

BEYOND DIALOGUE. DIFFERENT LITERARY AND ARTISTIC STRATEGIES TO  
REPRESENT THE UNSPEAKABLE IN THREE FRANCOPHONE PLAYS: WAJDI  
MOUAWAD'S *INCENDIES*, GROUPOV'S *RWANDA 94*, AND MILO RAU'S  
*HATE RADIO*

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ABSTRACT

The concept of representation is an ancient one, and as such it has acquired multiple meanings throughout time. However, when the representation in question is that of an “unspeakable” event, such as war and genocide, it must contend with the difficulty posed by the inadequacy of language to communicate the full extent of the event and consider special controversies surrounding its representation. Although some individuals purport that fiction is necessary to communicate the situation which surpasses comprehension, others express ethical concerns that artistic forms risk trivialization of the events. Further, the act of speaking for others through representation raises significant concerns regarding the possibility of misrepresentation since the proxy imposes his/her own view while speaking for the silent constituency.

This study focuses upon three plays of Francophone theater whose efforts to represent the unspeakable extend beyond dialogue: Wajdi Mouawad's *Incendies*, Groupov's *Rwanda 94*, and Milo Rau's *Hate Radio*. While scholarly work on the chosen plays may occasionally highlight the communicative difficulties faced therein, none of them place their focus solely upon the unspeakable as this study does. The analysis demonstrates that Mouawad, Groupov, and Rau attempt to overcome unspeakability and manage the difficulty and controversies inherent in representation of the unspeakable by the use of poetic and symbolic representation, the combination of total spectacle, heterogeneous dramaturgy, and political drama, and hyperrealism, respectively.