

**(Re)Creation Processes: Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Performance Studies

Department of Drama  
University of Alberta

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## Abstract

### English:

In 2008 Swiss theatre-maker Milo Rau and a group of collaborators founded the production company the International Institute of Political Murder. Since 2008, Rau and company have created a unique and identifiable brand of documentary-inspired political theatre. Early IIPM projects such as *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009) garnered significant attention for their contribution to the genre of reenactment; however, this early success led to the term reenactment serving as an umbrella term used to describe Rau's work. Pulling from the IIPM's body of work between 2008 to 2020, *(Re)Creation Processes: Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder* identifies and dissects the distinctive organisational categories of the company's oeuvre: reenactment (e.g. *Hate Radio*, 2011), recollection (e.g. *Empire*, 2016), and reactment (e.g. *Das Kongo Tribunal*, 2015). This dissertation offers a broad overview of Rau's oeuvre, while also exploring sources for the work. It situates the IIPM's productions within historical and contemporary political performance traditions such as lay and artistic reenactment, documentary theatre, Verbatim theatre, and global activist performative interventions. Working with a massive collection of critical and artistic sources, including live and recorded performances, this study engages in a process of performance and reception analysis, revealing commonalities and differences between productions and organisational categories. It poses questions about the use of autoethnography within various production forms, the role reenactment techniques play across Rau's oeuvre, the problematic centrality of the director himself, and ultimately analyses the successes and shortcomings of IIPM productions and political actions. In an appendix, *(Re)Creation Processes* also takes an in-depth look at *Hate Radio*, closely examining its performance, the text, the source material, and the reception of one of Rau's most internationally successful repertoire productions.

**Deutsch:**

Im Jahr 2008 gründete der Schweizer Theatermacher Milo Rau mit engeren Mitarbeiter\*innen das International Institute of Political Murder. Seither haben sie eigene Formen, Dramaturgien und Ästhetiken dokumentarischen politischen Theaters entwickelt. Erste IIPM-Projekte wie *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009) fanden große Beachtung als Reenactments. Dieser frühe Erfolg führte jedoch dazu, dass in der Forschung die Ästhetik des Reenactment als bevorzugten Zugang zu allen weiteren Arbeiten verwendet wurde. „(Re)Creation Processes: Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder“ stützt sich demgegenüber auf eine repräsentative Auswahl an Raus Arbeiten bis heute und stellt hierzu verschiedene innovative Kategorien zum Verständnis vor, neben dem Reenactment (z.B. „Hate Radio“, 2011), die Recollection (z.B. „Empire“, 2016) und das Reactment (z.B. „Das Kongo Tribunal“, 2015). Auf der Basis neu erschlossener Quellen, Kritiken und Materialien aus dem Probenprozess sowie von Aufführungsmitschnitten bietet die Dissertation einen umfassenden Überblick über Raus Produktionen, reflektiert kritisch die verschiedenen theoretischen Reflexionen Raus in direkten wie indirekten Bezügen zu seinem Werk und situiert es vor den Hintergrund historischer und gegenwärtiger Performancetraditionen wie Laien- und künstlerisches Reenactment, Dokumentartheater, britisches Verbatim Theater und Interventionen des Artivismus. Mit einem besonderen Schwerpunkt auf der tiefer gehenden Analyse einer seiner erfolgreichsten Produktionen, „Hate Radio“, geht es in der Arbeit auch um Fragen nach der Funktion der Rau'schen Autoethnografie in den verschiedenen Produktionsformen und nach seiner eigenen Rolle als Regisseurs im Hinblick auf die von ihm verantworteten Produktionsmodi.

## Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Lily Maeve Climenhaga. The interviews and email correspondence with Milo Rau received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, under the project name, “The Director-Auteur: Milo Rau’s mise-en-scène,” Pro00072531, 2017.

Some of this thesis has been published in the theatre blog “An Unopened Can of Tomatoes: Milo Rau’s ‘Das Neue Evangelium,’ or ‘The New Gospel’” (September 11, 2020), “This time without the tourists...” (September 10, 2020), and “‘It’s 9:00 Kigali’ – ‘Hate Radio’ and the Appeal of Experience” (March 2, 2019) on the blog *lostdramaturgininternational.wordpress.com*. Sections of the introduction are published as part of the introduction of *Theater Magazine*, 51:2 (2021). An early version of *Hate Radio*’s production analysis was previously read as part of a *Hate Radio* panel at the Performance Studies International (PSI) Conference in 2017. The image and description of “Re-Packing My Library: A Collection in Understanding” was featured in the 2019 University of Alberta Library’s Images of Research competition and is published on the University of Alberta’s Education and Research Archive.

This dissertation was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada and the University of Alberta.

**Dedication**

*For Joan,  
The Everywoman*

In the dark times  
Will there be singing?  
Yes, there will be singing.  
About the dark times.

-Bertolt Brecht, "Motto to Svendborg Poems," 1939

## Acknowledgements

Dissertations are never written alone.

They are born from long talks, late-night discussions, and animated disagreements.

This dissertation was made possible by the support of the University of Alberta Drama Department, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität's department of Theaterwissenschaft, and was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (2015-2019), University of Alberta, and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität. I would like to personally thank my supervisors, Dr. Piet Defraeye (UofA) and Dr. Andreas Enghart (LMU), for the support, guidance, and counsel provided throughout this long journey; my supervisory committee, Dr. Andreas Stuhlmann and Dr. Kim Misfeldt, for their invaluable feedback and support throughout this arduous process; and my externals Dr. Antje Budde and Dr. Melanie Dreyer-Lude for participating in my defense, not being afraid to ask challenging questions, and help with translations. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the U of A drama department's amazing administrative team – Julie Brown, Connie Golden, Helen Baggaley, and Liz Ludwig – whose work made not only this dissertation possible, but also the Masters and Bachelors degrees of myself and countless others. I would like to thank Dr. Stefano Muneroni, Prof. David Barnet, and Prof. Mike Kennard for instilling an early love and understanding of theatre, as well as Dr. Andrew Gow and Dr. Jeremy Caradonna for teaching me how to write, research, and critically look at the world, I still carry these lessons with me.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my friends and family, particularly my mother and father, Luanne and David, for their endless moral (and financial) support and for reading and copy-editing early (and terrible) drafts of chapters, articles, and presentations. To my aunt Joan, who read every blog, every lecture, every conference presentation, and every article I wrote, who – more than anyone – took an active interest in my work: it is bittersweet to finish without you here and I miss you very much. To Grandma Vi and the Mireau family for their constant support of my pursuits. To my drama family (Lebogang, Heun Jung, Xavia, Tonya, Angela, Thea), my karate family (particularly Manuel Desa and Janet Vranas), and all my people in Munich, Edmonton, and beyond (Caroline, May-Lee, Nelly, Sabine, Tornike, Oli, Anna, Kara, Karola, Andreas, Denise, Gerda, Felix, Andi, Heika), thank you all for your overwhelming support and feigned interest in Milo Rau. A special thanks to my dear friends John and Claire for all their help writing and editing chapters in those final stages.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to extend my most sincere and heartfelt thanks to all past and present members and employees of the IIPM and NTGent – Jens Dietrich, Eva-Maria Bertschy, Stefan Bläske, Rolf Bossart, Mirjam Knapp, Yven Augustin, Carmen Hornbostel, Mascha Euchner-Martinez, Kaatje De Geest, Tom De Clercq, Nele Buyst, and so many others – for their help setting up meetings, acquiring scripts, photographs, reviews, tickets, and videos, as well as for their support, interest, and kindness. I am eternally grateful for all your support, kindness, and acceptance over the past five years. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Milo Rau. Stumbling across your work (and into a rehearsal) was the best thing that happened to me. I cannot imagine this project without your critical interventions, arguments, and support. I cannot thank you enough for the time you have given me, the interest you have shown in this dissertation (and all its connected projects), and the kindness you have always shown me, no matter how odd, awkward, and off-putting I have, at times, been.

On behalf of the Unofficial International Institute of Rau Studies, thank you.

To everyone not explicitly mentioned here whose support extended my suffering in this PhD:

You know who you and you know what you did.

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### Production List and Filmography

<b>Productions: Pre-IIPM</b>	<b>Film: Pre-IIPM</b>	
<i>Die Rainer Werner Fassbinder Show</i> (2003) Dir. Simone Eisenring	<i>Paranoia Express</i> (2000) Dir. Siamesis Produktionen (Marcel Bächtiger, Simone Eisenring, Milo Rau, Mattias Stickel)	
<i>Dämonen/Tanz das Tourette</i> (2005) Dir. Rau & Eisenring		
<i>Amnesie</i> (2005) Dir. Eisenring		
<i>Bei Anruf Avantgarde</i> (2005) Dir. Eisenring		
<i>Das höchste Glück</i> (2006) Dir. Heiko Senst		
<i>Pornografia</i> (2006) Dir. Eisenring		
<i>Out of Focus</i> (2006) Dir. Eisenring		
<i>Montana</i> (2007) Dir. Eisenring & Rau		
<b>Productions: IIPM</b>		<b>Films: IIPM</b>
<i>Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus</i> (2009) Dir. Rau & Eisenring		<i>Land of Hope</i> (2009)
<i>Hate Radio</i> (2011)		<i>City of Change</i> (2010)
<i>Breviviks Erklärung</i> (2012)		
<i>Die Moskauer Prozesse</i> (2013)		
<i>Die Zürcher Prozesse</i> (2013)		
<i>Die Berliner Gespräche</i> (2013-2014)		
<i>The Civil Wars</i> (2014)	<i>Die Moskauer Prozesse</i> (2014)	
<i>Das Kongo Tribunal</i> (2015)		
<i>The Dark Ages</i> (2015)		
<i>Leitfaden für britische Soldaten in Deutschland</i> (2015)		
<i>Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs</i> (2015)		
<i>Five Easy Pieces</i> (2016)		
<i>Empire</i> (2016)		
<i>Die 120 Tage von Sodom</i> (2017)	<i>Das Kongo Tribunal</i> (2017)	
<i>LENIN</i> (2017)		
<i>General Assembly</i> (2017)		
<i>La Reprise. Histoire(s) du théâtre I</i> (2018)		
<b>Productions: NTGent &amp; IIPM</b>	<b>Films: IIPM &amp; NTGent</b>	
<i>Lam Gods</i> (2018)		
<i>Orestes in Mosul</i> (2019)		
<i>La Rivolta della Dignità</i> (2019)		
<i>Familie</i> (2020)		
<i>School of Resistance</i> (2020-2021)		
<i>Everywoman</i> (2020)	<i>Das Neue Evangelium</i> (2020)	
<i>Das Kongo Tribunal Kolwezi Hearings</i> (2020)		
<i>Antigone im Amazonas</i> (2021)		

## Re-Packing My Library: A Collection in Understanding (2019)



“Re-Packing my Library” depicts the collection process that goes into writing a dissertation. It shows a collection of books, papers, pamphlets, programs, and notes amassed over three years of research packed (once again) hastily into an old bag.

Taken in my small Munich apartment, this picture shows material collected over the past three years. The documents in and around the suitcase are the result of the numerous research trips to performances, political actions, conferences, lectures, and interviews that have taken me – and my battered suitcase – across Europe.

The collection of papers and books spilling out of the suitcase are a reminder of late nights, cheap hotels, long waits at airports, and even longer train rides, but also the physical, material proof of my own obsessive, international search for understanding.



## Introduction: A Theatre of Documentation

*“Denn es zählt nicht, was wir wissen, was wir gern tun würden oder wie wir selbst uns einschätzen. Im Grund ist Wissen nur eine Voraussetzung für das Handeln, für Protest, oder anders ausgedrückt: Wissen haben wir sowieso immer genug. Es zählt nur, was wir damit tun. Insofern lautet Lektion sechs: Fangen wir einfach an – alles andere kommt dann schon.”<sup>1</sup>*

-Milo Rau, “Hannah Arendt Tage,” 23.10.2018

Political theatre that responds to the present through the use of documentary techniques is by no means a new form. Within the German and European theatre landscape, this genre goes as far back as Erwin Piscator’s early documentary theatre – which is closely connected to the tradition of Living Newspapers in Germany, Russia, Britain, the United States, and pre- and post-revolutionary Russia. For many artists, not just in Germany but across the globe, the theatre has served as a space to hold up a mirror, to respond, to reflect, and ultimately to introspect upon what is happening outside (and sometimes inside) the performance space. Documentary theatre, having fallen out of vogue after a period of renewed interest in the early 1960s, underwent a

### Unterwegs

I found Milo Rau when I was looking on the Schaubühne website for a Swiss director to research for a directed reading course in December 2015.

I found *The Civil Wars* on the page for the Schaubühne’s annual F.I.N.D. Festival.

I thought it was a restaging of Robert Wilson’s *the CIVIL warS*.)

I thought it was strange that a German director would try to stage a Robert Wilson play.

Turned out it was a different play.

It makes sense, *the CIVIL warS* was supposed to be 12 hours long and was never completed.

Instead, I found Milo Rau.

No one else in the drama department at the U of A was aware of Milo Rau or his work.

I had found something new and completely my own.

No one liked my first presentation on Rau and his work.

The professors hated my term neo-documentary theatre.

reemergence in Germany in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the arrival of young performance groups such as Rimini Protokoll, She She Pop, GOB Squad, and documentary playwrights such as Hans-Werner Kroesinger. In the two decades, since their initial appearance as freelance artists on Germany’s *Freie Szene*, many of these artists have transitioned onto the mainstages of some of

<sup>1</sup> “For it doesn’t matter what we know, what would like to do, or how we see ourselves. Basically, knowledge is only a prerequisite for action, for protest, or in other words: We always have enough knowledge. The only thing that matters is what we do with it. Therefore, the sixth lesson is titled: Let’s just start – everything else will follow.”

Germany, Austria, and Switzerland's most important state and city-funded theatres. By the late 2000s and early 2010s – after these and many other documentary artists had established themselves as key players of not just the new documentary theatre,

I moved to Munich in April 2016.  
 On May 21, 2016, I saw *The Darks Ages*.  
 The first Milo Rau production I saw live.  
 At the production, a someone asked me if I'd interviewed Rau.  
 I hadn't and didn't plan to.  
 She said that was probably for the best.  
 I emailed Rau on June 2.  
 I assumed he'd never respond.  
 He answered the same day.

but European theatre as a whole – a new player entered the German/Western European theatre scene using documentary techniques for political performances: Swiss-German director, playwright, editor, essayist, and journalist, Milo Rau.



*Figure 1: "Milo Rau and the Zapatistas in Mexico," 1997; Photo Credit: Unknown*

Milo Rau was born in 1977 in Bern, Switzerland. Growing up, Rau frequently moved among Zurich's suburbs and the smaller Swiss city of St. Gallen. Rau studied French and



Figure 2: *Montana* (2007); Center: Franziska Dick; Photo Credit: Simone Eisenring

German language and literature and sociology in Paris, Zurich, and Berlin, studying under Pierre Bourdieu and Tzvetan Todorov, among others. During this period, Rau also began his career as a student activist, organizing student marches, protests, and petitions. In 2000, Rau began his journalistic career as a foreign correspondent for *Die Neue*

*Zürcher Zeitung*, at nineteen undertaking an early expedition to Mexico's Chiapas region to interview members of the revolutionary Zapatista movement (fig. 1).

In late 2007, the then 30-year-old Rau, alongside a group of his frequent collaborators – Simone Eisenring, Jens Dietrich, Marcel Bächtiger, Nina Wolters, and Franziska Dick (fig. 3) – founded the International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM), a production company that exclusively produces Milo Rau productions and projects.<sup>2</sup> Before 2007, Rau worked primarily as a playwright, regularly partnering

I had to travel to Berlin for the interview.  
It was August 17, 2016.  
I'd lived in Germany for 4 months.  
I showed up two hours early for the interview, because Rau's assistant told me that if I showed up a bit early, I could watch the rehearsal.  
I showed up early.  
They were rehearsing *Empire*.  
They were in the middle of a scene when I got there, so I sat with an assistant in the dirty kitchen of the rehearsal hall and drank a cup of bad coffee.  
I got a text from the stage manager: You can come in.  
When I entered the rehearsal hall, they were still rehearsing. The room was very dark, and I was trying to be very quiet.  
My eyes adjusted very slowly to the dark room.  
I tripped over a pile of metal poles and interrupted the rehearsal and just sat down on the ground where I was standing when I tripped, next to the metal poles.  
I awkwardly waved an apology across the room.  
The stage manager sent another text: "quietly 😊"  
I wanted to disappear.

<sup>2</sup> There is one exception to this rule: In October 2010, *Reifenstahl* – a monologue play performed by Franziska Dick and directed by Simone Eisenring – was performed at Theaterdiscounter's Monologfestival. The production, according to the festival's website, deals with similar questions as the IIPM's other early reenactments and is labelled as a IIPM project: the production, a reenactment of a discussion between André Müller and Leni Riefenstahl, performatively engages with questions of political art and reenactment ("Reifenstahl"). *Reifenstahl* remains, to date, the only IIPM production not included on the company's website.

with fellow Swiss director Simone Eisenring, with whom, before the founding of the IIPM, he created a number of moderately successful productions. These early productions played in small

The rehearsal ran an hour late.  
 Rau shook my hand and then went to give his actors notes.  
 I sat and watched from across the room.  
 One actor shook my hand, one actor smiled and nodded at me,  
 and two just ignored me.  
 I didn't have a handheld recorder or an app for one on my  
 phone, so I used GarageBand on my laptop.  
 Rau laughed and said his daughter likes to play with  
 GarageBand.  
 I conducted the interview in my terrible German.  
 I wanted to prove to the woman who told me not to contact  
 Rau that I could.  
 Rau was very nice about it.  
 My questions weren't very good.  
 We only talked for 20 minutes at the rehearsal hall before we  
 had to leave.  
 Rau had a meeting with a friend.  
 I met Stefan Bläske and made a stupid joke.  
 I regretted it immediately and still think about it.  
 I rode the subway with Rau and Stefan Bläske across Berlin.  
 A crazy guy yelled at Rau in the train.  
 I didn't know what to do, so I laughed awkwardly and sat  
 quietly.  
 We kept talking about Rau's work.  
 I found it hard to stay on topic.  
 Rau said, "Let's get back to the interview."

theatre houses and festivals across  
 Switzerland and Germany and included  
*Amnesie* (2005),<sup>3</sup> *Pornografia* (2006),  
*Montana* (2008; fig. 2),<sup>4</sup> and the 90-minute  
 flop film *Paranoia Express* (2002).<sup>5</sup> With  
 the founding of the IIPM and the massive  
 success of its first production, *Die letzten  
 Tage der Ceausescus* (*The Last Days of the  
 Ceaușescus*; 2009) – a reenactment of the  
 hurried show trial of Romania's deposed  
 dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife  
 Elena in the twilight hours of the Romanian

Revolution – Rau became one of Europe's most successful and influential directors. During this  
 early period, the nature of his work underwent a drastic shift. Rau's plays turned away from their  
 formerly fractured, abstract structure and moved towards political, documentary-style  
 productions, launching the director's international reputation as a provocateur and scandal-  
 maker.

Rau and the IIPM's particular political theatre genre did not emerge from a void but is  
 part of a rich and extensive historical tradition. Productions like *Hate Radio* (2011), *Empire*

<sup>3</sup> A postmodern abstract adaptation of Ivan Goncharov's *Oblomov* (1859).

<sup>4</sup> An adaptation of Euripides's *Bacchae* (ca. 405 BCE).

<sup>5</sup> An adaptation of a Thomas Pynchon's novel *V* (1963).

(2016), *Das Kongo Tribunal* (2015), and *La Reprise* (2018) fit within divergent structural categories, each of which pull inspiration from broader traditions within documentary theatre and political action performances. This study divides Rau's repertoire productions and political actions into three distinct structural and dramaturgical categories: Reenactment, recollection, and reactment. It additionally identifies a fourth category, reclassification, which serves as a peripheral focus in Chapter Six. The primary focus of this examination is Rau's work with the IIPM and although reclassification is certainly connected to the other three categories (as all of Rau's share common creation techniques and thematic interests), it was primarily developed through Rau's more recent work at NTGent. It is, therefore, outside the main scope of the current study. By looking at Rau's performance styles and productions from both the IIPM and NTGent



Figure 3: "Afterparty *Bei Anruf Avantgarde* (2005)"; L to R: Milo Rau, Simone Eisenring, Matthias Stickel, Franziska Dick, Sascha Gersak; Photo Credit: Judith von Ortenberg

(one of Belgium's major theatres that contracted Rau as its artistic director in October 2018<sup>6</sup>), it becomes apparent these projects pull (often directly) inspiration from other documentary artists with whom Rau is connected.

We finished the interview in a loud restaurant with Rau's friend.  
 I left the interview feeling good.  
 The next day I felt terrible about it.  
 After the interview I went to a friend's birthday party.  
 I felt terrible about the interview for weeks after, but I told everyone who asked that it went well.

IIPM productions emerge from an extensive, pre-existing, theatrical tradition, such as the documentary tradition Rau so adamantly denies. For years, Rau has explained his work is not documentary, because he is not drawing from existing documents, and because theatre is, by nature, anti-documentary:

Wenn mich einige als Dokumentarist bezeichnen, so basiert das auf einem Missverständnis. Denn was man auf einer Bühne tut, ist grundsätzlich das Gegenteil von Dokumentieren – es sei denn, Seiltanz ist dokumentarisch, weil die Erdanziehungskraft dokumentiert wird.<sup>7</sup> (“Das ist der Grund” 19)

In this outright rejection of the documentary tradition, Rau employs a reductive, even outdated definition of documentary theatre. The problem with the label documentary theatre – as with political theatre – is that it operates as an umbrella term. It envelops many drastically different modes of creation and performance that have emerged since the first use of the term in the mid-1920s. Rau's definition of documentary theatre is based on an understanding of the term as a theatre that employs existing documents, similar to the definition developed by Peter Weiss (1916-1982) in the sixties. Rau, unlike Weiss, is looking at creating new documents in his plays

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<sup>6</sup> Rau's opening weekend with NTGent took place from September 28 to October 1, 2018, although the work on the actual season began in mid-2017 shortly after Rau was named artistic director of the theatre.

<sup>7</sup> “When certain people refer to me as a documentarian, it is based on a misunderstanding. Because whenever you do something on a stage, it is the exact opposite of documentation – if that were the case, then tightrope walking would be documentary, because it documents gravity.”

and projects, although this assertion is itself problematic. For *Die Ermittlung* (1965) – Weiss’s most documentary play – Weiss created a new document by editing and adjusting the existing reportages from the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial.

Rau defines theatre as the creation of a situation – *herstellen eine Situation* (“Realismus (2)” 138). Theatre is live, active, happening in the *right now*, while documentation – although not passive – has already happened and is, therefore, inherently past-tense. One of the most political aspects of Rau’s productions is how they explore missing pieces of historical memory, how they find the individuals otherwise excluded from mainstream narrative, and how they create actions and institutions that do not yet exist. No matter what type of production – regardless of whether it is reenactment, recollection, or reactment – Rau and the IIPM are interested in uncovering, re-discovering, re-writing, re-enacting, and are, therefore, engaged in a constant process of documentation.

I saw Milo in November 2016 in Zurich.  
I’d never been to Zurich.  
I took the train to Zurich and stayed at an AirB&B.  
I spotted him across the room at Schauspiel Zurich’s  
Schiffbau BOX.  
I was there for a talk Milo was having with Stefan Zweifel  
about his upcoming *Die 120 Tage von Sodom*.  
I didn’t approach him.  
I didn’t think he’d remember me.  
Milo came up to me when I was buying his *Hate Radio*  
book.  
He shook my hand.  
He asked: “What are you doing here?”  
I said: “Research trip...?”  
He laughed: “Aha!”  
I talked to him again after.  
He remembered my name.  
I stared down at my boots.  
I felt awkward and out of place, but I was just happy to talk  
to someone whose German I could understand.  
The next day I flew to London to see a friend.  
Three years later in 2019 I was in London again for a lecture  
by Stefan Bläske.

Rau prefers the term *theatre of the real* to documentary theatre. Theatre of the real is a theatre, Alisa Solomon summarizes, that “documents, testimonies, court records, interviews, photographs, comes to play a more complex, dual role in the performances they serve: they present apparently sound evidence of real-world occurrences even as they reveal such representations are constructed” (Solomon 180). IIPM productions complicate accepted interpretations of history, of the present, and of potentialities for the future. Productions imply

that the future does not have to be the same as the present, as the *right now*: it can be something completely different. For Rau and the IIPM, this potential permeates the present in how the past is written and, both individually and collectively, can be re-written. All of Rau's theatre documents this potentiality through co-presence: i.e., performing it in a live space for a live audience. So, despite Rau's assertion that the term documentary theatre is an inherently contradictory one – because he claims, as a live performance, theatre cannot document anything – his theatre is precisely that: A theatre of documentation.

### Research Questions:

*(Re)Creation Processes: Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder* provides an overview of Milo Rau and the IIPM's work from 2008 to 2018. As the title suggests, this

I've taken trains across Germany, to Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom for Milo Rau talks, lectures, and premieres.

I've been to about 50 different events.

In March 2017, Milo sat next to me before a lecture in Basel and whispered in English, "It's the same one as in Cologne!"

It took me a minute to figure out he meant that he was reusing a lecture he'd given in Cologne in February. But I was so sick in Cologne I could barely remember the lecture.

That was the first time Milo spoke English with me. He stopped reusing lectures after that.

In May 2017, I missed the first two lectures in Saarbrücken, but came to the third. Milo saw me, laughed, and said: "Oh good! I was worried something happened to you!"

Once, in December 2017 I stayed out all night in Vienna with Rau and a group of authors and academics.

We went to an anarchist bookshop.

I got back to the hotel at 7:00 am and had to was on my train to Munich by 10:00 am.

Mostly I've walked around a lot of cities alone.

study offers a detailed analysis of Rau's various structural categories of theatre-making and their impact on the actual creation processes that generate these productions. The inclusion of re- in the title mirrors how the same prefix is carefully incorporated into the name of each category, highlighting the reenactive and repetitive impulse present throughout Rau's work.

The main focus of the study is Rau's work with the IIPM, but it still includes more recent projects with NTGent (documenting Rau's work up

to 2020). *(Re)Creation Processes* attempts to create an ordering system for Rau's work, seeking

to develop a nuanced and detailed framework for future analysis. It seeks to find commonalities and differences between productions and performance styles, exploring how themes, structures, and techniques coexist among productions and how certain directorial and dramaturgical choices re-emerge, uncovering through Rau's massive body of work a clearly identifiable *mise-en-scène*. *(Re)Creation Processes* also enters into a more significant discussion of why specific performance styles are used to address their chosen themes and how these structures serve (or fail to serve) the productions' subject matter.

### **Methodology:**

This study looks at Rau and the IIPM's work through the extensive lens of Performance Studies,

a field which – although relatively fluid and hard to pin down – looks at performance not simply as an artistic event – though it certainly is that too – but as part of (and a response to) a complex network of interconnected and ever-changing elements and events both in- and outside the theatre. Performance Studies looks at performance in a broad sense of the word, and sees it socially, culturally, politically, and economically embedded. In his essay, “Rethinking Ethnography,” Dwight Conquergood posed an important question for Performance Studies: “What happens to our thinking about performance when we move it outside of Aesthetics and situate it at the center of lived experience?” (Conquergood 361). American theorist, Judith Hamera, directly answers Conquergood's question, asserting that aesthetics is always lived

On August 7, 2017, I took the train from Munich to Locarno, Switzerland to see *Das Kongo Tribunal* at the city's annual film festival. I could only see the second screening, so I missed Rau, but his producer Arne Birkenstock and the Congolese politician Vital Kamerhe were there. I saw Arne Birkenstock at a later screening in Munich in November. He recognized me. He said I was like a Milo Rau Groupie. I didn't like that. Coming home the next day, I started messaging Milo from the platform in Locarno. I said if he ever needed help translating anything, I'd be happy to help. He said they wanted to translate *Wiederholung und Ekstase* into English. So I translated a book. It ended up being *Global Realism*. The train from Locarno to Zurich goes through some long tunnels and you sit for minutes in the dark. I thought about Friedrich Dürrenmatt's short story *Der Tunnel*. I finally understood the story.

experience – and “performance studies reveals this interrelationship in clear and compelling ways” – and is already inherently social (Hamera 46-47). Performance Studies, as it is used throughout this study, allows theorists to engage in an exploration of how theatre and performance serves as a marker of contemporaneous social and cultural history and experience. *(Re)Creation Processes* engages in a deep excavation process of IIPM productions and examines how current events and the surrounding political and social climate are an integral part of these performance projects.

Thus, the starting point for this examination is Performance Studies, a fundamentally interdisciplinary field. Richard Schechner clarifies the interdisciplinary quality of Performance Studies in his 1998 essay, “What is Performance Studies Anyway?” using the term *in-betweenness*. He highlights how Performance Studies is undeterred by the rigid binary and territoriality within disciplines:

Performance studies is ‘inter’ – in between. It is intergeneric, interdisciplinary, intercultural – and therefore inherently unstable. Performance studies resists or rejects

The nicest thing Milo ever said to me was at NTGent’s opening weekend in 2018. After the premiere of *Lam Gods*, on September 28, I sat with him on the steps of the Schouwburg. He asked what I thought of *Lam Gods*. I described it as a love letter to the city of Ghent. He used that term to describe the play later. After we finished talking about the play, he said: “I’m glad you’re here.” I said, “Where else would I be?”

definition. As a discipline [Performance Studies] cannot be mapped effectively because it transgresses boundaries, it goes where it is not expected to be. It is inherently ‘in between’ and therefore cannot be pinned down or located exactly. This indecision (if that’s what it is) or multidirectionality drives some people crazy. For others, it’s the pungent and defining flavor of the meat. (“What is PS” 360-361)

It is the interdisciplinary quality of this study that is interested in bringing together concepts from memory studies, media studies, history, and cultural studies. It is not just interested in the performance itself, but of the wider implications of productions. *(Re)Creation Processes* explores where productions fit historically within the present, how productions engage with the politics of the present, how power dynamics assert themselves in performative and activist projects and the production company itself, and how Rau and the IIPM respond to and fit within Western European theatrical traditions. It looks beyond the individual significance of specific productions (beyond a straightforward content analysis), but examines what happens within

In February 2020, I watched a panel discussion with Yvan Sagnet, Lara Staal, and Milo moderated by Kopano Maroga.

During the comment period one of the German dramaturgs in the audience said something so dumb that I made eye contact with Stefan Bläske and mouthed “What!” because I had to share the moment with someone.

Milo was annoyed by my comment about the temporary quality of his work.

He came over afterwards and said he wanted to talk about my comment.

We sat down to talk about it.

He was abrasive and defensive.

I was flustered and couldn’t organise my words.

I explained myself badly.

“I’m going to engage with you when I disagree!”

I guess he doesn’t like the term tourist.

specific productions, what they respond to, how they act as markers of our particular historical moment, and how Rau’s oeuvre fits (or does not fit) together. The primary methodology employed throughout this examination of Rau and the IIPM’s work is Performance Analysis, a method typically adopted by Performance Studies. The analysis

is most often based on direct, personal experience with the individual productions and political actions. The close readings of various IIPM productions found throughout this study contextualize and qualify the structural categories laid out in each chapter. They are based on multiple viewings of live performances, as well as an active engagement with written critiques of productions, the performance text (when available), and videographic material. Each analysis, which cumulates in what can be described as a genre analysis, engages with the intersecting and inseparable levels of performance analysis identified by Christopher Balme’s *The Cambridge*

*Introduction to Theatre Studies* (2008): specifically, theatrical text (what is written), production (the rehearsed/planned event), and performance (what actually happens on the day of) (133).

My Performance Analysis practice follows in the tradition most recently laid out in Marvin Carlson's *Theatre is More Beautiful than War: German Stage Directing in the Late Twentieth Century* (2009) and also Maria Delgado and Dan Rebellato's *Contemporary European Theatre Directors* (2010). Namely, a director-focused analysis that looks at both specific productions while also taking into account other productions, interviews, and the written work of the chosen director. Like Peter Boenisch's *Theatre of Thomas Ostermeier* (Routledge: 2016), *(Re)Creation Processes* also engages in a dialogue with the director, but where Boenisch directly engages with Ostermeier as a co-author, I engage with Rau's written work about his theatre, drawing on published essay collections as well as lectures Rau has given, and discussions and forums he has participated in.

The starting point of this analysis is (1)

the text (taken broadly as written text, production text, and performance<sup>8</sup>) and (2) direct

I took part in a workshop with Rau in Münster in December 2019.

My train from Kassel was 3 hours late the day before it started.

I arrived at the lecture hall at 10:00 am on the first day of the workshop, me and Elisa, an actor from Schlosstheater

Moers, sat in the empty room together for 20 minutes.

There was a transit strike in Belgium and the workshop wasn't going to start until 1:30.

We were the only two people not on the official mailing list.

I had to message Milo to find out.

When the workshop started, we did an introduction round.

Milo started by introducing himself and then turned to me and said: "Lily, who are you?"

After finished his first a lecture, there were no questions.

He looked at me and said, "Lily... speak!"

I babbled for four minutes about his work.

<sup>8</sup> When we talk about text in Performance Studies, we are in truth not talking about a single text – the written text, production text (a director's book that records the intended blocking or staging of a performance), lighting map, or sound board – but an amalgamation of these elements along as they come together in the performance and into contact with the live audience. In the 1973 article, "Drama, Script, Theater and Performance," Richard Schechner sums up the complexity of this concept of text within Performance Studies, stating: "Drama is what the writer writes; the script is the interior map of a particular production; the theatre is the specific set of gestures performed by the performers in any given performance; the performance is the whole event, including audience and performers (technicians too, anyone who is there)" (84). Therefore, when this study engages in a text and textual analysis of Rau and the IIPM's work, it is looking at how these different levels of production (the written text, the design and technical elements, the performance itself, and response to the performance) come together to create a performance event. In Performance Studies, this is often referred to as the Performance Text, where text is to be understood in a Derridian sense.

experience. Instead of first beginning with a set methodology or theoretical framework, theory follows both the analysis of the production and of larger structural categories. This study explores the intersection of the performance of Rau's political theatre (a term which encompasses both repertoire productions and one-time actions), its audience, its actors, and the socio-political forces of social memory, trauma, and history. While seldom at the fore of the analysis, each chapter engages in a process of reception analysis, referencing reviews of various productions taken from numerous sources (German, English, Dutch, and French newspapers).<sup>9</sup> Talkback sessions with audiences were also often a rich field of reception evidence. The experience-based quality of this examination lends itself to a phenomenological analysis that is deeply enmeshed in a subjective horizon of experience. This horizon of experience is then expanded (or, at the very least, further informed) through reviewer and audience interpretations heard in these written reviews and lived talkbacks.

Because Rau's work is itself interdisciplinary, the study also takes on a necessarily interdisciplinary methodology. It engages opportunistically with various theories and theorists from cultural studies, memory studies, media studies, post-colonial studies, while maintaining peripheral focus on history and historiography (written history and how history is written). Chapter Two's analysis of reenactment draws heavily on the performance theory of reenactment developed by German curator and scholar Inke Arns. Here, because of the medialisatation of both Rau's reenactment and many other artistic reenactments, media studies are key to how these performances engage with an increasingly mediatised world. Numerous well-known theorists such as Guy Debord (the society of spectacle), Susan Sontag (the pain of the Other), and Roland Barthes (whose voice is clearly heard in Rau's early writings) play an important role in the

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<sup>9</sup> In mid-2017, I created my blog *lostdramaturgininternational.wordpress.com*, which has served as a vital tool for this self-reflection about Rau's work, as well as public engagement and debate.

analysis of Rau’s medialisatation. Chapter Four, in its exploration of recollection, engages extensively with Performance Studies, exploring the performance and acting style in productions like *Empire* (2016) or *The Civil Wars* (2014). It borrows from performance theorists such as Richard Schechner (total acting), Michael Kirby (acting and non-acting), and Norman Denzin (ethnographic and autoethnographic performance) as an entrance into the performance of self that is visible in Rau’s work. This chapter also continues with the stream of memory studies also present in Chapter Two, drawing on French memory theorist Pierre Nora and German theorist Jan Assmann, while also exploring the complex interplay between memory, communication, and trauma discussed by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. Chapter Six examines how political action reactments continue to engage with performance and media studies (looking at the difference between the live performance and its subsequent mediation) and memory studies (trauma and testimony is central to the judicial quality of these actions). However, this chapter also takes on a notably postcolonial critical lens to highlight and examine the more problematic elements of reactment. These issues presented in this chapter are present throughout Rau’s oeuvre. However, in reactment and reclassification, where real people are used to respond to their real situations in a theatrically constructed situation, these issues become impossible to set aside, because performers face real world consequences for their participation.

On March 31, 2020, I made the best joke of my life on Facebook writing: “If there isn’t a Drehbühne (revolving stage) and/or a smoke machine then is it even considered theatre in Germany?” Milo liked the joke so much that he did his own take on it in response to COVID. In an article for the *New York Times* on May 5, 2020, he said: “They didn’t wait for the moment they could have a big revolving stage and 500 actors in fat suits.” He sent me a message saying he’d quoted me.

*(Re)Creation Processes* consists of three sections, each focused specifically on (1) reenactment, (2) recollection, and (3) reactment. Each section is then divided into two chapters: (1) a historical and contemporary contextualization of Rau’s work within European practice as well as the performance landscape beyond and (2) an in-depth analysis and close reading of

In early September 2020, Milo convinced me to go to Venice to see the film premiere *Das Neue Evangelium*.

There were no tickets.

I hadn't really looked for tickets, because I didn't really want to go because of COVID.

But he really wanted me to go.

He sent me to three different people to ask about getting a free ticket to the premiere.

Nothing worked, there were a limited number of seats and tickets available.

Finally, he messaged me about a second seating outside the official premiere.

Ultimately, I went to Venice for three days and I ended up buying my own ticket.

I spent three days alone in my hotel in Venice.

specific productions in an attempt to identify larger structural identifiers within the IIPM. Introductory contextualizing chapters (Chapters 1, 3, and 5) for each of the categories identify specific genres and then look at numerous, diverse productions from a wide variety of artists that loosely fit within these genres. These chapters do not delve into

productions in detail, rather they aim to illustrate the breadth and variety of work present within the selected genres. Each of these overviews also includes a summary *status quaestionis* of existing critical literature about the genre in question, to be followed by an in-depth analysis of the structural category in the subsequent chapter (Chapters 2, 4, and 6). These in-depth analyses are split into several sections, each approaching the chapter's titular question ("What is ...?") from a different perspective and corresponding framework. The conclusion of each of these chapters, rather than engaging in a typical step-by-step repetition of the argument, looks to bring together some of the key points discussed in the section to further engage with the genre's complex practice. Finally, the thesis closes with an extensive case study of one of the IIPM's most critically successful and internationally toured productions, *Hate Radio*. Chapters, as well the dossier, include a number of examples taken from IIPM productions, each example includes a link to a production video (when available) is provided, with time stamps for the exact section described in the text.

The first two chapters examine Rau and the IIPM's work within reenactment, a genre exemplified by projects like *Die letzten Tage*, *Hate Radio*, and *Breiviks Erklarung* (2012). An initial short contextualizing chapter, "Reenacting and Reenactment," illustrates where Rau and

the IIPM pull inspiration for their reenactment productions in the extensive tradition of historical reenactments, political reenactments, and artistic reenactment projects from across the performing arts landscape. Chapter Two, “What is Reenactment?”, undertakes an in-depth analysis of Rau and the IIPM’s reenactments. It borrows the basic structure of the IIPM’s first manifesto, “Was ist Unst?”, to answer the key questions put forth by Rau in February 2009 as well as a number of other concerns.

Chapters Three and Four examine the structural category of recollection, monologic plays that pull directly from its actors’ autobiographical memories and experiences, as well as the theatrical tradition within which these productions fit. The transitional Chapter Three,

When I was closest to quitting the PhD in October 2018 – at the EASTAP conference in Paris where I was presenting, and Milo was the guest speaker – Milo dragged me along to a dinner.

I hadn’t slept in three days and was in a bad way. I hadn’t slept in three days because I’d taken the train from Hannover to Munich for Milo’s lecture at the Hannah Arendt Days, from Hannover to Ghent for the Ghent premiere of *Compassie*, and from Ghent to Paris for the conference.

On the walk to the restaurant, I told him I was thinking of dropping out.

He said, “You can’t! You’re the last hope for the Institute of Rau Studies!”

It was exactly what I needed to hear.

Over dinner I got into a fight with the conference organisers about Ariane Mnouchkine and Robert Lepage’s play *Kanata*.

Milo had to moderate a very heated discussion. The French disagreed with me and I wouldn’t back down.

As we were leaving, I apologized to Milo.

I felt like I’d acted unprofessionally.

“Actually, I think it was the most professional thing you did all night,” he said.

“Documentary Theatre and Recollection,”

situates IIPM productions (and their creation

processes) within the documentary tradition of

the 1960s and beyond, the British Verbatim

tradition, and the work of post-nineties German

documentary artists. Chapter Four, “What is

Recollection?”, provides an in-depth analysis of

the performance style, exploring how

productions like *The Civil Wars* (2014), *The*

*Dark Ages* (2015), and *Empire* (2016) create

space on stage where the small *I* (the self) finds a

place within the big history. The chapter explores how the creation process and performance

style bring the closed and private politics of trauma in the public performance space. It explores

questions of representation and representability, the practical questions that surround issues of testimony, trauma, and witnessing, and the potential purpose of such presentations.

Chapters Two and Four additionally engage with those plays in Rau's oeuvre that combine reenactment and recollection techniques: *Five Easy Pieces* (2016), *Die 120 Tage von Sodom* (2017), *La Reprise* (2018), and *Familie* (2020). These productions re-enact primarily real stories<sup>10</sup> and, using a collage technique, contextualize these historical events by intermittently transposing the actors' socio-political realities through autobiographical recollection. In particular, productions like *Five Easy Pieces*, *La Reprise*, and *Familie* that reconstruct crimes, combine a self-aware meta-dialogue about theatre and performance with the performers' autoethnographic experiences both within and outside the theatre. Here, the performer serves as a signifier not just in the performance (i.e., the reenactment), but of the external socio-political reality.

Whether reenactment or recollection, IIPM productions look at traumatic moments of breakage to reexamine them from the perspective of the present. Reenactment asks, what would this event look like in the present? Recollection asks how it is remembered? The most explicitly and effectively political of these performance projects, the reenactment projects, ask, what would, and should, the future look like? Chapter



Figure 4: "Five years of research, five years of tickets"; Photo Credit: Lily Climenhaga

<sup>10</sup> The only exception to this real story rule is *Die 120 Tage von Sodom*, which uses Pier Paolo Pasolini's film of the same name as the reenacted material intermingled with the real experiences of the actors.

Five, “Engaged Theatre and Reactment,” the last of the transitional chapters, provides an overview of recent and historical practices of constructing performative institutions for real change. The chapter contextualizes Rau’s political action reactments and explores how Rau’s projects find inspiration in a variety of sources, traditions, and genres: recovering performance traditions that engage a prefigurative politics and projects that find themselves in a “continuum between art and activism” (Schmitz 10). Chapter Six, “What is Reactment?” takes a close critical look at those projects Rau describes as *symbolic institutions for the future* found in *Land of Hope* (2010), *City of Change* (2010), *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (2013), *Die Zürcher Prozesse* (2013), *Das Kongo Tribunal* (2015), *General Assembly* (2017), and *La Rivolta della Dignità* (2019) (“utopische Institutionen” 12-13). It analyzes the various levels of performance and, therefore, levels of spectatorship at play within reactment, while raising important questions about the intention and effect behind these actions. The chapter assesses how Rau and the IIPM employ techniques of provocation, agitation, and protest as a strategy for performative, symbolic social action.

Additionally, Chapter Six peripherally examines Rau and NTGent’s recent reclassification projects – *Lam Gods* (2018), *Orestes in Mosul* (2019), *Das Neue Evangelium* (2019/2020), and *Antigone im Amazonas* (2021). They engage a combination of reactment, recollection, and even reenactment techniques. Reclassifications re-enact short excerpts or images from classical texts (art, theatre, and scripture) alongside autoethnographic dialogue collected working on-the-ground with real activists and local artists. Ancient struggles are resituated – or reclassified – in modern society and their participants’ lived realities: Sophocles’s *Antigone* (441 BCE) is transposed into the acts of the Landless People’s Movement focused around the figure of Kay Sara, an indigenous activist in the Amazonas region. Such productions

build off the ideas of performative liberation developed by Paulo Freire and made famous in Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, seeking to empower participants and spectators alike and extend action beyond the walls of the theatre. Rau's reclassifications build on the groundwork of activists in a form of theatre better defined under the moniker of Kennedy Chinyouwa's Theatre of the Oppressor, "where agents of oppression can be turned into allies in the act of liberation [... but] require[s] awareness of privilege to avoid perpetrating the same inequalities, injustices and oppressions" (Chinyouwa 2, 14). Both reclassification productions and reactment projects, particularly those that take place in conflict zones,<sup>11</sup> open a utopian – and therefore ultimately unfinished – space of possibility in performance: A space that brings together individuals and organizations in a common fight ("Try Again, Fail Again"). Here, the construction of the space itself and the networks fostered are more important than the end production seen on stage, visible in the projects' self-referentiality.

*(Re)Creation Processes* concludes with

Since 2016, I have always made an effort to always be where Rau is (fig. 4).  
 I'm anxious when I'm not because I worry what will happen and that I'll lose that relationship.  
 I'm worried if I'm not there I'll be forgotten.  
 I feel like the only unique aspect of my work is this direct connection.  
 It's my connection.  
 I made myself and no one else set it up for me.  
 Otherwise my work isn't new or exciting.  
 I like Rau's work and like Milo as a person.  
 I'm proud of what I've done and the connections that I've made.  
 But I don't think I'm a great academic.  
 I'm always too personally invested.  
 I write about things because I'm a fan.  
 But I hate it when people call me a groupie, which happens more than I like.  
 I think the theatre can make a difference.  
 I got in a disagreement with Chantal Mouffe about that once.  
 I also think that if we want theatre to make a difference then we have to demand more of directors and theatre-makers and not ignore their more problematic aspects.

an extensive case study, structured as a production dossier, of *Hate Radio* (2011), offering a concrete example of what reenactment – as outlined in Chapter Two – looks like in practice, while also exploring questions of creation process and critical (and commercial) success. The examination looks at various aspects of the production: actors, text, performance, dramaturgy,

<sup>11</sup> Conflict regions refer not just war zones like Mosul, but also refugee camps in Southern Italy and demonstrations by Brazil's landless people movement.

reception, and production history. The dossier is split into five parts: (1) a performance analysis that undertakes an in-depth examination of *Hate Radio* based on the published script and a recorded performance available on the IIPM website. (2) An edited blog review of *Hate Radio* published on my blog *lostdramaturgininternational*, on March 2, 2019, in response to my first live engagement with the production and offers an experiential analysis of the production. The dossier then moves on to a more generalized examination of (3) reception, providing an overview and summary of 47 published reviews taken from newspapers, magazines, blogs, and various online publications written between 2011 and 2019. (4) It then looks at the use of verbatim material in the script, specifically where Rau and his team pull text directly from the transcriptions of archival RTL M broadcasts. (5) The dossier concludes with production notes, providing a brief overview of those people involved in the production, an incomplete list of tour locations and independent productions/staged readings of *Hate Radio*, and an extensive case bibliography.

*(Re)Creation Processes* is one of the first in-depth, English-language examinations of Milo Rau and the IIPM, independent of the production company and it is my desire and hope to thus make a substantial contribution to the discipline of Performance Studies. However, it is hopefully also one of the final markers of a particularly outdated line of scholarship in Theatre and Performance Studies that could be called the *Great Man Tradition*. A line of study that focuses on the contributions of individual (primarily white and male) directors while obfuscating the key role of collaborators. Throughout this examination, I attempt to foreground the role of collaborators, highlight the collective aspects of creation, and situate Rau's at times problematic centrality in his body of work.

There is an additional issue of positionality in regard to this study and its critical analysis of Rau's work that must be acknowledged beyond what the sidebar does on these pages. On August 17, 2016, I conducted an interview with Milo Rau<sup>12</sup> and while there are no inclusions from this initial interview in *(Re)Creation Processes*, there are certainly traces of the many interactions with Rau that followed. Over the course of the past four years, I have travelled to numerous events where Rau and/or his dramaturgs were speaking, spoken at length casually and professionally with Rau's past and present collaborators, participated in a workshop led by Rau, been present at premieres and other performances, actively participated in audience talkbacks, invited Rau to my own presentations (although he has not attended any), and translated a theory book and a number of articles for Rau, IIPM, and NTGent. Though all this, in combination with my blog, I, unwittingly, became part of the backdrop of IIPM's and NTGent's events. As such, I cannot pretend that the following examination of Rau's work is distanced or fully objective. It is, in fact, involved, invested, and somewhat subjective; let it be one of the strengths of this examination. Therefore, *(Re)Creation*



Figure 5: "Cleaning the stage with Milo Rau at *Rampenlichter Tanz und Theaterfestival von Kindern und Jugendlichen*," July 7, 2019; Photo Credit: Christian Zeitler

<sup>12</sup> An ethics review for this interview and subsequent email communication was completed through the Research Ethics Office at the University of Alberta, approved under the title "The Director-Auteur: Milo Rau's mise-en-scène," Pro00072531.

*Processes* is written from a neither completely outside nor completely inside position. Rather, it is written from the wings.

## Chapter 1: Reenacting and Reenactment

In 2007 – the same year Milo Rau and his counterparts founded the International Institute of Political Murder – curators Inke Arns and Gabriele Horn together with Hartware MedienKunstVerein Dortmund and KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin produced the exhibition *History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Re-Enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance*. This exhibition effectively presented the history of reenactment using twenty-five performances shown through video clips, beginning with Nikolaj Evreinov's *The Storming of the Winter Palace* and moving forward into the 2000s through Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) and Irina Botea's *Auditions for a Revolution* (2006). Two years before this exhibition, in 2005, famed performance artist Marina Abramović staged her seven-part performance art reenactment *Seven Easy Pieces*, arguably still one of the most famous examples of the genre. By the premiere of the IIPM's first reenactment, *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus*, in late 2009, the genre of performance had gained increased popularity within political theatre and performance arts.

The IIPM's particular style of reenactment emerges from a rich tapestry and extensive history of performances (both professional and amateur), ranging from reenacting historical battles and living history museums to contemporary professional performance practice. As is the case with each of the organizational categories of Rau's work, it is important not to look at it in isolation, but to consider how and where it fits within the wider performance landscape. This chapter breaks reenactment into two parts: first, historical lay reenactments, looking specifically at the phenomenon of public reenactment performances that commemorate past events. This section also briefly examines political propaganda reenactments, which have influenced both the documentary theatre tradition as well as political artistic reenactments. Pulling from a number of

examples, the chapter explores the social and political impetus that inspires the practice. The second section looks at how reenactment appears in professional performative practice (theatre, dance, etc.) using specific examples of each to explore what reenactment looks like and how it functions in dance, performance arts, film, and theatre. In doing so, this section foregrounds historical, organisational categories such as the ready-made (often medial) reenactment and performative (often live) reenactment. The underlying goal of this chapter is to situate Rau's particular brand of reenactment within a broader, established tradition.

### **1.1: Historical Lay-Reenactment – Taking Part in One's Own History**

Numerous novels (most famously Tom McCarthy's (\*1969) *Remainder*; 2008) and critical books have been written about the cultural phenomenon of reenactments. With Performance Studies, there is an increased interest in the longstanding practice of amateur actors or hobbyists reenacting historical events or periods: battlefield reenactments and living history museums. A good, cursory explanation of this form of reenactment as it fits within the tradition of tourist performances (i.e., reenactment performances created specifically to be viewed by an outsider audience) is available in Richard Schechner's *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2013). Iain McCalman and Paul A. Pickering's (Ed.) collection of critical essays *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Affective Turn* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010) provides a detailed and in-depth exploration of battlefield reenactments. Theatre theorist Scott Magelssen has worked extensively in the critical analysis of such reenactment performances in the United States: in 2011, Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy co-edited the volume *Enacting History* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2011) that explores the role of memory, history, and historiography within lay reenactments. Magelssen

also undertakes a similar exploration of memory and history in performance within the pedagogical reenactments of Living History Museums in *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2007). He again explores Living History Museums and tourist reenactments (another form of historical lay-reenactments) from the perspective of the participant and the experience of simulation. However, the principal text within Performance Studies for the North American (English-speaking) reenactment tradition remains Rebecca Schneider's *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011).

Historical lay-reenactments are public performances that romanticize and idolize the nostalgic past for the specific community: for example, Civil War reenactments in the American South are a celebration of the perceived glory of the Confederacy and Antebellum South of which reenactors see themselves as the successors (indicative of the demographic that participates in such performances). Key to this form of reenactment is its open quality. The artistic reenactment (as well as the larger documentary theatre) emphasizes the relationship between the spectator and performer. Sven Lütticken explains that in the hobby-reenactment, participation is what counts: “the active experience, the experience of acting – of reenaction – is everything” (Lütticken 39). This experiential quality is referred to by Jay Anderson as the magic moment – “the moment when you actually feel as if you are a part of a particular historical period or event” (*Living History Sourcebook* 455) – and as a time warp (“a momentary illusion of actually being in the past”) by Tony Horwitz (*Confederates in the Attic* 7).

Battlefield reenactments such as the Civil War reenactments in the United States or those of medieval battles in the United Kingdom are inescapably tied up with questions of identity and history, questions that cannot be contained within written history. Historical lay-reenactments,

according to Freddie Rokem, serve to reinforce cultural identities and ideologies – although, in some cases, they also challenge them (Rokem 3). Similarly, Charlotte Canning asserts, “performances can demonstrate aspects of and ideas about history that are less possible in print. It can encourage considerations of the gestural, the emotional, the aural, the visual, and the physical in ways beyond print’s ability to evoke or understand them” (Canning 230). The physical spaces of these reenactments often include a geographical dimension – similar to what French memory theorist Pierre Nora suggests in his concept of the *lieu de memoire* – where memory of the event is intrinsically connected to a concrete place, which serves as an anchor between the society and its history (Nora 9). For the reenactment, particularly the battlefield reenactment – like Civil War Reenactments in America, for example, the Battle of Gettysburg or the Battles of Bull Run – the physical location connects the reenactors with their perceived past, with a set of known gestures and images (battle formations, attack strategies, historical persons, recorded speeches, contemporary technology, etc.). This brand of historical reenactment – battle reenactment – looks to recreate specific events through the precise *reconstruction* of physical – clothing and props (the correct uniform and weapon for that time) – and behavioral details (Schechner 293).

Within these nostalgic reenactments, location is key with many battlefield reenactments actually taking place on the location of the original battle. These are almost inherently nostalgic: i.e., dedicated to the commemoration of a romantic past and not the critical analysis of broader, deeper (political, social, economic, etc.) meanings of the event (Clemons 17). They do so through the construction of *lieux de memoire*. These sites of memory, assert Nora and other scholars in the field of memory studies, exist in a space of absence and are created (through monuments and reenactment) as a way to maintain (or even create) continuity with the past:

“There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory” (Nora 7). Nora implies the *lieux de mémoire*, specifically the overabundance of these places, emerge as part of an anxiety surrounding the problem of a society’s historical continuity. He acknowledges the changeability of the so-called historical fact, the accepted interpretation and (temporary) significance of an event (7). Both internal (local) and external (international) change creates the necessity for the adjustment in both the memory (which is actual and exists only in the present) and history (which is inherently reflective and retrospective). The need to consecrate (*to hallow*) and re-consecrate *lieux de mémoire* is indicative of the inability to live in memory – which fades and forgets – and how we adapt ourselves and our identities through the process Nora describes as the “ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning” (8). The reenactment thus takes the site of memory one step further through embodiment (the ritual repetition) to create a surrogate body for what Lindsay Livingston defines as “embodied authenticity” (30-31) as it moves memory and history closer together for a single moment.

It is more accurate to describe the nostalgic historical lay-reenactment as a *simulation*. In the Baudrillardian sense, the simulation is connected to illusion, phantasm, and – perhaps most importantly for this brand of reenactment – a positive sense of self (Baudrillard 23-25). The simulation, like the *lieu de mémoire*, takes place in a space of absence: “To simulate is to feign to have what one hasn’t” (Baudrillard 5). The reenactment embodies an absent action, creating a *clone* – a perfect copy, a “perfect performative” (Sandler 584; Schechner 133-134). Schechner explains in Baudrillard’s theory that the difference between the fading original and the simulation is fundamentally hermeneutic: “a matter of ideology, not of any difference between the so-called original and the so-called copy” (Schechner 133). This difference in ideology, or

more accurately the difference between the original and the copy that is created through shifts in ideology, is contained in the idea developed by Milo Rau in “The Realm of the Real” of *inflection* (124). *Inflection* is best defined as the interpretative lens through which we as spectators, actors, members of a particular society view, experience, and interpret a historical event at the present moment.

*Inflection* is one of the central problems with reenacting history, as it may drag the performance in one of two directions: it either risks creating the image of a past that is complex, ruin-like and (ultimately) useless, or, alternatively, monotone, positivistic, and (ultimately) superficial (124-125). Thus, if the reenactment were to completely remove *inflection* – which I postulate is impossible – the event is divorced from its social, cultural, and historical context, loses its potency and significance. It is not possible to completely remove inflection and interpretation from the historical moment. The event is inevitably and inescapably bound up with its interpretations and historiography.<sup>13</sup> We cannot live in memory, and within the act of writing and rewriting history we are already engaged in an act of *inflecting*. We see this quality of inflection even within the Civil War reenactment and the glorification of a time long past and an ideal (of gentlemanly conduct and Southern belles) that never really existed. In Rau’s reenactments and much of the documentary tradition, there is a critical inflection that reevaluates what is known and what we know about the event or subject matter. The importance of images comes from the interplay of their double reality (simultaneous existence in the past and the present): that they undeniably took place – “in an actual room and in real time” – and constant rebirth of these images in the collective imaginary and their ever-changing interpretations – the *inflection* (125).

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<sup>13</sup> Although this belief is most likely tied to my own postmodern tendencies (I was, after all, like so many students trained largely in a specific form of postmodern criticism).

The *simulated authenticity* of the reenactment is intertwined with the shared narratives and collective memories of the community. Perceived and implied communal authenticity is attached to the construction of a community's group identity (Magelssen 1). Milton Singer refers to the process of *cultural performance* in the Civil War Reenactment as a proclamation and authentication of belonging to a community and cultural identity, where "[t]o participate in such performances, either as organizers, actor, or audience is to exhibit to oneself and to others the concrete representations of that identity as well as to make a public declaration of one's acceptance of it" (Singer 422). The nostalgia of historical lay-reenactment is seen in the patriotism and pride of a supposed *grand victory* (even in the case of a historical loss as in Confederate reenactments) and is marked by the return to an alleged site of origin, of success, of victory, of struggle<sup>14</sup> – a genealogical pilgrimage (Livingston 26). Rory Turner points specifically to this nostalgia as a sort of romanticism that points towards what is perceived as a "kinder, gentler, more wholesome time" ("The Play of History" 57). The re-enacted event serves a highly emotional form of cultural memory and, according to performance theorist Diana Taylor, connects and employs material spaces as memory containers: "the live present and the living past, and a notion (or act of imagination, perhaps) that individuals and groups share

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<sup>14</sup> In his 1977 article "On the Symbolic and Historical Structure of an American Identity", Milton Singer describes the "memory hole" of the United States, exploring the various literary and historical sources Americans have used to construct a uniquely American identity (i.e., an identity unique from, for example, British identity). However, as Rory Turner points to in his concept becomes somewhat complicated within reenactments, especially considering Civil War reenactments in the American South. The South lost the war, however, for some white Southerners, this loss is connected with a perceived victory that, in order to be read as a victory in the present moment, *must* be divorced from the social, political, and economic root causes of the conflict – specifically divorcing it from slavery and instead connecting it with a struggle to maintain the values of the antebellum South (or the "Lost Cause of the Confederacy"). Singer describes this complex relationship between identity and reenactment in the context of American Civil War reenactments in his article "On the Symbolic and Historical Structure of an American Identity: "[a] multimedia expression of an American cultural identity, encapsulated in concrete symbolic representations of its history, cosmology, and moral values" (Singer 442). See Milton Singer, "On the Symbolic and Historical Structure of an American Identity," *Ethos*, 5 (1977), 431-455. And, Rory Turner, "The Play of History: Civil War Reenactments and Their Use of the Past," *Folklore Forum*, 22: ½ (1989), 54-61.

commonalities in both the here/now and there/then” (*Archive and Repertoire* 82). In the historical reenactment – particularly those that employ amateur actors from within the community – the relationships of the performer to the original and to the reconstructed event are essential. Performances like Jeremy Deller’s (\*1966) *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) employ actors (both professional and amateur) who were involved in the original in some capacity – in which their memory is not just rooted in social and cultural memory (collective memory), but with personal, individual memory. We see a similar technique of accessing performer memory in Rau’s *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009) and *Hate Radio* (2011), which use actors with memories of the chosen event (the Romanian Revolution and Rwandan Genocide) to fill the historical roles. For such productions – as is also the case for historical lay-reenactments – the relationship between participant and event is key: Simulation is rooted in cultural memory, i.e., the interconnection and imagination of the event to existing identity constructs (36).

Another important facet of the tradition of amateur reenactment are living history museums. Living history museums, like Fort Edmonton (Edmonton, Canada) and the Plimoth Plantation (Plymouth, USA), fit better under a historical reconstruction: stable, interactive, historical installations. The difference between reenactment and reconstruction is that a reenactment always and necessarily consists of reconstruction, while reconstructions like Living History Museums do not necessarily consist of reenactment. Reenactment refers back to a specific event (*this* event), while, conversely, Living History Museums’ reconstructions look at broader historical periods, specific centuries or time periods rather than an event (i.e., *that* time). These reconstructions are also stable – meaning they have a set, often unchanging, location and hours of operation – and interactive in that they are also educational, with actors stepping in and out of roles for the spectator-participants.

One of the most notable categories of reenactment is political, propaganda reenactments: where specifically selected historical events are ideologically adjusted and reenacted for political regimes. The most famous examples of such reenactments emerge from the grand political displays of the former Soviet Union and its satellite states. Such state-sanctioned reenactive performances were visible in Nicolae Ceausescu's parades and public performances (which remains a prominent point of trauma in Romanian documentary theatre) and remains visible in Russian public performances commemorating World War II. However, the most famous example is the Soviet director Nikolaj Evreinov's (1879-1953) *Storming of the Winter Palace* performed on November 7, 1920, in Petrograd, Russia. This reenactment – indicative of how these propaganda reenactments function – served as an *enactment*, overtaking and replacing the original. The symbolic *Storming of the Winter Palace* created by Evreinov (and subsequently re-made by filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948)) simultaneously created and mirrored collective memory by taking a relatively anti-climactic event and magnifying and mythologizing it for the new Soviet government.

As is often the case with ideologically-driven reenactments, Evreinov imbued the storming of the Winter Palace with a greater cultural meaning, portraying it as a much greater victory than it in truth was – a mythology extending beyond the event and into the political ideology of the Soviet regime (“Die Wiederholung als Ereignis” 37). The reenactment, which was itself repeated seven years later in Sergei Eisenstein's film *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (1927), entirely replaced the original event – for which no film and almost no photographs exist – creating an iconography (“Die Wiederholung als Ereignis” 37; Arns 5).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Evreinov's contemporary, the Peoples' Commissar for Enlightenment Anatoly Lunacharsky, explained the purpose of the spectacle of *re-storming* the winter palace was to promote and enhance awareness among the masses: “In order to acquire a sense of self the masses must outwardly manifest themselves, and this is possible only when, in Robespierre's words, *they do become a spectacle unto themselves*” (italics added, Lunacharsky qtd. Arns 5).

The spectacularity – an important term moving forward – of Evreinov’s event and the resulting images (as well as its subsequent filmic re-reenactment) became the images we still associate today with the Storming of the Winter Palace.<sup>16</sup> Evreinov’s event took the place of the original, both because of the lack of photographic or filmic documentation and because the original did not suffice as a symbolic foundation for either the Revolution or the subsequent Soviet state.

While the original remains as a date in a history text – which is also somewhat foggy, because of the continued use of rival calendars in Russia in the early 1900s – and a physical place on a map, the actual event and its ideological implications have been replaced by the hyperbolic image of its reenactment.<sup>17</sup>

Such political reenactments – as is also the case with countless other reenactments – form what Baudrillard refers to as a *hyperreality*, producing a new, “transgressive” truth that exceeds the negation and contradiction of the absence, and is located on the other side of truth, not in the false, but in the “more true”, the truer than true and the “realer” than the real (“Die Wahrheit der Wiederholung” 237; “Realer als die Realität” 36; Stolze 91). This idea that performance presents a truth that is truer than life itself is not a new idea. It began with Aristotle and continues through Shakespeare, Calderón de la Barca, Artaud, Grotowski, and right into the present (*The Archive and the Repertoire* 4). While all of Rau’s reenactments are political, the only reenactments within Rau and the IIPM’s oeuvre to use lay-actors and operate in an interactive sense (i.e.,

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There is an undeniable similarity between Lunacharsky’s description of the reenacting of the Russian Revolution bears a strong similarity to the process surrounding the American Civil War reenactments, which actually began during the Civil War (although didn’t grow in popularity until the 1960s).

<sup>16</sup> German curator and theorist Inke Arns’s 2017/18 exhibition at the Hartware MedienKunstVerein Dortmund *Sturm auf den Winterpalast* provided a fascinating examination through collections of books and other images of this phenomenon surrounding the reenacted images of October Revolution. Also see: *Nikolaj Evreinov: »Sturm auf den Winterpalast«*. Ed. Inke Arns, Igor Chubarov, Sylvia Sasse. Zurich: Diaphanes, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> We must always approach government funded and government supported with a level of suspicion, because there is a decisive power dynamic at play. In the case of Evreinov’s reenactment, it became a way of archiving a specific event and constructing a meaning to legitimate the new regime. Thus, even in how the images of the reenactment have been employed over the past hundred years is indicative of these power dynamics.

without a clear distinction between the performer and the participant) are *Sturm auf den Reichstag – The Storming of the Reichstag* (2017) – and *The Entry into Jerusalem* (2019). It is significant that both these reenactments are part of large scale reenactments (*General Assembly* (2017) and *La Rivolta della Dignità* (2019)) and operate on a symbolic level: i.e., as a reaction to the politics of the present through the construction of iconic imagery for the future.

Lay reenactments are not always historical. There is also a fun tradition dating back to the 1970s of the reenactment of cult films by fans: what I would call cult reenactments – a sort of distorted and often imprecise, but nevertheless emphatic copy. Films that have gained a cult following such as *The Room* (2003), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and – most famously – *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) have all developed a tradition of special screenings with live involvement, including shadow casts, audience call-back, props, and elaborate costumes. The Swiss theatre group Theater Hora, a professional theatre company made up of actors with Down Syndrome and other similar disabilities, has built this reenactment tradition into their theatre, developing productions inspired by these cult film experiences: *Katastrophenfilm* (dir. Noha Badir, 2018) and *Mars Attacks!* (2014). Likewise, when Rau worked with Theater Hora for the remarkably uncontroversial *Die 120 Tage von Sodom* (2017),<sup>18</sup> produced with Schauspielhaus Zürich, was also built on this tradition of cult reenactment.

## 1.2: Artistic Reenactment – Performative Critical Reenactments

Despite a long history of artistic reenactment and the inherently reenactive quality of theatre and dance in general, only relatively recently – and really since the performance of Marina Abramović's (\*1946) *Seven Easy Pieces* in 2005 at New York's Guggenheim Museum – has the

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<sup>18</sup> Except for one *Daily Mail* article: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4224124/Swiss-director-opens-play-torturing-s-syndrome-actors.html>.

academy critically engaged with such reenactments. Following *Seven Easy Pieces*, one of the most significant projects – particularly for Rau and the German reenactment – dedicated to reenactment was Inke Arns and Gabriele Horn’s exhibition at the Hartware MedienKunstVerein (HMKV) Dortmund, *History Will Repeat Itself* (2005) and its resulting eponymous publication (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver Verlag, 2007).<sup>19</sup> In 2014, *Theater der Zeit* printed a volume of essays about reenactment and the history of reenactment in the German speaking realm under the title, *Reenacting History: Theater & Geschichte*, situating the genre as part of a larger historical tradition, while also exploring the relationship between documentary theatre and reenactment. For my study, Jens Roselt and Ulf Otto’s compilation *Theater als Zeitmaschine: Zur performativen Praxis des Reenactments. Theater- und kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2012) provides a fantastic overview of artistic reenactments, listing numerous examples of European artists working within reenactment as well as numerous concrete examples. Most recently, Paul Clarke, Simon Jones, Nick Kaye, and Johanna Linsley, edited *Artists in the Archive: Creative and Curatorial Engagements with Documents of Art and Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), which provides its reader with a massive overview of artistic reenactments from across the globe while also offering a cohesive theoretical breakdown of the performance style.

Artistic reenactments are largely focused on framing the original event, or, as Jeanne Bindernagel explains, “Keine Rekonstruktion verbleibt einfach in der Wiederholung, sondern sie bringt ihr Ereignis sichtbar hervor und birgt in sich die Information, mit welchen medialen Strategien in Widerstreit geraten” (Bindernagel & Braun 130).<sup>20</sup> Artists depend on a wide variety

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<sup>19</sup> The full name of the exhibition was *History Will Repeat Itself: Strategien des Reenactment in der zeitgenössischen (Medien-)Kunst und Performance/Strategies of Re-Enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance*

<sup>20</sup> “No reconstruction remains simply as a repetition, rather it brings its occurrence forward and contains the information about which medial strategies produces it, and where and how these strategies conflict with each other.”

of photos, records, and other audio, visual, or written documents, while remaining highly aware and critical of the unreliability of these records – their blanks, biases, and fallacies. These critical and self-aware qualities appear in both performance reenactments (i.e., reenactments of performances) as well as in the political media reenactments discussed below.

Performance reenactments are exemplified in projects such as Marina Abramović's 2005 *Seven Easy Pieces*, arguably the best-known artistic reenactment (and an inspiration of Rau's 2016 *Five Easy Pieces* and other plays of the Representation Trilogy). Abramović reenacts seven iconic pieces of performance art (including one of Abramović's own past performances and a new performance created for the event), from the sixties and seventies: Bruce Nauman's *Body Pressure* (1974), Vito Acconci's *Seedbed* (1972), VALIE EXPORT's *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (1969), Gina Pane's *the Conditioning* (1973), Joseph Beuys's *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965), as well as Abramović's *Lips of Thomas* (1975) and *Entering the Other Side* (2005). The project attempts to establish a framework through which to recreate performances, while maintaining the spirit of the original: "how it can be done in a way that's true to the original work" (Abramović qtd. Umathum 115). Similarly, Boris Charmatz's (\*1973) *50 ans de danse – 50 years of dance* (2009) sets out to re-create three hundred photographs of the famous choreographer Merce Cunningham from company archivist David Vaughan's *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years* (Matzke 130-131) in a *ready-made* cohesive performance. The photos from Vaughan's book – photos taken throughout Cunningham's career are combined to create something both uncannily familiar, mirroring not only the dancer's work, but also his creation process of "dance happen[ing] between the postures" (Amalvi).<sup>21</sup> Another prime example of this

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<sup>21</sup> Dance, it is important to note, offers a very different and perhaps more common form of reenactment than theatre in that many dance performances take on a process of reconstruction: we need only think of the restaging of famous choreographies like those by George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, and, more recently, Pina Bausch. In these reconstructions, there is inevitably something new added to the established choreography (like in

form of reenactment is the 2007 remount by the (in)famous New York company, The Living Theatre (founded by Judith Malina (1926-2015) and Julian Beck (1925-1985)), of their iconic 1963 production of Kenneth Brown's (\*1936) quasi-documentary play *The Brig*. The 2007 reenactment, directed by Malina, closely resembles the original and was constructed by building off Malina's memory of the first production as well as existing documents, but was now set against the backdrop of Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib instead of Vietnam, Cuba, and the Civil Rights Movement (Feingold; "Rückkehr des Pathos-Theaters").

Unlike historical lay-reenactments or Living Museums, which place audience participation at the center of the experience, the artistic reenactment returns to the centrality of witnessing – the aforementioned spectator-performer relationship. Thus, spectators are returned to the event and their experience expanded by the full complexity of meaning as is only possible retrospectively. Performative reenactments illustrate the fundamental difficulty of all artistic reenactments: they are, as asserted by performance theorist Peggy Phelan, essentially liminal and ephemeral: one-time events. According to Phelan, "Performance in a strict ontological sense is non-reproductive," because its "only life is in the present" (Phelan 148). The true moment of performance "cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations" (Phelan qtd. in Sajewska 365). Therefore, the moment of materiality is inescapably a moment of disappearance in performance – slipping away as it happens. While the reenactment is in part a search for what was and what remains, it is intrinsically accompanied by the transformative effect of its new context: citational and quotational (Umathum 116). There is a concerted effort by the artist to *supplement* – enrich – the original, a process Jacques Derrida

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Charmatz's *50 ans de danse*) but choreography also actively references and recalls the past. Yvonne Hardt in the article "Choreography: Performative Dance Histories" explains that reconstructed dance performances "expose different modes of taking up historical dance references, they all engage a concept of history that understands itself as a construction based on the needs of the present" (165).

calls *supplementarity* (*Writing and Difference* 253). Supplementing is the filling in of “deletions, blanks, and disguises” in writing, or more specifically the documentation (285). For both Abramović and Charmatz, this means finding the performance outside grainy photos and faded memories – created between the lines. For Rau, it means filling in the missing and muddled dialogue, finding the images out of the camera’s view – finding the door that creaks and softly bangs shut off-camera (“Realm of the Real” 123; “Realismus (1)” 120).

Productions such as Wooster Group’s *Hamlet* (2006) and *Poor Theater* (2004) embrace and include the blanks and miscommunications of their source material. Wooster’s *Hamlet* features a number of performers replicating the 1964 film of Richard Burton’s *Hamlet* with the film in the background – a reenactment of the filmic version (“Voice, Body” 368). *Poor Theater* sees the group attempting to recreate the last twenty minutes of Jerzy Grotowski’s *Akropolis* as accurately and closely as possible (Kalu 169-171). These Wooster Group productions attempt to reconstruct an original, theatrical performance (based on an archival recording), while simultaneously understanding and embracing the inevitability of their failure. Rather than repressing – smoothing over – the blanks and deletions in both memory and archived material, Wooster Group integrates them as a part of the reenactment – a reenactment of the document rather than of the event that was documented. In *Hamlet*, the Burton film skips and glitches, and the actors must negotiate these hiccups in their individual performances (Kalu 169). In *Poor Theater*, the original Polish text is fed to the actors through headphones, which is imitated tonally by the actors (many of whom do not speak Polish) (“Voice, Body” 377). The German performance collective Rimini Protokoll’s 2007 *Uraufführung Der Besuch der alten Dame* also adheres to this definition of performative reenactment by reconstructing – as the title of the piece suggests – the 1956 premiere of Swiss playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s *Der Besuch der alten*

*Dame, The Visit*.<sup>22</sup> The production sees the return of the surviving members of Oskar Wälterlin's original production team to Schauspielhaus Zürich, accompanied by a few audience members who were at the premiere on January 29, 1956 with cardboard cutouts standing in for deceased cast members.

Moving away from the performative reenactment, projects such as Israeli video artist Omer Fast's (\*1972) 2003 *Spielberg's List* and French artist Pierre Huyghe's (\*1962) 1999 *The Third Memory* employ the technique of medial reenactment to explore the interaction between filmic re-creations and original events. *The Third Memory* explores the space between criminal John Woytowicz's 1972 bank robbery and the 1975 film *Dog Day Afternoon* by Sidney Lumet. Huyghe places the aging Woytowicz (1945-2006) in a hall nearly identical to the now iconic set of *Dog Day Afternoon* and has him reenact the robbery with a group of actors in the fictive location to see how the film has impacted his memory of the event (Arns & Horne 118-119). Likewise, in *Spielberg's List*, Fast combines excerpts of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (which was filmed on a set constructed near the real concentration camp Plaszow, Kraków) with his own film material from Plaszow. Fast also interviews extras from *Schindler's List* about both their time working on the film and their experiences in the 1940s in an exploration of how memories of the film intermingle and mix with the historical events (102-103).

Both artistic (*Seven Easy Pieces*) and historical amateur reenactments (Civil War Reenactments) share an interest in personal connection to an event, although the historical lay reenactment does not acknowledge its subjective, biased quality and is much more involved in group identity. Rau's teacher at the Sorbonne, Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), explains that biographic events (i.e., events that have played a significant role in an individual's biography)

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<sup>22</sup> Although the title more accurately translates to *The Visit of the Old Lady*, its popular and most-used translation is *The Visit*.

serve to situate an individual within the social sphere (Wehren 225). Similar to what we have already seen with Civil War and other reenactments, specific foundational societal events may be revisited and adjusted to maintain positive self-image (*Archive and Repertoire* 30). In the discussion of reenactment and its placement in the broader genre of the documentary theatre tradition, the concept of authenticity emerges repeatedly. Authenticity is closely related to the playwright or artist's "truth claims," which are subsequently supported by the documentary source material (Žantovská 74). This claim of authenticity is inherently problematic because, no matter how much documentary material is used, someone always weaves the narrative – history is invariably written by someone and who that someone is influences how that history is written (76). Rebecca Schneider explains that the historical lay-reenactment does not look at an "authenticity that was," but rather "an authenticity that *should have been*" (italics in original; *Performing Remains* 55). Rau's reenactment – particularly productions like *Five Easy Pieces* (2016) and *La Reprise* (2018) – are significantly less interested in this concept of authenticity than it is in the ephemeral quality of the experience and the fading echo of the memory as it becomes intertwined with its reframing by the media as it is reshaped to fit within a specific ideological moment.

Other reenactments explore past events by through reframing the medial echo, as seen in Rau's *Die letzten Tage*. Another example is Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave*, a reenactment of the infamous clash between British miners and police in Orgreave in 1984 critically engaging with newspaper reports and pro-government public broadcasts about the conflict.<sup>23</sup> However, this practice of re-performing newspaper stories has its roots in post-revolution Russian Blue Blouse

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<sup>23</sup> Deller's performance project straddles the line between the aforementioned battlefield reenactment and artistic performance reenactments discussed in this section. What differentiates Deller's work from those mentioned above is the intention of the director (or the person staging the reenactment): Deller's intention is not rooted in a nostalgia for the past or the miners' strike, it is critical and artistic.

troupes – an agitprop collective founded by Boris Yuzhanin at the Moscow Institute of Journalism that in 1927 merged with the Workers’ Youth Theatre – delivered news to the masses using an energetic, physical Living Newspaper format (Youker 91). At about the same time, the German director Erwin Piscator (1893-1966) was also creating what Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) referred to as “documentary theatre” – the first use of the term (Favorini 74). Piscator’s early productions like 1924’s *Red Rumpus Revue* and, most famously, the 1925 production *Trotz Alledem!, In Spite of Everything!* (about former KPD leader Karl Liebknecht’s wartime agitations and the January 1919 uprising), which was constructed from news reports, political speeches, and other documents, projected films from the Russian Revolution, and radio broadcasts (Youker 95-97).

The living newspaper format and proletarian (i.e., Marxist) theatre groups remained a mainstay in American, Canadian, and British theatre throughout the interwar period and even into the post-war period. Groups like the American Workers’ Theatre and the US Federal Theatre, while heavily influenced by Marxist ideology, focused on the *poetics of information* – “how aesthetics and evocative imagery can help a documentary present and explain its subject matter in a pleasing and thought-provoking way” (110). The Living Newspaper tradition, not only builds off the political propaganda reenactments visible in Evreinov’s Winter Palace event, is also part of a highly political line of documentary performance, which uses medial documents as a way to transgress and re-write cultural boundaries: i.e., performances that reassemble documents into new forms that mimic the transformations of their society, or – alternatively – create models for necessary or desired transformations (2).

Another form of reenactment is visible in Rod Dickinson’s (\*1965) *Milgram Experiment* (2002), a reenactment of American sociologist Stanley Milgram’s infamous social psychological

experiment<sup>24</sup> at Stanford University (“Die seltsame Kraft der Wiederholung” 72). Dickinson employs the extensive transcripts of Milgram’s experiment to create a precise reconstruction of the original experiment. All four hours of the experiment are performed, divorced from the commentary, misinformation, and distortion applied retrospectively to the experiment by the media (72). British author-artist Tom McCarthy,<sup>25</sup> whose novel *Remainder* (written 2001, published 2005) remains a key text on the concept of reenactment, argues that when Dickinson places his performance (and later installation) in a gallery, he co-opts the original into the artistic tradition of Marcel Duchamp’s (1887-1968) bicycle wheel and toilet: the *ready-made* tradition (11). Similarly, Rau’s site-specific *Breiviks Erklärung* (2013), which is performed in city halls or governmental spaces, engages with this ready-made tradition, exploring what the transposition into these non-theatrical (but highly performative) spaces does to what happens during the production.

As McCarthy indicates, artistic reenactments are all, at least loosely, connected to this artistic concept of the ready-made. Instead of using an object, the reenactment takes an event and reframes it within a new, hybrid medium (11). It should come as no surprise that in

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<sup>24</sup> The Milgram experiment conducted at Yale University in 1961, measuring the willingness of participants to obey an authority figure even in an apparently immoral situation. The central question of the study surrounded the accountability of Germans (particularly Nazi war criminals such as Eichmann): Were collaborators and the German people simply following orders? In the experiment, the Experimenter would order the participant, or the Teacher, to ask the Student (unknown to the participant an actor) in another room a series of questions and for each wrong answer the Teacher would be ordered to give the Student a painful electric shock, which the Teacher believed was really happening, until the apparently fatal 450-volt shock. The original 1961 study showed a surprising number (roughly 65%) of students were willing to continue to administer shocks at the order of the Experimenter, despite the apparent screams of pain and protests from the Student, and the warning of potential danger and fatality (“Die seltsame Kraft der Wiederholung” 72).

<sup>25</sup> As well as being an author, McCarthy is also an accomplished artist and the co-founder of the “semi-fictitious organization” International Necronautical Society. McCarthy worked together with Dickinson in 2005 and 2006 on the reconstruction *Greenwich Degree Zero*, which recreates the speculation surrounding the strange death of French anarchist Martial Bourdin in 1894, who was blown up by a bomb he was carrying. “Rather than try to establish the ‘truth’, Dickinson and McCarthy use a form of repetition to reach back to the degree zero of time, mediation and terror” (Arns & Horne 90-93). Tom McCarthy was involved in writing for the program and the publication, *The Milgram Re-Enactment: Essays on Rod Dickinson’s re-enactment of Stanley Milgram’s obedience to authority experiment* (2004), about Dickinson’s project. Special thanks to Mr. McCarthy for sending me a copy of his essay “Between Pain and Nothing” from this publication. It has proven to be invaluable.

contemporary artistic reenactments (and extending into the wider documentary theatre) the use of various forms of remediation is key. Both Deller and Dickinson work to remove, or at least reduce, the media's interpretative lens, what McCarthy also refers to as an *inflection*: "he [Dickinson] simply had it repeated, word for word, action for action, in real time. His intervention is in this vital respect utterly passive [...] provid[ing] another space in which to see both the original ripple-pace repeated and the 'infinite, unchanging sky' reflected" (11). But, contrary to McCarthy's analysis – which interprets the act of reenacting as passive – the reenactment (this word-for-word, action-for-action repetition) is not passive, but completely, inescapably active. As already identified in the previous section, this "infinite, unchanging sky" is impossible. Infinite though it may be, the metaphorical sky is ever-changing. The wider implication of the reenactment is present on a superficial level even in that the event is worth reenacting. We see this worth on a foundational level in the funding received from various artistic and government agencies, as well as in audience- and participant-interest in the project: In reenactment, we must look at not only why this event is worth, as an artist, revisiting, as well as why, as an audience member, it is worth watching again? Or, as an actor worth experiencing again? Specifically, what do we find worthwhile as artists, actors, and spectators in reliving, re-experiencing, or re-watching the copy – the re-event – which is now void of the danger of the original?

The re-event of the reenactment is the result of an active and continuous process of remembering; it explores how the reality of an event forms through interactions and clashes of memories. However, the difficulty in *re*-presenting these highly mediated events is that the images surrounding the original are heavily influenced by or even replace the original in collective memory. Many artistic reenactments explore a world that is heavily mediated – a

space where memory is increasingly influenced and formed by these processes of mediation. They explore how the secondary, medial event – the Benjaminian aura that is inseparably linked to the original (we know that *this* refers to *that*) – blurs the event and how the easily accessible double eventually overtakes – or partially overtakes – the original in memory (“Reale des Simulacrum” 56). Diana Taylor argues that embodied expression is tied to the “pre- and post-writing” transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity (16). Embodied practice and memory are located in a *repertoire* of performance, gesture, movement, speech, song, dance, traumatic flashbacks, hallucinations, and repetitions (219). Embodied memory is malleable: meaning, value, relevance, and physical embodiment all change. The memory of the event is inherently manifold and live (220). Conversely, the archival memory requires a *material core*: “records, documents, archeological remains or bones” (219). Artistic reenactments, like Peter Weiss’s brand of the documentary theatre tradition, builds on the material core of historical events – the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, the assassination of JFK, the Rwandan Genocide. These performances are critical of the medium – looking at misrepresentations and biases present within the modern media’s documentation of events.

*The Eternal Frame* (a 1975 collaboration between the groups T.R. Uthco (Diane Andrews Hall, Doug Hall, Jody Procter) (1970-1978) and Ant Farm (Chip Lord, Doug Michels, Curtis Schreier) (1968-2010) also reenacts a major political event through a video installation: the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Like Deller, T. R. Uthco and Ant Farm use the existing televised images, removing the commentary by the news networks and reporters that framed the original event (“Die seltsame Kraft der Wiederholung” 74; Arns 7). Like both Deller and Dickenson’s projects, *The Eternal Frame* is a video installation. The project presents the original images (the Zapruder film) side-by-side with the reenactment, giving the audience the

opportunity to compare the original and its performative double. As Rau did with *Die letzten Tage* and *Hate Radio*, T. R. Uthco and Ant Farm adjusted the reenactment to copy the media qualities of the original: colour, camera settings, and sound quality (Arns 6). Arns explains that artistic reenactments, “confront the general feeling of insecurity about the meaning of images,” i.e., the supposed authenticity of the image crashing up against its visible inauthenticity (this is a picture and not the actual live event) coupled with the question of what these images mean concretely to us. This confrontation occurs by “erasing distance to the images and at the same time distances itself from the images” (Arns 3). At the heart of the reenactment is an event we know – that we lived or experienced – that we are now watching again. Although we know it is past and are able to reflect on it with the full wisdom of hindsight, we also inevitably share an emotional connection with it, which (even years later) colours how we react and interpret the event in question.

Cultural and experience-based memory is built upon both the memories and experiences of the performers, spectators, directors, dramaturgs, and playwrights (or compilers): a moment of *recognition* – in the Althusserian manner – facilitated in the performance. French philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990) refers to “somewhat unreflected knowing” as *recognition*, a concept he extends to the theatre. He asserts that “[b]efore becoming the occasion for an identification (an identification with self in the species of another), the performance is, fundamentally, the occasion for a cultural and ideological recognition” (Althusser 148). It is the purpose of the reenactment, according to Rau, to transport the spectator into a situation that possesses the uncanny aura of repetition (“Realismus (2)” 138). These situations are completely *present*, completely *real*, and completely *open* – the evocation of an experience, a historical moment, inseparably saturated within its emotional context for the individual spectator but also

for the performer (“Jener 25. Dezember 1989” 36). The inflections are not eliminated but shifted towards personal interpretation through the filmed autobiographical archive. Reenactments work to explore a complex event that has completely merged with its own evocative power and the multiple layers of interpretation of meaning by providing it with a (new) material body (“End of Postmodernism” 127). Live reenactments present physical presence alongside cultural and individual present-based and/or experience-based memory, the actor-expert, both in vocal and physical presence, serves as a presenter and representative of the event.

Artur Żmijewski’s<sup>26</sup> (\*1966) controversial video installation *80064* (2004) offers another example of the unique hermeneutics of the artistic reenactment’s interaction with the fading and disappearing materiality on the interpretative, mythologizing level. The eleven-minute video sees the interaction between Żmijewski and Józef Tarnawa, a 92-year-old Holocaust survivor, as the number 80064, which was first tattooed on Tarnawa at Auschwitz in 1943, is touched up with fresh, black ink (“Die seltsame Kraft” 71). The performance sits between *Körper-Gedächtnis* and *Körper-Archiv*, body-memory and body-archive: the memory of the camps, the written history of the camps, and the materiality of the faded numbers on Tarnawa’s forearm (not to mention temporality/mortality painstakingly clear in the hunched figure of a 92-year-old man).<sup>27</sup>

Briefly returning to the inflection and shifts in memory, as documentation becomes a normative aspect of everyday lives through self-surveillance and self-documentation via social media platforms, our daily life becomes increasingly part of an instantaneous archive. The images included in this archive – regardless of whether this archive is a formal library or a state

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<sup>26</sup> Żmijewski has also created several other reenactments: his most famous is *Repetitions* (2005), a recreation of the legendary Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) for the fifty-first Biennale in Venice (Arns & Horne 154-155).

<sup>27</sup> There is certainly a very complicated moral argument that comes into question with this performance, namely: Did Żmijewski take advantage of Tarnawa, a fragile old man? However, more pertinent to the discussion of the reenactment, is the question of trivialization. Does the act of reenactment trivialize the original? I don’t know the answer to this question, but it does introduce a certain moral dilemma to the practice of reenactment that should be considered. I will return to this note in my chapter two discussion of applause in reenactment.

archive or an online archive of Instagram photos or pictures posted on an individual's Facebook page – are inevitably filled with political, social, and cultural meaning. However, the increased importance (and normativity) of these instantaneous archives is indicative of how, as Nora also states, modern memory has become increasingly archival and how it relies heavily on material, mostly iconic, traces of the past, stating: “Ours is an intensely retinal and powerfully televisual memory” (Nora 13; 17). Collective memory is increasingly built on the *Bildungskanon* of a globalized world, an educational canon that has undergone a massive shift since the television became increasingly central to education and the transfer of knowledge. In this shift, a relatively new phenomenon of *Fernerfahrungen*, remote experiences, emerges (“Jener 25. Dezember 1989” 37). These *Fernerfahrungen*, despite their distance from the far-off witnesses, are experienced with the urgency and impact of those occurring within their direct proximity.

Using the same example that Rau employs, the images of the Romanian Revolution – the subject-matter of many documentary-style plays – are heavily based on the *fern* (remote) televisual memories of 1989. This televisual quality has inspired numerous documentary artists such as Harun Farocki's (1944-2014) and Andrei Ujica's (\*1951) *Videograms of the Revolution* (1992) and Irina Botea's (\*1970) subsequent project *Auditions for the Revolution* (2006) – a reenactment of Farocki and Ujica's project. The Romanian Revolution and indeed the entire Ceaușescu Regime possessed an overwhelming material core,<sup>28</sup> and the revolution is one of the first examples of a telerevolution as the events of December 21 (Ceaușescu's final speech) to December 26 (the first televising of the trial) seemingly unraveled in real time. At least 120 hours of film exist from the official channel alone, not even considering the home videos

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<sup>28</sup> The Ceaușescu Regime, even before the revolution, was highly mediatised and recorded. The National Film Archive in Romania and the State Television have collected over a thousand hours of video recordings of Ceaușescu (“1000 Stunden” 53).

(Leder). Many of the iconic images of the revolution burned into the Romanian collective memory come from these mediatized images, making the revolution inseparable from its images. The hysteria and paranoia that haunted the regime until its final breath remain ingrained in the images as a medial echo, *einen medialen Echoraum*, opening and reopening itself (“So wird man” 144). Ujica and Farocki take the images of the revolution, edit and cinematize the hundreds of hours of video to create a linear narrative, exploring how the medium of the regime was reclaimed as the medium of the revolution in *Videograms of a Revolution* (1992). Botea used these images in *Auditions for a Revolution* (2006): a twenty-four-minute video of numerous short reenactments of the key moments of the Revolution as seen in *Videograms* by Botea’s nonprofessional (American) student actors (Manole 84-87).

Other Romanian artists have employed a strategy of parody to depict the Ceausescu regime and the revolution, responding to the rigid structure of the regime. Many Romanian productions – which move away from reenactment and into the space of documentary theatre – use postmodern irony as a tool for critical reworking, starkly (and violently) rejecting any form of nostalgic return (*Poetics of Postmodernism* 4). The postmodern parody allows the artist to foreground the historical, social, and ideological contexts of the original both as it did and does exist – looking at the ghosts that continue to haunt present day Romania (24-25). Works such as Saviana Stanescu’s (\*1967) *Waxing West* (2003) and Denis Dinulescu’s (\*1950) *A Day in Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Life* (2005) explore the Ceaușescu regime and the looming figures of the dictator and his wife with a tone of bitter irony. Dinulescu’s play is partial reenactment of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s life set within the timespan of a day – a fast-forward through his life, whereas *A Day in Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Life* follows the Ceaușescus’ ghosts, Stanescu’s *Waxing West* shows the Ceaușescus as vampires sucking the life out of Romania, as is also seen in Caryl

Churchill's (\*1938) *Mad Forest* (1990) and American playwright Anne Washburn's aptly titled *The Communist Dracula* (2008).

For these productions, irony creates the phenomenon of double-voiced discourse. The doubleness of the ironic voice, which brings the past and present into "each other's light" to be judged, allows the artist to explore the political within the artistic and the artistic within the political as two inseparable forces (*Poetics of Postmodernism* 39; *Politics of Postmodernism* 15). The dramaturgical irony of post-revolutionary Romanian theatre (and film) is located in the reversal of the carefully constructed image of the Ceaușescus, using the regime's propaganda as source material. These projects do the exact opposite of the above-mentioned political propaganda reenactments, subverting the eternally youthful image Ceaușescu constructed for himself through public spectacles and rejecting the ideology that accompanied them through the presentation of a clueless, unloved dictator. The stage – home of the massive theatrical political spectacles performed for and about the dictator – and television become a medium of the criticism and hatred (as well as underground resistance) that already existed as whispers in Romania throughout the regime. *Die letzten Tage* produces this same phenomenon without a trace of irony, revealing the Ceaușescus as a confused old man and his illiterate wife on tried and executed by their former allies.

### **1.3: Transition – Reenactment**

It has become clear that Rau and the IIPM's reenactments do not emerge from a void. They appear as part of an extensive tradition of both lay and artistic reenactments, often pulling inspiration directly from specific performances or artists within the genre. Productions like *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009) and *Hate Radio* (2011) pull inspiration from the historical lay-reenactments discussed in this chapter in how they engage with the real-world experience of

their actors. They simultaneously tap into the carefully curated, repetition-oriented quality of artistic reenactments, transposing historical events into explicitly fictional spaces. Rau pulls inspiration from many well-established artists working in reenactment such as Marina Abramović, Jeremy Deller, and Rod Dickenson – all three of whom were featured in the *History Will Repeat Itself* exhibition. Looking at IIPM repertoire reenactments as well as one-time political ones within this massive performance tradition – particularly as we move into the in-depth analysis of the IIPM’s particular brand of reenactment – historical and contemporary artists and creators have had a traceable impact on Rau and his dramaturgical team.

## Chapter 2: What is Reenactment?

*“Memory belongs to the imagination. Human memory is not like a computer that records things; it is part of the imaginative process, on the same terms as invention.”*  
 -Alain Robbe-Grillet, “The Art of Fiction”

Reenactment is first and foremost performative repetition: Søren Kierkegaard, in his text *The Repetition*, explains that “genuine repetition is recollected forwards” (3). The repetition of the reenactment happens forwards because it is the quasi-literal recreation of a historical event in real time and physical space. Reenactment is, as Milo Rau explains it, “die Betrachtung des GENAU SO” (“Unst” 232).<sup>29</sup> The idea of remembering forwards suggests that repetition happens in real time. The repetition begins when the curtain rises – or, in the case of *Five Easy Pieces*, *Die 120 Tage*, and *La Reprise*, which constitute the Representation Trilogy, with the snap of the film clapper or the director’s call of “Action!” It ends when the curtain falls or the lights fade to black, when the spectators can separate themselves from the reenacted event and reflect back upon it, re-entering the realm of recollection.

Rau’s reenactments examine images of recent, specific, traumatic events that were moments of national or international breakage on an experiential level. Productions like *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009), *Hate Radio* (2011), and *Breiviks Erklärung* (2012) re-filter well-known images through the performers’, spectators’, and creators’ memories, translating them into concrete and material terms, evoking a medial echo space or *mediales Echoraum*. This performance style describes the afterlife of an event through its images and subsequent meditation: how images are used and reused through processes of public remembering. It acknowledges how mediation becomes part of both public and private memory and how it can even infringe upon the actual event. Reenactment actively engages with the interaction of

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<sup>29</sup> “the contemplation of the *exactly so*.”

memory and images, asking how we talk about and remember specific historical events from our past.<sup>30</sup>

The medial aspect of the reenactment is critical to Rau's interest in the increasingly interconnected globalized present. Rau uses the term *global realism* to describe the mise-en-scène that he and his company developed over their first ten years (2008-2018) and have continued with NTGent. *Global realism* describes "[the] global network of capital, its nightmares and hopes, its underworld and counterculture" ("What is Global Realism" 175). Moreover, global realism describes how Rau and his team use localized conflicts to engage with global politics and policies. It illustrates concrete consequences of the systemic inequalities of the post-Soviet, neocolonial world. Reenactments engage with the global quality of images: their medial commodification, increased importance in existing global systems of power and capital, and the increased evocative and associative power of the image in a culture that is oversaturated in imagery. They seek to free the image from the simple frame of its mediation by transposing it into the live, shared space of the theatre. These images are therefore not just watched but experienced in the co-presence of performance, performer, and audience.

In her pivotal essay *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag identifies the photograph as a site of rhetoric. She explains that photographs "reiterate. They simplify. They agitate. They create the illusion of consensus" (8). While this analysis of photography as a mechanism of historiography and power certainly has great merit, Rau approaches the

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<sup>30</sup> With the exception of *LENIN* (2017), all of Rau's reenactments engage with events that have happened within the director's lifetime. While *LENIN*, on the other hand, is not a reenactment in the same sense as *Die letzten Tage* and *Hate Radio*, it deals with a historical event without a concrete referent. Although we know how Vladimir Lenin died, there are no images of the death outside the corpse and the death of Lenin became heavily entangled with ideology and the continuation of the Soviet government (for both communism and Stalinism). With *LENIN*, one could argue that Rau is more interested in the afterlife of Lenin as an icon of a specific ideology as it extends into the present than he is with the actual historical event. Otherwise, Rau's productions deal with events that occurred during the Internet Age (beginning around 1989/1992) and increased global access to information.

photograph as an artifact and existing frame for the creation of new images. For Rau, the photograph is not just a site of historiographic and political construction, it is also the documentation of something that undeniably happened. More important for the reenactment is the use of memories to bolster and add detail to historical situations, to gain an understanding that extends outside the photographic frame. It means considering the inconsistencies that exist within and among accounts and exploring the details that naturally occur within memory and including them in the final production. These inconsistencies are not present as negatives or failures, but as part of the truth of the event. The question, “How was it?” is asked on an (subjective) experiential level, rather than a formal, historical level that professes a false sense of objectivity. Productions, therefore, entail the interconnected questions of “How did it happen?”, “What did it look like?”, and “What did it feel like?” Productions use a compository technique, looking at how the interviewees as well as the actors remember a specific moment of a historical event (the Ceaușescu’s trial or an RTL radio broadcast), to reconstruct and complete the historical moment outside the tight restrictions of formal history. How an individual remembers an event on an emotional and experiential level – ultimately on an existential level – may bear little resemblance to its historical (institutional) reality. Memory is more malleable, constantly shifting as the world around the specific individual changes: while a photograph cannot change, our memory of a moment can.

Reenactments attempt to bridge the gap that French memory theorist Pierre Nora describes between what we perceive as a *Geschichte*,<sup>31</sup> personal memories and anecdotal stories as they are entrapped in history, and *Historie*, written accounts of formal histories (8). Rau is

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<sup>31</sup> *Geschichte* is a German term used to describe formal history. However, unlike *Historie*, which has a more singular meaning for the formal study of history, *Geschichte* has a much broader meaning and can be used to refer to as story or narrative.

relatively uninterested in capital-H History, other than in how it provides fixed points. He is interested in reconstructing events emblematic of the violence and trauma of the modern era. He asks what this violence looks and sounds like on a collective level. The creation process begins<sup>32</sup> with the identification of the fixed historical point and deconstructing historical fact by uncovering the pluralism of how the point was experienced and, therefore, remembered across society. Rau displays historiographic impulse by reconstructing the now pluralistic event. The result is a history at eye level that is concerned with how the event is remembered. Reenactment is, therefore, concerned with *truth*; not in the sense of what historically, actually happened, but in the sense of the individual's remembered reality. Rau explains: "The documentaries [films] I know always get tangled with some conspiracy theory because when you try to create a linear presentation of facts, you allow for paranoid interpretations. I realized that the inconsistencies have to be shown as what they are – *conflicting truths*" ("Realm of the Real" 122). Reenactment is the co-existence of these conflicting truths brought together in a single performative moment. Rau uses the fixed point as a starting point. He and his team then explode this point through the individual perspectives, and then (re-)uniting the fragments. Reenactment is about remembering forwards – something being watched or experienced again, but also for the first time. It is a re-experience.

### **2.1: What Does Reenactment Mean?**

In the introductory article to the 2007 exhibition *History Will Repeat Itself*, Inke Arns identifies the fundamental difference between historical and artistic reenactments, she explains:

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<sup>32</sup> Although begins is not really the correct word, because even before this part of the creation process starts there has often been months of general research in search of the specific fixed point that comes to serve as the core of the project.

Historical re-enactments [...] are about *imagining oneself away into another time* and have nothing (or little) to do with the present, such as *playing a totally different role* that has nothing (or little) to do with our own reality [...]. Artistic re-enactments, however, do exactly the opposite. [...] artistic re-enactments are not performative re-staging of historical situations and events that occurred a long time ago; events (often traumatic ones) are re-enacted that are viewed as very important for the present. Here the reference to the past is not history for history's sake; it is about *the relevance of what happened in the past for the here and now*. Thus one can say that artistic re-enactments are not an affirmative confirmation of the past; instead, they are *questionings of the present* through reaching back to historical events that have etched themselves indelibly into the collective memory. (41-43; italics in original)

Rau's reenactments do not fit cleanly within either of these categories, though they are better situated among artistic reenactments because they are critical. Their careful response to existing images and accounts of events demonstrate how even formal history is interpretive and, therefore, guided by power dynamics, ideologies, and institutions. Re-examining the chosen event through repetition means looking at the event's significance, what it continues to be, and how we – on both an individual and group level – remember it.

Unlike historical battlefield reenactments or living history museums, Rau and the IIPM are not interested in the nostalgia of utopian historical representations. Rau is interested in traumatic moments marked by failure on a collective level: The 1989 Romanian Revolution failed to bring about structural change in Romania as the new democratic government also consisted of the former members of Ceaușescu's cabinet (*Die letzten Tage*). The Rwandan Genocide is an incredibly dark moment in Rwandan and global history that is marked by the

massive failure of the UN and Western powers like the US (*Hate Radio*) and is connected both to the colonial past (*Five Easy Pieces*'s prologue) and with the continued unrest and subsequent genocide in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (*Das Kongo Tribunal* and *Mitleid*). Anders Breivik's in-court response to his murder spree reveals an underlying xenophobia within Europe and a rhetoric that is becoming increasingly commonplace (*Breviks Erklarung*).<sup>33</sup> This fascination with trauma and failure continues in the Representation Trilogy: Marc Dutroux's murders illustrate the distance between French-speaking Wallonia and Dutch-speaking Flanders in Belgium on political and legal level within the context of Belgium's larger history of violence (*Five Easy Pieces*). In *Die 120 Tage*, actors with Down Syndrome and other disabilities reenact shocking scenes from Pasolini's horror art film by the same name, as well as a few specific scenes from *Il vangelo secondo Matteo, The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), as an entrance into the relationship between society and disabled persons, illustrating an uncomfortable truth about modern-day eugenics and segregation. Finally, *La Reprise* returns to Belgium for the murder of Ihsane Jarfi, exposing how, even in apparently tolerant nations, hate and homophobia remain a problem. The events are chosen for re-enactment for two reasons: because they remain socially relevant (Arns 39), and because the original events left a significant medial footprint. Images are remembered with greater clarity than the event itself, because these images are revealed as an incomplete recollection of the event. It is the reach these images have that maintains their traumatic afterlife in the bloody collective archive of history.

An image's afterlife shows how it is used and reused, inscribed and re-inscribed to tell (and retell) history in a specific way. News media is one of the primary sources for Rau and the IIPM in uncovering this afterlife: reportages, newspaper reports, and videos. Media theorists

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<sup>33</sup> *Breviks Erklarung* (Vienna, 11.12.2013: Youtube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPK8fngW7ps>.

Barbie Zelizer and Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt highlight how the mass and news media outlets play a central role in the establishment and legitimation of shared memories, creating a repository of a society's collective memory that connects events and constructing dominant societal narratives (2). Zelizer and Tenenboim-Weinblatt also discuss the concept of *institutional memory*, which describes both the selective memory of institutions and their connected interpretative framework (10-12). Institutional memory complements Sontag's rejection of the concept of collective memory: "Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as collective memory [...] But there is collective instruction. [...] What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds" (*Regarding the Pain* 67-68). Sontag points towards how institutions – which are inevitably colonized by self-interest – inform and instruct the interpretation and ordering of images and their attached narratives: formal history is, therefore, one type of institutional memory.

As a response to larger historical narratives intertwined with associated images,<sup>34</sup> Rau's reenactments attempt (but inevitably fail) to present un-*inflected* recreations of events ("Realm of the Real" 124). *Inflection*, as explained in the previous chapter, refers to institutional interpretations of events. These formal interpretations influence how historical events are portrayed in writing (and performance), but they also set the significance of the event to a society and its history. Inflections reflect set, established power dynamics. These narratives are marked by two major trends: (1) what could be called the modernist, utopian progress-based narrative

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<sup>34</sup> The concept of associated images provides one of the more interesting and perhaps overlooked aspects of the reenactment. Namely, the evocative power of the image is also an associative one. Images of major historical events become linked to other images in a way that declares "This is what revolution looks like," or "This is what genocide looks like". Therefore, those events that are given a medial afterlife never exist in isolation; they are always part of a larger associative web.

and (2) postmodernist indeterminacy. IIPM productions approach the present's relationship with the past with a revelatory, critical gesture that responds to the present's oversaturation with history predicated by the extensive reach of the media. In lectures, speeches, and essays, when Rau uses the example of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History (whose gaze is transfixed by the growing pile of catastrophe), he is rejecting the foolish optimism of a grand overarching narrative of historical progress ("Situationismus" 45; "Recapturing the Future"). Specifically, Rau rejects the notion of a chain of noteworthy events that lead to the present, which is the product and pinnacle of this progress.<sup>35</sup>

Rau describes himself as a postmodernist without the final gesture of postmodernism ("End of Postmodernism" 122). What this statement means is that although Rau is critical of what he identifies as postmodernism's skepticism, irony, obsessive pluralism, endless theorizing, and its rejection of stable, reliable knowledge and reality,<sup>36</sup> he also openly embraces certain traits of it: most significantly pluralism. Historical events are experienced from a variety of perspectives. Rau even defines history as *conflicting truths*. He recognizes the existence of a real event (i.e., a physical, flesh-and-blood real), something that really did happen and that serves as the physical referent for memory. However, the memory of the referent (the memory of what happened) is favoured over the referent itself (the event) ("End of Postmodernism" 122).

Rau uses images for orientation and frame. He creates a concrete, historical experience by looking at minute details, at contradictory and divergent accounts that come together in an experience. Like an act of archeology or crime scene reconstruction, reenactment demands a

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<sup>35</sup> Although not entirely, it is important to note that while Rau rhetorically rejects this concept, when we look closely at his and the IIPM's work, it does to a certain extent embrace this idea of progress. At the core of the reenactment (discussed in Chapter Six) is this idea of process, and reenactment still looks at set historical moments that Rau has determined to be important to the present.

<sup>36</sup> That being said, it is important to point out Rau only responds to one possible interpretation of postmodernism.

*poetics of absence*, because it is “about writing around what is obstinately not there” (Pearson & Shanks 60). This is particularly true because IIPM reenactments examine traumatic events, which are about co-existent and fundamentally opposed impulses to both remember and forget the traumatic experience. In the article, “Twice in Peril,” Piet Defraeye explains this need to forget: “We sometimes want or need to forget (or to repress) simply to be able to overcome the paralysis induced by the trauma and move on with our lives” (179). What Rau and the IIPM undertake is what Defraeye calls *restorative representation*, which pushes against the void created by the forgetting, fragmentation, and repression of trauma, restoring through remembrance.

Rau’s reenactments are not about the affirmation of the past, but about looking at and exploring the past through the lens of the present. They ask, “how does this specific moment reverberate into the present and how do we, from the present, remember and understand it?” (“Reenactment (1)” 163). To answer this question means accepting and engaging with multiple mediations and changing memories without falling into the trap of postmodernism: namely, getting caught up in the web of divergent narratives that emerge as temporal distance increases. Productions engage with the bilateral relationship between mediation and memory: how mediated images overtake the original within memories while *correcting* the memory.

Productions assert a real-world basis for the chosen event – the flesh and blood real. They move away from the realm of pure simulation by illustrating how the historical images and documents we often take as fact or truth, are – in fact – retrospectively constructed events with applied ideological and historical meanings. Productions translate these essentially medial events – i.e., events that live in both a void as well as an oversaturation – into a real space with real objects and real people and into the realm of cultural discourse (Arns & Horn 9). There is thus an

emancipatory quality: The event is emancipated from its mediality, returned to both life and liveness (“Realismus (1)” 126). Photographs show both how and that an event happened, providing – particularly over extended periods of time – a visual summary of what happened; or, as Sontag astutely notes:

[S]omething becomes real – to those who are elsewhere, following it as ‘news’ – by being photographed. [...] In an era of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it. The photograph is like a quotation, or a maxim or proverb. (*Regarding the Pain* 19-20)

Rau depends on the associative power of the image that Sonntag describes, i.e., the relationship between the image and its proverb or broader meaning. However, he is not interested in creating associations in the typical, moral sense – i.e., among revolutions, among genocides, among crimes – but in a more internal and less spectacular sense. Rau’s productions challenge their audiences by showing a startling, recognizable normality and banality present *within* traumatic moments: Where do we see ourselves in this moment? Where does the familiar overlap with the unfamiliar? This associative quality does not deny the existence of what Roland Barthes calls the *photographic referent*,<sup>37</sup> instead, it separates the referent from its associations. The actual, lived referent is liminal and exists on an experiential level. Association, on the other hand, occurs after the fact in how the referent is connected with other (similar<sup>38</sup>) events. The image, as a referent, is a locus of memory. It gains its meaningfulness (and meaning) retrospectively as it is able to assert and re-assert itself.<sup>39</sup> Images – pictures and videos alike – reassert themselves through continuous processes of republication and redistribution. The image is, particularly in an

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<sup>37</sup> “[the] *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens [and] without which there would be no photograph” (*Camera Lucida* 76).

<sup>38</sup> Even being able to use the term “similar” here indicates the existence of this associative quality of images.

<sup>39</sup> The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.

increasingly interconnected (medialized), globalized world,<sup>40</sup> the *lieu de mémoire*, the site of memory. Pierre Nora defines a site of memory as a space where “memory crystallizes and secretes itself” (Nora 7). While the image is an undeniably important marker of something real, it also portrays a set *Reality*: how the Real (i.e., what happened in real time and space) is shaped to fit within existing structures, institutions, and ideologies.

A critical point for IIPM reenactments is that they are not straightforward copies of a historical event pulled from a single historical document. The production is a repetition that attempts to shake something loose from the original event, signifying the revelatory function of its dramaturgy (“Jener 25. Dezember 1989” 35). This revelatory function understands that it is not just memory that enters the theatre but everything that happened after the initial historical happening right up to the moment of performance. In other words: *Hate Radio* is intentionally not a picture-perfect reenactment of an RTL M broadcast (as explored in greater detail in the dossier). It translates the institution it reenacts into the present, carrying with it the entire history of the genocide (both the killings themselves and the failure of the international community to stop them), as well as its aftermath (the loss of a generation on both sides of the perpetrator-victim divide). *Five Easy Pieces* is not just about Dutroux’s initial crimes, but also about the failure of the Belgian police, the White March, his 1998 escape, and Belgium’s still troubled (even paralyzing) relationship with its past.

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<sup>40</sup> It is important to note that, particularly in the Global North, we increasingly know the experience of the *Other* through the medialized and mediated images that flash across our computer screens at all hours of the day.

The IIPM’s founding manifesto “Was ist Unst?”<sup>41</sup> states, “Die Unst ist die reine Wiederholung” (232).<sup>42</sup> When we consider the question of *pure reenactment*, we are really asking: What do we remember (as individuals within a larger society) actually happening in emotional, existential, and physical terms. The concept of pure repetition liberates the reenactment, freeing the repetition from the limitations of images and historical documents, and releasing it into the transformational realm of memory. Like Nikolai Evreinov’s *Storming of the Winter Palace*, the reenactment is about the significance of the event to the present and how – infused with what we now know and our current practices – this event happened. Not what it actually looked like (in historically accurate terms), but what it would look like today.

## 2.2: What Excites the Reenactor?

Reenactments are focused on the event and re-founding the body of this event as it exists outside the phantasmagorical energy and imaginary power of the image. The body is re-founded as a singular moment built on precisely this phantasmagorical and



Figure 6: “Five Easy Pieces - Piece 2: ‘What is Acting?’”; (L-R) Polly Persyn, Elle Liza Tayou, Winne Vanacker, Maurice Leerman (as Marc Dutroux), Willem Loobuyck; Video: Peter Seynaeve (as Marc Dutroux) and Ans van den Eede; Photo Credit: Video still from IIPM vimeo

<sup>41</sup> I personally find “Was ist Unst?” to be a particularly interesting text for the IIPM, because in the years following its initial publication, Rau and the IIPM have republished this short article in all of his theory books to date (*Die Enthüllung des Realen*, *Althusser's Hände*, *Wiederholung und Ekstase*, and *Globaler Realismus*). Rau and his team have continued to develop the theories first laid out in this text through various articles, interviews, and discussions (often in more complex and sophisticated ways), this text remains at the core of IIPM ventures.

<sup>42</sup> “The Unst is pure repetition.”

imaginary power of *memory* (“Realm of the Real” 121). In “The Documentary Doubles of Milo Rau & the International Institute of Political Murder,” Frederik Le Roy describes Rau as working with a *gap* that exists between memory and history – which Le Roy refers to as the gap between the historical fact and historical truth of the historical reality. Le Roy describes Rau’s reenactments as continuous interrogations of the present through the lens of the past. The action – the reenactment itself – begins and belongs exactly here (in this place) and exactly now (in this time). The materiality of the reenacted moment stands in contrast to the inevitably absent event. The interrogation of the past from the perspective of present shifts the gaze away from *images we all know* and towards the uncomfortably human experiences of the past. It evokes a sense of déjà-vu: an uncanny sense of having been here before and having lived this moment before.

Reenactments restage quintessentially *medial events*, by transporting them into the live (i.e., lived and happening in the now) of a mass experience. Rau is interested in the *verletzende*, injurious, singularity of the (photogenic) detail, while producing a sense of *Dagewesen-Sein*, of *having-been-there* (“Realismus (1)” 122-123). Rau chooses events with relatively few direct witnesses. Events the spectator – or a large portion of the audience – knows (the Rwandan Genocide, the Romanian Revolution, the Dutroux Affair, Jarfi Murder) but did not see for themselves, rather retrospectively accessed. Productions reenact a *Nichtort*, a *non-place*. The clearest examples are in *Hate Radio*, a radio station – which Rau himself calls a *Nichtort*<sup>43</sup> – of which there are no pictures and which almost no one (with the exception of the two moderators Rau and his team interviewed) has actually seen or visited (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 53). The

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<sup>43</sup> “Die Inszenierung *Hate Radio* also spielt an diesem Nichtort, in diesem Radiostudio, von dem es keine Bilder gibt und das wir gemäß den Informationen von zwei überlebenden Moderatoren nachgebaut haben” [“So, *Hate Radio* takes place in this non-place, in this radio station, of which there are no pictures and that we reconstructed using the information collected from two surviving moderators”] (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 53).

same can be said of crime-scene-reconstruction reenactments like *Five Easy Pieces* and *La Reprise*. The scene of the crime is also essentially a *Nichtort* with few or no witnesses (other than the killers) (fig. 6).

This choice must be regarded, at least in part, as practical: How can a revolution or



Figure 7: Top: “Still taken from video of Ceausescu’s trial.” Photo Credit: *alchetron.com*; Bottom: *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescu* (dir. Milo Rau; 2011), Victoria Cocias (L), Constantin Cojocaru (R), Photo Credit: Alexandru Patatics/IIPM

genocide that thousands of people took part in be staged? These productions are inevitably an exercise in representing the unrepresentable. Choosing smaller moments within larger events that have limited (direct) participants<sup>44</sup> also means fewer actors are required. It also furthers and deepens the existing mediation, making its audience – perhaps in a way they never have before – acutely aware they are witnessing this moment live and in-person for the first time. As for the majority of people it has *only* been experienced from this mediated distance. This liveness of the productions is also a trick, because we

<sup>44</sup> The trial of the Ceaușescu instead of the taking of Romania’s State Television Station, a radio station instead of an instance of mass violence during the Rwandan Genocide, and Breivik’s statement at his trial instead of Utøya.

are of course only seeing a performance (a reconstruction) of the original.

The medial factor of the original complicates the (re)construction of the event's *concrete shape* for production, making the question: How can an event that exists primarily within a medial space be translated into material terms in a more complex way than superficial gestures and discourse.<sup>45</sup> Reenactment attempts to reach beyond the superficiality of a one-to-one copy by implicitly saying something more profound about what happened. Reenactments touch upon the images we know by taking a detour through impossible imagery: the minor details and parallel moments that cannot be captured on film. These are details and moments that declare their realness not through an explicit meaning or added value to what is happening, but through their banal, unimportant existence (fig. 8). It is arguably these details that excite Rau as a reenactor: those elements that cannot be contained within imagery, that are just there.

Reenactment hinges on this *de- and re-mediation*<sup>46</sup> of events known better for their mediation (as was famously the case of the Ceaușescu's trial) than for their lived event. The spectacle thus becomes *separated* from the physically real (flesh-and-blood) event, it becomes an exteriority to experience. French philosopher Guy Debord, in *Society of Spectacle* (1967), describes the concept of the society of spectacle, explaining: "Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle" (Debord 9). Separation can be summed up in the break between the human subject in their own time (*this time*) and their own experience in another time (*that time*)

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<sup>45</sup> However, when we talk about translation of these images into the discursive space of the theatre, it is inevitably accompanied by the question of whether Rau succeeds in pushing beyond the superficial. A question for which there is, at least in my opinion, no single, uniform answer.

<sup>46</sup> Theatre, particularly documentary or theatre based on real events, always undertakes a process of remediation, particularly when we consider remediation as Philip Auslander does in *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*: "the representation of one medium in another" (6-7). Rau's theatre is, therefore, always a remediation in that it is the transposition of a true story – a crime, a revolution, a genocide – onto a stage. When I refer to de-mediation, I am referring specifically to the *mediales Echoraum* or continued medial presence of the event in the present.

(Bunyard 13-14).<sup>47</sup> Jacques Rancière summarizes Debord's argument in the separation of the spectacle from its original:

What in fact is the essence of the spectacle for Guy Debord? It is exteriority. The spectacle is the reign of vision, and vision is exteriority – that is, self-dispossession. The malady of spectating man can be summed up in a brief formula: 'the more he contemplates, the less he lives'. [...] The 'contemplation' denounced by Debord is contemplation of the appearance separated from its truth; it is the spectacle of the suffering produced by the separation [...] What human beings contemplate in the spectacle is the activity they have been robbed of; it is their own essence become alien, turned against them, organizing a collective world whose reality is that dispossession.

*(Emancipated Spectator 6-7)*

Rau's reenactment introduces another separation, but this time it is a separation from the spectacle itself. It is in this separation that the lost liveness of the original returns in a form so blatantly self-aware of its falseness<sup>48</sup> that it takes on a unique, undead quality that re-inscribes the past event within the context of the present.

Reenactments do not claim that what we see on stage is *actually* (i.e., literally and physically) how the event was. Rather, reenactments state that this (what we see on the stage) is how it *would have felt by today's standards*. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag similarly draws on Spanish artist Francisco de Goya's series of engravings *The Disasters of War* (1810-1820) as synthesis for war. She uses Goya's engraving to explain the difference between the artistic creation and the photograph:

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<sup>47</sup> This separation is of course never perfect and not intended to be perfect, but it is what contributes to the silence that follows the reenactment – what Rau describes as the moment when the spectator forgets their role as spectator ("Reale des Simulacrum" 58).

<sup>48</sup> An awareness that what we are seeing is not the original, but a reproduction.

Goya's images move the viewer close to the horror. All the trappings of the spectacular have been eliminated: the landscape is an atmosphere, a darkness, barely sketched in.

War is not a spectacle. And Goya's print series is not a narrative: each image, captioned with a brief phrase lamenting the wickedness of the invaders and the monstrosity of the suffering they inflicted, stands independently of the others. The cumulative effect is devastating. (36)

In IIPM reenactments, we see something similar at work. The spectacular is replaced with the commonplace, thus pushing against the epic nature of the theatre, and, as Susanne Knittel states, "History becomes uncanny when it extends into the present, forcing us to re-evaluate our own subject position in relation to a collective past" (183). While Rau's theatre remains epic – epic in its dramaturgy rather than its narrative – everything performed within the event becomes banal. Even in this banality – or precisely because of it – it remains horrifying.

Returning to the question: "What excites the reenactor?", I believe the answer is located in the details included in the reenactment. In "Was ist Unst?", Rau rather enigmatically explains:

Der Ünstler ruft ausser sich: 'Süsse Schönheit!', wenn das Mikrofon des Diktators rauscht, wenn der Kies unter den Füßen des Zeugen knirscht, wenn ein Flugzeug ein verlassenes Braunkohlegebiet überfliegt, wenn der Scherz dem Erzähler entgleitet, wenn die Quellen sich widersprechen, wenn der Dezember für Klarheit sorgt, wenn ein Berg ein Echo wirft, wenn ein Unbekannter einen Einkaufszettel schreibt.<sup>49</sup> (232)

So, what excites the Ünstler is less the core event and more the seemingly minor, distracting details in the background. It is not the dictator's speech that excites the Ünstler or the reenactor,

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<sup>49</sup> The unstler calls out, 'Sweet beauty!', when the dictator's microphone crackles, when the gravel crunches beneath the witnesses' feet, when an airplane flies above an abandoned [coal] mine, when the joke escapes the storyteller, when the sources disagree, when December provides clarity, when a mountain casts an echo, when an unknown person writes a shopping list ("What is Unst?" 233).

but a sort of *cinema vérité*: the crackling microphone, the airplane flying overhead during the speech, or the joke that does not quite land with the audience. These are the points that prick the viewer. They are not just practical details, but purely material ones with no image-based proof. They gesture away from the mythic quality endowed onto the event; a quality distilled through its medial reverberations. Rau and his team are interested in what is missing from the reverberations: what has been edited out or did not catch the photographer's eye. They, therefore, embrace the crackling microphone, missed punchline, and the obscure, confused account, because these apparent distractions allow an entrance into the event on a fuller historical and social level.

The sense of real-ness of the reenacted event is found in concrete, often unspectacular details. Rau finds this sense of the real in the minor details that serve as literary flourishes with no effect *on the plot*. However, these details are also absolutely functional in terms of the situation created on the stage. Rau and his preferred designer Anton Lukas present spectators with something absolutely un-Aristotelian. The various elements present do not contribute to onstage action in the sense of an overarching plot. They are – in the sense of plot and narrative – void of meaning because they do not drive action forward.<sup>50</sup> They are *superfluous*, acting as markers of the original flesh-and-blood event, the referent (“Realismus (1)” 126-127). They are small and insignificant, but their inclusion makes the grand events seem smaller and more human. The reenacted event is not shown as grand or mythic, but as something recognizable. Their function is to show “*was geschehen war*,” or *what has happened*. They assert a certain sense of the real in precisely their apparent meaninglessness, the simple happenstance of

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<sup>50</sup> These elements are also hallmarks of the post-dramatic theatre described by Hans-Thies Lehmann. However, while there are certainly post-dramatic elements present within Rau's *mise-en-scène*, his work is more rooted in a very naturalist realism than in the post-dramatic exemplified by artists like Rene Pollesch and Benny Claessens.

everyday existence where not everything is inscribed with a deeper meaning (“Realismus (1)” 120-121; “The Reality Effect” 141). In terms of overarching plot, it does not matter Victoria Cocias coughs and moves her hands like Elena Ceaușescu, or that her winter coat is almost identical to her real-world counterpart; these details (just as in real life) do not (and never will) change the outcome of that trial.<sup>51</sup>

### 2.3: Why Does the Reenactment Celebrate Life?

The IIPM employs a variety of found and generated sources from both sides of the memory-history divide, expanding the event from its medial representation, then boiling it down to its essential form. Reenactment compresses sources (human and otherwise) to create a



Figure 8: “Superfluous details,” *Hate Radio* (dir. Milo Rau, 2011); Photo Credit: Daniel Seiffert/IIPM

quintessential reflection and recreation of a set historical situation. IIPM productions never offer a straightforward analysis of a situation: they don’t explicitly attempt to explain what happened, provide justification, or even contribute new knowledge.

Understanding – specifically Rau’s

need to understand – stands at the heart of each and every production. Rau and his team must feel like they understand the event before they attempt stage it. Thus, massive, complex, nearly inaccessible historical situations like the Romanian Revolution, the Rwandan Genocide, the

<sup>51</sup> *Die letzten Tage der Ceausceaus* (IIPM: Film): 00:17:46-00:18:33; 01:01:33-01:02:43; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fMnoK152NHUuyPTg5wk9akTwYHK5p-UA/view?usp=sharing>.

Dutroux Affair, and the treatment of people with mental disabilities are distilled into a single space, time, and action as a way to essentialize, but not simplify, the fullness of the event within both its historical and present context.

*Hate Radio* used hundreds of reportages, accounts, and studies written about the genocide in the ten years following the events of those hundred days.<sup>52</sup> The creation process for *Hate Radio* began in early 2006 with a failed attempt by Rau – who was at the time still working as a playwright – to write “something on Africa” (*Hate Radio* Program 4). The project, commissioned by a German city-theatre, was ultimately canceled when Rau was unable to write a complete play. Over the six months he attempted to write, Rau claims to have read “just about everything ever published on the Rwandan genocide” (4). However, it was during this unsuccessful process that Rau stumbled upon the RTLM and the odd figure of Georges Ruggiu, a white, Italian-Belgian social worker who worked at the RTLM – the station’s only white broadcaster. Like for *Die letzten Tage*, Rau and his team traveled to Rwanda to meet and interview survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders – perhaps the most significant interview was with former RTLM moderator Valérie Bemeriki, whose sketch



Figure 9: “Milo Rau in conversation with Valérie Bemeriki at Central Prison Kigali,” November 2010; Photo Credit: Lennart Laberenz (*Hate Radio* 46)

<sup>52</sup> It is important to note that Rau first began the process of researching and writing *Hate Radio* in about 2009, the year Rau took his first research trip to Rwanda, and 15 years after the violent interactions took place (“An Evening with Milo Rau” Amsterdam 29.01.2019).

and description of the studio served as the basis for Anton Lukas's set. The script compiled and created for *Hate Radio* uses snippets from interviews (fig. 9), recordings/transcripts from real RTLM broadcasts, and completely fictional parts written by the team as an uncanny way to return the station to the airways.<sup>53</sup>

This uncanny return is one of the most jarring aspects of the reenactment. It is exemplified in *Hate Radio*'s Kigali premiere, where the response of the spectators – themselves survivors and perpetrators of the genocide – was “It was just like that!” (“Das ist der Grund” 22). We also see it in the Romanian audience's initial unwillingness to applaud after *Die letzten Tage*. Where instead of applauding, audiences across Europe instead sat in silence in the darkened theatre for two to three minutes after the final monologue. Or in Bucharest, where they did not applaud at all (“Reale des Simulcrums” 58). In both these cases, a confusion of sorts occurred, where the reenactment becomes both too close and too distant from the original – it is too human, too recognizable, too un-theatrical, and, therefore, it *feels* too real. The performance conjures a familiar atmosphere that is displaced from its temporal bearings (from the then), pushing against the comfortable logic that a genocide, an execution, or a murder cannot conceivably feel familiar to a Western audience. It is out of place, but not enough to be comforting. The spectator is struck that the moment is unredeemed, meaning it is historically and presently unresolved.

Gabriele Horns and Inke Arns, two of the curators for the 2007 exhibition on reenactment *History Will Repeat Itself* in Dortmund, connect the reenactment's uncanny with an increasingly mediated world, the erosion of direct experience, and the shift towards image-based, indirect experience. Horns and Arns attach an increased interest in reenactment within performance with

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<sup>53</sup> Many of these transcripts are available online.

a longing for direct experience, or – in its absence – the illusion of direct experience that live theatre offers:

A reason for this almost ‘uncanny’ longing for repeating, for the ‘re-’ [in re-enactment], seems to lie in the fact that experiencing the world, whether past or present, is increasingly less direct. It is almost completely communicated through media, via media images of (historical) events. Of course, any serious engagement with history has always been *mediated*; to claim otherwise would be naïve. However, today the main difference is the all-pervasive and permanent availability of images, where any picture at any time can become its own simulacrum. In this situation of the potentiated spectacle, there is a fundamental feeling of insecurity about the status and the authenticity of images. (Arns & Horn 7)

Arns and Horn highlight how reenactment fills a hole left in a society oversaturated by media – an image-based society or a society of spectacle – by replacing the image with living, breathing, physically present bodies in an attempt to overcome the anxiety about the apparent loss of the Real. This anxiety arises from the repeated use of images that threaten to oversimplify and essentialize events – what Debord refers to as the commodification of the spectacle and the resulting loss of quality for these images (Kleinman & Kleinman 2; Debord “Thesis 36-38”).

IIPM reenactments examine liminal, or transitional, events. In a 2017 interview with *The Guardian*, Rau explained: “I’m always searching for the traumatic, tragic moments in individual lives and a country because it’s in these moments we are most touched and most changed” (Gardner). Reenactments do not look at what could be described as primary images of the larger chosen event, they look at adjacent moments. In the Reenactment Trilogy, Rau’s interest lies in the rhetorical violence, as opposed to the visible violence (what Arthur and Joan Kleinman refer

to as the globalization of suffering) favoured by mass media reporting (Kleinman & Kleinman 2). This is not to suggest that the plays of the Reenactment Trilogy do not depict violence, rather they portray the void that so often surrounds extreme violence: rhetorical violence, the taboo, and the (often commonplace) conditions that led towards the event itself.

Rau presents images of pictorially impossible experiences, taking events that have been extremely mediated – that have taken on an almost iconic quality over the years – and looking at the in-between, what images and aspects are absent from the larger portrayal. For events that are unphotogenic, i.e., unappealing for the media, reenactment responds to a void. Media serves as a medium of representation for the world surrounding us and a medium of experience for those things outside our field of vision. Photographs and medial (or mediated) images create, according to Sontag, miniatures of this reality. They provide “most of the knowledge people have about the look of the past and the reach of the present,” but do so in a way that pushes the appearance of reality to the fore and the purposeful editing of these images (how they are “reduced, blown up, cropped, retouched, doctored, tricked out”) into the background (*On Photography* 2). However, they also limit experience to the *photogenic* (6). Rau’s productions speak to a desire for experience while declaring the existence of an experience outside (and in-between) the images we know.

Rau taps into this desire for experience through the reenactment’s offer of re-experience, a lived experience of an event previously only seen from a (mediated) distance. Productions respond to the overwhelming cry for the live, dragging the historical event into the present for the sake of the spectator. Experience is key to understanding Rau’s reenactment. The reenactment allows the audience not only to witness an event again,<sup>54</sup> not as a media double, but

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<sup>54</sup> We are acutely aware of this *again*. Even if spectators know relatively little about the original event, the *again* remains front and center because Rau always reminds his spectators at the beginning and the end of the reenactment

in real time *as if* for the first time. In this newfound liveness, the uncanny again emerges (fig. 10). We recognize that we are seeing an event that is, as a theatre production, both inherently fictional but absolutely real, because, as Rau says, “[t]heatre is always a *transposition of a reality into something that is totally artificial*” (FRANCE 24 English; italics added). However, when the primary connection to the actual event is through its mediation (which holds its own complex series of associations and evocations), then the onstage encounter is in truth the spectator’s first time seeing and experiencing the event outside the image – which is again complicated by the digitally-mediated, filmic elements of the Representation Trilogy.<sup>55</sup> The original event becomes less important than the idea of the moment: What must this moment have been like? We find a double recognition of *there-and-then* within *here-and-now*: the recognition of self in the event and the subsequent implication of the self as a spectator within the theatre (“Realm of the Real” 127; Lukas & Naunheim 245). The success of this recognition is dependent on the evocation of experience and the creation of a permeating atmosphere that pushes beyond the fourth wall, encompassing the audience.

Atmosphere is conjured in the theatre by accessing experience on a societal level. It responds to the complex set of human relations, by examining how these relationships react to political, socio-economic, and cultural happenings (which also recognizes different audiences will respond differently to productions’ subject-matter). Atmosphere is unique: it exists only once under particular circumstances and is only accessible through memory. The atmosphere is filled with a sense of fear, euphoria, or transformation<sup>56</sup> that accompanies the memory; Namely,

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in the same way he reminds us of the realness, the actuality of the event we are watching: Of the real world and continuing consequences of the event.

<sup>55</sup> Although this liveness becomes problematic in all three of the productions discussed in this chapter – *Die letzten Tage*, *Hate Radio*, and *La Reprise* – where Rau and his team produce a film version of the production after the initial theatre premiere.

<sup>56</sup> And indeed, as is the case in many of the reenactment projects undertaken by the IIPM, the transformation or the promise of transformation is indeed only temporary.

‘How did *I* feel in *this* moment?’ To recreate an atmosphere is to induce a strange sense of déjà-vu: It is not a perfect copy of how it actually was, but a copy of the sense that this was how it was (“Europa (2)” 89). It must exceed the original, which is exaggerated and restructured in the mind of the rememberer, to become something new:



Figure 10: *La Reprise - Histoire du Théâtre*, Festival d'Avignon (2018); Photo Credit: Christophe Raynaud de Lage/festival-avignon.com

In seinen besten Momenten denkt der Wiederholer [...], er würde sich selber dem Original nicht bloß nachinszenieren, sondern dieses rauschhaft und gleichzeitig ganz spielerisch übertreffen: So, dass das Original, wie auf einer Art existenziellen Rennstrecke in Rückstand geraten, seinerseits gezwungen ist, sich in Bezug auf die eigene Wiederholung oder Fälschung zu verhalten, da diese in einer Umdrehung aller Verhältnisse auf einmal zum eigentlichen, bisher verborgenen Original geworden ist. [...] Den auf dem Ball laufenden Wiederholer überkommt eine Art Liebschaft mit sich selber,

ein Schimmer umgibt ihn, jener Schimmer, den nur – erkennt der Wiederholer – das wahre Original an sich hat, ein Original, das aber die in eine *plötzliche Selbständigkeit* wie durch ein Wunder völlig eingeschlossene Wiederholung ist.<sup>57</sup> (“Reenactment (2)” 167; italics in original text)

In other words, the stage is not an exact copy of the makeshift trial room in Targoviste (fig. 11), the radio station in Kigali (fig. 12), or the field twenty kilometers outside Liège (fig. 13).<sup>58</sup>

However, through the metonymic power of the theatre, the stage evokes *the idea of that room or that field*, now illuminated by the inescapable knowledge of hindsight (Lukas & Naunheim 246). An idea that is filled with the near-mythological evocations of the event, which is, in turn, bolstered by



Figure 11: *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus*, Dir. Milo Rau, Design Anton Lukas and Silvie Naunheim; Photo Credit: IIPM

forgetfulness and misremembering. Although the reenactment is *less than* the original (it exists in a state of repetition), it is also *more than* the original, because of its independence and its historical fullness. Within the re-embodiment, this fullness removes the sheen of sacredness, iconography, and mythos, returning the event with a jarring suddenness back to the human.

<sup>57</sup> In his best moments, the reenactor [...] thinks that he not only reenacts himself after the original but exceeds it in both an ecstatic and playful way: so that the original, as if it were falling behind on a sort of existential racetrack, is forced to behave in relation to its own repetition or falsification. With a single change of circumstance, it suddenly becomes the actual, hitherto concealed, original. [...] While running on the ball, the reenactor is overcome with a kind of love for himself, a shimmer encompasses him, which – the reenactor realizes – only the true original possesses, an original that is almost miraculously enclosed in the *sudden independence* of a completely closed repetition.

<sup>58</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: vimeo): 01:12:34-01:19:27; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

By bringing together experience, images, atmosphere, memories, and eyewitnesses, Rau *creates a situation*: the core of both Rau's concept of realism and the overriding goal of his theatre ("Reale des Simulacrums" 63-65):

Die Wiederholung, als künstlerische oder theatrale Aktion verstanden, ist so eine durchgehende, rein technische und absurd pedantische Daseinsform der Existenz-Spionage, die (falls sie gelingt) keine Aussage über die empirische Seite der beobachteten Zustände macht, sondern uns wie bei einem elektrischen Schlag in jenes Zentrum entführt, in jene *totale Situation*, in die *Erfahrung der Ereignishaftigkeit*, von der alles Empirische oder Dokumentarische wie von einer Kraftquelle ausstrahlt.<sup>59</sup> ("Reenactment (2)" 169-170; italics in original)

Rau engages with heavily mediated events with relatively few eyewitnesses, because it means engaging and undercutting a collective iconography in a transformational, humanizing sense. The reenacted event is not sped up for the sake of performance. Instead, it happens in (at times) painfully boring real time, creating an awkward unity of time, place, and action within the reenactment.<sup>60</sup> The liveness also allows the spectator to refocus their gaze from the spectacular *studium* (the focus of the image) to the uncomfortably familiar *punctum* (the minor, background detail that pricks the viewer) (*Camera Lucida* 96). In the live performance, the monsters of our modern-day mythology – aging dictators, youthful mass murderers, and drunken homophobes – appear in the full, startling banality in the light of the present: both startlingly human and yet

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<sup>59</sup> The repetition, understood as an artistic or theatrical action, is a continuous, purely technical, absurdly pedantic existential form of existence-espionage, which (if it succeeds) does not make a statement about the empirical side of the observed conditions, but – like a lightning strike – it takes us directly to that center, that *total situation*, that *experience of eventfulness* from which everything empirical or documentary radiates as if from a power source.

<sup>60</sup> This unity of time happens on a large scale in the Reenactment Trilogy, where the core reenactment (each of which lasts about one hour) happens in real time, and on a smaller scale in the Representation Trilogy, where the mini-reenactments are significantly shorter, happen in real time as well (although for these scenes the time ranges from five to twenty minutes).

capable of committing terrible, evil acts.<sup>61</sup> There is no straightforward, comfortable binary good and evil, because how they speak and move within the space does not reflect their historical



Figure 12: “Side view of RTL studio with Georges Ruggiu/Sébastien Foucault (design: Anton Lukas),” *Hate Radio* (dir. Milo Rau); Photo Credit: Daniel Seiffert

status as monsters. Stefan Bläske, one of Rau’s chief dramaturgs and collaborators from 2015 to 2019,<sup>62</sup> describes humans as *abysses* – borrowing a Georg Büchner quote, “Every man is an abyss, it makes one dizzy if one looks down” – to explain the complexity and moralistic dilemmas at play within the individual historical players (“Desire for Transgression” 79).

The returned (reenacted) figures are neither reduced nor excused for their actions. Productions humanize without slipping into apologist rhetoric. The event’s elevated status as part of some grand historical mythos is deflated. The historical event is reenacted not as part of a

grand, cosmic narrative or self-affirming fairytale, but as banal and repeatable. It is presented live in concrete, material terms – dirty furniture, failing heating systems, crackling microphones, faded dull colours, and uncomfortable silences – and returned to eye-level. It is at eye-level, at

<sup>61</sup> Although it could certainly be argued that this duality is present within all humans, it is amplified in the reenactment by looking at *great* men (women also, but Rau’s reenactments do tend to look mostly at men), or people who have through one or more acts seemingly changed the course of history and played a fundamental role in creating the trauma being reopened by the reenactment.

<sup>62</sup> Bläske first worked with Rau on the production *Dark Ages* in 2015 at Munich’s Residenztheater (where Bläske was at the time working) and continued to work with Rau and the IIPM and as part of Rau’s core artistic direction team at NTGent until early 2020, when he took over the position of head of dramaturgy at Theater Bremen.

*Augenhöhe*, that Rau’s form of realism encounters and presents the existential realities of life and the world (“Das ist der Grund” 35). It is here Rau finds a vocabulary for these impossible, incredible, traumatic moments, where the grand historical event becomes “weniger monumental, menschlicher,”<sup>63</sup> less monumental and more human (“Reale des Simulacrums” 60). The exquisite detail of Anton Lukas’s design, the intricacy of Rau’s choreography, and the years of dramaturgical research that can seamlessly disappear into the performance to create a sense of fullness – a *Vollständigkeit* – in the productions. This return to eye-level – the human re-framing of the event and rhetoric surrounding it – is indicative of the reenactment’s implicit engagement with both past and present.

So, how does the reenactment celebrate and embrace life and the live? Rau explains “Die Unst feiert das Leben, weil es GENAU SO ist” (“Unst” 232).<sup>64</sup> Within the exactitude of the *genau so*, the importance of life is found. Reenactments look at past events, recreate them just as they are remembered, and as they reverberate in the endless present. It presents an event steeped in the full emotional and moral complexity of memory and retrospectivity. The reenactment celebrates life because



Figure 13: “*La Reprise* – ‘Chapter IV: The anatomy of the crime’”; Sara de Bosschere, Fabian Leenders (in car), Sébastien Foucault (L-R), Tom Adjibi (Ihsane Jarfi, on ground); Photo Credit: Hubert Amiel/kfda.be

<sup>63</sup> To quote Rau somewhat out of context...

<sup>64</sup> “The Unst celebrates life, because it is *exactly so*.”

of its proclivity to forget and to fragment, because of its unwillingness to remember, and because of its simultaneous, paradoxical desire to recall and find or create completeness: because of the appeal of experience and its appeal to experience; because of its desire to understand actions that are inevitably at odds with its own lofty morals; or, as Rau explains:

Die Wahrheit des Erlebens im Beschreiben zu wiederholen, sie zu erwecken, [...] – die Welt also kühler, unverständlicher, unheimlicher, fremder, unmenschlicher und zugleich heißer, gegenwärtiger, zudringlicher, sichtbarer, menschlicher zu machen – das ist das Schwierigste.<sup>65</sup> (“Die Welt ohne uns” 21)

The reenactment celebrates life because it is beautifully intricate and at odds with itself; because it is only and unapologetically itself, as it is lived, experienced, and remembered at this moment and no other.

#### **2.4: How Does the Reenactment Solve the Problem of Time?**

Reenactment is temporally linked to both past and present while including a gesture to the future. Rau identifies two forms of historical events: (1) events that have *become* historical, that gain their historical significance in the present;<sup>66</sup> and (2) events that have an objective significance, where both participants and witnesses become instantaneously aware that what they are seeing is

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<sup>65</sup> To repeat the truth of experience through description, to awaken it [...] – to make the world cooler, less understandable, less familiar, stranger, less human and simultaneously hotter, more present, more intrusive, more visible, and more human – that’s the most difficult part.

<sup>66</sup> This first form, events that *become* historical, are slightly more difficult to identify, primarily because – when we are in the present looking back at them – they appear to have always been significant. The prime example of this form of historical event is the original seizure of the Winter Palace on October 25, 1917 during the Russian Revolution, which was bloodless and largely without resistance but was transformed into a spectacle to illustrate the power of the Soviets. Other examples are events, historical moments, or individuals that become connected to ideological, political, or nationalist movements that in the present bear little resemblance to what they refer to in the past.

immediately significant (“Reale des Simulacrums” 55).<sup>67</sup> IIPM reenactments engage with the question of time in how productions are simultaneously historical and contemporary, taking historical events but looking at them through the lens of their continued impact on the present and implied importance for the future. The past is reproduced for the sake of a (potential<sup>68</sup>) critical reflection in the present. Thus, performances serve as a subversive (or negative) affirmation of the historical event for the sake of the present.

In “Was ist Unst?”, Rau explains that in *Unst* – here synonymous with reenactment – past, present, and future are one in the same, and that reenactments (and by proxy all IIPM productions) deliver, “eine völlig wörtliche Wiederholung der Gegenwart durch die Vergangenheit für die Zukunft” (232).<sup>69</sup> What Rau means is explained by Le Roy, who states:

Milo Rau wants to go back-first into the future: the present understands itself through the repetition of the past. Herein lies the particular temporality of Rau’s approach: it’s not the past as such that matters; it’s its impact on the present that Rau is interested in. While historiography marks a caesura, a break between the present and the past, he wants to blur that caesura in order to lay bare the caesuras that history continues to create in the present. (Le Roy)

In other words, reenactments look at the present and ask, how did we get here and what are we doing here. Rather than assuming a gap between historical time and the present moment (and the implied future time), these productions are interested in exploring how these temporal levels

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<sup>67</sup> This second form of historical event are largely exemplified by what could be called big events such as 9/11, the assassination of JFK, or the fall of the Berlin Wall. This form of historical event is also much easier to identify, because they are typically more recent and immediately visceral.

<sup>68</sup> However, with this potential for critical reception implied within the uninflected reenactment, there is also, as Knittel points out, the danger of rendering not only these figures but also the “ideas, convictions, and assumptions underlying the perpetrators’ discourse permeate other and more ‘mainstream’ forms of speech” inert, or worse, freeing them of their responsibility for their direct actions (Knittel 178-179).

<sup>69</sup> “a completely literal repetition of the present through the past and with an eye to the future.”

blend together to form the present. The reenactment uses repetition of the past as a critical reflection for the present (i.e., the moment it is performed). The repetition (or *Unst*) is, as Rau explains, performed for the sake of itself and, as Susanne Knittel points out in her analysis of this essay, “the repetition does not serve some purpose that would be beyond the given moment; it does not illustrate something else but invites the viewer to look again and more closely at the specific event or thing being repeated” (176). Knittel, paraphrasing Walter Benjamin’s *Das Passagen-Werk*, shows how the reenactment’s temporality telescopes the past through the present, mobilizing the past as a way to situate the present in a critical light (177).

Benjamin’s interpretation of time laid out in “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” posthumously published in *Illuminations* (1968), provides an excellent framework for Rau’s staging of time. In this text, Benjamin introduces three interconnected concepts of time: (1) *homogeneous, empty time*; (2) *Jetztzeit, now-time*; and, finally, (3) *messianic time*. Benjamin’s conception of time is based on the vested interest of the present in images of the past, which assures the survival of these images over time: “every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably” (“Philosophy of History” 255). Beginning with the first two of these concepts of time: According to Benjamin, *homogeneous, empty time* is a basic (linear) unit of time ruled by the concept of progress, a fundamentally weak teleological connector (“Philosophy of History” 261; Ivry 142). This form of time is linear (i.e., measured by clocks and calendars), which Benjamin suggests is ultimately empty (meaningless), continuous (a linear, temporal continuum), and equivalent (marked by the sameness of the everyday) (Hayes 127; Robinson). In other words: For Benjamin, homogeneous, empty time is not the time that makes up history in a formal, institutional sense, but the plain (uninscribed/insignificant) time that passes outside this formal structure. It is a lived time, filled

with the banality of the everyday and is, therefore, *unfilled*. It is the time of the private, every day, individual history of each person, tied to Nora's concept of *Geschichte* mentioned at the top of this chapter. Conversely *Jetztzeit* is a marker of this institutionalized, formalized history (Nora's *Historie*), because to quote Benjamin: "History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]" ("Philosophy of History" 261; parenthesis in orig. trans.). IIPM reenactments examine how homogeneous, empty time functions within instances of this revolutionary *Jetztzeit*. The significance of the reenactment – as pointed out earlier in this chapter – is to reenact a chosen event because of its *relevance for the here and now*.

The term *Jetztzeit* translates to *now-time*, meaning a time filled with the *presence of the now*, and is made up of revolutionary moments of breakage that interrupt the mundane flow of homogeneous, empty time: "events which [are] blasted out of the continuum of history" ("Philosophy of History" 261; Wolin 50-52). The revolutionary moments of *Jetztzeit* are "shot through with chips of Messianic time" ("Philosophy of History" 263), thus interrupting the smooth progression of history (Firth & Robinson 288). They are moments that, at the time they happen, are, to a certain extent, recognizably significant: JFK's assassination or 9/11. These are the historical moments that have been crystalized and become what Benjamin refers to as messianic time: i.e., the *Jetztzeit* becomes the focus and a fixed point of history ("Philosophy of History" 262-263). The idea of a fixed point (i.e., a point that transcends its moment of happening to be included in a larger historical narrative) is significant, because the *jetzt* (or now) of *Jetztzeit* does not simply translate into a simple understanding of now – i.e., the present (*Gegenwart*). It indicates a recognizable immediacy but also gestures to the past and future. *This* time (this specific, fixed moment) is somehow different from the empty time that surrounds it,

and it is these revolutionary moments that become the fixed points of formalized history. The *now* of *Jetztzeit* also connects the historical moment (shot through with chips of Messianic time) to the moment it is read, recalled, or reenacted. It is always being looked at from the perspective and critical lens of now, resituating the historical moment in the present.

Messianic time emerges as a novelty amidst the homogeneous everyday, marked by events that break from a perceived *normal flow* of time, and is filled with the promise of the future (“Philosophy of History” 262-263; Firth & Robinson 288). It is rupturing, immediate (i.e., absolutely present), recognizable, intoxicating, experienced on an intensely emotional level, and redemptive (Robinson). The term redemptive – perhaps the most interesting of the qualifiers for messianic time – is not as inherently optimistic or positive as it initially appears. Instead, it refers to the way in which certain events (like revolutions) seem to appear and re-appear throughout history, not in a literal sense but an emotional one; Andrew Robinson summarizes: “‘messianic’ time is associated with the experience of immediacy, and the creation of non-linear connections with particular, past or future points. *The present revolt is connected in spirit to past revolts*” (Robinson; italics added). For Benjamin, the presence of messianic time is marked by an emotional force – i.e., the spirit of these past revolts. This emotion is attached to the moment’s potentiality and the potential of the moment, referring to its initial promise (what it promised to do), what it actually accomplished, and its future potential (what it could do).

The emotional aspect of Benjamin’s messianic time bears ties to Rau’s atmosphere. Atmosphere, as explained above, is reproduced on an emotional level rather than a purely literal or physical level. However, the construction of this atmosphere is also connected to the dual (and paradoxical) qualities of sameness and difference in productions. Atmosphere is created through the insertion of homogeneous, empty time into the messianic moment that has been blasted out

of the “homogeneous course of history” (“Philosophy of History” 263). In the homogeneous and empty, we find a sameness with the everyday of the now. It is precisely this sameness with the everyday of the *now* that we find a difference to the historical *then*, but for IIPM productions, recognition trumps historical accuracy and a disturbing recognition is invoked by the insertion of everyday elements into moments of frozen historical trauma. Rau is interested in re-inscribing the in-between images his reenactments produce with a level of banality and the everyday, an uncomfortable return to the *homogeneous* and the *empty* that implicates the continued violence (rhetorical or otherwise) present. The recognition fostered here in the *just so* – or *genau so* – that invites the spectator to listen to perpetrators and murderers, but also survivors and surrogate victims, and from this point of listening, to reevaluate their own position in relation to the violence discussed (Knittel 178).

Rau (re)creates those images missing from the larger archive, images that exist in-between those we have and know, paralleling the present. We find ourselves and our actions in the images. We find the homogeneity and emptiness of our time is – in an uncomfortable, human sense – also present in these historical moments. It is a subtle, prickly reminder of Hannah Arendt’s thesis on the “banality of evil,” that even seemingly ordinary acts can potentially lead to calamity when they go unquestioned, because the small cog does not question his or her place in the larger machine. For example, in *Breiviks Erklarung*, spectators hear rhetoric uncomfortably close to the philosophy of many Europeans who are wary, if not outright hostile, towards migration and multiculturalism.<sup>70</sup> However, Breivik’s treatise is read by the Turkish-German

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<sup>70</sup> Knittel describes a similar phenomenon in her article about *Breiviks Erklarung*, stating: “Rau does not explain Breivik but focuses entirely on his words. These words, however, are not the insane ramblings of a madman; rather, they form a coherent narrative that sounds uncannily familiar. What is disturbing about the speech is that it is not disturbing at all: the thoughts and sentiments expressed in it have become all too familiar in public discourse in Europe today” (Knittel 172).

actor Sascha Ö. Soydan, shifting focus to the words rather than the performative act of reading (fig. 17).<sup>71</sup> *Die 120 Tage* use Hora actors to reenact scenes from Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò* and *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* as a way to examine the treatment and segregation of disabled people in Swiss (and by-and-large European) society. It also forces spectator to engage with their own preconceptions about the abilities and limitations of disabled persons like the Hora Troupe, who perform complex, violent, and provocative scenes from the two controversial films. In *Hate Radio*, we hear easy talk-radio banter, bad jokes, popular music, and international news heard across Europe and North America during the nineties. The simple thesis Rau presents is that these moments of trauma have their origins within an everyday normalcy and complacency which serve as the first steps in normalizing atrocity. Rau often (mis)quotes Arendt saying: "Das Böse braucht keine Phantasie, und deshalb hat es auch keine Tiefe. [...] Das Gute jedoch braucht Phantasie" ("Die Kunst des Widerstands" Hannover 23.10.2018).<sup>72</sup> To be succinct, the reenactment is perhaps best summed up in the first part of this sentence: Evil is more normal than we would like to see.

This movement to the human and the introduction of uncomfortable recognition is indicative of Rau's practice of *subversive affirmation*.<sup>73</sup> an artistic or political tactic where artists or activists "take part in certain social, ideological, political, or economic discourses, and affirm, appropriate, or consume them while simultaneously undermining them" (Arns & Sasse 445). According to Arns and Sasse, subversive affirmation employs parasitical practices – a reference to the tendency of such performances to use ready-made (i.e. pre-existing) events – as well as

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<sup>71</sup> In comparison to other reenactments, verisimilitude is not at the fore of *Breiviks Erklärung*. Soydan stands at a lectern wearing a white T-shirt and a red (adidas) tracksuit, chewing gum, and occasionally sipping from a plastic water bottle. She never directly addresses the audience, but rather always looks directly into the camera positioned ahead of her.

<sup>72</sup> "Evil has no imagination and, therefore, has no depth. [...] While good requires imagination."

<sup>73</sup> In this case, the term affirmation refers to a negative rather than a positive affirmation.

‘classical aesthetic methods’: i.e., “imitation, simulation, mimicry and camouflage” (445). In reenactment, it is ultimately through the drastic reduction of distance that accompanies the audience’s recognition of the distance that separates them from the original event that Rau is able to undermine two narratives effectively: first, a narrative of exceptionalism, or the assertion that this event is an outlier and doesn’t normally occur in modern society. In an interview for his conflict-zone production *Orestes in Mosul*, Rau stated: “In peaceful, prosperous regions, it might appear as if the post-tragic way of life were natural, the automatic result of progress – so to speak” (“Why Orestes” 36). For example, in *Orestes in Mosul* takes the *Orestes* narrative – a staple of the Western European theatre canon – and resituates the narrative in Mosul, a war-torn (but also ancient and deeply historical) city in Northern Iraq. We thereby see how the familial turned political conflict of the Greek tragedy continues to be a daily reality for the people of Mosul in a conflict exacerbated by the West. The second narrative that Rau’s work undermines is the connected self-affirmative progress-based history that Benjamin is critical of in his writing. As Arns and Sasse explain, “[i]n subversive affirmation there is always a surplus which destabilizes affirmation and turns it into its opposite” (445), and Rau, rather than presenting his audience with the comforting affirmation of distance (that we are not this), reveals a distressing similarity (that we are). We see this aspect of subversive affirmation in *Hate Radio*, which uses the easy rhetoric of talk radio to find the commonality of violent rhetoric in our own society, turning the mirror back on the audience in the production. The assumption that violence only happens *out there*, is unpinned by the production as we find a reflection of our own violence within RTLTM’s incendiary utterances.

IIPM reenactments subvert the normally affirmative quality of state-driven, ideological reenactments by re-enacting an event without adding new information or commenting upon what

is shown. Despite the understood distance of theatre, we are brought closer to the banality and unspectacular nature of the original that disappears as the event becomes more entrenched in the realm of mythology. Rather than directly stating its question or critique of the original, it places the responsibility back on the spectator to re-evaluate their own position as subject (Knittel 178). The atmosphere constructed in performance demystifies the original by breaking down the mystical and mythical delineations between the historical original and the now, pulling it (in its full horror) out of a historically separate time beyond the normal flow of the everyday. While the process of historicization makes these events seem huge, inevitable, and exceptional, the horrors they are compounded upon are, in fact, often a fairly normal aspect of day-to-day life. It rejects the *matter of fact* inescapability of the event, which makes the event, as Knittel explains, “subject to unchanging universal laws or truths and that there is nothing to be done about it” (179). The reenactment reveals that the comforting distance afforded by concepts of time and trauma are, in truth, a curtain that conceals precisely the normality of the occurrence. It reveals the “hidden reverse” of a ruling ideology through what Žižek identifies as over-identification which explores how existing codes (the familiar rhetoric) extend outwards from the existing historical situation into the present (Arns & Sasse 448).

The audience is invited into this constructed situation, to re-evaluate the situation (both past and present) and themselves within it. Rau and his team are allowed the opportunity to undermine the assumption of the present’s (and thereby the spectators’) historical (and therefore moral) superiority: The assumption that we are standing at the top of history is replaced with the realization we are still within it. For Arns and Sasse, the repetition is key to subversive affirmation’s invitation to critique (for which over-identification is perhaps the ideal form), which confronts the spectator with a totality in performance “which excludes any possibility of

an ‘outside’ position or distance” (455). Rau’s earnest (re)creation of a situation confronts the audience with the impossibility of separating itself from the situation. It invites audience members to find the sameness and difference, not just within the onstage situation, but within their own horizon of experience. The liminal reduction of distance paradoxically exists alongside an inescapable temporal distance: i.e., we are, in a very real, temporal sense, physically outside the past moment, aware of it, but unable to affect it. This duality of distance allows a space where spectators acquire the critical distance to reflect and respond to the event in an intellectual as well as an emotional way. The reenactment resurrects the moment for the potential of self-recognition and reflection from the present. Productions work with and through existing images, bringing them back life, defamiliarizing and recontextualizing them, and ultimately creating new ones in a performance where the audience steps *into the historical situation* to inspect it again and, as Knittel summarizes, “perhaps come to new or different insights as a result” (187).

In this recognition, the redemptive aspect of Benjamin’s messianic time does not disappear but shifts. Redemption transforms everyday life as hope for the future that is located in the past and carried into the present. The redemptive view of history is, for Rau, a product of the authors of history (i.e., historians): “Die Geschichte hat keinen Autor, der Autor ist der Historiker selbst. Die Geschichte schreibt sich in ihrem Nachvollzug, im Reenactment” (“Möglicherweise” 148).<sup>74</sup> This illustrates how IIPM reenactments possess not only a temporal distance from the event but a distance from written accounts and the historical narratives as well. Reenactments heave events from their devised context: divorced from the rising and falling action known to the audience (colonial tensions, growing hatred towards a dictatorship, and xenophobic rhetoric), while exposition and dénouement are presented to the audience through

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<sup>74</sup> “History has no author, the author is the historian himself. History writes itself in its repetition, in reenactment.”

opening and closing monologues.<sup>75</sup> Again, events are presented in a now-time, marked by the immediate present occupied by the audience. However, it is performative, and this performative now-time is different from the now-time of the messianic moment from which this specific historical event emerged. This performative now-time is full of the past and present, as well as the knowledge that emerges between the two: “The present, which, as a model of Messianic time, comprises the entire history of mankind in an enormous abridgment, coincides exactly with the stature which the history of mankind has in the universe” (“Philosophy of History” 263). This is exactly what the audience encounters: just this one brief moment pulled out of a chronology and nothing else.

Benjamin’s “articulating the past” parallels Rau’s *Beschreiben*, description, of the past. Rau defines his projects as descriptive, *beschreibende*, projects, “in denen ich mich tief in den Brunnen des Fatalen hinabbeuge und die auftretenden Figuren ihren blinden Flecken, ihrer Schuld, ihrer sadistischen Freude, ihrer Melancholie und Verzweiflung überlasse” (“Zynischer Humanismus” 253).<sup>76</sup> Returning to “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Benjamin explains that “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was’ (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man [to be] singled out by history at a moment of danger” (“Philosophy of History” 255). This is precisely what Rau does in the reenactment. He and his team find memories and descriptions of the events (their historical/contextual surroundings) and use these accounts to recreate the scene. For Rau,

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<sup>75</sup> Or, in the case of *Breiviks Erklärung*, by the audience themselves during the post-show discussion. It should also be noted that *Breiviks Erklärung* (2013) is notably different from the other two productions of the first Reenactment Trilogy because it deals with both the most temporally recent event (2011) and geographically closest (Norway) to its (largely) Western European audience.

<sup>76</sup> “in which I dive deep into the fountain of fatalism and surrender the characters to their blind spots, their guilt, their sadistic pleasures, their melancholy and their doubts” (“What is Cynical Humanism” 189).

the accounts and memories of the event are more important than formal, historical (academic) sources, which means errors are purposely included in productions because they involve the memory of trauma as it flashes up at that particular moment – namely, the moment of the interview – becoming the foundation for the reenactment, both in design and performance.

Nevertheless, the moments explored in reenactment are not redemptive moments. Rau hints at precisely this when he refers to the lack of catharsis in historical moments – which are part of what he plays with in the reenactments. The reenactment does not present its events in a redemptive light, instead the reenactment looks at the present-based historiographic discourse surrounding the reenacted event. Thus, reenactment creates a performative that re-situates a historical event in a contemporary constellation, where the historical failure is finally visible and possible to understand: the failure of a revolution to bring change, or the understanding there will always be another genocide, another mass murder, another judicial failure. The moments explored in the reenactment are undeniably significant; they are chosen because they resonate with Rau on an individual level.<sup>77</sup> However, the event, the historical moment, and the image are – in a very literal, practical sense – beyond redemption. The past is past<sup>78</sup> – no matter how unsettled it might be. Redemption is instead located in the potentiality of the future, which, when confronted with the co-presence of the audience when they watch the production, transforms into an accountability on their part to do better. In this gesture to the future, one finds the careful optimism – buried in a great deal of historical pessimism – of Rau and the IIPM's work.<sup>79</sup> We also find the inevitable problem with redemption in Rau's productions: as theatre, a performed

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<sup>77</sup> All of Rau's reenactments have an autobiographic connection within him.

<sup>78</sup> One interesting function of time and the non-linear aspect of messianic time is found in the non-linear reenactments for plays in the Representation Trilogy, which are made up of four or five reenactments (depending on the production). The arrangement of the reenactments creates narrative, but not in a strictly chronological sense but a historical-emotional one.

<sup>79</sup> What Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) famously calls the pessimism of reason versus the optimism of the will.

moment, the historical moment cannot be redeemed. Not really. Even if the spectator acts after watching the production, she can only change future events, but the actual reenacted event can only be changed in terms of its cultural memory. It cannot be reversed or undone.

When Rau and his team look at these unsettled images, they are questioning why we cannot let go of these images and why society is trapped in the cycle of their repetition, rather than the creation of new images for the future (Le Roy). It is interesting to note that when Benjamin discusses repetition – much as when he discusses myth – it is in the context of homogeneous, empty time, not in that of the messianic, which is supposedly unique. Repetition is linked to a desire to re-access and re-find. In the repetition we are always looking for something new to emerge: “We are bored, argues Benjamin, because we don’t know what we’re waiting for” (Firth & Robinson 383). Here we find the transubstantiative aspect of Benjamin’s redeemed image – the picture of a historical moment that is pulled out from and into history. The messianic moment of this image reconfigures a specific space within homogeneous, empty time transforming it into something new, different, and significant (390). IIPM reenactments, while still undoubtedly indebted to this messianic concept, do the reverse: reconfiguring the exceptional space of messianic time by returning it to its homogeneous, empty roots.

There is a complex temporal code-switching at play within the reenactment. Rau engages the chosen event as a dialectical site of history, similar to what Benjamin defines as *origin*:

Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis. That which is original is never revealed in the naked and manifest existence of the factual; its rhythm is apparent only to a dual insight. On the one hand, it needs to be recognized as a process of restoration and reestablishment, but, on the other hand, and precisely because of this, as something imperfect and incomplete.

There takes place in every original phenomenon a determination of the form in which an idea will constantly confront the historical world, until it is revealed fulfilled, in the totality of its history. (*Origin of German Tragic Drama* 45-46)

This concept of origin illustrates the changeability and fluidity of not just memory, but also of how we talk about these events (cultural memory). Like the definition of reenactment, origin highlights how the recreation is always engaged in a critical dialogue with itself. How the production strives for a completeness is inherently at odds with the practical impossibility of attaining it. The play attempts to create a self-contained world, while implicitly engaging with the outside world, the spectators' fragmented world and their fleeting experiences.



Figure 14: “*La Reprise* – ‘Chapter IV: The Anatomy of the Crime’”; Video: Fabian Leenders (L), Sébastien Foucault (R), Sara de Bosschere (back); Photo Credit: Hubert Amiel/kfda.be

## 2.5: The Pain of the Other

At its core, reenactment is a form of resurrection. But like the zombies of a B-list horror film, the resurrected are not exactly what they were in life. Unlike a zombie film, though, the resurrection is exactly as we remember it and exactly as we would imagine it to be. This resurrected trauma unflinchingly directs the audiences' gaze to what we would rather look away from: the simplicity and banality of *evil* (if such a thing can even really be so easily identified). In the second act of *La Reprise*,<sup>80</sup> actor Sébastien Foucault performs a monologue about his personal experience and fascination with Jarfi's murder.<sup>81</sup> The monologue inadvertently sums up the function, or at the very least the goal, of reenactment:

Il [Ihsane Jarfi] sort de l'Open Bar, il monte dans leur voiture, ils prennent en direction des quais, ils le tabassent... Sur la route, près de stade, ils s'arrêtent, ils le mettent dans le coffre et repartent... Et c'est entre là et là, qu'Ihsane faisait ses prières, en arabe dans le coffre... Donc il sentait qu'il allait mourir. Il l'avait compris. Il a dû être terrorisé. Parce que lui, il l'a vu le mal dans les yeux de ces gars-là, ce mal qu'on n'arrivait pas à voir, nous, pendant le procès. Pourtant, en venant au tribunal, je m'attendais à avoir un choc. Je ne sais pas... qu'ils dégageraient une sorte de charisme négatif. Mais quand j'ai vu leurs têtes, c'est vraiment le ballon qui se dégonfle. Parce que c'est juste des débiles. Juste des gros cons qui ont... je sais pas... dérapé. On pourrait presque avoir de la peine pour eux tellement ils sont pitoyables. Je n'ai même pas ressenti de la haine en les voyant. [...] C'était vraiment très banal. C'est là qu'on se rend compte, vraiment, de la bêtise de la mort d'Ihsane. Ce qui est le plus frustrant, c'est de me dire que je n'arrive pas à ressentir ce que lui il a ressenti. C'est vraiment débile mais, maintenant, quand je vais chez le dentiste par exemple, si j'ai peur d'avoir mal, je pense toujours à lui. Pas pour me

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<sup>80</sup> Which is admittedly one of my favourite Milo Rau/IIPM productions.

<sup>81</sup> Foucault actually lived in Liege at the time of the murder and attended the public trial of Jarfi's killers.

dire que ça va m'aider... Non, pour me dire : « qu'est-ce que j'aimerais ressentir ce que lui, il a ressenti ». Toutes ces choses-là, ça me rapproche un peu de lui. Mais j'ai pas réussi à ressentir la terreur. J'aimerais bien la ressentir comme lui, pour partager ça avec lui, pour la lui enlever un peu.

Pendant le procès, il y a eu le moment où ils ont montré les photos du corps d'Ishane. Et sa famille est sortie. Je comprenais qu'ils ne voulaient pas voir ça. Mais ça me faisait de la peine que sa famille sorte. Je me suis dit : « il est tout seul, il n'y a personne qui veut le regarder ». Alors je me suis forcé à rester et à le regarder... J'oublierai jamais : on le voit à plat ventre, tout nu... Et là, je le reconnais... Je reconnais sa nuque, son dos, ses fesses, tout... On l'avait totalement massacré : sa cage thoracique était écrasée. C'était vraiment très dur mais je n'avais pas envie de tourner la tête et qu'il n'y ait personne qui le regarde... qu'il n'y ait que les meurtriers qui le regardent... et les gens dans la salle qui n'avaient aucun lien avec lui. Non, je voulais vraiment l'accompagner là-dedans.<sup>82</sup> (*La Reprise* (NL-FR) 13 ; fig. 14, 15, 16)<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> He [Ihsane Jarfi] comes out of the Open Bar, he gets in their car, they drive towards the wharves, they beat him up. On the way, near the stadium, they stop, put him in the trunk and keep going... And that's when Ihsane prays, in Arabic, in the trunk... So he felt he was going to die. He understood. He must have been terrified because he saw the evil in their eyes, the evil we couldn't see during the trial. But still, on the way to the trial, I was expecting to be shocked. I don't know... That they would give off some sort of negative energy. But when I saw their faces, that just dissipated... Because they're just morons. Assholes who let the situation get out of control. You could almost feel sorry for them, that's how pitiful they are. I didn't even feel hate when I saw them. [...] It was so banal. That's when you realise how stupid Ihsane's death was. The most frustrating thing is knowing that I can't feel what he felt. It's stupid but now, when I go to the dentist, for example if I'm afraid of the dentist, for example if I'm afraid of the pain, I think of the pain, I think of him. Not because it helps, but just because I can tell myself: "I want to feel what he felt." Those things bring me a little closer to him. But I haven't been able to feel the terror. I'd like to feel it the way he did, to share it with him, to relieve him of that a little.

During the trial, when they showed the photos of Ihsane's body, his family left the courtroom. I understand that they didn't want to see that but it bothered me that they left. I thought: "He's all alone, no-one wants to look at him." So I forced myself to stay and look... I'll never forget: he was lying on his front, fully naked... And I recognize him... I recognize the nape of his neck, his back, his buttocks, everything... They had destroyed him, his rib cage was crushed. It was very hard, but I didn't want to look away I didn't want there to be nobody to see him... Only the killers looking at him... And the people at the trial, who weren't connected to him. I wanted to be there for him. (*La Reprise* (EN) 12)

<sup>83</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: vimeo): 00:49:43-00:54:23; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

What Foucault describes is essentially the human desire to empathize with other people – the compassion function. That being said, we have to want to see and feel, which is what Foucault suggests most of us desire when we enter the theatre. Here, what I call the aura varies slightly from what Benjamin means by the term: The aura of the reenactment is fundamentally connected to a need to feel along with the original participants. By confronting the audience with what feels like a picture-perfect reenactment of the original (even though it is not one), the spectator has a sense that *this was how it was*, and that *this* feeling that I am experiencing right now is how *it would have felt and did feel* the first time around. However, this closeness is inevitably accompanied by the dissatisfaction and frustration that Foucault describes when he states he is unable to feel the terror Jarfi experienced that night. On top of this frustration, we, as spectators, are confronted with the infuriating banality and stupidity, as well as the preventability and



Figure 15: “La Reprise – ‘Chapter IV: The anatomy of the crime’”; video: Tom Adjibi (trunk of car); Photo Credit: Hubert Amiel/kfda.be

pointlessness of the original act. As Karl Marx famously observed in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, “History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce” (Marx 19).

We find ourselves, sitting in the darkened theatre, in the place of Benjamin’s Angel of History: Mouths agape with horror, but unable – or perhaps unwilling – to look away, if for no other reason than we want to see and share in the fear, terror, and horror of *that* moment as it spills over into the present. Here



Figure 16: “*La Reprise* – ‘Chapter IV: The anatomy of the crime’”; Tom Adjibi (Ihsane Jarfi); Photo Credit: Christophe Raynaud de Lage/festival-avignon.com

we find the emergence of the experiential in Rau and the IIPM’s work: In our need for human closeness and understanding. The empathy for another person and the situation as a whole as it crashes against a temporal and physical distance that (even through the magic of theatre) cannot possibly be overcome. What it means to bear the weight of witnessing in Rau’s work is best summarized in Sontag’s conclusion to *Regarding the Pain of Others*:

These dead are supremely uninterested in the living: in those who took their lives; in witnesses – and in us. Why should they seek our gaze? What would they have to say to us? ‘We’ – this ‘we’ is everyone who has never experienced anything like what they went through – don’t understand. We don’t get it. We truly can’t imagine what it was like. We can’t imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can’t understand, can’t imagine. That’s what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker

and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels. And they are right. (97-98)

## 2.6: Conclusion: Genau Dies – Exactly This

Throughout Rau’s writing the expression *genau so* – *just like that* – frequently appears, with two early articles dedicated to the reenactment as the vehicle of the *genau so*: “Was ist Unst?” (2009) and “Genau so. Realitätseffekte in *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus*” (2012).<sup>84</sup> This concept of the *genau so* is connected to the troubled concept of truth within Rau’s work. The theatre-maker’s definition of truth is related to memory, namely: how events are remembered on a cultural and existential level rather than on a historical one (“Tragödie (1)” 215). It must be understood that when Rau talks about uncovering *real truth*, he is referring to a duality: first, there was a real (actual) event that (physically) took place at a set time and place that serves as a concrete referent. Second, there are multiple individual memories surrounding the concrete event that together form collective and cultural memory. Secondary personal accounts are more interesting for Rau and his team than either written or formal histories, and arguably more interesting (and important) than the event itself.

The democratic quality of the reenactment and Rau’s work as a whole emerges as a strategy of the *genau so*, which examines how an event was experienced across society – and Rau does make an effort to talk to people from different parts of society. The onstage event is an *ekphrasis*: a dramatic, verbal description of the memory of an event that seeks to define and describe how it *would have* felt (“Realismus (1)” 134). For the IIPM, such a description can only

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<sup>84</sup> “Genau so” was published in *Wiederholung und Ekstase* under the title “Realismus (1),” and is an excerpt from Rau’s unfinished dissertation.

exist on a collective, intersectional level. Rather than building off a single account, the *ekphrasis* uses many different accounts from participants with various levels of involvement.

In *Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard explains that “truth is subjectivity [... and] subjectivity is truth” (287). So, according to Kierkegaard, truth relates to the individual and the individual’s relationship with and to it. Kierkegaard approaches truth as an object and, therefore, as material (167).<sup>85</sup> Likewise, Rau approaches reenactment from the perspective of a concrete event: something that actually happened in real time, which the performative re-concretizes. This concrete, material referent serves as a frame for the reenactment – a starting point – within which official, written histories, collections of visual documents, and (most importantly) the masses of personal memories surrounding the event are inserted. Reenactments occupy a space between *subjektivem Erzählungen und objektivem Verhängnis* – subjective narrative and objective catastrophe. This space – which fosters a dialogue between these two warring concepts – brings history into the realm of experience and the lived, the space between the writing of history and concretizing of it (Bude & Rau 38).

Reenactment is not interested in presenting a capital-T Truth, rather a collection of subjective truths that forms a democratic reflection on the event, but not a homogenous one. The term democratic refers to the creation of collective experience in material terms: Listening to individual accounts of what happened, what is remembered, and using these multiple accounts to *correct* existing historical images. For example, one of the soldiers present at the trial and execution of the Ceaușescus remembered with absolute certainty that there were twelve soldiers,

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<sup>85</sup> “When truth is asked about objectively, reflection is directed objectively at truth as an object to which the knower relates. Reflection is not on the relation but on it being the truth, the truth to which he relates. If only this, to which he relates, is the truth, the true, then the subject is in the truth. If the truth is subjective, reflection is directed subjectively on the individual’s relation; if only the how of this relation is in truth, then the individual is in truth, even if he related in this way to untruth” (*Unscientific Postscript* 167).

when we know – based on various formal historical sources – that there were only eight (Bude 83). The memory of being actively present at the execution became mixed with Biblical symbolism (twelve disciples), illustrating how this event was elevated and mythologized within Romanian society as well as individually in the twenty intervening years between the Revolution/execution and Rau’s production. Likewise, in *Hate Radio*, whether the real RTLM played Nirvana is both unlikely and unimportant. This and other Western music in the production illustrates, by all accounts, what the station was like (i.e., how it felt) at the time (April through July of 1994): How a radio station like RTLM that actively encouraged genocide and could laugh about the murder of a million people, and at the same time be cool, young, play the best music, and have young, radical, engaging, funny hosts (“Das ist der Grund” 22). However, to create the effect that such a radio station would have had in the early nineties in a fairly rigidly Catholic nation like Rwanda and to translate this effect into today’s Europe, the broadcast must be adjusted for the sake of atmosphere and experience. Rau’s productions look at how a specific event is remembered rather than how it was.

Returning to the democratic nature of the productions: The term democratic is intricately connected to the concept of the collective. Collective here does not refer to collective creation or collective theatre in a classic sense of a de-hierarchized structure, nor does it refer to the romantic myth of a collective work. Rau’s theatre doubtlessly retains a hierarchy, of which Rau himself is at the top. Hierarchy is built into both the IIPM and its rehearsal structure. Still, the idea of an artistic collective and collective authorship echoes throughout Rau’s work – although the draw of a *Milo Rau production* for potential audiences rests in no small part in the name value of Milo Rau. It is Rau’s name on billboards and posters for productions as well as the production books published by Verbrecher Verlag. Collective (collage) creation for Rau means

listening to and watching those people surrounding him and those people outside of his field of experience to gain a more complex and nuanced understanding of his subject-matter (“Autor” 52). It means listening to what people want to remember and want to talk about, rather than telling them specifically what to talk about and directing them in interviews (“Disziplin” 55). It also means working together with his actors and his entire production team – working with people from all walks of life where possible (not just with people from the same social and economic milieu) – in the creation process (“Why Orestes” 14). Rau’s logic is quite simply “collective authorship knows a lot” (13). The various biographic stories and individual experiences are told to find or uncover a truth, for “a mosaic intended to contribute to a higher level of knowledge” (16). Thus, at the end of the research period, Rau and his dramaturgical team are presented with a heterogeneous, diverse account of the event and its wider implications on both the individual and their community. However, we must remain aware that the name at the fore of these productions (and on the title page of books) is still Milo Rau.

The use of the term democratic is two-fold. It is, first, democratic in the sheer mass of voices brought into productions. The narrative – if we can even call the onstage action in IIPM productions narrative – is constructed through collective means, rather than produced by a single authoritarian figure (the playwright). Second, the clear existence of images with collective significance indicates a democratic process that defined these images as important has already taken place. While Rau is interested in finding missing images and images of the in-between, he does not deny the significance of these mainstream images. Images serve as a unifying and universalizing collective mode of experience, a product of an increasingly globalized world (Kleinman & Kleinman 2). They allow individuals around the globe to take part in experiences that were formerly limited to a single nation or community, which in turn explains how Rau

himself has an autobiographical connection with his international subject-matter. It means that we can describe these images as being inherently *touristic*: The term *touristic* highlights an ability to return and revisit a moment in time from the safe distance of the present. This term also illustrates the miniaturizing and reductionist function of the camera: “Cameras miniaturize experience, transform history into spectacle” (*On Photography* 85). Thus, while *touristic* implies the dual ability to both visit and re-visit the image, it also points to the ability to leave it behind.<sup>86</sup>

Photographs are the hallmark of the modern tourist, and although photographs give the illusion of closeness, they also present a real distance. Photographs are essentially non-interventionist. For the tourist, a photograph creates the appearance of participation without any actual commitment: a vehicle of semi-experience. On a journalistic level, photographs (in our increasingly mediated world) serve as a vital entrance into events happening far away (*On Photography* 6-8). There is also a notably *touristic* quality to the reenactment itself in the audience’s ability to watch the performance and once again share in the experience of the moment, but from a position of complete safety. This *touristic* quality also connects the reenactment to Benjamin’s idea of redemption and Le Roy’s unsettled history: Rau’s form of reenactment is essentially non-interventionist, which Rau himself acknowledges in the “depressing uselessness” of the reenactment (“Realm of the Real” 125). While these productions do not fundamentally change or restructure their chosen events, they do remove their mythic sheen. They look at how an event is unsettled in the sense of how it remains unredeemed: i.e., marked by failure.

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<sup>86</sup> There is also an implicit critique of Rau’s work contained within the *touristic* because Rau’s work is inescapably *touristic*. Rau is himself at times a tourist to the warzones and conflict regions he visits for his work. Although he does complete work there and create his theatre, at the end of the day (as several critics have noted), Rau always leaves the region and many of those people he worked with behind.

Redemption, according to Benjamin, is intertwined with the sometimes connected and sometimes dueling concepts of happiness and history:

The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with *weak*

Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. (“Philosophy of History” 254)

Benjamin is referring to the promise and deep-set belief that the future – through the steady accumulation and movement through (and away from) the past – will get better. Therefore, when Benjamin speaks of the weak messianic power endowed onto the past, he means that there is an eternal hope fused to those past images. These images have been saved in the hopes that they indicate (or will soon indicate) a movement towards something better (otherwise known as progress). Thus, for Benjamin, history is concerned with actualizing past possibilities of happiness in the present.

However, Rau is not interested in redeeming the past in such simplistic terms, nor is he interested in exposing a single failure. Rather Rau is interested in patterns of failure. Again, we find this theme of universalizing: the movement from specific to universal, more specifically, using extremely specific and localized examples as a way to access larger themes that exist on an international, universal level. The reenactment looks at truth as a spectrum. What does this singular individual instance of failure say about larger global structures? In this shift to universality, it is key that the element of uniqueness is not lost. Therefore, it is not about generalizing the chosen subject matter, but about finding the cross-cultural and transnational elements that become recognizable within the specific. Turning once more to the question posed by Jacques Rancière: What existing language can be used to talk about this event? (*Future of the*

*Image* 126). What images are suitable for reenacting the uniqueness of the traumatic moment without being absolutely specific to this and only this event? Where do we – as creators, actors, and spectators – find the recognizable in the unfathomable? (130).

So, what truth can exist amid competing accounts, historical facts, and universal existentialities? For Rau's work, truth must be approached as both subjective and collective, which separates him from Kierkegaard's singular, subjective repetition. Rau's work is based on the images and memories surrounding history and its representations: a "paradoxically duplicated reality" made up of images that "document undeniably something that really took place," as well as "the historical images, shaped from day to day anew by their path through the collective imaginary and their different interpretations" ("Realm of the Real" 125) – a democratic narrative and medial mythology ("Realismus (1)" 134). Again, *Historie* and *Geschichte* emerge, because although reenactment certainly exists between these forms of history, it prefers the specificity of *Geschichte* over the broad generalizations and uniting forces of *Historie*. Rau's performative exploration of how the past retains meaning for the present and its potential for the future (the possibility of these past images being redeemed for or in the future) creates what is perhaps best described as a *reflective history*. The term reflective is indicative of what could be called the inclusive critical-performative historiography of the reenactment. It is indicative of the processes of looking back, reflection, magnification, and forgetfulness that inherently follows trauma – moments that have blasted themselves out of the stream of normal, empty time.

The *genau so* of reflective history is the hoped for and intended reaction of the audience by the production: the exclamation, "It was just like that!" The strange sense of déjà vu evoked by seeing these images again, seeing them completely devoid of their mythologization and epic

nature, translated onto the stage as something completely human and present. We see not only the event as we remember it, but we are also confronted with ourselves within the event and its legacy. The *genau so* does not look at history for history's sake; it looks at history for its relevance in the here and now. This relevance is only found through a performative *questioning of the present*, reaching back to look at historical events with a collective significance carried into the present through a collective memory (on both an institutional and individual level) (Arns 43). The image is placed in a panopticon structure of sorts, filtered through and filled in by different stories and experiences to find an event that is exactly as it was in an absolutely present sense (“Das ist der Grund” 27).

Minor details – such as Elena Ceaușescu’s nervous hand movements,<sup>87</sup> Valérie Bemeriki’s “Free Mandela” t-shirt,<sup>88</sup> the number of times Ihsane Jarfi was kicked, Jérémy Wintgens remaining in the car and only exiting to throw up<sup>89</sup> – emerge, and it is these details that are part of a collective vision of the past. They are included in the performance not because of their overall importance to the actual event, but because of the presence they assert. There is no symbolic ordering



Figure 17: “Breiviks Erklärung (dir. Milo Rau, 2012),” actor: Sascha Ö. Soydan; Photo Credit: Thomas Müller

system in the real. Even in the midst of those events recognized as significant, there are still

<sup>87</sup> *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (IIPM: Film): 00:34:33-00:35:40; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fMnoK152NHUuyPTg5wk9akTwYHK5p-UA/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>88</sup> *Hate Radio* (IIPM: Film): 00:37:10-39:00; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>89</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: Vimeo): 01:14:48-01:16:00; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

pointless knocks on the door that add nothing to the historical narrative other than a simple proclamation that we are here for no other reason than because we are. These are the details and images that are eventually forgotten by history. These are the *fehlende Bilder* that Romanian filmmaker Andrei Ujica referred to when he spoke to Rau before *Die letzten Tage*.

Since *Die letzten Tage*, which examines these missing images on a relatively small scale – literally the images missing or not quite visible in the trial video – Rau’s reenactments have become increasingly complex and nuanced in their search for missing images (fig. 7). There is an increased focus on finding images for which there is no physical reference – crime scenes, closed trials, radio broadcasts, and the representation of marginalized people. However, even in this shift, the focus on detail never wavers. The connection with the *ekphrasis* becomes clear: these details are, in truth, what makes up productions, while historical evidence (documents, photographs, etc.) serve as the framework to which the details add depth – but not necessarily meaning. The details are the truth of the production while the facts are the framework.

Even more than the monumental status or objective importance of an event, reenactments look at how we as a society remember these events: the gap between what happened and how we talk about it (“Realismus (2)” 140). They examine how the language and rhetoric that we (as a society) require to discuss these traumatic moments – moments that are traditionally approached as unrepresentable and unspeakable – are already present within our existing, everyday lexicons of images, imaginings, and experiences. Rancière, in his examination of the unrepresentable, explains how, particularly within the *representative arts* (i.e., visual arts like theatre and film), the language and syntax that we need to discuss these apparently unrepresentable moments already exists. The difficulty is: “[t]he language that conveys this experience is in no way specific to it” (*Future of the Image* 126). Rather than using ostentatious or poetic language to

explore these moments, in performance, the reenactment highlights an uncomfortable recognition. The past serves as a screen that our own experiences and expectations are projected upon and back at us. It highlights disappointment and failure rather than the myth – or perhaps the hope – that some sort of progress is pulling us towards a better future (and a better us) even though our eyes remain firmly fixed on the past (“Realismus (1)” 134).

Reenactment does not attempt to add new information or teach the audience something new about the historical snapshot it reenacts. In performance, as Susanne Knittel points out in her analysis of *Breiviks Erklarung*, the actors do not comment on the text they are reenacting, nor do they try to tell the spectator how to respond to the performance. Therefore, reenactment always contains what Knittel calls a “troubling ambiguity” (172). We, as spectators, are asked to look again and, perhaps more significantly, to listen again to the words being spoken. As much as IIPM reenactments are about the reproduction and recreation of images, they are also about rhetoric and the nefariously banal everyday instances of rhetorical violence that seep into the normal.

In reenactment, we find the reemergence and repetition of rhetorical violence that mark the universal quality Rau uses to describe his work. We find a sense of uncanny sameness: the familiar becomes unfamiliar. Repetition and, by proxy, reenactment is as much about the production of difference as it is about the production of sameness (173). When we watch a reenacted event, we see difference and sameness co-existing in the performance: Namely, the difference from the original and the sameness with the present. These qualities are built into the relationship productions have with time (past, present, and future). Productions explore the changeability of what Benjamin calls the messianic moments of cessation – fixed points of institutional memory and formalized history – in cultural memory. However, the continued

present-ness (now-ness) of these historical events is filled by Rau and his team with the everyday, unspectacular quality of Benjamin's homogenous, empty time. It is in this incorporation of homogenous, empty time into the messianic moment that we find both sameness *to the present* and difference *with the past*, as this past serves as an entrance for a critique of our present.

So, for the final time, what exactly is reenactment and what is its goal? The reenactment is an exact representation of the past as it is viewed from the present, a live performance of a memory that is perfect and complete in its utter imperfection and incompleteness. It is created through a process of collecting (listening, watching, reading, creating) seemingly dysphoric accounts and impossible details, and finding a way to bring them together in a single account. It celebrates the past, not because it fulfills a promise to the future, but because – in the simplest of terms – it simply was. It recognizes the simultaneous co-existence of failure and hope in a moment that we already know is tragic, but without forgetting or excluding the potential that it possessed at the moment it happened. It gazes at the past and the past's gesture to a future even though it recognizes that this gesture is itself already past – the promise and hope that existed in that moment and its failed potential. Still, the reenactment is also unwilling to give in entirely to a historical pessimism and, therefore, gestures to another future, but a future that exists on a more universal and global level. What the reenactment shows us is just *this*, at *this moment*, in *this place*.

Was ist in einem Wort das Ziel der Kunst?

Was ist der Lebenszweck des Künstlers?

Sich zu erheben

Zu hören

Und zu sehen.

Was?

Alles, aber nur DIES.

Wann?

Immer, aber nur in DIESEM Moment.

Wie?

Auf alle Arten, aber nur GENAU SO.

Wo?

Überall, aber nur HIER.

Denn GENAU DIES

Ist das Ziel.<sup>90</sup>

(“Unst” 233)

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<sup>90</sup> “What is, in a word, the goal of unst? / What is the life purpose of the unstler? / To elevate / To listen / And to see. / What? / Everything, but only THIS. / When? / Always, but only in THIS moment. / How? / In every way, but only EXACTLY SO. / Where? / Everywhere, but only HERE. / For EXACTLY THIS / Is the goal.” (“What is Unst?” 236)

### Chapter 3: Documentary Theatre and Recollection

The term recollection refers to a specific subsection of Milo Rau's work: monologic, first-person, autobiographical or semi-autobiographical repertoire productions. Recollection – similar to reenactment – is a fundamentally memory-based form of theatre. It engages with memory in a very different way than reenactment. Instead of beginning with a material base to access history, recollection creates the performance text based in the memory of performers and people surrounding the production. These productions pull from an extensive tradition of ethnographic and autoethnographic theatre present within an extensive, international documentary theatre tradition, paying special attention to the German- and English-speaking traditions – particularly the long-established British off-shoot of Verbatim theatre.

This chapter provides a very brief overview of the massive theatrical documentary tradition that recollection finds itself within, exploring where the IIPM draws inspiration for recollection projects like *Die Europa Trilogie* (2014-2016) as well as Rau's monologue plays with Swiss actor Ursina Lardi (\*1970). The overview also takes a special interest in the tribunal genre of documentary theatre, which straddles the line between early reenactment productions like *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009) and *Breiviks Erklärung* (2012) and reactment projects like *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (2013) and *Das Kongo Tribunal* (2015). This overview looks at methodologies of creation and the political impetus of documentary productions, while also identifying key terms of the genre and drawing parallels between historical and contemporary artists and the IIPM. The chapter is split into three sections: The first looks at documentary trial plays, picking up where Chapter One left off with the numerous Romanian plays written about the Romanian Revolution and then moving forward through history. The second looks at the broader documentary and Verbatim tradition, providing an overview of

documentary-style productions while looking at the creation and collection styles of various documentary artists. The third and final section takes a brief look at the true-crime documentary plays, exploring a few of the moral questions surrounding such productions.

There is inevitably overlap among the work produced by documentary artists, and there is, therefore, also an overlap in scholarly sources. Both the scripted trial and tribunal productions listed in this first section, as well as the ethnographic and Verbatim productions of the following section, fall under the umbrella of documentary theatre. Overlap occurs because it is also not uncommon for documentary artists (as is also the case with most theatre artists) to engage with various forms of documentary theatre. Therefore, even more than with reenactment discussed in the previous contextualizing chapter and the political actions in the next one, this chapter deals with a huge breadth of material, artists, productions, and creation styles. The often diverse and distinct artists and performances discussed here have been selected because of connections between specific productions, creation techniques, or inspirations and Rau's work.

### **3.1: Documentary Theatre – Trials and Tribunals on Stage**

There have been countless publications and essay volumes produced about documentary theatre and the many localized offshoots of the genre, including recreated trials and tribunals. The sources mentioned in this chapter represent only a limited number of the many I have accessed throughout my research. For those interested in the American documentary theatre from the past twenty years, Jacqueline O'Conner offers an excellent and specific introduction to trial/tribunal plays in *Documentary Trial Plays in Contemporary American Theater* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013). *With Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson present a collection

of articles that examine the genre's long tradition on a global scale. Carol Martin's *Theatre of the Real* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013) remains a staple text for the analysis of documentary and Verbatim theatre. Attilio Favorini's *Voicings: Ten Plays from the Documentary Theatre* (Hopewell, N.J.: Ecco Press, 1995) outlines ten classic documentary plays, offering both an excellent selection of classic plays within the genre as well as insight into the close reading of such texts. Additionally, Favorini's *Memory in Play: From Aeschylus to Sam Shepard* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) and Harold Weinrich's *Lethe: The Art and Critique of Forgetting* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) are required reading for any examination of documentary or, even more broadly, memory-based theatre.

The 1989 Romanian Revolution has served as fodder for numerous documentary projects from both Romanian and non-Romanian artists (including *Die letzten Tage*). Two of the earliest projects about the Romanian Revolution emerged from outside the country: English playwright Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest: A Play for Romania* and Bolivian playwright Maritza Wilde's (\*1948) *Adjetivos*, both produced in 1990. Unlike *Videograms of a Revolution* and *Auditions of a Revolution*, which engage with the mediality of the revolution, *Mad Forest* explores the growing frustration of the Romanian population, the revolution, and post-revolution anger, looking at the "melodramatic exit of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu" (Adiseshiah 284-285). Wilde employs the more traditional structure of the documentary trial popularized in the postwar period by Peter Weiss's *Die Ermittlung* (1964) and Heinar Kipphardt's (1922-1982) *In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer* (1964). *Adjetivos* – more along the lines of Irina Botea's later *Auditions of a Revolution* – is transparent in its reenactment, depicting two actors (El and Ella) attempting to reenact the trial and discussing strategies of reenactment (DiPuccio 68-69).

When examining the postwar documentary theatre, it is important to situate the reenactment as a subgenre or subsection of the larger tradition as it connects methodologically to the documentary plays discussed below. The documentary drama (particularly trial and tribunal dramas) incorporates elements of reenactment into performance. However, reenactment – as a theatrical device – is also present in the French existential theatre and there is a notable split present in the divergent postwar traditions of German documentary and French existential theatre. Although both explore questions of history and memory, they do so in significantly different ways. Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), a key figure of this existentialist tradition, explores how corporeality and habit are physicalized using techniques of repetition and reenactment (*Memory in Play* 186). Beckett's characters are trapped in a time-loop, stuck in a repetition and unable to move on, forced to relive it again and again: "Tomorrow's shivering will be, to some extent, a citation, a quotation, a re-enactment and not just a repetition" (McCarthy 5). The existentialist tradition is tied to a process of remembering but is more strongly connected to involuntary remembering (fragmented and hallucinatory flashes of a terrible past) and the repetition of habit (how the past is actualized and physicalized) (*Memory in Play* 186). These plays look at what is between the documentation, the horrors contained in the mundane and everyday rather than in events.

The early plays of the German documentary tradition sought to re-politicize a society still recovering from the aftermath of the National Socialist regime (Irmer 17). Their plays replaced fictional narratives with the real situations found in historical documents: trial transcripts, radio broadcasts, recorded speeches, and interviews (17). In response to the horrors of war – the horrors of the Holocaust and Auschwitz – the artists of the documentary tradition turned to a positivistic writing style, marked by an extreme fidelity to the source material – as if there were

some explanation to be found in the traces of the past. Playwrights use specific historical episodes to access universal themes – intolerance, cruelty, family, etc. – that translate across national or cultural consciousness (DiPuccio 69).

It is important to mention that while Rolf Hochhuth's (1931-2020) plays are often grouped into the canon of the early documentary theatre, productions such as *Der Stellvertreter* (1963) and *Soldaten* (1967) are not strictly documentary in that they mix documentary with fictional material. Conversely, plays such as Weiss's *Die Ermittlung* or Rolf Schneider's (\*1932) 1961/3<sup>91</sup> *Prozeß Richard Waverly* use eyewitness reports edited into cohesive, watchable productions. Similarly responding to national trauma, British-American playwright Eric Bentley's (1916-2020) *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been 1947-1958* (1972) used transcripts from the infamous investigation by the House Committee on Un-American Activities into show business to reflect on the witch-hunts of the McCarthy era that so casually blacklisted, vilified, and destroyed people fewer than twenty years earlier (within the memory of its audience). South African playwright Jane Taylor's (\*1956) experimental production *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (1997) also combines testimonies from the witnesses at the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Graham 12). Taylor uses this technique to dramatize the ruptures and displacements (the blanks) within the verbatim material, using live performance, puppetry, video, and recorded material (16).

Another, more contemporary, branch of documentary theatre is marked by directors and collectives like Christoph Schlingensiefel (1960-2010), Hans-Werner Kroesinger (\*1962), Rimini Protokoll (2000), and She-She-Pop (ca. 1993). This branch distinguishes itself from the first by using theatre to “problematize the continual negotiation between reality and its inevitable

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<sup>91</sup> The play was first a radio play and was adapted for the stage in 1963.

representations (by the media, technology, historiography, or politics). Their perspective is undeniably shaped by the deconstruction of notions like truth, factuality and knowledge” (Le Roy). The *possibility* introduced in productions distinguishes this particular subgenre: By revealing the document in its apparently *raw* form (of course, the document is not in truth shown in a *raw* form, but is carefully edited and mediated), the play challenges the superficial acceptance of events by society and introduces (or attempts to introduce) the possibility of change (Beumers & Lipovetsky 622).

A divide within source material is also visible in productions by these contemporary artists (although this divide is by no means definitive, but rather fluid, as often there is overlap in material): *found material* and *self-generated material*. Contemporary tribunal plays – specifically productions based on real-world judicial processes – have much in common with documentary playwrights like Weiss. In these plays, the playwright acts as an editor, condensing and framing the source material into a digestible form for the spectator. Tribunals such as Wooster Group’s *Town Hall Affair* (2016) work within this framework, reconstructing Chris Hegadus (\*1952) and D.A. Pennebaker’s (1925-2019) film *Town Bloody Hall*, a documentation of a 1971 debate on Women’s Liberation at Town Hall in New York City. Other examples include: TG STAN’s (1989; Belgium) *The Monkey Trial* (2004; the State of Tennessee vs. John Scopes, 1925), Dustin Lance Black’s (\*1974; United States) *8* (2014; Perry v. Schwarzenegger, 2009), Hans-Werner Kroesinger’s (Germany) *Q&A – Questions & Answers* (1996; Eichmann Trial, 1961) and *Ruanda Revisited* (2009; Rwandan Genocide), and Moisés Kaufman’s (\*1963) *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* (1997). The English Verbatim tradition has also produced tribunal plays such as Nicolas Kent (\*1945) and Richard Norton-Taylor’s (\*1944) work with the

Tricycle Theatre: *Nuremberg* (1996), *The Colour of Justice: The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry* (1999), and *Bloody Sunday* (2005) (Eckersley).

Another form of tribunal theatre employs a mixture of the pre-existing archival material (trial transcripts and other historical documents) and material specifically collected by the auteur(s). Playwright-directors engage in process of collection – finding and recording witness and expert testimony – thus generating its own material, which is then performed by actors – much like in the Verbatim tradition discussed below – while also engaging with this pre-existing (collected) material. The Silent University's *Tribunal 12* (2012) uses actors to bring the testimonies of migrants onto the stage and to reveal the legal, political, and moral failure of European refugee and asylum policies (Trnka). Likewise, Anestis Azas (\*1978) and Prodromos Tsinikoris's (\*1981) *Case Farmakonisi or the Justice of the Water* (2015) is a performative inquiry into a tragedy that took place on January 20, 2014, when a boat from Turkey carrying twenty-seven refugees from Afghanistan and Syria to Greece sank while being towed to the Greek Coast Guard, which led to the deaths of eleven people. The production features video testimony of the actual witnesses as well as four performers acting as narrators, presenting live interviews, and reenactments of meetings with the Coast Guard and survivors (Nikitas). However, like the trilogy at Tricycle Theatre, *Case Farmakonisi* is performed by a group of four professional actors rather than bringing the people interviewed for the production or those actually involved in the incident onto the stage.

The tribunal drama, still a mainstay of the documentary genre, is not simply a *play within a play* or an attempt to establish facts through the development of a hence unknown narrative through arguments and cross-examinations, but a *play about this play within a play* constructed from what we know about both the crime and the trial itself. These productions question the

present as well know it and interrogate the biases and shortcomings of existing judicial systems. As Jacqueline O'Connor explains in her examination of documentary trial plays in the American theatre, trial plays respond to shortcoming and skepticism of judicial systems that surround moments of political, social, and judicial turmoil – which inevitably lend themselves to dramatic adaptation:

The justice system, designed to serve as a neutral platform for the resolution of private and public discord, often fails to achieve or maintain proposed neutrality, fostering skepticism about whether courtroom procedures and decisions can produce both just and satisfactory denouements during times of major social conflicts [...] Not surprisingly, then, the controversies that prompt or result from these proceedings, fired as they are with narrative tension and ambiguity, have not languished in historical archives but have been recounted in biographies, critical studies, and film, theater, and television documentaries or dramatizations. Whether on the page, stage, or screen, contentious legal cases lend themselves to afterlives in representational forms, their investigative and performative elements readily adaptable to a variety of narrative genres. (2-3)

There is already something intrinsically dramatic within the judicial structure offered by the courtroom, much like true crime productions. These are plays that are ripped from the headlines and have been placed onstage because there is no satisfactory verdict or conclusion. The reconstruction and restaging of trials provide a social commentary not only on the crime or court case, but about the socio-political reality of the society where it occurred and the one for whom it is reenacted.

### **3.2: Verbatim Theatre – An Ethnographic Approach**

Among the best scholarship on British Verbatim theatre and contemporary Verbatim artists is Will Hammond and Dan Steward's volume *Verbatim, Verbatim: Contemporary Documentary Theatre* (London: Oberon, 2008). Günther Heeg, Chica Braun, Lars Krüger und Helmut Schäfer's Theater der Zeit volume of essays *Reenacting History: Theater & Geschichte* (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2014), previously discussed in Chapter One and also Magdalena Marszałek and Dieter Mersch's volume *Neue Realismen und Dokumentarismen in Philosophie und Kunst* (Diaphanes: Zurich, 2016) explore past and present trends in the Germany documentary theatre, including several articles written by documentary artists. Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik's volume *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013) looks at documentary impulses (built upon testimony and personal memory) within theatre, performance art, film, and art. A somewhat older, yet useful source that explores the development of a documentary tradition in English-speaking Canada is Alan Filewod's *Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

One distinguishing factor in the documentary tradition, is the difference between playwright/director-collectors and playwright/director-creators. Whereas collectors use pre-existing material – i.e., various documents and sources already in existence and archived – to write or compose a text, creators generate and create the conditions possible to generate the documents used for the text. Directors increasingly play the role of auteur-director – acting as both director and playwright – and, in cases like the Berlin-based group She-She-Pop, also as performers (Irmer 17). At the same time, the lines between these two categorizations are blurry as not all documentary-playwrights are directors and not all directors of documentary plays are playwrights. Many documentary-playwrights (like playwrights outside the documentary tradition) remain marginally involved in the rehearsal process, filling a more dramaturgical role

within productions (Alecky Blythe, Alana Valentine (\*1961)<sup>92</sup>) or remaining completely outside the process. Although complete distancing is admittedly less common in contemporary theatre and is more common with playwrights like Weiss and Kipphardt or independent stagings.

Looking at the British Verbatim theatre, an important and longstanding vein of the documentary tradition, many of the central figures of the genre – Robin Soans (\*1946), Blythe, Richard Norton-Taylor, and David Hare (\*1947)<sup>93</sup> – are firmly situated as playwrights and not as directors. Some, like Nicolas Kent,<sup>94</sup> are perhaps best-known for their work as directors or actors. This branch of the documentary tradition developed during a period of downturn in documentary theatre in Germany, which resulted in a rich tradition in the English-speaking realm that took its first shaky steps with Joan Littlewood’s (1914-2002) *Oh! What a Lovely War!* in 1963 (which, although it can certainly not be defined as Verbatim, chronicled the events of World War I through contemporaneous documents and songs) and Peter Cheeseman’s (1932-2010) documentary plays at the Victoria Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent in the early seventies (most famously *Fight for Shelton Bar*; 1974) (Paget 319). These early documentary-style plays, according to Clive Barker, marked “a whole new area of documentary opening-up – the direct communication, or second-hand communication, of lived experience through the actor as instrument” in Britain (Barker qtd. Paget 318; “Representation and Reality” 36).

The Verbatim theatre has proven to be a prolific and influential genre within the theatrical landscape of the United Kingdom: some of the most notable works in the Verbatim tradition include Blythe’s *Do We Look like Refugees* (2010) and *London Road* (2011), and

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<sup>92</sup> Alana Valentine is a critically acclaimed Australian playwright best-known for plays such as *Run Rabbit Run* (2004; about the South Sydney Rabbitohs’ fight against the National Rugby League) based on true events and constructed from interviews conducted by the playwright.

<sup>93</sup> Hare’s work is better described as partial-Verbatim, because – in comparison to most of the artist listed here who work exclusively in Verbatim – Hare has only dabbled in the style.

<sup>94</sup> Kent worked as the artistic director of Tricycle Theatre from 1994 until stepping down in 2012, during which time Tricycle became known for its programming of tribunal and Verbatim plays.

Soan's *Talking to Terrorists* (2005). Even playwrights like David Hare – who can certainly not be described as a documentary artist – have dabbled in Verbatim and been influenced by the practice as visible in productions like *Via Dolorosa* (1998), *The Permanent Way* (2003), and *Stuff Happens* (2005).

Verbatim theatre is described by many as a “fact-based theatre,” tying it to that troubled notion of authenticity (Wake 105; Young 21-22; “Trauma, Authenticity” 112). Authenticity in the Verbatim tradition translates roughly to experience based. Source material is often drawn from an extended process of interviews and interaction with the personal testimonies in an almost journalistic pursuit of an “honest” or “truthful” interpretation of the theme (“Trauma, Authenticity” 112). Verbatim, and indeed documentary, theatre is marked by a ghostly return of events that we know are in the past through testimony from interviewees or other sources, creating a space of renegotiation and a space to remaster the traumatic past (Young 25-26). Playwrights such as Blythe, like Rau and his dramaturgs in *The Civil Wars* (2014), *The Dark Ages* (2015), and *Empire* (2016), exclusively use the words spoken by interviewees: “Verbatim theatre is theatre created from real-life conversations [...] nothing in any of my work has been fictionalized or made up in terms of what is said” (Blythe qtd. in Troy-Donovan). Derry Playhouse’s “Theatre of Witness Ireland” explored the experiences and legacies of the conflict in Northern Ireland, where the audiences’ personal experience with the subject inherently *ghosts* (or *haunts*) the production (Upton 210). The inclusion of personal testimony, increasingly in the actual voice of the witness and/or survivor – which we also see in Rau’s reenactments – brings the British Verbatim tradition, and its many offshoots across the English-speaking world, close to the writers and collectives of continental Europe. Increasingly, a style of theatre emerges where personal testimony serves to fill an almost choral function, reflecting the voices of the

involved community. The overlap in memory is key, because it connects the audience with the subject matter, forcing them to ask: “Where do I fit into this?”

This increased interest in interviews and the use of the audio and visual records of these interviews marks another important shift since the early postwar period: a shift closely related to technological innovations. It marks a movement away from a theatre dependent on distance – maintaining a distance between the playwright and their subject – towards a more journalistic, involved theatre. For example, in Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater’s *The Laramie Project* (2000) and *Laramie Ten Years Later* (2009) – which explore the murder of Matthew Shepard – consisted of more than two hundred interviews conducted by the playwright (Young 28). In 2019, Canadian playwright Johnnie Walker created *Shove It Down My Throat*, which, told from the perspective of a journalist, examines the strange case of Luke O’Donovan (a queer man) who stabbed five men at a New Year’s party in 2014. Like *The Laramie Project*, Walker constructed his play based on the interviews and meetings with people involved in the incident (including O’Donovan himself). Tommy Lexen’s *Like Enemies of the State* (2013) interviewed eighteen former child soldiers in the Congo (Young 29). The American playwrights Jessica Blank (\*1975) and Erik Jensen (\*1970) created their 2002 play *The Exonerated* from sixty interviews with exonerated former death row inmates from across the United States, using court transcripts and case files to fill in the blanks (“Trauma, Authenticity” 115-116). Austrian playwright Kathrin Röggla (\*1971) conducted twenty-five long and fifteen short interviews with various business consultants, which she expanded into *wir schlafen nicht* (2004) (Krauthausen).

Journalism and rigorous journalistic research methods are key to this form of theatre. Both self-generated documentary theatre and journalism are interested in recording and preserving. Journalistic accounts of trials, protests, strikes, and political events contribute to an

archive of events and behavior. They construct an archived repertoire surrounding these events, recording the social performances, and they illustrate how social codes are reproduced within the structure of events such as protests and trials, or even more mundane, everyday events like weddings (*Archive and Repertoire* 20-21). Diana Taylor – using the example of marriage – explains the archive and the repertoire work in tandem: “weddings need both the performative utterance of ‘I do’ and the signed contract; the legality of a court decision lies in the combination of the live trial and the recorded outcome; the performance of a claim contributes to its legality” (21). Journalism archives these embodied acts through *thick descriptions*<sup>95</sup> of the event: What happened in the court? What did the witnesses say? How did they say it? What is the reaction in- and outside the court? What is being protested? How is it being protested? What is the reaction to the protest? In an almost complimentary fashion, documentary seeks to re-embodiment these archived behaviors and practices by considering the collection and combination of gestures that come together to create the ritual and form the event.

Quality journalism looks at cultural gestures – political, social, and economic rituals within a specific culture – and attempts to both archive and analyze. The documentary theatre attempts to re-embodiment these inherently liminal events. It restages these ritualistic elements that appear repeatedly (but never identically). In the restaging and re-embodiment of these rituals, a critical element appears within the performance that also appears in the journalist’s published

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<sup>95</sup> Geertz borrows the term the “thick description” from Gilbert Ryle for his methodology of ethnography. He defines it so: “the point is between what Ryle calls the ‘thin description’ of what the rehearse (parodist, winker, twitcher . . .) is doing (‘rapidly contracting his right eyelids’) and the ‘thick description’ of what he is doing (‘practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion’) lies the object of ethnography: a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies are produced, perceived, and interpreted, and without which they would not (not even the zero-form twitches, which *as a cultural category*, are as much non-winks as winks are non-twitches) in fact exist, no matter what anyone did or didn’t do with his eyelids” (Geertz 7). The thick description thus takes an inside view of societal and cultural gestures and events (moving towards anecdotal, where the description is in part a description of the anthropologist/ethnographers’ own experiences within the event).

thick description of the event. Thus, the documentary theatre is closely connected to German visual artist Joseph Beuys's (1921-1986) concept of the "living archive." The living archive, according to Beuys, is a form of preservation within art that looks to past ideas to uncover new concepts within their preserved remains (Biddle 28). Much like the documentary tradition looks at the past through the lens of the present and uses this past to read the present, Beuys's living archive seeks to bring ideas forward, "not necessarily just preserving them for posterity, but preserving their vitality" (28).

It is not just the extensive and detailed research of journalistic methodology that influences the artistic landscape (and indeed academic, political, and judicial institutions) ("Recherche" 155). The past hundred years of developments in journalism and journalistic research methods are mirrored by upheavals in art. It is, as Rau points out, no coincidence that many important artists – Zola, Godard, Hemingway, and many more – began their careers as journalists (154-155). An extremely significant shift in both journalism and art is marked by the New Journalism movement of the 1960s. The new journalists took a more sociological approach than traditional journalism, taking an inside (subjective) view of the event they reported (Meisenhelder 470). Instead of locating themselves outside the event as an impartial, objective observer, journalists now identified themselves as active participants (471-472).

One of the underlying changes in the wake of New Journalism is the recognition of a link between the personal and the political (now largely accepted as common knowledge): the inherent relation between "the prosaic close-to-home and the broad ideals and ideologies of History" (Schudson 42). Instead of focusing on the dry facts of old school journalism ("who-what-when-where-why"), journalists shifted towards the anecdotal, looking at the individual

(often personal) experience as an entrance into larger societal issues (42).<sup>96</sup> Michael Schudson explains in “‘The Sociological Imagination’ as Cliché,” “Journalism may begin with a raindrop to help the audience appreciate the weight of a downpour” (43). This trend is visible in theatre through work such as Yaël Farber’s (\*1971) *He Left Quietly* (2008), which looks at the life of her actor Duma Kumalo (d. 2006) and his experience as a black man in Apartheid Era South Africa. Farber worked intensely with Kumalo over an extended period of time to create a play about his experiences and the broader implications of them in South Africa and around the globe (“Trauma, Authenticity” 115).

This shift towards the anecdotal within journalism and its extension into the documentary and broader theatrical tradition has several side effects. The use of anecdotal narrative in Rau’s work – visible in *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs* (2015), *Everywoman* (2020), and even *LENIN* (2017) – unsurprisingly, connects Rau and other artists who similarly engage with anecdote to sociologist C. Wright Mills’s concept of the *sociological imagination* and its potentially liberating function. Instead of viewing the troubles of others as the result of a personal failing or moral fault, these troubles are interpreted as part of a larger societal or systemic issue. A sense of solidarity emerges in the movement from personal to societal, private to public, specific to general, and local to global: “A recognition of common humanity gives people a motive to engage in collective and political action to remedy the structural failings that gave rise to the public issue in the first place” (Schudson 43).

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<sup>96</sup> This offers another interesting entrance into Rau’s *Die letzten Tage*. The historical reenactment at the core indeed focuses on the “who-what-where-when,” presenting the trial as an image-based replication of the original event. However, the anecdotal also presents itself quite explicitly in the series of monologues based on Rau’s interviews with witnesses (this same device is also present in *Hate Radio*). Rau, as is illustrated in later chapters, often uses this anecdotal quality in his work. The three plays of *Die Europa Trilogie* are constructed completely from the anecdotal memories of the participants to explore more universal themes.

This movement from specific to universal is key to Rau's work, which asks: what does this historical incident mean not only to this individual, but to the larger community to which they belong? It is located in Rau's keen interest in the experience of the individual and their personal connection to the event. While certainly not every documentary drama centers around personal memories and anecdotes, they often play at least a passing role in documentary productions. The inclusion of anecdotal narratives as a central mechanism of plot reflects on the event, not on an ideological level – although there is an inevitable ideological influence – but on a personal, individual level.

Even the tribunal drama genre accesses this anecdotal quality – admittedly to a lesser extent. *Die Ermittlung*, for example, uses witness testimony from the Frankfurt Trials to explore the larger themes of the production. However, even within the extremely specific context of the Holocaust and crimes of the National Socialist regime, there remains the possibility for universalization (or movement outwards to other genocides that have subsequently taken place) within the text. The actual text of such plays can also be overwritten by experience: the Rwandan-Congolese company Urwintore's 2007 production of *Die Ermittlung*, for example, overlies Weiss's text with the bodies and experiences of company members – survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Here, the lived experience, *das Erlebnis*, of the performer – seven Rwandan and Congolese actors – and director Dorcy Rugamba (\*1969) (who also collaborated with Rau for *Hate Radio* (2011)) are implicitly omnipresent throughout the performance (Millard).

There is significant overlap between the Verbatim tradition and the interview-based process of many of the above-mentioned artists. Alecky Blythe, for example, creates an audio script made up of from recorded interviews that the actors mimic, rather than writing a formal a

script (“Voice, Body” 370). American documentary playwright Anna Deavere Smith (\*1950), known for documentary plays such as *Fires in the Mirror* (1992) and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (1994), also uses tape recordings of interviews for her actors (369).

The most famous practitioners of the self-generated tradition are Rimini Protokoll with their *experts of the everyday* (Cornish 81-82). Here, instead of placing the experience of the playwright at the center of the production or the experience of outside persons, witnesses (the *experts*) are invited onto the stage or screen or street to share their experiences personally. Since its formation in 2000, Rimini Protokoll have created numerous audio walks, performances, installations, and performance events that have been met with massive international critical success (*rimini-protokoll.de*). Their experts are *real people* invited to interpret the subject matter and performance space through the lens of non-professional actors and infuse it with their own expertise (Upton 212). Instead of an actor’s performance, the audience is presented with a highly personal and subjective account. German director Volker Lösch (\*1963) is also known for his use of lay-actors as choruses in productions of classic plays. His 2003 *Oresteia*<sup>97</sup> used a chorus of fifteen men and thirteen women – elderly, unemployed, or pensioners – from the former DDR, and *Medea* (2007) included sixteen Turkish women as the chorus. Lösch uses the lay chorus as a device to convey the “political dimension of a collective which can be experienced physically and which stands in the general public” (Lösch qtd. “Choric Theatre” 341). The purpose of these lay-choruses is to grant voice and visibility to those often pushed to the margins of society. Swiss-Yenish journalist-playwright Mariella Mehr (\*1947) draws on her own autobiography for her plays, using her experiences as a member of Europe’s itinerant Yenish community for *Kinder der Landstrasse* (1986), *Silvia Z.* (1986), and *Anni B.* (1989) (Finnan 146; 154).

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<sup>97</sup> The original production of *Oresteia* did not include the thoughts of the chorus in the performance. However, later productions incorporated these testimonies into the actual production.

Many recent examples of contemporary documentary theatre groups similarly construct their productions around the experiences of their performers. For example, the Belgium-based group Groupov used the experiences of actors who survived the Rwandan genocide as source material for *Rwanda 94* (2001) (Moelker 42). Similarly, the seven-person Berlin-based collective She-She-Pop, made up of six female members and one male, employs the personal experience of its members to explore themes of voyeurism, artistic prostitution, and the female experience within the theatre. The primary devising strategy employed by the artists is to draw from their autobiographical and personal experience in combination with an existing text. The group's website explains, "Das Einbeziehen der eigenen Autobiografie ist dabei vor allem Methode, nicht Zweck der Arbeit" (*sheshepop.de*).<sup>98</sup> Recent projects from She-She-Pop have combined autobiography with classical dramas from William Shakespeare (*Testament*; 2010), Heinrich von Kleist (*She She P. ist die Marquise von O...*; 2011), Anton Chekhov (*7 Schwestern*; 2011), and Frank Wedekind (*50 Grades of Shame*; 2016) (*sheshepop.de*). IIPM productions and NTGent productions also employ this technique of infusing the real experiences and memories of the performers into a chosen historical event or a classic to create something more than a straightforward reenactment of the source material.<sup>99</sup>

A form of documentary theatre that, particularly since 2015, has gained increased popularity is refugee theatre. In Germany, many state- and city-funded theatres have formed refugee ensembles with migrants from war-torn nations like Syria. These ensembles – like the Münchner Kammerspiele's Open Border Ensemble – work to combine theatre with life-

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<sup>98</sup> "The integration of individual autobiography is above everything else process, not the purpose of the work."

<sup>99</sup> However, even in Rau's more classic reenactments (*Die letzten Tage* and *Hate Radio*) open and close the performance with pre-filmed performances of compository survivor/witness testimony. Even *Breiviks Erklärung* (2012) is always followed with an audience talkback as a way to incorporate spectator experience into the production, because Breivik's crimes remain in the collective memory of most audience members.

experience in biographic performances, providing a space to explore and analyze social and cultural narratives (“Open Border Ensemble”). Perhaps the best known of these ensembles is Berlin’s Maxim Gorki Theater’s Exile Ensemble,<sup>100</sup> founded in January 2017, with productions like Yael Ronen’s (\*1976) *Winterreise* رحلة الشتاء a partial reenactment and the company’s first production (April 2017). The ensemble is made up of professionally trained actors from Afghanistan, Syria, and Palestine and bases its plays (which are collectively devised and written) on their experiences in Germany, emphasizing cultural differences and difficulties.<sup>101</sup> Regardless of whether she is working with the Exile Ensemble, Ronen – known for self-aware productions such as *The Situation* (2015), *Lost and Found* (2015) and *Point of No Return* (2016) – always incorporates her actors’ experiences, combining them with pre-existing, found documents like security footage or pictures.

Another German theatre collective, andcompany&Co. (2003), creates what is best described as a “popmodern” documentary remix theatre. The company’s founding members Alexander Karschnia (\*1973), Nicola Nord (\*1975), and Sascha Sulimma explain their process as employing “Remix, Sample, copy&paste, Collage” to create a “Poptheater” (“andcompany&Co./about”). Their productions intermix the performers’ and creators’ personal history with pop culture references and pressing political issues as creative fodder in the self-proclaimed “postdramatic” style of productions like *little red (play): “herstory”* (2006), *Black Bismark revisited* (2015), and *89/90: The Great Disintegration* (2019) (“andcompany&Co./about”; Ganz 204). Andcompany&Co. is certainly not the only group to work within this postmodern documentary-style. The British-German collective GOB Squad

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<sup>100</sup> The Exile Ensemble as of January 2018 consists of Ayham Majid Agha (Syria), Maryam Abu Khaled (Palestine), Hussein Al Shatheli (Syria), Karim Daoud (Palestine), Tahera Hashemi (Afghanistan), Mazen Aljubbeh (Syria), and Kenda Hmeidan (Syria).

<sup>101</sup> The Exile Ensemble is expected to create two new productions per year.

(1994) has similarly used biography as an entrance into their “Theater des Symbolischen [...] und Imaginären” (Wehren 226-227).<sup>102</sup> While GOB Squad does not exclusively create documentary theatre, their 2011 co-production with CAMPO Ghent’s *Before Your Very Eyes* explored growing up, playing with the sociological concepts of *habitus* and normalization (225). *Before Your Very Eyes* was created as part of the same collaboration series, which five years later would produce Rau’s *Five Easy Pieces* – as well as *üBUNG* (Josse De Pauw (\*1952); 2001), *That Night Follows Day* (Tim Etchells (\*1962); 2004), and *Next Day* (Philippe Quesne (\*1970); 2014) – and began Rau’s longstanding relationship with Ghent.

### 3.3: Crime Reconstruction

Like the trial format, crime reconstruction and true crime productions have a built-in dramatic structure (or, at any rate, built-in drama) and, for spectators, an increased level of intrigue: the more infamous the crime, the bigger the draw.<sup>103</sup> The term crime reconstruction is taken from the forensic process undertaken by experts and law enforcement after a crime has occurred. These processes are about attempting to piece together what happened before, during, and after the incident. As Ross Gardner and Tom Bevel summarize in their criminology textbook, *Practical Crime Scene Analysis and Reconstruction*, summarize, crime scene reconstruction “involves evaluating the context of scene and the physical evidence found there in an effort to identify what occurred and in what order it occurred” (1). In theatre, crime reconstruction takes on a similar meaning-making function, attempting to explain to its audience what happened.

However, productions reflect on the socio-political realities of the crime and the society within it

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<sup>102</sup> “Theatre of the symbolic and the imaginary.”

<sup>103</sup> The infamy rule is certainly also very true within film and television. There is a reason there are so many films, Netflix docu-series, series produced by Ryan Murphy, and television shows about well-known serial killers and infamous landmark cases.

occurs and they explore the residual dissatisfaction surrounding the judicial conclusion (or lack thereof) to the crime.

Section two of this chapter mentioned two examples of crime reconstruction within theatre: the most famous example of theatrical crime reconstruction *The Laramie Project* and a lesser-known example *Shove It Down My Throat*. Both productions (with varying degrees of success) use a combination of quasi-journalistic, ethnographic research by talking to people in the community about the crime and engaging in extensive archival research. Like law enforcement and forensic experts, the makers of crime reconstruction productions engage in an analysis so as to understand an event that is, at its core, both unexplainable and unrepresentable. However, playwrights are faced with the difficulty of constructing a story where the truth of what actually happened is elusive, coupled with the question of how to represent a real-world tragedy without fetishizing or glorifying the violence of the underlying crime. Creators like Rau and Kaufmann face the very real danger of fetishizing the violence and horror of crimes, undermining the real pain and suffering of victims, survivors, and families for the sake of aestheticization

### **3.4: Transition – Recollection**

Since the foundation of the IIPM in 2008, testimony and first-person experience has played an important role in Rau's repertoire productions. At about the same time that Rau and his production company began employing these ethnographic techniques, German and Swiss groups like Rimini Protokoll and She-She-Pop had become mainstays of the German-speaking theatre scene and Hans-Werner Kroesinger's plays were being performed in city- and state-funded theatres and festivals across Germany. The technique Rau and his dramaturgical team employ in

recollection productions appeared in the middle of an accepted theatrical movement, as well as from the well-trodden ground of documentary and Verbatim theatre. Recollection, as the next chapter shows, engages in an undeniably ethnographic process. It, like in recent trends in Verbatim theatre, uses the autobiographical memories of its performers collected during rehearsal. More broadly, Rau uses the actors' past experiences as a way to enter into contemporary crises, similar to what Weiss did in *Die Ermittlung* with the Auschwitz Trials. Although the recollection plays discussed in the following chapter are undoubtedly important and effective, they are part of a practice of established and emerging artists engaging in journalistic and research-based creation processes.

### Chapter 4: What is Recollection?

*“I construct my memories with my present. I am lost, abandoned in the present. I try in vain to rejoin the past: I cannot escape.”*  
*Nausea*, Jean-Paul Sartre, 53

This chapter explores autoethnographic plays in Milo Rau’s oeuvre, a category is here referred to as recollection. Recollection is about the act of remembrance and the continued impact of event(s) on the individual and the present. Recollection is about the spectator’s act of witnessing (or re-witnessing) performed testimony. Recollection performances look at how the small, individual event or experience fits into the big, traumatic history. These are monologue productions where the roles are constructed using direct quotation to create the performance text. Monologues like those in *Die Europa Trilogie* are compository, meaning they combine personal experiences from the lives of the actors to create a self-contained performance. By comparison, monologues like those in *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs* (2015) – as well as in the prologues and epilogues of *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009) and *Hate Radio* (2011) – are composites of interviews conducted during the research and rehearsal period, not pulled directly from the actor’s autobiography (although certain elements may be, such as Dorcy Rugumba’s real relation as an escapee of the Rwandan genocide, or Ursina Lardi’s real experience teaching abroad). Recollection fosters a performative space in which the fragmented self (the *I* or *Ich*) meets the totalizing, ordering forces of history (“Affirmation” 12-13). The performance style re-frames history from a grandiose, formal narrative into something individual – smaller but for the teller, no less grandiose – private, unordered, and (in an absolutely unique and singular sense) true (“Ereignis” 69). True in recollection bears a strong similarity to truth in reenactment, it means true to the individual not necessarily true in the sense of capital-H,

institutionalized history. In Rau's words, recollection happens when "Weltgeschichte wird aus der Perspektive privater Erfahrungen erzählt" ("Jeder tötet" 134).<sup>104</sup>

The starting point for recollection is – as with reenactment – Kierkegaard, who famously stated: "Repetition and recollection are the same movement, just in opposite directions because what is recollected has already been and is thus repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forwards" (*The Repetition* 3). While the reenactment happens forwards – i.e., in real time, unreflected and uncommented upon – recollection is a past-tense exploration of an event (or series of events). Remembering, while certainly part of recollection, is different than performing the historical event as done in reenactment. Recollection, as the term implies, fits within both the private and public sphere because it is about the performance of sharing a personal memory. It is more closely connected to the private and intimate conversations between family and friends. This term, in addition to describing a specific form of remembering, is indicative of how the productions' dramaturgy functions, collecting the memories and experiences of their actors, re-organizing them, re-arranging them, and repeating them on the stage.

These productions use a technique of collection and rearrangement. Recollection is marked by the three plays of *Die Europa Trilogie – The Civil Wars* (2014), *The Dark Ages* (2015), and *Empire* (2016) – and is also used in the Trilogy of Representation – *Five Easy Pieces*, *Die 120 Tage von Sodom*, and *La Reprise*.<sup>105</sup> *Europa Trilogie* consists of a series of

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<sup>104</sup> "World history told from the perspective of private experience."

<sup>105</sup> In 2019, Rau redefined the existing trilogies and changed his third trilogy to the Trilogy of Belgian Crimes – effectively cutting out the Trilogy of Representation. This trilogy includes *Five Easy Pieces* (2016), *La Reprise* (2018), and *Familie* (2020). I find this trilogy more compelling than the Trilogy of Representation, because *Die 120 Tage von Sodom* – while without a doubt exploring a problematic social issue using a scandalous and graphic film – does something quite different than either *Five Easy Pieces* or *La Reprise* with recollection and reenactment. I therefore draw more heavily on these two plays than on *Die 120 Tage von Sodom* in this analysis.

thematically parallel monologues about its actors,<sup>106</sup> creating a loose descriptive narrative of recent European history. Specifically, a history that privileges Europe's ever-changing, ever-shifting population – the stories and struggles of its common people – rather than, like most histories of Europe, those of its leaders. The trilogy writes a pre-history for Europe – a history for a *new Europe* based largely on a traumatic rather than heroic narrative. These are productions as much about gaps in memory – traumatic absence – as they are about the production of presence. Productions engage in a process of *unconcealing* absence – what do (and don't) we remember? – exploring both individual and collective trauma through a cacophony of individual voices united in a symphony. This meeting of a single trauma within the larger historical picture – assuming trauma never occurs in isolation but as part of a repeating and reverberating continuum – is key to recollection.

#### **4.1: A Theatre of Self: Acting Autoethnographically**

Recollection invites the audience into the experiences of the actors. Spectators appear to share in the private form of remembering that usually happens among family and friends in private spaces like the home transposed into the public setting of the theatre. The performance takes the form of a conversation: not a direct conversation among actors, but a rhetorical one among actors who perform a specific version of themselves. This rhetorical quality is furthered by the intermediality of recollection. All recollection productions employ live projection (fig. 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33). Through the use of the live projection of the actor onto a screen placed above the actors, the actor appears to be looking directly at the audience. However,

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<sup>106</sup> One of the major claims surrounding Rau that began with *Europa Trilogie*, involves the director's work with amateur actors. However, it is important to point out that the use of amateur actors in Rau's work is most prevalent in the Representation Trilogy and Rau's later work with NTGent (where he included working with amateurs in the theatre's manifesto). In *Europa Trilogie* the only amateur actor/performer is Sudbin Musić.

this apparent direct address is a trick of the camera, because they are, in truth, always looking directly into the camera and never at the audience. They, therefore, engage in a closed (filmic) acting style rather than an open (theatrical) one.

The camera – always operated by another performer – provides a live feed of the performer and their monologue, which is projected onto the large screen over the stage just above where the subtitles are projected.<sup>107</sup> A duality emerges in that the actor is looking at the camera rather than the other actors or the audience during these monologues. The audience must constantly choose between which version of the actor and the narrative they engage with at a single moment: Do they engage with the medial version, the projection of the actor (a close-up of their face), or the evidence/additional visual information provided by the actors (photographs, maps, short videos, etc.) that are projected onto the screen? Or, do they ignore the medial aspect of the performance and instead watch the live actors onstage as they interact (or not) with each other and the camera? Do they choose the human element of the production, or their medial double?

This intermedial doubling is a hallmark of Rau and IIPM productions. It places the spectator at eye level with the performer and their stories. The camera provides the spectators with a close up of what is happening onstage on both a filmic and emotional sense.<sup>108</sup> Both the close-up effect of the camera and the intimate, undramatic staging of performances creates the sense of a private, one-on-one conversation, creating the illusion (but only the illusion) of what is not possible in theatre: i.e., a truly private conversation, without forcing (or allowing) the

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<sup>107</sup> Almost all of the productions I have seen by the IIPM have had subtitles, even when the main language spoken in the production is the local language.

<sup>108</sup> This filmic quality is arguably perfected in Rau's 2017 co-production with the Berliner Schaubühne, *LENIN*, which is the equivalent of watching a documentary filmed live on stage. *LENIN* combines the historical events of 1917 and the slow (utterly untheatrical) death of Vladimir Lenin) with the motifs of classic Russian tragedy (*à la* Chekhov: the desire to return to Moscow, a struggle for power, and ultimate disappointment).

audience into a participatory mode. However, it is only an illusion. The actual remembering that happens on stage is the actors remembering (and, of course, performing) their lines. Everything – the monologues, emotions, and movements – that happens on stage is rehearsed and precisely re-enacted. It does not invite the audience to respond as they would in an actual conversation, although productions do, at times, ask questions directed towards the audience. However, these questions – like Ursina Lardi’s “Was ist die Situation?”, What’s the situation?, in *Mitleid* – are not meant to be answered and if they were, the actor has no response. Rau’s theatre neither breaks the fourth wall,<sup>109</sup> nor demands the audience to respond.<sup>110</sup> In recollection, even the actors do not respond to one another, nor can they. In *Europa Trilogie*, each actor performs their monologues in their native language: for example, in *Empire*, Akillas Karazissis speaks Greek, Maia Morgenstern Romanian, Ramo Ali Kurdish, and Rami Khalaf Arabic. They are alone together in the theatre. Even the spectator can only access the majority of monologues on a textual level, through the surtitles projected above the stage.

The camera provides a close-up of the actor’s face, showing the actor’s full range of emotions and highlighting the difference between stage and film acting. Rau explains that showing the audience the faces of the performers through projection is “ein besonders interessanter Aspekt aller drei Inszenierungen [of the *Europa Trilogie*]” (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 74).<sup>111</sup> It fulfills a specific function within productions, namely: “Es stellt sich die Frage, was mit den Zuschauern geschieht, die sie ansehen. Oder anders gefragt: Was *sehen* eigentlich

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<sup>109</sup> *The Civil Wars, The Dark Ages, Empire, Mitleid/Compassie, Orestes in Mosul*, and *Lam Gods* employ a technique of meta-theatre, creating the illusion of breaking the fourth wall, directing their monologues outwards to the audience or acknowledging they are in a theatre.

<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, even in Rau’s political action pieces such as *Moscow Trials, Zurich Trials, The Congo Tribunal*, and *The General Assembly*, the people who pay to enter the theatre or the performance space to watch have no voice in the action.

<sup>111</sup> “an especially interesting aspect of all three productions.”

diese Zuschauer – mehr al sein Hörspiel mit Gesichtern?“ (74).<sup>112</sup> The concept of seeing the actors not as performers but as versions of themselves is unique to the particular form of *autoethnographic* theatre Rau engages with in recollection. Actors speak about how they experienced a specific moment in time – not in a grand historical sense but from an individual, personal perspective (23-24). Productions find connections between the individual’s unique experiences with larger historical and traumatic events. More than any of Rau’s other performance styles, recollection is a *theatre of self*. It engages in a research method that foregrounds the researcher’s personal experience (*auto*) in an attempt to represent (*graphy*) cultural experiences (*ethno*).

Norman Denzin, in *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (2003), explains: “[t]he task of autoethnography [...] helps the writer make sense of the autobiographic past [...] Autoethnography becomes a way of recreating and re-writing the biographic past, a way of making the past part of the biographic present” (Denzin 14-15). By uniting the actor as professional with actor as self, and the “mundane simplicity and statistics” of daily life with the traumatic moments of Europe’s recent past illustrate how personal experience becomes, as Rau’s theory partner Rolf Bossart explains, “a historical one” (“Jeder tötet” 135; “Schicksal” 357). It brings the actor together with the audience in what Denzin describes as a *jointly felt and shared field of experience* (Denzin 37). The performance of autobiographical memory reveals a universality among actors and spectators. It is an autoethnographic theatre that foregrounds the actors’ personal as well as cultural experiences to explore the foundations of identity, as Rau explains: “The world is reflected in every individual, if one only looks long enough” (“Von Molenbeek” 12-13; Stern 84).

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<sup>112</sup> “It posits the question what is happens with the audience who watch these images? Or, to put it differently: What exactly are these spectators *seeing* – other than a radio play with faces?”

Rau explains that recollection, in its specificity and personalness, reaches for the universality: “Every individual is nothing and also the entire world, or as Jean-Paul Sartre wrote in his autobiography (and Rau quotes in his writing about *Europa Trilogie*): “If I relegate impossible Salvation to the prop room, what remains? A



Figure 18: *The Dark Ages* (Residenz Theater Munich; 2015); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Left to Right: Sudbin Musić, Sanja Mitrović, Vedrana Seksan, Manfred Zapatka, projection: Manfred Zapatka; Photo Credit: Thomas Dashuber

whole man, composed of all men and as good as all of them and no better than any” (“Von Molenbeek” 13). As is also the case with reenactment, there is something notably anti-Aristotelian in this philosophy. Recollection productions share the non-plot seen reenactment discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, but recollection also engages with the concept of the tragic hero. In *Poetics*, Aristotle explains that the tragic character must be a character of a higher type:

Since the objects of imitation are men in action, and these men must be either of a higher or a lower type (for moral character mainly answers to these divisions, goodness and badness being the distinguishing marks of moral differences), it follows that we must represent men either as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are. (Aristotle)

Both the *Europa Trilogie* and Representation Trilogy have their actors play versions of themselves, revealing details and experiences from their personal lives. Rau and his team recognize that, in today’s society, celebrities (particularly those of television and film) have

overtaken the position formerly held by great leaders and royalty in ancient tragedies. Celebrities are now the characters who are placed on a pedestal. However, Rau also shows his actors in a notably human light: they are neither better nor worse than the spectators. They are united with the audience in the revealed normalcy of their shared experiences, in their humanity. Yet, like the *Reenactment Trilogy*, these productions tap into celebrity culture, using famous, easily recognizable actors of both stage and screen – actors who members of the audience recognize from past roles.

In recollection, it is significant who is speaking: Is it a professional actor? An amateur? An adult? A child? Recollection asks both “Who tells history?” and “Who is allowed to tell history?” It asks: *what does this body at this moment mean in this role?* IIPM theatre and film productions – across all of the organizational categories discussed in this study – are hyperaware of the celebrity power of their actors. Rau and his dramaturgs are acutely aware that in the Western European ensemble and city-/state-funded theatre structure, the theatre is part of a *specialist culture*. Professional actors are specialists. Their audiences routinely see the same actors in different productions (as well as local film and television) and, as Marvin Carlson states, they “inevitably carry some memory of those actors from production to production” (53). Joseph Roach similarly explains this doubling (which is eventually exacerbated by the actor’s real death<sup>113</sup>) as “[t]he passage between life and art, identity and role, enacted by their bodies as a condition of their employment, heightens their liminality in the rituals that mark their passing between life and death” (78). For the spectator, the actors’ inevitably liminal body, holds an immortal quality connecting the fragile, aging body with the canonical. Rau pushes against this immortal quality by showing the actor-celebrity outside their roles, in a human light.

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<sup>113</sup> As opposed to the many deaths of the many roles all actors perform throughout their careers.

Rau employs what Roach calls the *monstrous double* of the actor's *vulnerable body* as a foil to their *other body*, or performance body (82). The other body is the body that we, as spectators, are conditioned to see. It is constructed around past roles and performances and is disconnected from the actor's vulnerable body, made up of the personal experiences of the actor as a private person. As Marvin Carlson explains, in ensemble theatre structures, spectators become accustomed to seeing actors in specific roles and/or as particular character types. The actor therefore becomes associated with these roles/types of roles – which is even more true for film and television actors who bring not only past theatrical works onto the stage, but also their film roles (58, 70).<sup>114</sup> The other body, Roach explains, is immune to the human fallibility of the vulnerable body and connected to the haunted one, it “[t]ranscend[s] the body of flesh and blood, this other body consisted of actions, gestures, intonations, vocal colors, mannerisms, expressions, customs, protocols, inherited routines, authenticated traditions – ‘bits.’ Like the king’s body politic, the actions of this theatrical body could not be invalidated by age or decrepitude” (Roach 93). It is this split between art and life, which is interconnected with the public and private divide that surrounds the actor, that makes revealing the performer as a private person outside the theatre so jarring. Autoethnographic performances, while extremely aware of the actor's other body,<sup>115</sup> reveal the physical and figurative scars and injuries that exist outside performance. The autoethnographic performance creates a strange uncanny through the intertextuality of performer as performer, performer as private person, and the expectations of the audience. Rau similarly describes this uncanniness in his productions:

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<sup>114</sup> “In the operations of traditional theatre, East and West, in which audiences are normally accustomed to relatively stable companies of actors who offer the same plays over and over again, they become accustomed to seeing certain actors appearing again and again in specific roles or in specific types of closely related roles and soon come to associate those actors with those roles or types of roles” (Roach 58).

<sup>115</sup> The short excerpts of canonical productions in *Europa Trilogie* (*The Cherry Orchard* in *The Civil Wars*, *Hamlet* in *The Dark Ages*, and *Medea* in *Empire*) and *Hamlet*'s father's monologue in *La Reprise*.

Die seit einigen Jahren dogmatisch gewordene Forderung, dass die Künstlerin, der Künstler mit einer deutlichen und reinen Stimme zu sprechen habe, dass er oder sie der Gesellschaft vorangehen, sie provozieren, je nach Charakter auf satirische, hysterische oder ernsthafte Art an ihre Grundwerte, ihre Geschichte, ihre Verbrechen, ihre Traditionen und ihre Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten erinnern soll, ist mir deshalb, so verständlich sie mir als Bürger ist, als Künstler unheimlich.<sup>116</sup> (“Autor” 50)

What we see in recollection is the overt use of this uncanniness. The actor is both extremely recognizable (we know this body, because it is haunted by the past roles it has inhabited that we have seen), but it is unrecognizable because we do not actually know this person (i.e., the actor themselves).

Rau describes his actors in *Europa Trilogie* as *allegorical figures*. Rau means that they are *allegorical* in that they present the *essence* of our time:

Das ist für meine Ästhetik extrem wichtig: Die Subjektconstitution ist eine Besitznahme, ein Vorgang des Anheim-Fallens an etwas grundsätzlich Anderes. [...] Aus der Generalisierung des Eigentlichen bei seiner eingehenden Untersuchung entstehen allegorische Figuren, eben dieses *Ich*, das als Beispielsfigur in seiner Zeit lebt, die es formt und zu der es sich verhält.<sup>117</sup> (“Essay” 74-75; italics in original)

What allegory means in recollection, is that the singular individual and their experiences stand in as a whole for an entire group: the thirteen actors in *Europa Trilogie* come to represent all of

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<sup>116</sup> The claim, which over the past few years has become dogma, is that artists have to have a clearer and purer voice, that they lead the community, that, depending on their character, they, in a satirical, hysterical or serious way, provoke so to recall their basic values, their history, their crimes, their traditions and their developmental possibilities. This is so self-evident to me as a citizen that as an artist it is uncanny (“What is an Author” 269).

<sup>117</sup> “That is extremely important for my aesthetic: The constitution of the subject is a process of taking possession, a process through which the local disaster becomes something completely different. [...] During their in-depth investigation, allegorical figures emerge from the generalisation of the real, this very *I [self]* is exemplary of its time, which forms it and to which it relates.”

Europe and Lardi, in *Mitleid*, is representative of what could be described as a Western European mindset (but also of all benefactors of the current economic system). Entangled in this concept of allegory is how recollection accesses the vulnerable bodies of actors who have lived through the major events of our recent history and their other bodies also act as markers of a larger (theatrical) history: Shakespeare's England and Chekhov's Russia exist alongside fractured nations and exported wars of the twenty-first century.

Another potential frame through which to analyse the allegory present within Rau's recollection is Walter Benjamin's concept of allegory. For Benjamin, allegory is pre-eminently rooted in experience, "experience *par excellence*" (Cowan 110, 112). Benjamin, in a typically enigmatic fashion, partially explains the concept of allegory in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1963), stating:

When, as is the case in the *Trauerspiel*, history becomes part of the setting, it does so as script. The word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience. The allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history, which is put on stage in the *Trauerspiel*, is present in reality in the form of the ruin. In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay. Allegory thereby declares itself to be beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things. (177-177)

In other words, the meaning of the allegory is rooted in a broader history that reveals itself through a process of meaning constitution: "Any person, any object, any relationship can be absolutely anything else" (175). Recollection takes the biographies (or in the case of *Mitleid*, the apparent biographies) of its actors and presents them on the stage, thus presenting the actors not

as actors, but as a version of themselves. However, Rau and his dramaturgs are not interested in the actors as individuals, their individual memories, or familial or personal relationships. Instead, Rau is interested only in how these autobiographical elements are markers of the larger socio-political history. The personal conflicts described by each actor are included in the overarching narrative constructed by the dramaturgical team not because of their own individual significance but because of how they fit within the larger socio-political conflicts. The individual memory, to borrow Benjamin's own turn of phrase, is both elevated and devalued (175). Like recollection, allegory, Erika Fischer-Lichte explains in her exploration of allegory and art, is a mode of remembrance: "Remembering the past, allegory aims to 'rescue' the things from their transitoriness which is caused by the loss of their original meaning, their idea, in the language of man" ("Walter Benjamin's 'Allegory'" 159). Employing this frame of reference, recollection rescues the remnants of the individual memory from the fragmented and fleeting realm of the individual, resituating them within the ruins of history: placing the intensely private and personal into the open and public space of the theatre.<sup>118</sup>



*Figure 19: Empire* (Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, 2016); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Left to Right: Rami Khalaf, Maia Morgenstern, Akillas Karazissis; Photo Credit: Marc Stephan

<sup>118</sup> There is certainly more to be said about Benjamin's concept of allegory – which has admittedly only been selectively employed here – in conjunction with Rau's work, both in recollection and Rau's larger body of work. However, in no small part because of the difficulty of parsing meaning from Benjamin's writing on allegory, this particular line of inquiry is a space for future study as there is neither the time nor space to fully engage with it – or even fully unpack how Benjamin defines allegory – within this study.

There is a complex interaction of private and public within recollection productions, which is again present in the subdued acting of recollection plays. *Civil Wars*, *Dark Ages*, and *Empire* are marked by a performed non-acting. It gives the appearance of a spontaneous happening, i.e., a private conversation where the audience has no part in the conversation. In *A Formalist Theatre*, American performance theorist Michael Kirby (1931-1997) presents a definition of acting that contrasts the performances of Happenings and performance art from the late fifties and early sixties. Kirby explains that “[t]o act means to feign, to simulate, to represent, to impersonate,” while performers in Happenings “generally tend to ‘be’ nobody or nothing other than themselves” (Kirby 3, 6-7). Although recollection does not involve feigning, impersonating, or simulating (whereas reenactment is only these things), it is (like reenactment) undeniably performative and representative: an overly self-aware meta-theatre.<sup>119</sup> The acting<sup>120</sup> in recollection is a form of *total acting* contained within *non-acting*, and, in typical Rau fashion, productions also comment on acting and acting styles. The trilogy’s subtle



Figure 20: *The Dark Ages* (Residenz Theater Munich, 2015); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Left to Right: Vedrana Seksan, Valery Tscheplanowa, Manfred Zapatka, Sudbin Musić; Photo Credit: Thomas Dashuber

<sup>119</sup> Unlike reenactment, recollection is inherently *inflective*.

<sup>120</sup> Rau’s productions do adhere fairly firmly to the German *Schauspieltheater* tradition.

commentary on acting and performance explores how the performers' artistic choices (and the paths these choices have led them down) fit into individual biographies as well as the larger history of theatre and Europe. Returning to acting theory in recollection, performance theorist Richard Schechner builds on this Kirby's theory of acting, explaining:

Acting consists of focused, clearly marked and framed behaviors specifically designed for showing. At the not-acting end of the spectrum, there is no portrayal of another or of a character. The minimalist actor simply performs certain actions that are received as acting by spectators because of context. By contrast, in total acting, the 'other' is so powerful that it takes over or possesses the performer. (Schechner 174)

To perform recollection, the actor must step outside the comfortable *other* of total acting and the safety of the performative *other body*. Instead, actors must totally engage with their own experiences, but it is important to remember that the actors are still performing carefully composed and rehearsed monologues.

What we see in productions is a combination of non-matrixed performance and symbolized matrix performance. Non-matrixed performance is defined as "actions performed onstage which do not involve role-playing," while symbolized matrix performance is "onstage actions which the spectator recognizes as 'belonging to' a character, even though the performer continues to behave 'as herself'" (Schechner 175). In recollection, actors like Sébastien Foucault (*Hate Radio*, *The Civil Wars*, *La Reprise*), Sara De Bosschere (*The Civil Wars*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *La Reprise*), and Johan Leysen (*The Civil Wars*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *La Reprise*) play themselves. Their primary task is not to impersonate someone else (which they sometimes also do), but to perform a version of themselves. The actors explore their roles as sons and daughters (*The Civil*

*Wars* and *The Dark Ages*), as brothers and sisters (*Empire*), as children (*Five Easy Pieces*), as people living with disability (*Die 120 Tage*), and even as actors (*La Reprise*).

Just as the performance and acting style evoke a personal, private sphere, Anton Lukas's



Figure 21: *The Civil Wars* (KFDA, 2014); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Left to Right: Sara de Bosschere, Johan Leysen, Sébastien Foucault; Photo Credit: Marc Stephan

masterful stage design similarly works to evoke the private: the kitchen of Kurdish actor Ramo Ali's family home in Syria (*Empire*); the living room of the family home of Joris, a young Belgian who went to fight in Syria, in Molenbeek, Brussels (*The Civil Wars*); human rights activist Sudbin Musić's cluttered office (*The Dark Ages*); or the rehearsal hall (*La Reprise*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Die 120 Tage*). In *Europa Trilogie*, Lukas's design shows the two sides – the public and the private – of the actor. On one side of the revolving stage, is a classic theatre which grows more decrepit with each installment of the trilogy and on the other is the private space of the living room, office, or family home (fig. 18, 19, 20, 21). For the plays of the Representation Trilogy, Lukas creates a transformable space. All the props (and costumes) are onstage from the beginning and specific pieces of scenery (chairs, beds, and bars) are pulled on and pushed off as necessary to evoke the different spaces that the production requires. Representation plays have a director's table for the performer(s) who fill the director's role in the live production (fig. 6). These sets highlight both the private sphere of the performer (the closed rehearsal hall or living

room) as well as the overt theatricality of the performance (the theatre balcony, or empty, undressed stage).

IIPM productions contain three intersecting creation levels: (1) the historical, which is present within research and how the research is experienced; (2) the private, where the actor with their lives and experiences fits within the larger research questions (as well as within Rau's own life and the relationship between Rau and his actors); and (3) the production itself. The actual production marks a meeting point for not just the historical and the personal, but also the various practical elements of theatre: light, body, language, rhythm, and "der politische Moment und Ort des Projekts" ("Schauspiel" 202).<sup>121</sup> The intersections of personal, historical, and theatrical are difficult for the actor because it diverges from more classic acting styles where you play someone outside yourself, someone who is *other*. For the spectator, a similar difficulty presents itself: How the audience is supposed to perceive and interpret what they are being told? It becomes a question of what is true, what is not, or (most problematically) what is not *entirely* true – altered either consciously or unconsciously by the actor, or by Rau and his dramaturgs.

For example, *Mitleid* – the unofficial satire of *Die Europa Trilogie* – looks at the issue of white privilege and cynical humanism<sup>122</sup> using the privileged (and quasi-fictional) lens of the actor Swiss Ursina Lardi, who is white, middle class, and European.<sup>123</sup> *Mitleid* is representative

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<sup>121</sup> "Ich nähere mich einem Projekt auf drei Ebenen: auf der *historischen*, wozu die Recherche gehört, vor allem aber das, was man während der Recherche erlebt (die ihrerseits nur ein Erlebnis- oder Intensitäts-Vorwand ist); auf der *privaten*, wozu das Leben des Schauspielers gehört, aber auch mein Leben und das Leben unserer Arbeits-Beziehung; und schließlich auf der Ebene der *Inszenierung*, auf der alles zusammenkommt: das Licht, der Rhythmus, der Körper, die Sprache, der politische Moment und Ort des Projekts usw." ("Schauspiel" 202) ["I sustain a project through three levels: the *historical*, where research belongs, but above all else what one experiences during this research (which is only the pretext of experience or intensity); the *private*, where the actor's life belongs, but also my life and the life of our working relationship; and, finally, the *production*, where everything comes together: the light, the rhythm, the body, the language, the political time and place of the project, etc."]

<sup>122</sup> The philosophy of out of sight, out of mind in terms of the consequences of Europe and North America's economy on the Global South.

<sup>123</sup> The Ursina role was played by Els Dottermans – also playing a variant of herself – in the later Belgian re-staging/variant *Compassie. De geschiedenis van het machinegeweer* (2018). In this second production, we see



Figure 22: Top: *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs* (Schaubühne, 2015); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Stage and Screen: Consolate Sipérius; Photo Credit: Daniel Seiffert; Bottom: *Compassie. De geschiedenis van het machinegeweer* (NTGent, 2018); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Stage and Screen: Olga Mouak; Photo Credit: Michiel Devijver

of another form of recollection, one that does not build off the direct experiences of the actor but is still quotational. For *Mitleid*, Rau and Lardi interviewed various NGO volunteers and workers, and used these testimonies as well as a text Rau wrote in 2008 for the essay, “Sie wissen ja, wie es in Träumen ist...” (“Sie wissen” 241-244).<sup>124</sup> Lardi’s monologue is fictional in the sense that the words and experiences are not autoethnographical, although some are inspired by personal experiences such as Lardi’s year teaching abroad when she was 18 (but in Bolivia rather than the DRC).

Lardi’s nearly 90-minute monologue juxtaposes the much shorter prologue and

epilogue performed by the Belgian-based, Burundi-born actor Consolate Sipérius.

Sipérius’s two short monologues are, on the other hand, true, focusing on her real experience as a witness and survivor of the 1994 Burundi Genocide. Although she is a professional actor, Sipérius is also a survivor of the genocide. She was adopted by a white, Belgian family. She studied at Conservatoire royal de Mons in Belgium. She has acted in *Crever*

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another layer added to the already layered performance: Dottermans is impersonating the Lardi character, a version of herself that Lardi performs.

<sup>124</sup> The Merci Bien monologue from *Mitleid*, taken from “Sie wissen, ja, wie es in Träumen ist”; *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs* (IIPM: vimeo): 01:25:05-01:33:02; <https://vimeo.com/170140538>.

*d'amour* directed by Frédéric Dussene and an adaptation of *Antigone* at Théâtre du Rideau de Bruxelles (“Consolate Sipérius”; fig. 22).<sup>125</sup> In *Mitleid*, she straddles the line between the witness of refugee theatre and a professional actor: the one performs only inside herself and the other almost exclusively outside herself. This duality, that one can be both, creates the uncomfortable complexity of recollection performance. Another layer present within this performance is that Lardi is performing a character (a character based on her real person that shares her name), while Sipérius performs herself.<sup>126</sup> The spectator must constantly grapple with the different levels of character in *Mitleid*: the actor impersonating (Dottermans), playing themselves (Sipérius), playing a character (Lardi), or some combination of these things (Mouak) (fig. 22 and 24).

*Mitleid* contains an extremely complex and nearly opaque<sup>127</sup> interplay between true biography and invented text. Rau, in an interview about *Mitleid*, summarizes:

*Mitleid* ist eine andere, die ich Theateressay nenne. Denn der Vorgang der Realisierung im aktuellen Theater kann meines Erachtens auf zwei Arten stattfinden: Auf der einen Seite, indem man einen Menschen auf die Bühne bringt, der an sich real ist und der von sich erzählt und der das auch erlebt hat – oder eben überlebt. Auf der anderen Seite steht die Logik der Einfühlung: Solange man auf einer Bühne steht, sind die Dinge real, wenn man aber abgeht, sind sie das nicht mehr.<sup>128</sup> (“Mitleid (1)” 107-108)

<sup>125</sup> *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs* (IIPM: vimeo): Prologue: 00.04.51-00.12.30; epilogue 01.37.02-01.44.00; <https://vimeo.com/170140538>.

<sup>126</sup> This duality is again further complicated by *Compassie*'s Olga Mouak's performance of a version of Sipérius. Her prologue is slightly different from the original, making Mouak – a French actor – a Congolese survivor of a massacre in the region by the RPF, adopted by a biracial couple. Mouak is, in *Compassie*, also performing a character of herself. Although Mouak was born in Paris and grew up in Orléans, the Mouak character in the play is, like Sipérius, a survivor of a massacre but this time of a group of Congolese Hutu in the DRC at the hands of the Rwandan Patriotic Front following fleeing Hutus fleeing Rwanda (fig. 22 and 24).

<sup>127</sup> Particularly as Rau usually operates on an extremely transparent level within his productions, where, in productions like *Five Easy Pieces* and *La Reprise*, the division between actor as self and actor performing as someone else (in a mini reenactment) is clear.

<sup>128</sup> *Compassie* is what I call a theatre essay. For the process of making something real [*Realisierung*] in contemporary theatre can, in my opinion, can take place in two ways: The first way is you bring people onto the stage who are real and who talk about themselves and what they have experienced – or even survived. The second

*Mitleid*, more than any of Rau's other productions, is a discursive exploration of what Rau refers to as *Rollendistanz*: the difference between recollection (as a performative remembering of self) and total acting. Recollection is the drastic, and utterly untheatrical, reduction between role and self, while total acting – what Kirby calls complex acting – is “when the performer's entire physical, mental, and emotional capability is involved in the portrayal of a character” (“*Mitleid* (1)” 106-107; Schechner 175-176). While Lardi's performance is illustrative of total acting – which is what one normally sees on the stage of big city- and state-funded European theatre houses like Berlin's Schaubühne, where *Mitleid* premiered – Siperius, like the actors in *Die Europa Trilogie*, is performing a version of herself that draws on her autobiographic experience. Her short monologues pull together the fragments of memories to find a comprehensible narrative structure to present its audience, while resisting a simple and satisfactory ending that tidily brings the story to a close. All of which is again complicated in the second IIPM production of *Mitleid* with NTGent (*Compassie*), which adds further complexities to the text.

This collapse of *Rollendistanz* unites the role and the self, even if only briefly. The philosophy behind this performance style is, according to Rau's interpretation of the postmodern, anti-postmodern in nature. *Rollendistanz*, according to Rau, prevents both spectator and performer from identifying with either the role or the political gesture of the performance. It, therefore, hinders the moment of solidarity. To quote Rau, closing of the gap allows “sich mit einer Figur zu identifizieren, auch wenn sie vielleicht gemeiner oder gar reduzierter ist als man selbst und auch nicht bis ins Detail dem entspricht, was man selbst denkt und fühlt” (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 82).<sup>129</sup>

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follows the logic of empathy: As long as someone is standing on stage, then the things they say are real, but once they leave, they aren't.

<sup>129</sup> “To identify with a character, even if they are, perhaps, baser or more reduced than we are and does not correspond in every detail to how we think and feel ourselves.”

Canadian playwright, Julie Salverson expresses a similar concern about distance: When we watch an actor perform a role fully outside herself – particularly in trauma narratives – we, as spectators, lose the ability to respond. She describes the process of creating a play about the Bosnian War and how during the process a certain actor prepared a monologue for the group:

When Anita performed this monologue to the class, she spoke in a hushed voice filled with sadness. The performance had an air of falseness. Anita, with the best of intentions, could imagine nothing of the Bosnian woman’s strength, her possible humor, her complexity or her courage, caught as Anita was in an almost romantic identification with what the woman had lost. Anita performed as if she was waiting to be confirmed by the class/audience as wearing the nobility of the victim. The class described how they felt sympathy, guilt, and horror while watching this speech, but also a complete inability to respond. (Salverson 124)

Salverson identifies this phenomenon as the *erotics of injury*. Plays that explore trauma and stage trauma narratives – as all of Rau’s plays do – often fail to recognize the complexities of the situation from which the trauma emerged and within which it continues to exist – as Rau’s plays also do.



Figure 23: *La Reprise* (KFDA, 2018); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Stage (L-R): Sébastien Foucault, Johan Leysen, Sara de Bosschere; Photo Credit: Christophe Raynaud de Lage/festival-avignon.com

Instead, productions substitute the co-existing complexities of trauma with melancholy. Not only does melancholy oversimplify, but it comes from an inherently outsider position: i.e., how those outside the experience imagine it must have been and would have felt. Salverson explains that these simplistic and linear<sup>130</sup> narratives are not just problematic for the base event, but also for the spectator: “If we write a play that presents an uncomplicated portrayal of victims, villains, and heroes, what choices do we give an audience about how to relate?” (124). More nuanced and complex exploration of trauma present the audience with an entrance into both the subject matter and the experiences of the person standing on the stage.

Salverson warns of the oppressive “violence of the we” of a theatre that presents trauma as an *unexamined spectacle*. The unexamined spectacle allows spectators to spend an evening at the theatre, leave feeling good about themselves, but ultimately having learned nothing. Salverson is sceptical of all documentary styles that promise solidarity or advertise themselves as an act of solidarity. She offers a scathing critique in her critical response to such productions in the essay “Change on Whose Terms? Testimony and an Erotics of Injury”:

A theater that testifies offers an act of solidarity and attempts to explore solidarity’s path to narcissistic charity when the ‘I’ is collapsed from the equation – the resulting connection is not ethics but a ‘violence of the we.’ This violation is enacted through performances that reduce representation to mimesis as reproduction, as ‘mirror of reality,’ including the ‘authentic’ reality. The problem of mimesis, then is a problem of both relationship and responsibility. It is an ethical move to consider mimesis not as a mirror of reality, but as a faculty that refuses to reduce testimony to either an interpretive

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<sup>130</sup> Two things that trauma never is.

frame where ‘the unworded is sentenced to meaning,’ or to an ever-unmeetable absence where all otherness is sentenced to loss. (124)

With recollection, Rau establishes a *we* (a collective), but this *we* is not created through the collapsing of the *I* (the self), rather through the bolstering and expanding of it. This excess of self, of *I*, is part of the universalization of the IIPM. For Rau, at least ideally, the universal materializes through the specific: the specific shared experiences of the actors unite them, but these experiences also unite the spectators with the actors (and by proxy each other). These collected, organised, and shared experiences mark an attempt to reach as many people, actors and spectators, as possible (“F.I.N.D. #15). The spectacle presented is examined – or attempts to be examined<sup>131</sup> – so

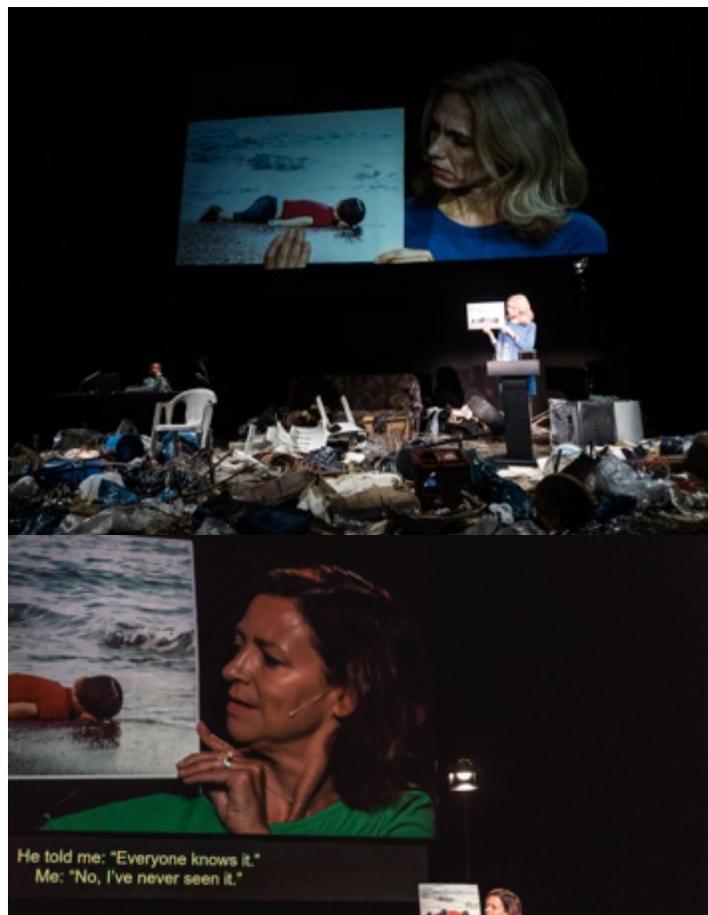


Figure 24: Top: *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs* (Schaubühne, 2015); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Stage and Screen: Ursina Lardi; Photo Credit: Daniel Seiffert; Bottom: *Compassie. De geschiedenis van het machinegeweer* (NTGent, 2018); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Stage and Screen: Els Dottermans; Photo Credit: Michiel Devijver

<sup>131</sup> We then of course come upon the question of whether Rau and the IIPM are always successful in presenting an *examined* – a critically self-aware – spectacle. At the conference, “Cultures of the Left in the Age of Right Wing Populism” in April 2019 in Venice, I had a conversation about *Mitleid* – which toured to Colombo, Kalkutta, Delhi, and Chennai in March 2018 – with Dr. Anuradha Kapur, a professor at Ambedkar University in Delhi as well as the former director of the National School of Drama in Delhi. Dr. Kapur found *Mitleid* extremely problematic, as did much of the Indian audience. For Dr. Kapur, the directorial and dramaturgical choices of the *mise-en-scène* – placing Sipérius at the corner of the stage, having her confined to a desk only performing prologue and epilogue, and the use of a famous (although Lardi’s fame meant presumably nothing to the Indian audience as it meant nothing to me when I first saw *Mitleid*) white woman like Lardi with her full white privilege on display – contributed to an uncritical *mise-en-scène*. All of the carefully planned implicit criticisms of the tropes of German/Western European mainstream theatre completely disappear when it is not the oppressor or the colonizer watching the production – and

as not to reduce the trauma, but to find convergence.

This jarring reduction of performance and self, this refusal to present simplified, straightforward narratives allows for a potential moment of identification, of recognition, and ultimately of solidarity between spectator and actor. More than just the actor, it is the relationship with all the elements of production that come together to form a symbolic act. Rau's definition of theatre hinges on this relationship between spectator and symbolic act ("Was ist globaler Realismus?" Berlin 1.11.2017). For Rau, theatre is, at its core, *this interaction* and its potentially *productive* result. The power of theatre lies in the ability for solidarity to emerge between actors and audience – a typically utopian encounter – through a symbolic act: "Theatre is a symbolic space where something should happen in the real world" ("Über die Bilder" Basel 30.3.2017). This understanding of theatre is based on an underlying belief, visible throughout Rau's oeuvre, that theatre has the potential to facilitate change ("An Evening with Milo Rau" Amsterdam 29.01.19).

At its core, theatre is a symbolic act and can, therefore, create only symbolic change. It can present a situation that should exist and that has the potential to inspire change, but the act alone cannot be the change. To paraphrase Rau: The world cannot be saved with theatre, because the act presented is not – in the true sense – real. However, it can create the potential for change by presenting the symbolic space needed *right now*: "Ich denke, dass der Begriff des Symbolischen genau das Gegenteil des Reflexiven meint, von dem Hegel spricht: Die symbolische Handlung ist das Vorleuchten einer Zukunft, in der dieses Symbolische gewissermaßen normal wäre" ("Das Symbolische" 24; "Unter vier Augen" Cologne

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maybe even for a non-*Theaterwissenschaftler* (theatre-scholar) or theatre-making audience. Instead, it becomes just another example of the continuation of colonial theatre tradition and of favouring white narratives (even fictional ones) over that of the colonized and/or oppressed. An audience from a nation like India, that was violently oppressed by the British until 1947 (still living memory), would be hyperaware of such rhetoric.

15.02.2019).<sup>132</sup> Real change can only happen after the performance, when the spectators (or participants, as is explored in greater detail in the next chapter) leave the performance space to re-enter the real world. In the co-witnessing of this so-called utopian space as well as the recognition and understanding that emerges from the resulting moment of solidarity, the potential arises for the symbolic change of the theatre to be carried into the real world (“An Evening with Milo Rau,” Amsterdam, 29.01.2019).

Rau’s work engages in a radical utopianism, where “[the] vision of hope moves from private to public, from biographical to institutional, linking personal troubles with public issues. This utopianism tells and performs stories of resistance, compassion, justice, joy, community, and love” (Denzin 12-14). Productions work to fulfill the promise of a critical performance autoethnography by “expos[ing] the ways in which power and ideology shape self, desire, and human consciousness in concrete institutional and interactional sites. The everyday culture that critical performance autoethnographers interrogate is discursive, material, and embedded in the naturalized commonsense realities of capitalism, the media, and the neoliberal corporatist state” (33). The performance itself creates something along the lines of what Jill Dolan calls *utopian performance*: “where tragedy induces the private to become public, and in the process, allows the citizenry to speak to each other and to the world from their minds and their hearts” (*Utopia in Performance* 135). Rau is less romantic in his formulation of this sentiment about the opening up of a visibly private space (a living room or dorm room) and private stories to a wider audience. In the presentation of intersecting experiences, the stories reflect back at the audience, inviting them to engage. Productions pose the question: Where do I – the spectator – fit within this new

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<sup>132</sup> “I think that the concept of the symbolic is precisely the opposite of the reflexive that Hegel spoke of: The symbolic action lights the way for a future in which this symbolic would be halfway normal.”

narrative of Europe and where do I fit within this new Europe? Rau is hyperaware of these questions his productions pose for the spectator:

Wann schaut man nicht mehr auf einen anderen, sondern auf den *Menschen*, also auf sich selbst? Was ist das: Katharsis, also dass man versteht, dass das, was auf der Bühne erzählt wird, dieses syrische oder afrikanische oder längst vergangene oder virtuelle Elend ein Schicksal ist, das uns alle, das *mich* betrifft?<sup>133</sup> (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 62)

All of Rau's performances undertake this construction of a utopian space by bringing performers from diverse (and sometimes disparate) backgrounds and experiences together. They look at how the disparate parts somehow fit together and create something loosely united, without assigning more meaning or worth to any one person's narrative.<sup>134</sup> Instead, all narratives – whether they belong to an actor from Munich or one from Syria – appear on the same stage and their words hold the same weight. The stories gain their significance in their convergence and precisely through the discovery of these intersections that overcome time and place.

*Europa Trilogie*, which offers recollection in its truest form, provides a collage surrounding issues of migration, belief, family, performance, violence, escape, freedom, loss, suffering, truth, and existence based on the individual and overlapping memories and experiences of its actors (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 72). Each play in the trilogy follows a basic dramaturgical framework consisting of the six points: (1) All three plays contain five acts plus a prologue and epilogue. (2) Each act has a title, which is projected onto a screen above the actors, underlining the dramaturgical theme for that act. (3) The fourth act always contains a play within

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<sup>133</sup> “When are you no longer looking at an Other, but rather at the *people* and, therefore, at yourself? What is catharsis, i.e., when you understand that what is being told on the stage, about this Syrian, African, long past, or even virtual misery [suffering] is a fate that affects us all, that affects *me*?”

<sup>134</sup> Although this claim must also be approached critically, because recollection productions (*Die Europa Trilogie*, *Mitleid*, and even in the Representation Trilogy) favour professional actors and do, perhaps inadvertently, prescribe more meaning to their narratives because of their celebrity status.

the play – an excerpt from a canonical play (*The Cherry Orchard, Hamlet, Medea*) that connects thematically to the central question of the production. (4) There is no real dialogue within any of the plays, there are a series of monologues consisting of the actors’ personal experiences and life stories that connect with each other in the themes of migration, belief, family, and/or violence – and these themes are often themselves interconnected within a single act and/or monologue. (5) Each actor performs their monologue in their native tongue – French, Flemish, Serbian, Russian, German, Kurdish, Romanian, Arabic, and Greek – and surtitles are provided on the screen above the actors for the audience. Finally, (6) the central rule of the trilogy is “Everything told is true, from the actors’ lives”, so there is no fiction in any of the plays (Pearson).

The first play of the *Europa Trilogie, Civil Wars* – which premiered in 2014 at the Zürcher Theater Spektakel – places four professional actors from drastically different backgrounds. Karim Bel Kacem, Sara De Bosschere, Sébastien Foucault, and Johan Leysen each represent an expert in a drastically different acting tradition and familial backgrounds. Nothing from the actors’ lives is reenacted, only short scenes from Chekhov’s *Cherry Orchard* are performed forwards, while everything is looked back upon. *Civil War* begins with a monologue about sitting in a family room in Molenbeek (Brussels) with the father of a young Belgian jihadi, Joris. In the epilogue, we find out that Joris’s father travelled to Syria himself, found Joris, and brought his son home.<sup>135</sup> The next five acts, use of schizophrenic, absent, abusive fathers (*Vatergeschichten*) to connect actors to each other as well as larger historical events. It examines how the children of these men have fought to escape their shadows, resist the trauma inflicted upon them, survive with these psychic scars, and liberate themselves from the legacy of madness. Bel Kacem, a young French performer of Moroccan descent, recalls his abusive father

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<sup>135</sup> *The Civil Wars* (IIPM: vimeo): 0.01.06-0.08.23; <https://vimeo.com/106367727>.

and the resulting short-lived youthful exploration of Islamic extremism. Bel Kacem's testimony contrasts that of the now elderly Belgian actor Leysen, a veteran actor of international stage and screen, whose father died when he was nine years old and who, in his youth, took a half-hearted foray into Trotskyism. The overt absence of Leysen's father is paralleled by the unemployment, alcoholism, and madness of Foucault's, De Bosschere's, and Bel Kacem's fathers. These testimonies illustrate the isolation, abandonment, cynicism, and disillusionment that creates the conditions for individual radicalization that parallels Joris's own extremism. Ultimately, through its actors' testimonies, the production explores what was (and still is) motivating young Belgians and Western Europeans to leave their homes to fight in Syria and Northern Iraq with extremist groups like Islamic State.<sup>136</sup>

*The Civil Wars*, *The Dark Ages*, and *Empire* use the European family structure – fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters – as a frame for the history of Europe since the end of the Second World War. The productions look at a Europe whose social and political constellations have shifted dramatically over the past seventy years: a Europe that has fallen apart and re-formed, has conquered and been conquered. Even the title *The Civil Wars* operates two-fold. It refers to a continent that has been fractured and torn apart by civil wars, and that has facilitated and funded civil wars outside its borders, most significantly in Syria. It also refers to the extreme internal conflict at the level of the family: a civil war at the micro-level (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 65).

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<sup>136</sup> *The Civil Wars* premiered on August 27, 2014, just a few weeks after the first of ISIS's beheading videos first appeared, and just days after the beheading of American journalist James Foley made ISIS a household name. These shocking videos showed the extent of European involvement in the organization (Foley was killed by a British citizen called Jihadi John – real name, Muhammad Jassim Abdulkarim Olayan al-Dhafiri). The production premiered more than a year before the Paris Attacks on November 13, 2015 and the attacks in Brussels on March 22, 2016 but discusses similar issues – the exclusion of a specific section of Western European society that contributed to extremism – that would appear on the European continent during these attacks. According to Rau, the majority of the research and writing of *Civil Wars* happened roughly ten months — before the official foundation of ISIS (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 64).

*The Civil Wars* takes place in the sovereign territory of the family: the family home. The living room that Lukas constructs refers specifically to the play's prologue, where Foucault describes the uncomfortable experience of sitting in a home that is not his own:

Es ist doch immer wieder befremdlich und auch unangenehm, zu Menschen zu kommen, die man gar nicht kennt... sich zu ihnen auf ihr schreckliches grünes Sofa zu setzen, in einem Wohnzimmer, in dem ihre ganzen Familiendramen stattgefunden haben. Von ihren Familienfotos und ihrem Nippes umgeben zu sein, Dingen, die dir gar nichts bedeuten, für sie aber mit Geschichte geradezu vollgesogen sind.<sup>137</sup> ("The Civil Wars" 32)

It is specific to Joris's family's living room (with their awful green couch) but is reminiscent of the living rooms of the actors and many of the spectators' family home.<sup>138</sup> The actors sit together in the uncanny living room, on the green sofa, surrounded by family pictures: A picture of Leysen's father, a picture from a Foucault family vacation, a Persian rug like the one in De Bosschere's family home, and a sofa like the one that Bel Kacem's father would pass out drunk on. Each actor recalls their family home: the living rooms where their own fathers would, like Joris's, sit and wait. They recall the space their fathers fit within their homes and the gaps left in their absence: failed breadwinners, feared oppressors, or absent saints (sanctified in their absence).

*Europa Trilogie* uses an anecdotal dramaturgy. Anecdotal is perhaps the best description of the performance style: Anecdotal rather than narrative. In *Dark Ages*, Rau explains:

The format I've developed for the Europe Trilogy is a matter of mundane simplicity and statics: world history told from the perspective of private experiences. The five

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<sup>137</sup> "It's always something strange and unpleasant, to be sitting on the [horribly coloured] couches of people you don't know. In a living room where all of their family dramas played out. To be surrounded by their family photos and awful trinkets, which mean nothing to you, but to them are steeped in history" ("The Civil Wars" 33).

<sup>138</sup> It bore a striking resemblance to my grandparents' home.

performers talk about very personal and occasionally very dark times in their lives. But it's not about their biographies as such. Anecdotes from their lives and their work provide examples of changes in Europe's society over the past 25 years. ("Jeder tötet" 135)

There are narrative markers between anecdotes, common elements between stories such as family trips, family homes, schizophrenia, and televisions. For example, in *Civil Wars*, the television is a marker of trauma as well as of the larger historical events that float through the background of the actors' lives (and the foreground of formal history). Leysen's father gained recognition for his work as a pioneer of television in Belgium. After his death in a car accident, one of the few memories Leysen has of him is watching television together as a family – specifically the French film *Crin-Blanc* by Albert Lamorisse. Leysen's early memories revolve around television – a medium he would later work in. The first thing he remembers about his family home is the antenna: "Here's our house. And here's the antenna" ("The Civil Wars" 65). Leysen's mother sanctified his father after his death and while the four sons were all part of him, as individuals, they were inherently less than him: "All of us together came close to what he had been but by ourselves, we were nothing, we were practically non-existent" (69).<sup>139</sup> Foucault remembers his father's short-lived job as a projectionist. He played nature videos in schools with an early (and very expensive) projector.<sup>140</sup> Foucault discusses the strange relationship his father developed with television, particularly after the death of the French philosopher with the same name, Michel Foucault. Foucault tells the audience: "My father had a strange relationship with the TV, it spoke to him [...] He wove all this chaotic information together as if it made sense, as if only he were conscious of the connection between all this information... and that he himself

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<sup>139</sup> *The Civil Wars* (IIPM: vimeo): 00.40.25-00.46.48; <https://vimeo.com/106367727>.

<sup>140</sup> *The Civil Wars* (IIPM: vimeo): 00.37.34-00.40.29; <https://vimeo.com/106367727>.



Figure 25: “*La Reprise* - Act III: The Banality of Evil”; Fabian Leenders and Sara De Bosschere; Photo Credit: IIPM and Hubert Amiel

was the connection” (83).<sup>141</sup> De Bosschere’s father also had an odd relationship with the television, specifically the news: “When the news came on, he was transfixed by the screen. Extremely tense. He seemed to be experiencing first-hand what was happening on the screen” (83).<sup>142</sup> For both Foucault and De Bosschere, their fathers’ interest in television were the first signs – or the first signs they remember – of their fathers’ madness and the emotional and psychological terror that ensued. For Bel Kacem, the television is directly related to his father’s abuse: “Every other evening my father would come home late from the allotment. We would wait with my mother in front of the TV in the living room, often

until midnight. All the lights were out and the sound of the TV wasn’t allowed to be too loud so we could hear his steps in the stairwell” (91). The act of watching television is linked to the memory of his father beating his mother and the terror of waiting to see what would happen next.<sup>143</sup>

The anecdotal dramaturgy visible here, appears throughout recollection plays. Although we see it most directly in *Die Europa Trilogie*, it is also visible in productions like *La Reprise*, *Die 120 Tage von Sodom*, *Five Easy Pieces*, and *Familie*, each of which use techniques from

<sup>141</sup> *The Civil Wars* (IIPM: vimeo): 01.00.15-01.03.19; <https://vimeo.com/106367727>.

<sup>142</sup> *The Civil Wars* (IIPM: vimeo): 01.03.19-01.04.39; <https://vimeo.com/106367727>.

<sup>143</sup> *The Civil Wars* (IIPM: vimeo): 01.16.40-01.18.48; <https://vimeo.com/106367727>.

both recollection and reenactment. Anecdote serves as a way for productions to attach the private lives of those people on stage with larger historical events. *Europa Trilogie* begins with small-scale (individual) traumas of the performers and then moves on to connect the individual testimonies to create a comprehensive history of Europe. The Trilogy of Representation, on the other hand, begins with two set questions: (1) a specific trauma such as the Dutroux Affair or Ihsane Jarfi's murder and (2) a question about the nature of theatre and performance. Going into the theatre, spectators already know these two questions, and anecdote connects the performers to these questions. For these productions, we start with the big trauma and move to and through it using strategically placed anecdotes to introduce the larger historical event and to look at any specific connections among the performer, their role, and the other actors. Whereas reenactment constructs a copy of a historical moment including the superfluous details of memory, recollection constructs their histories through precisely these individual, superfluous details – at least superfluous to larger progress-based narratives of capital-H history (“F.I.N.D. #15”). It is these details that construct the world of the play: *Five Easy Pieces*, *Die 120 Tage*, and *La Reprise* introduce everything that is going to happen in the short reenactments and the rest of the production in the prologue's onstage discussion.

Following *La Reprise*'s prologue, Leysen, Foucault, and De Bosschere engage with the other three actors (Suzy Cocco and Fabian Leenders, two amateur actors, and Tom Adjibi, a young, professional Belgian actor) about their acting experience.<sup>144</sup> The short conversation with each actor foreshadows the roles these actors will play in the coming reenactments and what they are expected to do. For example, De Bosschere asks Leenders if he's ever kissed or hit someone on stage, Leenders plays Jérémy Wintgens (fig. 25). During the series of reenactments, Wintgens

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<sup>144</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: vimeo): 00.11.00-00.33.07; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

drinks too much on the night of the murder, aggressively kisses his girlfriend until she leaves, goes out trolling with his friends for women during which he and his friends come across Jarfi and beat him to death. It is also through the anecdotal that we find out Leenders, a young unemployed man from Liège, is about the same age as Wintgens at the time of the murder, also hurt his back, and also used to drink too much at work. It is also during this conversation that we learn Leenders is a DJ and musician, and we are introduced to all of the sounds and music used throughout the performance (*La Reprise* EN 6-7).<sup>145</sup> Likewise, in the play's opening, Foucault tells us about his connection to the city of Liège (where he studied at the Conservatoire) and to the site of the murder, which is close to where he goes for walks with his daughter and his in-laws' Border Collie; and his strange fascination with the trial, which he attended every session, taking copious notes of everything that happened (2).<sup>146</sup> *La Reprise*, like the other plays of the

Representation Trilogy,

uses conversation

intermingled with

monologic anecdote to

set up productions. These

plays do not necessarily to

provide new information

about the traumatic issue

but explore its larger

significance (on a personal



Figure 26: "Maurice's make-up," *Five Easy Pieces* (2018; second staging); Photo Credit: Phile Deprez

<sup>145</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: vimeo): 00.16.53-00.24.07; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

<sup>146</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: vimeo): 00.06.48-00.10.40; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

and societal level), as well providing insight into the performability (or impossible performance) of trauma.

More directly than *Europa Trilogie*, the Trilogy of Representation explicitly engages in a pedagogical discussion about theatre and performance theory. In *Five Easy Pieces*, the young actors ask Peter Seynaeve (the only adult actor in the production, who stands in for the director) questions like: how do you act like you're dead on stage? ("Schauspielen ist wie träumen. Du bist ganz woanders, aber du bleibst du selbst mit deinen Gedanken und Gefühlen. [...] du bist doch nicht wirklich tot, aber irgendwie stirbst du doch")<sup>147</sup> ("Five Easy Pieces" 38-39).<sup>148</sup> We watch him helping them through their performances (Maurice: "Ist meine Schminke okay? Peter: Sie ist beeindruckend, ja. Vielleicht ein bisschen übertrieben. Vergiss die Fotos nicht. Und das Husten.")<sup>149</sup> (32; fig. 26) and sometimes telling them to focus ("Concentratie") (*Five Easy Pieces* 3.10.2016 Performance).<sup>150</sup> Yet, here we also see the limitations of performance highlighted in a question that remains unvoiced but ever-present: Can you ever properly or even adequately find the words to describe, discuss, and perform real-world traumas in theatre?<sup>151</sup> Rau's trauma productions are caught in a vicious cycle. You can keep looking at the event from new and different perspective and still never find a single satisfactory explanation.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> "Acting is like dreaming. You are somewhere else completely, but you remain yourself in your thoughts and feelings. [...] you aren't actually dead, but somehow you do die."

<sup>148</sup> *Five Easy Pieces* (IIPM: vimeo): 00:40:44-00:53:32; <https://vimeo.com/174412918>. **Please note**, although *Five Easy Pieces* is performed in Dutch and Flemish, the performance text was published in German.

<sup>149</sup> Maurice: Is my makeup okay? Peter: Yes, it's great. Maybe a little much. Don't forget the photographs. And the coughing."

<sup>150</sup> *Five Easy Pieces* (IIPM: vimeo): 00:26:55-00:29:14; <https://vimeo.com/174412918>.

<sup>151</sup> This is essentially the contention of Theodor Adorno's famous quote about "art after Auschwitz", that words are an utterly inadequate medium to represent the trauma and horror of Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

<sup>152</sup> "Stücke wie *Empire* [...] aus der »Europa Trilogie« oder *Five Easy Pieces* sind gleichsam posttraumatisch, es wird je ein Kern des Unerklärlichen (der Tod geliebter Menschen und die Kriegserfahrung in *Empire*, die Affäre Dutroux in *Five Easy Pieces*) umkreist, immer von Neuem und aus immer neuen Beobachter-Perspektiven erzählt. Das Beobachten, das Erzählen, ja: die Darstellung selbst werden Thema" (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 23-24). ["Plays like *Empire* [...] from the "Europe Trilogy" or *Five Easy Pieces* are both post-traumatic, they revolve around the core of the unexplainable (the death of a beloved person and wartime experiences in *Empire*, the Dutroux Affair in

At its core, recollection offers what Victor Turner refers to as a *reflexive* framing, Turner explains that “to ‘frame,’ a group must cut out a piece of itself for inspection (and retrospection)” (Turner & Turner 140). What does it mean for a group of people from Liège to perform (or re-enact) Jarfi’s murder? What does it mean for a group of Belgian children to re-enact the Dutroux Affair? These performances ask a group of individuals with a connection to the subject matter (Belgian children to Dutroux, struggling people from Liège to Jarfi) to publicly reflect back on the event using their lens of experience. The anecdotal and conversational quality of Rau’s plays seeks to create a collective on the stage representative of a larger group.

*Europa Trilogie* explores the troubled concept of Europe through its actors – a nomadic profession. It offers thirteen perspectives of Europe, beginning with Western Europe (Belgium and France) in *The Civil Wars*, moving towards the divided and imploded nations Central Europe (Germany,<sup>153</sup> the former Yugoslavia, and the former Soviet Union) in *The Dark Ages*, and finishing with the edges of the European Union (Romania and Greece) and the lands where Europe now exports its conflict (calling back to *Civil Wars*, Syria) in *Empire*. It explores a history of conflict, of state formation and dissolution, of forced and economic migration, of violence on both a micro and macro level. Unlike more formal (i.e., institutional) histories of Europe, Rau’s history of Europe is first and foremost a history of people, not of kings, dictators, or powerful leaders. It is a history of the *common man* whose voice is so often cut out or ignored. In the coalescence of these common voices, a group representative of the demographics of this

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*Five Easy Pieces*), always told new and from new perspectives. The observers, the narratives: the representation itself becomes the theme.”]

<sup>153</sup> Although Germany certainly sits more comfortably under the definition of Western Europe, it is significant that Manfred Zapatka’s father fought on the Eastern Front during WWII, was taken as a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union, and Zapatka grew up in Cloppenburg (West Germany) and later moved to Munich for work.

new Europe emerges (“Von Molenbeek” 13). Using the voices of the common man<sup>154</sup> – the disparate and often conflictual groups present in Europe – the trilogy provides a reflexive framing of what Europe is through the micro perspective of its actors.

#### *Five Easy Pieces*

undertakes this same task on the small-scale of Belgium: the headquarters of the European Union’s governance, with its own violent colonial past and deep-rooted cultural and linguistic divides.<sup>155</sup> However, the reflexive framing of this production is very different from the monologues of *Europa Trilogie* and even from the anecdotal, expository dialogue of *La Reprise*. The child actors in *Five Easy Pieces* have no direct experience with the Dutroux Affair, which happened over 15 years before the oldest of them was born. *Five Easy Pieces*’s first reenactment is the assassination of the Congolese Freedom Fighter and President Patrice Lumumba in 1960 (“Five Easy Pieces” 30-31; fig. 27). The Lumumba reenactment<sup>156</sup> is significant to Dutroux for several reasons: (1) Dutroux’s father, Victor Dutroux (featured in the second reenactment),



Figure 27: “Five Easy Pieces - The Death of Lumumba”; Stage (Left to Right): Rachel Dedain, Elle Liza Tayou, Pepijn Loobuych, Video (Left to Right): Willem Loobuych and Winne Vanacker; Photo Credit: Phile Deprez

<sup>154</sup> *Commonish...* Rau very purposefully choses extremely well-known European actors (or actors living and working in Europe) for these productions, which again jumps back to the essentially Aristotelian concept of who should be represented in tragedy (the best of us) discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter.

<sup>155</sup> Belgium becomes representative of Europe on a small scale.

<sup>156</sup> *Five Easy Pieces* (IIPM: vimeo): 00:20:40-00:24:28; <https://vimeo.com/174412918>.

worked as teacher in the Belgium Congo during its final years (the colony existed from 1908 to 1960). Dutroux lived there for the first four years of his life, from 1956 to 1960. (2) Lumumba's sudden disappearance, torture, and eventual murder parallels Dutroux's own murders: six little girls disappearing seemingly without a trace, their torture and rape, and the general confusion that still surrounds the event. (3) This element, other than the enduring collective memory of the two events in Belgium, is the only similarity between the two events. The Dutroux Affair was shocking and horrifying not only because of the crime itself but because it brought the incompetence of the Belgian police to light as well as the real consequences of the bureaucratic divides between Wallonia and Flanders that Dutroux took advantage of. The entire Affair happened in plain view of all of Belgium and – unlike the murder of a single Congolese leader and rabble-rouser (at least from the perspective of the former colonial administration) – could not be ignored or easily forgotten. *Five Easy Pieces* heaves the past onto the stage in an exploration of how this past continues to echo into the present (how although everything is now different, at the same time, nothing is). The production is framed around the child actors, playing with expectations of innocence while exploring the collective memory of the Dutroux Affair through its young actors: How do the children know this event? How do they physicalize and internalize the violence? How do they want to play this violence?

#### **4.2: Trauma and Performance: Publicizing the Private**

Rau's work with the IIPM operates under a general philosophy of *Nichts-ist-vergangen, nothing-is-past* (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 82; "Tragödie (1)" 215). In performance, everything takes place in the *immediate present*. Recollection is simpler to define within this immediate present because recollection is ultimately told in and from the perspective of the present. Unlike

reenactment, which looks at *this* past within *this* present, recollection reflects on how the larger past fits within *this* present. Rau's productions, whether reenactment or recollection, explore traumatic moments of breakage. The historical concept of trauma, Cathy Caruth explains in her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, is marked by a *perplexing contradiction*: "while the images of the traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control" (151). Trauma presents a memory that is elusive, but, when it returns, it is precise in its recall (153). Reenactment essentially presents its audience with a *flashback*, which "provides a form of recall that survives the cost of willed memory or the very continuity of conscious thought" (152). The flashback is indicative of how trauma resists active memory because the experience does not fit within the existing frame of our lexicon of past experiences. There is an impossibility of language for trauma, because trauma cannot be contained within language. Recollection attempts to do this: put trauma into the language of the everyday, or, as Rau explains: "In *The Civil Wars*, I pick four different characters, four different actors each with a different style, words and movements, which are clearly different from one another. I did not wish to reconstruct something, demonstrate something, I wanted to create a language, a precise, simple, and personal language, to speak about the nightmares occurring in Europe in our times" (F.I.N.D. #15).

The normal response to the trauma is repression, dissociation, and denial – all of these terms are indicative of a conscious effort to forget that paradoxically mark the impossibility of forgetting ("Trauma, History, Memory" 391). The reenactment's flashback is a detailed re-experience – a "literal registration of an event" – that highlights the unworked through and unprocessed nature of the event in the present:

The history that a flashback tells [...] is, therefore, a history that literally *has no place*, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood. In its repeated imposition as both image and amnesia, the trauma thus seems to evoke the difficult truth of a history that is constituted by the very incomprehensibility of its occurrence. [...] The flashback or traumatic reenactment conveys, that is, both *the truth of the event*, and *the truth of its incomprehensibility*. (Kolk & Hart 153; italics in original)

Theatre, by its very nature, provides a stage for the flashback by collapsing *telling* into *living*, or more accurately *re-living*. The only way to represent traumatic experiences, at least according to Ivana Maček's interpretation of trauma in "Communicating the Unthinkable: A Psychodynamic Perspective," is to re-live and re-experience them. Maček explains that this re-living process allows us to re-experience the trauma *here-and-now* as we did *there-and-then* without an intellectual or emotional distance from the original: "The representation of traumatic experience typically takes as long as the original experience took; it cannot be symbolized but only acted out as it is stored in the body, which gives it a sense of immediacy and concreteness. Thus, it is only the body that, through re-enacting the experience and re-experiencing it in the present, can communicate the traumatic experience" (113). Theatre already offers a frame for this action as the Western theatre tradition is largely *reiteration as creation*, where performance is a vehicle "whereby the past is transmuted into the present" (Stephenson 49).

With recollection, Rau uses theatre as a direct medium for traumatic recall.<sup>157</sup> By comparison, reenactment is arguably the more straightforward of the performance styles to identify within trauma, because it is a staged or embodied flashback. The reenactment takes a

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<sup>157</sup> And he is certainly not the only director/theatre-maker to do so.

traumatic moment of historical breakage – what Benjamin would describe as “a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger” (“Philosophy of History” 255) – and places it, uninflected, on stage in detail (creating the appearance of picture perfect). Reenactments present re-embodied events that are indelibly coloured by a violence and horror that extend far beyond the rhetorical frame of the stage. Events like genocides and murders resist interpretation and integration into collective, national memory – if such a thing can even exist.<sup>158</sup> In the scholarship of trauma, from major historical figures such as Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud to more contemporary figures such as Dori Laub, Caruth, and van der Kolk and van der Hart, a common thread emerges surrounding the issue of language and trauma. Trauma is a response to events so overwhelming that they cannot be fully grasped as they occur. Trauma can, therefore, not be integrated or interpreted within an existing lexicon of experiences (*Unclaimed Experience* 91-92; Kolk & Hart 170). Trauma, therefore, evades the interpretive and ordering power of language.

In his article about Rau’s theatre, Belgian scholar Frederik Le Roy refers to the *unsettled* nature of the IIPM’s historical subject matter (Le Roy). Reenactment does not try to internally order the traumatic. It does not try to create an internal vocabulary with which to facilitate a discussion. Instead, it aims for retrospection outside the performance space. Le Roy accurately explains that within these reenactment projects “the real value of retrospection through re-enactment does not lie in the reconstruction of the original event, but in research into, reflection on and even the production of a cultural memory” (Le Roy). Recollection, while still dealing with trauma, does so using language: not the grandiose language of metanarratives, but the

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<sup>158</sup> Even the trial of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu in *Die letzten Tage* – arguably the most straightforward and explicable of the traumatic moments in the reenactments – recounts a traumatic event that fails to fit cleanly into the past and, therefore, was never fully experienced. Its repetition in the production highlights an uncomfortable reality about the execution of these two confused old persons – both of whom fail to embody their public perception as the monsters of Romania – and the ultimate failure of the revolution to bring about any real change.

common language of the everyday. Rau describes *Die Europa Trilogie* as a pre-history for a *New Europe*:

[T]hese three plays, although written almost throughout in the simple past tense, are primarily a pre-history, a backstory. ‘And what then?’ asks the Greek actor Akillas Karazissis in *Empire* at the end of the trilogy, which began in 2013 with a visit to a young jihadist in Antwerp [*The Civil Wars*], led to the mass graves of Bosnia [*The Dark Ages*], and ended in the devastated cities of Mesopotamia [*Empire*]. ‘Then the tragedy begins.’ (“Von Molenbeek” 10-11).

*Europa Trilogie* uses individual experience to access numerous historical traumas – the Second World War, the rise and fall of communism across Europe, the AIDS epidemic, the Romanian Revolution, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav War and Bosnian Genocide, and the Syrian Civil War and refugee crisis – while *La Reprise* and *Five Easy Pieces* use a singular trauma and connect it to the daily lives of the performers. Recollection engages in a process of finding and creating a starting point for *narrative memory*, the mental constructs and frameworks that are used on a subconscious level to make sense out of experience (Kolk & Hart 160). Traumatic experience becomes cemented in a sort of *speechless terror* because it does not correlate with other lived experiences for which a satisfactory (i.e., functioning) lexicon exists. So instead of being organized on a linguistic level, where the experience is arranged in memory through just words and narrative, the traumatic becomes organized on an iconic level – part of a series of other, seemingly exceptional, experiences (yet the connections drawn between them reveals how startlingly unexceptional they are). It is organized as something outside the realm of the normal and becomes greater than these other experiences (172-173).

*Die Europa Trilogie* assimilates trauma into everyday experience without reducing the traumatic to the commonplace. *Five Easy Pieces* presents perspectives of a traumatic event both in and outside its reenactments: it presents how specific players in the Dutroux Affair experienced the tragedy (reenacted in real time on stage), as well as how the monster of Dutroux lives on in the public consciousness years after his arrest and imprisonment. In other words, the trauma does not exist as one concrete event but as a plurality: not in the fractured, innumerable postmodern sense of which Rau is so critical, but in an absolutely individual sense.<sup>159</sup> Yet there is something undeniably postmodern in this presented plurality of experience. The idea of plurality is arguably a significant aspect of postmodern historiography, but Rau's plurality, rather than denying the existence of a singular concrete event at the core of the experience, exists precisely because of this concrete event and acknowledges how it was viewed and lived by many different people and takes into account their resulting different perspectives.

Reenactment takes on the apparent frozen quality of trauma by imbuing it with the historical and witness perspective. It recreates the trauma as a flashback, breathing life into it again as an event happening once again in unedited real-time on the stage. Recollection looks back in *the simple past tense*, which begins a process of integrating and situating these moments into what Aleida and Jan Assmann call the *communicative* or *everyday memory* (Assmann & Czaplicka 126). Recollection brings together two apparently oppositional forms of memory: the communicative and the cultural. Communicative memory is socially mediated and group related.

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<sup>159</sup> Yet there is something undeniably postmodern in this sense of plurality of experience. The idea of plurality is arguably a significant aspect of postmodern historiography. It is also important to note that Rau is responding to a very specific definition of postmodernism, one he views as a dangerously noncommittal *anything-goes* philosophy embraced by a specific portion of Western European leftist academia and artists: "das Problem unseres linken Oberlehrers ist nicht, dass seine Analyse der gegenwärtigen Situation nicht zutreffend wäre. Sein Problem ist, dass er keinen besseren Vorschlag, keinen stärkeren, keinen intensiveren Glauben, keine Alternative anzubieten hat" ["our leftist head teacher's problem isn't that his analyses don't apply to the situation. His problem is that he doesn't have a better proposal to offer, no stronger, no intensive belief, no alternative."] (*Was Tun?* 13).

It is, as the name suggests, fundamentally communicative – i.e., based on and in a social interaction among two or more people (engaged in listener-speaker relations). In comparison to cultural memory, communicative memory holds “a high degree of formlessness, willfulness, and disorganization [...] [and] offers no fixed point which would bind it to the ever-expanding past in the passing of time” (Assmann & Czaplicka 126-127). We see the communicative in generational remembering, where knowledge is shared within families and between different generations in a close-knit group and is often small-scale: An internal process of knowledge and experience sharing. Communicative memory exists as what French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs describes as the memories of the society, which can only extend “as far as the memory of the groups composing it” (Halbwachs 142).

By comparison, cultural memory is larger: it is created and contained by multiple groups like a community or society, i.e., a group that is larger than a family unit. It is institutional and communicative, which means it is created around fixed points in a formalized history and extends beyond the lifetime of the group members:

Just as the communicative memory is characterized by its proximity to the everyday, cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks its temporal horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). We call these ‘figures of memory.’ (Assmann & Czaplicka 128-129)

At its core, communicative and cultural memory are part of the historiographical binary of direct, lived experience and its written/recorded historical accounts – which bears striking similarity to

Diana Taylor’s *archive* and *repertoire* within theatre and performance studies. However, cultural memory condenses and attaches these points to symbolic figures (*memory figures*), which are then celebrated and used to explain history from the present and for the present. The transformation of these fixed historical points – arguably the key to Rau’s work – into remembered history inscribes a mythic quality onto these moments; or, as Jan Assmann explains,

One might even say that cultural memory transforms factual into remembered history, thus turning it into myth. Myth is foundational history that is narrated in order to illuminate the present from the standpoint of its origins. [...] Through memory, history becomes myth. This does not make it unreal – on the contrary, this is what makes it real, in the sense that it becomes a lasting, normative, and formative power. (*Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* 37-38)

Fixed points are also present in *foundational memories*, serving as origin stories that are “more a matter of construction than natural growth,” and function “through fixed objectifications both linguistic and nonlinguistic,” but without the inscribed mythical quality of cultural memory (37).



Figure 28: *Everywoman* (Salzburger Festspiele, 2020); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Stage: Ursina Lardi; Video: Helga Bedau; Photo Credit: Armin Smailovic/IIPM

In recollection, communicative memory becomes immediately apparent to the spectator. *Europa Trilogie* notably exercises communicative memory through its very performance style. Its actors speak simultaneously inwards (to the camera) and outwards (through the camera, directly to the audience or – in the case of *Everywoman*, *Lam Gods*, and *Orestes in Mosul* to the other, live actors on the stage). Productions introduce a communicative memory that interacts and introduces the fixed points of cultural memory into the everyday and the mythmaking of self (Who am I and where do I fit into the larger history as the hero of my own story?). It explores how individual (i.e., biographical) communicative memory can orient itself with the mythical fixed points of cultural memory. Rau describes how the format of *Europa Trilogie* as “a matter of mundane simplicity and statistics,” tells “world history from the perspective of private experiences” (“Jeder tötet” 135). *The Civil Wars*, *The Dark Ages*, and *Empire* illustrate how forms of memory must co-exist to create the *collective history* that the IIPM seeks to create for Europe: A history that uses the individual and biographical qualities of communicative memories set within a communicative frame (i.e., the theatre). It introduces fixed (i.e., traumatic) points within the frame of the biographic – which must fit within the recent – or at least lived) past – of the actor and, therefore, the lived memory of the audience.<sup>160</sup>

Assmann highlights the social role of memory, social processes of memory formation, and the role memory plays in the formation of group identities – a process he defines as the *concretion of identity*. This *concretion of identity* is one of the pillars of Assmann’s understanding of cultural memory; he and his co-author John Czaplicka explain:

Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity. The objective manifestations of cultural memory

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<sup>160</sup> Assmann notes that living memory is a maximum eighty years (*Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* 37), thus Rau’s pre-history for a new Europe fits within the scope of living memory.

are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive ('We are this') or in a negative ('That's our opposite') sense. (130)

Memory is fundamentally interpersonal. It exists between people. It contains a social function in both small (private) groups and on a larger (public) level. Cultural memory is communicative insofar as it records or commemorates specific fixed points into some form of public display. Communicative memory is, therefore, always in the process of disappearing precisely because it is private. Cultural memory attaches itself to physical remnants, providing a public record in the service of a society's (or government's) specific origin story. Memory is therefore an active, integrated experience, closely connected to existing institutional structures as well as the individual. It is the unique connections of this individual to formal institutions (the state, the academy, etc.) as well as interpersonal (smaller familial) dynamics that determine potential reactions and reception of both recollection and reenactment productions.

Trauma, in stark contrast to memory, is marked by a paralysis of sorts. It cannot be actively recalled and is, therefore, a solitary experience (Kolk & Hart 163). Trauma is resistant to memory and, therefore, resistant to communication; as Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart explain in "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma," "the healthy response to mobilization of adaptive action [...] memory is an action: essentially, is the action of telling a story" (175). Caruth makes a similar claim in her description of trauma as an experience which *escapes full consciousness* and "survives the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious thought" ("Introduction – *Trauma*" 152-153). Likewise, Jill Bennett in her analysis of trauma within the arts emphasizes how memory transforms experience into representation while trauma *resists such processing*: "Its unfamiliar or extraordinary nature renders it unintelligible, causing cognitive systems to balk; its sensory or affective character

renders it inimical to thought – and ultimately to memory itself” (Bennett 27). This assertion about the resistance of trauma to integration and narrativization is heavily influenced by Pierre Janet’s writings on traumatic memory in the early twentieth century and marks a common thread within scholarly writing on trauma. The traumatic event fits neither within the past nor the present and in its refusal to settle, it continues to reverberate – meaning we still feel its effects – in the present.

Precisely because trauma resists language, processing, and representation, it triggers a *crisis of representation*. In sharp contrast to the communicative power of memory, trauma is marked by silence and the isolating power of this silence (Le Roy, Stalpaert, Verdoodt 250). Trauma effects the mind like an injury. The traumatic experience is so overwhelming that it cannot be processed or made sense of and, therefore, cannot be “integrated with other experiences into a coherent whole” (Herman 33-35). This resistant quality is also problematic for the identificatory determination of cultural memory because trauma cannot be easily integrated into the frame of “We are this...” or “We are not this...”. Both these proclamations are essentially positive assertions, while trauma represents a negative one (Assmann & Czaplicka 130).

According to the traumatic frame suggested by Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman in *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood* (2007), trauma, like the framework for memory described above, also exists within the duality of individual (personal) and collective (group) trauma (211). Throughout Rau’s work, there is a visible interest in accessing the universal – which specifically refers to the largest group identity available – through the specific, i.e., the individual’s narrative. Fassin and Rechtman point out that there is considerable overlap between trauma as an individual and collective experience because how a

person views him- or herself translates to their position as a political subject and a group (211-213). It is important to point out that Fassin and Rechtman, as the title of their study suggests and like many trauma theorists before them,<sup>161</sup> examine trauma specifically from the victim's perspective. In contrast, Rau is interested in exploring trauma from the position of both victim and perpetrator. Like in the analyses by trauma theorists such as Michael Rothberg and Dominick LaCapra, trauma is neutral in Rau's work, which means that trauma does happen with victims and survivors but can also happen with perpetrators and bystanders. Instead, cultural productions examine trauma as it exists on both sides of the perpetrator-victim divide – although most cultural productions favour the victim perspective (Rothberg 231; *History and Memory* 41).<sup>162</sup> Rau's traumatic narratives take place in a gray area that neither condones nor forgives. They instead attempt to stage the traumatic situation within its full (historical) complexity ("Rezeptivität" 198).

The complexity of the trauma that Rau explores in his work – large-scale, national, or international trauma – is fundamentally rooted in an unnegotiable negative. The gray zone of Rau's perpetrator-victim relationship reveals how trauma takes the 'We are this' of positive memory and self-image creation and combines it with the irreconcilable conclusion of 'We are not this.' The resulting statement that 'We are (in fact) this violence' or 'We are (in fact) this horror' stands in stark contradiction to the normative positive quality of cultural memory (and the struggle to integrate negative aspects of history into national self-image). Assmann – Le Roy reminds us – similarly compares the implications of trauma to cultural memory:

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<sup>161</sup> Cathy Caruth, Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, etc.

<sup>162</sup> Rau has expressed that he is most interested in situations where this role – i.e., perpetrator and victim – shifts back and forth, as is the case with the Rwandan genocide with the Hutu and the Tutsi, which is explored in *Hate Radio* (which looks at the genocide proper) and *Mitleid* (which looks at the resulting slaughters and conflicts in the DRC with the influx of Hutu refugees and Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front crossing the border in pursuit of perpetrators) ("Campo skypes Milo Rau").

Cultural memory specialist Jan Assmann stresses the importance of what he calls ‘memory-figures’: ‘culturally shaped, socially bonding memory pictures’ that usually refer to significant events in the history of a nation. These events are commemorated in celebrations, ceremonies and historical images – in short, in all kinds of recurring (re-) stagings. Rau contrasts this effective, ‘healthy’ cultural memory to the negative memory-figure of Dutroux. (Le Roy)

Thus, as Le Roy points out, when we look at productions, it becomes evident how Rau employs these negative fixed points of trauma – moments that both resist conscious recall yet are

impossible to forget – to write a *history of violence* for Europe. The Dutroux Affairs is one of these fixed points as is Jarfi’s murder. This negative fixed point is then connected to a larger negative history. Rau’s productions posit an uncomfortable underlying message about this larger history. They posit the history of Belgium is – alongside the small banal moments that make up individual, everyday life – one of violence. That Switzerland’s history with people with mental disabilities is one of violence (segregation and eugenics). And, in the same way, the history of Europe (continuing into the present day) is also a history of violence. Again, theatre itself



Figure 29: “Sudbin Musić as Hamlet,” *The Dark Ages*; Photo Credit: Dashuber/kfda.be

consists of a history and historical canon that repeatedly performs violent spectacle:

Clytemnestra murders her husband and is murdered by her children (*Empire, Orestes in Mosul*), Oedipus kills his father, marries his mother, blinds himself, and abandons his children to die (*Mitleid, Antigone im Amazonas*), Hamlet's revenge for his father's murder (*The Dark Ages, La Reprise*), and the cherry orchard is chopped down (*The Civil Wars*).

Theatre is an essentially communal experience marked by the encounter of production (actors, text, stage, etc.) and audience. For Rau, the audience is the key element of theatre. In *Das geschichtliche Gefühl*, Rau talks about the concept of *appearance, Erscheinen*, in theatre. The concept hinges on the co-existence of spectator with the performer and the effect that this co-existence has on the spectator at the moment of appearance: "Was *geschieht* mit dem Zuschauer?" (*Das geschichtliche Gefühl* 61).<sup>163</sup> This co-existence or relationship is contained in the concept of *witnessing*. Not only are many of Rau's productions about witnesses (actors and performers who have witnessed historical events and who then recreate and/or retell them), but it is the task of Rau's spectator to *witness*. Rau goes so far as to define the foundational premise of theatre as the creation of a situation for witnessing:

Jemand hat etwas zu erzählen, und wir hören ihm zu. Jemand zeigt uns etwas, und wir schauen es uns an. Es geht um diese gemeinsame Einsamkeit oder einsame Gemeinsamkeit, die eben das »Geschichten-Erzählen« ist. Es geht um die Herstellung von Präsenz, um gemeinsam etwas erscheinen zu lassen: das, was erzählt wird.<sup>164</sup> (76)

Rau's work in recollection engages with the idea of the witness and the question of the gaze: Performer as witness (*Mitleid, Europa Trilogie*), the impossibility of witnessing (*La Reprise*,

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<sup>163</sup> "What *happens* to the spectator?"

<sup>164</sup> Someone has something to say and we listen to him. Someone shows us something, and we watch it. It is about this shared loneliness or this lonely togetherness that is precisely the "storytelling." It is about the creation of presence to make something appear together: that which is told.

*Five Easy Pieces*), and the spectator as a witness as well as a voyeur. *Five Easy Pieces*' use of child actors as well as *Die 120 Tage von Sodom*'s use of actors with Down Syndrome make the implicit voyeurism of theatre explicit, so the audience is aware of the uneven and awkward power dynamic at play during the performance (fig. 32).

Watching a production, the spectator becomes what Shoshana Felman calls a *second-degree witness*, or the “witnesses of witnesses, witnesses of testimonies” (“Return of the Voice” 213), while in production the complex interplay among memory, trauma, testimony, and witnessing is constantly at play. As spectators, we engage in the process of becoming witnesses to the testimony of trauma, which – for better or for worse – returns trauma to the communicative, de-scarified realm of memory and chronicled history. We are given a starting point for a linguistic ordering of the event (although often not in the audience’s native language), thereby removing it from silence and re-situating it within the communicative realm.<sup>165</sup> Israeli-American psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Dori Laub explains that trauma is an event with no “beginnings, no ending, no before, no during and no after,” and trauma survivors are *entrapped* in this incompleteness (“Bearing Witness” 68-69). For Laub, the narrativizing reconstruction of history offers a



Figure 30: *The Civil Wars*; Sébastien Foucault; Photo Credit: Marc Stephan and IIPM

<sup>165</sup> It should also be noted that these productions – which are touring productions – are also geographically resituated and automatically translated (by which I mean Rau does no work himself to the production for this geographical transposition) into the specific socio-cultural environment of the performance location (with varying degrees of success).

way out of this entrapment. He refers to this process as the *re-externalizing of the event*, where the traumatic moment is transposed into the communicative (interpersonal) realm of memory from the isolating (solitary) realm of trauma: “This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to outside oneself and then take it back again, inside” (69-71). It, therefore, demands a listener. Theatre facilitates a space in which the performer co-exists with a captive listener (the spectator and onstage interlocutor), where there is the possibility to externalize (or re-externalize) a chosen situation is built into the institute itself.

What I refer to as recollection can easily be summarized as a form of performative testimony. While recollection is about the narrativization of individual history within the larger history, it is also hyper-aware of its fragmentary nature. *Die Europa Trilogie* is composed of monologic fragments of home life and historical events, while the plays of the Representation Trilogy (particularly its crime plays – *Five Easy Pieces*, *La Reprise*, and also *Familie*, which is not part of the Representation Trilogy) are about the fragmentary nature of events without reliable witnesses. Where *Die Europa Trilogie* creates testimony, the Representation Trilogy depends on testimony – from family, investigators, perpetrators, and hearsay – in a judicial sense (collected from those people close to the victim and the perpetrators). However, the testimony shared in these monologues or the short transitional scenes tells us about more than just the traumatic event(s), it also tells us about the time we live in.

According to Felman, testimony tells us about our own personal relation to our times; but does so in liminal, rather than perfect or finite, terms. As it responds to the shattering effect of trauma, testimony is inherently incomplete and fragmentary, a speech act that is self-aware of its

incompleteness. In the opening chapter of her groundbreaking study with Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, Felman states:

As a relation to events, testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of memory. (“Education and Crisis” 5)

In this brief definition of testimony, several striking commonalities emerge with the earlier discussion of memory and trauma: the overwhelming, unsettled, and disordered nature of trauma in comparison to the settled and narrative quality of memory/remembrance. Looking at recollection, a *process of ordering* without a definitive *ordering process* appears. Productions do not claim to offer a complete or completed reference system to order the performance’s and performers’ trauma(s). Productions like *Five Easy Pieces* and *La Reprise* do not pretend to offer a totalization of the event, nor do they pretend to strive for realism. They offer a process of looking back and uncovering the ultimately unsatisfactory and incomplete fragments making up the whole of what we know with the available information. The performance of the reenactments (like Rachel’s monologue<sup>166</sup> or Jarfi’s murder<sup>167</sup>) highlight a fictionality of what we are seeing on the stage. We see Peter Seynaeve giving direction behind the camera in *Five Easy Pieces*. In *La Reprise* (the most realistic of the Trilogy of Representation), camera people stand onstage while the actors “drive” the gray silver Polo using a flashlight to make it appear in the film like the car is driving down a highway. *Familie* uses a real family (parents An Miller and Filip Peeters and their two daughters Leonce and Louisa) – their daily rituals, their struggles, their joy,

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<sup>166</sup> *Five Easy Pieces* (IIPM: vimeo): 00:53:34-01:03:55; <https://vimeo.com/174412918>.

<sup>167</sup> *La Reprise* (IIPM: vimeo): 01:04:02-01:19:25; <https://vimeo.com/294579217>.

and their dismay – to explore the suicide of the De Meesters family in Calais, France in 2007 (fig. 31). These productions look at the construction of narrative as well as the construction of performance. They ask, how do we stage this event, both dialogically and physically? How do we stage what is ultimately impossible to understand and represent? We watch the process initially undertaken by Rau and his team during their research and rehearsal phases to find an answer to this question.

Laub explains testimony is more than a straightforward retelling, it is the *discovery of knowledge* – an event within its own right (“Bearing Witness” 62). Testimony presents the fragments in which this knowledge is contained, and which is, in turn, only uncovered in the process of being told (70-71). Felman and Laub undertake an in-depth analysis of Holocaust narratives, most significantly French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann’s 1985 film *Shoah*. The film – composed of 566 minutes of interviews with survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators – examines the Holocaust from the witness (both survivor and perpetrator) perspective. Lanzmann situates his discussion firmly in the here-and-now. It is not – in comparison to the many films that came before and after – a film about the camps set in existing archival footage. Instead, Lanzmann – whose considerable influence is undoubtedly



Figure 31: *Familie* (NTGent, 2020); Dir. Milo Rau; Designer: Anton Lukas; Stage: An Miller; Screen: Leonce Peeters and Louisa Peeters; Photo Credit: Michiel Devijver/NTGent

felt in Rau's work – creates new footage by exploring the continued present-ness of the genocide (in the 1970s and 80s) using real people in an interview documentary format without using large-scale reenactment. However, Lanzmann does, at times, instruct his interviewees to reenact actions (such as haircutting or driving a train into Auschwitz) while providing testimony. In doing so, he implicates the viewer. *Shoah*, Felman points out, is more than a historical document. It is a film about the present and about the legacy and continuing effect of the Holocaust on its survivors and participants, about the relation between *history and witnessing* and the relation between *art and witnessing* (“Return of the Voice” 205).

Recollection asks: How was and is history witnessed? How is it represented? Rau offers his audience history on the micro level. Rau explains that his productions are about “was die sogenannten ‘großen Erzählungen’ mit uns Machen oder gemacht haben,”<sup>168</sup> on the level of its actors, “die Erzähler als professionelle Performer nicht nur Spezialisten sind für ihr Leben – sondern auch dafür, wie man auf der Bühne von menschlichem Leben erzählt” (“Jeder tötet” 136-137).<sup>169</sup> Spectators are not so much presented with history on a national level as they are with history on the familial level, with the family serving on a micro-level as a metaphor for the spats and conflicts of nations as well as a group that is subjected to the spats and conflicts of nations. How are these myths carried into the present? In *Five Easy Pieces*, the spectator is presented with how children growing up in a post-Dutroux Belgium – in a post-Dutroux Flanders – still grapple with this legacy and explores the scars it left on the small nation. As we return to the question of why *this story, this body, this time, and this place* (which is muddled by the nomadic nature of touring productions), a new element presents itself: *this* (specific) *audience*. Recollection is about the audience in a reflective sense. Namely, an audience that is able to look

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<sup>168</sup> “what the so-called ‘grand narratives’ do or have done to us.”

<sup>169</sup> “narrators [who] are not only specialists of their own lives, but also in how to present life on stage.”

back and reflect on their own place and memories of the history, and on their positionality to the performance itself. Each audience, in each different city and country, will have a difference response to the production and the subject matter depending on the theatre tradition of that place and their awareness of the issue. Audience reception of Rau's productions is enmeshed with the



Figure 32: *Die 120 Tage von Sodom* (Schauspielhaus Zürich, 2017); Dir. Milo Rau; Design: Anton Lukas; Left to Right: Nikolai Gralak and Michael Neuenschwander; Photo Credit: Toni Suter/Schauspielhaus Zürich

socio-political environment of the people attending the play that night: their experiences, their expectations, and their culture.

#### Recollection

provides the testimony of a specific individual: Not just an actor performing a part, but the testimony of that specific actor. Rau employs a multilingual approach<sup>170</sup> in his productions, where actors perform in their native languages. This multilinguality highlights the individuality and specificity of each voice and each story, even though it forces the majority of spectators to depend on translated surtitles.<sup>171</sup> Although there is certainly more to be said about the use of language and multilingualism in recollection, I will conclude this section with a short discussion of translation and *translatability* in productions.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>170</sup> It should also be pointed out that this multilinguality is also part of an increasingly popular tradition within European theatre of using multiple languages during a performance, a trend often absent from English North American theatre. The choice for multilinguality must also be connected to a (highly successful) attempt at popularity and mainstream fame on the part of Rau.

<sup>171</sup> Rau's productions are almost exclusively touring productions; they are shown across Europe and across the globe.

<sup>172</sup> *Five Easy Pieces* – which was performed on four different continents – *Five Easy Pieces* uses Flemish and Dutch, *Die 120 Tage von Sodom* uses Swiss German, German, and French, and *La Reprise* uses French and Dutch.

In Rau's productions, language is both an auditory and visual (i.e., through the surtitles) medium. I am drawn to Felman's concept of the *untranslatable*, or: "that which language cannot witness; that which cannot be articulated in *one* language; that which language in its turn cannot witness without *splitting*" ("Return of the Voice" 213). In Rau's productions, the projected translations paradoxically point to both the impossibility of translation (of both the words and the experiences) and the productions' mammoth undertaking of precisely this task. If trauma is marked by silence and the impossibility of language, then Rau's productions are marked by the cacophony of voices (at times the oversaturation of language) and the possibility of finding language within this abyss, despite (or perhaps precisely because of) the inevitable insufficiency and incompleteness of the final result.

In their analyses of *Shoah*, Laub and Felman identify that testimony is inherently communicative; Laub explicitly states,

Bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener. For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other* – in the position of the one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking to *somebody*: to somebody they have been waiting for a long time. ("Bearing Witness" 70-71)

Laub explains that the presence of another person for testimony starkly counters trauma's "absence of an empathic listener, [...] an *addressable other*" (68). Returning to the fundamental encounter with the spectator of Rau's theatre: the framework of theatre – the same framing of retelling that makes this listening possible – also ascribes the presence of the addressable other because the spectator is, by design, an emphatic and empathetic listener. Recollection is at its core a narrative theatre form, a variant of the German *Erzähltheater* tradition, which counters the

silence of trauma by resituating the isolating solitude of the traumatic event into a shared collective experience (“Rezeptivität” 198).

#### **4.3: Conclusion: Was sind Wolken? – What are Clouds?**

The answer to “What is recollection?” is entangled with the representation of trauma. If, as Kierkegaard (and Rau) posit, reenactment is remembering forwards, then recollection is remembering backwards. It is a process of looking back at a traumatic moment to understand its reverberations into the present. It looks at the past from the perspective of the present. It takes a past event, a past trauma, and reflects upon it with the audience, unapologetically *inflecting* (from the perspective of the moment of performance) upon it.

There are – unsurprisingly – a number of similarities between reenactment and recollection. Both are present-based genres, and both reveal how historical realities *keep happening* through its re-presentation. However, the re-presentation of recollection is also the trick of the extremely self-aware production. Recollection, with its narrative disposition, presents its audience the appearance of spontaneity, the liveness of the actor, the trueness (at least on a personal level) of the intimate stories and personal anecdotes, and an intermedial intimacy with the performers. Still, as spectators, we remain aware that we are watching something that was created specifically for the purpose of reproduction and performance (night after night, month after month, year after year). Productions are set in theatres and acknowledge the very institutions they are a part of and within which they are performed: written and put together in rehearsal halls and inherently theatrical in how they address and employ their actors and audiences. The actors in their metonymic *performance of self*, serve as allegories. They are representative of the everyman in today’s world – today’s Europe. Their experiences, their

selflessness and selfishness, their sorrow and suffering, their joy and triumphs are the symptoms of the historical tensions of today (Le Roy).

Recollection takes the fragmentation of self – the irreconcilable private and public self – and aligns this fragmentation with the fragmenting power of trauma. It asks, how can we possibility fit within this history (its triumphs, horrors, banalities, and serendipities) and how does it fit within us and inscribe itself upon us? Rather than presenting the moment of trauma as a performative flashback like in reenactment (in the full banal horror of its first occurrence), recollection takes the fragment and engages it in words, thoughts, and larger narratives through the lens of the fragmented self. It looks how the big, inconceivable event fits within the life of the small individual – the life of an actor or a child – while also looking at the public individual as a fragment of the private self. It employs the narrativizing and exploratory power of theatre. Recollection takes the bits and pieces discovered during the research and rehearsal process and combines and edits them into coherent two-hour productions. While productions seek cohesion within fragmentation, they still recognize the limitations of the theatrical institution itself to – in concrete and real terms – *work through* the past and uncover the possibility of coming out the other side. Rather than offering a completed version of history, or a historical moment, productions do not provide an escape or reprieve from the terrible incompleteness. Through testimony, through the incessant questioning of the past and the present and at the risk of (re)traumatization – which is a legitimate danger present within Rau’s work<sup>173</sup> – recollection points to the utter ineffectiveness of theatre to the ordering system that the documentary tradition so often promises in its attempt to find a performative order for the inexplicable. While theatre

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<sup>173</sup> One need look no further than *Five Easy Pieces*, where one of the major concerns and critiques of the production was the effect that such an examination of the crimes of Dutroux would have on the children performing the reenactments and discussing the crime onstage.

may raise the dead, it may only do so for the space of the performance. At the end of the performance, when the actors return to the stage for their curtain calls, the brother of Rami Khalaf in *Empire* is still dead and Ihsane Jarfi in *La Reprise* returns to the dead after his short-lived performative (and entirely unreal) resurrection.

As a performance style, recollection breaks the comforting duality of *here and there*, and instead presents its audience with the simultaneities of here and there: an actor is both him/herself as well as an actor, and therefore not him/herself. We watch a situation that both is and isn't real (in the sense of happening), and the recreation of a real event, a real conversation, in an inherently fictional space.<sup>174</sup> Productions can offer a space for these fragments to temporarily come together for (perhaps) the first time. Such meetings are what Rau means when he refers to the *utopian space* of performance. What emerges in these spaces is the possibility of recognition as is only truly possible in theatre and, therefore, the possibility of response. Here,



Figure 33: “Five Easy Pieces – ‘What are clouds?’”; Stage (Left to Right): Elle Liza Tayou, Willem Loobuyck, Polly Persyn, Pepijn Loobuyck, Rachel Dedain; Video (Left to Right): Annabelle van Nieuwenhuysse, Peter-Jan de Wyngaert, Ans van den Eede, Hendrik van Doorn, Sara de Bosschere; Photo Credit: Phile Deprez

<sup>174</sup> This idea refers to all of Rau’s work, not just recollection.

recognition is not necessarily the recognition of sameness – although this is also part of it – but of difference. What we see in performance is not actually *real*, but it stands in for the absence of this real. Theatre – whether it is classical texts, documentary productions, or Rau’s theatre of the real<sup>175</sup> – is always, in Rau’s idiom, “a resurrection” (“An Evening with Milo Rau” Amsterdam 29.01.2019). The production of presence is marked by the overwhelming presence of an absence that we are then forced to acknowledge (Stephenson 146-147).

Alice Rayner, in her introduction to *Ghosts: Death’s Double and the Phenomena of Theatre*, explains that “recognition or re-knowing or unforgetting is, rather, a particular kind of perception: it is a sensation of seeing for the first time what one has seen many times before” (xix). The power of recollection – as the very name implies – lies in the sharing of memory and experience, not necessarily unfamiliar experiences but absolutely individual ones. The closed, private situation is displaced into the open and public realm as a part of a ritual of sharing and storytelling. Between the striking sameness and overwhelming difference among the stories told, we find something we know. I am drawn to the concept of re-knowing and unforgetting in Rau’s work, because, although there is no new information to be found in productions, something is uncovered in the fragments: that something provides or facilitates a moment of solidarity. Spectators, as in all theatre, find something that unites them in their trauma, in their horror, in their witnessing for the time and space of the production. Something that – despite the differences in experiences – opens the window and, if only for a brief moment, reveals the sky (“Recapturing the Future”).<sup>176</sup> This hopeful sentiment is communicated in *Five Easy Pieces*

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<sup>175</sup> His term (“An Evening with Milo Rau” Amsterdam 29.01.2019).

<sup>176</sup> As is the case with many of Rau’s speeches, when we look through early articles and blogs written by Rau, we can find fragments of ideas that he later repeats and further develops. This idea of art as a way to open the window to the future also appears in an article that first appeared on March 13, 2016 in *Sonntagszeitung* as a response to *Das Kongo Tribunal*. In this article, titled “Was bringt die Kunst?”, Rau states: “Die Kunst kann diese Fenster einen Spalt weit öffnen. Und auch wenn sie gleich wieder zugeschlagen werden: Man hat den Himmel kurz gesehen”

final monologue performed by Polly Persyn (fig. 33), aptly summing up how recollection productions explore the space that the individual occupies within capital-H history:

Ich denke, jeder hat sein eigenes Schicksal.

Wenn du ein Held bist, stirbst du auf dem Schlachtfeld.

Wenn du ein gewöhnlicher Mensch bist, stirbst du zuhause.

Wie das Sprichwort sagt:

“Die Geschichte findet uns dort, wo wir geboren wurden.”<sup>177</sup>

(“Five Easy Pieces” 54)<sup>178</sup>

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[“Art can crack open this window. And even if it is immediately slammed shut again: You saw the sky for just a second”] (“Was bringt” 295).

<sup>177</sup> I think everyone has their own fate. If you are a hero, you die on the battlefield. If you are a normal person then you die at home. As the saying goes: “History finds us there where we were born.”

Please note, although *Five Easy Pieces* is performed in Dutch and Flemish, the published version of the script features a German translation.

<sup>178</sup> *Five Easy Pieces* (IIPM: vimeo): 01:30:10-01:34:12; <https://vimeo.com/174412918>.

## Chapter 5: Engaged Theatre and Reactment

Since the performance of *Die Moskauer Prozesse* in March 2013, Milo Rau and the IIPM have been internationally recognized for their political actions. For their staged institutions and performative rallies, Rau and his team build from an extensive, international tradition of artists and performance collectives who take to the streets, employing a combination of activist and artistic tools for a performance that aims to create political and economic change (“*Artivists (Artist-Activists)*” 147). Such one-time performative projects are founded on the aesthetics of protest. Numerous terms have been used to describe this form of theatre: Socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventional art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art, social practice, activist art, and activism (Malzacher 17). German dramaturg and curator, Florian Malzacher (\*1970), defines this form of theatre as engaged art, which is “more than mere relational reflection or aesthetics. It takes a stand or provokes others to take a stand. It does not only want change; it wants to be an active part of this change, or even to initiate it” (13). Stephen Duncombe and Steve Lambert (the founders of the Center for Artistic Activism) similarly explain how such artistic projects draw both on art and activism to produce an identifiable and qualifiable difference in the community where it takes place: “the aesthetic, process-based approach of the arts with the instrumental, outcome focus of activism” (Duncombe & Lambert 34).

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first picks up where the overview of Chapter Three leaves off and looks at constructed institutions for real change, carefully curated, but unscripted, mock trials created for and by theatres and other cultural institutions. It explores the long history of such institutions and short, spontaneous political performances dating back to Workers’ Theatre Movements of the 1920s and 30s and extending into the present (Shalson 18).

The second section examines those artist-activists who fit within what has recently been called *artivism* (art + activism), situating several artists (including Rau) within this tradition and exploring how these artists use theatre and theatricality through political action. In reactment, we see the connections between IIPM's constructed institutions and documentary actions that feature real activists and other long-standing political performance traditions: guerilla theatre, mock institutions (mock awards, mock elections, mock trials), and creative activism.

### **5.1: Constructed Institutions for Real Change**

There is relatively little written about this form of tribunal-style performance, because they have only recently gained more mainstream popularity in Western Europe and become a more regular feature of European mainstage. The recent publication of *Performance Zwischen den Zeiten. Reenactments und Preenactments in Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2019) offers an excellent look into the performance practice of preenactment, a term that envelopes these institutions as well as other future-oriented, politically engaged productions. Other collections that look at the intersection of art and activism in constructed institutions are *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization* (Rotterdam: NAI, 2011) edited by Lieven De Caeter, Ruben De Roo, and Karel Vanhaesebrouk; *The Art of Civil Action: Political Space and Cultural Dissent* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2017) edited by Phillipp Dietachmair and Pascal Gielen; and the latter's *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude: Global Art, Politics and Post-Fordism* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2017). These volumes look at the theory and practice of transnational democratic art, drawing on contemporary political actions and artists, but are huge in their scope and more focused on theory than on practice. General works on documentary theatre or engaged arts also include sections about this form of performance: the "Institutions" section of Theron Schmidt's *Agency: A Partial*

*History of Live Art* (Bristol: Intellect, 2019) provides a detailed exploration of performative institutions within the UK tradition of Live Art. Additionally, Rau and NTGent have curated several volumes of their Golden Book series about politically engaged political artists and their use of theatre for political means. The fourth Golden book, *The Art of Resistance: On Theatre, Activism and Solidarity* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2020), features essays and excerpts from IIPM reactments, Lara Staal, Yoonis Osman Nuur's, and Maria Lucia Cruz Correia's staged activist tribunal projects.

Contemporary Austrian philosopher Gerald Raunig (\*1963), in "Occupy the Theater, Molecularize the Museum," identifies the role cultural institutions and creators take in *conceptualizing and instituting other worlds*. He explains the duality of the creation of these liminal institutions with the artist's desire to find radical alternatives to the "sinking ship" of capitalism: "Instituting other worlds implies, on the one hand, inventing ever new instituent practices wherever possible, but also occupying, reterritorializing, and molecularizing existing art institutions, when many of them become dysfunctional, out of joint, or even fall apart" (76). Constructed performative institutions serve as symbolic institutions within a real-world void – i.e., for those incidents with (as of *yet*) no set trial date, those victims who have not (*yet*) been given a voice, and those perpetrators who have not (*yet*) had their day in court – plugging into the familiar gestures of the justice system as a way of presenting these unheard voices to a wider audience. Rather than interrogating *how* a trial took place like the scripted and reenacted tribunals by Weiss, Wooster Group, Kroesinger, and others, these projects interrogate *why* there is no existing tribunal or institution using the mechanisms and gestures of justice. They bring international experts together with eyewitnesses, perpetrators, witnesses, locals, lawyers, and judges. In these projects, the *director* and *author* take on more the role of administrator or

curator, responsible for finding people and arranging the details of the tribunal (who gets to speak and for how long). They shift away from existing documents and towards the creation (or generation) of one's own material and one's own institution – towards a more journalistic working process. Artist and researcher Johanna Linsley (founder of the Brooklyn-based centre for documentary arts, UnionDocs) identifies how art both engages and challenges existing institutions, and how newly constructed performative institutions ask the question, “How can new models for institutions be achieved?” (Schmidt 133).

The tribunal is an appealing format for political theatre, because – as Richard Schechner identifies – is already inherently dramatic (Schechner 211). The performative ritual of justice – the quasi-theatrical space of the court, the opening and closing arguments by lawyers, the judge's final verdict, etc. – is central to all plays and performances within the tribunal genre. According to Schechner, the trial follows a specific format, a series of people enter the courtroom to present different versions of events from the perspectives of the various involved parties (250). Judicial proceedings present the judge and jury with what Richard Harbinger refers to as a *play within a play*, because “[t]he drama of the courtroom takes place in the courtroom, while the drama of the crime takes place elsewhere” (Harbinger 122-124). Tribunal plays and projects look at a crime that is *out there* – that has already happened or is happening right now – and because those responsible cannot be brought onto the stage, they bring courtroom dialectic into the theatre in an examination of both the crime itself and the handling (or lack thereof) of it by transnational, international, and state institutions.

In *The Art of Resistance*, Dutch artist, curator, and activist Lara Staal (\*1984) offers a potential explanation for what makes the courtroom an attractive structure for political artists and actions:

There is something fascinating about the way we organize truth-procedures. Although the court makes use of people, performativity, roles, rituals, rhetoric and even costumes, we associate the judicial process with truth and that of art (or theatre) with fiction. [...] What constitutes the truth? When is something true and when is it subjective? And who decides? Even in a court we cannot erase subjectivities. Because courts are made by people. And people are not objective. Subjectivity is present in every element of truth-seeking. Social values, political dynamics, personal taste, choice of words, timing; all these elements are influencing the outcome of a case. Truth is not the same everywhere or in every time. (“Exercising ourselves” 122-123)

Tribunals allow for a temporary explosion of the art-life distinction, juxtaposing the fictionality and constructedness of judicial institutions with the potentiality of theatre to access an admittedly subjective truth forum. Jonas Staal (\*1981), another political Dutch artist and Lara Staal’s older brother, calls attention to the exciting potential of performative institutions like mock trials, tribunals, and assemblies:

The truth of politics is here first spoken by art; its radical imaginative force redefines our notion of politics as whole. [...] the art of fundamental democracy is not only to question the world and imagine it differently but to redefine the concept of political action, of political being in the world itself. Not to make new artworks, but to make a world. [...]

The task of progressive art is to make that truth a reality. (“Progressive Art” 65)

The role of these constructed institutions is to “expose, defy, and change” the conditions their *real* counterparts present, identifying the biases and, at times, violent politics of such institutions (65).

Performative institutions are also sometimes unscripted, one-time productions that *reopen* past trials. They are similar to documentary trial plays, but – instead of examining *what happened* – it provides a utopian space for the trial to happen the way it *should have happened*. For example, the *NSU-Komplex* project, sponsored by a number of state and city theatres across Germany.<sup>179</sup> The project engages with the German authorities' shoddy investigation<sup>180</sup> of neo-Nazi terror attacks and institutional racism surrounding a series of murders and attacks by members of the National Socialist Underground from 1999 to 2011. *NSU-Komplex auflösen* (2017) brings together a number of anti-racist initiatives, building on existing judicial structures, inspired by ongoing political activism, and contains the transparency and openness lacking from the legal court cases in 2013 and 2018 ([www.nsu-tribunal.de](http://www.nsu-tribunal.de)). Such performances attempt to create transparent tribunal structures, in a critique of oblique and unsatisfactory judicial systems. These tribunals examine “unresolved problems of the present” (Trnka), and stage events that have not yet happened using what Rau calls *symbolic institutions* (*General Assembly* 12). Another form of performative tribunal is exemplified by (and often styled after) Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905-1980) and Bertrand Russell's (1872-1970) 1967 *Russell Tribunal*: a private body organized to investigate and evaluate American foreign policy and military intervention in Vietnam. The Russell Tribunal for Vietnam, as well as the subsequent Russell Tribunals, occupy a strange place in the canon of tribunal theatre because they straddle a line between tribunal theatre and activism – many of the projects occupy a nebulous subsection of the genre. The initial *Russell Tribunal* famously employed the performative trappings and series of gestures associated with judicial processes as an entrance into real issues of the present. The initial Vietnam tribunals

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<sup>179</sup> Schauspiel Köln, Münchner Kammerspiele, Hebbel am Ufer, der Haus der Kulturen der Welt, etc.

<sup>180</sup> Made all the more complicated since emails from the self-styled “NSU 2.0” (a group of right-wing extremists that has sent a series of anonymous death threat via Fax, SMS, and email since 2018) were linked to police computers in Hessen, Berlin, and Hamburg.

consisted of only two sessions in 1966 and 1967, however, since 1967 a number of tribunals have been established using Russell and Sartre's model.<sup>181</sup> Projects like *Case Farmakonisi* and *Tribunal 12*, which involve a meticulous collection of firsthand accounts about the incidents and topics discussed (the blatant violation of human rights of refugees in Europe). Like *NSU-Komplex*, Lara Staal and Yoonis Osman Nuur's (\*1982) *Europe on Trial* (2018) explore the failure of existing justice systems through the implementation of an ideal (uncorrupted) one, while exploring the ethics and ethical dilemma of Europe's response to 2015's refugee crisis.

The overlap between documentary trial plays and performative institutions is further complicated with the desperate presentness of the subject matter and need for a change that both reach for. The issues explored in these trials are not commentaries on the present from the past (although one could certainly argue that the documentation of these performances does do this), but *live*, ongoing, issues that are – as of the moment of performance – unresolved. Productions are left *unresolved* when the curtain closes, because, although they engage in the performative ritual of judicial legislation, they do not hold the legitimation necessary to effectively resolve these issues – these human rights violations, these civil wars, these deaths.

Over the past ten years, there has been an increased interest in the creation of these future-oriented, utopian institutions, which often provide a forum for the voiceless. For example, Terike Happonen (\*1974) and Laura Gustafsson's (\*1983) 2014 *History of Others: The Trial* constructs an imaginary trial and judicial system, granting animals legal standings and putting those people who victimize animals on trial. In 2011, a mock trial was held in the UK Supreme Court *Eradicate Ecocide* for the environment. English activist and lawyer Polly Higgins (1968-

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<sup>181</sup> There have been *Russell Tribunals* on human rights violations in Argentina and Brazil's military dictatorships held in Rome in 1973, on Chile's military coup d'état held in Rome between 1974 and 1976, on human rights in psychiatry held in Berlin in 2001, on Iraq in 2004 in Brussels (also called the BRussells – for Brussels Russell – Tribunal), and, from 2009 to 2014, on Palestine in Barcelona, London, Cape Town, New York, and Brussels.

2019), who participated in this mock trial, continued the efforts of the initial trial as part of a larger *Stop Ecocide* project. Artist Maria Lucia Cruz Correia's (\*1983; Portugal/Belgium) *The Voice of Nature: The Trial* (2019) similarly used the tribunal structure to investigate ecocide as well as seeking to create a proposal for the justice system ([mluciacruzcorreia.com](http://mluciacruzcorreia.com)). Other curators, like Lara Staal, use the tribunal structure to explore the rights of refugees, migrants, and minorities in a conference style, such as Jonas Staal's series *New World Summit* project (2015-2018). We see the influence of these summits and tribunals in IIPM projects such as *Das Kongo Tribunal* (2015) and *General Assembly* (2017), while Rau's early reactments, particularly *Moskauer Prozesse* and *Zürcher Prozesse* (2013), are most heavily influenced by Swiss director Jean-Stéphane Bron's (\*1969) 2010 documentary film *Cleveland Versus Wall Street*. Bron's film responded to the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States by staging a mock trial that allowed the residents of some of Cleveland's poorest neighbourhoods to confront Wall Street banks and their affiliates.

Symbolic institutions are not only structured after judicial institutions and these performative institutions can have more staying power than initially anticipated by their creators. Another example of symbolic institutions fits under the moniker of arts education institutions. For example, German film- and theatre-maker Christoph Schlingensiefel's (1960-2010) *Operndorf* project (2010-present) located outside Burkina Faso's capital city Ouagadougou.<sup>182</sup> Operndorf, the Opera Village, was initially conceived as an international meeting place has since (at least according to the project's website), but has since manifested itself as a platform for international exchange and postcolonial discourse in a practical, sustainable, and embedded context ([operndorf.afrika.com](http://operndorf.afrika.com)). Schlingensiefel is best-known for his acts of public provocation. His

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<sup>182</sup> Schlingensiefel died of lung cancer on August 21, 2010, six months after they first broke ground in Burkina Faso ([operndorf.afrika.com](http://operndorf.afrika.com)).

controversial and influential legacy remains an important part of the German language theatre's history. *Bitte liebt Österreich – Erste österreichische Koalitionswoche* (2000, better known as *Ausländer raus!* or *Foreigners Out!*) infamously brought Austria's – and Europe's – underlying xenophobia to the fore, exposing a raw nerve with the giant industrial containers strategically placed at the heart of Vienna's historic city centre (Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz) (Moldenhauer) (*schlingensief.com*).

Building off the legacy of institutions like Operndorf, Dutch artist Renzo Martens's (\*1973) Institute for Human Activities (IHA),<sup>183</sup> and the Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC; or Congolese Plantation Workers Art League)<sup>184</sup> with its Lusanga International Research Center for Art and Economic Inequality (LIRCAEI) operates under a similar philosophy. The LIRCAEI was founded in 2014 and is a post-plantation, anti-monoculture project in Lusanga – the region where the Lever Brothers (later Unilever Company) founded their first palm oil plantation in 1911. Using the money earned by CATPC's national and international exhibitions, the artists were able to purchase the plantation and has been able to enjoy a meagre profit from their artistic work. Both *Operndorf* and LIRCAEI mark a sort of embedded political art, undertaken in the hopes of being picked up by on-the-ground partners and participants who will carry it forward independently. These and other projects like them aim for self-empowerment, liberation, and repatriation in both a practical and concrete sense for participants.

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<sup>183</sup> Renzo Martens has worked in the DRC since 2012 and is perhaps best-known for his film *Enjoy Poverty* (2008).

<sup>184</sup> The artwork from Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (Congolese Plantation Workers Art League) was featured in the foyer of NTGent's Arca Theatre during the opening weekend of Rau's first season as artistic director at the theatre. Two artists from the plantation – Mathieu Kilapi Kasiama and Cedrick (Ced) Tamasala – were present at the filming of *Nuovo Vangelo*. Kasiama, who would play Jesus in the Congo iteration of the project, was baptized by Sagnet, who had previously been baptized by Enrique Irazoqui, Pasolini's Jesus in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*. The baptism serves as a symbolic act that marks continuation and initiation, i.e., the intent of the Congolese artists to re-enact *Das Neue Evangelium* themselves.

## 5.2: Artivism – Generating the Event

As was the case in the previous section, there is relatively little written specifically about artivism; the term itself is relatively new. The foremost book on artivism remains Lilo Schmitz's volume of essays *Artivismus: Kunst und Aktion im Alltag der Stadt* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015), which looks at artist movements across the globe. Additionally, the seventh chapter of Diana Taylor's *Performance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), "Artivists (Artist-Activists), or, What's to Be Done?", looks at three examples of artivism in post-dictatorship Latin America. However, the movement has been examined under different names: Nancy Sue Love and Mark Mattern's collection of essays *Doing Democracy: Activist Art and Cultural Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013) looks at instances of performative activism in the United States. Timothy Youker's *Documentary Vanguards in Modern Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2018) offers a fascinating look into the history of political documentary and engaged theatre (stretching back to 1835) in Europe and North America, giving not only numerous modern examples, but also revealing shifts within such theatre as it moved closer to activism. Birgit Beumers, Alexander Etkind, Olga Gurova, and Sanna Turoma's volume *Cultural Forms of Protest in Russia* (London: Routledge, 2018) provides useful insight into the longstanding and often overlooked tradition of protest performance in Russia, which Rau directly references in works like *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (2013).

Closely connected to the embedded work of arts education institutions is what has been called artivism, a combination of art and activism in a public Theatre of Protest. Artivists create both the event itself and work with the event's mediation. Perhaps the most notable difference between this and the other genres of the documentary tradition is that artivism is a one-time,

unrepeatable event, the reverberation of the performance is located entirely in its mediation. This liminal quality of open, political performance connects activism with reenactment, because, like historical lay-reenactments, participation is key to the act of performance act.

Even more than documentary plays, activist projects are inseparably and inescapably connected with media and the artists often take part in this mediating process. Artists play with (and at times manipulate) how the media presents the event – which has become increasingly important with the advent of social media, personal websites, and blogs (Rauterberg). Visual artist Peter Weigl (\*1973) from Karlsruhe’s Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie defines activism as “die erste wirklich neue Kunstrichtung des 21. Jahrhunderts” (Weigl qtd. Schmitz 9).<sup>185</sup> Activists use the vocabulary and medium of art to present social action messages – social action is marked by the fight for human rights and against exclusion and poverty – while artists use the medium to provoke and agitate (10). Lilo Schmitz asserts that the activist, using political and artistic means, leads a fight for a good (or better) life (9). It is an art movement developed in a society still rooted in postmodernism, offering a “Reparaturkultur” – a repair culture – and the opportunity to pose questions against existing socio-political structures (Schwarz).

Activists have the unique opportunity to tease the boundary between art and reality, as well as between artist and citizen: acting as Joseph Beuys’s “Soziale Plastik,” “social sculpture” (Bieling). Beuys – an early example of an activist (although he did not label himself as such) – describes an art that explodes the art-life distinction to “build conversations, cooperative practice, and organizational structures” (Biddle 26) through art, and to “mould and shape the world in which we live” (Beuys qtd. in Biddle 26). So, art, according to Beuys, acts as a tool of political realization and enlightenment: didactic and revelatory in nature. This educational

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<sup>185</sup> “the first truly new art movement of the twenty-first century.”

quality is exemplified by Beuys's 1977 "Free International University" at Kassel's Documenta 6, illustrating his own social sculpture concept. The free university was "part exhibition, part performance art, and part public education platform" (28). It invited participants to engage with his theories about how art acts as a transformative political force for society and how art, out of necessity, must change with society (28). Beuys's theoretical concepts of social sculpture and living archive are highly influential to the artists' societal critiques and interventions, as well as Rau's work in reactment.

Early movements towards activism within the American performance tradition are seen in the *activist endings of optative documentaries*, which Youker defines as:

[P]erformances that use factual material to anchor and naturalize an explicitly functional evocation of a wished-for present or future reality. Optative documentary mixes documentary methods with what Jill Dolan calls utopian performatives [... asking] if everyday life could be more like the fictive world evoked through a given performance event. The document, in these works, plays one or both of two possible roles: it can serve as a symbol of oppressive authority or historical trauma that the performers seek to overcome, and/or it can serve as concrete proof of a cultural genealogy that culminates in the performance's *activist ending*. (Youker 126; italics added)

Artists like Judith Malina and Julian Beck's Living Theatre as well as the "courtroom antics" (entering the court dressed as judges or police) of Abbie Hoffman (1936-1989) and Bobby Seale (\*1936) during the 1968 Chicago Eight conspiracy trial united the "documentary sensibility of the theatrical and a theatrical sensibility of real life" to close the gap between desire and reality. They heralded in an attempt to remake reality in the act of documenting it and move the political reality closer to the utopian visions of the performance's authors (126).

Artivism is not just a European phenomenon, there is an extensive, longstanding tradition of artivism across South America dating back to the late sixties. Artistic actions served as a way to critique, respond, and actively resist the military dictatorships that appeared across the continent. For example, in 1968, *Tucumán Arde* (or *Tucumán is burning*) brought a group of Argentinean artists together to expose conditions in the Tucumán region under then dictator Juan Carlos Onganía by collecting firsthand accounts of living and working conditions in the Tucumán province which were then publicized in exhibitions in Buenos Aires and Rosario, Argentina. In 1983, with the return to democracy to Argentina, artists again took to the streets with the massive public art experience *El Siluetazo* – part of the larger *Marcha de la Resistencia* project – where artists and activists cut out life-size human silhouettes in an effort to draw attention to the issue of disappeared people under the dictatorship (“Sketching a History” 37).<sup>186</sup> Other nations like Brazil, Chile, Columbia, and Uruguay were also home to post-dictatorship artivism, where political actions became a medium to respond to former repressions. There is no space in this overview to name the many activist collectives and actions that took place across South America, however, it is important to note there is a rich historical tradition globally; similar post-dictatorship projects took place in the former East Bloc, such as the former Yugoslavia, with groups like WHW (Hungary) and IRWIN from Neue Slowenische Kunst (Yugoslavia) (53).

Echoes of Schlingensiefel’s work are clearly present in *Zentrum für politische Schönheit*, (2008; Centre for Political Beauty) projects like *Flüchtlinge fressen* (*Eating Refugees*; 2016), *Die Toten kommen* (*The Dead are Coming*; 2015), or *Denkmal der Schande* (*Monument of*

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<sup>186</sup> Artist groups continue to be an important part of the cultural landscape in many South American nations. Groups such as Grupo de Arte Callejero, Etcétera..., and Iconoclastas in Argentina and Bijari, Contra File, and Frente Treis de Fevereiro in Brazil all deserve an in-depth examination.

*Shame*; 2017). ZPS is a collective of about seventy *Aktionskünstlern* (action-artists), founded in 2008 by Swiss-German philosopher and artist Philipp Ruch (\*1981) that operates under a philosophy of “aggressive humanism,” asserting “art must hurt, provoke and rise in revolt” (*politicalbeauty.com*).

For both Schlingensiefel and ZPS, the medium – in a McLuhanesque manner – becomes the message. There are a number of superficial similarities between the two, both remediate or refashion popular mediums such as television shows and pop culture that hold a place in the collective memory (*Big Brother* and Roman Gladiator culture), providing a stark critique of the present through these established mediums (Remshardt 42). Rau similarly actively engages with both the mass media as well as social media for campaigns like *La Rivolta della Dignità* (2019) and *Das Kongo Tribunal* (2015). Even more than ZPS, Schlingensiefel, or Rau, Germany’s Peng! Collective – “an explosive concoction of activism, hacking and art battling the barbarism of our time” (*pen.gg*) founded in 1998 – depends on Twitter, Facebook, social media, and pop culture. Peng’s 2015 anti-campaign “Mach was zählt” – a collaboration with Dortmund Theater – was a direct parody of the Bundeswehr’s 2015 recruitment campaign, pointing to the issues ignored by the Bundeswehr’s official campaign, such as: being trained to kill people, post-traumatic stress disorder, sexism, and the prevalence of right-wing attitudes among soldiers (*pen.gg*). Doves of people visited the website set up by Peng with more than 150,000 visitors in a single day. The anti-campaign, which was arguably more successful in raising awareness than the original, cost only 100 Euros in comparison to the 10.6 million Euros that the Bundeswehr spent on their campaign (Kaul). These political projects parody the language and style of the original as a way to draw attention to systemic problems located in the original through a “Mockup” – a mocking copy (“Hype und Elend”). The critique is still provocative (less aimed at outrage and more

towards discourse), but the style is quieter than the street corner provocation of Schlingensief or ZPS.

The most famous (or infamous) instance in recent years of activism is the Russian group Pussy Riot's (2011) February 21, 2012, performance inside Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The minute-long performance resulted in the arrest of two group members – Nadezhda Tolokonnikova (\*1989) and Maria Alyokhina (\*1988) – who were sentenced to two years imprisonment under the charge of hooliganism: “disrespect to society and disruption of public order with the motives of religious hatred and enmity” (Yatsyk 123).<sup>187</sup> Pussy Riot is one of the many examples protest performances in modern Russia. For example, the Sakharov Centre's exhibitions “Beware, Religion!” (2003) and “Forbidden Art 2006” (2007) – both of which garnered significant public attention and notoriety because of the overt criticism of the Orthodox Church in the exhibitions – led to the Centre's curator Yury Samadurov (\*1951) facing charges of “inciting religious hatred” and his dismissal as curator (Skillen 27). Since the sixties (the Thaw), Soviet artists and collectives used participatory art and so-called total installations to subvert censorship and undermine state ideology using the language of the censor and the bureaucracy. This movement is marked by individual artists like Ilya Kabakov (\*1933) and groups like the Moscow Conceptualists<sup>188</sup> and the Collective Actions Group (1976).

Activism is a reactive art form, where the artists construct responsive, symbolic events concerning the social, political, and economic issues of the present moment while inviting the spectator to participate, volunteer, and witness. These events can become incredibly difficult to separate from normal protests (i.e., protests that are organized and not described as performative

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<sup>187</sup> A third member, Yekaterina (Katya) Samutsevich, was also arrested but was freed on probation with her sentence eventually suspended. For *Die Moskauer Prozesse*, Rau worked with Samutsevich in *Moskauer Prozesse*.

<sup>188</sup> Kabakov, Dmitri Prigov, Irina Nakhova, Viktor Pivovarov, Eric Bulatov, Andrei Monastyrski.

or theatre – although all protests are, at least in part, performative), many largescale movements such as Occupy – which was an inspiration of Rau’s *General Assembly* (2017) – are also linked to activism, even if the activists involved don’t recognize this connection. Some performances test the boundary between performance and protest such as Turkish performance artist Erdem Gündüz’s (\*1979) peaceful protest “*duranadam*,” “standing man” (2013). In the aftermath of a violent protest, Gündüz stood silently in Taksim Square in response to the government supported police brutality (Seymour).

Activism, like much of the documentary tradition, works within a repertoire of protests – accessing the rituals associated with protest for the sake of the performance. They examine the question: What are the gestures and rituals of protest and how are these aspects of public protest embodied by protestors and participants? Artists employ the Internet, social media, and mass media to archive their actions. Activists not only represent and perform protest, but also take part in the embodied practice of protest. Perhaps the fundamental difference between the plays and productions of the wider documentary tradition (i.e., those methodologies documented above) and activist actions is their often uncontrollable and unpredictable results in comparison to scripted, reproducible plays or carefully controlled and curated reenactments. Still, both scripted plays of the documentary tradition and the unscripted performances of activism reflect on the present social, political, and economic climate, on a pre-existing set of public gestures, and explore the intersection of experience and memory.

### **5.3: Transition – Reactment**

Milo Rau’s reactments take a number of diverse forms, from unscripted trials like *Die Zürcher Prozesse* to street level actions like *La Rivolta della Dignità*. These live one-time performance

events pull from an extensive tradition of staged trials and tribunals as well as collective protest performances and performative institutions. Rau pulls inspiration for his reactments from an extensive global tradition that, in the German-speaking realm, is marked by Joseph Beuys's social sculptures and carried to the extreme by provocateurs such as Christoph Schlingensief. However, on a larger international level he has historical roots in national resistance movements such as those in Latin American and the former USSR. As is the case with reenactment and recollection (Chapters One and Three), Rau's work in reactment does not appear in isolation, but pulls inspiration from a long-established and increasingly popular line of political actions and performative institutions.

## Chapter 6: What is Reactment?

“Kunst wird erst dann interessant, wenn wir vor irgend etwas stehen, das wir nicht gleich restlos erklären können.”<sup>189</sup>

Christoph Schlingensiefel quoted in “Mein Idealer Künstler”

This chapter explores the titular question: What is reactment? It is a term of my own creation that describes Milo Rau’s political action performances. The term indicates how these political actions *react to* specific issues and against existing institutions’ structural and systemic failures through performative recreation.<sup>190</sup> Reactment refers to Milo Rau’s political action projects – *City of Change* (2010), *Land of Hope* (2010), *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (2013), *Zürcher Prozesse* (2013), *Das Kongo Tribunal* (2015), and *La Rivolta della Dignità* (2019). Reactments are closely connected to the reclassification<sup>191</sup> productions produced through NTGent – *Orestes in Mosul* (2019), *Das Neue Evangelium* (2020), and *Antigone im Amazonas* (2021) – which similarly examine how global conflicts play out on a local level, but do so through repertoire, mainstage (i.e., repeatable) productions, rather than one-time, non-repeatable actions.

Rau and his team use performative projects to respond to the systemic failures of European/Western<sup>192</sup> society by constructing institutions before which, to paraphrase Rau, the political class and business elite must justify themselves (Arts.21.). Rau describes this performance style as a *Möglichkeitsrealismus*, a realism of possibilities (“Das Symbolische” 24).

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<sup>189</sup> “Art only becomes interesting when we are faced with something that we cannot completely explain immediately.”

<sup>190</sup> It was originally written as react-ment to highlight this reaction quality of the production, while the *-ment* is meant to connect the category of performance with Rau’s reenactments and to highlight the resurgent quality of reenactment that is at play in these political actions (they are re-enacting institutions).

<sup>191</sup> Reclassification refers specifically to the productions within the Classics Trilogy Rau has produced with NTGent, which, although they are repertoire productions built around classical texts (plays, books, pieces of art). The term reclassification functions in several different ways: the *re-* is, first and foremost, a nod towards the re- of Rau’s initial reenactments and the re-enactive impulse inherently at play in these productions both in how they exist in a state of repetition as well as how they use techniques of reenactment and recollection within the performance.

<sup>192</sup> Throughout this chapter I use the term *the West* and *Western* to refer to a larger system of economic powers and former colonizers that include Europe, North America, and Australia.

In other words, (at least according to Rau) reactments make the unimaginable imaginable: “Was nicht darstellbar ist, ist nicht denkbar, und das *Kongo Tribunal* hat etwas real gemacht, was vorher nicht einmal in den verrücktesten Träumen vorstellbar war” (“utopische Institutionen” 16).<sup>193</sup> Rau remains aware that the institutions he and his team create are not *real* (in the sense of governmentally and judicially legitimated) but primarily symbolic, although, as this chapter explores, reactments also push against the symbolic and into the realm of the pragmatic and real.

This chapter has two parts. The first breaks down the concept of symbolic institutions for the future – how Rau describes reactments. It looks at the theory behind this concept by using Rau’s writing about his political actions and the previously discussed tradition of activism and political action performance. The second part contextualizes and analyses the various aspects of performance within their political function, examining them through the different levels of spectatorship at play within the creation and performance of projects. This section identifies how performances function differently based on the positionality of individual participants and spectators, while also exploring issues of collective creation and collectivity within IIPM projects. For its analysis, the chapter draws heavily on Rau’s two best-known reactments: *Die Moskauer Prozesse* and *Kongo Tribunal*, but also refers to *General Assembly* and *Das Neue Evangelium/Rivolta della Dignità*.<sup>194</sup> For *Moskauer Prozesse* and *Kongo Tribunal*, I refer specifically to the documentary films produced and the books published of these productions, because these are the documents to which I have access. I engage with *General Assembly* and *Neue Evangelium*, because I was present at the live performances of these projects in Berlin

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<sup>193</sup> “That what cannot be represented is not conceivable, and the *Congo Tribunal* made something real, which was not imaginable in anyone’s wildest dreams” (“utopische Institutionen” 17).

<sup>194</sup> These are two connected projects rehearsed and filmed in Southern Italy from August to October 2019. *Das Neue Evangelium/Rivolta della Dignità* is also one of the few reactment projects that I have had the opportunity to witness and engage with firsthand.

(*General Assembly*), and Matera and Rome (*Rivolta della Dignità/Neue Evangelium*). So, unlike *Moskauer Prozesse* and *Kongo Tribunal*, I am able to access the on-the-ground realities of these reactments in a way that is not possible with others.



Figure 34: “Bukavu sitting of *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket, 2017)”; Photo Credit: Real Fiction Filme

## 6.1: Symbolic Institutions for the Future

In 2018, Rau and his team at the Belgian city-funded theatre Nederlands Toneel Gent (NTGent), published a manifesto of ten rules for the new era of the theatre under Rau’s artistic direction. The Ghent Manifesto

consists of ten rules for in- and out-of-house directors at NTGent. They were created with the intention of inspiring new, politically relevant texts for the theatre’s repertoire, rather than the continuous reproduction of established, canonical ones. The first rule of the manifesto – indicative of Rau’s entire outlook on theatre and particularly relevant for the director’s reactment projects – states: “It’s not just about portraying the world anymore. It’s about changing it. The aim is not to depict the real, but to make the representation itself real” (“Ghent Manifesto” 281).

For Rau, theatre is a symbolic rather than a pragmatic space: *eine symbolische Räume, keine pragmatischen* (“Aufgeklärter Katastrophismus” 43). Rau means that because theatre is an artistic-cultural project, it can respond to politics but, alone, it cannot create change. In an article originally published in 2015 in the Swiss magazine *Passagen* (Pro Helvetia, 65:2/2015) and

subsequently republished in the theory book *Wiederholung und Ekastase* (2017), Rau explains: “Kunst wird aber nie Machtpolitik sein. Die Frage ‘Was muss man tun, damit die Dinge sich ändern’ ist eine machtpolitische. Diese Frage kann die Kunst realpolitisch nicht beantworten, nur symbolisch. Der Künstler ist ein Vor-Augen-Führer, ein Vorbereiter, aber kein Politiker. Kunst und Macht lassen sich nicht vereinen, das ist die spießige Wahrheit” (“Zukunft (1)” 240).<sup>195</sup> Yet, when we consider what reactments attempt to do – i.e., create the potential for real world change through artistic staging of idealized alternatives to existing power dynamics and their interconnected structures – what Rau says here runs counter to what he and his team actually aspire to do, particularly in postcolonial projects like *Kongo Tribunal* or *La Rivolta della Dignità*.

Reactments attempt to bridge the gap between symbolic and pragmatic change. They explore through the creation of performative spaces how symbolic change can be transformed into pragmatic, real-world action. However, Rau understands there is a crucial difference between art and on-the-ground politics. The artist and artistic intervention fulfill a revelatory, emergent function. This emergent function means that art can show what potential change could look like. For Rau, this means constructing performative institutions based on real-world necessity (“Zukunft (1)” 240). Rau is acutely aware that the symbolic and, therefore, unreal space of these performative projects is one of the reasons why they are allowed – particularly in conflict zones like the DRC or Iraq – to take place. He is a theatre-maker, not a lawmaker. It is this distinction that gives Rau and the IIPM the freedom to stage their performative institutions (“The Congo Tribunal” Hamburg 8.6.2017). At its core, the reactment transposes potential

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<sup>195</sup> “But art will never be machtpolitik. The question ‘What do you have to do to change things’ is a question for the machtpolitik. Art cannot answer this question pragmatically, only symbolically. The artist is a visual guide, a preparer, but not a politician. Art and power cannot be united that is the cruel truth.”

futures (or idealized versions of the past in *Moskauer Prozesse* or *Zürcher Prozesse*) into the present of the live performance. It is an active attempt to create (or perhaps more accurately inspire) change with the hope that the symbolic, performative act will be picked up and carried forward into reality by those outside the theatre, as is the case with the *Rivolta della Dignità*'s "Houses of Dignity" – discussed in greater detail below ("Rückeroberung der Zukunft" Vienna 24.11.2017).

These institutions – a tribunal for the DRC, or a strike for workers' rights that starts in the ghettos of Southern Italy – do not *yet* exist but are necessary: "ein *richtigerer* als die *richtigen*" ("Affirmation" 16).<sup>196</sup> Performances construct fictive spaces using symbolic means, seeking to produce pragmatic results (a clear divergence from Rau's earlier statement): "Es wurden Realitäten in einem artifiziellen Rahmen geschaffen, den es vorher als Institution noch nicht gab" ("utopische Institutionen" 16).<sup>197</sup> For Rau, the symbolic act takes place in the meeting of the spectator (on various levels and positionalities) and the performance serves as a light for the future ("Das Symbolische" 24-25). However, Rau's *symbolic* should not be interpreted as ethereal and intangible, but as concrete and specific (living and breathing). Symbolic acts are performed seriously and unironically, treated *as if* they were real, legally legitimate institutions; still, Rau explicitly states, "Es gibt in meinen Projekten kein Als-ob, keine Reserve" ("Affirmation" 16).<sup>198</sup> However, there is an inherent as-if (*als ob*) in these projects. Reactions construct *alternatives* – alternative institutions and alternative political movements – that are untethered from divisive politics and ideological differences, which are markers of the utopian aspects of these projects. Rau and the IIPM's as-if is located in how the alternative is freed from

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<sup>196</sup> "a trial more real than the *real* one" ("In My Projects" 202).

<sup>197</sup> "Realities were created within an artificial framework, which didn't exist previously as an institution" ("utopische Institutionen" 17).

<sup>198</sup> "In my projects there is no as-if, no reserve" ("In My Projects" 202).

ideological and political blockades present in national and international power structures. These alternatives are simultaneously fictional and factual: the people involved are real, their testimonies are real, the conflict is real, but the institution is not legitimate (meaning legally sanctioned) and has no real power. Actual political, social, or economic change does not occur by the institution itself – although Rau would like it to do so – rather the institution holds the potential to carry forward real change through its participants.

Rau's early reactments (2009-2013) respond to the politics of the present. They look at the recent past, rather than looking towards the future. They deal exclusively with European subject matter and take on a more re-enactive than prefigurative form, i.e., looking at something that has already happened instead of what is yet to come. These early projects explore migration politics in former East Germany (*Land of Hope*), questions of citizenship and migration in Switzerland (*City of Change*), freedom of expression in critical art in Russia (*Moskauer Prozesse*), and freedom of the press in Switzerland (*Zürcher Prozesse*). After 2013, there is a clear shift in focus. The assemblies become prefigurative, working towards a concrete goal and its potential actualization. They look at external, transnational issues that have their roots in the European neocolonial economic system. These post-2013 reactments fall into the subcategory of postcolonial reactment. Both forms of reactment, like Joseph Beuys's *soziale Plastik*, social sculpture, essentially work to collapse the life-art divide by bringing real people (experts and eyewitnesses alike) into a courtroom that is publicly acknowledged as a performance (i.e., non-legitimated) space. Like Beuys's social sculpture, Rau's political actions also aim to "*mould and shape the world in which we live*," which Erika Biddle summarizes in the statement: "Art becomes *techne* for realizing democracy" (Beuys & Harlan 9; Biddle 26).

Rau's first reactment, *Die Moskauer Prozesse*, was a three-day retrial of three separate legal incidents in Russia, where curators and artists critical of the Russian Orthodox Church were charged with inciting interreligious hatred or hooliganism for their use (or misuse, depending on the perspective of the viewer) of religious imagery or spaces. The project explores the extraordinarily complex interrelationship among art, religion, and the government in contemporary Russia. The one-time (filmed) performance took place at Moscow's Sakharov Center (a museum and cultural center devoted to the protection of human rights in Russia) between March 1 to 3, 2013, with each sitting dedicated to a different trial. The first sitting of the second day examined the case of *Caution! Religion* (2003), an art exhibition denounced by the Orthodox Church for its use of religious imagery, vandalized by local hooligans, and eventually condemned by the Russian Parliament for inciting interreligious hatred.<sup>199</sup> The day's second sitting looked at another equally complicated exhibition in Sakharov Center, *Forbidden Art 2006*, which used religious imagery to discuss the question of institutional censorship and was similarly received by the Church (fig. 35). It resulted in similar charges<sup>200</sup> and even more substantial fines<sup>201</sup> against the museum's curator, Juri Samodurow, and the exhibition's curator, Andrej Jerofejew. The third and final day of the trial was dedicated to the most internationally notorious of the artist trials: the trial of the punk-rock protest group Pussy Riot for their short political action performance *Punk Rock Prayer* in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour on February 21, 2012. Three members of the group were arrested for this short performance: Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina were ultimately convicted of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred (article 213, paragraph 1b of the Russian penal code) and

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<sup>199</sup> In 2005, the museum's curator Juri Samodurow and his co-worker Ludmila Wassilowskaja were found guilty of this charge and fined 100,000 rubles (ca. 2500€) (Frimmel 17).

<sup>200</sup> They were charged under article 282, paragraph 2b of the Russian legal code (Frimmel 16).

<sup>201</sup> Jerofejew was fined 150,000 rubles (ca. 3,750€) and Samodurow 200,000 rubles (ca. 5000€) (Frimmel 19).

sentenced to two years imprisonment, while Yekaterina Samutsevich was released and her sentence suspended (Frimmel 21).<sup>202</sup> *Die Moskauer Prozesse* asked what these trials would look like if the complex, historical interrelationship between church and state in modern



Figure 35: “Anton Lukas’s research for *Die Moskauer Prozesse*”; *Die Moskauer Prozesse*, Sakharov Center, Moscow, Russia, 2013; Photo Credit: Anton Lukas

Russia that were inevitably present at the trials of these artists could be removed (Frimmel 15-23). Six cameras filmed the trial, and Rau and the editors at Fruitmarket<sup>203</sup> turned the most exciting moments into the roughly 100-minute documentary film that toured theatre houses across Europe. *Moskauer Prozesse* was one of the IIPM’s first major international successes, with Rau and the production company winning considerable attention from European and international media outlets, both because of the initial infamy of the Pussy Riot case and because of the two disruptions by immigration officers and Cossacks at the IIPM’s retrial.<sup>204</sup>

*Das Kongo Tribunal* builds on the successes of *Moskauer Prozesse*: first as a live, one-time trial performance followed by the release of a documentary film about the production, featuring footage of the creation process as well as the six days of the tribunal in Bukavu,

<sup>202</sup> An additional group member, Yekaterina Samutsevich (who worked with Rau on *Die Moskauer Prozesse*), was also charged with hooliganism, but appealed the sentence and was freed and received two years of probation in lieu of jailtime (Frimmel 22).

<sup>203</sup> The film company that produces all of Rau’s films.

<sup>204</sup> *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (Fruitmarket: 2013): 01:06:55-01:11:26; <https://vimeo.com/257215174>.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Berlin, Germany (fig. 34). The tribunal creates a forum based on three specific cases. The first and second case explore how Western, multinational corporations profit from and proliferate ongoing conflicts, looking specifically at the Canadian gold mining corporation Banro in Twangiza (Case 1) and the Swiss multinational Magminerals Potasses Congo (MPC) and its Bisie mine (Case 2). Case 3 looks at a specific instance of violence in the region, and the failure of local law enforcement and international agencies, specifically NGOs and UN, at a massacre in the small town of Mutarule (Kivu region) on June 6, 2014, that left 36 people dead (“Fall III” 182). This massacre was the fourth of its kind in Mutarule to happen over a two-year period. The tribunal took place over six days: three days in Bukavu, the capital of the South Kivu province, and three in Berlin.<sup>205</sup> It used a tribunal format, featuring real lawyers from the International Criminal Court, experts, and eyewitnesses to explore how a one-sided global economy marked by multinational corporations’ interventions that have fostered a civil war which has claimed over three million lives (“Regietagebuch 1” 18).

*General Assembly*, a three-day event that took place between November 3 and 5, 2017 at Berlin’s Schaubühne, attempted to create a transnational governing organization – a world parliament – to deal with issues that extend beyond individual national borders. The three days of the event were split into five three-hour plenary sessions (plus a constitutive, opening session and closing session) each dedicated to a specific set of issues: (1) Diplomatic Relations, Sanctions, and Wars, (2) The Regulation of Global Economy, (3) Migration and Border Regime,

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<sup>205</sup> It is significant that Berlin was also the location of the Berlin Conference (also called the Congo Conference) of 1884 to 1885 – a conference that aimed to regulate the colonizing and trade with Africa. The conference resulted in the General Act of the Berlin Conference, which served as a formalization of the Scramble for Africa and contributed to the elimination of autonomy and self-governance on the African continent. The historical comparisons between *Kongo Tribunal* and the Berlin Conference is an area for future study that requires more time and space than possible in this study.

(4) Cultural Global Commons (by far the most explosive of the sessions),<sup>206</sup> and (5) Natural Global Commons. Rau and his dramaturgical team created an assembly with over sixty representatives from around the globe. The representatives spoke as experts on various global issues in an attempt to create a “Charter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Although this charter was supposed to be read at the closing session, it proved too difficult to find consensus among the delegates and the charter was not released until January 25, 2018 – nearly three months after the project’s conclusion.

Finally, the film project *Das Neue Evangelium, The New Gospel*, and its connected political action *La Rivolta della Dignità, The Revolt of Dignity*, took place over two months in Matera, Italy (a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1993) and a 2019 European Cultural Capital) (fig. 50, 51, 52, 53) and concluded with an assembly in Rome on October 10, 2019 (fig. 43).<sup>207</sup> *Das Neue Evangelium* – the resulting film’s name – is an exploration of the conditions under which migrant workers in Southern Italy’s agricultural industry live and work. The project juxtaposes the modern-day slavery of the agricultural sector with the Bible’s passion story and asks: What would Jesus preach today? Who would he stand with? Who would his disciples be? The project features Cameroonian activist Yvan Sagnet as Jesus and a network of local Italian farmers, migrant laborers from the ghettos, sex workers, and activists as the disciples. Local

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<sup>206</sup> The most explosive motion of the sitting was 4.3: “National and elitist politics of memory must be replaced by a transnational democratic negotiation process, in which the significance of historical events and crimes, the respective memorials and the redress for past injustices must be consistently reassessed by the parties affected” (*general-assembly.net*). The sitting proceeded normally until the presentation of Mihran Dabag (a historian of Armenian descent) was followed by a presentation by Tugrul Selmanoğlu (a supporter of Turkey’s AKP party) – the stance of the AKP and the Turkish government is that there was no Armenian genocide. This was the first instance when there was fundamentally impassable clash not just between the two speakers, but between a speaker and the majority of participants that resulted in the collapse of the session. *General Assembly: Fourth Plenary Session* (vimeo, 2017): 02:12:12-02:48:43; <https://player.vimeo.com/video/245689912>.

<sup>207</sup> The assembly in Rome was initially intended to be the final day of filming for *Neue Evangelium*, where Jesus (Sagnet) would be taken down from the cross and be resurrected. Although these two things did happen at the assembly, Rau chose not to include any of the shots from the assembly in Rome in the finished film.

Italians (both actors and amateurs) fill out the rest of the characters in the Passionspiel – a very different institution than the other reenactments curated by Rau and the IIPM, or the alternative political institutions of the other reactments. *Rivolta della Dignità* was the larger political action within the Biblical reenactment that made practical use of the network of activists, migrant laborers, local farmers, and NGOs to create a strike movement within the makeshift ghettos that the majority of the migrant labour force occupy.

What we see in these and Rau's other reactments is a *(p)re-figurative* and *counter-democratic* technique. Projects begin as reenactments of existing judicial or governmental institutions, which then identify the original's shortcomings. In its one-time performance, the reactment corrects the original, exposing how the original (and, in some cases, the IIPM's *bad copy*) fails in the realm of the actual political world. Many of Rau's reactments are prefigurative and have even been called pre-enactments (Walter-Jochum 160; "Revolution Talks" Zurich 24.10.2017). Projects look at existing institutions to uncover the potential for better institutions and construct the performative ones based on this potential; Mathijs van de Sande defines prefiguration within political performances:

'Prefiguration' or 'prefigurative politics' refers to political action, practice, movement, moment, or development. A space where political ideals are experimentally actualised in the 'here and now', rather than hoped to be realised in some distant future. Thus, in prefigurative practices, the means applied are deemed to embody or 'mirror' the ends one strives to realise. (230)

Reactments perform political struggle in an agonistic sense. They produce political institutions that do not aim at functioning through continual consensus. Instead, the reactment's institutions function through the presentation of opposing, political stances where any consensus found

remains conflictual. So, the verdict is upheld because of a mutual recognition of the institution rather than because of mutual consensus about the verdict itself (*Agonistics* xii).<sup>208</sup> Unlike the existing closed and vertical institutions that act as the starting point for these performances, the reactment institutions operate as open and horizontal alternatives introducing new voices to the dialogic space of the liminal performance.

It must be pointed out that there is a correlation between the type of institution constructed and the success (in terms of effectiveness) of the project's as-if function: trials and tribunals prove a more useful vehicle of reactment than the assembly structure seen in both *General Assembly* and the assembly in Rome for *Rivolta della Dignità*. Trials and tribunals automatically employ an agonistic structure, with disagreement throughout and ending with a decision that is upheld but not always agreed with. Therefore, conflict is already built into the trial structure and, thus, the underlying dramaturgy of productions as well. Participants are already aware of the rules of court (which follow the same rules and regulations of legitimated judicial institutions), so they are predisposed to accept the reactment's illegitimate trial and verdict. Conversely, large-scale assemblies like the UN or World Bank operate under a consensus model. While polarization is certainly present, this model is based on agreement. However, when you bring a group of people with not only differing opinions, but irreconcilable wants and needs together, consensus becomes not only impossible, but absurd: How can you discuss questions of vegetarianism in Germany and Western Europe alongside the misuse of the DRC's raw materials by Western multinational corporations?

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<sup>208</sup> We find the founding logic of reactment institutions like *Moskauer Prozesse*, *Kongo Tribunal*, and particularly *General Assembly* in Chantal Mouffe's *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (2013): "political questions are not mere technical issues to be solved by experts. Proper political questions always involve decisions that require making a choice between conflicting alternatives" (3).

However, returning to the horizontal quality of the IIPM’s agonal alternatives, horizontal refers specifically to a structure that seeks to “break down and through existing hierarchies,” and allows individuals to speak for themselves (Lorey 53). The project’s horizontality separates it



Figure 36: “Witness B (Bukavu), former rebel”; Case 2: Bisie Mine and the Dodd-Frank Act; *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket, 2017); Photo Credit: IIPM/Fruitmarket

from political and representational homogeneity. This horizontality instead allies it with the heterogeneity and pluralism visible in our globalized reality. It brings a variety of people, opinions, and experiences into a single space. It is not insignificant that the IIPM physically brings these people

together. In this physical convergence of political ideas and beliefs, we find what Hannah Arendt calls the “space of appearances.” Arendt explains that *being* is accompanied by an *urge to appear*, in other words, “to fit itself into the world of appearances by displaying and showing, not its ‘inner self’ but itself as an individual” (*Life of the Mind* 29). Closely connected to this prerequisite of being, the space of appearance – which Arendt closely associates with the Greek polis – is a liminal space where political actors are both seen and heard, which is, for Arendt, the prerequisite to existing and being viewed as a part of the world (Brennan & Malpas 43; *Portable Hannah Arendt* 447). Just as Arendt understands appearance as “a public self-disclosure through speech in a community,” for Rau’s projects, delegates’ physical presence – particularly non-European ones – is key (Barbour & Zolkos 6). This physical (visible) presence is connected to representation through self-representation, democratic representation, and theatrical/performative representation. The seemingly simple act of bringing people together through five- to ten-minute

presentations on a stage in the trials and tribunals has a disclosive function, because appearance correlates with reality and the right to appear (Dean 337).

Much like Rau's repertoire productions, reactments are about the physical presence of its participants: i.e., their corporal presence. However, Rau is, by and large, not interested in the performers' bodies in terms of physical attributes as is often the case in dance and theatre. For Rau, the body of the performer is the marker of the individual's experiences and how this experience is representative of a group or community. Reactment is about collectivity, which performances both mark and create. Rau is interested in the *lived body*: i.e., offering his audience the story that belongs to this body and pushing the private self into a public, highly visible, performance space. Through performance, the fictional tribunal fosters – in a notably un-



Figure 37: 1) "Assembly meeting room," *General Assembly* (Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, 2017), Photo Credit: Daniel Seiffert/Schaubühne; 2) "Courtroom," *Die Zürcher Prozesse* (Neumarkt Theater, 2013), Photo Credit: Markus Tomsche; 3) "Courtroom," *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (Sakharov Centre, 2013), Photo Credit: Anton Lukas; 4) "Berlin Sitting," *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket, 2017), Photo Credit: Daniel Seiffert

Arendtian way with its use of collectivity and the private self – Arendt’s “space of appearance,” creating *spaces* of appearance.

As Arendt states in *The Human Condition*: “[whatever is denied appearance] comes and passes away like a dream, intimately and exclusively our own but without reality” (*The Human Condition* 199). For Arendt, the space of appearance comes into being “wherever men are together in a manner of speech and action” (Arendt qtd. Knauer 727). In other words, the space of appearance occurs through interaction with others. For Rau, this space – or spaces – of appearance is about visibility, presenting alternative voices: those people directly affected by economic policies and political repressions of the present. Rau’s reactments construct spaces of active political engagement that recognize differences in experience and different political opinions.

Reactments aim to create (and show) dialogue through irreconcilable conflict and this core agonism (a concept that sits uncomfortably alongside any discussion of Arendt) is built into the projects’ core dramaturgical structure. However, as much as they are about constructing their alternative institutions, reactments are also about the presentation of alternate power structures founded (ideally) on those excluded from real power structures. Still, reactment institutions are inevitably connected to existing power structures. Rau is careful to include people in real positions of power in the trials and tribunals. For instance, in *Kongo Tribunal*, there are not only government officials (like the ministers and provincial governor), but also judicial figures like Jean-Louis Gilissen (who has collaborated with Rau on repertoire productions) and Sylvestre Bisimwa (both lawyers for the ICC). At the same time, reactments have an unacknowledged internal power structure, where Rau and his team select all participants. Rau explains that in his new realism, which is exemplified in reactment, the situation created is both uncontrollable and

completely artificial.<sup>209</sup> Even the projects' agonism and polarization are artificial, or – at the very least – curated. These projects are not interested in finding or performing consensus (even in the final verdicts). They aim to reveal contradictions, which means the selected participants are those people who will best perform them when they are set loose in the performance space.

These constructed institutions and their alternative dialogic structure fit under the moniker of the *counter-democratic*. Here, *counter* operates not as a full negation, but as an alternative. It responds to a manifest lack: Why hasn't there been a tribunal in the Congo? Why didn't the Pussy Riot performers have a fair trial? The reactment's institutions show absence through the presence (and presentation) of a counteraction that builds off institutions that *exist*, presenting otherwise ignored voices. IIPM political action projects run parallel to existing structures; for example, *General Assembly* acts as a utopian, egalitarian parallel to closed, overly bureaucratic, hierarchical institutions. It creates, although not always entirely successfully, a forum for individuals and organizations otherwise excluded from the global debate. Likewise, *Kongo Tribunal* follows the International Criminal Court's model, even using ICC judges and lawyers, alongside poor farmers and miners from the DRC. *City of Change*, a film project created in 2009, created an alternative political party and alternative government (inclusive of its own constitution and propaganda ministry) for Switzerland and used this party as a medium to explore social and political realities of citizenship and migration in the non-aligned country.

Rau's theatre is marked by the creation of a situation ("Realismus (2)" 138). Reactments in their construction of fully functional courts (minus a final, all-important, legally enforceable verdict), act as *total installations*. In *Moskauer Prozesse* and *Zürcher Prozesse*, the spectator sits in a space designed by Anton Lukas to look like an actual courtroom: a witness stand, a bench, a

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<sup>209</sup> "[Realismus heißt]: Ein Situation *herstellen*, die unkontrollierbar ist. Realismus ist ja etwas völlig Artifizielles" ("Realismus (2)" 138).

jury box, spectator seating (fig. 36, 37, 38). In their productions, the spectator feels this courtroom experience, it is *as if* they are in a real courtroom. In larger projects like *General Assembly*, where there is a more clear-cut theatrical distance between the spectators and the delegates, the space still emulates the huge auditoriums that house meetings of the UN or German Parliament. Lukas's design tells us, the spectator, where we are and what this project seeks to emulate. It also provides context for the nature of the dialogue and the conflict that the reactment promises.

Rau builds a critique using an existing courtroom structure, refiguring it to a utopian form; or, as Robert Walter-Jochum explains for *General Assembly*:

Indem sie eine politische Alternative nicht nur auf der Bühne, sondern für, mit und in der Öffentlichkeit aufführt, realisiert Raus *General Assembly* eine Verkörperung utopischen Denkens und setzt so eine Vision der Weltpolitik um, die als radikaldemokratische Alternative zu den bestehenden politischen Institutionen angelegt ist [...] In den beiden

nun zu untersuchenden Fällen [*Die Moskauer Prozesse* und *Kongo Tribunal*] nehmen Raus Tribunale die Position einer verkörperten Inszenierung von politischen und rechtlichen Alternativen unter Rahmenbedingungen ein, in denen es an einer juristischen Struktur freier Gerichte, die die Rechte und

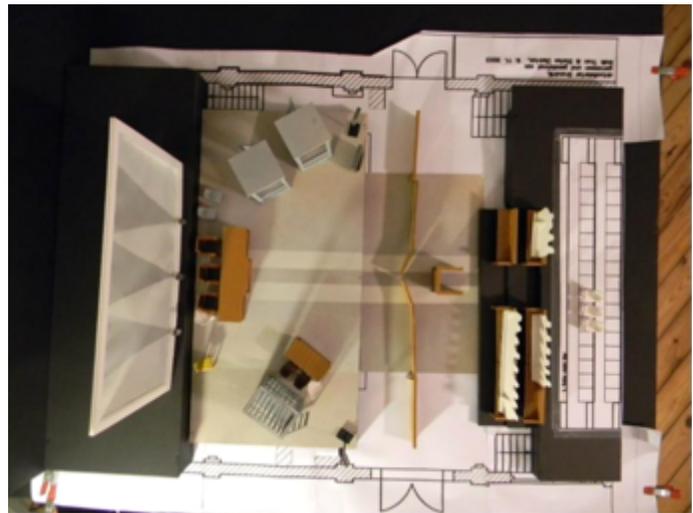


Figure 38: "Stage design for *Die Moskauer Prozesse*," Design: Anton Lukas; Photo Credit: IIPM

Freiheiten der Bürger in den betroffenen Ländern garantieren könnten, mangelt. Das

Fehlen eines effektiven und verlässlichen Justizsystems ist der gemeinsame Aspekt der Tribunale, deren Gegenstände sich ansonsten deutlich unterscheiden.<sup>210</sup> (160, 168)

IIPM reactments are fundamentally fully integrated installations that operate through doubling. The result of this doubling for the individual spectator is that, while watching the reactment, it feels as if it is real: you become immersed in the onstage action. It is only when you leave the theatre that you can reflect on what happened – what was said and witnessed. We also see this drastic reduction of distance for the participants, who – although they understand that the space is not a legitimate institution – become invested in the outcome: delegates get angry, argue, and talk over each other in *General Assembly*, and when the verdict is read out in *Moskauer Prozesse*, the members of the prosecution and member of the jury who supported the initial verdict are visibly upset when the new one is announced.<sup>211</sup> For many of those directly involved, distance is only retroactively possible. Distance is temporarily lost during the actual performance as the spectator and participant<sup>212</sup> become engrossed – or perhaps more accurately, carried away – in the action and this distance is only regained with its full emotional impact when the verdict is read and the profound, purposeful moment of dissatisfaction that accompanies it occurs. This dissatisfaction – which Rau calls the *Entdramatisierung*, de-dramatization – highlights the tribunal’s fictionality: i.e., that it has not yet become real (“Antagonismus” 40-41). Projects

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<sup>210</sup> In that they present a political alternative not only for the stage but for, with, and in public, Rau’s *General Assembly* is the physical realization of utopian thinking and deploys a vision of world politics that is applied as a radically democratic alternative to existing political institutions [...] Even in the two case studies [*Moscow Trials* and *Congo Tribunal*], Rau’s tribunals take on the position of an embodied staging of political and legal alternatives under conditions in which there is a lack of the legal structure of free courts that could guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens in the countries concerned. The failure of an effective and reliable justice system is the common aspect of the tribunals, whose objectives are otherwise different.

<sup>211</sup> *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (Fruitmarket, 2014): 01:17:00-01:21:20; <https://vimeo.com/257215174>.

<sup>212</sup> It must also be pointed out that when we talk about distance and reception within reactments, we are in fact talking about a spectrum of engagement and engrossment: positionality depends how close to the issue the spectator or participant is. It is precisely because of this spectrum that this study looks at the levels of spectatorship within productions and how different elements of the reactment respond and tailor themselves to very different audiences.

present a fictional tribunal with real testimony and real polarization, but as the theatricality falls away at their conclusion, the crushing reality rushes back. While the total, all-encompassing situation of the theatre is filled with new knowledge, nothing outside has changed despite the performance's immediacy. However, with this *Entdramatisierung* – particularly in postcolonial reactments – another form of immediacy emerges, and this immediacy demands that the institution be carried forward by participants and spectators, transforming the *not yet* of the institution into the *now* and reality.

These performative trials, tribunals, and assemblies offer criticism (at least superficially<sup>213</sup>) in the sense described by French film director Jean-Luc Godard: “In order to criticize one movie, you have to make another movie” (Fischer 39; “Essay” 79). The theatrical (and public) construction of these institutions subverts the private (and at times almost banal) act of political gathering and transforms it into a radical act: radical because the performance brings dissenting voices together, acting against an accepted system. As Rau explained in his “Recapturing the Future” lecture at 2017’s *Dialektik der Befreiung* held in Vienna’s Alte Schmiede:

Realism – realistic politics, realistic art – can only be to listen to those voices that know what is going on – and draw upon these voices in establishing one’s own view of matters. Trapped within our own logic, what we perceive from a distance as being correct is often completely wrong. The present seems inevitable, hermetically sealed, particularly in

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<sup>213</sup> It is important to point out the superficiality of the critique, because – unlike with Godard’s film – Rau’s institutions can only operate as artistic institutions, not real judicial or governmental institutions. Therefore, the critique offered can only respond on a performative, exterior level and not to the systemic, often ideologic problems that exist within their actual counterparts such as the UN and the judicial system in the DRC, Russia, and Switzerland.

today's world, in which everything is oriented, one could say 'pre-programmed', towards profit. ("Recapturing the Future")

The most radical act of the performance is its extreme hope for something better. IIPM institutions subvert first-world blindness and the sense of impotence that accompanies the banal acceptance of everyday, normalized atrocity.<sup>214</sup>

Rau describes his work as "active," meaning it contains an urge to realize itself and thus creates the possibility for change ("Das ist der Grund" 17-19).<sup>215</sup> While this idea – which echoes the first rule of the "Ghent Manifesto" – sounds ambitious, if not contradictory and/or unrealistic, it coincides with the concept of pre-enactment, where performance acts as a rehearsal for the (near) future. Rau creates a political performance that begins symbolically by staging what Walter-Jochum calls "eine greifbare Utopie der Gerechtigkeit" – a tangible utopia of justice – and concludes with a concrete proposition: i.e., a model for how this should and/or could look (162). In reactment, we find a desire to push beyond the symbolic power of allegory and into the realm of pragmatic action, a characteristic that marks the (at times dueling) impulses of artist and activist.

Looking at this activist impulse on a practical level, we find whispers of Irish sociologist John Holloway's concept of "crack capitalism" and the crack's world-changing potential, which

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<sup>214</sup> Rau quotes the French philosopher Geoffroy de Lagasnerie: "If I had to describe the current political situation with just a single concept" ("Recapturing the Future").

<sup>215</sup> "Sie ist aktiv, sie hat einen Realisierungsdrang, sie will die ganze Welt auf einmal umarmen, und vor allem will sie sie verändern. [...] Theater ist nichts anderes als die völlig konkrete Rückbesinnung auf diese ganz simple aristotelische Tatsache: dass alles, was wir für real erachten, nichts anderes ist als eine soziale Verabredung. [...] Aber Spielen oder Inszenieren, wie ich es verstehe, bedeutet, die im Normalfall einfach als natürlich und zwingend hingenommene Wirklichkeit nicht analytisch oder ironisch aufzulösen, sondern sie in all ihren Konsequenzen zur Erscheinung zu bringen, sie in Aktion zu zeigen" ("Das ist der Grund" 17-19). ["It is active, it has an urge to realise itself. It wants to take the entire world in its arms and, above all else, it wants to change the world. [...] Theatre is nothing more than a completely concrete return to this very simple Aristotelian principle: Everything we consider real is nothing more than a social engagement. [...] playing or staging, as I understand it, does not mean resolving the reality that is normally accepted either analytically or ironically as natural and compelling, but it means bringing to light all its consequences and thus showing it in action" ("I am a Postmodernist" 157-158).]

serves as a good metaphor for Rau's work. A crack, according to Holloway, is an act of resistance. It is a rejection or negation of the normalized conditions of capitalism as they exist in the present moment. By returning dignity (itself a rejection of capitalism) and subjecthood to the individual, the crack splinters the stagnant present to allow for the possibility of creation.

Therefore, the crack defines itself in its rejection of the present (the *as-is*):

[T]he No is backed by an other-doing. This is the dignity that can fill the cracks created by the refusal. The original No is then not a closure, but an opening to a different activity, the threshold of a counter-world with a different logic and a different language. The No opens to a time-space in which we try to live as subjects rather than objects. [...] A crack [is] then a moment in which relations of domination were broken and other relations created. (19-20, 31)

Within crack theory, Holloway applies special meaning to the idea of dignity. Dignity is marked by simultaneous acts of refusal and creation: "to refuse to make capitalism and to create a new world" (49-50). It marks the return to subjectivity from the objectivity placed upon oppressed and ignored people by a capitalist global system, breaking free from labour as value.

Reactments (regardless of if they are pre- or post-2013) are about rejecting an inadequate present and offering a performative alternative. When we look at *Rivolta della Dignità*, what is more important than the Biblical reenactment, the formal assembly in Rome, or even the film itself, is how it encourages and assists in a very real rejection by assisting and documenting the creation of a strike movement in the ghettos and creating an activist support network for those involved. The actual strike movement promotes a concept of dignity both in and outside the ghetto in a way the film cannot quite convey. Dignity, for Holloway, is intricately connected to the crack; or, as he explains:

Dignity is the immediate affirmation of negated subjectivity, the assertion, against a world that treats us as objects and denies our capacity to determine our own lives, that we are subjects capable and worthy of deciding for ourselves. Dignity in this sense means not only the assertion of our own dignity but also implies the recognition of the dignity of others. Central to the crack is the idea that mutual recognition does not have to wait till the end of history, but that we can already start on it now, by combating constantly the negation of our mutual recognition as persons. (39)

The dignity developed in the IIPM's collaboration with strike leaders and activists rejects the equating of a person's worth with economic worth. It asserts that a person is not an object of capital, but a subject with intrinsic, unique human worth. Dignity is about taking control, about negating-and-creating, about creating a "crack" in the existing system and using this crack as a way to the reclaim self and subjectivity. The concept of dignity seen in the *Revolt of Dignity* is wrapped up in the politics of empowerment and hope. Dignity is the most significant contribution of the entire project and is what ties the real-world struggle against the system and of real people participating in the project (and we must never lose sight of the fact these are real people) to a Biblical struggle.

However, cracks are not marked by finished projects or established political change. They are a revolutionary starting point: "[cracks] are the acting-out of a world that does not exist, in the hope that in acting it out, we may really breathe it into life; or rather, in the knowledge that this is the only way in which we can bring it into life" (Holloway 37). Rau's reactments react to these cracks' sudden appearance. Around these cracks, the IIPM form political actions that work to aggravate and extend them to make them become more widely (internationally) visible. For example, Rau builds on the groundwork laid out by Sagnet. The strike staged for *Rivolta della*

*Dignità* uses Sagnet’s international reputation as an activist, his local connections in the Ghettos, the trust that he already has with migrant labourers (fig. 39). The activist both creates and takes advantage of emergent cracks, while Rau does more the latter in his reactments. Specifically, the activist identifies existing, but underexamined (and underfunded) local issues. With the means that Rau and his production company have (or can acquire), they expand this knowledge, further splintering and widening the crack. However, Rau would not necessarily agree with such a use of



Figure 39: “Yvan Sagnet at ‘Entry into Jerusalem,’” *La Rivolta della Dignità* (Matera, 2019); Photo Credit: Armin Smailovic

Holloway’s metaphor. Rau aims for full transformation with his work. Because of the liminal nature of projects, reactment projects like *Moskauer Prozesse*, *Kongo Tribunal*, or *Rivolta della Dignità* are able to foster a larger (international) dialogue, empower participants, and illustrate a potential future; however, transformation created for the camera is symbolic. Real, pragmatic change results from what is carried forward from the performance. IIPM reactments export these cracks and the discontent that arises from them to different levels of society in the different

social groups and different audiences they address. Levels of spectatorship also mean cracks have divergent effects and aftermaths depending on the positionality and distance the spectator has to the subject matter.

## **6.2: Levels of Spectatorship: Embodiment – Embodying and Enacting the Utopian**

According to theatre-theorist Jill Dolan, the utopian space is always *in progress*, “always only partially grasped, as it disappears before us around the corners of narrative and social experience [...] a never finished gesture towards a potentially better future” (*Utopia in Performance* 164-165). Utopian embodiment extends utopia into the physical, lived realm using performance’s temporality. Dolan explains that performed utopias – what she calls utopian performatives – embody an alternative to what currently exists, providing performative commentary of the present (7). This definition of utopias as a sort of alternative is useful for the reactment, because they act as utopian performatives, which, as Dolan explains, are “small, specific and profound moments in performance that beckon the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present” (“Utopia in Performance” 164). The performative is the act done during the performance, referring specifically to the onstage action. The *doing* here functions like J. L. Austin’s *acting* (something that *acts*): i.e., something that performs tangible and effective (practical) action.

In his anticipatory statement for *General Assembly*, German journalist and political author Robert Misik highlights the utopian value of reactments and its anticipatory function:

The idea of the World Parliament is a utopia. But which one? It doesn’t imagine any *other* world, but a different organization of power within the world. They would allow for other decisions to be made, completely independent of the question of how exactly these

decisions will look like. [...] there is still something that can be called *anti-utopian utopias*, which do not imagine any specific future, but still believe in a better future and consider it worth striving for, yet try to identify trends of this future precisely in those powers being effective in the present. [...] It is a utopia and at the same time, it is not. Because it does not imagine any other world, but instead postulates that a different distribution of power would lead to other results, although it does not mention anything about these results. [...] As a theatrical intervention, the World Parliament is an anticipation of the results of a shift in power. It is radically utopian, because it brings a vision into the world of what could happen if micro-changes of power would lead to a radical change in power relations. (Misik 59-63)

Misik describes the prefigurative politics of the performance, the construction of utopian space, and how the live performance contains inevitable conflicts of real politics. He identifies how the performative institution, as a counter-site, seeks to do something concrete in the present rather than a utopian future – a notably heterotopic quality of reactment.



Figure 40: “Destroy what oppresses you,” Entry into Jerusalem, *Rivolta della Dignità* (Matera, 2019); Photo Credit: La Rivolta della Dignità Facebook

Heterotopia is a loosely developed concept by French philosopher Michel Foucault. In comparison to the utopia, Foucault describes heterotopia as a functional counter-site: “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are

outside all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality” (Foucault 3-4). The heterotopia is a relational space juxtaposed to reality (i.e., *what is*). Like the institution constructed for *General Assembly* or the IIPM’s other tribunal projects, it provides an alternative framework. It mirrors a shape we recognize, can relate to, even see ourselves within. However, at the same time, it is *not* (i.e., the image in the mirror is not the thing itself, but a reflection of it). The heterotopia is – like Rau’s symbolic institutions – a space of extreme hope and contained in the counter-site is the transformative and illuminative potential of imagination.<sup>216</sup>

Activist performances, like those mentioned in Chapter Five, “become a transformation of knowledge that literally *moves* our musculature and the rhythms of our breath and heart, as corporeal knowledge conjoins cognition through enfleshment knowledge” (Madison 7). This statement by performance theorist Soyini Madison refers specifically to the transformational quality of political embodiment. For participants, this embodiment goes hand in hand with physical presence, and, for Rau, physical presence (or *the body*) is connected to the individual as a political entity. The individual is invited onto the stage to transform the private, individual self into a public, political being representative of a larger political and economic system. Participants become part of a body politic: the embodiment of politics which accompanies a shift from political and epistemological invisibility to an (even if only liminal) visibility and presence. This shift occurs in the coming together of the performance, what Woodward calls the *embodied sensorium of practice* (104).

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<sup>216</sup> Foucault never fully developed the concept of heterotopia beyond the 1984 article “Of Other Spaces” (based on a lecture given in March 1967). In this article, Foucault identifies the ship as a heterotopia *par excellence*, explaining: “if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens [...] [the boat] has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. [...] In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates” (9). There is certainly a lot of potential to be explored here in regard to how Rau’s reactment projects function as counter-institutions, but that is an area for future study.

IIPM reactments function most effectively (and affectively) when they maintain the repertoire productions' revelatory dramaturgy. The spectator becomes a witness to the witnesses' testimony about the traumas inflicted by neoliberal repressions and official narratives. Live performances, as much as they are about potentiality, are also about listening and witnessing a void that – particularly in the postcolonial reactments – conveniently encompasses the true cost of Western conveniences (smartphones, laptops, cheap canned vegetables) (fig. 40). Dori Laub highlights this idea of the void in “Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening”:

The listener to the narrative of extreme human pain, of massive psychic trauma, faces a unique situation. [...] The victim's narrative – the very process of bearing witness to massive trauma – does indeed begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, in spite of the overwhelming and compelling nature of the reality of its occurrence. [...] The emergence of the narrative which is being listened to – and heard – is, therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the 'knowing' of the event is given birth to. The listener, therefore, is a party to the



Figure 41: “Audience of Bukavu Sitting of *Das Kongo Tribunal*”; Photo Credit: Simone Schindwein

creation of knowledge *de novo*. The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time. By extension, the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a *co-owner of the traumatic event*: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself. (57)

Witnessing, on an individual level, is connected to the affective power of the performance event. *Bearing witness* is key to the reactment, because the spectator bears witness to the testimony of experts, survivors, and opposition. In “Witnessing: The Guerilla Theater of Greenpeace,” Steven Durland defines the importance of bearing witness in political action events: “A person who bears witness to an injustice takes responsibility for that awareness. That person may then choose to do something or stand by, but he may not turn away in ignorance” (Durland 68). The reactment confronts its audience with something which otherwise is more comfortable left ignored. However, the performance’s effect (and affect) depends greatly on the individual spectator’s positionality geographically, politically, and socially.

The live performance opens up the chosen issue for the physically present audience, although the performance is – as is nearly always the case in theatre – not entirely public. Performances are only public to those who can afford tickets and get to the event. While performance is part of the space of appearances described by Arendt, it is also not open to everyone. The IIPM and its collaborating institutions attempt to make the tickets for these projects affordable,<sup>217</sup> for *General Assembly*, tickets cost 2.50€ per session. Prices, ticket

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<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, ticket’s for Rau’s repertoire pieces are on par with standard theatre and festival prices on the German, Belgian, French, Dutch systems, costing a minimum of 20€, but are often around 45€ or more (depending on seating). While these prices are not set by Rau himself, this still places limitations on who can access these performances and who can/will access theatre: an important question that is often overlooked. Theatre remains a hobby of bourgeois society.

availability, location, and time means the actual, physical performance of these projects are private in that not everyone can attend. This private aspect is also present in *Kongo Tribunal* and *Das Neue Evangelium*, which respectively took place in Eastern DRC and the ghettos constructed by migrant workers in Southern Italy.

For example, *Kongo Tribunal* has a very different effect on a German spectator at the Berlin Hearings than on a Congolese spectator at the Bukavu Hearings (fig. 41). It is different again for a white European spectator at Bukavu or a Congolese spectator in Berlin. An individual's life experience plays a massive role in reception, such as how close they are personally to the situation in the DRC. If you have lived through, witnessed, or lost friends and family in hundreds of massacres in nearby villages and the surrounding countryside, your experience watching a tribunal – even a fictional tribunal – will be massively different from that of a white German living in Berlin. The emotional effect (and real-world impact) of the tribunal is magnified for those *on-the-ground* in Bukavu.

Testimony disrupts silence.<sup>218</sup> Postcolonial reactments provide a dialogic opportunity for those who suffer the most under the injustices of the existing economic system (i.e., contemporary imperialism) to air their grievances and find a space of shared experience. The tribunal's dialogic structure offers this audience a space and opportunity to share in an experience. For those people at the tribunal with lived experiences (not just those on the stand but also those in the audience) these projects are about reclaiming agency. Holloway's dignity is an act of (or towards) self-determination. They can tell their own stories and, therefore, take up space within them, share in a collective experience, and become part of a collective. The live

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<sup>218</sup> Again, there is more to be said about the bodily consequences of forced silence and the liberating quality of testimony, but this undeniably aspect of reactment as well as Rau's repertoire productions but requires further study than is possible here.

performance is about visibility and visibility is always related to power (Woodward 8). On the ground, this sudden visibility – particularly for poor farmers and miners in *Kongo Tribunal* who take the stand – is an act of extreme empowerment and a reclaiming of self.

The witness and act of witnessing are key, not just in the judicial capacity but also in the spectator's encounter with the participant. In "The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*," Shoshana Felman explains when the witness, when called to testify, conjures memory to "address another, to impress upon a listener, to *appeal* to a community" (204). The idea of the addressing and appealing to a community is built directly into the tribunal structure. When we ask, "What community?" or "Who is the witness addressing?"; the answer is limited to those in the room. Rau extends this public using modern technologies and broadcast intermediaries. The IIPM employs the spectacle of mass media (controversy, scandal, celebrities, etc.), working with news outlets. For both *Kongo Tribunal* and *Das Neue Evangelium*, Rau published an online director's diary with the magazine *taz*, which seek to give readers updates about what has happened on location, provide insight into the realities of rehearsing and filming, and it gives Rau a space to postulate about what he's doing (or trying to do). He continues to publish a biweekly column with the Swiss daily *Die Tagesanzeiger*, which often focuses less on theatre and more on politics and current events, and interviews with Rau are routinely published in major papers such as *Die Zeit*, *Die Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *The Guardian*, and the *New York Times*. Reactments are accompanied by an internal media network made up of e-mail lists, websites, newsletters, Facebook sites, Instagram stories, and Twitter streams.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Milo Rau and the IIPM have a Twitter page (@iipm\_milorau), as does *Das Kongo Tribunal* (@CongoTribunal) and *La Rivolta della Dignità* (@rivoltadignita), I am significantly less plugged into the impact and outreach of the accompanying Twitter campaigns because I don't have a Twitter account... Who needs that kind of negativity in their lives?

Projects like *Moskauer Prozesse*, *Kongo Tribunal*, and *Rivolta Della Dignità* have multiple levels of spectatorship: The audience in the auditorium (which we, as mentioned above, can also be split into two groups) and the audience watching the film. For the initial, live audience – particularly in postcolonial reactments – the impact is empowerment. Again, we see the significance of the participant’s physical presence. The witness and expert at the live performance is a political embodiment of the small, private self – the private person as enfleshed politics. Woodward – building off Simone De Beauvoir in her own examination of the politics of being looked at and being seen – describes the concept of the embodied self, differentiating this body from the lived body: “Embodied selves [... allow] greater agency and possibility for transformation and avoids the reduction of the self to the body by acknowledging both the situations which bodies inhabit and the interrelationship between bodies and situations” (98-99). This relationship between bodies and situations is at the heart of the enactment (i.e., the live performance) and at the core of spectatorship. Who is standing at the podium is extremely important because – at their most effective – they are a representative, not just of their individual experience, but of the larger issue: body politic. Body politic – particularly in postcolonial reactments – confronts the spectator with the results of the current system, often the inherent lack of such institutions (a network of activists to protect the rights of migrant workers, a tribunal for accountability in the ongoing civil war in the DRC, or a transnational governing organization that includes the voices of those directly impacted by the issues they address), and the possibility of constructing such institutions.



Figure 42: “NoCap: People Before Profit”; Photo Credit: Yvan Sagnet (Twitter)

These projects confront the spectator with a question: “What do I do with this knowledge?”<sup>220</sup> This question demands an answer. Particularly, for those with lived experience, the performative institution demands that a real-world (functional) institution be founded, or for the network developed for the performance to be used outside the performance to enact and enforce change. For the more distant (often European) audience, the response is less direct: an online GoFundMe campaign or online petitions. Ultimately the performance still invokes a sense of responsibility (or at any rate a need to respond) to the injustices shown. However, the urgency of the reactment varies depending on the positionality of the individual spectator.

The live embodiment and enactment of the reactment have a very different impact than



Figure 43: “Audience of the Assembly in Rome,”  
*La Rivolta della Dignità* (Rome, 2019); Photo  
Credit: Teatro di Roma

the resulting documentary films. The concrete, real-world effect these projects have for those people on the ground – i.e., people living in the DRC or migrant workers in Italy – cannot be underestimated. Productions do have real-world effects. Before the live performance of *Kongo Tribunal*, holding a tribunal in the DRC to explore the role of multinationals in political unrest in the region in an effort to hold them accountable was, for many people (particularly on-the-ground), unimaginable. The project resulted in real-world change, with people demanding accountability from their government and on an

<sup>220</sup> A question that Rau also explores in his recollection, repertoire production *Mitleid. Die Geschichte des Maschinengewehrs*, and that has its roots in Lenin’s question “Was tun?”, “What is to be done?”, which Rau also used for his 2013 critique of postmodernism: *Was Tun? Kritik der Postmodernen Vernunft* (Zurich: Kein & Aber, 2013). Rau, throughout his career, has maintained a select relationship with writings and theories by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Like many artists (and theorists), Rau pulls specifically the theories and pieces of writing that best fit with what he wants to say. However, as a place for future research, Rau’s at times uncomfortable relationship with these two Soviet leaders must be examined.

international level from organizations like the ICC. In the three days in Bukavu, *Kongo Tribunal* revealed several corrupt and incompetent governmental figures<sup>221</sup> and the incompetence (or downright passivity) of UN troops in the region. After the project concluded, two ministers were forced to resign, but on the other side, several participants – those who chose not to remain anonymous – were forced to flee for their safety (“Gerichtstag”; “Was bringt die Kunst” 294).

*Das Neue Evangelium/Rivolta della Dignità* brought together organizations and individuals independently fighting for better working conditions and the human rights of Italy’s massive population of seasonal migrant workers. Over months of research and preparation, the IIPM and its collaborators created an extensive activist network connecting these organizations and individuals. This network provides what Sagnet describes as a tool kit that can be applied to daily struggles. These practical networks are the most significant aspect of these political actions: they connect people through performance. Using the funds raised by *La Rivolta della Dignità*, Sagnet, his organization NoCap,<sup>222</sup> and other organizations – with their newly won Vatican support – constructed the “Houses of Dignity.” As of February 2020, the Houses of Dignity purchased empty buildings to provide humane and safe housing for more than fifty workers who formerly lived in various ghettos across Southern Italy. This number includes many of the apostles in *Das Neue Evangelium*. According to Sagnet, between October 2019 and February 2020, Sagnet and NoCap were able to hire 350 migrant laborers from across Italy. They aim to hire 1,340 workers by the end of 2020 and supply papers for seventy previously illegal workers (“The Art of Resistance” Ghent 9.2.2020).<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> The most striking example is Jean-Julien Miruho, the minister of the interior for the province of South Kivu, where the Mutarule Massacre took place. During the trial, Miruho refused to acknowledge the government’s accountability in this and similar incidents of violence where the local police failed to intervene.

<sup>222</sup> NoCap stands for *no caporalato* (which took me an embarrassingly long time to realize).

<sup>223</sup> These estimates are from February 2020.

*Kongo Tribunal* and *Rivolta della Dignità*, in addition to their locally embedded performances, feature secondary (external) performances. For *Kongo Tribunal*, this secondary performance was the Berlin Hearings that took place from June 26 to 28, 2015, and for *Rivolta della Dignità* the assembly on October 10, 2019 in Rome. When we consider the impact of these locally embedded performances, the secondary ones seem odd. To a certain extent, these secondary meetings are about spectators being seen, visually demonstrating their support for the cause. These secondary events heavily feature video excerpts from the primary performance (e.g., *Kongo Tribunal*), expert analyses of previously given testimonies, and discussions by people who ultimately share the same opinion but operate from a Western *expert position*. The result is that they lose the agonistic dialogue of the original. They serve an essential purpose in fundraising (i.e., gaining sponsorship from big-name theatres and organizations) and winning media attention, but are very different from the visceral impact of the on-the-ground performance. On-the-ground performances directly access and engage with issues of visibility and agency: Issues that are shifted and adjusted in the subsequent medial iterations and repetitions to be tailormade for the intended audience.

### **6.3: Levels of Spectatorship: Social and Mainstream Media – Generating Image Events**

Reactments, more than Rau's repertoire productions, are about the public aspect of performances. Performances introduce local issues or localized problems (individual markers of larger global issues) into the public realm "for public deliberation" as a technique of incitement (Madison 6). Unlike reenactment and recollection productions, which are marked by the performance's liminal presence and a concrete script, reactment is marked by the traces left behind after the project's conclusion. Multiple levels of the public appear in reactment:

- 1) the public, which is physically present at the performance;
- 2) the digital public, which is plugged into the ongoing process; and
- 3) the public watching the film, a public that accesses the live performance after the fact.

Individual spectators can be members of multiple publics present at the live performance and watching the documentary film, or following the social media surrounding the project and then watching the film. These intersecting levels of spectatorship raise an important question about the reception of these projects: Who is listening to the witnesses and experts?

Rau and his dramaturgical team understand these publics are not all the same. Different publics relate to the specific subject matter differently. Projects are framed depending on who the performance (or document of performance) addresses. What this means when we look at films (and reportages about them like those on *Das Erste*'s "tnt" program<sup>224</sup>) is that they are not about a true



Figure 44: Top: "Yvan Sagnet as Jesus," *Das Neues Evangelium* (IIPM, 2020); Photo Credit: T. Erich-Schneider/Fruitmarket Langfilm; Bottom: "Yvan Sagnet as Jesus carrying the cross," *Das Neues Evangelium* (IIPM, 2020); Photo Credit: Gianni Cipriano/*The New York Times*

<sup>224</sup> The German weekly broadcast "tnt – title, thesen, temperamente" from *Das Erste* has produced two features on Rau, "Milo Raus Theater und Filmprojekt 'Das Neue Evangelium'" (October 14, 2019) and "Milo Rau – ein Mann

documentation of what actually happened. These films, like repertoire productions that employ a similar making-of technique, show an idealized version of the project, presenting a specific narrative about what happened on-the-ground that is curated from the footage collected and aimed at a very specific audience. Whether it is pictures widely distributed by the IIPM or those shared by the IIPM, NTGent, and Rau across various social media platforms, mediated images similarly create a narrative for viewers following the project through these platforms. Rau recognizes this process, referring to it as utopian documentation (“Die Schande Europas” Facebook Livestream 16.04.2020). Here, *utopian* refers to the product of the documentation: choosing the most successful and least problematic images of, or footage from, the live performance to produce an ideal version of the project.

Newsfeed activism – like the Facebook pages for *Rivolta* and *Kongo Tribunal* – amplifies the project’s effect by stretching the space beyond the live production. When we look at the number of subscribers to the Facebook pages for *Kongo Tribunal*, *Rivolta della Dignità*, and even the IIPM, the reach of these social media pages is immediately evident: *Kongo Tribunal* has 7,551 subscribers, *Rivolta della Dignità* has 2,560, and IIPM has 14,719. Although there is no way to determine how many of these subscribers actively followed the project, it does gauge these projects’ potential reach. These are not huge numbers, but they dwarf the live audience, allowing this much larger audience access to the project – an audience that can access the project for free as long as they have a computer. These pages create a networked public: A public brought together by networked technologies, the direct result of the intersection of the people within the group (boyd 39).

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mit Mission” (May 4, 2020). These two features present a very specific perspective on both Rau’s projects as well as the artist himself.

In their narrativizing, IIPM's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages employ a medial dramaturgy, tailoring a very specific, idealized image of the project. They decide who is seen and whose voices are heard. For example, in *Das Neue Evangelium*, the online media content features a mixture of interviews in the ghettos about their working and living conditions and conversations with people in Matera asking locals whom a modern Jesus would stand alongside. Spectators and interested parties (the potential audience) can follow the early phases of the project and the progress made after its completion: A carefully curated arrangement of photographs, live streams, pre-recorded interviews, newspaper/magazine articles, and strategically posted short participant biographies. These pages show what the IIPM and other activists are doing on the ground, keeping subscribers/followers up to date on the situation's continuing development. They serve as an alternative framing device apart from the performance and the media. They mark a space that is more cosmopolitan and transnational than the live performance, using the space to access physically distanced audience. It is continuously being updated with various hashtags and tags generating and organizing the narrative (even for a period after the performance is completed), showing the successes of what is being done on the ground. However, these pages only show what the production team wants subscribers to see. *Rivolta della Dignità's* Facebook page made it possible in the project's early stages to access live streams of staged political marches as well as photos and interviews with migrant labourers. The page posted articles about migrant deaths on plantations, and how the Italian government's actions have made the lives of migrants more difficult. However, the stream is also selective. It focuses primarily on positive achievements rather than the difficulties that the production team faced, such as finding willing participants within the ghettos.

Reactments construct image events, a term that highlights the potential superficiality of media attention and illustrates how projects provide *critique through spectacle* rather than *critique versus spectacle* (DeLuca 22). Spectacle and mass media go hand in hand with activist movements and the performative element of protest, because it “animate[s] the possibilities for public discourse” by “generating new lines of argument” (Delicath & DeLuca 327).

Anthropologist Jeffrey Juris, in his exploration of forms of radical activism, explains how spectacle intertwines with media in the digital present:

Spectacular protests conform to prevailing media logics, a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world through the production formats and modes of transmission of the mass media as entertainment. Indeed, the growing influence of ‘infotainment’ means that unusual, spontaneous, dramatic, or emotionally satisfying events often garner significant media attention, while less visually and emotionally compelling incidents go unnoticed. (64-65)

Reactments construct spectacular images that show epistemic injustice and violence in an appealing way for the spectator. This concept of the spectacular here draws on Guy Debord, thus creating a clear connection between Rau’s reenactments (which reenact and respond to pre-existing image events) and reactments (which create their own image events). For example, a picture of Sagnet dressed as Jesus in white robes, wearing a crown of thorns with blood soaking through the back of the white linen (fig. 44), or on the cross (fig. 45), is more striking, more spectacular, and more memorable than images of the ghettos or migrant workers picking tomatoes.<sup>225</sup> The primary purpose of Rau’s Jesus imagery is to provoke: using classic mythology to access contemporary struggle. This provocation draws attention to an ongoing – easily ignored

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<sup>225</sup> A statement with its own troubling implications.



Figure 45: “The Crucifixion of Christ,” *La Rivolta della Dignità* (Matera, 2019); Photo Credit: Gianni Cipriano/*The New York Times*

– issue: local conflict caused by global neoliberal economic policies. With *Kongo Tribunal*, the image of the tribunal in Bukavu, a gathering of approximately a thousand spectators seated alongside rebels, survivors, government officials, opposition leaders, economists, philosophers, lawyers, and judges from around the globe, bears more weight than the countless pictures of massacres in the region. The image of the gathering asserts the central argument of the tribunal’s potential, while inadvertently illustrating what Rau calls cynical humanism: where it is possible to be morally outraged by images of suffering while also turning a blind eye to how one’s own privilege plays a part in creating the conditions that produce these images (“Zynischer Humanismus” 254-259). It is a telling commentary about how cynical humanism functions; that

it takes a liminal, performative action from a white, Swiss director to grab the global media and an international audience's attention.

If, as Juris posits, “to perform is to carry something into effect,” then the spectacle, or the image event of the underlying event, is to carry this effect forward in a public sense (Juris 65). However, the purposely constructed spectacle and its mass dissemination are not unproblematic. There is always the potential for superficiality and reductiveness: i.e., the danger of aesthetics and simplicity over substance. One of the main critiques of reactments and IIPM productions is this tendency to over-aestheticize their images, which often (if not always) overshadows the groundwork laid out by activists before the project.

The image events of reactments produce appealing and provocative images with the intention of sparking debate. They harness the televisual and digital public sphere to extend the debate of the original outside Bukavu, Berlin, or Matera (Delicath & DeLuca 324, 327). These compelling images provide the action with an archival and predictive power (325-327). The success of the IIPM's campaigns comes from the fact that Rau is very good at harnessing spectacle and the power of a compelling image, in which he is careful to include himself (fig. 48). An important, but often overlooked, critique of the reactment is the visible centrality of the director (fig. 46).

Rau is always a visible part of the IIPM's political action, particularly for Western media sources – which focus on the figure of Rau as a heroic, central figure (fig. 46, 47, 48). The figure of Rau becomes inseparable from the image event



Figure 46: “Milo Rau working with Iraqi actors in Mosul for *Orestes in Mosul* (2019)”; Photo Credit: Sergey Ponomarev/The New York Times

constructed by media outlets and the IIPM itself. Rau is an easy and convenient figure for the media, representative of the (majority) white, middle-class readership/viewership of these outlets and the journalists themselves. Rau becomes inseparable from the project itself and its larger political message, which is then intensified by the director's status as a media darling. The media's longstanding infatuation with Rau is rooted in three main points: (1) the double-sided spectacle of provocation and scandal; (2) *genius* and celebrity *culture*;<sup>226</sup> and (3) the *Milo Rau Mythos*.

The arts and culture industry is dominated by the mythic concept of genius. Phillip McIntyre, in *Creativity and Cultural Production: Issues of Media Practice* (2012), highlights the prevalence and underpinnings of this concept, stating: “the literature on creativity was until recently dominated by what one could call the ‘genius’ view of creativity, which also pervades our society.

This view [...] assumes that truly creative acts involve extraordinary individuals carrying out extraordinary thought processes” (12). Rau is often praised as a genius, or – in the words of one jury of critics – a “rücksichtsloses Genie,” a reckless genius (“Ich war dreizehn”). We see what Margaret Boden, in *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*, refers to the romantic myth of



Figure 47: “Milo Rau in the Media”; Top: Rau directing *Das Neue Evangelium* (2020), Matera, Photo Credit: Gianni Cipriano/The New York Times; Bottom: “Milo Rau directing *Sturm auf den Reichstag* (General Assembly),” Berlin, 2017; Photo Credit: Michael Kappeler

<sup>226</sup> Genius culture is something of a by-product of the *Regietheater* tradition in Germany and Western Europe, which often finds itself connected to preserving the legacies of great men.

creativity, an “imaginative construction, whose function is to express the values, assuage the fears, and endorse the practise of the community that celebrates [it]” (14). This romantic myth of genius claims that creativity as a marker of an exceptional, remarkable person (14-15).<sup>227</sup> This notion of genius asserts that Rau possesses an innate or intuitive gift that allows him critical access to otherwise unexplored and overlooked themes – which is never the case (15). It forgets the collaborators who lay the groundwork for Rau’s actions, while ignoring the role opportunity and privilege play in the assessment of *creative genius* (23).

When we only focus on the theatre artist, we overlook the work done by activists on location, other artists, and collaborators – all of which are key to reactment. The limited focus on a singular, exceptional director-figure downplays pre-existing efforts or, worse, labels them as *less than*. Rau and the IIPM – as is almost always the case with big-name directors – are not responsible for this process but are certainly complicit in it. For example, *Kongo Tribunal* ignores – or at the very least severely downplays – work by NGOs and investigations by transnational organizations (like the United Nations) that pre-date the IIPM’s tribunal. This is not to suggest that these organizations are above critique. Rau and the IIPM levy an extremely valid critique of the UN, World Bank, and Western NGOs, and this critique is part of a meaningful conversation about the role transnational politics in these organizations. However – no matter how flawed their efforts may be – these organizations and their efforts have provided the groundwork (or at least a starting point) that Rau and his team build upon. We cannot forget that creating theatre and political actions is not only about vision, but about having the means and

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<sup>227</sup> “Creative artists (and scientists) are said to be gifted with a specific talent which others lack: insight or intuitions. As for how intuitive insight actually functions, romantics offer only the vaguest suggestions [...] According to the romantic, intuitive talent is innate, a gift that can be squandered but cannot be acquired – or taught” (Boden 14-15).

power to create effective political actions that garner national and international attention for both the project and connected political conflict.

For example, in 2002, the UN security council published a report compiled by an independent panel of experts that reached a similar conclusion as *Kongo Tribunal*, reporting:

Eighty-five multinational companies based in Europe, the US, and South Africa had violated ethical guidelines in dealing with criminal networks that have pillaged natural resources from the war-torn central African country. [...] Home governments have the obligation to ensure that enterprises in their jurisdiction do not abuse principles of conduct that they have adopted as a matter of law. (Carroll)

Rau and his team undeniably did an enormous amount of research and preparation for *Kongo Tribunal*. However, they also built on the findings of this report, others like it, and smaller trials held by the ICC for the DRC. Fruitmarket's official trailer for *Kongo Tribunal* states, "No region in the world is richer in resources than Eastern Congo. But in the last 20 years, six million Congolese citizens have died in a cruel civil war. No investigation has ever taken place. For the first time, all voices were heard in a tribunal," and Rau is correct, a large-scale tribunal for the region hasn't taken place ("The Congo Tribunal Trailer"). However, the UN's investigation was undertaken fifteen years before *Kongo Tribunal* and since 2004, the ICC has had an open investigation in the DRC focused on "alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the context of armed conflict since 1 July 2002" (*icc-cpi.int*). Rau presents the narrative put forward in *Kongo Tribunal* as something wholly new and otherwise (i.e., outside the reactment) neglected. In "The Ethics of Political Art," Sara Geenen, Kristof Titeca, Josaphat Musamba, and Christoph Vogel point to the film's claims of firstness and uniqueness, as well as

the selective editing (which at times obfuscates the existing work) of the film (Geenen, Titeca, Musamba, Vogel).<sup>228</sup>

Such claims in and of themselves are not unique for artists – superlative claims of firstness, uniqueness, exceptionality. What is more problematic is that they are seldom fact-checked



Figure 48: “Milo Rau and the Media: Part 2”: Top: “Rau at construction of *Das Kongo Tribunal* in Bukavu (2015),” Photo Credit: IIPM; Bottom: “Immigration officers interrupt performance of *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (Moscow),” Photo Credit: Maxim Lee/IIPM

by the media or those surrounding the artist. We must remember that journalists and reviewers are part of the same cultural industry as the artists whose work they review. Therefore, they both subscribe to and reinforce the power dynamics and hierarchy of the theatrical institution to which they respond.<sup>229</sup> We see an example of the media’s failure with *Das Neue Evangelium* and Rau’s claim that the film featured the “first black Jesus.” This claim was left unchallenged for months and repeated by numerous journalists.<sup>230</sup> *Das Neue Evangelium* is certainly not the first film to feature a black Jesus. It is part of a short, but existing, tradition.<sup>231</sup>

<sup>228</sup> “Experts who were critical of the conflicts minerals narrative – such as one of the authors (Vogel) – have been tackled with a series of suggestive questions during the hearings. His testimony was not taken into account in the cinematographic edition, for it might represent too much a cognitive dissonance to Rau’s preformatted punchline?” (Geenen, Titeca, Musamba, Vogel).

<sup>229</sup> There is a much larger systemic critique about the relationship between media outlets and cultural institutions, and the current cultural discourse to be found here. Although I do touch on this larger argument here, a more significant study should be undertaken in this area specifically.

<sup>230</sup> The Swiss daily *St. Galler Tagblatt* reported the film “wird nun den ersten schwarzen Jesus der Filmgeschichte spielen, so die Ankündigung” [“will even the first black Jesus in the history of film according to the announcement”] (“Milo Rau und der erste schwarze Jesus”), and Roland Müller for the *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* wrote, “Mit dem Aktivisten und Plantagenarbeiter Yvan Sagnet soll zum ersten Mal ein schwarzer Jesus vor der Kamera stehen” [“With activist and plantation worker, Yvan Sagnet, a black Jesus will, for the first time, appear on film”] (Müller).

<sup>231</sup> *Seduto sulla destra* (Valerio Zurlini, 1968, Italy), *Son of Man* (Mark Dornford-May, 2006, South Africa), *Color of the Cross* (Jean-Claude La Marre, 2006, USA), and *Revival! The Experience* (Danny Green, 2018, USA).

Declarative statements like “the first black Jesus” overlook other directors’ contributions in the project’s normalizing function that Rau ascribes to himself.

Both the theatre and media are obsessed with this idea of genius – specifically the director as genius.<sup>232</sup> This obsession is deeply embedded in the theatre’s hierarchical power structure that places the director at the top, where the director’s word is assumed to be true because of his position. In other words, his word – because of his title – is incontestable. Within the romantic myth of genius that surrounds the director, the quasi-mystical claim of exceptionalism and uniqueness (the idea that no one else can do what they are doing, which is inherently false), is a dangerous failing. Rau does listen to critique and corrections, and after I pointed out the existence of *Color of the Cross* to Rau on October 11, 2019, subsequent articles by Rau about *Das Neue Evangelium* changed to referencing the first black Jesus in *European Biblical films, den ersten schwarzen Jesus des europäischen Bibelfilms* (“Die Waffe der Entrechteten”). This issue of critique – which is so intertwined with the systemic problems of theatre’s power dynamics and the immutable figure of the director – is troubling because it undercuts the significance of such projects by making them untouchable. It obfuscates the contribution of artists without the power and position of figures like Rau. The problem with the media dimension that surrounds Rau is that it too often fails to acknowledge and explore the fallibility of projects, thereby demanding more of both the project and its creators.

With Rau and the IIPM’s reactments, the exclusion of pre-existing investigations, tribunals, and activist interventions from reportages and published dossiers feels at odds with the “something is better than nothing” philosophy of IIPM reactments.<sup>233</sup> Rau presents a valid

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<sup>232</sup> Again, this obsession is part of a much larger problem located within critical institutions (and which this dissertation is also a part of), which requires further examination.

<sup>233</sup> This issue is part of a much larger discussion about the issue of citation, source acknowledgement, and recognition within theatre and arts. The question that presents itself is to what extent do we, as spectators and critics,

performative critique of established institutions; however, ignoring pre-existing efforts weakens IIPM reactment institutions' *try again fail again* logic and the *Entdramatisierung* – de-dramatization – that accompanies the institution's ultimately powerless verdict (“Antagonismus” 40-41; “Try Again. Fail Again”). The symbolic institutions of reactments are founded in failure: they build on the failures of existing institutions by creating better, but still deliberately failing, institutions.<sup>234</sup>

#### 6.4: Collected Thoughts on a Collective Process

As noted above, in IIPM projects, media outlets often focus almost exclusively (at the very least excessively) on Rau. However, the concept behind the IIPM as a production company is notably collective: based in the idea of collaboration. The issue of the collective and of collective creation is an important to both reenactment and recollection, but it becomes more pressing in reactment because of the projects' activist impulses and real-world implications. Even before the foundation of the IIPM, Rau's career was marked by collaboration; in 1999, Rau, alongside Marcel Bächtiger, Simone Eisenring, and Matthias Stickel founded Siamesis Produktionen for the film *Paranoia Express* (2002). Between 2003 and 2007, Rau frequently worked with fellow Swiss director Eisenring as the Eisenring-Rau duo, producing seven productions together. The IIPM was founded as a collaborative project by Rau, Eisenring, Bächtiger,<sup>235</sup> Franziska Dick,<sup>236</sup>

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expect artists (particularly famous and respected ones) to acknowledge the influence of others in the artistic projects (whether that is a play, a performance, a political action, a painting, or a dance piece) they produce?

<sup>234</sup> Deliberately failing institutions refer to the pre-enactment quality of the performance as a *künstlerische Antizipation eines künftigen politischen Ereignisses*, a performance that anticipates a conflict that will happen in the (presumably near) future (Marchart 130).

<sup>235</sup> Videographer Marcel Bächtiger worked with the company until the conclusion of *Hate Radio* (either 2011 or 2013, it is difficult to determine at what point precisely): He is credited as the film director (alongside Rau) for the film version of *Die letzten Tage*, a co-director for *City of Change* (2010), and the video elements of *Hate Radio*.

<sup>236</sup> Swiss actor Franziska Dick performed in many of Eisenring-Rau's productions: *Dämonen* (2005), *Amnesie* (2005), *Bei Anruf Avantgarde* (2005), and *Montana* (2007) – notably only the productions Rau worked on with

Jens Dietrich,<sup>237</sup> and Nina Wolters.<sup>238</sup> This concept of the collective that infused the founding principles of the IIPM is also deeply ingrained in all of Rau's work (reenactment, recollection, reactment, and reclassification): specifically, the use of frequent collaborators and texts that are written in rehearsal.<sup>239</sup> According to Rau, projects always begin with a blank sheet of paper and the productions tap into the power of collective knowledge, drawing on the team's combined expertise to find understanding and construct an inter-performance discourse ("Schauspiel" 201; "Disziplin" 55).

This collective aspect is even more important for reactments because the action is only as successful as it is in amassing diverse participants. Reactments create a political collective out of their individual participants. The most successful reactments are those that create diverse collectives and find solidarity in the performance's antagonism – which is otherwise impossible ("Mitleid (1)" 111). The collective element of the reactment means that the contributions of participants involved in real-world (non-theatrical) activism becomes more problematic when ignored. Many of the activists involved in postcolonial projects like *Kongo Tribunal*, *Das Neue Evangelium*, and (to a lesser extent) *General Assembly* are BIPOC artists and activists and the exclusion of their input in research and creation is part of a broader tendency in cultural institutions.

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Eisenring. Additionally, Dick performed in the only IIPM production not directed by Rau, *Riefenstahl* (2010), which was also directed by Eisenring (the director's final foray with the IIPM).

<sup>237</sup> Dramaturg Jens Dietrich, who worked with Rau since 2005, continued with the IIPM until 2013, *Moskauer Prozesse* and the scenic congress that accompanied the project. Dietrich was the dramaturg for *Land of Hope* (2009), *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009), *Hate Radio* (2011), and *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (2013) before leaving the company. Interestingly, Dietrich is sometimes credited as the co-director of *Hate Radio*, and one Dutch newspaper even interviewed Dietrich as the project's director.

<sup>238</sup> From 2009 to the present, Nina Wolters has done the corporate designs for the IIPM and its many publications. She is the only remaining collaborator from the original founders of the IIPM.

<sup>239</sup> Both share the same shortcoming: it is always Rau's name on the poster, the front cover, and the newspaper article.

Is Rau’s work actually collective? Rau’s work adheres to the firmly established hierarchy of the European theatre landscape. It is certainly not insignificant that posters, theatre billboards, programs, DVDs, and books published by Verbrecher Verlag feature only the name Milo Rau alongside the project title. *The Art of Resistance: On Theatre, Activism and Solidarity* (2020), and *Why Theatre?* (2020) are the notable exceptions, and these books are published as part of the Golden Book series that have accompanied Rau’s tenure as artistic director of NTGent and are not connected to a specific production. There is a conscious choice made to brand projects as “Milo Rau” productions rather than “IIPM” ones. There is an institutional dimension to this branding. Rau’s work fits within the European theatrical tradition and the German tradition of *Regietheater*, which foregrounds the role of the director and has led to the advent of a generation of celebrity directors. The media and cultural landscapes are already predisposed to embrace the director’s heroic centrality, which embraces a level of forgetfulness about contributors and collaborators. The problem that presents itself here is not unique to Rau, but the marker of a



Figure 49: “Milo Rau and his team filming in the DRC,” Photo credit: IIPM/*The Congo Tribunal*

larger issue in Western theatre. It allows and, at times, even actively participates in processes of erasure, because it fits in convenient narratives of the singular power of the creative genius (fig. 49).

### 6.5: Levels of Spectatorship: Documentary Film – Circulating Remnants

The IIPM’s documentary films provide a summary of the live performances, while simultaneously situating the performance within the larger historical and political context. These documentary-style films do not just follow the performance, but the creation process as well. Therefore, productions are framed in a particular way – as highlighted above – to structure an idealized narrative for a specific audience. The liveness of the original is transposed into the virtual realm of the cinematic and, in the process, issues are selected and magnified in the limited lens of a 100-minute film. Completed films provide a compact best-of the project for an audience without the opportunity (or the patience) to sit through multiple days of performance. Important testimonies are shortened and spectacular moments from research trips are selected to show the

most important and memorable moments, i.e., those testimonies deemed significant for the (primarily European) audience.

Although, it is important to acknowledge that the film version of *Kongo Tribunal* premiered in Bukavu



Figure 50: “The Kiss,” filmed in Mosul for *Orestes in Mosul* (2019); Photo Credit: Sergey Ponomarev/*The New York Times*

(accompanied by Rau and his team) and toured the DRC before it premiered in Europe at the Locarno Festival in August 2017.

There is an undeniable element of misery tourism in reactment (and reclassification) at play and several reviewers have criticized Rau for this *Elendstourismus*. In part, Rau and his team travel to these places because of a desire to understand the issue firsthand, attempting to offer a more dynamic and nuanced exploration of the problem than possible in a more straightforward, scripted performance. However, these conflict zone productions are also about being seen (and filmed and photographed) on location (Burkhardt & Philipp; Muscionico). Reactments are liminal: the team arrives, researches, rehearses, performs, and then moves onto the next project and the next crisis. Rau does care about the people on the ground (as his efforts to stay in contact with his former collaborators clearly illustrates); however, he and his team are there for a particular reason.

Alissa Rubin from *The New York Times* identifies how, in *Orestes in Mosul*, the IIPM team's preconceptions and preoccupations failed at times to reflect the complex daily realities of the Iraqi team and failed to reflect local customs. Rubin interviewed many of the Iraqi participants, reporting: "since Mr. Rau never inquired, he [Mustafa Dargham] did not mention the daily difficulties that he said many of his classmates faced. 'They did not ask about water, about electricity,' he said" (Rubin). She also points to one of the most contentious scenes in *Orestes in Mosul*: the kiss between Orestes (Risto Kübar) and Pylades (Duraïd Abbas Ghaïeb) (fig. 50).<sup>240</sup> In Iraq, homosexuality – while not explicitly illegal – remains taboo and honour killings of gay family members face few (if any) legal ramifications ("Iraq"). Many of the Iraqi actors were concerned about the onstage kiss, fearing it was against their religion or that they

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<sup>240</sup> *Orestes in Mosul* (NTGent: vimeo): 01:12:26-01:15:20; <https://vimeo.com/334240664>.

“would be seen by their community as tolerating overt homosexuality,” and could, therefore, potentially face repercussions for the performance.<sup>241</sup> After much discussion, Rau eventually agreed to modify the kiss so that the chorus of Iraqi actors would circle Kübar and Ghaieb, pulling them apart as they kissed. However, the scene was still too explicit for much of the Iraqi audience. Rubin highlights the cost (and potential danger) of the extremely specific focus and purpose of the IIPM’s presence in conflict zones: how, despite the European team’s good intentions, they are not necessarily looking to (or able to in the time they have to) challenge initial expectations and preconceptions (although this does sometimes happen).

In both conflict zone repertoire productions (reclassifications) and one-time political actions (reactments), there is a divide between Rau’s team and participant/performers. However, through careful editing and purposeful framing in the documentary films (and projected onstage videos for reclassifications), this divide is obscured. We are not shown how the temporal limitations placed on projects mean certain questions cannot be asked, because there is no time. The films must work around these limitations (actually taking them a step further) by showing only the highlights of the trial. For example, in *Kongo Tribunal*, the 22-minute testimony of the then-minister of the interior for South Kivu, Jean-Julien Miruho, is cut down to about four minutes.<sup>242</sup> This short version highlights Miruho’s incompetence, including his inflammatory statement that the local police could not arrive at the massacre until the next day because they could not work at night. It also cuts out significant portions of what was said at the live performance. The editing of films simplifies the argument, while simultaneously allowing an

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<sup>241</sup> “Some of the male Iraqi theater students, who played the Furies, were uncomfortable, even angry, when asked to present for the scene” (Rubin).

<sup>242</sup> *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket: 2017): 01:21:51-01:26:10, DVD; “4.3: There were disagreements in the military command chain” (original video): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=5&v=kglys\\_AQybc&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=kglys_AQybc&feature=emb_title).

outside audience to understand the on-the-ground situation. In 100-minutes, the film can only present a superficial presentation of what happened and the foundational conflict. It cannot not necessarily grapple with the complexities and depth of the situation.

When we watch the *Kongo Tribunal* film, we, as spectators, are presented with a mixture of snippets from the tribunal and the on-the-ground reality. It shows the devastation caused by the mine at Bisie (which is common knowledge for the Bukavu audience) alongside testimony that responds to it. This structure allows *Kongo Tribunal* to show its audience the realities of the cases the tribunal discusses. For example, the tribunal's final case is the Mutarule massacre. The massacre was included primarily because Rau and his team were the first to arrive onsite after the massacre. They were able to collect fresh, firsthand responses of locals to the massacre, which are, at times, almost too fresh and too raw, like the mother who sits on the ground at Mutarule, saying: "I have no children left. All my children are dead. They have destroyed me" (*Das Kongo Tribunal* film).<sup>243</sup>

As mentioned above, the documentation process – the filming and editing – is a form of utopian documentation. The documentation contributes to the further development of the utopian project, with what is captured on film to be used alongside the actual institutional model. In the future, the makers of real (legitimized) institutions can theoretically look at what Rau and the IIPM did and build upon their work. Returning to the concept of utopian documentation discussed above, it also serves to reinforce how live performances occur in a space where the alternative institution is liminally possible. The film then pushes beyond even the utopian performance. Another part of this utopian aspect of the documentation is how the film makes the performance appear less problematic and less difficult to create. However, the problem with this

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<sup>243</sup> *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket: 2017): 00:04:30-00:05:26; DVD.

aspect of the documentation is that it risks whitewashing projects of their obstacles and difficulties such as creating the trial/tribunal, finding participants, and gaining support.

Considering that one of the goals of reactments – particularly postcolonial ones like *Kongo Tribunal* – is to provide a framework for the future, this editorial exclusion means we do not see the many walls such institutions (even a relatively small-scale performative one) run up against in the real world. As one critic said about Jean-Stéphane Bron’s mock trial for *Cleveland versus Wall Street*: “the mock trial in the movie resembles a real trial the way a preliminary artist’s sketch resembles a finished oil painting” (Connors).

The short opening and closing statements seen in the film ignore the awkward and, at times, halting reality of tight time restraints and some participants’ lack of public speaking experience and testimonies are cut off mid-sentence. Projects provide a future-oriented framework, which is productive and does have real-world merit. However, as spectators, we also have to acknowledge the project – as an artistic production – is inevitably reductive in its scope and ability. Even the project’s title, *Das Kongo Tribunal*, suggests the possibility of putting such diverse issues together in a single judicial forum when, of course, the realities of transnational, national, and local justice are more complex than an artistic tribunal can represent. An actual tribunal for the DRC will require weeks, months, or years, not a mere six days (three, in truth, when we look at the sittings in Bukavu versus Berlin). Still, as an experiment, the tribunal is undoubtedly productive. The true success of these projects is their impact on the spectator and proving such a thing could be possible. The live performance provides this impact on a local level, while the film does so on an international one.

The merit of such projects is located in their effectiveness to inspire real-world action, which means its successful continuation is handed off from the creator to the spectator. Perhaps

the most impactful thing done by the filmic translations of the reactment – and we must keep in mind that on-the-ground performances are performed for a camera as well as for an audience – is to extend the dialogue beyond the tribunal. On a much larger scale than the live performance, the film creates local solidarity among participants and a cosmopolitan solidarity among spectators across the globe. *Kongo Tribunal*, over the course of the performance, develops a discourse about the ongoing conflict in the DRC and opens the window of possibility for future work in the field (“Tribunal” 230). The documentary film must find a way to transpose that discourse, which took six days of performance and years of research to construct with all its confrontations and irreconcilable positions, into the short format. The film employs a comparative structure to fast track the performance’s discourse. In the performance, each expert and witness receive between fifteen and twenty minutes for both testimony and cross-examination (which is still far less time than necessary), but the film (because of its length) can only use snippets. If Rau and his editing team showed the full testimonies, then the film would only be able show one of the twenty sessions that made up the six days of the hearings.<sup>244</sup> By showing the highlights of the testimonies – the best or most emotionally triggering parts – the film cuts out the more tedious judicial explanations or drawn-out analyses of the situation and instead focuses on core issues.

Visibility is essential in reactments because they are (at their core) about visibility and reclaiming agency – returning to the idea of empowerment. When we look at Rau’s films, we must again return to the centrality of the director, because in these films, Rau is always the central framing device. We are led into *Das Kongo Tribunal* by Rau. We first encounter the director at the Berlin hearings and then again in the DRC as part of a film shown in Berlin that the editing allows spectators to step into. In the DRC, he walks ahead of his camera crew as they

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<sup>244</sup> Each sitting was approximately 90-minutes in length, with the two sessions for the closing speeches running at about thirty minutes.

approach the site of the Mutarule Massacre, eventually pushing the cameraman in front of him. We then see Rau throughout the tribunal as well as in the footage shot at Bisie, Bukavu, and other on-the-ground locations.<sup>245</sup> *Moskauer Prozesse* also begins with off-screen exposition spoken by Rau over alternating footage of Moscow's subway system and Pussy Riot member Yekaterina Samutsevich. The opening cumulates in shots of Rau directing his team on the construction of the courtroom in Sakharov Center.<sup>246</sup> In both films, Rau is not just behind the camera, but in front of it. He becomes a player in the film's narrative.

Presence and visibility are intrinsically tied up in issues of power and power relations, or, as Woodward explains in *The Politics of In/Visibility: Being There* (2015):

Visibility involves power relations. Why does it matter, and what is the importance of visibility? An explanation of being there contributes to an understanding of the specific nuances, connections and disconnections, which make up the politics of in/visibility and the processes which are implicated in seeing and being seen or not seen, and looking and being looked at, or not. (8)

We must consider what Rau's centrality in the films means within the larger context of the projects and within the IIPM's mission statement, the first rule of the Ghent Manifesto: making the representation real. To a lesser extent, the reactment's live performance is framed around the director. At live events, Rau is also careful to reserve a spot in the opening and closing speeches for himself (which are subsequently republished). Even at *Rivolta della Dignita*'s assembly in Rome, where the language of the assembly was Italian (which Rau does not speak), Rau still opened the event with a brief statement (translated by his assistant director Giacomo Disordi).

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<sup>245</sup> *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket, 2017): 00:00:00-00:03:13; DVD.

<sup>246</sup> *Die Moskauer Prozesse* (Fruitmarket, 2013): 00:00:00-00:03:21; <https://vimeo.com/257215174>.

In *Moskauer Prozesse*, *Kongo Tribunal*, and *Das Neue Evangelium*, where it is impossible to ignore that Rau is in front of the camera, we must talk about the politics of visibility. Rau and his team make a specific dramaturgical choice when they include him in the shot, because it means that, to a certain extent, the film becomes about Rau rather than just about the politics of artistic freedom in Russia or the ongoing civil conflict in the DRC. We must remain aware that both the IIPM and, more recently, NTGent function hierarchically, even in the reatment projects that are so much about incorporating voices across the social hierarchy of the communities they document. As the director, Rau is at the top of this hierarchy. His presence in the film is significant, because, for a portion of the audience, these films are about Rau and his journey into the unknown. As Woodward points out, “Being there and being seen to be there are not innocent or neutral processes; presence raises questions about responsibility and agency and about the nature of being visibly situated within a particular context” (Woodward 12). So, when we consider Rau’s onscreen presence in the films – particularly for postcolonial projects – we have to talk about interconnected issues of responsibility, agency, power, and privilege. We also have to question what (and who) these films are actually about.

Rau’s presence has two functions. First, it highlights the fictionality of the performance. His presence asserts that this (what we are watching) is a performance and not an actual tribunal or assembly. It is performative that functions in a theatrical rather than official judicial capacity. And here is the director – physically at the tribunal – as proof. Second, this presence proclaims: This tribunal is a Milo Rau project. Films like *Kongo Tribunal* present their audience with postcolonial narratives (although *Kongo Tribunal* and *Das Neue Evangelium* attempt to be decolonial) but do so with and through a European narrator (which is why they remains

postcolonial and never passes into the decolonial).<sup>247</sup> Therefore, the narrative presented in these films explore their central conflicts from a specifically European perspective. We must recall Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous question: "Can the subaltern speak?" Spivak highlights the epistemic violence that claims to know and understand the interests of oppressed people (the subaltern) without recognizing or utilizing their repressed voices (Pohlhaus 13; Spivak 76). The reactment, from its live performance to its documentary film, is about extending a microphone to those people whose voices are most often excluded from the conversation about global economic policy. The creation of a platform, the underlying purpose of the reactment, is important, particularly for those on the ground: i.e., the Congolese who attended and participated in the Bukavu tribunal. However, to what extent does this impact extend and reveal itself in the film and beyond the performance? We must be cautious of the problem Spivak identifies in postcolonial studies of *white men saving brown women from brown men* (268): white authors who write about oppressed people as objects, rather than as the subject of their own experiences. The danger is that the film becomes (or could become) more about Rau's journey through the DRC than about the people there and their experiences.

When we look Rau's presence in postcolonial projects like *Kongo Tribunal* and *Das Neue Evangelium*, it becomes at times uncomfortable – particularly in some of the images that Rau and his editors choose to include in the final product.<sup>248</sup> Parts of the films fall explicitly into white saviourism. However, Rau contends that the inclusion of himself in the picture serves as a

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<sup>247</sup> An excellent critical review of *Das Kongo Tribunal*, which looks specifically at the failure of the project to actually foster real world change for people on the ground ("A participant in the hearings told us that he 'hopes the message will have an effect in maybe five or ten years. But so far the effect on the political situation has been nil'"), or to take ethics fully into account ("we feel such an ambitious project should pay more attention to ethnics, as it *does* intervene in real and ongoing conflicts and hence may have *more than symbolic* consequences"), or to look at existing research on the issue is "The Ethics of Political Art" by Sara Geenen, Kristof Titeca, Josaphat Musamba, and Christoph Vogel in *africasacountry.com*. This article provides an excellent overview of precisely why projects such as *Das Kongo Tribunal* fail to cross over from post- into decolonial rhetoric.

<sup>248</sup> *Das Kongo Tribunal* (Fruitmarket, 2017): 00:10:40-00:12:14; DVD.

way to directly confront the issue of white savourism by acknowledging that the film is made by a white, European director and will, therefore, inevitably fall short. In a 2020 interview about *Das Neue Evangelium* with *Filmmaker Magazine*, Rau (for the first time) explained the intention behind his presence in IIPM films, stating: “As a director I want to show my own failure, my own intrusion in the films I make. For me a film, an artpiece [*sic*], is not the end product but the entire process, before and after the premiere” (Wissot). This self-awareness doesn’t absolve the films of their more troubling imagery, but it does mean there is a nod towards the *try again, fail better* philosophy of the projects. It indicates – at least according to Rau – that he and his team are aware they are presenting something potentially problematic, but that they are doing so in the hopes something better will follow.

Part of Rau’s role as narrator/guide is based on his outsider status in Moscow, the DRC, and Southern Italy. It is this outsider status that gives Rau and his team the freedom and privilege to access people who would otherwise ignore or censor their efforts. Rau and his behind-the-camera team are marked by an immediately apparent difference (ethnic, linguistic, social, political, or otherwise). There is always a clear divide between Rau and his subject matter. *City of Change* and *Land of Hope* – Rau’s two earliest reactment projects – also feature Rau as an on-camera presence.<sup>249</sup> In these films, which take place in Switzerland (*City of Change*) and Germany (*Land of Hope*), Rau takes on an insider position in a subject matter specifically about the chosen societies’ outsiders. Even here, the film establishes difference between the instigators (Rau and his Swiss/German dramaturgical team) and their subject matter (immigration and citizenship). What is always visible in these film projects is an outsider narrator exploring *as if* from an insider position. However, Rau never really deals with issues of positionality or

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<sup>249</sup> *City of Change* (IIPM: video): 00:03:38-00:09:18; <https://vimeo.com/110868727>.  
*Land of Hope* (IIPM: video): 00:00:58-00:03:10; <https://vimeo.com/15881222>.

privilege in the discourse surrounding the IIPM's political projects. He and his team operate from a privileged position of big budgets, built-in audiences, and media attention, all within a bubble of relative safety.<sup>250</sup>

Performance theorist Kennedy Chinyowa, writing about Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, develops a concept called *theatre of the oppressor*. Rau's reactments (particularly postcolonial ones) and later repertoire projects such as *Orestes in Mosul* and *Antigone im Amazonas* – imperfect as they may be – fit within this format. Chinyowa defines theatre of the oppressor as a theatre that acknowledges the privilege of the theatre-maker and their own place in systemic oppression. He explains that this form of theatre acknowledges complacency while also making oppressors “agents for change within the regime of their own design” (14). This form of theatre aims to shift the theatre-maker's role towards one of advocacy, because, as Chinyowa explains: “True advocacy demands that a person who bears witness to an injustice needs to take responsibility for that awareness by not blocking off possibilities for action by others” (15). Reactment may (and most often does) fall short of its lofty aspirations, but the advocacy it provides is still vital: how it gives a voice and puts a human face on global, economic tragedy.

Rau favours action over endless questioning. *Kongo Tribunal* and *Das Neue Evangelium* have undoubtedly successfully created noise and raised awareness across Western Europe through the press coverage and popularity of the films. They have raised money for specific causes such as “Houses of Dignity.” Yet there remains the looming, unanswerable question of “Is this enough?”, or, more precisely, “Is the good produced by these projects – their films and live performances – enough to overcome their shortcomings?” Rau and the IIPM financially (and

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<sup>250</sup> This is a much more complex issue than outlined here that obviously requires further discussion.

critically) benefit from projects (profit is always a motivator in the arts and culture industry). By proxy, the IIPM also benefits – if only because of what is attractive to contemporary audiences – from situations of unrest and human suffering. Precisely, because of this aspect of the theatre, it is particularly important to engage with issues of advocacy and responsibility to counter the touristic and temporary quality of the symbolic institution and found better institutions than those seen in the films.

### 6.6: Conclusion: This Time Without the Tourists

In early October 2019, I travelled to Matera, Italy to watch the final days of filming for *Das Neue Evangelium* and the final actions of the first phase of *Rivolta della Dignità*. On the day that Sagnet, in his role as Jesus, was filmed carrying the cross, Rau



Figure 51: “Yvan Sagnet, carrying cross,” picture from front of procession; *La Rivolta della Dignità*, Matera, 2019; Photo Credit: Gianni Cipriano/*The New York Times*

invited the surrounding mass of tourists to join the procession of local actors following Sagnet/Jesus up the countless stairs.<sup>251</sup> After about two hours of shooting, the number of tourists following the procession dwindled to only six or seven people, all of whom had travelled to Matera specifically to watch the filming of the project. As we approached the top of the stairs,

<sup>251</sup> These tourists were cut entirely from the final version of the film and the scene of Jesus carrying the cross featured only Rau’s historical reenactors (*Das Neue Evangelium* film).

where the scene ended, Rau called over the megaphone: “Once more without the tourists!” As the “tourists” – all of whom were tourists of Rau rather than of Matera – dispersed, I thought about the broader implications of a reactment without tourists. Returning to accusations of misery tourism, Rau could himself be described as a docu-tourist. He and his team travel to a set location to rehearse a project, collect images, and (swiftly) depart. While I recognize that Rau strongly disagrees with the term tourist or touristic regarding his work, it remains a crucial element of projects and an essential criticism of his work.

Reactment projects (and reclassification repertoire productions), as much as they are about arrivals and what happens on the ground, are also about inevitable departures. Rau and his team arrive on-site and work with the knowledge and under the pressure that they must eventually return to Europe. The site of conflict is what attracts the IIPM, and, in turn, the IIPM and Rau attract others to the location. It is difficult to determine which aspect of the conflict zone (the people, the on-the-ground reality, or the conflict itself) draws Rau and his team – and the



Figure 52: “The Procession following Jesus and the Cross,” Condemnation and Passion of Christ, *La Rivolta della Dignità*, Matera, 2019; Photo Credit: Gianni Cipriano/*The New York Times*

tourists of Rau: Is it an indelible belief that the flawed model projected onto the stage and screen will be picked up in the real world and built upon? Or, is it a sort of rubbernecking, or what the Dutch call

*rampentoerisme*, where one sees a catastrophe and – filled with a sudden morbid curiosity – cannot look away? It is, most likely, some combination of the two: a hope for the future as well as a morbid fascination that draws the eye. Again, one cannot help but think of Walter Benjamin’s Angel of History (a figure who has appeared throughout both this study and Rau’s work), who upon seeing the growing mountain of catastrophes finds herself unable to look away and who is perhaps a more apt descriptor than the *rampentoerist*.

Reactments blend the on-the-ground reality with a constructed performance, creating a transformative event through liminal performance. These performances construct symbolic institutions of “How would it be possible?” (*Wie wäre das möglich?*). What we see in tribunals like *Moskauer Prozesse*, *Kongo Tribunal*, and *General Assembly* are not artistic allegories, but events played out with real political actors and real conflicts rather than fictional characters and authored disputes (“Zynischer Humanismus” 250). Here, we again find the awkward duality of symbolic versus pragmatic action in reactment. Rau asserts that theatre creates symbolic spaces rather than pragmatic ones – we could also use this dyad to distinguish between artists and activists. The symbolic quality of reactments is not without value when we compare it to the concept of the pragmatic. Symbolic means that the outcome of the tribunal is less direct than with pragmatic action, meaning *Kongo Tribunal* did not result in real justice for all the crimes examined, but it did lead to two ministers resigning and an increased demand for justice in the region. *Rivolta della Dignità* did not change an entire economic system, but it did win Sagnet and NoCap the financial support necessary to construct the Houses of Dignity and have their ethically produced tomatoes and tomato products (fig. 42) more widely distributed in Italian and European supermarkets. As Rau highlights, the symbolic is connected to reactment’s revelatory function, showing what could and should be possible by opening the window of possibility for a

brief moment. Reactments could be referred to as a generative argument, a performance that demonstrates potentiality through the generation of a publishable, reproducible, archivable, and eventually repeatable visual documentations.

One of the markers of reactment is the photographs that accompany the creation process, which then appear across social media accounts, in press dossiers put out by the IIPM, and are subsequently reprinted in magazines, newspapers, and books. The centrality of these images (both photographs and video) is both a great strength and pressing danger to the reactment. Susan Sontag links tourism with photography, even stating: “The photographer is a



Figure 53: “Filming the carrying of the cross”; *La Rivolta della Dignità*, Matera, 2019; Photo Credit: Gianni Cipriano/*The New York Times*

supertourist” (*On Photography* 33). For Sontag, the touristic quality of the photograph is

connected to an inherent voyeurism, where pictures are taken to be looked at later. They, therefore, contain a sense of possession: the photographed experience belongs to the tourist. There is certainly an element of voyeurism in Rau's use of images, however, they are also part of a larger political strategy of provocation that aims to induce action. They are about more than just being looked at; they generate awareness by providing visual proof of the projects' stakes. This strategy denormalizes the violence of the situation by creating something more than stock images, reframing violence with a human face and voice, and with the potential for a solution. The danger of these images and their mass production/distribution is the pull of spectacle, specifically the temptation to produce increasingly spectacular imagery. The images of the events are about bringing the event into reality – extending it beyond the performance space – and creating a dialectic. The danger of the call of spectacularity is that the image will overtake the event: i.e., the spectacle and images of it will become better known and more revered than the actual assembly or tribunal, that the project will become a part of what it critiques.

So, how do we judge the success and value of reactment? Do we judge it on the quality of the images it produces or on the real-world effectiveness of the assembly? These projects are incredibly successful at grabbing the attention of international audiences (particularly across Western Europe) and raising awareness for the existing conflicts they examine. However, questions about their spectacularity and effectiveness still arise upon close examination. Maybe the best way to look at Rau's political reactments (and most artistic, political actions) is as a fictional institution for real hope; or, as Jill Dolan aptly summarizes in *Utopia in Performance*:

Perhaps instead of measuring the utopian performative's 'success' against some real notion of effectiveness, we need to let it live where it does its work best – at the theatre or in moments of consciously constructed performance wherever they take place. The

utopian performative, by its very nature, cannot translate into a program for social action, because it's most effective as a *feeling*. [...] Perhaps burdening such moments with the necessity that they demonstrate their effectiveness after the performance ends can only collapse the fragile, beautiful potential of what we can hold in our hearts for just a moment. [...] The politics lies in the desire to feel the potential of elsewhere. The politics lie in our willingness to attend or to create a performance at all, to come together in real places – whether theaters or dance clubs – to explore in imaginary spaces the potential of the “not yet” and the “not here.” (*Utopian Performance* 20)

The idea of “not yet” and “not here” parallels the concept of symbolic institutions for the future, which similarly takes place in a utopian *nicht jetzt* time. The promise of such utopian times is that of the future enactment. This term – *enactment* – is key to IIPM reactments. In the judicial sphere, enactment refers to a repeatable and enforceable law or process that can be referred and returned to when necessary. In this legal or judicial sense, the enactment of courts and laws on a local, national, and international level refers to a set course of actions to deal with specific



Figure 54: “View from behind the procession”; Photo Credit: Lily Climenhaga

situations as they arise. Reactments take the touristic singularity of the project and create an action, institution, or network that can become repeatable and replicable. The impulse behind the

reactment is to create something that can (and will) eventually be repeated (or even improved) independently: i.e., without the artist-tourist.

Returning to the direction that Rau shouted at his band of tourists in Matera, we find the primary goal of reactment. Namely, for the event to happen again, but this time for real: Without Milo Rau, his production team of docu-tourists, the cameras set up to capture every movement, the tourists of Rau, and the gaping onlookers. Reactment reacts and responds to conflicts that co-exist on a local and global level by demonstrating what could and should be, but with the asterisk that it must eventually come to be in concrete and real terms. Only this time, it will happen, as Rau's voice boomed over the stone walls and steps in Matera, "without the tourists."

### Conclusion: *Was Tun, Milo Rau?* – What is to be done?

*Wie alles mit mir losgegangen ist, weiß keiner, am wenigsten natürlich ich selbst.*<sup>252</sup>  
Milo Rau, “Aus der Kindheit des Odysseus,” 233

This study has identified four distinct, structural categories within the work of Milo Rau and the IIPM, exploring three in depth. **Reenactments** – the only of the four terms taken directly from Rau – recreate chosen historical moments and react against the increased mediation of recent historical events through experiential performances. Productions such as *Die letzten Tage der Ceausescus* (2009), *Hate Radio* (2011), and *Breiviks Erklärung* (2012) attempt to break the historical event out of the medial echoraum in which it is trapped through a real-time repetition. **Recollection** – a term taken from Søren Kierkegaard – is a performed act of remembering that explores where the self (the small individual) fits within the large History. *The Civil Wars* (2014), *The Dark Ages* (2015), and *Empire* (2016) each explore Europe’s recent history, constructing a new narrative from the intersections and divergences of the actors’ autobiographies. **Reactments** are performative reactions to the failures and injustices of present institutions. These projects construct their reactions by creating staged symbolic and utopian institutions that gesture towards a possible future with its own, better institutions. The fourth and final category is **reclassification** (which is only peripherally explored in this study): making-of<sup>253</sup> productions that explore how local struggles mark global injustices. This category, along with Rau’s administrative and curatorial work as artistic director at NTGent, offers ample ground for future research. Unlike reactments – which also consider the local as a symptom of the global – reclassifications use a classic work of art as a framework for modern conflict and struggle.

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<sup>252</sup> “How it all started with me no one knows, least of all myself.”

<sup>253</sup> Making-of refers to how production reenact conversations from rehearsals and show bit and pieces what went into the creation process during the performance.

The political theatre developed by Rau and his team at the IIPM and NTGent is, at its heart, presence-based. Key to all the work discussed in this study is the concept of co-presence: the co-presence of performers and production team, of spectators and performers, of the audience (as a collective) and the performance (as a whole). Intertwined with this concept of co-presence are the duelling mechanisms of memory, history, and historiography. Important questions include: how does the audience remember the historical event and how has the official history has been written? How do we access history? What do we remember and what do we forget? What is being forgotten? What will, in the future, be remembered of the now? Entangled with such broad questions of social memory and the processes of remembering is a socio-political and socio-economic commentary about the state of the present. While recollection and reenactment are more passive in their reflections on the present (they do not demand direct action from the spectator), the more recent reactments and reclassifications are increasingly politically engaged (they demand action from the spectator) and functional (create real-world change).

While Rau has received praise from international news outlets for his productions and political actions, it is vital to remain aware of the dangers and more problematic elements: the foregrounding of the director, the obfuscation of collaborators, the favoring of certain narratives and (famous) voices, and the aestheticization of suffering. There is certainly much more to be said and done following these lines of critique. These issues are relevant not only to Rau's work but also within the work of many contemporary activists and politically motivated artists. This is particularly true as documentary political theatre has in recent years become increasingly popular and been adopted – in no small part because of Rau's success with engaged theatre – on the mainstages of Western European mainstream theatre. Therefore, another area of future study in the exploration of Rau and the IIPM is to examine and unpack the multilateral relationships

among Rau and his contemporaries in documentary theatre and activism. As the transitional and contextualizing chapters of this study have illustrated, contemporary theatre and performance trends have greatly influenced Rau and the IIPM. It is also clear that Rau and the IIPM have also influenced recent developments in the German and European theatre scene. There is also space to map out the influence cultural theorists such as Roland Barthes, Guy Debord, Susan Sonntag have had on Rau's critical writing and theatre work, as well as the influence of his former teachers Pierre Bourdieu and Tristian Todorov, not to mention his problematic fascination with such political figures and theorists as Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

In March 2020, Milo Rau – like so many others – ran into the brick wall of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rau and his team found themselves stranded in rural Brazil, where they had travelled just two weeks earlier for their forthcoming production, *Antigone im Amazonas*. By the time Rau and his team returned to Europe, the continent had gone into lockdown. Theatres around the world shut their doors for the remainder of the 2019/20 season. However, despite the shutdown, Rau and his team have remained active. Since the shutdown, NTGent curated a biweekly online debate series, *School of Resistance*; prepared a film version of the production *Familie*; and completely reworked the 2020/21 season, adapting to new safety rules and regulations. Alongside NTGent dramaturgs Kaatje De Geest and Carmen Hornbostel, Rau published the fifth edition of NTGent's Golden Book series, *Why Theatre?* (released September 29, 2020). During this same period, Rau, Hornbostel, and Rau's favourite Swiss actor, Ursina Lardi – both of whom were in Brazil for *Antigone* – rewrote, reworked, rehearsed, and staged the new play *Everywoman* at the Salzburger Festspiele (August 19, 2020); Rau and his longest-serving dramaturg, Eva-Maria Bertschy, prepared the next sitting of *Das Kongo Tribunal*, the Kolwezi Hearings, at Schauspielhaus Zürich (October 25, 2020); and all while they were

planning the continuation of *Antigone* rehearsals in Brazil and Europe. Since March 2020, Rau has participated in numerous online talks, published columns, and taken on the role of an influencer and international commentator for the European theatre's coronavirus crisis and the necessary changes and adaptations theatre will have to make. His engagement with the world around him, even while the theatre doors are half closed, remained (and remains) impressive.

For those familiar with Rau, this breakneck pace of production comes as no surprise. Since the founding of the IIPM in late 2007, Rau and his team have produced more than fifty productions, political actions, films, books, installations, and debate series. They are responsible for many critically and internationally successful productions. These productions have engaged with the more problematic aspects of the recent past while seeking to bridge the gap between politically engaged performance actions and mainstage repertoire productions.

*(Re)Collection Processes: Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder* seeks to provide an overview of Rau's work with the IIPM, but, because of its broad scope, lacks a series of in-depth analyses (similar to the *Hate Radio* dossier) that each of production requires. Future study must include and focus on in-depth production and reception analysis of the individual productions within each structural category. The reality of Rau's work is that we, as spectators, do not see everything. We only see the onstage reenactments, the filmed segments projected on the stage, and the camera's carefully curated gaze in the documentary films. We do not see what happens (or does not happen) between filmed interviews or carefully rehearsed staged reenactments. We do not see what is (or is not) said and done behind the camera or behind the curtain. Furthermore, we do not see what happens after the project concludes. All of this means that we only learn the results (positive and negative) of productions from Rau or his team – who, because of their involvement and investment, are inherently unreliable narrators.

One of the most significant difficulties posed by this study was the overwhelming breadth of Rau's work. The sheer number of critiques, reviews, and interpretations available in response to productions and the various avenues of critique available for Rau's work. Rau's work, moreover, is highly interdisciplinary: it is ethnographic and engages with a notably journalistic methodology, i.e., through many interviews, extensive research, and travel. In writing *(Re)Creation Processes*, I began with a broad view of both Rau's work and considered various analytical frameworks. Only as I moved forward, becoming increasingly comfortable with the work of the IIPM, did the analytical framework's scope, visible throughout this study, narrow. However, this methodology means that several potential and undoubtedly useful lines of inquiry have fallen to the wayside. For example, there is much to be said about the intermedial quality of Rau's productions (particularly in recollection and reclassification) and their digital dramaturgies, which I have only superficially touched upon here. Additionally, a sociological exploration of Rau's projects and productions is underutilized in this examination – although it is a line of inquiry doubtless closer to Rau's own intentions and methodologies than much of what is contained within the pages of this study. Perhaps most pressing when we consider what Rau's postcolonial projects proposit to do, further study must consider Rau's work – particularly his work on the South American and African continents – in a postcolonial context: to look at how productions like *Kongo Tribunal* engage in a colonial dialogue as well as a postcolonial one. Finally, there is further space to explore how language and multi-linguality function within and among IIPM/NTGent productions: processes of signification and re-signification in the repertoire productions.<sup>254</sup> It would have also been productive to engage more deeply with past and present collaborators about the work, which I only had the opportunity to do with a limited number for

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<sup>254</sup> A number of these lines of inquiry are explored in the forthcoming special edition of *Theater Magazine* (51:2) focused on Milo Rau, the IIPM, and NTGent.

this study. Despite such oversights, I hope this examination has succeeded in providing a broad overview – one of the first in English – of Rau’s work that categorizes the different styles and structures that it employs and highlights the role of the often-overlooked collaborators.

Rau’s work, while flawed, is undoubtedly important. Rau’s relative fame and extreme popularity have enabled him and his team to participate in significant political movements and major developments in political theatre. Rau has the financial and artistic freedom to travel, create, and screen mainstage political art that would be impossible for less well-known artists. Rau has been able to travel to Romania, Rwanda, Russia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Brazil – not to mention the various locations worldwide, including Montréal’s Festival TransAmériques, that IIPM productions have toured – to stage politically relevant productions and performative actions. If Rau’s particular brand of political theatre is to create real-world change – as Rau himself argues is the case – then it must be put to the test, critiqued, and questioned. It cannot be looked at as beyond reproach simply because it claims to generate change. Rau has said as much himself in “Try Again. Fail Again,” an article written while he was in quarantine in São Paulo, Brazil:

I dream of an adventurous, creative, solidarity-based critique that can withstand the contradictions. A critique that takes the time to delve into a case, without identifying with it. Which understands the “work of art” as an alibi, to reflect on the contexts it is dealing with, and thus perhaps finds better, more correct, more precise ways of describing (and maybe even transforming) reality. Much like Samuel Beckett’s catchphrase:

“Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

If Rau is serious about the intention and potential of his art, then it must be examined for both its positive contributions as well as its potentially harmful effects in the hopes of creating something

better (the very intention of reactment productions). If anything, that is the true place of this examination in the broader field of Performance Studies: it marks a critique that demands more of the theatre-maker whose work it addresses. My study may well fall short of its initial lofty aspirations, but if you are going to make a mistake, let's make the most confident and spectacular mistake possible.

One of the main challenges of writing about Milo Rau is that no one is neutral about his work. There is always a barrage of opinions about not only individual productions, but also about how Rau's work should be critically approached. It is, therefore, possible to analyse Rau's work from a variety of perspectives and frameworks. In this examination, I have only been able to engage with a limited number of issues and employ a limited number of frameworks. Looking back at my work from the past five years – my research, analyses, presentations, and reviews – I hope to have succeeded in drawing a comprehensive picture of Milo Rau and the IIPM's performative work, which invites further investigation into their successes and failures.

Reflecting on the past five years, I have not maintained a consistently critical eye or distance to Rau and his work. From December 2016 onwards, I have embraced Rau and the IIPM's work with energy and enthusiasm, often championing the work and its creator. However, Rau's work – as is the case with any study that extends over a significant period of time – is like a Monet painting such as *The Water Lilies – The Clouds*. From a distance the painting is beautiful and whole, but the closer you get, the it the harder it is to make out what the artist has created. You see each of the individual paint strokes that make up the whole that are lost in the distance. From a distance, Rau's work looks and feels very different than it does close up. It is not that up close the work loses its significance or its impact, but that it becomes something different: more complicated and less cohesive, but no less important in the picture that it attempts

to construct and the message it attempts to put forth. Yet we must remain aware of the individual brushstrokes, which are so often lost when we admire the piece from a distance, because they are what make the water lilies and they are what remains after the artist has left.

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## Appendix A: Hate Radio Dossier

### Introduction to Dossier:

In early November 2011, Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder previewed its second reenactment production, *Hate Radio*, at Kunsthhaus Bregenz in Bregenz, Austria. The production explored the hundred days of the 1994 Rwandan genocide through the lens of the infamous pro-genocide, Hutu power station Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTL). Rather than attempting to stage the horrors of the genocide directly, Rau and the IIPM return RTL to the airwaves in an installation style performance. *Hate Radio* is a reenactment of one hour of RTL programming, performed within a copy of the original RTL studio. The production explores the normalizing power of rhetorical violence, demanding – as the program for *Hate Radio* explains – that its “audience members be observers at the centre of the inner circle, at the centre of racist thought [by making] them the suffering witnesses of its destructive and inextinguishable consequences” (“*Hate Radio* Program” 2-3).

This dossier looks at the performance and text of *Hate Radio* from various perspectives. It first undertakes an in-depth production analysis, looking at the various elements within the production: its structure, its characters, the various elements at play within the performance such as music and stage design, and the socio-political situation surrounding the genocide and the real RTL as well as the production. The next section looks at the issue of reception. First, it presents my own blog review written in late February and early March of 2019, after I first saw a live production of *Hate Radio*. The inclusion of the blog review serves as both an introduction to a more general reception, as well as presenting another form of critical engagement with the performance. The next section is dedicated specifically to the reception of the production from 2011 to 2019, summarizing 47 reviews of 13 different performances of *Hate Radio*, written in four different languages. The fourth section returns to *Hate Radio*'s text, looking at where in the text Rau pulls text directly from the archive of RTL transcripts. I present a side-by-side comparison of the German and the French/Kinyarwanda text with Concordia University's online archive of RTL transcripts (available in English and French translation as well as the original broadcast's language (French and Kinyarwanda). The final section provides production notes: Important dates, cities where *Hate Radio* was performed, and the actor biographies.

### About the Translations:

Where possible in this analysis I have used a French-Kinyarwanda version of the script compiled in January 2012 and provided by Milo Rau. There are a few examples of text present only in the German version and not in the French and Kinyarwanda original. For example, the original version provided by Rau and the IIPM, does not include the prologue and epilogue. Therefore, all quotes taken from the prologue and epilogue are in German because they are taken from the German version text. All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own, taken from the German text as translated from French by Rau's dramaturgs Mascha Euchner-Martinez and Eva-Maria Bertschy.

## 7.1: Production Analysis<sup>255</sup>



Figure 55: “Inside the studio of *Hate Radio* (set design: Anton Lukas)”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert.

“C’est la Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines émettant de Kigali, il est maintenant 9 heures dans nos studios. Oui, c’est la RTLM qui vous parle, radio sympa (il rit), la voix du peuple (il rit), c’est la radio qui vous dit la vérité, toute la vérité et même des secrets. Hum, courage a tous nos auditeurs, courage” (“*Hate Radio*” 177).<sup>256</sup> This is the first line of Milo Rau’s *Hate Radio*: a reenactment of a live broadcast by the infamous pro-genocide, Hutu power<sup>257</sup> radio station Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) that fanned the flames of anti-

<sup>255</sup> A version of this analysis was written and read at the 2017 Performance Studies International (PSI) Conference in Hamburg, Germany as part of a panel on reenactment in *Hate Radio*.

<sup>256</sup> “You’re listening to Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines. We’re broadcasting [live] from Kigali. It’s 9 pm in our studio. Yes, you’re listening to Radio RTLM, Radio Sympa, the voice of the people, the radio that tells you the truth, the whole truth and even a few secrets. To all of you, the listeners: Courage!” Is this your translation?

<sup>257</sup> Hutu power is an official term that refers to the state ideology of Rwanda at the beginning of the nineties.

Tutsi sentiment during the Rwandan Genocide. In 2013, the Rwandan Governance Board<sup>258</sup> published a report about media regulations and trends in pre- and post-genocide Rwanda titled “Rwanda Media Barometer,” which summarizes the significance of radio and particularly the RTLM in 1994 Rwanda (and its continued legacy in present-day Rwanda):

Amongst all the media, radio was by far the most instrumental to the conflict and genocide in Rwanda. A large number of Rwandans were illiterate; radio was therefore an important tool for the government to disseminate messages to the population. Radio Rwanda, in addition to the usual news, was openly used by the government in 1992 to promote killings of Tutsis. When civilians were mobilized to hate and kill Tutsis, Radio Rwanda was also used in the so-called self-defense effort. Of all the media that fuelled hatred in the country, the Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) and Kangura Newspaper were doubtlessly the main driving forces. The RTLM was created in 1993 by so many ruling elites and other media think tanks such as Ferdinand Nahimana who was well acquainted with the power of the radio. This radio was created in a bid to become the voice of the ordinary citizens, which translated in its programming. Its programs centered on topics that underlined differences between Tutsis and Hutus; it therefore also called Hutus to be alert to Tutsi plots and possible attacks. (26)

The significance of this station was identified by numerous sources during the genocide itself: American journalist Philip Gourevitch – like Canadian General Romeo Dallaire who was stationed in Rwanda by the UN – identified the radio as a major player in the genocide. Gourevitch went so far as to state that taking out the radio would have been a good place to start

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<sup>258</sup> I am well aware of the critiques of the Kagame government with its initial autocratic tendencies.

in shutting down the genocide before it even started (Gourevitch).<sup>259</sup> *Hate Radio* takes place during the bloodiest moments of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, between the assassination of president Habyarimana on April 6, 1994 and the abandonment of RTLM's studio in Kigali on July 4, 1994. Although the timeframe and location of Rau's RTLM are doubtlessly specific, there is a paradoxically universal quality that resonates in the production's opening line and throughout the performance.

The movement from private to universal is a theme seen throughout Rau's oeuvre, and is



Figure 56: "Afazali Dewaele as DJ Joseph"; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

key to the idea of using local problems as an entrance into global issues implicit within the genre of global realism. *Hate Radio*'s upbeat opening uttered by DJ Joseph overtop of Congolese singer M'bilia Bel's 1990 hit "Ba Gerants Ya Mabala"<sup>260</sup> is, while clearly set within a very specific context, strangely generic.<sup>261</sup> It wouldn't be out of place on an American-style talk show radio that was popularized in the early nineties. It is the informal, open, international style the station borrowed from the Western media that gave RTLM a young, fast-paced and even funny atmosphere. It reflects a DJ radio culture marked by a

<sup>259</sup> In his first article for *The New Yorker* about the genocide, "After the Genocide," written on December 11, 1995, Gourevitch already identified the significant role RTLM and the radio encouraging the genocide, stating: "Dallaire's claim that vigorous intervention could have prevented hundreds of thousands of deaths is now widely held as obvious; a Western military source familiar with the region told me that a few thousand soldiers with tanks and big guns could have knocked out the radio, closed off Rwanda's main roads, and shut down the genocide in one or two days."

<sup>260</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:00:22-00:02:11; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>261</sup> M'bilia Bel is credited as the African continent's "first female transcontinental diva" and the "Queen of Congolese rumba" ("M'bilia Bel Wikipedia").

mixture of local alongside international music and news, as well as a highly charismatic team of opinionated, but likeable radio personalities who encouraged, particularly their young, listeners to call-in and take part in the broadcast (McCoy 85; Straus 615). It is Rau's careful reproduction of this atmosphere that provides his RTLM broadcast (and we must distinguish Rau's RTLM from its real-world equivalent) with a universal quality. This fast-paced, flexible, and fun dialogue that seems so out of place against the backdrop of mass murder, could just as easily be found in Germany, the United States, or Switzerland.

I will start by looking at the reception to *Hate Radio* in very specific context: the 2011 performance in Kigali – the home of RTLM and heart of the genocide. A central concern in a production such as *Hate Radio* is: How does the artist represent the unrepresentable? Show the unseeable? How do we, as a community, remember what we don't want to remember? Memory is a troubled topic, particularly in Rwanda. Every year, during the opening event for Rwanda's official weeks of remembrance in April, about two hundred people faint from grief (Dietrich 81). The Kagame government controls public memory in Rwanda and since the genocide there has been extremely limited discussion of ethnic identity allowed with a closely controlled curriculum and the terms Tutsi and Hutu over twenty-years later remain strictly forbidden in public discourse (Conway; Corniciuc). *Hate Radio* confronts these difficulties in coming to terms with the past by displaying a specific aspect of this



Figure 57: “*Hate Radio* Kigali Performance in Studio”; Photo Credit: Anton Lukas

memory to the public in a production that would normally be completely forbidden in Rwanda (Dietrich 82). Rwandan trauma expert Darius Gishoma (like the trauma theorists quoted in earlier chapters of this study) explains that the survivor experience is totally individual and solitary, while perpetrator experience is tied to a group experience: “What is the most unbearable about trauma,” states Gishoma, “is the loneliness that shrouds remembrance” (Gishoma qtd. in Dietrich 81). *Hate Radio* opens up this private experience of mourning and trauma to a wider, international audience – but perhaps its most significant offering is how it opened up this memory space within Kigali and Rwanda itself.

The Kigali performance took place in the actual studio of the former RTLM, which has since become a jewelry store. The audience gathered on the street below and watched the broadcast through the large windows, listening to the broadcast on small, handheld radios given out for the performance.<sup>262</sup> Rau states the broadcast was often followed by an hour of silence while many spectators cried (“Wahrheit” 233). Similarly, both Dietrich and Nancy Nkusi (who portrayed Valérie Bemeriki in the original run of *Hate Radio*) remember how during the first audience talkback in Kigali there was 15 minutes of silence before people started speaking, because no one – actors and spectators alike – knew what to say or do, the trauma was all too real (“Gros plan”). Despite the difficulty of remembering, the production did serve at least a small part in (re)opening a public discourse about remembering, and even opened up a discussion about turning the old studio in Kigali into a museum or memorial (Corniciuc).

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<sup>262</sup> All performances used these handheld radios in the theatre space and broadcast it roughly 500 meters outside the theatre on a set radio channel.

One of the most notable responses from the Kigali audience (and in reviews ever since then) is: “That was exactly how it was!” (“Das ist der Grund” 22). This exactness, this *genau so*, that Rau describes in his 2007 manifesto, “Was ist Unst?”, translates into the underlying reality that infuse the dramaturgy of his reenactments. It looks not only at the historical event – i.e., the Rwandan genocide – but at its continued reverberation into the present. This process is firmly located within memory. It does not focus on the *actual* RTLM, but on a *true* or *genuine* RTLM: i.e., a sense of how it felt to be there at the original moment of happening (“Wahrheit” 225). The intent and atmosphere created by the station, or the station boiled down to its essence. RTLM is not what Rau would refer to as a “dead image,” but an image that is still very much alive, tangible to the present moment (“Situationismus” 45).



Figure 58: “Hate Radio Kigali Performance”; Photo Credit: Anton Lukas

This live quality is perhaps most visible in Anton Lukas’s design for the show, a large glass box sits centerstage between the audience, which is split into two parts with spectators on both sides of the box (an alley seating arrangement). This box contains an exact reproduction of the RTLM studio – what some reviewers refer to as a terrarium – exactly as former moderator Valérie Bemeriki, who Rau interviewed in prison and who drew a sketch of the studio for him, remembers it. The end result is not merely a realistic radio station, but a self-contained memory space. The closed studio both provides a distance for the audience, while revealing an uncanny closeness. This closeness is highlighted by the use of handheld radios and headphones spectators use to access the broadcast through the same medium as the *genocidaires* and many of their victims. The outward, superficial image of the radio station is *picture perfect* and, therefore, wholly unspectacular, which is perhaps the design’s greatest triumph. As Rau was warned early in his creation process, “nothing is more boring than looking into a radio station” (“Hundert Abende” 240). It must be noted that the Kigali performance took place at the location of the original studio, visible to the public through a second story window. The audience – also

listening on handheld radios given to them before the performance – gathered on the street below to listen and watch the broadcast (fig. 55, 57, 58). This audience – particularly when we consider the firsthand



Figure 59: “Hate Radio stage design,” HAU Berlin (15.5.2012); Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert.

experience many of the spectators had with the genocide – therefore, had a very different experience in watching and experiencing the production than their European counterparts.

When we look at the actual structure of *Hate Radio*, it lacks an Aristotelian structure. It has no driving action. *Hate Radio* is a broadcast that takes place in real time: where absolutely banal and everyday elements like international news, sports, weather, pop music from around the world is juxtaposed against the rhetorical backdrop of atrocities and mass murder. This is the horror of the production. The image is in itself normal, with rhetoric moving between normal and horrific as the suggestion and even encouragement of violence and murder becomes mixed with banal DJ banter at a breakneck pace: Lighthearted banter is intermingled with racial slurs and calls to murder, which themselves take on a light, cheery air. The audience is left on the outside of a radio station, looking in and watching the mundane actions of the broadcasters as they engage in monologues, political discussions, joke, drink, and smoke. During musical interludes, the audience sees the three moderators planning their next section, but again there is no dramatic action in the classic Aristotelian sense: no rising or falling action, simply a radio show happening in real time. What we see in *Hate Radio* is of course not actually an RTLM broadcast pulled directly from the months of archives, it is Rau's version of a RTLM broadcast. What the spectator hears and sees is not a copy of a pre-existing radio transcript, although there are certainly verbatim elements within the production, but it is a completely new broadcast ("Wahrheit" 229). RTLM is once again live and broadcasting. *Hate Radio* is a *Verdichtung* of the former station, a compressed and condensed version of RTLM. The collage technique the IIPM employs hurtles the RTLM, in all its violent intensity and extremism, into the present. However, it also means Rau's RTLM – in reality – bears relatively little resemblance to the original. Rau himself identifies this distance, as he explains:

To listeners today, the ‘real’ RTLM would be a far cry from a popular youth radio station. An historical reconstruction would have conveyed nothing of the nihilistic violence with which this broadcaster crashed into Rwandan society in 1994. [...] In contrast, the ‘true’ presenters at RTLM, perhaps with the exception of Kantano Habimana, were very serious journalists, professional and focused. To our sensibilities today, they were pedantic, stuffy employees of the genocide. (“*Hate Radio Program*” 5-6)

In *Hate Radio*, Rau and his team translate the effect that RTLM had on Rwanda in the early nineties into its would-be experience in the present (What would it look like today? How would it feel in the present?). This is not to suggest that the station wasn’t extreme, because it certainly was. *Hate Radio* often directly quotes RTLM broadcasts, using many of the station’s most infamous – and most memorable – moments.



Figure 60: “*Hate Radio Kigali Performance audience view of performance*”; Photo Credit: Anton Lukas

The broadcast is hate-filled, but still light and fast-paced constructed from a collection of transcripts and interviews, creating a unique atmosphere within the performance space.

Atmosphere is obtained through the meeting and intermingling of concrete details (such as the reconstructed studio itself) and rhetorical gestures (“*Realm of the Real*” 125). The oversaturation of information and experience means that Rau’s RTLM at the moment of performance feels realer (closer and more direct) than the reality of the actual station. “*Realism*,” as Rau’s favourite

quote – which has since been written into Rau’s “Ghent Manifesto” – says, “doesn’t mean that something will be represented as it actually is. Realism means that the representation itself becomes real” (Rau “Lecture 3” Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken).

Rau, his co-creators, and dramaturgs’ process for writing *Hate Radio* consisted of a year and a half of research and six months of rehearsing and rewriting while working with his cast of Tutsi survivors. During this research and writing, Rau and his team travelled to Rwanda where they interviewed around fifty survivors, witnesses, perpetrators, and former RTLM journalists with each interview lasting typically between five and six hours (“Wahrheit” 229). Collage is a central technique in Rau’s creation process. *Hate Radio*’s video prologue and epilogue are the cumulative result of interviews with survivors. Rau wrote these opening and closing monologues and while they do not consist of a single account, they serve to provide an overview of the collective horrors of the interviewees, an overarching memory of the genocide from the perspective of those who were supposed to be eliminated – documented in video form. Many of the actors who perform in the videos are themselves survivors of the genocide or have familial connections with the genocide. The prologue tells us essentially everything that



Figure 61: “*Hate Radio* moderators,” (L to R) Valérie Bemeriki (Nkusi), Kantano Habimana (Ntarindwa), and Georges Ruggiu (Foucault); Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

eventually happens in the reenacted broadcast in the prologue. We learn the station played the best music from across the world,<sup>263</sup> its weaponization of history,<sup>264</sup> its young callers,<sup>265</sup> and how its moderators would smoke, drink, and joke on the air but also encourage extreme violence<sup>266</sup> and on air denunciations of Tutsi and moderate Hutus<sup>267</sup> – of which we also hear the direct result in two survivor testimonies.<sup>268</sup>

The main act (the hour broadcast) of *Hate Radio* is a collection of verbatim material that represent a real, tangible historical moment. It represents, to quote Rau, “something that really



Figure 62: “Diogène Ntarindwa as Kantano Habimana”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

took place, in an actual room and in real time – and that’s what is reconstructible until the smallest detail, like a clockwork made out of gestures, tables, words, sounds, light and space” (“Realm of the Real” 125). In the production, Rau and his team fill in the historical blanks,

looking at the inescapably ineffable quality of memory as these historical images are shaped and

<sup>263</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:05:54-00:06:42; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>264</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:09:45-00:10:28; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>265</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:27:50-00:00:28:10; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>266</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:09:18-00:09:48; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>267</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:15:28-16:20; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>268</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:13:07-00:26:30; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

reshaped to better fit a collective imagery – or, in the case of Rwanda, pushed into the background.

*Hate Radio* consists of a mixture of verbatim and created text. Following his condensing strategy, Rau places three moderators and one DJ on the stage. The characters of Georges Ruggiu, Valérie Bemeriki, and Kantano Habimana, while based on their real-world counterparts, are a composite of the station's ten broadcasters. Rau selects the two most frequent and popular broadcasters – Kantano and Bemeriki – and the station's only white broadcaster – the Italian-Belgian Ruggiu, who served as an ideologue for the station. For the real historical RTLM, Ruggiu, despite broadcasting only in French, was an important figure, present in 7.97% of all RTLM broadcasts, making him the fifth most popular broadcaster (Kimani 117).<sup>269</sup> For the genocidaires on the other end of the broadcast, Ruggiu was a white European who not only supported the genocide but used European sources to justify it. For these listeners, Ruggiu's presence implicated the West, using this one European to indicate that Europe supported the extermination of the Tutsi or at least lending credence to the claims made on air (Vokes 822). Looking at Rau's script side-by-side with RTLM transcripts reveals examples of this compositing and redistribution of text among the broadcasters, there are sixteen examples in *Hate Radio*'s script taken word for word from actual station transcripts accessible through the archives of Montreal's Concordia University. For example, Ruggiu's news report towards the end of the reenactment is an edited version of RTLM moderator Ananie Nkurunziza's international news report from July 3, 1994, when a DC9 plane did indeed crash in North Carolina killing eighteen; when 450,000 people in Yemen were left without drinking water

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<sup>269</sup> In Mary Kimani's analysis of RTLM broadcasts, she documents that 89% of all broadcasts were introduced by Habimana (33.51%), Bemeriki (16.88%), Gahigi (14.72%), Nkurunziza (10.65%), Ruggiu (7.97%), or Hitimana (5.02%) (Kimani 117).

during a drought, and Switzerland did indeed lose a football game to Spain 3 to 0 at the World Cup.<sup>270</sup>

Likewise, the callers are also taken from real interactions. Caller Jean-Pierre Kajuga<sup>271</sup> is taken from an in-studio interview on June 10, 1994 between Bemeriki and Kajuga, a young man travelling to the city to fight against the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). However, Rau expands the verbatim text and includes Kantano in the interaction. The dialogue with eleven-year-old caller Honeste Nzizorera<sup>272</sup> is taken from Kantano's on-air monologue from April 22, 1994, where Kantano recalls talking to a young boy who told him where a group of Tutsis were hiding in his neighborhood. The text is again expanded to create banter among the hosts as well as establishing the impact the station had on its younger audience. The only figure in the reenactment that is created by Rau without a real-world



Figure 63: “Nancy Nkusi as Valérie Bemeriki”;  
Photo Credit: IIPM & Daniel Seiffert

counterpart is DJ Joseph, as the DJs at the RTLM worked behind the scenes and did not have a microphone. Rau gives the character an active role akin to the DJ in today's radio culture. It is also not uncommon to find instances where Rau redistributes text to better fit into a dialogue structure – not surprising as, according to Mary Kimani's “RTLM: the Medium that Became a Tool for Mass Murder,” RTLM broadcasts consisted of about 66% monologues with only 2%

<sup>270</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:57:57-01:00:43;  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>271</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:13:24-00:15:14;  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>272</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:29:25-00:32:10;  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

dialogue (Kimani 117). The more dialogic structure Rau integrates into *Hate Radio* creates a familiar American Talkshow feeling – an amusing conversation between listener and moderator – further highlighted by the variety of music which varies from Reel 2 Reel (“I Like to Move It”)<sup>273</sup> and Nirvana (“Rape Me”)<sup>274</sup> from the United States to the Rwandan artist Simon Bikindi’s anti-Tutsi song “I hate the Hutus.”<sup>275</sup>

Strangely, in the transition from prologue to reenactment broadcast, we hear a section of Anton Bruckner’s *Symphony No. 7*, a composer who was, interestingly enough, (posthumously) a favourite of Hitler.

*Symphony No. 7* was, according to a report by the British newspaper *Daily Mail* on May 2,

1945, played by the Großdeutscher Rundfunk on May 1, 1945 upon the announcement of the news of Hitler’s death (“Wagnerian Concert of Death”). In the radio play version of *Hate Radio*, Rau also uses *Symphony No. 7* as the classical music<sup>276</sup> preceding the announcement of president Juvénal Habyarimana’s death on June 7. It is a telling parallel between two genocides: one concludes with the broadcast of *Symphony No. 7*, while the other starts with it.



Figure 64: “Sébastien Foucault as Georges Ruggiu”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

<sup>273</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:46:22-00:00:48:57:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>274</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:26:03-00:28:45;

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>275</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:08:13-00:13:14;

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>276</sup> In the transcript from the joint broadcast with RTL and Radio Rwanda on June 7 on states *musique classique*, as I am unable to find out exactly what piece of classical music was played. It could certainly have been Bruckner’s *Symphony No. 7*, but it seems too thematically fitting. *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:12:55-00:14:15; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

RTLM became the “voice of the Genocide,” or – as “Rwanda Media Barometer” explains – “the sole source of authority for interpreting meaning” and a “conversation among *Rwandans* who knew each other well,” by employing a pre-existing vocabulary rooted in intergroup conflict to historicize an ethnic divide between Hutu and Tutsi: label the Tutsi as outsiders, dehumanize the Tutsi and encourage violence against them. Paradoxically, the moderators are for democracy, opposed to colonialism, pro-black power, smoke pot, drink beer, Bemeriki even wears a Nelson Mandela t-shirt, and, without a trace of irony, in the same breath Bemeriki and Kantano condemn Hitler and call for the systematic elimination of all Tutsis and moderate Hutus (“Wahrheit” 221; Dietrich 83). Nevertheless, they see themselves as freedom fighters and the Tutsis as would-be Nazis. The journalists at RTLM were, following the genocide, brought up on charges of



Figure 65: “Dorcy Rugumba as Kantano Habimana” (original actor in role) at the Kigali performance of *Hate Radio*; Photo Credit: Anton Lukas

genocide and crimes against humanity, the first of their kind since the Nuremburg trials (Dietrich 85).

Rau includes the specific vocabulary of the RTLM in *Hate Radio*, specifically the term *Inyenzi*, which translates as “cockroach” and was used by Hutu extremists to describe Tutsis. Thus, the Tutsi – much like the Jews under National Socialism – are reduced to less than human: A pest that needed to be exterminated. *Inyenzi* is used twenty-four times within the hour broadcast. Likewise, the term *inkotanyi* – which can be loosely translated as a nickname for RPF fighters

or even more generally Tutsis – is employed a staggering twenty-seven times throughout the production (“*Hate Radio*”; Li 95; Kimani 119). Curiously, another official term *ibyitso*, which translates to “accomplice” and was used by the government to refer to moderate Hutu or those who opposed the Hutu power movement, is only used twice in *Hate Radio*. These terms originated from a vocabulary initially only used privately by the Rwandan government to refer to members of the RPF, Tutsis, and moderate Hutus well before the genocide and the assassination of president Habyarimana. Later, these terms entered the vernacular and, normalized by active mediums like RTLM, *inyenzi* became a coded synonym for Tutsi and for ‘persons to be killed’ (Somerville 206; Collines 173). Terms like “work” (which we also hear in Rau’s broadcast) or “clearing the bush” – both of which are code for state-sanctioned killings – date back to the end of Belgian colonial rule in the region in the late fifties and the on and off massacres of the Tutsi (Gourevitch). *Hate Radio* presents what dramaturge Jens Dietrich calls “the perfidious mechanisms of the propaganda machine,” illustrating how language played an important role in normalizing violence (88-89). The language of the actual RTLM is symptomatic of what had been boiling under the surface of Rwandan society for years. This stark linguistic and psychological divide between Tutsi and Hutu aggravated by the German colonial administration, which privileged the pre-existing Tutsi-elite, building on English explorer Hanning Speke’s Hamitic hypothesis, which supposed the Tutsi were descendants of Ham and were, therefore, “more European and superior to the Hutus and Twa” (Kellow & Steeves 113).<sup>277</sup> These divisions

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<sup>277</sup> Specifically, Speke described the Tutsis as the descendants of Ethiopians (i.e., taller and fairer skinned) and, therefore, more European (and therefore superior) to the Hutus and the Twa. As colonizers increasingly accepted this analysis and the Tutsis were, in comparison to the Hutus and Twa, given more power. However, the concrete nature of the Tutsi-Hutu division is controversial with some historians identifying an ethnic division between the two, while others argue this distinction is based on social status and economic activities (Kellow & Steeves 113).

where then carried forward by the Belgian colonial administration<sup>278</sup> (1916<sup>279</sup>-1962), which emphasized ethnicity by allying itself with the Tutsi elite and introducing identity cards that clearly identified whether the card holder was Tutsi or Hutu. The arrival of Europeans in the region and the subsequent colonialization distorted and reinforced the existing divides between the local people, transforming once flexible customs into rigid convention (Kellow & Steeves 113). By the time RTLM hit the airways, racialized language was deeply entrenched within the Rwandese society, which was then compiled with a growing fear of a Tutsi power grab (pushed over the edge by the death of Habyarimana on April 6). As Mary Kimani, a journalist and an expert on the genocide, in her article about the role of the media in the



Figure 66: “Kantano recovers from a monologue in *Hate Radio*”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

genocide, “RTLM: The Medium that Became a Tool for Mass Murder,” explains: “It is important to remember that RTLM broadcasts were *not* responsible for introducing the language and ideology of hatred into the Rwandan community. Such language and the ideology of ethnic conflict and polarization already existed in Rwanda in the form of a powerful social construct involving ethnic identity” (110). Stations and media outlets like RTLM employed this language

<sup>278</sup> Rwanda had been part of German East Africa since 1898, but the territory was given to Belgium after the First World War.

<sup>279</sup> There are three dates attributed to the Belgian colonization of Rwanda, 1916 (the date used here) marks when the Belgian Congolese army invades Rwanda while Germany busy in Europe with WWI; the second date is 1918, when Germany (and Austria-Hungary) officially lost the war; and the final, most official date, is 1922, when the League of Nations officially gave Rwanda to Belgian as part of the spoils of war.

to heighten an underlying sense of fear, danger and urgency while pushing for immediate action by its listeners (112).

There is an absolute oversaturation of language in *Hate Radio*. Like its real counterpart, Rau's RTL M broadcasts in both the colonial French as well as the local language of Kinyarwanda, switching between the two languages depending on who is speaking. Kantano speaks only Kinyarwanda and Ruggiu only French, while both DJ Joseph and Bermeriki use both. The prologue reveals: "RTL M was all tempo, all rhythm," and it is easy even as a spectator



Figure 67: "Kantano (Ntarindwa) performs," *Hate Radio*; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

to get caught up ("*Hate Radio*" 167).<sup>280</sup> As Dietrich explains, while watching the reenactment the audience can't help but laugh, only to realize in horror the consequences of this laughter. Even at the Kigali production, younger post-genocide Rwandans laughed at moderators' jokes and danced to some of the music played during the evening ("*Wahrheit*" 233). Although there is no plot within the production, there is certainly build. The moderators work themselves into a fury, Bermeriki delivers a passionate monologue and collapses back into her seat, exhausted.<sup>281</sup> Kantano works himself to his feet, grabs the microphone, joyfully dances to "I

Like To Move It,"<sup>282</sup> and removes his coat to reveal a concealed handgun under his sky blue suit

<sup>280</sup> *Hate Radio: Zeitzeugen*: 00:08:20-00:08:34; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBa1FqamJGVUpDMWc/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>281</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:21:58-00:24:34; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>282</sup> Rugumba does not dance in his performance, this moment occurs specifically in Ntarindwa's performance as Kantano.

jacket;<sup>283</sup> and Ruggiu sings along, banging his head to Nirvana’s “Rape Me” occasionally looking out into the audience.<sup>284</sup>

One of the production’s successes is its production of a sense of uncanny closeness. Nothing in the studio specifically ties it to Rwanda, but perhaps what is most striking is that this could be anywhere. Rau is careful not to use African clichés in either design or text. Thus, the audience is confronted with a paradoxical doubled reality, a “shocking and distant [feeling of] being-there” (“Realm of the Real” 125). The final line of the video epilogue says: “If there has been a genocide, then there will be many more” (“*Hate Radio*” 216). RTLM, a central mechanism of the genocide, cannot be externalized: pushed out of memory or expelled to the peripheries by situating it as an African (non-Western) problem, because it is not (216). With the removal or replacement of about five or six lines, Rau states, this broadcast could easily take place anywhere in the world (“Art Talks” Basel 30.03.2017). Genocide is unfortunately understood on a global level. *Hate Radio* explores genocide on a dialectic, medial level – how the media serves as a framing and normalizing device for violence.

*Hate Radio*’s uncanniness is found in its transposition of the unimaginable into the familiar (“Wahrheit” 228). Rau explains the production is just as much about his own youth and masculinity in the early nineties as it is about Rwanda. Milo Rau was seventeen in 1994, part of the

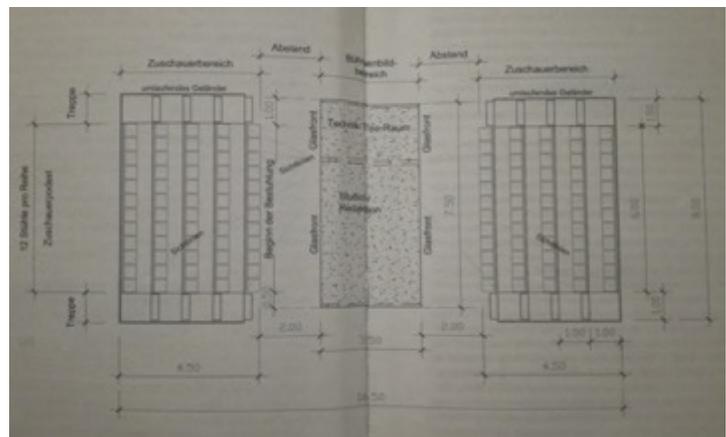


Figure 68: “Anton Lukas’s stage design and metrics for *Hate Radio*” (“Wenn aus Wasser” 10-11)

<sup>283</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:46:22-00:00:48:57; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>284</sup> *Hate Radio HAU*: 00:26:03-00:28:45; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B749oxjQBIIBV2Z3WnM3WIZzcEE/view?usp=sharing>.

same age group as about ninety percent of the Rwandan perpetrators (“So ist der Mensch” 23). This generation of young Rwandans listened to similar music as Rau did in Switzerland, as many of us did in our respective homelands. This extension of the specific historical moment onto a broader world stage has a revelatory function as the division between perpetrator and spectator is reduced. However, this should not be mistaken for being apologetic. *Hate Radio* neither forgives nor excuses either RTLM’s broadcasters or the young genocidaires on the other side of the broadcast. Instead, it presents the building blocks of genocide: how language is used to normalize and encourage violence.

## 7.2: Blog Review<sup>285</sup>

### *“It’s 9:00 Kigali” – “Hate Radio” and the Appeal of Experience*

What is the effect of watching a live radio broadcast? What about a broadcast from Rwanda during the hottest day of the Genocide? A response to Milo Rau’s much celebrated 2011 production *Hate Radio*.



Figure 69: “Afazali Dewaele as DJ Joseph in Studio”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

I have an interesting relationship with Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder’s 2011 production *Hate Radio*. I’ve given conference presentations and lectures about *Hate Radio*, read the text, watched the film version of the production, broken down the script, and read transcripts from the International Criminal Court of Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines’s broadcasts to find specific passages quoted directly in the production. I’ve read the production dossier, performance reviews, and articles about the production. I’ve researched the genocide, the role of the media, and the radio station.

I know *Hate Radio* backward and forwards. I theoretically understand what it does and how it does it. But I’d never seen *Hate Radio* live. But this week, as part of Ghent’s “Same Same But Different Festival” (a festival organized by CAMPO, Vooruit, NTGent, and Black Speaks Back and focused around the theme of decolonialism in Belgian theatre), *Hate Radio* returned to the stage.

For those who don’t know the production: *Hate Radio* examines the 1994 Rwandan Genocide through the lens of the pro-genocide radio station Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille



Figure 70: “Image from in the studio”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

<sup>285</sup> This review is an edited version of what was first published on March 2, 2019 as part of my blog [lostdramaturgininternational.wordpress.com](http://lostdramaturgininternational.wordpress.com). For obvious reason this section will restate facts and observations from the production analysis.

Collines (RTL)M). The production is what Rau calls a reenactment. It returns the station’s three most infamous hosts – Kantano Habimana (played by Diogène Ntarindwa), Valérie Bemeriki (Bwanga Pilipili), and the Italian-Belgian (and only white) moderator Georges Riggiu (Sébastien Foucault) – and DJ Joseph Rudatsikira<sup>286</sup> (Afazli Dewaele) to the airwaves for a single broadcast. The actors – the Rwandan actors in the production are survivors and exiles of the genocide – sit together in a sixteen-meter square glass box: a replica of RTL’s Kigali studio based on sketches by Valérie Bemeriki. The actors wear headphones, they speak into microphones, scribble down notes, take calls, laugh, make jokes, and play music. It has all the makings of a normal – at times boring<sup>287</sup> – radio show, the sort of talk radio that could be heard anywhere with the token cynicism, sarcasm, and aggression of nineties’ pop culture. You are literally watching a live broadcast of a radio show, where – outside of the, at times, non-linear conversation – absolutely nothing happens.

However, you are immediately struck by the use of language. This was a radio station operating in the hottest days of the genocide. One that supported the mass killing and extreme violence, while also aiding and abetting<sup>288</sup> in the murder of between 800,000 and 1,000,000 people. It goes without saying that there is something fundamentally different in the experience of watching and reading a play or even watching a recording or a live performance. That being said: After spending three years reading and writing about *Hate Radio*, I went into the performance on Tuesday thinking that I more or less understood it and knew what to expect.

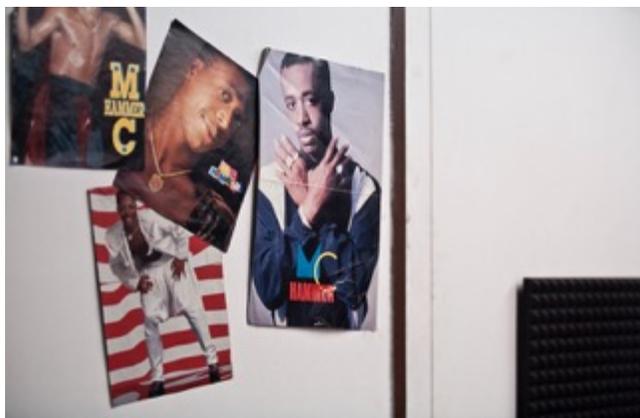


Figure 71: “Hate Radio, in-studio posters”;  
Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

*Hate Radio* opens and closes with a series of pre-taped monologues projected onto the sides of the on-stage studio. These composite monologues (monologues composed from various sources, largely from interviews conducted by Rau and his team while researching and rehearsing the production) discuss the days before the genocide, the genocide, and its aftermath. These monologues describe the ruthlessness of the genocide – the inexplicable nature of the atrocities committed between April 7 and July 15, 1994 – and the role played by RTL. They describe the coolness of the station – moderators who swore (which was unheard of in the extremely Catholic nation), spoke easily and spontaneously, and played the best music. However, they also describe how moderators encouraged violence and dehumanized the Tutsis. The monologues set the scene for the atmosphere constructed by the live broadcast<sup>289</sup> that is the core reenactment of *Hate Radio*.

<sup>286</sup> The only fictional character (i.e., completely created by Rau) on the stage.

<sup>287</sup> Rau has stated that “There is nothing more boring than watching a radio broadcast,” and he isn’t necessarily wrong. There is no action so to speak.

<sup>288</sup> The station reported to their listeners where Tutsis and moderate Hutus were hiding or living on air.

<sup>289</sup> During the duration of *Hate Radio*, the show really is broadcast on a radio station for about 150 meters outside the theatre.

The blinds of the studio slowly rise and the lights in the studio flick on, revealing the three moderators and a soldier frozen in place. DJ Joseph sits alone in his booth, poised in front of a soundboard, tape player and phone. The booth is much grimmer than visible in the film. There are small cracks in the wall, visible wires, a mess of dusty cables, a flashing neon Virgin Mary statue, a crudely drawn map of Rwanda on a whiteboard in the studio with notes stuck to it, and bottles of beer and coffee on a trolley in the corner. There is nothing spectacular about the studio, yet it is undeniably a nineties-era studio: Boxes of old cassette tapes, a Simon Bikindi tape leans against the glass wall on one side of the booth, Snoop Dogg and Tupac posters hang on the wall.

*Hate Radio* live is an experience. You listen to the production through a small handheld radio, literally plugged into the performance you are watching. It is strangely immersive. Realistically, you don't really need the headphones or radio to hear the actors; while somewhat muffled by the glass box, if you take off your headphones, the actors are still audible. Outside the headphones, the theatre is filled with a soundscape of rain (April in Kigali is the rainiest month) and crickets, as if you were standing outside in Rwanda.



Figure 72: "My radio for the evening";  
Photo Credit: Lily Climenhaga

*Hate Radio* is a reenactment, but not a one-to-one recreation of the real RTLM. It is an entirely new broadcast, not the performance of a (single) existing transcript. Rau pulls parts of monologues and conversations verbatim from existing transcripts.<sup>290</sup> Reenactment, in Rau's work, recreates atmosphere: i.e., How the radio station is remembered by those who heard it or listened to it rather than actual historical fact. Instead of a copy, Rau (re)creates a popular radio station in line with what this station would look like in today's world. The production illustrates in real time, on an absolutely pragmatic and rhetorical level, how racism functions. To quote the program for *Hate Radio*, it shows just how easily people can be "talked out of" their humanity.

*Hate Radio* is extremely successful in showing racism and implicating its audience in it.

Even if you know the play and what it is trying to do...

Even if you understand the implication of the script in terms of real human life...

Even if you know about the Rwandan Genocide and the role the media played in it...

it is almost impossible not to be carried away.

The music is undeniably catchy and when songs like Nirvana's "Rape Me," Reel to Reel's "I Like to Move It," and Joe Dassin's "Le Dernier Slow" switches from the radio to the theatre's

<sup>290</sup> During my research on *Hate Radio* I found exact excerpts from broadcasts on April 22, May 28, May 29, June 10, June 20, July 2, and July 3 while digging through old transcripts from the station (I was limited to those transcripts translated into English).

central sound system and fills the theatre, it is hard not to tap your foot or bob to the music. It is difficult not to forget – just for a second – what you are watching. This is especially true when Ntarindwa’s Kantano Habimana and Foucault’s Georges Ruggiu are carried away by the music: When they dance along, pump their fists in the air, grab the microphones dramatically sing along, or sing (often badly) with the music. In these moments, you feel a palpable shift, a short-lived wave of relief that is then completely undone when the music ends and the talk returns to extermination, rape, and cockroaches [*Inyenzi*] (the moderators’ term for the Tutsi, which is used 24 times throughout the entire production).<sup>291</sup>



Figure 73: “Diogène Ntarindwa as Kantano Habimana”;  
Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

Alex Jones’s red-faced racist monologues in the States really aren’t that far at times from those constructed by Rau for the moderators, and the pseudo-intellectualism reeks of the rhetoric used by individuals like Jordan Peterson. Lies and mistruths are spoken with absolute confidence and claims to authority (the use of things that sound like facts): It is a pseudo-intellectualism that uses buzzwords as a way to justify both hatred and acts of violence. You can’t help but almost understand how people buy into this sort of propaganda. Rau’s moderators speak with such fervor – grabbing desperately at their microphones, nearly talking over each other, giving their passionate monologues and then dramatically pushing away from the table with fists curled tightly with anger – they believe so strongly in what they are saying that it sounds like it should make sense, like it’s supposed to make sense.

The moderators hate Hitler and the Nazis but in the same breath encourage their listeners to murder every Tutsi or moderate Hutu they meet. Valérie Bemeriki is wearing a free Mandela t-shirt and Georges Ruggiu (the only white moderator at RTL) – amidst his own calls for violence – uses familiar post-colonial rhetoric and compares perpetrators to French freedom fighters during WWII.

<sup>291</sup> I have used this statistic in many if not all of my talks about *Hate Radio*, but the truth is that when you hear this term so often in the performance it is actually absolutely overwhelming. It truly feels like you never go for more than 2 minutes without hearing at least one of the moderators use the word *Inyenzi*.

The performance creates a wall of language that crashes against you. You don’t even have time to process what’s been said before the moderators are already onto the next topic, the next sentence, the next line of their pseudo-intellectual logic. The moderators’ hysteric and almost absurdly passionate monologues that aren’t that different from a specific branch of contemporary political commentators (a somewhat generous term here). It’s the sort of racially charged discourse you hear from outlets like Breitbart, Fox, Rebel Media.

The rants are long, passionate, at times intriguing, at times boring (they do ramble on), and often downright scary.



Figure 74: "Inside the Studio";  
Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

Yet, these were the right words and the right theories used at the right historical moment to play a pivotal role in something unspeakable.

I must admit, this familiarity shook me.

It is uncanny.

Although we don't see any of the images of the Genocide we know from news reports and history books – killing fields, church massacres, machetes, mass graves, and piles of bones – the production is oversaturated in not just memories of the genocide itself but the knowledge that only comes with the retrospective gaze of temporal distance. We can't help but remember the violence and failures that contributed to the genocide: the tensions fanned during the colonial period, the UN's failures to prevent the genocide, the Hutus who flooded to the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the Rwandan Genocide leading to yet another genocide in the DRC.

We, as spectators, cannot help but remember all the horrors of those images we don't see in performance...

The overarching aesthetic of *Hate Radio* can be summarized by the term oversaturation. It is performed in French and Kinyarwanda with English subtitles, and the broadcast schedule is full of international news, history quizzes, incoming calls, drawn-out discussions of political ideology with almost no pauses. The onstage discussion of violence becomes so trivial and nonchalant. The murder of an entire group of people becomes a joke for the moderators and

listeners to laugh about. It's an echo chamber effect: You're plugged in and it surrounds you. It's nihilistic, cynical, and sarcastic and you can't escape it. This overwhelming fullness is something you can really only understand when you are sitting there, not something you can find in the text or recording.

It's strange, scary, and just too familiar.

The production's concluding statement – “When there's been one genocide then there will be many more” – stays with you because it's all too close for comfort, too recognizable. There is no longer the safety of historical or geographical distance: it is directly and undeniably in front of you.

And it's something I just can't quite shake because it becomes a very real experience.

It was just like that...

It is just like that...

And it will always repeat itself in this way.



Figure 75: “Closing of *Hate Radio*’s reenactment”; Photo Credit: IIPM and Daniel Seiffert

### 7.3: Reception

0	Review Title Author Publication Date (DD.MM.YYYY)	City Country (Performance) Language	Positive Negative Neutral	Review Summary	Significant Quote
1	“Milo Rau holt Verbrechen auf die Bühne” Stefan Keim <i>Die Welt Online</i> 05.05.2012	Cologne Germany (Berlin TT) German	Positive	A summation of the Rwandan Genocide, <i>Hate Radio</i> , as well as a description of the reenactment performance style and Rau’s obsessive interest in performing violence in his political theatre. <i>Hate Radio</i> is described as an effective and moving experience for the audience, and is “gewaltiger Publikumserfolg,” or tremendous success.	“Bei Milo Rau ist das Reenactment ein Mittel zur Erkenntnis. Er arbeitet sich in Protokolle und Akten hinein, spricht mit Beteiligten und entwickelt daraus seine Texte und Figuren. Diese Form des Theaters hat viel mit Journalismus zu tun, aber auch mit Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft wie der oral history, dem Sammeln von persönlichen Erlebnisberichten.” [“For Milo Rau, reenactment is a medium of experience. He works with records and files, speaks with those involved and from this research creates his text and characters. This form of theatre has a lot to do with journalism, but also with methods from history like oral history and the collection of personal accounts.”]
2	“Popsongs und Rassenwahn” Simone Schlindwein <i>taz.de</i> 1.12.2011	Berlin Germany (Kigali, Rwanda) German	Positive	Description of the performance in Kigali, Rwanda, that took place in the original studio location of RTLM with the audience listening from the street below. Draws heavily on the reaction of Schlindwein’s Rwandan companion Nadja Kagamba. Highlights how <i>Hate Radio</i> ’s dramaturgy provokes an uncertainty that shakes loose a sense of catharsis.	“Dies ist mit dem Projekt vollkommen gelungen, zumindest in Kigali. Kaum ein Kunstprojekt zuvor hat je so deutlich gemacht, welche Rolle der Sender in der psychologischen Vorbereitung des Völkermordes gespielt hatte.” [“This was an absolute success with the project, at least in Kigali. Seldom has an art project so clearly presented what role the radio station played in the psychological preparation of the genocide.”]
3	“Jagt sie!” Philipp Lichterbeck <i>Der Tagesspiegel</i> 02.12.2011	Berlin Germany (Berlin HAU) German	Positive	Description of the revealing effect of watching the radio dialogue performed from the glass box, and highlights the importance of historical accuracy in <i>Hate Radio</i> . Lichterbeck defines <i>Hate Radio</i> ’s reenactment as an experiment about the murderous effect of language that fills the set.	“Es ist also ein enthüllender Effekt, als sich die Jalousie hebt und man in einen Glaskasten blickt, einem Terrarium gleich, in dem die drei RTML-Moderatoren, ein Techniker und ein Soldat sitzen, nervös herumlaufen, scherzen und rauchen. Das Studio wurde nach den Skizzen der einst beliebtesten Sprecherin Ruandas angefertigt, die die Theaterleute im Gefängnis in Kigali trafen.” [“So, it is a revealing effect when the blinds are raised and you look into the glass case, it is like a terrarium, in which the three RTLM moderators, technician, and

					soldier sit, nervously pace, joke, and smoke. The studio is based on the sketches by one of once most beloved speaker in Rwanda, who the production team met in the prison in Kigali.”]
4	<p>“Völkermord-Propaganda am eigenen Leib erfahren” Matthias Weigel <i>Nachtkritik.de</i> 01.12.2011</p>	<p>Berlin Germany (Berlin HAU) German</p>	Positive	Talks specifically about how the productions provide a historically accurate reenactment that does not comment directly on historical situation: defines reenactment as a visual object. Foregrounds the creation of experience, the use of distance, and evil shown on an unspectacular, human level.	<p>“Atemberaubend ist das vor allem, weil es unkommentiert geschieht. [...] Denn in dieser Laborsituation können sich Struktur und Prinzip des Bösen selbst entblößen, ohne Schock, ohne Hollywood-Geschichte, ohne Betroffenheit – nur durch Sprechen ins Mikrofon.” [“It is, above all else, breathtaking, because it happens without comment. [...] Because this laboratory situation can expose the structure and principle of evil, without shock, without Hollywood-stories, without concern – only through speaking into a microphone”]</p>
5	<p>“Genozid als Radioprogramm” Anna Opel <i>Freitag.de</i> 01.12.2011</p>	<p>Berlin Germany (Berlin HAU) German</p>	Positive	Compares <i>Hate Radio</i> to Hans-Werner Kroesinger’s <i>Ruanda Revisited</i> , highlighting how the IIPM instead focus on an isolated incident/situation in the larger genocide. Hinges the success of the production on the extensive research of the production team.	<p>“Was eins zu eins gezeigt, ja, was geradezu zelebriert wird, ist die Banalität des Bösen, seine Oberfläche. [...] Die beiden Ebenen ermöglichen eine doppelte Perspektive auf die Ereignisse, die allerdings statisch in der Empörung verharnt.” [“What is shown one to one, and is what is actually being celebrated, is the banality of evil, its surface. [...] The two levels allow a double perspective on events, which remain hardened in a state of static rage.”]</p>
6	<p>“Tod durch Musik” Elisabeth Wellershaus <i>Neue Zürcher Zeitung</i> 06.12.2011</p>	<p>Zurich Switzerland (Berlin HAU/Kigali) German</p>	Positive	Describes the schizophrenic quality of the broadcast, which illustrates how evil hides itself in the seemingly harmless. Identifies the difficulty of accessing the language of the production and how reception is hindered by the subtitles. Mentions success of production in Rwanda.	<p>“Doch in der Beiläufigkeit liegt die so einfache wie verstörende Botschaft: Das Böse steckt im vermeintlich Harmlosen. Ebendiesen schizophrenen Aspekt der Propaganda wollte Rau in seiner Inszenierung herausarbeiten. Und über weite Strecken ist es ihm gelungen.” [“Indeed, in the casualness lies a simple and disturbing message: Evil conceals itself in the apparently harmless. Rau wants to work with this same schizophrenic aspect of propaganda in his production. And, in large stretches, he has succeeded.”]</p>
7	<p>“Der hippe Sound der Vernichtung” Simone Kaempf <i>Nachtkritik.de</i> 16.05.2012</p>	<p>Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) German</p>	Positive	Highlights the revelatory function of <i>Hate Radio</i> and celebrates the installation-style design of the performance, the self-contained format, and the illustrative power of the performance of propaganda.	<p>“tatsächlich ist "Hate Radio" im Theater sehr gut aufgehoben, in dem die unheilvolle Antriebswirkung dieser Radiopropaganda suggestiv ihre volles Ausmaß offenbart, auch ohne dafür gleich neue Formate,</p>

					scheinbare Experten oder viele Stunden Spieldauer zu strapazieren.” [“actually, <i>Hate Radio</i> is very well received in the theatre, where the ominous driving force of this radio propaganda is suggestively revealed to its full extent, even without straining new formats, call on apparent experts, or relying on many hours of playing time.”]
8	“Brutalstmögliche Aufklärung der Realität oder das Ende der Illusionen auf der Bühne” Christoph Fellmann <i>Du Magazin, Zeitschrift der Kultur</i> (Nr. 826) 05.2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) German	Positive (critical analysis of Rau’s work)	Situates <i>Hate Radio</i> within Rau’s existing oeuvre ( <i>Die letzten Tage</i> and a planned project in Russia) and the broader tradition of reenactment (hobby and Evreinov). Article analyses how <i>Hate Radio</i> performs a political act and presents a snapshot of the society’s brutality. Talks about the freedom that performers have in the performance despite a carefully written and strict script.	“In <i>Hate Radio</i> erhält man eine schlimme Ahnung davon, wie so etwas möglich ist [...] eine Installation des freien Falls. [...] Das IIPM reihte sich in den neuen Theaterrealismus ein, aber mit einem anderen Zugriff: Professionelle Schauspieler sollten historische Ereignisse in einem sogenannten Reenactment möglichst detailtreu noch einmal zeigen.” [“In <i>Hate Radio</i> , you get an idea of how such a terrible thing is possible [...] a free fall installation. [...] The IIPM is part of the new theatre realism, but with a different approach: professional actors show historical events in a so-called reenactment as detailed as possible.”]
9	“Tanzmusik zum Völkermord” Ulrich Seidler <i>Berliner Zeitung</i> 15.05.2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) German	Neutral/ Positive	Overview of play and historical situation. Highlights the collage creation style, the coolness of the broadcast, and the way the production both lulls and horrifies the spectator.	“Für <i>Hate Radio</i> hat Rau eine Vergegenwärtigungsmaschine gebaut, die es in sich hat. [...] Der Zuschauer rutscht immer tiefer hinein in eine Beklemmung zwischen zwei Fluchtpunkten der Verdrängung: Einlullung und Entsetzen.” [“For <i>Hate Radio</i> , Rau constructed a visualization machine that is really something. [...] The spectator slides ever deeper into an anxiety between two disappearing points of repression: lulling and horror.”]
10	“Einpeitscher des Massenmords” Patrick Wildermann <i>Der Tagesspiegel</i> 26.04.2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) German	Positive	Describes how Rau finds similarities between his own experiences growing up in the 90s and that of his Rwandan performers (and subjects). Looks at how RTLM is condensed and separated from the historical situation (which is not directly commented upon). Mentions that Rugamba left the production as well as Rau’s personal goals past and present.	“Manche Kritiker bemängeln auch an ‚Hate Radio‘, dass dabei der historische Kontext verloren gehe. ‚Es ist wie in der Medizin‘, hält Rau dagegen. ‚Man kann eine Ferndiagnose stellen oder den Bauch öffnen.‘ Er entscheide sich für die Operation.” [“Some critics also criticize that <i>Hate Radio</i> loses its historical context. ‘It is like a medicine,’ counters Rau. ‘You can look for another diagnosis or you can open up.’ He chooses the operation.”]
11	“Soundtrack zum Genozid”	Munich Germany	Positive	Connects Rau’s production with Hans-Werner Kroesinger’s <i>Ruanda Revisited</i> . It describes the	“Was Milo Rau vornimmt, wenn Angehörige der Tutsi-Minderheit, Überlebende der Opfer-Gruppe, als

	Peter Laudenbach <i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> 03/04.12.2011	(Berlin TT) German		production's naturalistic style and recalls a representative from the Rwandan embassy saying of Rau's RTLM "that was 99.9% RTLM" at the premiere. Praises production for its authenticity both in structure and presentation, as well as for the survivor stories (performed by survivors) in the prologue/epilogue: a terrible journey through time for all involved.	Darsteller zu Moderatoren des Hass-Radios werden, ist ein atemberaubender Perspektivwechsel, wie er so nur im Theater möglich ist. So ist Theater kein bloßes Transportmittel dokumentarischen Materials, sondern wird als Medium selbst Ort der Aufklärung." ["What Milo Rau does by making members of the Tutsi minority and survivors of the victim group the moderators of the hate radio is a breathtaking change in perspective that is only possible in theatre. Thus, theatre is not merely a means of transportation for the documentary material, but as a medium itself that becomes a place of enlightenment,"]
12	"Das Radio des Grauens" Cord Riechelmann <i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung</i> 04.12.2011	Frankfurt Germany  German	Neutral/ Positive	Mentions production's staging convention, the casting (both Rwandan and European), and the use of "elegant colonial French" as the primary language of the performance. Highlights how the production brings the genocide into the striking <i>normality</i> of the present.	"Vergleichen kann man dieses Stück mit gar nichts. Auch wenn man seit dem Vietnamkrieg um den Zusammenhang von Rock, Drogen, Mord und Massaker weiß, und Peter Weiss' ‚Ermittlung‘ kennt, bietet das keinen Halt, aus dem man kulturell abgekühlt sich diesem Abend nähern könnte. Der Genozid ist noch nie so wirklich in das Allgemeine und Besondere der Radio- und Popkultur als ‚Normalfall‘ eingebettet worden." ["You cannot compare this play with anything else. Even if you know the connection between rock music, drugs, murder, and massacres since the Vietnam War, and know Peter Weiss's <i>The Investigation</i> , there is no culturally cooled down way to approach this evening."]
13	"Der geballte Charme des Genozids" Franz Wille <i>Theaterheute</i> (2/2012) 2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin HAU) German	Positive (critical analysis of mise- en-scène)	Looks at 'time travel' in both Rau's <i>Hate Radio</i> and Alvis Hermanis's production of <i>Eugen Onegin</i> . Highlights <i>Hate Radio</i> 's research-based creation style, its minimalistic mise-en-scène, and its attempt to make sense out of the widely available material about the genocide. Identifies how <i>Hate Radio</i> makes the distance between represented past and lived present productive by asking how the spectator would have reacted.	"Milo Raus radikaler historischer Illusionismus verführt die Zuschauer gerade nicht, sich in die Köpfe der damaligen Täter und Opfer einzufühlen oder hineinzuverstehen wie in einen alten russischen Roman – die Distanz bleibt bewahrt. Die historische Theaterinstallation sucht im Gegenteil die Konfrontation: die Gegenüberstellung einer hinter Glas wie im Terrarium aufbereiteten Rekonstruktion mit dem heutigen Zuschauer." ["Milo Rau's radical, historical illusionism does not seduce the spectator to empathize or understand what was going on in the heads of the then perpetrators and victims like in an old Russian novel – the distance is preserved. On the contrary, the historical theatre

					installation seeks confrontation: the juxtaposition of a reconstruction prepared behind glass, like in a terrarium with today's audience.”]
14	“Massenmord am Mikrofon” Katrin Bettina Müller <i>taz (Sonntaz)</i> 5/6.05.2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) German	Positive	Explains how the production represents the unrepresentable through a documentary “linguistic fantasy.” Praises the production for its dramaturgical arrangement of elements – timing, music, guests, dialogue, and its conspiratorial tone – to create an uncanny experience. Highlights the critical success of the production in Rwanda as well as Europe.	“Zu Recht hat ‚Hate Radio‘ an allen Spielorten, auch in Ruanda selbst, positive Kritiken bekommen. Und auf dem Theatertreffen sah man auch schon lange keinen so ästhetisch überzeugenden Zugriff mehr auf die harten Realitäten der Welt.” [“Rightfully so, <i>Hate Radio</i> has received positive critiques everywhere it’s played, even in Rwanda. And it has been a long time since a more aesthetically convincing entrance into the hard realities of the world has been seen at [Berlin’s] Theatertreffen.”]
15	“Genozid als Mords-Spess” Alfred Ziltener <i>Musik &amp; Theater</i> (32:4) pp. 4	Zurich Switzerland (Basel & Bern) German		Situates <i>Hate Radio</i> within the context of Rau’s other projects, <i>City of Change</i> and <i>Die letzten Tage</i> . Highlights the reenactment genre, the innovative stage design, the casting of Rwandan-survivor actors, the inclusion of RTLM’s white broadcaster Georges Ruggiu, and the dramaturgical build within the broadcast.	“So zeigt «Hate Radio» exemplarisch, wie politische Manipulation funktioniert: durch die systematische Verdrehung der Wahrheit und den Appell an Angst und Hass.” [“This is how <i>Hate Radio</i> shows in an exemplary way how political manipulation works: through the systematic distortion of truth and appealing to fear and hatred.”]
16	“Social Justice through <i>Hate Radio</i> ” Katy Scott <i>Whatsonincape town.com</i> 12.02.2014	Johannesburg South Africa (Hiddingh Hall) English	Positive	Notes that ID must be handed over to enter theatre (and this connection to Rwanda). Highlights the video opening (testimony rather than visual record of events), the sense of authenticity, and tendency to trust radio as news source.	“The brilliance of HATE RADIO was perhaps best felt afterwards, as we walked out of the theatre feeling that social justice had been achieved. The chance to witness a Milo Rau production of documentary theatre should not be missed.”
17	“Theatre Review: Hate Radio, Glasgow” Joyce McMillan <i>The Scotsman</i> 15.03.2014	Glasgow Scotland (The Arches) English	Positive	Praises the understated style of production, the structure (both textual and design), and the juxtaposition of normality with the moderators’ horrific statements.	“What is brilliant about <i>Hate Radio</i> is the way it treads the line between the absolutely normal [...] and the utterly unthinkable [...] The combination of sound, action, verbatim text and intense, precise acting is unforgettable.”
18	“Hate Radio” Rebecca Corbett <i>The Wee Review</i> 19.03.2014”	Glasgow Scotland (The Arches) English	Positive	Overwhelmingly positive review that applauds the simplicity of <i>Hate Radio</i> : its script, its minimalistic set, its actors, and its use of the live medium of theatre to explore conflict.	“Rau’s script is a triumph, enabling the audience to be horrified without needing to over-dramatise. He aptly realises that the monstrosities don’t need a dramatic retelling and instead simply states the facts of the shocking anecdotes, resulting in a powerful presentation.”
19	“Hate Radio” Andrew Tickell <i>Exeunt Magazine</i>	Glasgow Scotland (The Arches)	Positive	Finds strong connections between Rau’s RTLM and Hannah Arendt’s thesis on the banality of evil. Describes the numbing effect of the repetition’s	“After an hour of denunciations, self-serving historical revisionism and misplaced victim fantasies delivered in the lurid, boisterous style of the sports reporter – the

	21.03.2014	English		horrible yet paradoxically light-hearted, boisterous utterances that permeate the production's atmosphere. Ultimately, deemed <i>Hate Radio</i> successful, but repetitive, in its attempt to stage this banality.	effect is numbing, distancing, repetitive. [...] <i>Hate Radio</i> stages this banality more effectively than anything else I have seen. It does so by being a resolutely undramatic, grinding, even dull watch. I leave flat, and uneasy. A remarkable, troubling piece."
20	"Hate Radio" Fergus Morgan <i>The Stage</i> 01.02.2019	London England (NTGent) English	Positive	Points out the continued effectiveness of the production 8 years after its first performance and how it contributes to a conversation about Belgium's colonial past. Highlights the success of the project's simplicity, the revelatory function of its unspectacularity, and great performances by Ntarindwa and Foucault.	"The stark horror of their conversation is heightened by the calm and casualness of their behaviour (they joke and dance and laugh as they incite extreme ethnic violence) and by the verbatim video monologues of Rwandans remembering the genocide that bookend the broadcast – truly horrific stories of brutality, rape and murder."
21	"A transmission from the heart of the Rwandan genocide" Pat Donnelly <i>The Gazette</i> 31.05.2014	Montreal Canada (FTA) English	Positive	Finds the structure of the play (the survivor monologues prologue/epilogues surrounding the reenactment) especially effective in juxtaposing the banality and normality of the broadcast with the lived horror of the genocide from the Tutsi perspective; praises Ntarindwa's "mesmerizing" performance.	" <i>Hate Radio</i> , which makes use of verbatim transcripts from RTL, is a powerful, devastating piece of work that allows the facts to speak for themselves. [...] Rau's direction is painstakingly understated, and the banality of the scene is striking."
22	"Review: Hate Radio" Miriam Sherwood <i>Miriamsherwood.com</i> 16.05.2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) English	Negative	Struggles with production's claim of authenticity, lack of narrative, and the question 'is this theatre?' Highlights the obvious significance and merit of the production (and its message about propaganda, pop culture, and the violent potential of youth), but questions if the critically successful and easily transferable performance actually undercuts this significance. Questions if this really is theatre or an artistic installation.	"The problem is what happens when you trade the streets of Kiwali [ <i>sic</i> ] for <u>Hebbel-am-Ufer</u> in Berlin and present it as a piece of theatre – one of the 10 most remarkable pieces of theatre to be seen in the German-speaking world this year, as it turns out. <b>Is Rau pushing the boundaries of what we call theatre?</b> Or does a performance that had a radical, active, political impact on the street, reacting with the stories of the individual listeners to create a new story, <b>a living piece of theatre</b> , paradoxically become no more radical than an art installation being presented in a theatre instead of a gallery?"
23	"Be There" Anita Rákóczy <i>Hotreview.org</i> 05.2012	Berlin Germany (Berlin TT) English	Positive	An analysis of the entire production that looks at the historical situation, the structure of the play, the build in music and action, the position of the spectator as voyeur, and the place of the production within 2012's Theatertreffen Festival.	"Playing the production, especially in Rwanda, has been of crucial importance to the artists. 'It was a must,' one of them said [in the talkback]. 'We played it right in the building where the RTL radio studio used to be. It was a historical moment.'"
24	"Hate Radio" Mary Brennan <i>Herald</i> 17.03.2014	Glasgow Scotland (The Arches) English	Positive	Connects the production's look at the Rwandan genocide to nationalistic movements in the present (2014, Crimea); praises the real-time reconstruction of a typical program and the unsettling feeling that accompanies watching <i>Hate Radio</i> .	"this show whispers latent warnings about histories being forged now, in the name of freedom, national identity, and self-determination."

25	<p>“Radio Mille Collines out comment le théâtre témoigne” Armelle Héliot <i>Figaro.fr</i> 6.12.2012</p>	<p>Paris France (Théâtre Paris-Villette) French</p>	Positive	<p>Criticizes the subtitles, which are too small, not bright enough, too long, and difficult to read properly. Identifies how <i>Hate Radio</i> condenses material into a dramatic re-composition where everything is true (according to the paper’s expert on the Rwandan genocide), its effectiveness in translating the experience of the past into the present, the political quality of the theatre, and the place of the talkback and production book that accompany the performance. Mentions performance in Kigali and draws comparison to Groupov.</p>	<p>“Il y a dans le hiatus entre la tranquillité de la manière de dire et ce qui est dit, l’espace de l’horreur et de la souffrance, l’espace du courage et de la faiblesse des uns, de la force des autres. De ceux dont ils nous parlent.” [“There is a gap between the tranquillity of way things are said and what is said, the space of horror and suffering, the space of the courage and weakness of some, the strength of others. These are the things about which we speak.”]</p>
26	<p>“Hate Radio : la radio peut tuer” N/A <i>Franceculture.fr</i> 11.12.2012</p>	<p>Paris France (Théâtre Paris-Villette) French</p>	Positive	<p>Explains how <i>Hate Radio</i> illustrates the banality of evil, the destructive power of language, and how it exemplifies familiar propaganda techniques in a restaging that was created through extensive research. Highlights the role of Rwandan actors in lending authenticity and language to <i>Hate Radio</i>, and their role in the talkback after each Paris performance.</p>	<p>“Avec ce spectacle, Milo Rau utilise le théâtre pour éclairer la banalité du mal qui a conduit à l’horreur, comme une tentative de compréhension de l’incompréhensible” [“With this show, Milo Rau uses theatre to clarify the banality of evil that has led to horror, as an attempt to understand the incomprehensible.”]</p>
27	<p>“Mille Collines, la radio de la haine” Didier Méreuze <i>La Croix</i> 15.03.2013</p>	<p>Paris France (Théâtre Paris-Villette) French</p>	Positive	<p>Particularly interested in the figure of Georges Ruggiu (“the white Hutu”). Describes the non-theatricality of a piece that recounts in detail (both textually and in design) an hour of programming and the virulence the moderators during the most extreme hours of the genocide. Highlights how atmosphere plays with temporal proximity and Rwanda’s continued disconnect with the Genocide that seeps into the production.</p>	<p>“un spectacle étrange, troublant, aux allures d’OTNI (objet théâtral non identifié). Sans histoire. Sans vraie pièce, au sens traditionnel du terme, non plus. [...] On est entre choses vues et choses vécues, sur le mode d’un théâtre documentaire qui fait froid dans le dos[.]” [“a strange, disturbing show that looks like a UTO (an unidentified theatrical object). Uneventful. No real play, in the traditional sense of the term, either. [...] We are between things that are seen and things that are experienced, in the style of a chilling example of documentary theatre[.]”]</p>
28	<p>“Théâtre – Rwanda : mauvaises ondes” Pierre Boisselet <i>Jeune Afrique</i> 18.12.2012</p>	<p>Paris France  French</p>	Neutral/ Negative	<p>Questions whether the production fully translates the significance and innovative quality of RTLM in Rwanda in comparison to other stations at the time.</p>	<p>“Cette oeuvre est une plongée dans la mécanique perverse de ce média de la haine, qui n’aurait jamais été aussi efficace s’il n’avait pas été aussi attrayant. Plus de dix-huit ans après et en dépit de la mise en scène, qui reproduit le studio de la radio, il est parfois difficile de saisir toute la dimension novatrice de la RTLM à l’époque.” [“This work plunges into the perverse mechanics of this medium of hate, which would not have been as effective, if it had not been so attractive. More than eighteen years later, despite the staging, which</p>

					reproduces the radio studio, it is sometimes difficult to grasp the full innovative dimension of RTLM at the time.”]
29	<p>“<i>Hate Radio</i>, La Radio de la haine” Anaïs Pachebézian <i>Africultures.com</i> 26.12.2012</p>	<p>Paris France (Théâtre Paris-Villette) French</p>	Positive	<p>Describes the “painstaking” reconstruction of the radio station (physically, textually, and performatively), and how the performance shows how the station was able to dehumanize one group of people while radicalizing the other in horrifyingly banal and normal terms. Calls performance an attempt to “understand the incomprehensible” Mentions post-show talkback with actors and experts.</p>	<p>“En reconstituant une émission de la radio des mille collines, le spectateur en devient un auditeur, en direct. Glaçant, le spectacle nous amène à réfléchir sur le pouvoir des mots. Des mots qui tuent. Des mots qui ont permis de propager le discours de la haine.” [“By reconstructing a radio programme from the Radio des Mille Collines, the spectator becomes a listener, live. Icy, the show leads us to reflect on the power of words. Words that kill. Words that allow the spread the discourse of hate.”]</p>
30	<p>“Hate Radio” Agnès Santi <i>La Terrasse</i> (Nr. 211) 26.06.2013</p>	<p>Avignon France (Festival d’Avignon) French</p>	Positive	<p>Highlights how <i>Hate Radio</i> uses theatre as a medium to present the banality of the everyday to show what people are capable of. Describes Rau’s recognizably simplistic/minimalistic, research intensive, and historically precise mise-en-scène. Praises how the production shows the genocide’s brutality in a bloodless production.</p>	<p>“Aucun exotisme dans cette radio de la haine. Les gens qui ont connu Paris dans les années trente l’ont vécu : rendu possible par une propagande féroce, le basculement dans la terreur se fait bien plus facilement que ce qu’on imagine. Du jour au lendemain, votre camarade d’école vous méprise sans raison. [...] Ce huis clos hyperréaliste appelle à la prise de conscience face à la banalité ordinaire de la folie meurtrière.” [“The mechanisms of hatred, here at work through a popular media, are universal. No exoticism in this hate radio. [...] This hyperrealist closed-door session calls for awareness of the banality of murderous madness.”]</p>
31	<p>“Radio Mille Collines, la tuerie dans la bonne humeur” Fabienne Darge <i>La Monde</i> 23.07.2013</p>	<p>Avignon France (Festival d’Avignon) French</p>	Positive	<p>Praises the rigour and intelligence with which the play explores the subject-matter and confronts the audience with the unthinkable. Mentions how Rau brings reality and real testimony together, thus blurring the distance between fiction and reality (also seen in casting). Describes how <i>Hate Radio</i> shows how RTLM constructed and normalized genocidal rhetoric in its hijacking of words and history in easy to listen to broadcasts.</p>	<p>“<i>Hate Radio</i> montre, pas à pas, la construction de la rhétorique génocidaire, les appels au meurtre et les dénonciations en direct qui ont fait alors le quotidien de cette radio interactive. Milo Rau fait voir surtout – et c’est le plus glaçant, le plus dérangeant – que tout se passait dans une ambiance “bon enfant”, joyeuse et libérée, un peu comme elle pourrait l’être dans un studio de Fun Radio, par exemple.” [“<i>Hate Radio</i> shows, step by step, the construction of genocidal rhetoric, calls for murder and live denunciations that made the daily life of this interactive radio. Above all, Milo Rau shows – and this is the most chilling, the most disturbing – that everything took place in a ‘good natured’, joyful and liberated</p>

					atmosphere, a bit like it could be a Fun Radio station, for example”]
32	<p>“‘Hate Radio’, les ondes assassins du Rwanda” Lucile Pinault <i>La Gazette</i> 11.02.2016</p>	<p>Montpellier France (humain Trop humain [hTh] CDN) French</p>	Positive	<p>Quotes Rau in referring to the global quality of <i>Hate Radio</i> – i.e., the talkshow radio banter and the nineties set design (posters, cassette tapes, etc.). It highlights the relaxed atmosphere and antagonistic, violent speech within the production alongside the historical undertones of the broadcast’s language.</p>	<p>“Dans celle pièce de l’International Institute of Political Murder, une compagnie basée à Cologne, pas d’images sordides de cranes ou de machettes qui ont largement illustré le massacre. Le metteur en scène Suisse Milo rau a choisi de montrer l’indicible. Les ondes de la Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines dévoilent les resorts de cette terrible haine. [...] Une émission imaginaire aux détails concrets qui restitue cette histoire collective au plus proche.” [“In this play by the International Institute of Political Murder, a Cologne-based company, there are no sordid images of skulls or machetes, which largely illustrated the massacre. Swiss director Milo Rau chose to show the unspeakable. The airwaves of Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines reveal the roots of this terrible hatred. [...] An imaginary show with concrete details that restores this collective history as closely as possible.”]</p>
33	<p>“La radio de la haine reconstituée à hTh” Anon <i>Midi Libre</i> 16.02.2016</p>	<p>Montpellier France (hTh CDN) French</p>	Neutral	<p>Highlights how radical racial rhetoric is slipped into talk show banter, trendy music, and a relaxed broadcast atmosphere. Mentions the naturalistic aesthetic visible throughout the production.</p>	<p>“D l’autre côté de la vitre, le spectateur devient l’auditeur d’une émission fictive (mais montée à partir de propos réellement tenus) qui cristallise la haine à l’ouvrage et la complicité du langage dans cette entreprise propagandiste.” [“On the other side of the glass, the spectator becomes the listener of a fictitious program (but edited from real words) that crystallizes the hatred at work and the complicity of language in this propaganda enterprise.”]</p>
34	<p>“Campagne de pub pour le génocide” JMDH <i>La Marseillaise</i> 19.02.2016</p>	<p>Montpellier France (hTh CDN) French</p>	Positive	<p>Praises the extensive research that went into <i>Hate Radio</i>, the way the production shows violence without ever directly showing images of violence, and how this decision foregrounds the “performative power of the voice”.</p>	<p>“Sans image, ni cri de victims, le matter en scène suisse Milo rau conçoit avec <i>Hate radio</i> une installation théâtrale qui donne à entendre la puissance performative de la voix. Les paroles nous font toucher le reel. Elles se sont manifestées lors des appels au genocide au Rwanda via les transmissions radio de station Radio Télévision libre des Milles collines.” [“Without image, nor cry of victims, in <i>Hate Radio</i>, the Swiss director Milo Rau conceives a theatrical installation which gives to hear the performative power of the voice. The words make us touch reality. They</p>

					manifest themselves while speaking of the Rwandan Genocide via the radio transmissions of RTLM.”]
35	<p>“Les voix glacantes du génocide au Rwanda” Jean-Marie Gavalda <i>Midi Libre</i> 19.02.2016</p>	<p>Montpellier France (hTh CDN) French</p>	Positive	Highlights the naturalistic and realistic aspects of the production and how that they help illustrate the mechanisms of disinformation at play in both the real, historical RTLM as well as Rau’s RTLM.	<p>“<i>Hate Radio</i> de Milo Rau reconstitue une émission en montrant comment la RTLM (contrôlée par le gouvernement hutu) profitait de sa popularité pour manipuler les auditeurs, les pousser au crime.” [“Milo Rau’s <i>Hate Radio</i> reconstructs a programme showing how RTLM (controlled by the Hutu government) took advantage of its popularity to manipulate its listeners into committing crime.”]</p>
36	<p>“hTh Grammont : Hate Radio ou les talents de la haine” Fatma Alilate <i>Toutmontpellier.fr</i> 19.02.2016</p>	<p>Montpellier France (hTh CDN) French</p>	Positive	Identifies how <i>Hate Radio</i> uses the radio station as a prism through which to examine the violence of the genocide. Praises how the design and explosive performance create an immersive experience that illustrates how complicity functioned and still functions: implicitly explores questions of media accountability, manipulation, and power abuse.	<p>“Cet étonnant spectacle provoque une emprise. Est-ce le dispositif immersif, le talent et l’implication des comédiens ? Dans cette euphorie grinçante, le spectateur-auditeur est emporté par l’ambiance festive, car les chansons donnent le ton. [...] Milo Rau met en garde sur la responsabilité des médias et les dérives des pouvoirs. [...] Ce théâtre fait réfléchir sur la manipulation et les talents de la haine.” [“This astonishing spectacle causes a stir. Is it the immersive device, the talent and involvement of the actors? In this squeaky euphoria, the spectator-listener is carried away by the festival atmosphere, as the songs set the tone. [...] Milo Rau warns of media accountability and power abuse. [...] This theatre makes you think about manipulation and the talents of hatred.”]</p>
37	<p>“L’insoutenable légèreté de l’horreur” Mario Cloutier <i>La Presse</i> 31.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Positive	Praises how <i>Hate Radio</i> dissects the everyday rhetorical mechanisms of the genocide and how the production builds in action and violence. It identifies the explicit voyeurism of the staging and how the production turns the question of responsibility back onto the audience by asking what they would have done in that position.	<p>“Et Milo Rau nous retient à eux par ces écouteurs qui deviennent les appareils d’un voyeurisme morbide. Aucun ne réussit à détourner le regard, même s’il ne peut croire aux ignominies qu’il entend. Nous sommes piégés, ni plus ni moins que des auditeurs passifs devant l’incitation à la violence et au crime.” [“And Milo Rau holds us to them [the moderators] by the headphones that become devices of a morbid voyeurism. No one can look away, even if you can’t believe what they are hearing. We’re trapped, no more and no less than passive listeners outside before the incitement of violence and crime.”]</p>

38	<p>“Le poids des mots, l’horreur d’une radio” Fabien Deglise <i>Le Devoir</i> 30.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Positive	<p>Highlights the emotional effectiveness of the production in how it uses the RTLTM to illustrate how violence can be spread.</p>	<p>“Impossible de sortir indemne d’une rencontre avec <i>Hate Radio</i> [...], et qui, en deux heures, plonge le spectateur dans la spirale de l’horreur génocidaire, dans la dérive identitaire poussée dans ses retranchements les plus abjectes, sans jamais rien montrer des exactions. La monstruosité se raconte ici par elle-même.[...] Tout est là pour induire silence, impuissance, douleur et inconfort, y compris cette référence.”</p> <p>[“It is impossible to come out unscathed from <i>Hate Radio</i> [...] and which, in two hours, plunges the spectator into a spiral of genocidal horror, into the identity pushed to its most abject entrenchments without ever showing any atrocities. The monstrosity tells its own story. [...] Everything is there to induce silence, helplessness, pain, and discomfort.”]</p>
39	<p>“Gros plan sur la radio du génocide rwandais” Fabian Deglise <i>La Devoir</i> 28.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Neutral	<p>Historically situates <i>Hate Radio</i> and describes its mise-en-scène. Includes an interview with Nancy Nkusi (who had then left the production) to discuss the effect of the Kigali performance and the 15 minutes of silence that started the Kigali talkback. Nkusi also explains why she left the role and how it helped her better understand her own history.</p>	<p>Nancy Nkusi : « <i>Ni le public ni nous n’avions les mots pour exprimer ce qui venait de se passer</i>, poursuit-elle [Nkusi]. <i>Juste avant, la troupe venait de marcher sur les pas des protagonistes de cette histoire à l’endroit même où cette histoire s’est déroulée moins de 20 ans plus tôt. Ça avait de quoi donner la chair de poule. Pour une comédienne comme moi, qui avait huit ans lors du génocide, qui a perdu une partie de sa famille dans ce drame, c’était quelque chose de grand, de fort et de troublant à la fois.</i> »</p> <p>[Nancy Nkusi: “Neither the audience nor we had the words to express what had just happened,” she continues. ‘Just before, the troupe had just walked in the footsteps of the protagonists of this story in the very place where it took place less than 20 years earlier. It was very creepy. For a actress like me, who was in the genocide today, who lost part of her family in that tragedy, it was something big and strong and disturbing at the same time.’”]</p>
40	<p>“La transmission de la haine” Jean Siag <i>La Presse</i> 26.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Neutral	<p>Largely a discussion with Rau about <i>Hate Radio</i>: talks to the director about the project and how it explores the mechanics of genocide as a <i>theatre of the real</i>. Also discusses how he edited documentary material, how he selected moderators from the</p>	<p>Milo Rau : « J’ai recréé ce studio à ma façon. Par exemple, j’ai mis plus de musique dans ma version. Mais tout ce que vous allez entendre a été dit, souligné-t-il. En faisant abstraction de la langue, cette station de radio était semblable à n’importe quelle autre station dans</p>

				station, the ideology of the station, and the risk of boredom in the production.	<p>le monde. Quand j’ai commencé à travailler avec les acteurs rwandais, on s’est rendu compte qu’on écoutait la même musique. C’est ce qui était fascinant: un génocide qui se passe dans un monde déjà globalisé. »</p> <p>[Milo Rau: “I recreated this studio in my own way. For example, I put more music in my version. But everything you’re going to hear has been said,” he points out. “Regardless of the language, this radio station was like any other station in the world. When I started working with the Rwandan actors, we realised we were listening to the same music. That’s what was fascinating: a genocide taking place in a world that’s already globalised.”]</p>
41	<p>“La radio qui sert à dénoncer” Louise Bourbonnais <i>Le Journal de Montréal</i> 24.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	<p>Neutral/ Positive</p>	<p>Highlights the use of real, historical facts, specific practices of the real RTLM, and how these daily rituals were translated into performance (the use of headphones really placed at the fore of discussion).</p>	<p>“Pour ajouter de l’originalité, les spectateurs seront munis de casques d’écoute. « C’est une façon de créer un lien d’intimité et de proximité. Les acteurs ne s’adressent pas au public comme dans une représentation théâtrale traditionnelle, ils parleront plutôt à chacun des spectateurs, directement dans le creux de l’oreille. »”</p> <p>[“To add originality, spectators will be equipped with headphones. ‘It’s a way to create a bond of intimacy and closeness. The actors don’t address the audience as in a traditional theatrical performance, but rather speak to each of the spectators, directly into the hole of their ears.’”]</p>
42	<p>“Critique: Les mots qui tuent” Gabrielle Brassard <i>Montheatre.qc.ca</i> 30.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Identifies the historical background of the play, describes the design and the key elements of the production such as actors and music. Places the strength of the piece in its use of language, which is both unbearable and familiar.</p>	<p>“<i>Hate radio</i> nous rend forcément inconfortable, face à la contradiction de cet environnement radiophonique dans lequel ces criminels dansant, boivent et rient tout en incitant à la tuerie. Absurde, intolérable, insupportable. Mais nécessaire.”</p> <p>[“<i>Hate Radio</i> inevitably makes us uncomfortable, faced with the contradiction of this radio environment in which these criminals dance, drink and laugh, while inciting murder. Absurd, intolerable, unbearable. But necessary.”]</p>

43	<p>“FTA – Hate Radio : Frontal” Lucie Renaud <i>Revue JEU</i> 30.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Positive	<p>Highlights the use of the handheld radio, the use of songs like Bruckner’s <i>Seventh Symphony</i>, <i>Rape me, I like to move it</i>, and zouk within the structure of the lighthearted (but violent) broadcast. Praises the contained performances of Bwanga Pilipi, Diogenes Ntarindwa, and Sébastien Foucault.</p>	<p>“D’entrée de jeu, il est confronté à des témoignages bouleversants de survivants (incarnés par des acteurs, projetés sur les murs extérieurs du studio, pas encore dévoilé). Des mots simples, massue qui évoquent l’horreur la plus pure, l’abjection dans ce qu’elle a de plus vil, de plus universel. « C’était des mots ; c’était irréal. »” [“From the outset, he [the spectator] is confronted with shocking testimonies of survivors (played by actors, projected on the outside walls of the studio, not yet revealed). Simple words, sledgehammers that evoke the purest horror, abjection in its vilest, most universal form. ‘It was words; it was unreal.’”]</p>
44	<p>“Hate Radio : les mots, arme de destruction massive – Milo Riau [sic]/FTA2014” Katerine Verebely <i>Ma mère était hipster</i> 30.05.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Positive	<p>Praises Rau’s (spelt Riau throughout) use of language and the power of words in <i>Hate Radio</i>, a hyperrealistic production. Highlights how the spectator is implicated by their inadvertent participation as listener. Critiques the staging, which Verebely views as too minimalistic because “radio doesn’t always make good theatre” and the production, therefore, risks becoming boring.</p>	<p>“Pourquoi allons-nous au théâtre? Cette question, qui peut sembler bale, est au cœur de la réflexion du metteur en scène suisse Milo Riau [sic]. Alors... pourquoi y aller, au théâtre? Peut-être pour être transporté par la force des mots. Ces mots qui nous font rire, pleurer ou réfléchir. Ces mots dont on sous-estime souvent la puissance.” [“Why are we going to the theatre? This question, which may seem like a whale, is at the heart of Swiss director Milo Riau’s [sic] thinking. So... why go to the theatre? Perhaps to be transported by the force of words. Words that make us laugh, cry or think. Words whose power is often underestimated.”]</p>
45	<p>“Scènes de catastrophe” Alexandre Cadieux <i>Le Devoir</i> 23.04.2014</p>	<p>Montreal Canada (FTA) French</p>	Neutral	<p>Written prior to the performance in Montreal, article looks at the history of productions about trauma and catastrophe at the FTA festival and how different productions have handled issues of memory, iconography, and the high stakes of genocide. Builds off Émilie Martz-Kuhn’s dissertation, “Scenic Writings of Human Disaster in Contemporary Theatre” and refers specifically to Groupov’s <i>Rwanda 94</i>.</p>	<p>“Si on ne peut, après cette triple étude de cas, conclure à l’existence d’une esthétique scénique Générale de la catastrophe humaine, Émile Martz-Kuhn insiste sur l’existence d’une nouvelle éthique artistique ; elle souligne notamment le surgissement de nouveaux processus de collaboration interdisciplinaire où créateurs, spécialistes et témoins élaborent patiemment des dispositifs qui permettent d’envisager la scène comme lieu de reconnexion avec l’Autre, et ce, malgré l’actuelle logique unidirectionnelle de la consummation culturelle.” [“If one cannot, after this triple case study, conclude to the existence of a general scenic aesthetics of the human catastrophe, Émile Martz-Kuhn insists on the</p>

					existence of a new artistic ethic; she underlines in particular the emergence of new processes of interdisciplinary collaboration where creators, specialists and witnesses patiently elaborate devices that allow to consider the stage as a place of reconnection with the Other, and this, despite the current unidirectional logic of cultural consumption.”]
46	<p>“Theatervoorstelling laat zien hoe radio de genocide in Rwanda aanjoeg” Seada Hourhussen <i>Trouw.nl</i> 17.08.2012</p>	<p>Groningen The Netherlands (Grand Theatre) Dutch</p>	Neutral	<p>Centralizes the use of Rwandan actors such as Nancy Nkusi and the significance of play within Nkusi’s biography. Interviews Jens Dietrich rather than Rau, and specifically credits Dietrich as director. Talks about the performance in Kigali and the significance of <i>Hate Radio</i> for Rwandans (both Hutu and Tutsi), who after the production had the opportunity to talk about the Genocide.</p>	<p>“Dietrich: Het laat zien hoe er tegen een vrij onschuldige achtergrond racistische propaganda kon worden verspreid. De toeschouwers maken de uitzending echt mee en zullen aan den lijve ondervinden hoe zoiets je kan beïnvloeden. Het is niet onze bedoeling schuldigen aan te wijzen. Wij willen alleen een discussie creëren onder alle Rwandezen. Over de genocide wordt namelijk nog steeds niet gepraat” [“Dietrich: It shows how racist propaganda could be spread against a fairly innocent backdrop. The spectators really experience the broadcast and experience firsthand how such a thing could influence you. It is not our intention to appropriate blame. We want to create discussion Rwandans, because the genocide is still not talked about.”]</p>
47	<p>“Politiek theater van het hoogste niveau” Moos van den Broek <i>Theaterkrant.nl</i> 19.08.2012</p>	<p>Groningen The Netherlands (Grand Theatre) Dutch</p>	Positive	<p>Describes how in watching an RTLM broadcast, the spectator becomes witness to one of history’s most brutal and gruesome massacres. Praises the effective structure and presentation of the play.</p>	<p>“<i>Hate Radio</i> legt pijnlijk bloot hoe gevaarlijk een medium kann zijn in tijden van poitieke spanning en oorlog. [...] <i>Hate Radio</i> is politiek theater van het allerhoogste niveau, doordat het de pure feiten van een geschiedenis gedetailleerd reconstrueert.” [“<i>Hate Radio</i> painfully exposes how dangerous a medium can be in times of poetic tension and war. [...] <i>Hate Radio</i> is political theatre of the highest calibre; in that it reconstructs the pure facts of history in detail.”]</p>

## 7.4: Verbatim Material

This appendix looks at examples taken from the text of *Hate Radio* that have been taken verbatim or nearly verbatim – i.e., with minimal intervention to the text – from actual RTLM broadcasts. I do not claim that These examples are limited to those I was able to identify in the text and find in the transcripts of RTLM broadcasts.

I have tried to find larger sections (looking for sentences rather than specific phrases) of Verbatim texts in order to avoid incidental/accidental Verbatim repetition within *Hate Radio*.

All translations included in this appendix are not my own.

- For Rau’s text, I use both the German translation by Mascha Euchner-Martinez and Eva-Maria Bertschy and the performance version of Rau’s French and Kinyarwanda text. Therefore, any inconsistencies between the French and German versions of the text, both of which I have included in this appendix, are markers of the inconsistencies that exist between the performance and its subtitles.
- All translations and transcriptions of RTLM broadcasts are official versions made for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Transcripts exist in French, English, and the original Kinyarwanda.<sup>292</sup>
- I have attempted to find the Verbatim quotes in the original transcripts in the same language as it is spoken in *Hate Radio* (specifically using the French-Kinyarwanda text). However, as not all broadcasts were transcribed and translated, it is not always possible to find all the sections of text in the correct language.

Rau – who is fluent in German, French, and English – initially wrote *Hate Radio* in French and the sections in Kinyarwanda were translated by his actors. Comparing the Verbatim texts with *Hate Radio*, it is clear that for his research, Rau primarily used French and English transcripts of RTLM broadcasts. The French transcripts share stronger similarities in terms of vocabulary and grammar with Rau’s text. Comparatively – as seen in the examples below – the Kinyarwanda sections in *Hate Radio* share few visual markers<sup>293</sup> with the translations included in Rau’s text. However, looking at the English and French translations of these transcripts next to the German translation, strong similarities in what is said and how it is said become apparent. I have also included the original broadcaster and date of the original broadcast, I have also included who spoke said each line in *Hate Radio*.

Please note, some original broadcasts include multiple entries, these entries are labelled French I or English II to indicative which transcript was used based on the MIGS website’s labelling system.

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<sup>292</sup> These original transcripts are often a mixture of Kinyarwanda and French

<sup>293</sup> Please note I am limited to looking at the Kinyarwanda pieces of text on a purely visual level (i.e., are the same words visible in both texts) because I do not speak/read/understand Kinyarwanda.

E.g.	Original Transcript (English Translation)	Original Transcript (Original Language)	<i>Hate Radio</i> (Original Transcript)	<i>Hate Radio</i> (German Translation)
1	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> I am back for the French broadcast and today's news which, first of all, <b>condemns Radio France Internationale for having declared today that the Rwandan army is traversing rough time. The RFI said that the rebels thoroughly encircled our army in Kigali.</b> [bold text included in original transcript]</p> <p>I quote: "the capital would entirely be encircled and all the access ways are blocked up."</p> <p>We would like to formerly deny this declaration. Not all the access ways are cut. We have had opportunity to meet someone from Gisenyi, which means that if all the ways were completely blocked, he wouldn't have arrived here. We greet him but we cannot mention his name due to confidential reasons. I am confident that the exit way exists but we have to be cautious. Heavy fights are taking place around one of the ways which gives access to Kigali. However, this doesn't mean that the capital is completely surrounded. How can Radio France Internationale affirm such things while its journalists haven't come to ascertain the situation on the ground.</p> <p>(July 3, 1994, English II: 6)</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Informations chaudes du jour qui démentent d'abord Radio France Internationale qui a déclaré aujourd'hui matin que l'armée rwandaise était dans un mauvais pas et qu'elle était totalement encerclée par les rebelles dans Kigali</p> <p>Je cite : « La capitale serait entièrement encerclée et toutes les voix d'accès coupées. »</p> <p>Eh bien nous apportons un démenti formel, toutes les voies d'accès ne sont pas coupées.</p> <p>Nous avons d'abord eu l'occasion de rencontrer quelqu'un qui venait de Gisenyi et qui est arrivé, donc si c'était vraiment coupé complètement il ne serait pas arrivé ici. Et nous le saluons. Pour des raisons qui doivent encore rester confidentielles nous ne pouvons pas vous dire le nom mais faites confiance le passage existe bien mais il existe avec prudence. De graves combats se déroulent pour l'instant au tour d'un des axes qui permet d'arriver ici dans Kigali. Cela ne veut pas dire que la capitale est entièrement encerclée mais Radio France Internationale n'a pas été vérifier jusque là. Puisqu'il n'a pas été vérifier jusque là, comment peut on affirmer des choses pareilles.</p> <p>(July 3, 1994, French I: 2)</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Radio France Internationale a déclaré aujourd'hui matin que les Forces Armées Rwandaises étaient dans un mauvais pas et qu'elles étaient totalement encerclées par le FPR dans Kigali, je cite : « La capitale est entièrement encerclée et toutes les voies d'accès coupées. »</p> <p>Eh bien ! Nous apportons un démenti formel, toutes les voies d'accès ne sont pas coupées. Nous avons... nous avons eu même l'occasion de rencontrer aujourd'hui quelqu'un qui venait de Gisenyi et qui est arrivé. Oui, il est arrivé...</p> <p>Donc si c'était vraiment coupé complètement, il ne serait pas arrivé ici, et nous le saluons. Oui, nous le saluons, même si pour des raisons confidentielles, nous ne pouvons pas vous dire son nom, mais faites-nous confiance. De toute façon, le passage existe bien, mais il existe avec prudence. Puisque « Radio France Internationale » n'a pas vérifié sur place ses informations, comment peut-elle affirmer que Kigali n'est plus accessible ?</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Gestern erklärte Radio France Internationale, die Ruandischen Streitkräfte in Kigali seien von der FPR umzingelt. Ich zitiere: „Die Hauptstadt ist umzingelt und alle Verkehrswege sind blockiert.“ Wir widersprechen dieser Nachricht ausdrücklich. Die Verkehrswege sind nicht vollständig blockiert. Wir sind..., wir sind heute jemandem begegnet, der aus Gisenyi nach Kigali gekommen ist. Ja, er hat es bis nach Kigali geschafft ... Wären also alle Verkehrswege blockiert, wäre auch er nicht hier angekommen. Wir begrüßen ihn herzlich, auch wenn wir seinen Namen an dieser Stelle nicht nennen dürfen.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Das stimmt, auch wenn man sehr vorsichtig sein muss ... Wenn Radio France Internationale seine Informationen nicht geprüft hat, wie wollen sie dann behaupten, dass Kigali über die offiziellen Verkehrswege nicht erreichbar ist?</p> <p>(“Hate Radio” 180)</p>

2	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Then, this evening in order to feed your thoughts, we thought of searching in our library. We then chose for you two extracts from <i>The Prince</i> by Nicholas [sic] Machiavelli. That book about government and political principles was written in 1514, that is more than 490 years ago now. But good ideas don't die ... These two extracts are going to feed your thoughts and we remain open to others; dialogue and mutual listening seem to us profitable to everyone and if you have written comments, we remain always available to be acquainted with them and perhaps even to broadcast them if they are worth it. Here then is Nicholas Machiavelli who speaks through my voice.</p> <p>(Li 17)</p> <p><b>Original transcript from March 15, 1994 not found</b></p>	<p><b>Transcript not found</b></p>	<p>Et donc, comme chaque soir, afin d'alimenter vos réflexions, nous avons pensé et été fouiller dans notre bibliothèque. On a donc choisi pour vous deux extraits du "Prince" de Machiavel. Ce livre sur les principes politiques du gouvernement a été écrit dès 1514, soit plus de 480 ans maintenant, mais les bonnes idées ne meurent pas... Ces deux extraits vont alimenter vos réflexions et nous demeurons tout autant ouverts aux vôtres, car le dialogue, l'écoute mutuelle nous semble profitable à tous et si vous avez des commentaires écrits, nous pouvons... nous restons toujours disponibles pour les... en prendre connaissance et peut-être même les diffuser s'ils en valent la peine. Voici donc Machiavel qui parle par ma voix.</p>	<p>Und wie jeden Abend wollen wir das Nachdenken etwas anregen. Dafür haben wir das Nachdenken etwas anregen. Dafür haben wir ein wenig in unserer Bibliothek gestöbert und einen Ausschnitt aus „Der Fürst“ von Machiavelli für euch gefunden. Und auch wenn er das Buch über die politischen Maximen der Herrschaft bereits 1514 geschrieben hat – vor 480 Jahren also –, möchten wir festhalten: Gute Ideen sterben nie. Der Abschnitt soll euch zum Nachdenken anregen, und wir warten auf eure Kommentare. Denn der Dialog und der Austausch scheinen uns wichtig. Und wenn ihr uns eure Kommentare lieber schriftlich zu senden wollt – nur zu! Wir werden sie lesen und sie an unsere Zuhörer weiterleiten, wenn sie es wert sind. Hier also Machiavelli, der mit meiner Stimme zu euch spricht.</p> <p>(“Hate Radio” 191)</p>
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3	<p><b>Kajuga:</b> Thank you, Valerie! My name is Kajuga Jean-Pierre, as you have just said I am from Murambi commune in Byumba prefecture. [...] I came to RTL M to deliver a message to the inhabitants of Murambi, not only to the inhabitants of Murambi but, to all Byumba inhabitants and to all Rwandans. I would like to give them a message that the Byumba prefecture has been a hideout for the soldiers of Museveni, a message to sensitize them, especially the Byumba population, on how to defend itself, on how to liberate our prefecture together with our Army. Thank you. [...]</p> <p>We would really like to request the whole population to understand that the time to flee is over, that at present it is time to defend one's self. Every individual should use all possible means to protect his property, his children, his wife and his family [...] The time to seek refuge is over [...]</p> <p>Thank you, Valerie! I thank you once again! Continue to work relentlessly, we lie your radio station. I believe that the first award for the war will be conferred on you, your radio station helps many people. Thank you very much. (June 10, 1994, English: 6-9)</p>	<p><b>Transcript found but specific sections in original Kinyarwanda could not be identified in text</b></p>	<p><b>Kajuga:</b> Urakoze Kantano. Nkomoka muri komini ya Murambi nk'uko umaze kubivuga. Mbahamagaye kugirango ngeze ubutumwa ku baturage bo muri komini ya Murambi ku buryo bw'umwihariko ariko no ku baturage bose ba Byumba ndetse n'abanyarwanda batwumva. Byumba ubu yabaye akarima k'abasirikare ba Museveni. Ubu butumwa ni ubwo gukangura abaturatione, cyane cyane abo muri Byumba, kugirango bashake uburyo bwo kwitabara, twibohore bidatinze inkotanyi. Igihe cyo gutegereza cyararenze. Ndabashimiye.</p> <p><b>Kantano:</b> Urakoze Jean Pierre. Nanjye, nagirango mbwire abaturatione ko igihe cyo kwitabara cyageze, buri wese akoresheje uburyo bwose ashidikiriye, kugirango murengere imitungo yanyu, abagore banyu n'abana banyu mubarinda inkotanyi. Mube maso, mushakisha mu mayira yose murebe niba nta nkotanyi yahanyuze, mukurikirane aho zaba zanyuze mumenye aho zihishe...Yee, urakoze, Jean Pierre, ku bitekerezo byiza ugejeje ku banyarwanda</p> <p><b>Kajuga:</b> Bon, urakoze Kantano. Radiyo yanyu turayikunda cyane. Ndatekereza ko muri mu ba mbere bazahabwa umudari kuko radiyo yanyu ifasha abantu benshi cyane. Mukomeze urugamba. Ndabashimiye cyane.</p>	<p><b>Kajuga:</b> Danke, Kantano. Ich bin aus Murambi, wie ich bereits sagte. Ich rufe an, weil ich den Leuten von Murambi etwas zu sagen habe. Aber ich richte mich auch an alle Leute aus Byumba und überhaupt an alle Ruander. Byumba ist vor einiger Zeit zur Hochburg von Museveni Soldaten geworden. Ich will euch also sagen: Wacht auf, ihr Leute aus Byumba! Erwache, Ruanda! Wir müssen Wege finden, wie wir uns verteidigen können. Wir müssen uns von diesen Rebellen befreien. Wir dürfen nicht mehr zögern. Ich danke euch.</p> <p><b>Kantano:</b> Danke, Jean-Pierre. Du hast absolut Recht: Die Zeit ist gekommen, dass wir uns verteidigen! Jeder soll seine Habe, seine Frauen und seine Kinder gegen die Rebellen verteidigen! Bleibt wachsam, durchkämmt alle Straßen und Wege und versucht, ihre Verstecke zu finden. Vielen Dank für diese wunderbare Nachricht an das ruandische Volk, Jean-Pierre.</p> <p><b>Kajuga:</b> Vielen Dank, Kantano. Wir lieben euer Radio. Ihr habt euch einen Orden verdient. Denn euer Radio hilft vielen Menschen. Kämpft weiter so. Ich danke euch ganz herzlich.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">("Hate Radio" 184-185)</p>
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4	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Er... so they have er... they have a lot of tricks, just now... I have just learnt that there are four Inkotanyi who must be on their way to Kimisagara, they are going to Kimisagara... it is said that two have gone to APACE School and two others are going to Nyakabanda. We go this information from Bernard Sinshoboye's houseboy. So two young men wearing stone-washed jeans, as normally worn by the Inkotanyi, with grenades in the bocket came to Bernard Sinshoboye's houseboy and asked him to take them where the people had been killed the day before. So the young man took them around showing them but when we asked him if anyone they had met could have recognized those Inkotanyi in stone-washed jeans, he answered that he took them through small short-cut paths. So you understand that Inkotanyi can ever use such short-cut paths. So people near Sinshobo... Bernard Sinshoboye's houseboy should keep asking him, and try to know where he left those Inkotanyi, then people living in Kimisagara should seek them out in APACE, Kabusunzu, and you in Nyakabanda should... also be vigilant. (April 22, 1994, English I: 8-9)</p>	<p><b>Transcript not found</b></p>	<p><b>Domestique:</b> cumi n'umwe  <b>Bemeriki:</b> cumi n'umwe... ushobora kubwira abatwumva izina ryawe ?  <b>Domestique:</b> Nitwa Nzizorera Honeste.  <b>Bemeriki:</b> Honeste... ngo wabonye inkotanyi zanyuze ku murenge wawe  <b>Domestique:</b> nibyo... bari bane bambaye amakoboyi. Banyegereye barambaza bati « niko, twereke aho biciye abantu uyu muni nyuma ya saa sita » nyuma yaho bantegeka kubereka inzira ya bugufi kugirango batagwa kuri bariyeri  <b>Bemeriki:</b> bagiye he?  <b>Domestique:</b> Babiri bagiye ku Kimisagara, mu ishuri ya APACE, abandi bajye mu Nyakabanda  <b>Kantano:</b> Ntimwumva ko bagihari, hari n'abo usanga ...(il rit) mu myobo, mu bihuru, mu misarane, hari n'abari mu bishingwe, basigaye bameze nka ya misega inywa amazi yo mu misarane. Nimunyumvire namwe, abo ngo nibo bashaka gutegeka ingabo, kugendera mu modoka zacu no kurara mu mazu yacu. Honeste, izo nyenzi hari grenade zari zifite mu mifuka ?</p>	<p><b>Honeste:</b> Ich bin elf Jahre alt.  <b>Valérie:</b> Elf Jahre... Und willst du den Zuhörern vielleicht sagen, wie du heißt?  <b>Honeste:</b> Ich heiße Nzizorera Honeste.  <b>Valérie:</b> Honeste... hast du in deinem Quartier Rebellen gesehen?  <b>Honeste:</b> Ja, sie waren zu viert, alle in verwaschenen Jeans. Sie fragten mich: „Zeig uns doch mal, wo sie heute Nachmittag die Leute umgebracht haben.“ Und sie zwangen mich, ihnen einen Schleichweg zu zeigen, damit sie an den Straßensperren vorbeikommen.  <b>Valérie:</b> Wo sind sie hin?  <b>Honeste:</b> Zwei von ihnen gingen in Richtung Kimisagara – da wo sich die Gebäude der APACE-Schule befinden – die zwei anderen nach Nyakabanda.  <b>Kantano:</b> Sie sind tatsächlich überall. In jedem Loch, in den Sümpfen, in den Toiletten, überall gibt es noch diesen Unrat. Mittlerweile trinken sie wie streunende Hunde Wasser aus den Latrinen. Was für eine Ironie, dass solche Leute unser Land regieren, unsere Offiziere werden, unsere Fahrzeuge benutzen und in unseren Häusern schlafen wollen.  <b>Valérie:</b> Zuhörer, wie ihr soeben gehört habt, können die Rebellen auch geheime Wege benutzen. Die Nachbarn von diesem Jungen, der bei Sishoboye Bernard lebt, sollen sich bei ihm erkundigen, wo er sich von ihnen getrennt hat. Jagt sie!  ("Hate Radio" 192-193)</p>
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5	<p>Another man called Aloys, Interahamwe of Cyahafi, went to the market disguised in military uniform and a gun and arrested a young man called Yirirwahandi Eustache in the market, a merchant who has been selling things at the market for 18 years. In his identity card it is written that he is a Hutu though he acknowledges that his mother is a Tutsi. He is from Gahanga sector in Kanombe commune, but this man Aloys and other Interahamwe of Cyahafi took Eustache aside and made him sign a paper of 150000 Frw. When he was going to take the paper from them, they ran away. He is now telling me that they are going to kill him and he is going to borrow this amount of money. He is afraid of being killed by these men... If you are a cockroach you must be killed, you cannot change anything, if you are Inkotanyi you cannot change anything. No one can say that he has captured a cockroach and the latter gave him money, as a price for his life, this is cannot be accepted. If someone has a false identity card, if he is Inkotanyi, a known accomplice of RPF don't accept anything in exchange, he must be killed.</p> <p>(May 28, 1994, English I: 4)</p>	<p><b>Transcript not found</b></p>	<p>Nagirango mbahe urugero rw'umugabo witwa Aloyizi, ...Aloyizi ni interahamwe ya hano i Kigali. Ejo twahuriye mu isoko, aberewe, yambaye umwambaro wa gisirikare afite n'imbunda...uyu Aloyizi ejo yafashe umusore witwa Yirirwahandi Eustahe ucururiza mu isoko. Ku ndangamuntu ye handitseho ko ari umuhutu, n'ubwo bidashoboka kuko abantu bose bazi ko nyina ari umututsikazi. Aloyizi n'izindi nterahamwe bamujyanye mu mfuruka hirya yabo abasinyira icyemezo ko abafitiye umwenda w'ibihumbi ijana na mironko itanu 150.000FRW. Nashatse kubambura icyo cyemezo ariko Aloyizi na bagenzi be baransiga, wa mucuruzi asigara aho yitotomba "Ngo Kantano ntabara, baranyica, bansinyishije icyemezo cy'umwenda w'iibihumbi 150.000, none ngiye gushaka aho nyaguza hirya no hino nyabahe" Ariko jye naramushubije nti "ni iyihe mpamvu se ugomba kwigura, niba uri inyenzi, uri inyenzi nta kindi, nibakwice, ntabyo kwigura birimo"</p>	<p>Nehmen wir zum Beispiel Aloys. Aloys ist ein Mitglied der Interahamwe aus Kigali. Gestern traf ich ihn auf dem Markt, er sah gut aus in seiner Militärkluft, gut angezogen, mit einem Gewehr... Aloys also schnappte sich mitten auf dem Marktplatz einen Mann namens Yirirwahandi Eustache, einen Geschäftsmann. Auf seiner Identitätskarte steht zwar, dass er ein Hutu ist, aber jedermann weiß, dass seine Mutter eine Tutsi ist. Aloys und ein paar andere Mitglieder der Interahamwe schleiften ihn in eine Ecke und verlangten, dass er einen Schuldschein über 150.000 ruandischen Francs unterschreiben soll. Ich versuchtem mir das Dokument anzusehen, aber Aloys und seine Freunde waren schnell weg damit, während der Geschäftsmann stöhnte: „Sie werden mich umbringen, Kantano, helfen Sie mir, ich bitte Sie. Sie haben mich gezwungen, einene Schuldschein zu unterschreiben, und ich muss mir nun überall Geld leihen, um ihnen das zurückzuzahlen.“ Aber ich sagte zu ihm: „Will willst du dich denn frei kaufen? Wenn du eine Kakerlake bist, dann bist du eben eine Kakerlake und man muss dich töten. Du kannst dich nicht freikaufen.“</p> <p>(“Hate Radio” 198)</p>
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6	<p><b>Transcript not found</b></p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Vraiment on se pose la question, monsieur Clinton est-il bien informé des réalités rwandaises ? En tous les cas nous avons des graves doutes là-dessus, nous avons également des graves soutes sur même..., sur la capacité de monsieur Clinton à décider ce qui se passe et sur ce qui devrait se passer ici au Rwanda. Ee... vu l'échec des... des... des Nations unies conduites par les Etats-unis en Somalie, Monsieur Clinton serait mieux de retourner en Arkansas, en Arkansas où vraiment il co... semble mieux comprendre la situation américaine que la situation africaine. Que monsieur Clinton donc ee... garde ses offres empoisonnées, qu'il aide les gens mais pas sélectionner, pas choisir ceux qui vont venir maintenir la paix ici. Les Américains n'ont manifestement pas beaucoup de... de... de compréhension du problème rwandais, ils n'en avaient pas d'ailleurs beaucoup plus du problème somalien. Tout ce que l'on peut leur demander est de nous aider mais pas, mais pas du tout de choisir ceux qui vont nous aider. Si le Rwanda a besoin d'être aidé, il n'a pas besoin des Etats-unis pour lui servir d'intermédiaire. Les Nations unies sont là pour ça et pas monsieur Bill Clinton. Monsieur Bill Clinton qui d'ailleurs ne représente que le gouvernement américain et même pas tout un peuple. Nous au... nous avons même des doutes, véritablement des doutes sur ee... le fait de savoir que la m... poitique de monsieur Bill Clinton si la situation au Rwanda était véritablement, objectivement et de manière neutre, exposé aux Etats-unis et à la</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Vraiment, nous nous posons la question : M. Clinton est-il bien informé des réalités rwandaises? En tous les cas, nous avons de graves doutes là-dessus, nous avons également de graves doutes sur la capacité de M. Clinton à décider ce qui se passe et ce qui devrait se passer ici au Rwanda, vu l'échec de l'ONU conduites par les Etats Unies en Somalie. Nous le disons franchement, tout ca est une action colonialiste cachée sous les drapeaux d'un mot : « Génocide ». Un mot sur lequel les Blancs, je veux dire : les valets des <i>inyenzi</i>, ne cessent d'insister, et qu'on ne peut pas utiliser qu'une fois que les gens sont tués de tous les côtés comme c'est, malheureusement, le cas au Rwanda et qui sera vite oublié si nous nous battons bien et obtenons la victoire... Non, M. Clinton, ce n'est pas comme ça qu'on fait la paix. Notre ministre de la défense, Augustin Bizimana, a expliqué clairement aux journalistes de la CNN qu'en réalité le Rwanda se battait contre l'Ouganda et que son président Muzeweni collaborait avec les Belges, selon ce que nous avons entendu au cours du journal de ce matin. M. Clinton ferait alors mieux de retourner en Arkansas, oui, en Arkansas, car vraiment il semble mieux comprendre la situation américaine que la situation africaine.</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Weiß Herr Clinton über die Realität in Ruanda Bescheid? Ich bezweifle es. Es ist auch sehr fragwürdig, ob Herr Clinton in der Lage ist zu entscheiden, was hier in Ruanda geschieht oder geschehen soll, wenn man daran denkt, dass die UNO in Somalia kläglich gescheitert ist. Was hier geschieht, ist nu rein weiterer kolonialistischer Übergriff, verschleiert von einem Wort: Genozid. Alle Weißen – die Diener der Kakerlaken – hören nicht auf, dieses Wort zu benutzen. Dabei kann man diese Bezeichnung gar nicht verwenden, wenn auf beiden Seiten Bezeichnung gar nicht verwenden, wenn auf beiden Seiten Leute umgebracht werden, wie es leider in Ruanda der Fall ist. Und sobald wir gesiegt haben, wird auch niemand mehr diese Bezeichnung verwenden... Nein, Herr Clinton, so macht man keinen Frieden. Unser Verteidigungsminister Augustin Bizimana erklärte den Journalisten von CNN ausführlich, dass Ruanda sich in Wirklichkeit im Krieg gegen Uganda befindet und Ugandas Präsident Museveni mit den Belgiern zusammenarbeitet. Das haben wir heute in der Nachrichten erfahren. Herr Clinton sollte besser nach Arkansas zurückkehren, ja, nach Arkansas. Denn er versteht selbstverständlich die Situation in Amerika besser als die in Africa. (“Hate Radio” 187-188)</p>
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		<p>population rwandaise... e... et la population américaine, nous avons des doutes pour que de savoir si ee... le... le... le peuple américain continuerait à soutenir la politique de monsieur Bill Clinton. (May 28-29, 1994, Kinyarwanda I: 10)</p>		
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7	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Friends, let us rejoice... The Inkotanyi have all perished... Friends, let us rejoice... God is fair... (June 20, 1994, English: 1)</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> « Muze twishime ncuti Inkotanyi zashize, muze twishime ncuti, ayi wee hey a Imana ntirenganya » (June 20, 1994, Kinyarwanda: 3)</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Muze twishime nshuti inkotanyi zashize, muze twishime nshuti Imana ntirenganya...</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Freuen wir uns, Freunde! Die Tutsi sind vernichtet! Freuen wir uns, Freunde! Gott ist immer gerecht! (“Hate Radio” 204)</p>
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8	<p><b>Kantano:</b> The Good Lord is really just, these evil doers, these terrorists, these people with suicidal tendencies will end up being exterminated. When I remember the number of corpses that I saw lying around in Nyamirambo yesterday alone; [...] When you look at them, you wonder what kind of people they are. In any case, let us simply stand firm and exterminate them, so that our children and grandchildren do not hear the word “<i>Inkotanyi</i>” ever again. (July 2, 1994, English: 1)</p>	<p><b>Transcript found but specific section in Kinyarwanda not identified</b></p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Imana ntirenganya...bariya bagome...nta shiti bazashira, jye ubwanjye niboneye imirambo irambaraye hariya i Nyamirambo...mu by’ukuri, bariya bantu sinzi uko bameze...sinzi ukuntu koko bameze...iyo umuntu abyitegereje yitonze aribaza « ariko bariya bantu ni bwoko ki? » Ntacyo ariko twikomereze. Twizirike umukanda hanyuma tubatsembe ku buryo abana bacu, abuzukuru bacu, n’abana b’abuzukuru bacu batazongera kumva burundu abantu bitwa «inkotanyi».</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Gott ist aber tatsächlich immer gerecht, und sie werden ganz bestimmt bald ausgerottet. Ich habe in Nyamirambo Leichen herumliegen sehen. Unter uns: Ich weiß nicht genau, was das für Leute sind. Wenn man sie so anschaut, fragt man sich: „Diese Leute, welche Rasse haben die überhaupt?“ Aber schauen wir lieber vorwärts. Reißen wir uns am Riemen und vernichten sie endlich. Damit unsere Kinder, unsere Enkelkinder und die Kinder unserer Enkelkinder nie mehr ihren Namen hören. (“Hate Radio” 204)</p>
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<p>9</p>	<p><b>Ananie Nkurunziza:</b> If I may, I will now go on to international news. In Uganda, fighting has intensified between Museveni's army and the opposition army operating in the North of the country. As we have always said, Museveni should be vigilant even though he continues to attack us. He must also know that today it is the others' turn, but tomorrow it will his.</p> <p>In Angola, they are talking about the upcoming summit for heads of state of the region. Apparently, the heads of state of the Great Lakes region will meet at the summit in discuss the Rwanda problem. The Rwanda problem is similar to that of Angola the only difference being that the Angola problem has been in existence for the last 19 years.</p> <p>In the other news, Yasser Arafat was received in Gaza, Palestine, with all the honours accorded to a head of state. He is due to preside over the swearing-in of the Government members in the city of Jericho. Yasser Arafat urged the Palestinian people not to worry about subsistence, because, as he said: "I shall never accept the lending policies imposed by the World Bank, as they are aimed at controlling out economies." As we have always said, "Assistance never comes on time." Yasser Arafat told the Palestinians: "You should back on your efforts, you should not count on the efforts of those who are trying trap us."</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p><b>Ananie Nkurunziza:</b> Permettez-moi de passer de l'actualité nationale à l'actualité internationale. En Uganda, les combats entre l'armée de Museveni et celle de l'opposition, opérant dans le Nord du pays ,s'intensifient. Comme nous l'avons toujours dit, Museveni devrait être vigilant même s'il continue à nous attaquer. Qu'il sache qu'aujourd'hui ce sont les autres, mais que demain ce sera son tour.</p> <p>En Angola, on parle du sommet qui réunira les chefs d'Etat de la région. Ce sommet réunira apparemment les chefs d'Etat de la région des Grands Lacs pour examiner le problème du Rwanda est similaire à celui de l'Angola à la seule différence que le problème angolais existe depuis dix-neuf ans.</p> <p>Autre sujet d'actualité, Yasser Arafat a été accueilli hier à Gaza, en Palestine, avec tous les honneurs dus à un chef d'Etat. Il doit présider les cérémonies de prestation de serment des membres du Gouvernement dans la ville de Jéricho. Yasser Arafat a demandé au peuple palestinien qu'il ne devrait pas s'inquiéter de sa subsistance, car, a-t-il déclaré : « je n'accepterai jamais les conditions d'octroi de crédit que la Banque mondiale m'impose, conditions qui visent à contrôler notre économie ». Nous l'avons toujours dit, « le secours ne vient jamais à temps ». Yasser Arafat a dit aux palestiniens : « Comptez sur vos propres efforts, ne comptez pas sur ceux qui veulent nous piéger ».</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Par ailleurs, une mauvaise nouvelle nous vient de la Caroline du Nord, un des Etats formant les Etats-Unis</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> En Angola, on parle du sommet qui réunira les chefs d'Etat de la région. Ce sommet réunira apparemment les chefs d'Etat de la région des Grands Lacs pour examiner le problème du Rwanda. Le problème du Rwanda est similaire a celui de l' Angola a la seule différence que le problème angolais existe depuis dix -neuf ans.</p> <p>Autre sujet d'actualité, Yasser Arafat a été accueilli hier a Gaza, en Palestine, avec tous les honneurs dus a un chef d'Etat. Il doit présider les cérémonies de prestation de serment des membres du Gouvernement dans la ville de Jéricho. 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Au Yémen, comme ce fut le cas pour notre pays, les Nations Unions avaient pris une décision demandant aux belligérants d'accepter un cessez-le-feu; cependant, la décision n' a pas été appliquée car I es combats se poursuivent dans ce pays. Le représentant de la Croix-Rouge Internationale a tire la sonnette</p>	<p><b>Ruggiu:</b> Man spricht von einem Gipfeltreffen in Angola, das alle Staatsoberhäupter der Region an einen Tisch bringen soll. Das Treffen führt die Staatsoberhäupter der Region der Großen Seen zusammen, offensichtlich, um die Probleme in Ruanda zu diskutieren. Die Probleme in Ruanda sind denen in Angola sehr ähnlich, mit dem Unterschied, dass sie in Angola schon seit 19 Jahren vorhanden sind. Eine weitere Neuigkeit ist, dass Jassir Arafat gestern in Gaza, Palästina, ehrenvoll empfangen wurde. Er wird in der Stadt Jericho den Zeremonien anlässlich der Vereidigung der Regierung vorsitzen. Jassir Arafat bittet das palästinensische Volk, sich keine Sorgen um seine Zukunft zu machen, denn, so erklärte er: „Ich werde die Versuche der Weltbank, unsere Wirtschaft zu kontrollieren, nicht akzeptieren.“ Wir haben bereits darauf hingewiesen, dass „die internationale Hilfe nie rechtzeitig kommt“. Jassir Arafat sagte den Palästinensern: „Vertraut auf eure eigene Kräfte und nicht denjenigen, die euch reinlegen wollen.“</p> <p>Außerdem erreichten uns heute traurige Nachrichten aus North Carolina in den USA, wo ein Flugzeug des Typs DC9 abstürzte und 18 Menschen mit sich in den Tod riss. Wir haben euch bereits vor ein paar Tagen von tragischen Flugzeugabstürzen berichtet, die Menschen das Leben kosteten. Ja, solche Dinge geschehen.</p> <p>Im Jemen, genau wie es in unserem Land vor einigen Monaten passierte, trafen die Vereinten Nationen einen Beschluss, der die Kriegsparteien zum Waffenstillstand auffordert. Der Beschluss zeigt aber keine Wirkung, denn die Gefechte im Land gehen weiter. Ein Vertreter des Internationalen Roten Kreuzes macht darauf aufmerksam, dass die zentrale Wasserstelle von Aden durch Einschüsse beschädigt worden ist und die Stadt mit 450.000 Einwohnern kein Trinkwasser hat.</p>
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<p>Also, we have received sad news from North Carolina, one of the States in the United States of America, where 18 people perished in a DC 9 [crash]. In recent days, we have reported plane crashes with loss of human lives; yes, that happened.</p> <p>In Yemen, as was the case in our country, the United Nations had taken a decision asking the warring parties to accept a cease-fire; however, the decision was not applied, as fighting still going on in the country. The the [sic] International Red Cross representative sounded the alarm regarding the fact that the water pumping station has been damaged by shelling and that the city, with a population of 450,000, is still without drinking water; the people risk dying of thirst. We should mention that the temperatures in that country are unlike those we experience here, because it is a hot country, where temperatures reach 40° whereas here, it is only 25°. Regarding the World Cup being held in the United States, in yesterday's match between Switzerland and Spain, Spain eliminated Switzerland by beating it 3-0. Switzerland is therefore eliminated. As I said earlier, it was a knock-out eliminated. Today, Saudi Arabia faces Sweden, while Romania faces Argentina. Those who are still able to secure batteries should follow those matches. I will end with a bicycle race known as the <i>Tour de France</i>. The Spaniard Miguel Andulene [sic]</p>	<p>d'Amérique, où il y a eu un accident d'avion de type DC 9 dans lequel 18 personnes ont péri. Ces derniers jours, nous vous parlions d'accidents d'avion, qui emportent des vies humaines ; ou, cela arrive aussi. Au Yémen, comme ce fut le cas pour notre pays, les Nations Unions avaient pris une décision demandant aux belligérants d'accepter un cessez-le-feu ; cependant, la décision n'a pas été appliquée car les combats se poursuivent dans ce pays. Le représentant de la Croix-Rouge Internationale a tiré la sonnette d'alarme sur le fait que le point de pompage d'eau a été endommagé par des tirs et que la ville habitée par 450 mille personnes reste sans eau potable ; la population risque de mourir de soif. Rappelons que la chaleur dans ce pays n'est pas comparable à celle que nous connaissons ici, car c'est un pays chaud où la température atteint 40° alors qu'ici elle n'est que de 25°. A propose de la coupe du monde qui se tient aux Etats-Unis, hier à l'issue de la rencontre qui a opposé la Suisse à l'Espagne, l'Espagne a éliminé la Suisse qu'elle a battue par trois buts à zéro. La Suisse a donc été éliminée. Comme je vous l'ai annoncé, le tournoi se joue en élimination directe. Dans le même cadre, l'Allemagne a battu la Belgique sur un score de trois buts à deux. La Belgique est également éliminée. Aujourd'hui l'Arabie Saoudite affronte la Suède, tandis que la Roumanie affrontera l'Argentine. Que ceux qui sont encore en mesure de se procurer des piles radios suivent ces rencontres. Je termine par la course cycliste appelée « Tour de France ». On</p>	<p>d'alarme sur le fait que le point de pompage d' eau a été endommagé par des tirs et que la ville habitée par 450 mille personnes reste sans eau potable; la population risque de mourir de soif. Rappelons que la chaleur dans ce pays n'est pas comparable a celle que nous connaissons ici, car c'est un pays chaud ou la température atteint 40° alors qu'ici elle n'est que de 25°.</p> <p>A propos de la coupe du monde qui se tient aux Etats-Unis, hier a l'issue de la rencontre qui a opposé la Suisse à l'Espagne, l'Espagne a éliminé la Suisse qu'elle a battue par trois buts a zéro. La Suisse a donc été éliminée. Comme je vous l'ai annoncé, le tournoi se joue en élimination directe. Dans le même cadre, l'Allemagne a battu la Belgique sur un score de trois buts a deux.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Je termine par la course cycliste appelée « Tour de France ». On pronostiquait sur la victoire de l'Espagnol Miguel Indurain du fait de sa réputation, nous-mêmes, nous l'envisagions ainsi, et qu'il sera suivi par le Suisse Tony Rominger, mais cela n'a pas été le cas. Hier au premier tour prévu sur une piste de 7 kilomètres 200 m, le britannique Chris Boardman a gagné la manche en une vitesse moyenne de 56km 152m par heure, endossant ainsi le maillot jaune réservé aux gagnants dans cette course cycliste.</p>	<p>Die Bevölkerung droht zu verdursten. Bedenken Sie, dass die Hitze in diesem Land mit den Temperaturen in unserem Land nicht vergleichbar ist. Im Jemen steigen die Temperaturen auf bis zu 40°C, während wir hier nur 25°C haben.</p> <p>Kommen wir zu den Fußballweltmeisterschaften in den USA: Im Spiel Schweiz gegen Spanien gestern gewann Spanien mit 3:0 Toren. Die Schweiz ist damit ausgeschieden, denn wie ich bereits erklärte, wird dieses Turnier nach einem direkten Ausscheidungsverfahren gespielt. Am gleichen Spieltag schlug Deutschland Belgien mit 3:1 Toren.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Kommen wir zu Tour de France. Bereits vor Beginn des Wettkampfs setzten alle auf einen Sieg des Spaniers Miguel Indurain an. Alle – sogar wir – dachten, er würde dabei harte Konkurrenz von Tony Rominger bekommen. Aber all das hat sich nicht bewahrheitet. Gestern siegt der Engländer Chris Boardman im Auftaktrennen auf einer Strecke von 7,2 Kilometern mit einer durchschnittlichen Geschwindigkeit von 56,152 Stundenkilometern und konnte sich nach diesem Etappensieg das Gelbe Trikot überziehen.</p> <p>(“Hate Radio” 206-208)</p>
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	<p>was expected to win due to his reputation – we think so too – followed by the Swiss, tony Rominger, but that was not the case. Yesterday, during the first stage, on a 7-kilometer 200 a country road, the British [Chris Boardman] won the stage at an average speed of 56 km 152m per hour , he thus won the race leader's yellow jersey. (July 3, 1994, English I: 23-25)</p>	<p>pronostiquait sur la victoire de l'Espagnol Miguel Andulene [<i>sic</i>] du fait de sa réputation, nous-mêmes, nous l'envisagions ainsi, et qu'il sera suivi par le Suisse Tony Rominger, mais cela n'a pas été le cas. Hier au premier tour prévu sur une piste de 7 kilomètres 200 m, le britannique (0) a gagné la manche en une vitesse moyenne de 56km 152m par heure, endossant ainsi le maillot jaune réservé aux gagnant dans cette course cycliste. (July 3, 1994, French I: 18-20)</p>		
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10	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Thank you, Ananie for the detailed reports. Regarding the Mundial taking place in the United States of America, I should add that a player has been assassinated; a star Colombian player was murdered in the city of Medellin by people accusing him of having, inadvertently, caused a goal against his team. That's such strange behavior on the part of the fans who shot him at close range! He fell down dead. (July 3, 1994, English I: 25)</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Merci Ananie pour ces informations détaillées. A propos de ce Mundial qui se déroule aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique, j'ajouterai qu'un joueur a été assassiné ; il s'agit d'un joueur colombien de renom qui a été tué dans la ville de Medeline par des gens qui lui reprochaient d'avoir, par inadvertance, fait encaissé un but à son équipe. Quel drôle de comportement de ces fans qui ont tiré sur lui à bout portant ! Il est tombé raide mort. (July 3, 1994, French I: 20)</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Permettez-moi, Georges... hari icyo nagirango nongereho kuri mundial yo muri Amerika. Hari umukinnyi w'ikirangirire warasiwe mu mujyi wa Medelin n'abantu bamuziza ko yatsindishije ikipe ye. Hahaha. Abafana baragwira, ngo bamurashe urusasu mu musaya ahita arambarara, hahaha</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Lass mich kurz etwas hinzufügen, Georges... was diese Weltmeisterschaften in den USA angeht. Ich möchte erwähnen, dass einer der Spieler. Er wurde nach seiner Rückkehr nach Kolumbien in der Stadt Medellín von Leuten umgebracht, die ihn beschuldigten, mit seinem Eigentor das Ausscheiden von Kolumbien verschuldet zu haben. Was für ein seltsames Verhalten. Sie schossen aus nächster Nähe auf ihn, sodass er auf der Stelle tot umfiel. Das Mikro gehört dir, Georges. (“Hate Radio” 208)</p>
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11	<p><b>Nöel Hitimana:</b> People say... “if you’re going to fart... it should stink”. The best thing to do is to produce a really foul smell. (McCoy 88)</p>	<p><b>Transcript found but specific section in Kinyarwanda not identified</b> ---</p> <p><b>Nöel Hitimana:</b> Tant mieux s’il l’on parle de vous. On dit ... (il bougonne) ... que quand on pète, il vaut mieux dégager une mauvaise odeur, il ne faut pas le faire en évitant de faire du bruit. Quand une réalité existe, on en parle. (April 3, 1994, French: 9)</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Nk’uko bavuga usuze aranutsa, ndetse bikanasakuza... Quand une réalité existe, on en parle ... n’est-ce pas Georges ?</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Wie man so schön sagt: Wenn man furzt, soll es wenigstens richtig stinken, man soll nicht furzen, ohne dabei richtig viel Lärm zu machen. (“Hate Radio” 185)</p>
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12	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Do not lose sight of what those people are, you must know that they are, they are the ones who killed your children, who assassinated our President, the [<i>sic</i>] are the ones who are killing babies in Kigali, Butare, Byumba, Kibungo, everywhere... Do not lose sight of them, keep an eye on them, be you an old woman, an old man, a child, huh... keep that small thought in your hearts, know how to recognize that those who look at you while laughing, with a snide chuckle, who they [really] are. They of an unequalled viciousness, they have gone beyond human comprehension, people do not know how to describe them, as they are hyenas among hyenas, because they are meaner than rhinoceros. (July 3, 1994, English I: 13)</p>	<p><b>Kantano :</b> ibyho zibabwiye mwemere kugira ngo mudapfa ariko mumenye yuko mumenye abo bantu abo ari bo mubamenye abo ari bon ibo baduhekuye, batwiciye Umukuru w'igihugu, ni bo barimo bica impinja za Kigali, za Kutare za Butare za Byumba, za Kibungo hose. Mubarebe mubacunge, ari umukecuru, ari umusaza ari umwana ee mubike ako kantu mu mutima mumenye abo babsekera n'agatwenge k'uburyarya abo ari bo, ni abagome kabuhariwe barengeje ubwenge noneho nta wamenya ii ukuntu noneho umuntu azabita, ni impyisi mu zindi kuko barengeje ubugome isatura. (July 3, 1994, Kinyarwanda I : 9) ... ne perdez pas de vue ce que sont ces gens, sachez qui ils sont, ce sont eux qui ont tué nos enfants, qui ont assassiné notre Président, ce sont eux qui tuent des bébés à Kigali, à Butare, à Byumba, à Kibungo, partout... Ne les perdez pas de vue, surveillez-les, que vous soyez une vieille femme, un vieil homme, un enfant, hein... gardez cette petite chose dans votre cœur, sachez bien reconnaître ceux-là qui vous regardent en riant, avec un petit rire plein de malice, ce qu'ils sont. Ils sont d'une férocité inégalable, ils ont dépassé ce que peut imaginer l'intelligence humaine, on ne sait plus désormais comment les qualifier, puisque ce sont des hyènes, car ils sont plus méchants que le rhinocéros. (July 3, 1994, French I: 10-11)</p>	<p><b>Kantano :</b> Ziracyahari ziruzuye, nibo bishe abana banyu, barashe Perezida, nibo bica ibibondo mu mugwi wa Kigali, i Butare, i Byumba, i Kibungo, mu gihugu hose...Ntimubakureho ijisho, mubacungire hafi, n'ubwo waba uri umukecuru, umusaza, cyangwa umwana, mubizirikane ku mutima, mubamenye abo bose babishongoraho, n'agatwenge kuzuye uburyarya. Kuko bafite ubugome burenze ukwemera, bafite ubugome burenze ubwenge bwa muntu, ntawe ukimenya uko yabita, kuko ni impyisi mu zindi mpyisi, barengeje ubugome isatura</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Aber es gibt noch welche! Sie haben unsere Kinder umgebracht, unseren Präsidenten haben sie getötet, und sie töten sogar unsere Babys in Kigali, in Butare, in Byumba, in Kibungo, überall. Verliert sie nicht aus den Augen, überwacht sie, verfolgt sie! Egal ob ihr eine Frau, ein alter Mann oder ein Kind seid ... Denkt an die Leute, die euch lächelnd anschauen, mit diesem böartigen, kleinen Lächeln. Ihre Brutalität hat längst die menschliche Vorstellungskraft überschritten – wir wissen gar nicht, wie wir sie noch bezeichnen können. Sie sind wie Hyänen unter Hyänen, und ihre Abscheulichkeit übersteigt sogar die des Nashorns.“ (“Hate Radio” 184)</p>
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13	<p><b>Kantano:</b> One hundred thousand young men must be recruited rapidly. They should all stand up so that we kill the Inkotanyi and exterminate them, all the easier that... [<i>sic</i>] the reason we will exterminate them is that they belong to one ethnic group. Look at the person's height and his physical appearance. Just look at his small nose and then break it.</p> <p><i>(Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimann 135)</i></p> <p><b>According to court transcripts from broadcast on June 3, 1994 but missing from/not found in English transcript.</b></p>	<p><b>Transcript found but specific section in Kinyarwanda not identified</b></p>	<p><b>Kantano :</b> Ni ubwoko bumwe kandi bugomba gushira muri iki gihugu. Nimuhura n'umuntu mumwitegereze, murebe indeshyo, uko asa, niba afite akazuru gato mukavune.</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Es geht hier um eine Rasse, und Ruanda muss von ihr befreit werden. Schaut euch also jeden gut an, schaut auf seine Größe und sein Aussehen, schaut euch seine hübsche, feine Nase an – und dann zertrümmert sie.</p> <p>(“Hate Radio” 200)</p>
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14	<p><b>Section not included in English transcript for April 3, 1994</b></p>	<p><b>Nöel Hitimana:</b> Vous devez bien contrôler vos dépenses, pour que votre enfant ne manque pas de ... j'allais dire de patates douces, mais ici à Kigali les patates douces sont plus chères que les pommes de terre ! Le prix d'un kilo de patates douces est le double du prix d'un kilo de pommes de terre ! La situation est difficile. Ne parlons même pas de bananes, là c'est encore plus grave. Avant, on achetait un régime de bananes à 100 francs et maintenant, on l'achète à 800 francs. La situation est devenue très difficile. Elle est difficile, on ne peut pas se permettre d'acheter des patates douces ou des bananes ! Pour le moment, nous essayons de survivre avec du riz, parce que même le prix des haricots a augmenté.</p> <p>J'ai demandé le prix d'un kilo. On m'a répondu : 75 ou 80 francs.</p> <p>-Et le prix d'un kilo de patates douces ?</p> <p>-40 ou 50 francs hum !</p> <p>-Et un kilo de bananes ? – 40 ou 50 francs, hum !</p> <p>(April 3, 1994, French: 8)</p>	<p><b>Bemeriki:</b> Oui, chers auditeurs, les temps sont difficiles. Et même si vous trouvez du sucre sur le marché à Kigali, il est cher, il est très cher. Vous devez bien contrôler vos dépenses pour que votre enfant ne manque pas de... j'allais dire des patates douces, mais ici à Kigali les patates douces sont plus chères que les pommes de terre! Le prix d'un kilo de patates douces est le double du prix d'un kilo de pommes de terre! La situation est alors difficile, et nous ne parlons même pas des bananes, non, puisque là, c'est encore plus grave. Aujourd'hui j'ai demandé le prix d'un kilo de bananes, et on m'a répondu: «40 ou 50 francs.» Qui peut permettre de s'acheter ca?</p>	<p><b>Bemeriki:</b> Ja, liebe Hörer, die Zeiten sind hart. Falls man noch Zucker auf dem Markt in Kigali findet, ist er sehr, sehr teuer. Ihr müsst darauf achten, wie viel ihr ausgebt, damit eure Kinder nicht zu wenig – ich wollte gerade sagen: Süßkartoffeln haben, aber hier in Kigali sind die Süßkartoffeln teurer als die Kartoffeln! Ein Kilo Süßkartoffeln ist doppelt so teuer wie ein Kilo Kartoffeln! Die Lage ist schlecht. Und von den Bananen gar nicht zu reden! Denn da sieht es noch viel schlimmer aus. Heute fragte ich auf dem Markt nach dem Preis für ein Kilo Bananen, und man sagte mir: „40 oder 50 Francs.“</p> <p>(“Hate Radio” 201-202)</p>
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15	<p><b>Kantano:</b> We shall fight them and we defeat them, that is a truth. If they do not pay attention they will be decimated. I have remarked it, they are in the minority. The <i>Inkotanyi</i> form a minority group in Rwanda. Tutsi are very few. Even if we used to say that they are 10% may be the war has taken away 2%. They are now 8%. Will they go on committing suicide? Won't they be exterminated?</p> <p><i>(Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana 136; May 15, 1994, English: 4)</i></p>	<p><b>Transcript found but specific section in Kinyarwanda not identified</b></p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Ni agatsiko gakomoka mu baturage bake cyane bitwa abatutsi. Abatutsi ni abantu bake cyane. Ndetse n'ubwo dutekereza ko bangana nk'icumi kw'ijana, iyi ntambara yamaze nka babiri ku ijana...yamaze gukuraho nka babiri ku ijana, ubwo ni ukuvuga ko hasigaye nk'umunani ku ijana, ariko se ! Aba bantu bazakomeza kwiyahura, bashora urugamba rwo kwiyahura ku bantu babarusha ubwinshi, ntabwo koko babona ko bazashira burundu?Ariko noneho za nkotanyi zanerefonaga zirihe ? Hein ? Ubanza zarashize burundu ?</p>	<p><b>Kantano:</b> Diese Sippschaft besteht nur aus seiner sehr kleinen Gruppe... ich spreche von den Tutsi. Die Tutsi sind nicht sehr zahlreich. Sie machten früher vielleicht zehn Prozent unserer Gesellschaft aus. Aber dieser Krieg hat sie bestimmt um zwei Prozent reduziert. Zwei Prozent weniger, also sind nur noch acht Prozent. Was nun? Diese paar Prozent geben den selbstmörderischen Kampf nicht auf, den sie gegen eine große Gruppe wie die Hutu führen. Ist es nicht logisch, dass sie dabei vernichtet werden? All die Tutsi, die früher bei uns angerufen haben, wo sind sie hin? He? Ah! Sie wurden bestimmt ausgelöscht</p> <p><i>(“Hate Radio” 203-204)</i></p>
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16	<p>[the inyenzi] grabbed pregnant women, knocked them unconscious with a stick, and sliced open their stomach to extract the fetus, which, in turn, they tossed on the ground and killed after having sliced its stomach open too          (Broadcast from June 3, 1994 qtd. in Kellow &amp; Steeves 121)  <b>Original not found in French or English Transcript</b></p>	<p><b>Not found in original transcript</b></p>	<p><b>Section not included in French version of script, but present in performance</b></p>	<p><b>Bemeriki:</b> Man hat uns berichtet, wie die Kakerlaken schwangere Frauen mit einem Knüppel erschlugen und ihren Bauch öffneten, um den Fötus herauszureißen. Und der Fötus wurde auf die Erde gelegt und getötet, nachdem man auch ihm den Bauch geöffnet hatte.          (“Hate Radio” 190)</p>
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## 7.5: Production Notes

Preview: Bregenz, Austria Kunsthaus Bregenz, November 2, 2011

Rwanda Premiere: Kigali, November 16-18, 2011

German Premiere: HAU, Berlin, December 1, 2011

Cast:

Figure	2011 Premiere Bregenz 2011 Premiere Kigali 2011 HAU	2019 Ghent Performance <sup>294</sup>
DJ Joseph	Afazali Dewaele	Afazali Dewaele
Georges Ruggiu	Sébastien Foucault	Sébastien Foucault
Kantano Habimana	Dorcy Rugamba	Diogène Ntarindwa
Valérie Bemeriki	Nancy Nkusi	Bwanga Pilipili

Video:

Figure	Actor
Georges Ruggiu	Sébastien Foucault
Journalist	Estelle Marion
Female Survivor	Nancy Nkusi
Investigator – Exile – Survivor	Dorcy Rugamba
Valérie Bemeriki	Nancy Nkusi

Production Team:

Book – Direction	Milo Rau
Dramaturgy – Conceptual Management	Jens Dietrich
Stage – Costume Design	Anton Lukas
Video	Marcel Bächtiger
Sound – Video Assistance	Jens Baudisch
Research Collaboration	Eva-Maria Bertschy

Actor Biographies:

Actor	Role	Biography
Afazali Dewaele	DJ Joseph	Afazali Dewaele was born in 1978 in Rwanda and was adopted by a Belgian family as a child, where he grew up and eventually studied acting and directing at the Conservatoire Royal de Liège. In 2009, Dewaele portrayed a protagonist in Phillippe van Leeuw’s film about the Rwandan genocide <i>Le jour où Dieu est parti en voyage</i> , it was during filming that Dewaele returned to Rwanda and met his biological family for the first time (“Press Kit: Hate Radio” 9).
Sébastien Foucault	Sébastien Foucault	Sébastien Foucault was born in France and studied French literature at the Sorbonne in Paris, France, and acting and directing at the Conservatoire Royal de Liège. He has undertaken intensive collaborations with the Belgian director

<sup>294</sup> As a part of the festival put on by NTGent, Kunstencentrum Vooruit, and CAMPO “Same-Same-But-Different” (February 20 to March 3, 2019), *Hate Radio* returned to the stage for three performances between February 26 to 28, 2019. My own reflections on the production itself are thus largely taken from the performances on February 26 and 27 as well as an existing video found on the IIPM’s website filmed during the initial performances in December 2011.

		François Bloch, specializing in documentary theatre. Foucault has been one of Rau's frequent collaborators since the creation of the IIPM in 2007 ("Press Kit: Hate Radio" 10).
Dorcy Rugamba	Kantano Habimana	Dorcy Rugamba is one of the best-known Rwandan actors working in Europe, he has taken part in <i>Rwanda 94</i> , <i>The Investigation</i> , and other productions. Rugamba lost most of his family in the genocide. Rugamba, who was in university when the genocide began, fled to Belgium through Burundi in 1994. Where he studied at the Royal Conservatory of Liège, participated in a number of Groupov productions, founded Urwintore (2001), and in 2012 founded the Rwanda Arts Initiative; he currently works between Belgium and Rwanda. Rugamba left <i>Hate Radio</i> after its initial run of the production at Berlin's HAU (Hebbel am Ufer) in Berlin (prior to the Theaterreffen invitation and subsequent tour) and was replaced by Ntarindwa in the role of Kantano Habimana. According to Rau, Rugamba could no longer psychologically endure playing the role night after night ("Er konnte es psychisch nicht mehr ertragen") (Wildermann).
Diogène Ntarindwa	Kantano Habimana	Diogène Ntarindwa is not only an actor, but during the Rwandan Genocide he was a member of the primarily Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). In an interview with the German newspaper <i>Die Welt</i> , he is quoted as saying: "Ich war damals Teil der Tutsi-Rebellenarmee, die in Ruanda einmarschiert ist. Angst vor den Völkermord-Milizen hatte ich nicht. Ich war ja da, um sie zu bekämpfen. Insofern fühle ich mich als Zeuge, nicht als Überlebender" ["I was then a member of the Tutsi rebel army that marched into Rwanda. I wasn't afraid of the genocide militia. Because I was there to fight them. Therefore, I feel like a witness, not a survivor."] (Keim). Ntarindwa also studied law at the University of Butare and acting at the Conservatoire Royal de Liège. He is a member of the Belgian-Rwandan group Groupov and performed in <i>Rwanda 94</i> , and is also a playwright, his play <i>Carte d'identité</i> was invited to Festival d'Avignon in 2009 ("Press Kit: Hate Radio").
Nancy Nkusi	Valérie Bemeriki	Born in 1986, in 1994, Nancy Nkusi and her family fled Rwanda to Belgium, where she grew up without really knowing what happened in Rwanda (Graton & Nkusi). Nkusi, by 2014, had also left the production, because the experience had become too psychologically taxing for the performer to continue. In an interview with the Montreal newspaper <i>Le Devoir</i> she explained that, from an emotional perspective, the production was very difficult for her and although she recognizes the production is "necessary" ( <i>nécessaire</i> ), after the Kigali performance, she could no longer take on the role ("Gros plan"). She has performed in various film and theatre productions, including <i>Gamblers</i> (2011), written and directed by her <i>Hate Radio</i> co-star Dorcy Rugamba ("Press Kit: Hate Radio" 11).
Bwanga Pilipili	Valérie Bemeriki	Bwanga Pilipili was born in 1978 in the Kivu region of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, she lives and works in Belgium and is a member of the street art company Les Rougisseurs. Pilipili also works as a playwright ( <i>Datcha Congo</i> , 2018; an adaptation of Chekhov's <i>Cherry Orchard</i> ) and has acted on both stage and screen ("Press Kit: Hate Radio" 10-11).
Estelle Marion	Journalist (prologue and epilogue)	Estelle Marion grew up in Brussels, Belgium with a Rwandan mother. She studied acting in Brussels and has worked as an actor in Belgium since 1973. She lost members of her family during the genocide and since then has worked intensively on artistic projects about the genocide. She is a member of Groupov and was involved as an actor and coauthor of <i>Rwanda 94</i> ("Press Kit: Hate Radio" 11).

Incomplete List of *Hate Radio* Tour Locations:

	<b>City, Country</b>	<b>Date MM.YYYY</b>		<b>City, Country</b>	<b>Date MM.YYYY</b>
1	Bregenz, Austria	11.2011	28	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	10.2013
2	Kigali, Rwanda	11.2011	29	Cape Town, South Africa	02.2014
3	Zurich, Switzerland	01.2012	30	Johannesburg, South Africa	02.2014
4	Luzern, Switzerland	02.2012	31	Maputo, Mosambik	02.2014
5	Berlin, Germany	11.2011 05.2012 01.2016	32	Glasgow, Scotland	03.2014
6	Brüssel, Belgium	03.2012 09.2014	33	Montreal, Canada	05.2014
7	Basel, Switzerland	04.2012	34	Bogotá, Colombia	06.2014
8	München, Germany	04.2012	35	Geneva, Switzerland	09.2014
9	Bern, Switzerland	04.2012	36	Terni, Italy	09.2014
10	Groningen, The Netherlands	08.2012	37	Brest, France	01.2015
11	Vienna, Austria	09.2012	38	Nanterre, France	03.2015
12	Hamburg, Germany	10.2012	39	Athens, Greece	05.2015
13	Siegen, Germany	10.2012	40	Venice	08.2015
14	Kortrijk, Belgium	11.2012	41	Madrid, Spain	09.2015
15	Paris, France	12.2012	42	Nitra, Slovakia	09.2015
16	Oslo, Norway	03.2013	43	Milan, Italy	11.2015 12.2018
17	Szczecin, Poland	04.2013	44	Saarbrücken, Germany	05.2016
18	Lisbon, Portugal	05.2013	45	Istanbul, Turkey	05.2016
19	Winterthur, Switzerland	05.2013	46	Luxembourg City, Luxembourg	09.2016
20	Cologne, Germany	05.2013	47	Montpellier, France	10.2016
21	Copenhagen, Denmark	05.2013	48	Clermont-Ferrand, France	01.2017
22	Shizuoka, Japan	06.2013	49	Budapest, Hungary	04.2017
23	Barcelona, Spain	07.2013	50	Potenza, Italy	12.2018
24	Avignon, France	07.2013	51	Ghent, Belgium	02.2019
25	Ljubljana, Slovenia	08.2013	52	Nancy, France	11.2019
26	Riga, Latvia	09.2013	53	Reims, France	02.2021
27	Krakow, Poland	10.2013			

## Independent Productions:

Director	Date DD.MM.Y	Performance Venue	Project Description	Special Notes
Stefan Herrmann	22.09.2012	Freies Werkstatt Theater; Cologne, Germany	Staged reading of original German text of <i>Hate Radio</i>	Performed by the acting students of Alanus Hochschule für Kunst und Gesellschaft (a private art school with campuses in both Mannheim and Alfter).
Derek Goldman	17.06.2013	Theater of the Voiceless: International Symposium and Festival of Documentary Theatre"; Georgetown University; Washington, DC, USA	A staged reading of <i>Hate Radio</i> as part of the "Theater of the Voiceless" conference, in which Rau's dramaturg Eva-Maria Bertschy took part in the panel "Documentary Theater: Implications for Policy and Post-Conflict Reconciliation"	English translation of the German text staged by Derek Goldman and The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University, featuring Caroline Clay, Crashonda Edwards, Rick Foucheux, Kenyatta Rogers, Erika Rose, Joshua Street, Baakari Wilder, and Michael Anthony Williams. The conference also featured staged readings of <i>small, small world</i> (dir. Serge Seiden) and <i>Worst Case</i> (dir. Jenny Lord).
Jennifer Bakst	18.10.2013	Vibrant 2013; Finborough Theatre; London, England	A rehearsed reading of <i>Hate Radio</i> performed as part of the Vibrant 2013 Festival	The performance included a new English translation by John Neilan. During rehearsals, Bakst brought a genocide survivor (identified as Eric) to talk to the cast about his experiences in the Rwandan Genocide ("Jennifer Bakst").