sentence for each word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Investigate reasons why people move from where they were born (citizen, refugee, emigration)</td>
<td>Match the words and their definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Learning to place events in a chronological order. Make a timeline for the invasion of Britain</td>
<td>They order, Saxon, Viking, Roman, and Norman invasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Understand the difference between invade and settle. Give reasons why the Romans invaded Britain</td>
<td>Look at definitions and synonymous (invade and settle) Questions on the Roman Invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>15/9</td>
<td>Give reasons why the Romans invaded Britain</td>
<td>Use pictorial map with pictures which shows reasons why people have invaded Britain in the past. Brainstorm in groups, share with the class. They write the reasons in full sentences justifying ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16/9</td>
<td>Use evidence to find what the Romans thought of Celts</td>
<td>Use statement based on which they devise questions and write answers. (how the Celts looked like, weather in Britain, they behaved as cowards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>22/9</td>
<td>Infer what the Celts were like from evidence</td>
<td>Write under each picture what it tells us about the Celts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29/9</td>
<td>The similarities and differences between Roman and Celtic Women lifestyles</td>
<td>Locate the appropriate monologue to the right picture. Write the similarities and differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30/9</td>
<td>Roman Celtic women. Questions you could ask in the role play</td>
<td>Take on the role of a Celtic and Roman woman. Write the dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>Use artefacts to answer questions about the past. Suggest what the artifact tell us about Roman life in London</td>
<td>Look at the artefacts. Pretend they are archaeologists analysing what the object is made from, what it looks like, what it might have been used for and what information it tells us about London. It links with the visit to the museum. Suggestion for follow up work is to write non chronological reports about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Make mosaics</td>
<td>Research from books to find out about the Romans and how they lived. What was the Roman Army like? Answer questions (what did the Roman army do? What did the army built as they went to different countries, what did the soldiers have to carry as they walked, what did the soldiers get when they retire?). 2nd group work: answer questions on what was a Roman Town like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>14/10</td>
<td>Roman food and cooking</td>
<td>Look at school Roman artefacts linked to food and cookery: e.g. amphora, samian ware, mortarium. Create display of Roman food stuffs. Preparation for the visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect on the visit</td>
<td>Answer the school’s worksheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Half term week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>Identify past representation</td>
<td>Look at images of Boudica drawn long after Boudicca was alive. Read Roman eye witness accounts of what Boudica looks like. Read a short description of Boudicca written by Dio, which describes what Boudicca looked like. Introduce concept of bias and unbiased/ positive and negative. Draw the Boudicca based on evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>Museum visit (museum of design)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 18 A sample of the year 4 children's work in the classroom before the museum visit (BL school)

The Similarities and Differences Between Roman and Celtic Woman.

WALT: similarities and differences between their life styles

WILF: differences between

A ROMAN WOMAN

I stay at home and look after my four sons. They will carry on the family name. Only poor women work outside the home.

My husband looks after my property for me.

A CELTIC WOMAN

I can choose who I am going to marry. I look after my own property.

I help to rule my tribe. I could become a chief and lead the tribe into battle.

My four sons are cared for by other members of the tribe. I work outside the home.

I look after my home and family. Men run the Empire.

My father chooses my husband for me.

How can her husband be chosen by her father in the dress?
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