

MILO RAU. AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

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Abstract: The study is dedicated to the work of the Swiss director Milo Rau, which is characterised by an understanding of art as a tool of communication. Several projects are presented in the study, with the author focussing on the phenomenon of reenactment and preenactment, their starting points, points of contact, and composition techniques. Given the nature of Rau's work, the study includes a definition of these terms in relation to documentary theatre, from which some of the techniques are drawn, but with respect to final form, the future is a distinctive element of reenactment. The centrepiece of the text is an analysis of the preenactment *The Congo Tribunal*, in which Rau reflects on three cases of human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, concerning the mining of precious minerals, particularly coltan and cassiterite, massacres, and population displacement.

Key words: Milo Rau, *The Congo Tribunal*, preenactment, social sculpture, postcolonialism

Swiss director Milo Rau, who studied sociology alongside Germanic and Romance languages and literature,¹ understands theatre, or performance art, in its extended form – as a tool of communication. In this respect, he concurs with the German artist and art theorist Joseph Beuys, who also regarded art as a tool of social change through artistic communication.² Milo Rau publicly espouses such a concept through his artistic work on the platform of the International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM).³ He founded it in 2007 and its main starting point is working with performativity within socio-political-artistic interactions – communication. The IIPM and its activities can be regarded at several levels: as theatre productions, films, books, exhibitions, and events.⁴ German film director Alexander Kluge called Rau's work "real theatre": "The theatre of Milo Rau belongs to reality itself. Also, to a functioning resistance towards false realities. (...). Theatre where imagination weapons of perception and weapons of articulation can be forged."⁵ Rau understands realism as a specific tension that allows you to enter into an image as if you were in a waking dream.⁶

¹ Milo Rau studied, for example, under the French-Bulgarian philosopher Tsvetan Todorov or the French socio-anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu.

² For more see BEUYS, J. – HARLAN, V. *What Is Art?* Clairwiev Books, 2004, pp. 21–27.

³ IIPM is an art group that operates between Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland. The emblem of the group is the director Milo Rau, who is the author, director or actor of all projects, external members are invited to participate in its projects. The area of collaborators includes, for example, dramaturg Stefan Bläske, dramaturg Eva Maria Bertschy, set and costume designer Anton Lukas, cameraman and video artist Marc Stefan.

⁴ For more on the work of Milo Rau and the IIPM see: <<http://international-institute.de/en/news/>>.

⁵ KLUGE, A. – GRONEMEYER, N. Tschukowskis Telefon. Umwege zum Realismus. [Interview]. In GRONEMEYER, N. – STEGEMANN, B. (eds.). *Lob des Realismus. Die Debatte*. Berlin : Theater der Zeit, 2017. Cit. according to SZATKOWSKI, J. *A Theory of Dramaturgy*. Routledge, 2019, p. 272.

⁶ RAU, M. *Global Realismus. Global Realism*. Berlin : Verbrecher Verlag, 2018, p. 161.

Civic engagement expressed through artistic means is essential to IIPM projects. A characteristic feature is the initial situation, which draws mainly from the near but also distant past. Some of Milo Rau's most distinctive projects include *Breivik's Statement* and *Five Easy Pieces*. The former was launched just after the events of 2012 and was literally a probe into the thoughts of Norwegian far-right mass murderer Anders Breivik, who killed 77 children on the Norwegian island of Utøya. The minimalist framework of the project was created by actress Sascha O. Soydan, who cited the killer's thoughts, or rather sketched their thought horizon. The project *Five Easy Pieces* was created in 2016 in collaboration with the art centre CAMPO.⁷ The main theme was one of the most traumatic events in Belgium's modern history: the case of a serial killer and child molester Marc Dutroux, sentenced to life imprisonment for the murders of four minor girls he raped, tortured, and murdered. The real event culminated in massive demonstrations when, alongside the case, huge corruption scandals were brought to light, and several members of the Belgian government resigned. The production was not an exact reconstruction of past events, based on the principles of documentary theatre, rather it was closer to reenactment, with the event portrayed through child actors.⁸

From both examples it is obvious that Milo Rau is attracted to traumatising moments – this dimension is strongly represented in his other projects. These are often expanded by outputs in the form of a book monograph or a film, which do not work as documentary derivatives of the projects per se but serve as supporting points or documents that deepen the issues at hand. They are captured through a different medium and in a different quality, i.e., in a different communication structure. One such complex project is *The Congo Tribunal* (2017), which, like the term reenactment, is discussed below.

Documentary Theatre

Hans-Thies Lehmann has been reflecting on the genre of documentary theatre since the 1960s, first through an analysis of docudrama, that “confronts a similar kind of difficulty as every historical drama attempting the impossible: namely, how to represent the historically already known events as uncertain and to be decided upon only in the course of the dramatic procedure. Suspense is not located in the progress of events but is an objective, intellectual, mostly ethical one: it is not a matter of a dramatically narrated, “discussed” world. (...) What is so forward-looking about the documentary theatre is less the desire for direct political action, and even less its conventional dramaturgy, than a trait likely to provoke rejection and criticism (...).”⁹ The theoretical starting point, where the text, i.e., the drama, is the vehicle for genre anchoring, comes to the fore again. Hans-Thies Lehmann's analysis of documentary theatre relies on its construction and specificities. The debatable claim that political

⁷ CAMPO operates as an arts club in Ghent, Belgium. In its productions space is given to a wide range of artists, such as Florentina Holzinger, Tim Etchells, Gob Squad, Philippe Quesne, Sarah Vanhee, Anna Franziska Jäger, Jaha Koo. For more see: <<https://www.campo.nu/en>>.

⁸ Milo Rau interpreted the story through eight actors and actresses, seven of whom were children. See more: <<http://international-institute.de/en/five-easy-pieces-2/>>.

⁹ LEHMANN, H.-T. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Taylor and Francis, 2006, pp. 55–56.

action is not important works in two directions – one towards staging as an aesthetic framework and the other towards the nature of documentary theatre without political action.

The foundations of documentary theatre can be looked upon as a source ideological material, which itself refers to the genre nature of documents and facts. This type of drama mostly captures/-ed historical events¹⁰ condensed into several-hour long productions. Documentary theatre also featured productions reconstructing court trials, with the dramatic aspect prevailing. The focal point was the historical event retold in dramatic language, in the subjugation, so to speak, of the conventionally perceived dramatic work.

It was not until the 1990s, when the shifts in the staging practice became more pronounced and Hans-Werner Kroesinger staged his documentary project Q & A – Questions and Answers (1996), but the projects of Rimini Protokoll or She She Pop theatre group had the most profound impact and response. Their performative pieces, along with documentary productions, were characterised by working with factography, but the most obvious shift occurred in their composition techniques, strongly determined by the work with new media. Staging practice and performativity range became much more important than the dramatic text, whose documentary nature no longer determined staging methods.

Reenactment

Reenactment as a concept is a phenomenon in many fields, and its characteristics, content, and formal anchoring range widely. What defines it in broad terms is the past and its performative treatment. The fundamental character is created by living history, that is, a field where the past is replicated in the present. Event realisation through reenactment is crucial in relation to its meaning. One of its most popular forms is historical reenactment. The latter is in many cases presented in a nostalgic or romanticising spirit, and these reenactments are mostly carried out by history enthusiasts in the reconstruction of specific events. These were predominantly war themes, with military equipment, real uniforms, or plausible replicas of them and, of course, the event was often linked to a specific geographical location where the war or battle in question took place.¹¹ Initially, this approach was criticised for lack of factographic accuracy, as it favoured atmosphere and experience over a strict adherence to historical facts, utilising a carnivalesque, performative approach.¹²

A completely opposed form are artistic reenactments that cite other artistic events or happenings. Their realisation is not only linked to a historical event, but also the artistic reality comes to the fore. For example, *Seven Easy Pieces* by Marina Abramović

¹⁰ In the context of European theatre, these were mainly themes such as the holocaust, the democratisation processes around 1989, or the trials of Adolf Eichmann or the Nuremberg trials.

¹¹ For more on military or other forms of reenactment see AGNEW, V. What is the reenactment. In *Criticism*, 2004, Vol. 46, Issue 3, Article 2. Available at: <<https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1151&context=criticism>>.

¹² For more on historical reenactment see JOHNSON, K. Performing pasts for present purposes: reenactment as embodied, performative history. In DEAN, D. – MEERZON, Y. – PRINCE, K. (eds.) *History, memory, performance. Studies in International Performance*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 36–52. Available at: <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/23414/>.

are worth mention. In 2005, the artist realised a series of seven reenactments at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Over the course of a week, she would dedicate each evening to a well-known, seminal happening or performance: Bruce Neuman – *Body Pressure* (1974), Vito Acconci – *Seedbed* (1972), Valie Export – *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (1969), Gina Pain – *The Conditioning* (1973), Joseph Beuys – *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965), and her own performances, *Lips of Thomas* (1975), and *Entering the Other Side* (2005). Marina Abramović's reactivation of these pieces, in which she had never participated and only knew them from documentation, ushered in the theme of a new documentation based on reenactment.¹³

Milo Rau's reenactment may evoke one of the starting points of documentary theatre by exposing the event itself. However, in his realisation, the dramatic quality of a concrete situation is subdued by a detailed reconstruction, and through the artistic reality of the reenactment, it recalls, portrays, and again "replicates," from his perspective, crucial historical-political-cultural events. One of Rau's noteworthy early reenactments was the project *The Last Days of the Ceaușescu* (2009), based on a reconstruction of the trial and death of the Romanian dictator and his wife in 1989; another was *Hate Radio* (2011), reflecting on the political oppression in Rwanda, where genocide supported by a radio station took place in 1994. His reenactment of *The Moscow Trials* (Sakharov Center in Moscow, 2013)¹⁴ that referred to Stalinist purges and rigged trials of the late 1930s, was an immediate response to the verdict in a high-profile trial of the members of the Pussy Riot art group. In 2012, the group gave a "concert" at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow: five hooded members entered the Orthodox church and sang a punk song with the chorus: "Mother of God, rid us of Putin." Their action was both an outright criticism of Vladimir Putin and the suppression of human rights, and at the same time pointed to Putin's links with the Orthodox dignitary Kirill. On 17 August 2012, The Pussy Riot members, namely Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Yekaterina Samutsevich, and Mariya Alyokhina, were charged with insulting believers, blasphemy, agitation against the Russian nation and rioting, and were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 16 to 24 months. *The Moscow Trials* were characterised by an anti-illusionary approach based on political theatre with a detailed event reconstruction. The three-day project raised questions as to whether President Putin was violating cultural policy and freedom of expression, or whether it was really art that insulted the sensibilities of the believers.¹⁵

By realising the above reenactments, Milo Rau emphasised specific events and highlighted their fundamental impact on our history, thus giving his narrative a new intensity. However, it was not a purely artistic representation interpreting a real event. On the contrary, he resigned himself to postmodern analytical interpretations. Instead, he portrayed a given fact – an actual event – and the artistic gesture was manifested in its re-existence and realisation, which could be described as an accurate replica of it.

¹³ For more see BENZAKUEN-GAUTIER, S. ART. In *The Routledge Handbook of Reenactment Studies*, 2019, pp. 16–20.

¹⁴ The Sakharov Center (founded in 1994) is dedicated mainly to research and archival activities in the field of crimes of the communist regime, the history of the labour camps – gulags and its victims. In 2014, the Centre came into conflict with the Foreign Agents Act. In it, Vladimir Putin ordered all organisations or individuals to use the foreign agent designation if their funding came from abroad.

¹⁵ For more see *The Moscow Trials*: <<http://international-institute.de/en/the-moscow-trials/>>.

This artistic strategy focuses more on the reflection of society from the perspective of civic engagement and the socio-political situation, where art is both a fiction and a replica portraying reality, rather than on the achievement of artistic goals. Through a specific event which is given weight in the form of a reenactment, Milo Rau creates a performative hybrid on the border between performing arts and performance art. The liminal nature of reenactment represents the merging or fusion of artistic reality with lived reality. The concept of performativity is both self-referential and constitutive, creating an impression of reality. However, with respect to time variable, he thinks of it in a Hegelian spirit: in it, history appears first as the development of an individual's consciousness, as a compressed reproduction of the stages through which human consciousness passes, then he understands the development of society in terms of self-awareness, and finally, through self-awareness, he retrospectively understands historical development as an outcome of human activity. As the Czech philosopher Jan Zouhar notes of Georg Hegel's phenomenology: "here is an opportunity to analyse (...) and assess their significance in the light of what humanity has already achieved and what it can achieve."¹⁶ The described philosophical concept of time contains three basic horizons – past, present, future. According to the concept of the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, it is successive time, where the present is no longer a matter of what is and what was: the present is also a challenge for the future to create the new.¹⁷

By replicating a historical event in the present, Milo Rau co-creates the future, and thus the basic time horizons exist in parallel in their triunity. At the same time, he follows the principle of repetition, which, in addition to temporality, may also stem from Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy and the principle of repetition. The latter is based on the repetition or replication of attempts to regain a previous reality: "Sometimes to be finished too quickly is the most dangerous thing of all (...) when time itself is the task, it will be a mistake to finish before time."¹⁸ However, this is not about cyclicity, as it might appear from the previous consideration of time; rather, it reveals the influence and impact of man, his existence in a limited time and space on society.

The socio-artistic starting point is the concept of social sculpture, or its characteristics. Milo Rau's ideological starting point is almost identical to Joseph Beuys' social sculpture, but Rau rather prefers to use the term social phantasy, within the meaning of appropriating existing discourses, shaping and radicalising: "Social phantasy means appropriating existing discourses, forming them, radicalising them, closely guiding them and putting them in a space where all of a sudden, their meaning once again becomes completely open."¹⁹ He places them in space where their meaning is reopened (we mean especially his performative praxis – reenactment and preenactment), and this expanded concept of art becomes in his understanding both a tool and a means of change. For Milo Rau, art means the possibility of co-creating soci-

¹⁶ ZOUHAR, J. Hegelova fenomenologie ducha ve studiích Jaroslava Kudrny. In *Studia Historica – Hegelova Fenomenologia ducha a súčasnosť*. Košice : FFUPJŠ, 2008, pp. 201–209.

¹⁷ For more see JUSKO, Š. Patočka: čas, mýtus a kritická filozofia dejín. In *Filozofia*, 2015, Vol. 70, Issue 6, pp. 465–471.

¹⁸ KIERKEGAARD, S. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*. Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 137.

¹⁹ RAU, M. *Globaler Realismus. Global Realism*, p. 156.

ety, its values, goals, and direction through artistic truth: "(...) because art can create something like artistic truth. Theatre must be an act, there must be a difficulty performing it – not a technical difficulty, but a real, an existential one. Theatre means the creation of a situation of choice."²⁰

The Congo Tribunal

The concept of a judicial system in art in the form of a trial or tribunal is significant for Milo Rau. The crucial difference is that while trials were the reconstruction of past historical events, in terms of temporal coherence, in tribunals, time implodes, with all three basic timelines – past, present, future – overlapping.

Between 1966 and 1967, British philosopher Bertrand Russell and French thinker Jean-Paul Sartre carried out one of the most important tribunals. It is known by several names: *The Russell Tribunal*, *the International War Crimes Tribunal*, *Russell-Sartre Tribunal*, or *Stockholm Tribunal*, and dealt with the intervention of American military forces in Vietnam. Like Sartre and Russell, Milo Rau launched *The Congo Tribunal* in anticipatory spirit, not only to draw attention to the problems of the Congo, but at the same time to suggest a possible solution to long-standing conflicts through law. Although the common ground of both tribunals was an appeal to justice, Jean-Paul Sartre and Bertrand Russell discussed the problem in the safe space of Europe and opened the tribunal in Stockholm, London, and Copenhagen, i.e., in countries that were neither the crime scene nor directly involved in the Vietnam War. By contrast, Milo Rau located *The Congo Tribunal* on two continents – Africa and Europe. The first tribunal took place in the epicentre of the conflict, Bukavu City, and was followed (with minor variations) by its premiere in Berlin.

In *The Congo Tribunal*, Milo Rau, whose work in the past had straddled the line between activism and investigative journalism,²¹ focused on the theme of colonisation and its consequences. King Leopold II of Belgium formally acquired the Congo territory at the 1885 Berlin Conference. He made the territory his own possession, named it the Congo Free State and ruled it as an autocratic ruler. Between 1885 and 1908, a million Congolese died due to exploitation and diseases. In 1908, the Belgian Parliament, after initial rejection, conceded to international criticism (especially from Great Britain) and took control of the territory from the king as a Belgian colony. From that moment on, it became the Belgian Congo, administered by the Belgian Parliament. The Belgian Congo gained its independence on 30 June 1960 under the name "République du Congo," the Republic of the Congo. As in the past, the present Congo is a country with extensive mineral deposits. These are mostly fast-traded raw materials, which are in great demand by foreign companies, which use them in the production of smart phone or computer components (chips). The mines produce the rare mineral coltan, which contains niobium and tantalum. It is estimated that Congo holds up to 80% of the world's deposits. Coltan ore mining causes extensive ecological damage, mainly due to deforestation and controversial waste treatment, which burden the habitat. The other mineral from which tin is predominantly extracted is

²⁰ Ibid, p. 159.

²¹ Several articles came out of this period, the most important (also for him) was a report on the Mexican Zapatistas.



The Congo Tribunal. Photo © 2015 Fruitmarket, Langfilm & IIPM.

cassiterite. However, the mining of these minerals in the Congo is accompanied by a high mortality rate not only due to the work of the miners themselves (often children are deployed) but also to fighting between paramilitary groups operating in the mining areas. In addition to the economic, social, and political ramifications, the fact that the waste from mining imposes a devastating burden on the environment by polluting drinking water is a significant environmental and existential concern. For this reason, the inhabitants of certain parts of the Congo are forced to daily search for new sources of water in the wider area, but by doing so, they risk clashes with armed groups and possible death. The point of way out of Milo Rau's project *The Congo Tribunal* was based on a reflection on these processes and their interconnections leading up to a genocide, in which more than 7 million people are estimated to have died. Neither the massacres of the 1990s nor the conflicts over minerals are far from being a sufficiently open, let alone closed chapter, which implies the project staging concept.

After the realisation of the reenactments, Milo Rau opted for a performative model anticipating a fair trial in the form of preenactment. As the root of the word suggests, this is an offshoot of reenactment, but one that refers primarily to the future. "It is this emphasis on the iterability that enables expanding the concept of reenactment towards the future. (...) Whereas preenactment has up until now been used to indicate a reversal of reenactments' temporal structure, (...) we want to emphasise the fundamental interdependence and interconnectedness of pro- and retrospection. A new perspective on (p)reenactment that transgresses the loops of repetition and initiates processes of transition and new beginnings. (...) Actualisations of the past (re-), realisations of possible futures (pre-) as well as their intersection in actions (act) and practices (enact). Thus, it not only entails everyday acts of playing social roles that constantly need to be reenacted and actualised and whose effects reach into the



The Congo Tribunal. Photo © 2015 Fruitmarket, Langfilm & IIPM.

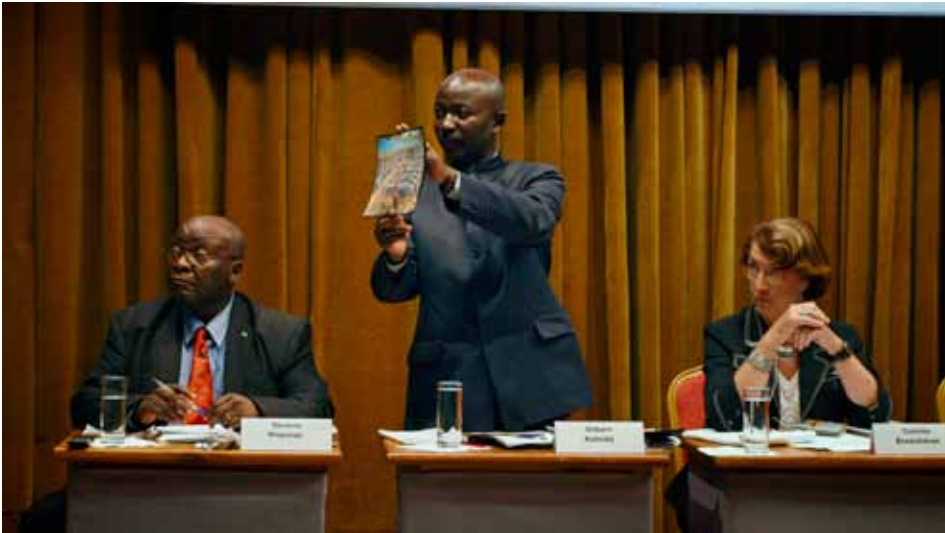
future.”²² Preenactment can thus have stabilising, emancipatory or even regressive effects,²³ not only in art, but also in the legal system.

It was these two areas, art, and law, that Milo Rau integrated into a single whole, the anticipatory aspect of his tribunal being an attempt to establish a real tribunal and to pass final judgments. Through artistic reality, he presented possible legal implications in resolving the long-standing conflict in the Congo. By choosing a theme and treating it, he revealed the stigmas of the European countries that were heavily involved in these tribunals. The experience of European states with colonialism and its consequences has been the subject of many fields of research, but on a performative level, this is one of the few projects that has not only realised historical facts in a documentary form, through preenactment, but also put forward a possible scenario for justice and a solution to the current situation.

The Congo Tribunal structure was characterised by simultaneity, which was co-created by several separate elements, but they interacted and complemented each other to create an overall picture. The staging space was a classical proscenium stage theatre – a black box theatre. A projection screen was placed on the backdrop, with several tables and chairs placed in front of it on the right side of the stage. On the left side there was a separate lectern prepared for the witnesses to give testimonies and for summoned representatives of various groups, next to it there was a place for an interpreter. A banner reading *Verité et Justice* was hanging above the stage, with five film cameras placed in front of the proscenium, shooting professionals, not actors,

²² OBERKROME, F. – STRAUB, V. Performing in Between Times. In *Performance zwischen den Zeiten. Reenactments und Preenactments in Kunst und Wissenschaft.* (Eds. A. Czirak – S. Nikoleit – F. Oberkrome – V. Straub – R. Walter-Jochum – M. Wetzels). Bielefeld : transcript Verlag, 2019, pp. 9–10.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.



The Congo Tribunal. Photo © 2015 Fruitmarket, Langfilm & IIPM.

mostly from the fields of law and social psychology. The chairman of the tribunal²⁴ was Jean-Louis Gilissen,²⁵ the investigator-in-charge Sylvestre Bisimwa,²⁶ there was a minute clerk and court service. The jury, consisting of lawyer Wolfgang Kaleck, was seated centre stage,²⁷ along with FACE Africa founder Saran Kaba Jones,²⁸ social psychologist Harald Welzer,²⁹ author and director Marc-Antoine Vumilia Muhindo,³⁰ Colette Braeckman, journalist and Congo war expert,³¹ sociologist, economist and one of the harshest critics of globalization Saskia Sassen,³² and director Milo Rau, who opened *The Congo Tribunal* with his speech: “Ladies and gentlemen, the Congo Tribunal, which on my initiative, has gathered here, in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, for three days, aims at analysing the reasons – whether linked to the economy, the government, to identity or geostrategy, behind war, insecurity and poverty in Eastern Congo. (...) It is about hearing the voices of those who are never heard. (...) The purpose of this tribunal is to try to publicly restore every citizen’s right

²⁴ Given the two premieres, in Bukavu and in Berlin, there have been changes in the jury members and witnesses. For more on the project see <http://www.the-congo-tribunal.com/>, http://www.the-congo-tribunal.com/hearings/tag/berlin.html?fbclid=IwAR2mVIb0kAFHtKzXVu_Yruj9h6zNVj0SI20Mf38VvHmMh7y9EE-Wuss0fLY8.

²⁵ Jean-Louis Gilissen is the co-founder of the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

²⁶ Sylvestre Bisimwa is a director and author who emigrated from the Congo to Sweden.

²⁷ Wolfgang Kaleck is a lawyer and expert on civil law, currently, Secretary General of the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights.

²⁸ Saran Kaba Jones is particularly concerned with access to drinking water for the people of Africa.

²⁹ Harald Welzer is professor of transformational design at the University of Flensburg, Germany. His main research areas are memory, violence, and climate change.

³⁰ Marc-Antoine Vumilia Muhindo is a theatre and film director.

³¹ Colette Braeckman is concerned with violence and genocide in Africa.

³² Saskia Sassen is a Dutch-American sociologist and professor at Columbia University. Her main research object is globalisation.

to security, happiness, and freedom of speech, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congo Tribunal will therefore ask the following questions: Is there a way to achieve development for everyone? How could one implement socially responsible industrialisation? How can this industrialisation be regulated by governmental and international actors, to guarantee the security and happiness of the Congolese people? (...) You know that this is a fictitious tribunal. It was not called for by any State, or international organisation, or on anyone else. It is a symbolic tribunal, a tribunal of the people and for the people, a tribunal that is ultimately only accountable to public opinion. It was not set up by a State or an international organisation. On the contrary: it is an independent tribunal. The tribunal will find its legitimacy in the future only: in the help it will lend to the development of this beautiful country, the Congo. The only ambition it would have is to make the truth heard."³³

The Tribunal heard three cases of violations of various rights and freedoms of the Congolese people over a period of three days in the presence of an audience. The first was The Banro Case: the case of a Canadian mining company that displaced 6,000 people to conduct mining in the Congo, causing them to lose their fields without a possibility to claim compensation. The second was The Bisie Case concerning the iniquities at the Bisie mine. The focus of the third case, The Mutrarule Case, was the 2014 massacre in which 36 people died. In detail, the confrontational model of performativity looked like most trials or tribunals. The radius of highly complex and intersecting conflicts ranged from primary human rights and freedoms to negative impacts on ecology, to the failure of basic health care, to global economic structures. Representatives from both sides of the conflict and direct witnesses took turns at the lectern. One of the most significant was a meeting between the Congolese government officials and activists.

In *The Congo Tribunal*, Milo Rau put before the public a representative example of the disintegration and simultaneous empowerment of art. Disintegration in the sense of performance art that interprets reality, since the predominant aspect here is the social and political power of art. Without aesthetic or interpretive embellishments, it interprets reality by employing fictional reality: the "Magic If" of Konstantin Stanislavsky has in his understanding a preeminent existential and anticipatory character, emanating from reality and at the same time flowing into it. A marked difference between the realistic and the real, between fictional and real is created, where the "Magic If" is preenactment. By balancing the two realities, Milo Rau structures the viewer's consciousness through a fictitious tribunal based on facts, while the jury's verdict will have no legal effect.

Conclusion

What Milo Rau exposes through reenactments and preenactments can be understood as a relationship between trauma and memory, which could also be loosely interpreted as a relationship between the past and the future. He transposes personal, introspective themes into a broader social or political and economic discourse,

³³ Excerpt from Milo Rau's opening speech at the premiere of *The Congo Tribunal* in Bukavu 29 May 2015. Cit. according to RAU, M. *Kongo tribunal*. Bratislava : Asociácia Corpus, 2021, pp. 38–43.

thereby radically changing their character, weight, and meaning. Thus, what underpins *The Congo Tribunal* compositionally is Milo Rau's understanding of art in which the political becomes personal³⁴ and vice versa. Trauma is a spontaneous reaction to a specific event or chain of events that caused shock and indelible marks. The treatment and the goals of trauma are very closely related to Milo Rau's preenactment. According to American cultural sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander, the goal is to restore psychological health by removing social repression and restoring memory. As sociologists point out, a variety of collective means are needed to achieve this goal, whether they are public commemorations and artistic representations or public political clashes that serve to undo repression and allow for the expression of repressed emotions of loss and grief.³⁵ In this respect, the reenactment of *The Congo Tribunal* has clear therapeutic effects through the "voices of the unheard," giving them a space to express their attitudes and opinions. It does not merely respond to the pain of the Congolese people through therapeutic listening, but contextualises it in terms of causes and consequences, thus turning personal trauma into public, i.e., societal, trauma. It bluntly names the political, economic, and power structures co-responsible for the traumas, while carrying out the whole exercise under the slogan "truth and justice."

Reenactment and preenactment as forms of artistic expression, as applied in Milo Rau's work, are in many ways a dangerous art. Working with pure facticity, which is communicated through a fictitious "staged" tribunal, is a symbolic dialogue between two continents, Africa, and Europe, and at the same time a confrontation between ordinary people and the representatives of transnational corporations. The delivery of the judgement in the theatre courtroom is not so much an anticipation of the actual trial, but rather a demonstration of the possibility of justice and the possibility of strengthening democracy.

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³⁴ RAU, M. *Global Realismus. Global Realism*, p. 20.

³⁵ ALEXANDER, J. C. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma." In EYERMAN, R. (ed.). *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley, California : University of California Press, pp. 1–30. Cited from KRATOCHVÍL, A. (ed.). *Paměť a trauma pohledem humanitních věd*. Praha : Akropolis, 2016, p. 103.

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