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Tribunal Theatre in Spain: *Jauría* and the La Manada Gang Rape

Jauría (2019) was the first tribunal verbatim play in Spain and it had a great impact on audiences in the context of heated debate about how national legislation had a long-standing legacy of sexism. Based on the transcripts of the legal proceedings of the La Manada gang-rape case, *Jauría* not only clarifies this controversial case for different types of audiences, but it also poses very important questions concerning the nature of rape and how the judicial system treats the victims of rape. This article studies the performative force of tribunal verbatim in shaping the audience's understanding of an actual gang-rape case and indicates how a feedback loop is created in the performance itself, transforming the spectators' attitudes. Svetlana Antropova is a lecturer at Villanueva University in Madrid. Her recent publications include 'Filming Trauma: Bodiless Voice and Voiceless Bodies in Beckett's *Eh Joe*', in Elspeth McInnes and Danielle Schaub, eds., *What Happened? Re-presenting Traumas, Uncovering Recoveries* (Brill/Rodopi 2019), and 'De/Construction of Visual Stage Image in Samuel Beckett's *Play*' (*Anagnósis: Revista de Investigación Teatral*, XXII, 2020). Elisa García Mingo is an associate professor in Sociology at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and is an associate member of the Centre for Transforming Sexualities and Gender at the University of Brighton.

Keywords: verbatim theatre, legal proceedings, transcripts, reality, authenticity, audiences.

ON 16 JULY 2016, an eighteen-year-old woman was gang-raped during the San Fermín bull-running festival in Pamplona, Spain by five men who called themselves 'La Manada'.¹ After a five-month trial, in April 2018 the five members of La Manada received a nine-year sentence for continual sexual abuse. They were acquitted of rape. This court decision brought about public demonstrations under the rallying cry 'It's not abuse, it's RAPE!' and a stream of criticism both in the mainstream media and social media. Even though, on appeal, the Supreme Court of Spain finally determined in 2019 that the assault had in fact been rape, the previous sentence had propelled debate about how sexual violence is addressed by the Spanish legal system.

In this context, and based on the transcripts of the legal proceedings, the playwright Jordi Casanovas brought this case to life in the theatre. *Jauría* is the first tribunal verbatim play made in Spain.² It was staged by the renowned theatre director Miguel del Arco and premiered on 25 February 2019.³ Such

was the success of *Jauría* that the theatre company held more than 150 performances in the run of 2019–20 and went on two international tours to Uruguay and Costa Rica. The production became a must-see in Spanish theatre life and enjoyed a very favourable critical reception.

Jauría was not only acclaimed by the critics – it received the most prestigious theatre awards in Spain in 2020 – but it proved to have affected the spectators' senses, leaving a long-lasting impression on the public who had seen it. Some of the comments of the theatregoers published in social media were: *Jauría* is 'brutal, gut-wrenching and shocking' and 'one of those experiences that are not forgotten for a long time because it leaves you knocked out'.⁴ Miguel del Arco affirms that his theatre company 'were witnesses to authentic catharsis among spectators'.⁵

Jauría thus drew our attention as scholars committed to the study of rape culture and the staging of trauma. We pursued a two-fold objective: to study the performative force of tribunal verbatim and how it influences the

audience's understanding of a real gang-rape case and, since *Jauría* proved to be a gripping experience, analyze how a feedback loop is created in this performance.⁶

We took a phenomenological approach to *Jauría* due to our interest in the audience's interaction with the play, taking part as spectators and attending post-performance debates. This phenomenological analysis was complemented by qualitative research, including in-depth interviews with the playwright and the director of the productions.⁷ The use of supportive methods was essential to access 'the materiality and affective substance of the performance itself'.⁸

The analysis of the meaning-making process in *Jauría* was performed according to the following characteristics of tribunal verbatim: the value of the authentic legal document, unveiling the meaning of legal proceedings through staging a trial, the focus on a miscarriage of justice, and a call for action. Furthermore, in 'Miscarriage of Justice', the cross-examination and rape scenes are analyzed to pinpoint the most relevant techniques that can affect the audience's perception and entice them to become personally involved in the performance.

Tribunal Verbatim Theatre: The Transformative Power of a Legal Document

Jauría can be considered a tribunal verbatim piece, following Richard Norton-Taylor's definition of tribunal theatre: 'a fictional inquiry using verbatim testimony from real witnesses'.⁹ It was not a mere coincidence that Casanovas decided to write the play based on the La Manada case, as it was a highly controversial verdict that drew a tremendous social backlash and put the country's judiciary under scrutiny.

The choice of the subgenre of tribunal verbatim for bringing this rape case to the stage was adequate as, according to Peter Weiss, tribunal plays are the most effective way to communicate legal proceedings, laying bare the basic problem while allowing a detailed and rigorous explanation.¹⁰ In the same breath, Nicolas Kent and Norton-Taylor state that tribunal plays allow non-experts to

grapple with the detail of important public inquiries for themselves.¹¹

Norton-Taylor argues that the experience of watching a tribunal verbatim play transcends the mere intake of information, since the audience engages with the performance in many ways: feeling empathy for the victims, seeking the truth, acknowledging the injustice incurred, and, eventually, preventing future injustices in real life.¹² Following this argument, *Jauría* involves spectators in active opinion-making about a highly controversial case as they are exposed to authentic legal proceedings through the theatrical embodiment of a trial.

The coverage of the La Manada case was exposed in quick bites in the news and social media; and even when the sentence had been highly publicized and heavily discussed in the media, the reality was that the general public had not had access to the footage of the trial. As a result, some of the specific means by which to understand the inquiry were omitted. While reading the original court transcript, Casanovas came across some details of paramount importance in the testimonies, which were not brought to light anywhere else.¹³ Therefore, it became important to clarify all the nuances of the criminal case and to make the 370-page sentence accessible to all types of audiences.

However, when a five-month inquiry is condensed into a two-hour play, 'truth may be a difficult concept'.¹⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that documentary theatre claims authenticity, being based on original sources, Carol Martin states that it can both exploit and disrupt it,¹⁵ since the truth is presented in a new way and is dependent on its reproduction in the theatre.¹⁶ While writing a documentary play, authors have to select, edit, and stage the raw material in order to meet cultural, political, and theatrical needs. By doing so, they transform reality. Selection and editing processes are key to understanding whether a documentary play distorts perception of the truth.

Stephen Bottoms, when discussing the objectivity of verbatim plays, argues that it is precisely textual reflexivity that makes the difference as it allows the audience to know

a play's source.¹⁷ When spectators assume that it is based on an authentic document, they 'approach the play not just as a play but also as an accurate source of information'.¹⁸ Verbatim theatre and journalism may overlap, thus the playwright must 'abide by some sort of ethical code'.¹⁹ Kent, explaining the editing process, stresses the importance of addressing all lines of argument from different people when tribunal plays are written, as the playwright's unbiased view is a guarantee for spectators' quest for the truth.²⁰

While writing *Jauría*, Casanovas was tempted to reduce the number of characters to the victim and one perpetrator; on closer examination he understood that the reality of a gang rape would be distorted.²¹ Even though the dramatist questioned the issue of objectivity in documentary theatre, he highlighted his responsibility not only towards spectators but, first and foremost, towards the real people whose words should not be altered.²² The playwright stated that while writing the play, the legal transcripts had undergone some selection and editing (mostly for dramatic purposes), but that the testimonies had not been altered.

Special emphasis should be drawn to two characteristics of any document used in tribunal theatre. On the one hand, revealing the source of the play already sends a message regarding authenticity to the audience. On the other hand, as the playwright's major goal is to present all complex layers of truth, the audience assumes that there is no opinion-manipulation process.

The role of the legal document in *Jauría* is to provide evidence, so initially the relation with the document is that of trust. The document *per se* does not take sides; it only informs of the state of events. Martin claims that documentary theatre expands the boundaries of the audience's knowledge and engages them in a deep analysis of the reality.²³ Consequently, its value is viewed as a means of communication between the text and the spectator.

Transforming legal proceedings into a play gives birth to another reality. Paradoxically, although the document is authentic, it relies heavily on its reproduction on the stage. Janelle Reinelt points out that the value of a

document is dependent on the phenomenological engagement of the audience with the text, and on the relationships established between the mediators and the spectator, which are connected to the reality that it represents.²⁴ In doing so, tribunal verbatim creates a fusion between artistic and non-artistic elements: 'The autonomy of art itself becomes the object of self-reflection in performance as opposition between art and reality, and between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic, collapses.'²⁵

The court transcript of *Jauría* has a dual effect on the audience: it documents the criminal act, which happened in the past, but the binaries of here/there and past/present are also blurred, and the historical past becomes the theatrical present. Experiencing the event from a two-fold perspective, social and aesthetic, the spectator perceives the dissolution of the boundaries and finds himself/herself on the threshold between the two worlds. Liminality *per se* is being articulated in both cognitive and somatic ways because the performance involves two different codes of communication: documentary – the text based on the official transcripts of legal proceedings – and theatrical – how this text is enacted on the stage.

The fusion of these two codes contributes to the oscillation between the modes of perception and to the elaboration of new meanings. While contrasting their knowledge of the La Manada gang rape, probably inferred from the TV coverage, the audience is affected by the actors' performative bodies, the content of the play, and its spatial design. The spectators physically experience the performance. This continuous interactivity, or 'autopoietic feedback loop', results in the audience's emotional involvement, and further cognitive processing of meaning, contrasting it against their background knowledge of the historical event. Therefore, the physiological response is connected to the emotional involvement and cognitive processing, contributing to the continuous revision of the subjective conceptual frame during the performance.

Furthermore, Fischer-Lichte asserts that the feedback loop implies the transformation of the audience, as it 'often implies strong

feelings and changes in a person's physiological, energetic, and affective state'.²⁶ The spectator, affected by the power emanating from the actors, becomes personally involved in the performance by way of his/her own sensations.

Staging a Trial: Interpreting the Meaning of Legal Documents

Certain features of tribunal theatre have proven to be the most effective way to communicate legal proceedings because they lay bare the basic problem, while allowing a detailed and rigorous explanation. Considering the complexity and people's lack of knowledge of legal proceedings, the structure of the play becomes the core for understanding how the criminal case was treated in the courtroom. *Jauría* exposes the legal proceedings in a holistic way, shifting the spectator's attention to the real statements of the defendants and the victim throughout its four major blocks: the exposition of the case; the defence attorney's questioning of the victim; the prosecutor questioning the defendants; and the jury's announcement of the verdict.²⁷

Reinelt suggests that a public occurrence can be theatricalized if the event is of grave importance to the public and can take a recognizably Aristotelian form in terms of plot development and the existence of antagonist-protagonist conflict.²⁸ A trial *per se* is not only a set of logical propositions, but also a story of interconnected facts, which take on meaning in a specific context. Thus, this story can be gradually disclosed during the direct examination of the witnesses; like all stories, it has characters.

According to Nicole Rogers, although law and the performing arts are perceived as opposites, court proceedings and theatre have undeniable similarities insofar as both are based on human rituals and rely heavily on the staging of social interaction.²⁹ In the same vein, Martin describes similarities between trials and theatre as 'close cousins dramaturgically', and stresses their capacity to engage the audience in the observation and active participation in ritualized debate.³⁰ Thus the stage suits performing court proceedings best, tracing

in tribunal verbatim such court techniques as divergency of testimonies, cross-examination, and 'the audience in the role of jury'.³¹

Norton-Taylor, referring to a tribunal verbatim and court inquiries, observes that there is 'an inbuilt conflict to the proceedings, with both sides giving their version of events, usually determined to stick to their position'.³² Thus, divergence, consequent on conflict, becomes the axis of tribunal verbatim. The exposition part of *Jauría* is grounded in divergent testimonies, creating a false yet beautifully strangled dialogue between the actors. Juxtaposed contradictory statements create distinct dramatic tension. This 'narrative vertigo' brings about confusion due to the opposition of the testimonies.³³

Furthermore, in a trial, cross-examination becomes the most dramatic moment when lawyers try to challenge the witnesses' credibility and persuade the jury of their guilt. In *Jauría*, both the victim and the perpetrators are subjected to cross-examination in the second and third blocks of the play. The prosecutor and the defence attorneys question the witnesses, with the aim of revealing the inconsistencies in their testimonies. In this way, their stories are put under the audience's scrutiny.

Both divergency of testimonies and cross-examination techniques are used as a conflict-building device in tribunal theatre, so that the audience, by watching how people give evidence, is 'empowered and able to arrive quite dispassionately at the truth in their own minds'.³⁴

Jauría is not only a dramaturgical transformation of legal documents and a powerful meaning-maker for the audience, but it also offers alternatives for the comprehension of the law by the audience, thus creating new possibilities for justice.³⁵ In fact, while Weiss and Reinelt emphasize that a better understanding of legal documents is the aim of tribunal theatre, Chris Megson in his definition of tribunal verbatim places the focus on social injustice and 'the meticulous re-enactment of edited transcripts of state sanctioned inquiries that address perceived miscarriages of justice and flaws in the operations and accountability of public institutions'.³⁶ As happens in real-life trials, it is the jury who is

compelled to issue a unanimous decision for or against a party. On the other hand, in tribunal theatre, the audience, who takes on the role of the jury, is free to form their own opinion, which may differ from that of the original sentence.³⁷

Exposing the Miscarriage of Justice

In the first tableau of *Jauría*, a spectator can see six mismatched chairs centre-stage facing the auditorium in semi-darkness, which, according to Del Arco, is already a 'declaration of intentions', as there would be no 'fourth wall'.³⁸ Are the spectators witnesses or the jury in this show? Are they the ones to be judged? Weiss asserts that a spectator in tribunal theatre 'can be put into the place of the accused or of the accuser . . . he can contribute to the understanding of a complex situation or provoke opposition'.³⁹ In the first block of the play, while the case is exposed to the audience, the actors presumably do not hear each other, so they address all their disconnected testimonies to the audience, making the spectators the focus of their attention.

The feeble voice of a nameless victim starts giving testimony, intercut by five different male voices giving their statements and contradicting her words. As there are 55 victim's statements as opposed to 211 defendants' statements, the perpetrators' voices are heard more, and thus their version seems more solid. Consequently, doubts may arise about the victim's innocence, sparking confusion:

ANGEL B.: She kept saying that she liked us, and she had never been with a man from Seville.⁴⁰

ANGEL B.: Who would you like to have relations with?

ALFONSO C.: We are kidding you.

ANTONIO MANUEL G.: But she responded: 'Why do I have to choose one?'⁴¹

The victim blames herself for being on her own, far from home, and for speaking to strangers. The girl is uncertain about whether it was her fault for having been raped: 'When I got home . . . I felt guilty, I felt I should have done something to avoid this whole situation. I felt responsible for spoiling the life of five

men, that it was my fault for what had happened.'⁴² The victim's declaration that she engaged in a conversation about sex with the five men contributes to the audience's disorientation. A whole gamut of questions starts taking form, the same questions that the victim poses later in the play:

Why did I go there? Why had I talked to strangers? Why had I gone with the people I didn't know? Why did I separate from my friend? Why did I go alone to an unknown city? I thought it was my fault for not having turned away . . . I was revolving it all in my head all the time.⁴³

The girl places all the responsibility for making the wrong decisions on her own shoulders such that the spectators are more willing to judge her as guilty.

Jauría challenges the spectators in their quest for the truth by involving them on a personal level and to consider with whom to take sides in this rape case. The performance becomes an unsettling experience as the audience is kept in a continuous state of disorientation not only due to the differences between testimonies but also to the constant change of speaker and the latter's quick delivery. Spectators must shift their attention from one actor to another to keep up with the performance, thereby having little time for reflection.

This rhythm becomes the dominant organizing principle of the performance, weaving the whole piece together.⁴⁴ Apart from requiring complete audience concentration, the rhythm 'works directly on the bodies of the spectators and draws them in', contributing to creating a certain energetic field.⁴⁵ Even if momentarily, the audience has a shared sense of belonging to a community. This erratic rhythm affects their breathing and understanding, and, as a result, it contributes to the performance's instability of meaning and the audience's postponement of judgement.

While the actors address the audience during the exposition, they start to interact with each other during the cross-examination of the victim in the second block. Cross-casting in this part catches the spectator off-guard, creating confusion. When the perpetrators, wearing court gowns, start interrogating the girl, the audience is in a state of shock since they

perceive it as a kind of macabre joke.⁴⁶ These court gowns seem more a disguise than a change of character. Like wolves in sheep's clothing, the defence attorneys remind the audience of the perpetrators as their voices and overall aggressive behaviour towards the girl are similar.

During this interrogation, the defence attorneys try to evoke a 'perfect rape myth' to bring the victim's credibility into question.⁴⁷ According to Liza Fitzpatrick, although there is a growing recognition that rape should be considered as an act of violence, the distrust of women's testimonies of rape, and 'particularly the belief that women lie about rape, is remarkably persistent'.⁴⁸ As a result, some of *Jauría's* spectators possibly initially support the defence attorneys' version.

Illuminated by the spotlight, the actress is sitting on a chair in a small, tiled cubicle at the back of the stage. The interrogation scene is well orchestrated: the attorneys form a circle around her; their questions are like bullets, shot from different angles. Every question uttered by the attorneys is aimed at proving the victim's guilt, and reminds her of the trauma she had gone through. Affected by post-traumatic stress disorder, her memory fails, while the only answer that she can give them concerning the rape episode is: 'I don't remember.'

The rhythm becomes even more frantic during this part, based not only on the fast delivery of speeches but also on the repetitions of the same questions: 'At no stage do you remember any of them making a hot comment?';⁴⁹ 'Were you going to scream? Or do anything?';⁵⁰ 'Did they throw you on the floor in the lobby?';⁵¹ 'Did they cover your mouth all the time?';⁵² Finally, the victim utters a gut-wrenching scream followed by a complete silence, creating a catharsis.⁵³

The actress's body amplifies the sound and 'physically' touches the audience. Her scream does not sound human: full of physical pain and terror, it catches the audience off-guard. This non-verbal utterance becomes a physical experience as it penetrates the spectators' bodies, creating an echo, which makes them feel for the victim, provoking empathy. Furthermore, on a semiotic level, this scream becomes

the 'language' of suffering and trauma in the performance. Since the victim is unable to narrate the rape experience, due to the 'unspeakable' nature of rape, this scream can be viewed as her postponed response to what she has been through.

Paradoxically, despite the neck-breaking speed of the interrogation, the theatrical time is frozen as the same questions are repeated; this block of the play seems never-ending. Likewise, the agony of the victim is prolonged as she must face humiliation and relive the rape, in this way being subjected to a secondary victimization.⁵⁴ And as the spectators are not just mere witnesses to the performance – 'the act of perceiving the other is always a political act that involves projections of self' – the victim's helplessness and suffering may be physically experienced by the audience.⁵⁵ Emphatic engagement with the victim can generate frustration and anger at her 'torturers'. Del Arco affirms that, notwithstanding the fact that everybody should have a right to a defence, the text of *Jauría* reflects 'how terrible some judicial procedures are, because it is not normal that a girl, who has gone through a trauma like this, be subjected to this demolishing process in the name of law and justice'.⁵⁶

While the attorneys use every tried-and-tested technique to intimidate the victim and reveal the inconsistencies in her testimony, the perceivers' aim is to clarify what really happened. Appalled by the way the attorneys distort and twist the victim's testimony, as well as by experiencing the victim's vulnerability and frustration, the spectator, at this point, may be more than willing to take the victim's side (Figures 1 and 2).

Was It Truly Rape?

During the whole performance the audience is put under great emotional and cognitive stress, having to observe, understand, and interpret the play, while trying to come to terms with their own stance regarding this rape case. Martin asserts that 'Tolerating differing narratives with equanimity is not the same as considering the merit of multiple views in order to arrive at truth about social



Figure 1. Alex García, Frank Cantos, Martiño Rivas, Ignacio Mateos, Raul Prieto, and Maria Hervas in *Jauría*. Photographer: Vanessa Rabade. By permission of the Pavón/Kamikaze theatre company.

reality', and, although the reality may be multifaceted, people always believe in only one version of events.⁵⁷

The major question as to whether it was sexual abuse or rape is not easily answered in *Jauría*. According to Spanish law, while 'sexual abuse' does not imply any violence, 'sexual aggression' involves violence and intimidation of the victim. And, although during the performance the defendants argue that it was consensual sex, while the prosecution could not prove that the perpetrators used violence to subjugate the victim, the spectators are left to elaborate their own opinions based on their interaction with the performance.

There are two constructs of rape narrative in *Jauría*. On a documentary level, as the victim does not remember what happened that night, the spectator learns about the circumstances of this event through the perpetrators' testimonies. On a theatrical level, rape is staged in the first block of the performance.

This means that the fusion of the artistic representation of rape and the playscript is used as a tool to shape the spectators' memories of the event they did not witness.

There is a certain complexity in performing rape onstage, as it operates semiotically on the two levels of 'semiotic behaviour surrounding rape, and [the] semiotics of rape itself'.⁵⁸ The semiotic behaviour around rape concerns the difficulty of narrating the rape experience by the victim. Likewise, in *Jauría*, the girl does not remember anything: a traumatic experience can be viewed as 'the wound of the mind – the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world', thus it is not only difficult to narrate but, quite often, it is also not available to consciousness.⁵⁹ The other difficulty has to do with the interiority of the act itself, since it happens inside someone else's body, making the crime invisible. Mieke Bal contends that 'it is the violence of the forced sexual act (which retains the appearance of a sexual act) and the crucial absence of consent



Figure 2. Maria Hervas in *Jauría*. Photographer: Vanessa Rabade. By permission of the Pavón/Kamikaze theatre company.

that makes it rape'.⁶⁰ While at no point did the girl give her consent for the sexual intercourse with the five men (which was demonstrated by both sides in the testimonies), violence is something that the spectator must judge for himself/herself.

The rape scene is staged in a small, tiled cubicle at the back of the stage, which becomes overcrowded as the six actors can hardly fit into this space. Performed as a slow-motion dance, the rape scene interrupts the quick rhythm of the performance and acquires a nightmarish quality, which is further enhanced by the opposition between light and darkness. While the cubicle is brightly illuminated, the rest of the stage and the auditorium are in darkness, which creates a double-edged effect. On the one hand, the darkness enveloping the space of the cubicle serves as a framing device, while, on the other hand, it creates the effect of alienation, as it makes this place diminish in size. Bal argues that since rape is an inner psychological and

physiological experience, on a social level rape is made real only at a distance from the suffering body and is experienced as an after-shock.⁶¹ The physical presence of the audience as a witness, together with the alienation effect achieved by the darkness, make the rape 'real'. The spectator, who belongs to the zone of darkness, cannot see the other spectators' reactions, which means that their responses to the rape scene are individual and deeply personal. What the audience sees onstage is greatly disturbing.

Imprisoned in the claustrophobic space of the cubicle, the fragile actress's body is being manipulated by five corpulent men, their hands are incessantly touching and moving all over her. The slow rhythm of this scene allows the spectators to commit each movement to their memory: ten strong hands trying to break the body, pulling this woman in opposite directions, submitting her to their will. The men are handling her as if she were a rag doll: they bend and flip her around,

pulling her hair and thrusting her head backwards and forwards, finally forcing their victim on to all fours. According to Fitzpatrick, witnessing violence onstage may not only provoke an active response from the spectators, but it can also make them 'recognize their own ontological vulnerability'.⁶² In the same breath, Erin Gilson asserts that vulnerability can also enable the spectator to become engaged in a meaningful interaction with the performance.⁶³

The audience's response to the victim's vulnerability is elicited on multiple levels. Being ethically engaged in the performance and witnessing injustice, spectators feel empathy for the victim and outrage towards the assaulters. Yet, on the premise that vulnerability is an ontological quality of humanness, personal vulnerability can be projected on to others. Thus, while watching the frail actress's body being subdued and dominated by force, spectators become well aware of their own bodies, and, as a result, the process of self-identification with the victim is able to take place. Furthermore, witnessing the abuse can bring forth their active response to protect and/or defend the victim.

Body language plays a crucial role to indicate whether what is happening can be considered a pleasurable sexual act: the victim's body is numb, and she does not say a word. During the whole rape scene, the actress keeps her eyes shut. In her testimony the victim explained: 'I was in total shock, I did not know what to do, I only wanted it to be over and I shut my eyes not to feel anything, not to see anything, to make it pass quickly.'⁶⁴

Although the girl does not scream or protest, can her silence be interpreted as a consent for having sexual intercourse with the five men? Outnumbered and paralyzed by fear, she is unable to fight back. The actress's whole body mirrors the victim's testimony: clasping her arms around her bent body, as though in pain, with her head tilted towards her chest – her posture embodies her fear and distress. Mimetic representation of fear can elicit a physiological response from the audience: they feel it as tension in their bodies, which can be experienced as an extra-aesthetic encounter with the sufferings of the Other.⁶⁵

This shared moment of union can be viewed in the light of Jill Dolan's concept of 'fleeting intimation', which leads the audience not only to feel aesthetic responsibility, but also to unavoidable implication.⁶⁶

Although the rape is artistically embodied onstage, the perpetrators' comments, which the audience hears, are taken from their testimonies. What can surprise the spectator is that they are totally unaware of the victim's state. At no moment does any of the men address her or call her by her name. Thus, erasure of subjectivity can be brought into view here.⁶⁷ While the male actors continue their perverted dance, the silent body is reduced to a mere object of their pleasure. During the rape scene, the assaulters discuss whose turn it is to rape her, while bragging about their masculine virility and inciting each other. To capture the event, they not only shoot a video on the victim's cellphone without her consent, but they also take a photo to upload to their WhatsApp group. The prosecutor describes this photo during the cross-examination in the third block:

The defendant has his buttocks leaning on the victim's face, situated underneath him. The victim's eyes are covered by the defendant's buttocks, who is looking towards the camera, meanwhile stretching his right arm backwards and making a gesture with his finger pointing towards his right buttock.⁶⁸

In the photo, the victim is turned into a trophy of the perpetrator's masculine-ego victory. Faceless and speechless, her body loses any trace of humanity for them: it is, perhaps, another victory to gloat over.⁶⁹

The narrative of treating a woman as a trophy is appalling *per se* and takes the spectator back to the origins of a patriarchal society, where the concept of masculinity is intertwined with control, bravado, aggressiveness, and invulnerability, demonstrated by a lack of emotions. While leaving the cubicle, none of the attackers pays attention to the girl's numb body lying on the floor. They do not ask her whether she is all right, or whether she has enjoyed it. The perpetrators seem to lose all interest in their prey. Del Arco considered this case from a universal perspective:

We should investigate what kind of five adult men could thrust a girl in a 3×3 square-metre cubicle, rape her, not addressing a word to her, steal her cellphone and then simply leave without feeling any remorse and having no awareness that they had done anything wrong. What has happened? What is happening? . . . That is what makes me ponder beyond this one specific case. It gives me a chance to think how this case universalizes and discloses our society.⁷⁰

Through a codified representation of the event, the rape scene contradicts the perpetrators' testimonies and serves as the victim's silent testimony. Concurrently, witnessing the rape scene affects the audience's senses and involves them on a personal level. The performance pushes the spectator into shaping their opinions not only about what can be considered rape, but also, on a broader scale, how such issues as humanity and social ethics are put under scrutiny. The fusion of artistic and non-artistic elements collapses the 'real' and the 'fictional' and leads to a 'splendid unplanned harmon[y]' in the service of the creation of meaning'.⁷¹

A Call for Action Against Rape

Tribunal verbatim creates a new reality as the legal document becomes an artistic theatrical device; it develops an ability to pose questions and stir emotions, engaging the audience in a dialogue about sexual violence that was previously impossible. Martin states that implicit belief in agency and possible change is inherent in documentary theatre.⁷² In *Jauría*, through the deep analysis of what is happening onstage, spectators are urged to form their own opinion and to become agents of change.

Both Casanovas and Del Arco agreed on this, while reflecting about the social mission of *Jauría*:

Without any doubt, the *La Manada* case was a turning point, which generated a series of questions about our society, male chauvinism and feminism, and raised the question of how women face the interpretation of justice in these cases. . . . While writing the play, I became aware of why this case produced such a huge impact on us, as a society.⁷³

It is evident that this case marks an inflection point. Has it been the most violent of rape cases? No, there

were other cases which ended with the victim's death. Perhaps its relevance lies in the fact that our society was prepared to accept and demand a change.⁷⁴

The playwright and the director's aim was to provoke a profound social conversation about rape and rape culture in Spanish society and, more specifically, to stir public debate about the male chauvinistic bias of the Spanish judicial system when it comes to prosecuting sexual crimes.

At the same time, *Jauría* presents an occasion for the spectators to explore and test their assumptions about rape, because, as Molly Flynn observes, 'through shared testimony, a society uses the rituals of the courtroom to define a code of societal ethics'.⁷⁵ But how does this fictional courtroom allow collective debate to happen?

It is precisely on the threshold between the historical past and the theatrical present, undergoing the experience of liminality, that the affective state of the audience is altered; and it is the alteration of the affective state created by the aesthetic experience that produces a transformation of the audience called upon, first, to reflect, then to debate, and finally to act against sexual violence.

Generating critical intervention as regards the *La Manada* gang rape and overcoming the limitations of public understanding of this sort of violence,⁷⁶ *Jauría* holds a mirror to Spanish society, calling the audience to act.

Conclusion

The original court documents, now transformed into a play, became a springboard to engage the audience in a dialogue, as well as a powerful tool to expose misogynistic attitudes and violence against women. *Jauría*, as a novel genre in Spain, opens new horizons, and enhances the value of the legal document in three different ways: first, the document's transformative power emerges due to the phenomenological engagement of the audience with the transcripts of legal proceedings; second, the document enables a new relationship between the performance and the audience, involving the spectators in taking sides,

therefore, making them judges of the events; and, finally, the re-enactment of the court case in the theatrical present has the power to transform the reality it represents.

This tribunal play not only opens the La Manada rape case to all types of audiences due to its structure and specific trial techniques, but, on a theatrical level, *Jauría* is a breathtaking experience. Spectators become mesmerized by the production's breakneck speed, juxtaposition of voices, and lighting effects. They are kept in a continuous state of disorientation due to the dramatic tension created by the contradiction between the victim's and the perpetrators' testimonies. This 'narrative vertigo' overwhelms the spectator, and at the same time puts a great strain on their cognitive abilities.

Furthermore, cross-casting in the second block of the play is another device that creates confusion, but also serves to enhance the similarity between the defendants' and the defence attorneys' behaviours. The similarity between the rape scene and the victim's cross-examination can be viewed as a brilliant technique to disclose the truth of the defendants' testimonies. Although different in rhythm (the slow-motion of the rape scene as opposed to the fast speed of the attorneys' interrogation), both scenes are rather similar, as the victim is harassed and forced to do something against her will. It is precisely this similarity that makes the audience shape their views with respect to the victim's credibility. And finally, the scream uttered by actress Maria Hervas at the end of the second block, which resonates in the spectator's mind even when the performance is over, serves as a trigger to release the audience's bottled-up emotions. On a deeply emotional level, this gut-wrenching scream stigmatizes the spectators and engages their heartfelt sympathy. This scream, being the only fictional element of the play, becomes the 'voice' of all silenced victims of rape.

The *mise-en-scène* of the play produces a strong emotional response from all types of audiences, generating empathy and identification with the victim. Responses as to whether it was rape are given on a personal level, making the spectator an active agent of

change. Moreover, *Jauría* exposes the flaws and contradictions of the judiciary, and illustrates the process of revictimization that victims are forced to endure during a long legal procedure.

The use of authentic legal proceedings and novel aesthetics augment the impact of *Jauría*, pushing Spanish documentary theatre beyond its boundaries. *Jauría* has been dubbed 'the play that we would rather not have seen, but that has to be seen', as it has created an arena for social dialogue about the gender system, patriarchal culture, and rape culture.⁷⁷ Moreover, it has contributed to the momentum of a large part of Spanish society that has been wanting for years to change what they consider to be 'patriarchal justice'.⁷⁸

Notes and References

1. Translating as 'pack' or 'wolfpack' in English, the same word was used for the WhatsApp group via which the video of rape was distributed.

2. Jordi Casanovas (b. 1978) is the most promising playwright in Spain. He has written more than thirty plays, the most famous of which are *Un hombre con gafas de pasta* (2010), *Patria* (2012), and *Gazoline* (2017). Several of his plays have won national awards.

3. Miguel del Arco (b. 1965) is a Spanish playwright, scriptwriter, actor, and theatre director. His first play, *La Funcion por hacer* (2009), was a great success. His subsequent theatre productions, *La Violacion de Lucrecia* (2010), *Juicio a una Zorra* (2011), and *De Ratones a Hombres* (2012), made him a key figure of the Spanish theatre. In 2014 Del Arco co-founded the Academy of Scenic Arts in Spain. Since 2016 he has been the Artistic Director of the Pavón/Kamikaze theatre in Madrid, which was awarded the National Theatre Prize in 2017.

4. See <<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2019/03/08/wolfpack-madrid-theatre-stages-gut-wrenching-play-based-controversial-la-manada-sex-assault-case/>>.

5. Elisa García Mingo and Svetlana Antropova, 'Jauría: el poder curativo y pedagógico del teatro. Entrevista a Miguel del Arco a propósito de Jauría', *Anagnórisis: Revista de Investigación Teatral*, XX (2019), p. 451–70 (p. 455).

6. Erika Fischer-Lichte defines an autopoietic feedback loop as a dynamic process of ongoing interaction between the performers and the audiences: see Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskaya Iris Jain (London: Routledge, 2008).

7. To delve into the play's success, we conducted two interviews: an interview with Del Arco, on 10 March 2019, in the Kamikaze Theatre, and with Casanovas, on 10 October 2019, via Skype. The interviews were carried out in Spanish. Translations are ours unless otherwise noted.

8. Stuart Grant, 'Genealogies and Methodologies of Phenomenology in Theatre and Performance Studies', *Nordic Theatre Studies*, XXIV (2012), p. 8–20 (p. 8).

9. See interview with Richard Norton-Taylor, in Will Hammond and Dan Steward, eds., *Verbatim Verbatim: Techniques in Contemporary Documentary Theatre* (London: Oberon Books, 2008; reprinted 2016), p. 104–31 (p. 104).
10. Peter Weiss, 'The Material and the Models: Notes Towards a Definition of Documentary Theatre', *Theatre Quarterly*, I, No. 1 (1971), p. 41–6 (p. 43).
11. Nicolas Kent was Artistic Director of the Tricycle Theatre, London from 1984 to 2012. He has commissioned and directed many tribunal plays, among them *Half the Picture* (1994), *Nuremberg* (1996), *Srebrenica* (1997), and *Bloody Sunday* (2005); Richard Norton-Taylor is Security Affairs Editor for the *Guardian* newspaper. He has written several tribunal plays, including *Half the Picture* (1994), *Nuremberg* (1996), and *Bloody Sunday* (2005). See Hammond and Steward, eds., *Verbatim*, p. 11.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
13. The playwright discovered that some details that pinpointed the perpetrators' character and clarified their real motives were omitted on TV. See Svetlana Antropova and Elisa García Mingo, 'El nuevo Pacto de Jordi Casanovas con el público: teatro-documento en España Entrevista a Jordi Casanovas, dramaturgo y director del teatro', *Pygmalion*, XII, No. 20 (2020), p. 212–56 (p. 219).
14. Norton-Taylor, in Hammond and Steward, eds., *Verbatim*, p. 108.
15. Carol Martin, *Theatre of the Real* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 221.
16. Janelle Reinelt and Gerald Hewitt, *The Political Theatre of David Edgar: Negotiation and Retrieval* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 10.
17. Stephen Bottoms, quoted in Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, p. 133.
18. Hammond and Steward, eds., *Verbatim*, p. 10.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Kent, in *ibid.*, p. 138.
21. Casanovas, in Antropova and García Mingo, 'El nuevo Pacto', p. 224.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
23. Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, p. 15.
24. Janelle Reinelt, 'The Promise of Documentary', in Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson, eds., *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 7.
25. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, p. 172.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
27. Casanovas used the term 'block' instead of 'act' when explaining the structure of his play.
28. 'Toward a Poetics of Theatre and Public Events: In the Case of Stephen Lawrence', *The Drama Review*, L, No. 3 (2006), p. 69–87 (p. 74).
29. Nicole Rogers, 'The Play of Law: Comparing Performances in Law and Theatre', *Queensland University of Technology Law and Justice Journal*, VIII, No. 2. (2008), p. 429–43 (p. 429).
30. Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, p. 146.
31. Norton-Taylor, in Hammond and Steward, eds., *Verbatim*, p. 113.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
33. Del Arco, in García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 464.
34. Kent, in Hammond and Steward, eds., *Verbatim*, p. 139.
35. Rogers, 'The Play of Law', p. 443.
36. Chris Megson, 'Half the Picture: "A Certain Frisson" at the Tricycle Theatre', in Forsyth and Megson, eds., *Get Real*, p. 195–208 (p. 195).
37. Derek Paget asserts that the metaphor of 'audience as judge' is widely acknowledged in all documentary plays. See Paget, 'New Documentarism on Stage: Documentary Theatre in New Times', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, LVI, No. 2 (2018), p. 129–41.
38. Del Arco, in García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 461.
39. Weiss, 'The Material and the Models', p. 43.
40. Jordi Casanovas, *Jauría* (Madrid: Antígona S., 2019), p. 17. (In Spanish; translations are ours unless otherwise noted.)
41. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Del Arco highlighted the importance of rhythm. During the rehearsals, he insisted that the actors listen to a string quartet playing a *senza misura* to understand and reenact its rhythm in *Jauría*. See García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 463.
45. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, p. 37.
46. As spectators, we were greatly affected by the cross-casting of the second block. The performance took an unreal turn, as our impression was that the perpetrators were torturing the victim.
47. According to Lynn Hecht Schafran, an internationally recognized attorney specializing in gender discrimination law, a stereotyped narrative of 'real rape' is an infrequent situation 'in which a degenerate, sex-starved, knife-wielding stranger jumps from the bushes to attack a blameless, nubile young woman. After the rape, the woman reports immediately to the police and is then admitted to the hospital for treatment of her savage physical injuries, sustained while resisting to the utmost' ('From the Archives: Barriers to Credibility: Understanding and Countering Rape Myths', <<https://kathmanduk2.wordpress.com/2009/04/09/from-the-archives-barriers-to-credibility-understanding-and-countering-rape-myths/>>).
48. Liza Fitzpatrick, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage* (Derry: Palgrave, 2018), p. 7.
49. Casanovas, *Jauría*, p. 59.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
53. Del Arco explains that during one of the rehearsals he was inciting the male actors to verbally attack the victim to accelerate the rhythm of the play. As a result, the leading actress, María Hervas, was so overwhelmed that she screamed and left the stage crying. This scream made them numb, but the director decided to keep it in the play. See García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 460–1.
54. During the performance, two scenes take place in the cubicle: the rape scene and the cross-examination of the victim. Del Arco explained that the cubicle functions on a metaphorical level as revictimization. See García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 462.
55. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, p. 46.
56. Del Arco. See García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 462–3.
57. Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, p. 12.

58. Mieke Bal quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage*, p. 26.
59. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 4.
60. Bal, quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage*, p. 26.
61. Bal, 'Calling to Witness: Lucretia', in *Looking In: The Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), p. 100.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
63. Gilson, quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage*, p. 186.
64. Casanovas, *Jauría*, p. 35.
65. Teresa Brennan, in Fitzpatrick, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage*, p. 141.
66. Jill Dolan, 'Utopia in Performance', *Theatre Research International*, XXXI, No. 2 (2006), p. 163–73.
67. Fitzpatrick, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage*, p. 2.
68. Casanovas, *Jauría*, p. 80.
69. Four members of La Manada were subject to prosecution for another sex abuse case involving a 21-year-old woman lying unconscious in the defendants' van in Andalusia. See <https://elpais.com/sociedad/2018/09/25/actualidad/1537872071_703040.html>.
70. Del Arco, in García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 462–3.
71. Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, p. 10.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
73. Casanovas, in Antropova and García Mingo, 'El nuevo Pacto', p. 220.
74. Del Arco, in García Mingo and Antropova, 'Jauría', p. 467.
75. Molly Flynn, *Witness Onstage: Documentary Theatre in Twenty-First-Century Russia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 310.
76. Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, p. 70.
77. See <<https://www.lamarea.com/2019/03/26/Jauría-la-obra-que-preferiríamos-no-haber-visto-y-que-hay-que-ver/>>.
78. 'Patriarchal justice' pays homage to the people's shouting during the street protests, which were also included as offstage shouting in the performance of *Jauría*.