

A Danilo e Franca

Con gratitudine e  
ammirazione

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**TESI DI LAUREA**

**DARIO FO IN ENGLAND: THE THREE TEXTS OF ACCIDENTAL  
DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST**

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## **DARIO FO IN ENGLAND: THE THREE TEXTS OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST**

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist, its British translations and subsequent adaptations, in the last twelve years in the English-speaking world. The idea was born on the one hand from the observation of the increasing interest in the famous Italian playwright's political experience and works on the British behalf; and on the other hand from the lack of studies on Fo's popularity in Great Britain carried out from Italian considerations.

The English-speaking world had the opportunity to read the first translation of Accidental Death of an Anarchist by

Suzanne Cowan in 1979 -- text published in the United States by Theater, and put on stage on 13 March 1980 at the Open Circle Theatre, Toronto, adapted and directed by R. G. Davis --, then the play was re-translated for its first staging in London in January 1979 at the Dartington College by the Belt and Braces Roadshow Company. The latest translation dates back to the end of 1990 and its publication only to the first days of 1991; translated by Tim Supple and Alan Cumming -- the latter is also the director -- the play opened at the Wyndham's Theatre in London on 4 January 1991.

The success of all the above mentioned stagings is undeniable -- according to the number of spectators and of performances as well as of the copies of the book sold -- as is its topicality even more than twenty years after the first night in Milan at the Capannone in Via Colletta on 10 December 1970. However, the reasons for Fo's popularity in

Great Britain and the United States are not confined only to this script.

The first of his plays to be staged in London was Can't Pay? Won't Pay! -- translated by Lino Pertile and adapted by Bill Colville and Robert Walker, who is also the director; it opened at the Half Moon Theatre in London on 22 May 1978. Now nearly any of his scripts has already been translated into English and published.

Contrary to what happens in Italy where Fo's plays would have no reason to be staged unless by himself, in foreign countries many companies have already done it.

As far as the publications on Fo are concerned, until now there are only a few full-length studies in English, but more and more scholars are interesting themselves in him because the great success of audience his plays have in their country cannot go unobserved. It can be said that Fo

is one of the most famous living and still working Italian playwrights in Great Britain.

In the first chapter of this study Accidental Death of an Anarchist has been analysed and discussed in its structure and its two stagings in Italy in 1970 and 1987. Then the development of Fo's theatre has been retraced through his successive changes of circuit and his learnings from Italian artists who precede him in revue and in situation theatre.

The second chapter discusses the three translations of the play in English as for their stagings in London and in the United States.

The third chapter is dedicated to the comparative analysis of these texts, which present distinguishing features according to the choices made by the translators in their rendering Fo's open denunciations of the politics of the establishment. This analysis has disclosed the problems

of translating this text because of its involvement in the national situation of the time, being it Italy in the Seventies, America in the Eighties or Great Britain in the Eighties and Nineties. It has also been noticed that many of the differences of the texts from the original script are due to the theatrical circuit in which the text opens: this is the proof of the inconvenience for the establishment to approve such a politically committed theatre -- which explains Fo's suffering from censorship.

In the fourth chapter there has been given an outline of the English political theatre before and after Dario Fo. His works can be accepted in this new venue because many artists are at work for a renewal of the theatre according to the idea that it should be at the people's disposal. Indeed, the English artists whom Fo has been compared to, belong in great part to the socialist movements which took

to the abolition of theatrical censorship in Great Britain in 1967, and to others that were born after that date.

The Appendix reports an interview with Dario Fo, the author, he gave on 11 May 1991 in Milan, on the matter discussed in this study. There is also a short exchange with Franca Rame on her organization Soccorso Rosso.

**CHAPTER 1: ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST  
IN ITALY**

## CHAPTER 1: ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST IN ITALY

### 1. 1: Accidental Death of an Anarchist in Italy

In 1968 Dario Fo decides to devote himself to committed revolutionary theatres: from giullare della borghesia (jester of bourgeoisie) he becomes a giullare della classe operaia (jester of working class). He abandons the established circuit of big city theatres to find new venues and new audiences elsewhere. For a while he finds them in the cultural and recreational circles associated with PCI (Italian Communist Party), and forms Nuova Scena (New Scene); but Fo and PCI's mutual understanding is brief. PCI reacts to Fo's satire directed to its own way of dealing

with political questions (1). In 1970 Fo moves away from this circuit and forms Il Collettivo Teatrale La Comune (theatrical collective "La Comune"). Performances take place in occupied factories, at strike meetings, in arenas and in sports halls: theatre becomes militant. His plays now deal with the issues which are tearing Italy apart, and not only Italy but the whole world, in the turbulent Seventies. Fo transforms tragic events into farces which are very funny, but which never allow their audiences to forget the tragic starting point. In this atmosphere was born also Accidental Death of an Anarchist.

1 Suzanne Cowan, "Theatre, Politics, and Social Change in Italy since the Second World War", Theatre Quarterly, vol. 7, No. 27, Autumn 1977, p. 36:

their attacks were not limited to the most blatantly oppressive institutions of contemporary society, but also criticized the reformist policies and bureaucratic structure of the Communist Party itself. In making these denunciations, the company was not isolating itself from the working-class left, but simply articulating a position which had grown more and more widespread, even among the Party rank-and-file membership, since 1968.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist deals with the beginning of the Right-wing terrorist campaign in Italy, the arrest of the uninvolved anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli in connection with a bombing outrage, his supposed suicide while in police custody and its subsequent cover-up (2). Fo stresses the grotesque stories invented to defend the real culprits.

The late Sixties and the Seventies see Italy in a difficult political situation which has its climax in August 1980 with the explosion of a bomb at Bologna railway station.

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2 Two young anarchists were arrested for the bomb at the bank: Giuseppe Pinelli and Piero Valpreda. The second remained in prison for ten years and wrote a diary about it. The first was "defenestrated" from the window of the police headquarters where his questioning was held. Ten years later, at Catanzaro the trial ended and the fascists were condemned: Franco Freda and Giovanni Ventura. On the one hand, the trial tried to demonstrate that at the time the fascists were associated to the anarchists. On the other hand, Valpreda has never been cleared, he was accused of "subversive association". Moreover, various incidents were never explained such as the facility with which Ventura and Freda escaped from police custody.

The fact dealt with in Accidental Death of an Anarchist is related to the explosion of a bomb on 12 December 1969 in the Agricultural Bank in Piazza Fontana, Milan. A year after, on 5 December 1970 Fo opens with the play in the Capannone of via Colletta (3), Milan. Then the show goes for a tour all around Italy; it is again in Milan -- at Cinema Italia -- on 14 and 15 June 1971. It is a success everywhere, even against police's threats.

Fo wants to reveal to the nation the corruption of institutions and give a sense to the "strategy of tension" practiced by the establishment with the aim of cracking down the Left. According to the very figures reported by the Giornalista (Journalist) the situation is that of a state of emergency (4). Indeed, the woman journalist who arrives to

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3 The building is the famous Palazzina Liberty occupied by Dario Fo's theatrical collective, in Milan.

4 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale di un anarchico, Verona, La Comune, E.D.B., 1972, pp. 101-102:

break the circuit and to make the audience refer what is happening to their own experiences is considered by Cairns to be as Alice in the wonderful world -- the heroine of Lewis Carrol's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, 1865 (5).

Dario Fo himself resumes his aims to write a so-called instant book, born from a precise request from the audience, as follows:

questo spettacolo è nato subito come esigenza, appena è successo il fatto (l'assassinio di Pinelli). [...] Cinque o sei processi di anarchici stranamente si assomigliavano tutti. [...] Allora mi è venuto di raccontare una storia un po' legata a tutte queste storie dell'anarchia. [...] Ci voleva un personaggio-esca, [...] un pazzo che cioè ha la chiave, al livello di follia, per far diventare tutta la

GIORNALISTA (che nel frattempo ha estratto da una cartella alcuni fogli): Ah, non le risulta? E non le risulta nemmeno che su 173 ATTENTATI dinamitardi avvenuti fino ad oggi: dodici al mese, uno ogni tre giorni, su 173 attentati dicevo (sta leggendo su di un documento) ben 102 si è scoperto essere stati certamente organizzati da fascisti, e che, per più della metà dei rimanenti 71 ci sono seri indizi si tratta ancora di attentati messi in piedi da fascisti o comunque da organizzazioni parallele.

follia esatta. E lui diventa normale, mentre gli altri sono anormali. Proprio il ribaltamento. [...] E ci siamo resi conto che l'indignazione è veramente un mezzo di catarsi. [...] Ma in fondo il discorso di base è questo: la borghesia usa proprio il mezzo dell'indignazione per nascondere la struttura (6).

Fo wants to destroy the version of the fact given by police with the aim of "striking terror into the workers' hearts": it is counter-information against the discrediting of the Left.

The sources of the play are the court documents and an anonymous book on Pinelli's "defenestration", La strage di stato (The State Massacre) (7). But Fo's play itself turns out to be a source of information: it grows and develops, continually enriched by new situations taken from the current events over a period of four years. Being a work

5 Christopher Cairns, "Introduction", in Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, London, Methuen, 1991, p. XIX.

6 "Morte di un anarchico: uno spettacolo grottesco per evitare che la drammaticità diventi catarsi. Intervista a Dario Fo", Il Nuovo Canzoniere Italiano, Milano, 12 December 1970.

7 Published by the editor Samona-Savelli in 1970.

written in response to people's wish of being informed it is continually modified, sometimes day by day during rehearsals, in the light of changing circumstances or in reply to the criticism made in the discussions which follow the performances. This causes also different scripts of the play: Fo never claims his works to be unalterable. On the contrary the script is a basis for performance, a means of showing something to its audience and that they cannot put into practice in reality. The play turns out to be a source of information for its audience, being more updated than any television news programme or newspaper.

Fo is the director as well as the scene designer and the main actor (8) but the text is mainly of his audience because his first goal is to accomplish with them (9).

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8 Fo can be considered also an example of "cultivated man". Suzanne Cowan, "Dario Fo and Franca Rame", in Franca Rame and Dario Fo, Orgasmo Adulto Escapes From the Zoo, adapt. Estelle Parsons, New York, Broadway Play Publishing Inc., 1988, p. IV:

Later, in 1972, the very title changed to Morte  
accidentale di un anarchico e di alcuni altri sovversivi  
(Accidental Death of an Anarchist and of Other Subversive)  
and the play deals also with Giangiacomo Feltrinelli's death  
and the dynamite found near his corpse under an electricity  
pylon (10).

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Dario Fo is one of Italy's most popular and successful playwrights. He is also an actor, director, choreographer, set and costume designer, painter, graphic artist, poet, musician, scholar, cultural organizer, and political activist. Such extraordinary versatility approaches the fifteenth and sixteenth century ideal of the cultivated individual; it may not seem surprising that Fo comes from the country that gave birth to the popular concept of the "Renaissance man".

9 Mary Karen Dahl, "State Terror and Dramatic Countermeasures", John O'Connell and Dragon Kläic, eds., Terrorism and Modern Drama, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1990, p. 115:

Fo's experience illustrates how theatre can work to generate values to be held in common by a community gathered for a performance. It also forcibly reminds us of the obvious limitations of theatre.

10 Giangiacomo Feltrinelli was the head of a still famous publishing house carrying his name. At the time

It can be considered to be a journalistic theatre of counter-information with a "contextualizing obsession" (11) and with the aim to show that also in the real world things happen with a farcical appearance.

However, there is a limit for the play in the fact that it is staged inside "private" structures where a kind of predetermined audience come to see what they already know will be in contrast with the version of the establishment and because of this they will surely agree with it. The whole fact can transform itself into a self-glorification close, on the one hand, in its sureness in the audience's approval and on the other hand in the audience's awareness to go and see what they look for: what their idol proclaims

of his death it had published many Left and revolutionary books. An explanation was never given to his death, the case was closed by saying it was suicide.

11 A glorious predecessor is Aristophane's theatre of city-life that in a sense substituted the modern means of communication which is the newspaper in his dealing with current events: a newspaper-theatre. It is also something similar to Piscator's conception of representing the whole class revolt in a play: the history of mankind and a day of a city, and the wish of satisfying the audience's request of entertainment.

must be true (12). Fo himself states his intention to stage his play in a circuit outside that backed by the establishment, he says:

noi crediamo fondamentale innestare i nostri spettacoli in spazi politici, gestiti dai compagni della base (13).

But this provokes a kind of short-circuit.

At the same time this play meets Fo's idea of a theatre at the disposal of people victims of the powerful establishment. Fo himself realizes the importance of Accidental Death of an Anarchist as a text with a political

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12 Paolo Puppa, Il teatro di Dario Fo. Dalla scena alla piazza, Venezia, Marsilio, 1978, p. 199:

da un lato appartiene agli strumenti volanti tatzebao, ciclostilati, vignette satiriche, assemblee operaie e studentesche, dall'altro si inserisce nelle azioni chiuse, "artistiche" provocate dall'affaire.

13 Cf. Claudio Meldolesi, Su un comico in rivolta. Dario Fo il bufalo e il bambino, Roma, Bulzoni, 1978, p. 157.

relevance and moreover as representative of a precise period of his career; to a specific question about this he states:

Question: ...per un certo periodo, hai fatto un teatro che parlava in maniera immediata di problemi politici, era uno strumento di lotta politica e ideologica.

Dario Fo: Credo che su questo aspetto abbiamo calcolato oltre misura. Prendiamo l'Anarchico, considerato, anzi catalogato, come un classico esempio di teatro esplicitamente politico. Sì, c'è l'inchiesta condotta su un incidente avvenuto in questura: il famoso volo dalla finestra dell'anarchico. Forse un delitto, un delitto di Stato, un assassinio che goffamente si cerca di far passare per suicidio. Ma la chiave di racconto si colloca in una situazione di divertimento. [...] Questo gioco del grottesco, del paradosso, della follia è un gioco che potrebbe benissimo stare in piedi anche senza il discorso politico (14).

To call it a "political theatre" is too limiting, there is also entertainment even if on a serious base (15):

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14 Dario Fo, Dialogo provocatorio sul comico, il tragico, la follia e la ragione, edited by Luigi Allegri, Bari, Laterza, 1990, p. 149.

15 Vittorio Felaco, "New Teeth for an Old Shark", John Fuegi et al. eds., Beyond Brecht: Brecht Yearbook Vol. 11, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1983, p. 61:

the aim is the identification of the spectator with the actor on stage. Private property is denied also as far as roles and language are concerned.

The incisiveness of the play in dealing with such a delicate matter has obliged Fo to insert a transposition: he pretends to be re-enacting the anarchist Salsedo's defenestration from a window of the Police Headquarter in 1921 in New York. This happens in order to avoid censorship. However, the device helps Fo to stress one of his aims: to show past and present -- and unfortunately also future -- affinity of the political mechanisms.

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Franca Rame and Dario Fo have a vision of post-Brechtian theatre that affirms the absolute necessity of theatre, a situational concept of entertainment totally integrated with all other aspects of society and life. Such a vision of theatre resists, at least initially, any stylistic analysis [...] Fo's spectacles reject the easy classification of its techniques.

Fo himself states his device in a Prologue (16) to the performance that he is used to "acting" before the raising of the curtain, with the lights still on. It is also part of his epic way of acting, indeed he himself defines epic style as follows:

the epic style derives from realism. But it is characterized by the self-aware detachment of the actor; the actor is critical of what he acts. He does not confine himself to conveying information, to telling something, and then letting the audience sort it all out. He seeks to provide the audience with the necessary data for a reading of the piece (17).

And also:

to be epic is to be able to convey the situation before the finer details of it become apparent (18).

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16 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, pp. 11-12.

17 Dario Fo and Franca Rame, Dario Fo and Franca Rame Theatre Workshops at Riverside Studios, London, April 28th, May 5th, 12th, 13th and 19th 1983, London, Red Notes, 1983, p. 6.

18 Ibidem., p. 19.

He enters the stage as the entertainer of revue who was appointed to present the following numbers. It is never a fixed text, but he changes it by adding considerations on the current events of the day (19). Here he shows all his skill in miming and impersonating different characters only with the use of his voice and his body, without special props. It is like a monologue with Fo standing in a no-man's land between the hall with its seats with the "passive" spectators and the stage with its props copying reality but false in their materiality (20). It can also be said that

19 Indeed, following editions of the play -- for example Dario Fo, Morte accidentale di un anarchico, Milano, Einaudi, 1988 -- do not have the whole text but only a short version of it if they have not cut it completely.

20 Roberto Nepoti, "Ridi con rabbia", in Cappa M., Nepoti R., Dario Fo, Roma, Gremese, 1982, p. 14:

benchè una simile teatralità esorbitante dai limiti convenzionali appaia più in rilievo nel periodo della Palazzina Liberty, non sfuggirà come essa sia stata presente, a diversi gradi, anche nel teatro anteriore di Fo. Nè come si riproponga oggi, su un piano che diremmo di "regia seconda", a quei semplici ingressi di Fo in sala o in palcoscenico che fanno già teatro

he restores a kind of "mystic gulf" with putting himself on the higher position of a magician able to make people identify themselves with what he is saying and answer him: in this homologated answer, obliged to be nothing more than a laugh even if clearly combined with anger for the impotence to rebel against injustice, is part of the theatre's limit (21). It is an example of the real theatre with no cues learnt by heart but with the actor-storyteller-

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(già rapporto con il pubblico) o attraverso quelle forme di metacomunicazione teatrale che sono i suoi brillanti e semi-improvvisati monologhi introduttivi.

21 While analysing Dario Fo's Tutti uniti! Tutti insieme! Ma scusa, quello non è il padrone? (All United! All together! But excuse me, that is the master, isn't he?) Paolo Puppa defines a typical mechanism at work in Fo's plays:

attivazione solo emozionale, mai dialettico-critica, e quindi passivazione ideologica operata nei riguardi del pubblico stesso. [...] Gioco violento di chiaroscuri emozionali, sempre entro la precisa volontà di coinvolgere il pubblico, controllandolo totalmente e totalmente guidandolo nei suoi meccanismi identificativi e proiettivi (Paolo Puppa, "Tutti uniti! Tutti insieme! Ma scusa, quello non è il padrone?", L'erba voglio, Year II, No. 5, April 1972, p. 25).

mountebank-mime's own experiences dramatized on stage. For this reason, for its profound topicality it is also a moment of sharp satire. Here, Fo puts into practice his unifying role between the performance and his audience's reality of life before they come into the theatre.

The main character, the Matto, is played by Fo himself; one of the "massive parts Fo writes for himself in his plays" (22), because he admits to suffer from "histriomania":

INDIZIATO: [...] ma io sono matto: matto patentato... guardi qua il libretto clinico: sono stato ricoverato già sedici volte... e sempre per la stessa ragione: ho la mania dei personaggi, si chiama "histriomania" viene da istriones che vuol dire attore. Ho l'hobby di recitare delle parti insomma, sempre diverse (23) --

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22 Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo. People's Court Jester, London, Methuen, 1986, p. 7.

23 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 14.

that pushes him to impersonate many roles, as is going to happen in the play (24).

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24 Joel Schechter, "The Un-American Satire of Dario Fo", Partisan Review, LI, No. 1, 1984, pp. 114-115:

is sintomatic of a comic, consciuosly practised schizophrenia that pervades his satire. [...] In Accidental Death of an Anarchist [...] Fo himself performed the roles of maniac, police inspector, high court judge and bishop. He kept disowning or temporarily exchanging one persona for another, so that the Maniac's opening confession in the play might well be Dario Fo's personal testimony; he claims to suffer from a psychic disorder, "Histriomania", a compulsion to play multiple roles.

And this device is the best to provoke irony, as Pirandello did in his Henry IV. Christopher Cairns, "Introduction", cit., p. XVIII:

just like Pirandello's celebrated mediation on madness, Henry IV, he will be immune from prosecution. And like Pirandello, whose Henry has a passion for impersonation and theatre, Fo's madman has a psychiatrically recognizable complaint: impersonation is his stock-in-trade. So he may assume different disguises [...] to interrogate the interrogators in an hilarious mad-hatter's tea-party.

However, Cairns sees also a similarity with the schizophrenic impersonations dealt with by Robert Louis Stevenson in his The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886).

He is a twin of Pinelli that comes back to the place of the tragic end in order to find out the authors of the killing: he is not only the dissacrating fool of the carnival(25) but also an apostolical visitor who satisfies his audience's symbolical expectations. The Matto is also Fo himself; Fo reflects himself in him, in his behaviour: he is the clown as well as the revolutionary politician (26).

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25 Paolo Puppa, Il teatro di Dario Fo, cit., p. 200:

astuto naif, ingenuo-malizioso, enfant terrible gaffoso, la cui lingua ha un potere allucinatorio, entificante di provocare disastri, e allo stesso tempo consente il recupero dell'antico topos della festa contestativa propria della cultura carnevalesca, grazie a cui la sala accederà ai segreti delle istituzioni.

26 Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo, cit., p. 60:

the Maniac ("I'm the Maniac, not a fool -- watch your terminology", he says at one point) combines some of the blustering farcical antics of Il Lungo's encounter with state bureaucracy in Gli arcangeli non giocano a flipper with the Mediaeval figure of the disconcerting, truth-telling Madman of Mistero Buffo, but above all he is a representation of Fo himself in his multifarious guises as clown, political

The entire performance lives of Fo's skill in satirizing and debasing anyone and everything. When asked about what comicality is, Fo says:

il comico è una sorta di gioco folle, che però ribadisce la superiorità della ragione. [...] (Le) chiavi usate nella comicità [...] : sono tutte tese a ribadire il problema della ragione come supporto vincente in ogni discorso, in ogni storia. Il potere cerca di cancellare la ragione, la sua dialettica. Vuole sostituirci l'ordine che non si discute (27).

Language is the first to be set free of its structure revealing its function of an ideological medium. The whole stage is Fo's not only because of his "ubiquitous acting style" (28) that turns out in a scenic game. This effect comes from Fo's learning of mime and also from his wish to rescue his predecessors' way of acting; his very body represents what the play deals with: the corruption of the

pamphleteer, giullare, stand-up comic, quick-change artist and satirist.

27 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 116.

28 Joel Schechter, "The Un-American Satire", cit., p. 117.

state (29). The powerful charismatic figure that Fo represents allows him to ask his audience to become his coconspirators off stage, to become a militant audience.

The other characters of the play are not characters in a psychological sense but personifications of the real participants in the event (30). The only invented one is

29 Joylynn Wing, "The Performance of Power and Power of Performance: Rewriting the Police State in Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Modern Drama, XXIII, No. 1, March 1990, p. 146:

as the scene builds, it becomes increasingly evident that the grotesquely corrupted body of the "Maniac" and the body of the politic are theatrical reflections of each other. [...] (It) is a deliberate implementation on Fo's part of a particular kind of grotesque physical paradox employed in the "black mime" tradition of Lecoq [...] and the late Sicilian comedian, Totò, in which over physical abuse builds to [...] "a point of paroxysm".

30 Suzanne Cowan, "The Trow-Away Theatre of Dario Fo", The Drama review, XIX, No. 2, June 1975, pp. 109-110:

there are no "characters," in a psychological sense, only types or personifications. [...] Actors can, and often do, change roles in the middle of a play. Dario Fo usually plays the part of several different characters -- in Morte accidentale di un anarchico, for example, he is a madman [...] who adsumes many roles. [...] Any

just the Matto. The audience can easily recognize Luigi Calabresi -- the Police Chief charged with the case and present at Pinelli's questioning before the "fall" -- as the Commissario Sportivo; Marcello Guida as the Questore; Camilla Cederna -- Journalist of the Espresso, an Italian magazine -- as the Giornalista.

The very many gags present all through the play help Fo to maintain a constant attention from his audience and to express his vis comica (comical power) (31).

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character functions basically as a personification of a certain political problem, and as such can change roles the moment his or her function on stage is to articulate an issue different from one that was treated a few minute before.

31 Much of Fo's way of creating gags derives from the theatre of variety. Nepoti realizes this heritage is visible in many cases. Roberto Nepoti, "Ridi con rabbia", cit., p. 9:

dall'improvvisazione all'a parte (in cui l'attore si rivolge direttamente al pubblico per commentare l'azione in corso), dalla controrecitazione all'uso dell'incidente e dell'imprevisto (che serve a violare la "magia" della scena portandola ad una dimensione quotidiana).

Accidental Death of an Anarchist has achieved sustained and international popularity. It is Fo's first play to receive a professional production both in England and in the United States. This play possesses such a perfect balance between serious and comic effects that is apt for stagings all around the world -- up to now, indeed, it has been staged in forty-one countries -- and moreover its tragic event shows its over-topicality everywhere. To the accuse of having written too farcical a text Fo answers:

Accidental Death of an Anarchist is a farce. [...] But we never forget the fact that, even though it is a farce, what we are describing is true, is a reality. The element of farce heightens the tragic element of what they are portraying. In fact, the key to the tragedy is that which enables the comic to take on a satirical dimension. Nobody in Italy got upset

Fo's comicality derives from many different ways of considering the comic theatre. For a survey of these mechanisms see P. De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality", in Interpretation/Theory and Practice, Baltimore, The J. Hopkins University Press, 1969, pp. 173-209; Giulio Ferroni, Il comico nelle teorie contemporanee, Roma, Bulzoni, 1974; Gianni Celati, Finzioni occidentali. Fabulazione, comicità e scrittura, Torino, Einaudi, 1975; Piero Camporesi, La maschera di Bertoldo, Torino, Einaudi, 1976 and Fo himself when he describes the actor's task in his unusual diary which enters his

because we were making a farce out of things that were tragic. [...] This is the art of theatrical invention -- the ability to use farce in order to tell of tragic events (32).

The play has a circular structure: events continue to repeat themselves and a definite solution cannot be found: as it happens in reality (33).

A third act begins at the end of the written text: a discussion with the audience about the matter of the play or in general about revolution against the political system. The audience is free to choose the matter to discuss with the company. This latter is composed of people who share with the audience both political and ideological ideas. It is a spontaneous meeting of militants for the same ideal. Surely it is the moment of a more dynamic participation

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various experiences, true or invented: Dario Fo, Manuale minimo dell'attore, Torino, Einaudi, 1987.

32 Dario Fo and Franca Rame, op. cit., 1983, p. 26.

33 Suzanne Cowan, Dario Fo. Bibliography, Biography, Playography, London, TQ Publication, 1978, pp. 14-16.

which the society of mass media has tried to estinguish(34).

Fo has always looked for a collective work (35). He also looks for a qualification of the answer and not for an

34 The performance is constituted of many stages in which the audience is progressively made to partake in the work in an active way. See the description of these phases in Ruggero Bianchi, "La teatralizzazione permanente. Happening proletario e rituale della militanza nel teatro politico di Dario Fo", Biblioteca Teatrale, XXI/XXII, 1978, pp. 160-180.

35 He describes his technique in writing a text and it comes out that it is considered an open text waiting for the actors' as well as the audience's ideas. Dario Fo and Franca Rame, op. cit., p. 37:

You set up a fixed video-TV camera on-stage, together with a separate tape recorder for the sound. We record the improvisation, and then study the recording. We pick out passages that are clear and which come across well. Then all of us together begin working on a scenario, a master-text. We write also out the action on the left-hand side, on the right we write the dialogue. And we make further proposals -- collective proposals. Then we read the thing through two or three times together -- but we don't try to establish too much detail at this point. We leave the thing open, so that when we go through and perform it again, people are acting with their own words. Then we record it a third time, and again a fourth time, and gradually we end up with a structure that feels right. Then we begin the serious work of producing the piece and staging it. We study the correct rhythms of interrelated actions. And, in particular, we work together in order to seek out supporting situations outside of the central action. In other words, we seek to create counterpoint.

unconditioned approval by the non-committed theatre-goer: he puts himself under discussion every evening, after any of his performances. His audience is his judge:

the audience is a crucial factor, for the actor who is able to listen to the audience. The audience is the actor's greatest collaborator. In fact it is the audience which enables you to understand how to correct your mistakes. Because the audience, for an actor, is like the mirror for the classical ballet dancer... Even more so, in fact, because the audience shows you things that a mirror cannot show (36).

The importance of this moment, together with other hints for discussion directly made use of during the performance, perhaps signalled only by a clapping of hands, is undeniable. It is unique for the novelty it represents in the Italian theatre which is suffocated by the old fixed structure inherited by the non-democratic dark periods of the history of the nation. With Accidental Death of an Anarchist Fo stresses more than ever his commitment for a political minority which in reality should be the majority

as for the numbers of members: the working class. He himself comments the successive editions of the play as part of his wish to be at his audience's service:

the tragic farce of Accidental Death was repeated all over Italy for more than two years on end. It was seen by more than half a million people and it was published in three different editions. Why three different editions? Simply because the play had to follow the increased consciousness of Italian public opinion and the sharpening struggle by the working class and the student movement, and to evolve the political developments that resulted from absorbing themes and syntheses from the new political and social events which were emerging (37).

Fo decides to re-stage this play in December 1987 at the Teatro Cristallo in Milan: Pinelli's case comes again in the limelight because of the decision of the administration of Milan to take away from Piazza Fontana the memorial slab for the anarchist's death (38). The text is neither changed

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37 Dario Fo, "Auhtor's Note", in Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, London, Methuen, 1987, p. XVI.

38 Giovanni Raboni, "Dario Fo ritorna 'pazzo' e improvvisa col suggeritore", Corriere della sera, 9 December 1987, p. 23:

nor updated, and it has a great success even this time. It has again its original function of book for his audience's instant need. It is used in a political controversy. Fo and his charismatic figure can do more than any other indication and the theatre, with its skill in making its audience partake directly through emotions in the denunciation of a fact, performs its cathartic function for the spectators' consciences.

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più che di rievocazione si dovrebbe dunque parlare di rimozione, in senso sia letterale che figurato; o, se si preferisce, di organizzazione dell'oblio.

### 1. 1. 1: Italian criticism of Accidental Death of an Anarchist

When in 1970 Fo opens with Accidental Death of an Anarchist, his "satira a caldo" (39), critics immediately noticed Fo's coming back to his preferred genre of farce(40). Indeed, he creates a text which is political in

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39 Corrado Augias, "Come si scivola da quel davanzale", L'Espresso, 20 December 1970.

40 Arturo Lazzari, "Fo si scatena sul tema dell'anarchico 'defenestrato'", L'Unità, 12 December 1970:

l'andamento del copione è tipicamente farsesco, ed esso rivela il ritorno di Dario Fo al suo stile preferito, quello appunto della farsa. [...] Di nuovo, o meglio di sempre rinnovantesi, ci ha messo una facilità e una fertilità di gags, di battute umoristiche.

Also Corrado Augias, art. cit.:

teatro di gran livello tenuto costantemente a mezzo fra farsa, satira e ricostruzione cronistica con abilità che è del miglior teatro di Fo.

Also Gottardo Blasich, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Letture, XXVI, No. 2, February 1971, p. 138: "l'estro di Dario Fo vi si trova a suo pieno agio, nel suo campo naturale."

all its lines and he abandons his past habit to insert political hints in a basically non-committed structure (41).

Its value of counter-information has been recognized even in

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41 Augias asserts this progress even if he is slightly polemic on the real political base of the play. He seems to consider it more political as for the effects it has on its audience. Corrado Augias, art. cit.:

è esattamente il contrario dei vecchi testi di Fo nei quali una situazione farsesca di partenza veniva presa come base per innestarvi frammenti di discorso politico. Qui invece c'è una situazione di base che è "politica" (almeno per i riflessi che stimola negli spettatori) nutrita di continui innesti farseschi o comunque teatrali.

The farcical structure can also be considered the most important but the political one is an element impossible to be completely cancelled because Salsedo-Pinelli's case is a "dark" episode. Edoardo Fadini, "Il nuovo Fo: La realtà che imita la follia", Rinascita, 15 January 1971:

(Fo) è tornato alla comicità slabbrata, popolaresca e pantomimica delle sue vecchie commedie, risolvendo inoltre genilmente l'impasse che poteva venirgli dalla gravità della vicenda delle bombe di Milano con un'invenzione scenica di prim'ordine: il protagonista della commedia non è, infatti, l'anarchico morto "accidentalmente" in questura, bensì un matto.

a "discussed" period of the Italian history as that in which it is staged (42).

Fo's ability as an actor is praised once again for his playing the main role of the Matto (43).

42 Arturo Lazzari, art. cit.:

"coscienza" elementare ma astutissima, che sa navigare nel mare della lotta di classe. Innalzando, è ovvio, la bandiera del sistema: difendendone in modo scoperto e brutale le ragioni, e con ciò stesso distruggendole.

Also Corrado Augias, art. cit.:

è esattamente quello che dovrebbe essere il teatro politico al suo miglior livello quando cioè riesce a non essere non soltanto una piatta lettura di "documenti" che vanno dalla rivendicazione anche giusta al piagnisteo.

43 Arturo Lazzari, art. cit.:

godibilissimo a vedersi nella rappresentazione che ne dà Fo, nella sua straordinaria bravura di interprete di se stesso, questo matto così congeniale.

Also Corrado Augias, art. cit.: "per rimestare il calderone Fo s'è cucito addosso il personaggio d'un maniaco."

The only complaint seems to be for the way the play ends, which has appeared as a contradictory kind of happy ending for such a pressing matter (44): Fo's discussion of scandals as a means to strengthen the institutions' power is seen as a criticism that the same Fo could do to himself.

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44 Arturo Lazzari, art. cit.:

ci è sembrata una assenza quella di uno sdegno morale indispensabile, a nostro avviso, per trattare simile tema scottante.

Also Corrado Augias, art. cit.:

(1') efficacia viene meno nell'ultima mezz'ora di spettacolo, quando alla veemenza satirica della prima parte si sostituiscono plumbee predicatorie che sono anche esse un aspetto meno tollerabile, della teatralità di Dario Fo.

And Gottardo Blasich, art. cit.:

l'animosità del discorso si sfalda quando nella seconda parte il matto tende a generalizzare il "caso", nel momento in cui esce dalla sua funzione critica e tenta una spiegazione degli accomodamenti del sistema. [...] Cala di tono la puntata satirica.

As far as the successive staging of Accidental Death of an Anarchist in 1987 is concerned, success does not lack even if the staging has been decided in a few days. The text is brought on stage without updating a line and Fo makes open use of a prompter, who stays on stage -- and this fact makes many more comic situations spring (45).

The political atmosphere has changed, satire is used by many other artists and in many different occasions, but Fo's unique skill as an actor is always visible: his texts do not loose in effectiveness when he is on stage to play them, but on the contrary "il valore si moltiplica" (46).

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45 Giovanni Raboni, art. cit.:

i momenti più felici nascono, [...] dalla mancanza di preparazione, cioè dai dialoghi che Fo, non ricordando le battute, improvvisa col suggeritore, accortamente piazzato in vista. Ne derivano situazioni da cabaret non di rado godibili.

46 Mariella Zanetti, "Ridere per non dimenticare una morte 'accidentale'", Il sole 24 ore, 6 December 1987.

In the end it is however undeniable that the play makes clear all its "corda rozzamente propagandistica" (47) because it lacks its main function of counter-information. The event for itself has been nearly forgotten. What remains is the so well-structured comic text that continues to be effective even after more than seven years from the first night.

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## 1. 2: Dario Fo and the problem of theatrical circuits

Fo's passion for the theatre began with his experience of the oral traditions of his country. His love for the province together with his disillusionment always

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47 Giovanni Raboni, art. cit.

characterizes his works (48). The "stories of the lake", so famous in his native region, answer to the people's need of a mythical history which can reflect their dreams. At that time he has no strong theoretic or critic ideas, but he works to reevaluate the popular theatre as an alternative expression. They are the base for Fo's first works for the national radio, RAI, in 1951.

He continues to work in the circuit of the establishment up to 1962 (49) when censorship hinders him

48 Claudio Meldolesi, Su un comico in rivolta, cit., p. 24:

il riferimento popolare di Fo non è nostalgico, Fo ama l'inerzia della storia che la tradizione rappresenta, il riferimento alla provincia per lui è un'arma contro la cultura stabilizzatrice.

49 Carlo Di Stefano, La censura teatrale in Italia (1600-1962), Bologna, Cappelli, 1964, pp. 131-132:

fino al 1962 ha agito il decreto legge emanato nel periodo fascista. La legge del 1 aprile 1935 n. 327, [...] che è stata abrogata nell'aprile del 1962. [...] Mentre la legge "limita", la Costituzione Italiana all'articolo 21 dice testualmente: "Tutti hanno diritto di

from continuing with his satire of the government. It is a crucial change of environment after the middle-class comedies. He has been one of the most successful Italian playwrights but now he supports the working class' needs: it is an ethical as well as commercial decision. Fo takes possession of a circuit and tries to change it from inside with his works, but he is ready to leave it for a new one when he cannot go on with his experiments, with his extreme criticism of everything and everyone who is adapted to the establishment. But at the limit of this process it is as if he would insert avant-garde solutions in a circuit that cannot bear them and so he is obliged to find another one more at his disposal.

He thinks of finding an alley in Left circles. His goal is a militant theatre able to make people understand the absolute necessity of a renewal in the institutional

manifestare liberamente il proprio pensiero con la parola, con lo scritto, ed ogni altro mezzo di diffusione".

system. But also the PCI -- Italian Communist Party -- does not agree with his direct way of dealing with scandals and he breaks with it when in 1968 the new movement of renewal arises.

The atmosphere breathed in 1968 makes Fo and Franca Rame, his wife, hope in an opportunity for a state reform. In 1970 he forms the Collettivo teatrale (Theatrical Collective) "La Comune": his personal circuit should answer to his social aims first of all.

In this period he writes the most political of his plays, among which there is Accidental Death of an Anarchist. The plays must correspond to an immediate need of defending the masses' values against the power of the government. In them his audience can see what cannot be put into practice in the fight against fascism meant to be Italian politicians' most common behaviour. It is also the moment for checking his intellectual position: he seems to

become a political leader but in reality his position is not so definite. The staging of plays with a precise political aim and with a precise militant audience can provoke a short circuit that ends in self-fulfillment (50).

The problem of circuit, indeed appears also with the staging of Accidental Death of an Anarchist in London, the first time. Fo commented the episode of the moving of the company to the West End, and the danger of conditioning the play comes out very clear:

the danger of being instrumentalized by economic power is always there. However, what you have to consider is how much of your politics you are able to continue to get through, even when performing in a commercial situation. For example, Accidental Death of an Anarchist ran for almost a year in East London, performed by the same company. At a certain point the director of the theatre to which they transferred, in the West End, came and invited them to perform in the West End. The actors in the company went through a crisis, because they

50 Paolo Puppa, Il teatro di Dario Fo, cit., p. 199:

pur riconoscendogli un grande impegno civile e morale, di cui bisogna dargli atto, (c'è) il rischio di chiudersi in un rituale della ridondanza.

didn't know whether to accept or not. Later, though, I talked with a lot of English comrades who saw the show in the West End, and they said that this transfer was correct political decision. Because, if nothing else it enabled people to see a style, theatrical language and technique, a conception, but also the content, the politics of it. And perhaps, if that show had never have gone into the West End, then I would never have the chance to come to London myself...! (51)

The next step is the extreme Left. However, Fo's progress has not ended, yet. After all this he comes back to the roots of the theatre: the mime, with the contemporary morality of Mistero Buffo. He struggles with himself between the need of rendering everything theatrically and the need of reducing the spaces for the theatre as such in order to give his audience the opportunity to partake actively in the realization of the play.

However, by now in Italy he is thought to have very little to say; the rhetorical and separated figures of author, actor and audience are maintained: the theatre of evasion turns into the escape from the theatre.

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51 Dario Fo and Franca Rame, op. cit., p. 43.

In England, on the contrary, he represents a revolutionary way of making theatre and his works are considered among the best in contemporary theatre.

British artists have experienced the problems of the choice of a circuit, that is obligatory when the theatre is thought as a revolutionary means of expression, but they have also been more conservative than the Italians. Their traditions are surely different but it is too much to say that they completely lack a structure for a committed theatre(52).

Fo and his wife have also been considered terrorists, while they themselves have been victims of terrorism and censorship, and this has influenced many people in their understanding of this theatre (53).

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52 Cf. David Hirst, Dario Fo and Franca Rame, London, MacMillan, 1989.

53 Vittorio Felaco, "New teeth for an Old Shark", in John Fuegi et al., eds, op. cit., p. 58:

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### 1. 3: Dario Fo and his theatrical models

Dario Fo has a lot of predecessors as far as peculiar aspects of his art are concerned but he himself renounces any precise teacher because his theatre must explain itself(54). Moreover he has also invented fantastic stories for his life: as if his private life were a stage, as well. However, Italian theatre has given a lot to his art.

The beginning of Fo's career is among the storytellers of his village. The heritage of that tradition will

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in Italy they have suffered from censorship, the problem is that Italian authorities have historically been too intolerant, when they have not altogether acted within fascist parameters and guidelines, and the critics have not learned to differentiate between the actors/authors and the political activists.

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54 Claudio Meldolesi, Su un comico in rivolta, cit., p. 9-10.

characterize a great part of his theatre. This latter is like the battlefield and it must give the low classes the opportunity to re-possess their culture against the mass-media homologation (55).

He attends Jaques Lecoq's school of mime -- Fo is also influenced by the mime Jaques Tati's (56) aphasia -- that will give him the first teachings for his future mimic: the mime that comes back to its origin and finds the ancient

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55 His first model can also be Gustavo Modena the patriotic romantic actor, who differs from Fo in his idea of theatre as a temple that cannot be contaminated. Indeed he left it to go to fight in the war field. See Ibidem., p. 188.

56 Jacques Tati is the stage name of Jacques Tatischeff -- born in 1908, his mother was French and his father was Russian, from this his non-French surname -- French actor, producer and scene designer, known for his gift as gagman but in a grotesque way that turns into satire. Moreover, in this process reality appears deformed and stylized. He is well-known for his dumb-language on stage, he never speaks but makes his body speak. his body has much in common with Fo's also at the physical level. On Tati and his works see Roberto Nepoti, Jacques Tati, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1978.

union of gesture and word also in the permeating of genres (57).

His first plays, as it has already been said, spring from a middle-class venue but they present peculiar features that derive from the futurist theatre relived by Achille Campanile: digression becomes a fundamental characteristic. It destroys the same commonplaces on which the society represented in these rapid, rather epigrammatic, comedies finds itself (58).

57 Marco de Marinis, Mimo e mimi, Firenze, La Casa Usher, 1980, p. 62:

la sua concezione [...] (è che) il "mimo" [...] può (anzi, deve) legittimamente avvalersi, oltre che del corpo umano, di ogni altro "linguaggio" scenico [...] e ampliare sempre di più la gamma delle tecniche e delle forme teatrali di cui servirsi: clowning, acrobatica, danza; tragedia greca, giulleria, commedia dell'arte, pantomima bianca ecc.

58 Campanile's logic does not follow the common one: after a beginning in an everyday's story he ends in a dissacration of reality. On Campanile's theatre see Andrea Bisicchia, Aspetti del teatro comico del novecento, Milano, Sergio Ghisani, 1973, pp. 23-33; Calendoli, "Achille Campanile", in Novecento. I contemporanei, V, pp. 4430-4442; Umberto Eco, "I

When in 1968 Fo changes circuit, he also stresses his jester-like way of acting: to elude censorship the ancient jesters used dialect and mime against the regularized language of the establishment. It is the time of the grammelot: a language made of sounds so similar to the real ones that the audience understand the meaning but the establishment cannot intervene because nothing is explicit(59). It is a new kind of commedia dell'arte, and the actor has a central function: a remembrance of the ancient manifold performance. The logic of carnival comes to

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meccanismi del comico in Campanile", Ibidem., pp. 4450-4459; Renato Minore, "Teatro umoristico e satirico. Campanile, Flaiano, Fo", in Teatro contemporaneo, I, Roma, Lucarini, pp. 571-580.

59 Claudio Meldolesi, Su un comico in rivolta, cit., p. 96:

ribellione a tutte le forme di standardizzazione del mestiere del comico, nel Seicento, nell'Ottocento, ma soprattutto nell'oggi. E' il comico che inneggia al giullare per la sua profondità di immaginario, rinnegandosi come anticipatore del feticismo capitalista, ma non per regredire, quanto per creare disordine nella funzionalizzazione dello spettacolo oggi.

the memory in this view of the theatre: the object of art is contemporaneity. It is the feast of time which destroys everything. Fo destroys the function that links actors with the stage and leaves the audience to spy from outside, that is typical of the theatre of the establishment.

His plays are now created for precise needs of counter-information and because of this rapid "exchange" sometimes there is no time to build a structure according to the rules of prose theatre. Fo rescues cabaret actors' habit: his prologue has the role of explaining what is being represented on stage and also of uniting the different pieces (60).

60 On the role of the entertainer in cabaret, see Roberto Mazzucco, ed., L'avventura del cabaret, Cosenza, Lerici, 1976, p. 21:

la stessa presenza dell'entertainer non è stata imposta soltanto dall' necessità del coordinamento e del commento ma anche per dar tempo a un attore di buttare via un berretto per sostituirlo con un cilindro, di cambiare un attrezzo, di azionare un registratore. Ma la natura del cabaret è tale che deviazioni e pause non sono consentite nemmeno a colui che è

His constant using puppets and dressing-ups in his plays stresses his learning of revue and avanspettacolo (curtain-raiser). An example for this can be considered Ettore Petrolini with his make-ups taken from his experience of life and of people. Petrolini is important for his gestures as well as for his way of speaking and of staying on stage. The actor and his audience must be one thing and the latter must be submitted by a striking "theatre of surprise". The slittamento (sliding) from reality to invention is important, as well as the audience's partaking the show (61).

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presente per la realizzazione delle deviazioni e delle pause. Il coordinatore è a sua volta ingrediente, è cabaret.

61 Franca Angelini, "Introduzione", in Franca Angelini, ed., Petrolini. La maschera e la storia, Bari, Laterza, 1984, p. 6:

pronto al fischio e al dialogo; l'attore deve concentrare nel tempo e nello spazio un magnetismo capace di imporre il silenzio, l'attenzione, l'applauso.

Fo's attention to the least movement on stage that refers to a precise behaviour of men's day-life comes from his learning Eduardo De Filippo's technique, that he calls souplesse:

I have noticed that what distinguishes great actors from average actors is their souplesse. This means that they have a great understanding of the technique of acting, and they understand so deeply, and are involved in, what they are performing. [...] They don't show they are exerting themselves. They make you forget that they are acting. [...] It appears normal, easy, because the technique has become so much a part of the actor's baggage [...] the audience will not notice the changes (62).

The link between Fo and Eduardo's theatre as well as way of living is evident. They both tend to explore the deep

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And also Ferruccio Marotti, L'attore Petrolini, in Ibidem., p. 44:

la caratteristica di fondo è la costruzione totale di un insieme di personaggi teatrali che non si rapportano se non per confronto, per negazione -- ma una negazione creativa -- alla realtà circostante, ma che al fondo sono soprattutto una costruzione artificiale.

62 Dario Fo and Franca Rame, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

interrelationship life/theatre and actor/real man. Theirs are texts which look for a discussion of political and social problems concerning the society they are living in.

Eduardo thinks actor and character must live a private relationship; his daily low middle-class experience, indeed, partakes in his theatre: he starts from reality, from family-problems and the relationships among classes. His wish is to renew theatre and the language spoken by the characters: it must be real men's language (63). But he has to experience fascist censorship because of his subversion

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63 Paolo Puppa, "Comico cencioso e comico filosofico, in Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, eds., Il Novecento, II, Milano, Garzanti, 1987, p. 791:

con Eduardo De Filippo (1900-1984) si corona il movimento ascendente della subalternità dialettale verso la ribalta nazionale. Il mondo cencioso della bassa emerge dal sottosuolo e si affaccia con prepotenza nei circuiti "garantiti". In cambio, lo sfondo proletario della Strada si ritira, e riemergono i più tranquillizzanti e socialmente meno problematici orizzonti piccolo-borghesi, mentre la Scena tende ormai ad essere sequestrata dal tinello domestico.

of the established rules of the Italian national theatre. In the name of a useful theatre, Eduardo's is considered to be weak(64). This happens for his interest in daily life and the insignificant things that form it. On the one hand, Eduardo teaches -- as Fo himself says -- how the most meaningless movements are to be analysed and dealt with on stage. He writes his own texts, he is both actor and writer, first because they partake in his own life. On the other hand, he complies with the market and would like to repudiate his low origins and make his plays much more

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64 Claudio Meldolesi, Fra Totò e Gadda. Sei invenzioni sprecate del teatro italiano, Roma, Bulzoni, 1987, p. 78:

nel '50 gli amministratori cominciarono a contrapporre il diritto dei consumatori al diritto degli artisti: questa logica riordinatrice, portata avanti anche con slogan "progressisti", era ostile tanto al superamento dei generi, quanto agli spettacoli d'eccezione: il consumatore -- si diceva -- vuole sapere esattamente che teatro va a vedere, e vuole produzioni sane senza sprechi.

bourgeois (65), even if the world without institutionalized laws remains the symbol of a kind of paradise lost. His meeting with Pirandello makes Eduardo stress this effect of daily life; but the necessity of pleasing his audience has given him also the consciousness of his position in the national theatre. He acts Pulcinella, the mask symbol of the slave and of low comicality (66).

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65 Paolo Puppa, "Comico cencioso", cit., p. 794:

purtroppo l'attore sembra a volte sacrificarsi a vantaggio dell'autore, perchè il percorso drammaturgico di Eduardo s'affretta a liquidare i registri "orali" della scrittura "precaria", della scenetta becera e un po' surreale, per innalzarsi nel quadro d'ambiente e appesantirsi ideologicamente. In compenso, il senso di colpa culturale per la partenza "bassa" si rovescia spesso, poi, in nostalgia ambigua per quello stesso mondo gaglioffo e volgare: insomma, solo se allontanato, l'avanspettacolo ridiventa poetico.

66 Pulcinella can be the symbol of the relationship between comicality and society. All his experience appears through his language, which is most of all a dialect. he destroys any hierarchy and logic and puts his culture in their place. He opposes himself with strength to assimilation to the institutional order. His clownish behaviour is a defence against the truth he presents to his master.

Dario Fo learns from Eduardo to use a negative scene which describes reality but at the same time tries to incite the audience to become conscious of the possibility of a different future. However, Fo will use contemporary masks instead of the traditional ones used by Eduardo, in order to give his texts a definite didactic and political meaning.

In the end, Eduardo's dialectical origin remains the basis of this process even in the silence that presents itself as the last weapon at his disposal (67).

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67 Paolo Puppa, "Comico cencioso", cit., p. 802:

il personaggio di Eduardo raggiunge a questo punto la maniera pirandelliana del "raisonneur", dello sguardo scisso dal corpo, del protagonista "postumo" ed estraneo al Mondo. L'interprete sale ora alla massima cancellazione di sé, ad un'ellissi recitativa che abbandona scene madri e messaggi nazional-popolari: immobile sulla poltrona, simile ad un novecentesco "malade imaginaire", l'autore si accomiata da noi minacciandoci e perdonandoci con la sua stanca afasia.

However, other artists of revue and cabaret can be considered to be as teachers to Fo, such as for example Fregoli (68).

The end of the Seventies sees Fo's return to the practice of the fabulist fool, alone on the stage, that goes against everything and everyone. This is the figure of a man that has the courage to say what the establishment renounces to admit: laughter becomes corrosive. Because of this the modern minstrel that is an enemy both for the Left and the Right, accused of terroristic aims but on the contrary attacked many times by the same terrorists. Fo is not the

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68 Leopoldo Fregoli was born in Rome in 1867. Famous for his fregolismo (a word accepted also by the Italian language to define swift mutations, either in figurative sense or not): skill in changing very rapidly of dress and make-up. Any of the characters he impersonates has a different face, pace and voice. He begins his career as a macchietista (character author) and illusionista (illusionist) in 1889 when he decides to go volunteer to Eritrea and plays for the resting troupes. He dies in Viareggio in 1936. See also Rodolfo De Angelis, Café-Chantant. Personaggi e interpreti, Firenze, La Casa Usher, S.E.S., 1984; Stefano de Matteis, Marina Lombardi and Marilea Somarè, eds., Follie del varietà. Vicende Memorie Personaggi, 1890-1970, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1980.

jester who receives the permission to criticize his master just from this latter who needs a purification from his sins through the comic actor's words.

Fo's masks become personifications of stereotypes of the current society so that, as Paolo Puppa says (69) :

i suoi "gesti", programmaticamente "sporchi" provocano pertanto adesioni viscerali e rigetti iconoclasti, di natura ideologica, più di quanto non permettano una attenzione critica ai modelli linguistici adottati, e alla strategia culturale complessiva che ne deriva.

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69 Paolo Puppa, Il teatro di Dario Fo, cit., p. 9.

**CHAPTER 2: THE TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH OF  
DARIO FO'S ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST**

## CHAPTER 2: THE TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH OF DARIO FO'S ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST

### 2. 1: Introduction to the three translations in English of Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist

Dario Fo was nearly unknown to the English-speaking world and theatre until around twelve years ago. Moreover, nowadays his plays continue to be better known than him.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist is surely Fo's most famous play in Great Britain. At the moment there have been more than eighteen different British and Irish productions and two translations have already been published. However, the first translation was in American English and it has

been published in the United States in 1979; the principal American and Canadian productions have been five up to now.

Suzanne Cowan translated the play in 1979 for Theater; Gillian Hanna translated it in 1980 and the text was published by Methuen. The last is Tim Supple and Alan Cumming's translation published by Methuen, in 1991.

The reason for such a great success in the English-speaking world can be found in the topical matter of the play whenever and wherever it is staged. Moreover, its structure is so well built up that in any venue the play opens, it always works as a perfect farcical text: a "clown" is to pronounce with political and moral statements through outrageously farcical means. It is, nevertheless undeniable that Fo is himself part of his text and his absence can be substituted by no performance styles, however good.

The script belongs to the not only Italian but also English popular theatre genre: it looks for destroying the

invisible fourth wall which divides the hall from the stage in order to create live theatre. Fo has undoubtedly written an example of what a play should be like to reach this aim.

Thanks to Accidental Death of an Anarchist Left-wing English theatre has had the opportunity to enter the "high" circuit of the West End: Gavin Richards' production first opens in 1979 and then in 1980 he is asked to move to the Wyndham's Theatre. And the new 1991 production "was born" in the National Theatre circuit.

Fo himself expresses only a regret about the English stagings of his play that is their failing to match his more deep intentions. It must be noticed that in general these texts and their productions have not given enough importance to the politics which structures the original script. First of all it depends on the companies' wish to have success with critics, and the more a play is "de-politicized" the better. Renouncing to bite the bourgeoisie they also have a

great outcome with the middle-class audiences that constitute the greatest part of the English theatre goers.

The great number of people who have had the opportunity to see Accidental Death of an Anarchist (1) is indeed Fo's greatest satisfaction. One of the Italian playwright's aims is to make as many people as possible conscious of the frequent wickedness of the establishment.

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**2. 2: Introduction to Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, tran. Suzanne Cowan, Theater, X, No. 2, Spring 1979, pp. 12-46**

This translation of Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist is the one, among the three taken into

<sup>1</sup> On 14 September 1983, a television version of Gavin Richards's production has been telecasted on Channel Four.

consideration, that best sticks to the original. It is quite contemporary to Richards' adaption, maybe it precedes it only of a few months: it is published in Spring 1979 and translated by Suzanne Cowan. After having been adapted and directed by R.G. Davis (2) it opens on 13 March 1980 at the Open Circle Theatre, Toronto.

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2 R.G. Davis is the founder-director of the San Francisco Mime Troup in 1959. He had the rights of Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist for North America (Cf. R.G. Davis, "Dario Fo Off-Broadway: the Making of Left Culture under Adverse Conditions", Theatre Quarterly, X, No. 40, Autumn-Winter 1981, pp. 30-36). The group wanted to experiment a new kind of theatre made of:

una singolare irripetibile mistura di Commedia dell'Arte, mimo e mixed means, marionette, vaudeville e circo, cinema e rock'n'roll (Marco De Marinis, Il nuovo teatro 1947-1970, Milano, Bompiani, 1987, p. 130).

As the years pass their political implications became more and more precise. They prefer performances in parks or streets and want to use a simple language able to make people of any class understand their message of renewal. Because of their "unconstitutionality" they also suffer from censorship in 1965, when they have Giordano Bruno's Candelaio on programme at the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. In 1969, Davis leaves the group. The same American critics recognize the San Francisco Mime Troup adapt to stage Fo's plays. Robert Brustein, "Exploding an Anarchist Play", The New Republic, XCI, No. 25, 17 December 1984, p. 25:

Cowan recognizes the peculiarities of Fo's style which is based on everyday spoken language but possesses its own rhythm (3). So she maintains Fo's own words as far as possible and where she definitely cannot, she explains what has been changed and why, in a footnote at the end of the text(4) : a punctual piece of information whenever a peculiar Italian reference appears.

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Dario Fo is a high-spirited Italian dramatist. [...] The result of this unlikely struggle is a species of left-wing political farce, a rare theatrical form regularly practiced in this country only by the San Francisco Mime Troup.

3 Suzanne Cowan, Dario Fo, Politics and Satire. An Introduction to Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Theater, vol. X, No. 2, Spring 1979, p. 11:

Fo writes a dramatic prose which comes very close to the everyday spoken vernacular by a people throughout northern Italy. [...] Although actual dialect expressions appear rarely in his scripts, they are colored by expressive idioms. [...] Even the most straightforward, "conversational" dramatic language possesses an internal rhythm [...] which distinguishes it from spontaneous oral communication.

4 Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Theater, vol. x, No. 2, Spring 1979, pp. 45-46.

As far as peculiar political events dealt with in the play are concerned, the culture of the "target" audience must not be forgotten: to make a foreign audience conscious of the hidden complexity of the play means also to offer them examples of their own country political life by updating and adapting those of the text that are no longer effective. Cowan does it only once, in a long piece, when she adds to the Fool's example of a British scandal, other scandals that involved C.I.A. and F.B.I (5).

Moreover, the play resolves itself around a "network of charades" (6) which must be well organized to be clear to the audience. However, in its game of Chinese boxes the hidden aim of revealing the real culprits of such an incredible death as Pinelli's must always be remembered. These tricks make the play attractive: they dialectically

5 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 41.

6 Suzanne Cowan, Dario Fo, Politics and Satire, cit., p. 10.

oppose themselves to the seriousness of the matter. This translation renders them as similar as possible to the original and, when it is impossible, changes everything according to the new options.

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### **2. 2. 1: Fo and Accidental Death of an Anarchist in the USA**

After R.G. Davis' adaptation for Open Circle Theatre in Toronto, which opens on 13 March 1980, Suzanne Cowan's translation of Accidental Death of an Anarchist is then adapted by John Lahr and directed by Mel Shapiro in January 1983 at the Marker Taper Forum in Los Angeles (7). But Fo

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7 The staging was well-accepted by the critics and also considered part of "an informal trilogy" with We Won't Pay and About Face. Mel Gussow, "Dario Fo's Barbed

manages to see only Richard Nelson's adaptation directed by Douglas Wäger and staged at the Kreeger Theatre in Washington on 9 February 1984 because of the denial of visas for him and his wife. The same play opens again, nine months later, in Belasco Theatre, Broadway on 15 November 1984.

Nelson's adaptation arouses no little problems.

The greatest change is that of the setting: in reality it is America in 1984 and not Italy, even if it pretends to be staged in Rome -- and not Milan as in the original. The American references to current political events happened in 1984 and the years round are very different from Fo's. It is Fo himself to notice the new effect the play has on its audience and he is very critical:

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Wit Is Aimed at Many Targets", The New York Times, 14 August 1983, p. 3:

each is concerned with the subjugation of individuals by ruling authority, with the battle between the haves and the have-nots. Though they are originally addressed to the Italian populace and derive from specific local events, they achieve a more general perspective in performance.

the American public, seeing this play in its present adaptation, obviously cannot feel the real, tragic, tangible atmosphere which the Italian public brought with them when they came to the performance. It can share this only by the act of imagination or -- better still -- by substituting for the violence practised by the powers in Italy (the police, the judiciary, the economy of banks and multinationals) equally tragic or brutal facts from the recent history of America (8).

On the contrary some American critics well accept it without taking care of the deep differences from the original, because they think the Americans have the opportunity to reflect themselves in it (9).

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8 Cf. Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo. People's Court Jester, London, Methuen, 1986, p. 114.

9 Alan Wade, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist -- Rewiev", Theatre Journal, vol. 36, October 1984, p. 416:

no matter the "Italian" setting, this is 1984 established America, and Nelson swings at everything in sight: executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government, lobbyists, the clergy, the media, physicians, the academy, law schools, the lecture circuit, professional athletes, Reaganomics, and even, fleetingly, the masses, complicit in their own oppression. [...] We laugh because the allusions are current and carry wit in their expression. We are stung because they apply to us.

The play turns out into such a farcical form that the tragic event seems to have been forgotten. Indeed, its clownish exaggeration has been noticed (10). Even the transposition Fo inserts -- that is his referring to the

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10 Benedict Nightingale, "Calls-To-Arms", New Statesman, IC, No. 2556, 14 March 1980, p. 405:

yet the inquisitor is a blend of trickster and clown, whose iconoclastic glee and eccentric camouflage [...] both proclaim his origins as the zanni of Italian commedia dell'arte; the police are strutting or tumbling grotesques.

Some time later the same journalist points out again the impression she had of this play. Benedict Nightingale, "Bitter Pill", Ibidem., CII, No. 102, No. 2624, 3 July 1981, p. 22:

he inveigles us into swallowing his radical nostra by plastering them with funny lines, entertaining business, and farcical rough-and-tumble ultimately derived from the Commedia dell'arte. It sounds pretty indigestible, not to say dubiously therapeutic; and so it would no doubt prove in practice, if his humour really were external rather than innate, imposed rather than intrinsic. [...] What mainly amuses us about Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist is also what shocks and disturbs us. [...] Jokesmith Fo is also the somewhat chilling revolutionary who ended Accidental death by recommending the murder of admittedly corrupt policemen.

defenestration of the Italian anarchist Salsedo in New York in 1921 instead to Pinelli's -- does not help the play to be more incisive. However, the play seems to maintain its anarchism, if Nightingale sees Fo while encouraging "violence" in his lines (11), and indeed she considers him as a "chilling revolutionary" (12).

Richard Bauer, the actor playing the role of the Matto -- here called the Fool --, reveals his skill in being a zany on the stage but the stereotypes used do not appear to be a fresh theatrical means as Fo's: satire is too soft and innocuous.

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11 Ibidem.:

Dario Fo is said to be distressed by some of the recent actions of the Red Brigades [...]. But it may be that a play like this, tolerating and even encouraging political violence, yet extracting the nastiness from it by a burlesque presentation, makes such events marginally more likely.

12 Benedict Nightingale, "Bitter Pill", cit., p. 22.

The play closes after a few months and does not have the great success Accidental Death of an Anarchist has in London, which Nelson would have liked to emulate. Fo himself, by admitting the deviation of this text from his script, decides to ban further performances of it.

In the United States Dario Fo and his wife Franca Rame are known more for raising the hate of the State Department than for scandalizing the church or the establishment. Indeed, when they want to pay a visit to the staging of Accidental Death of an Anarchist in USA in 1980, they are denied the entry visas because of their activism on behalf of the Italian prisoners accused of terroristic attacks (13).

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13 Charles Mann, "Fo No-Show Doesn't Mean No Fo Show", The Village Voice, 17-23 December 1980, p. 115:

Section 212(a)(28) of the Immigration Act excludes, in addition to the usual communists and anarchists, any aliens who "writes, publish [...] circulate, display or distribute [...] any written or printed matter advocating or teaching opposition to any organized government". It

The cause seems to be just their activity with Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid) but in reality the State Department has never fully explained the reason.

In New York, as an answer to this decision, a group of American intellectuals stage An Evening Without Dario Fo and Franca Rame and this gives the two actors such publicity, they would never have gained so much if they had been there in person. A few years after Franca Rame explains in an interview what has happened and what comes out is a real report of the censorship suffered by the two actors:

when we were applying for a visa to go to America, I was interrogated at the American Consulate. They euphemistically called it an "interview", but it was a cross-examination. The American consul, whose name is Perkins, had a dossier on me which included everything I'd done since my birth -- joining the PCI (Italian Communist Party), leaving the PCI, starting the Soccorso Rosso (her prison group). Perkins asked me in most ingenuous way, "It is true you're harbouring absconders and obtaining false passports and arms?" No Italian judge would ever be allowed to ask me a question like that. [...] But most serious effect of not getting a visa for the States was that the theater we were to

seems only fair to note that this clause in the past would have stymied the hopes of Arturo Toscanini, Albert Einstein, Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinsky.

perform in had already been booked. We were involved in an Italian festival, and our tickets had been paid for by the Italian Foreign Ministry, and it was organized by the Italian State theater organization -- part of the government. In fact, it was the Italian government who didn't want us to go to the States -- Soccorso Rosso was only a pretext, an excuse. The fact of the matter was that Italian political leaders weren't happy that we do political satire and were going to represent Italy. [...] We learned a lot from the experience and it was very useful. [...] Not going caused such a scandal that they put on a huge show with all the major New York intellectuals, called An Evening Without Dario Fo and Franca Rame, which gave us a lot of publicity(14).

They obtain the visas in 1984, when Accidental Death of an Anarchist re-opens at the Belasco Theatre, Broadway. They are welcomed as celebrities but Fo can not forget the previous refusal to make them enter and he criticizes the American President, at that time Ronald Reagan, who has supported the idea.

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14 Steve Grant and Tony Mitchell, "An Interview with Dario Fo and Franca Rame", Theater, vol. XIV, No. 3, Summer/Fall 1983, pp. 47-48.

**2. 3: Introduction to Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, tran. Gillian Hanna, adap. Gavin Richards, Methuen, London, 1987**

The translation by Gillian Hanna adapted by Gavin Richards for Belt and Braces Roadshow Company -- first published in 1980 -- cannot be considered a translation: it is a theatrical transposition of Fo's script.

It opens in January 1979 at Dartington College; in October, the same year, it is transferred to the Half Moon Theatre, London, and then on 5 March 1980 it opens at Wyndham's Theatre. Accidental Death of an Anarchist is the second of Fo's plays to be staged there, the first has been We Can't Pay? We Won't Pay! on 22 May 1978 (15).

15 The play had been staged for the first time on 3 October 1974 at the Palazzina Liberty in Milan, then revised and re-staged in the same place on 16 September 1980. In Great Britain the first staging was on 22 May 1978 at the Half Moon Theatre in London. It was translated by Lino Pertile and adapted by Bill Colville and Robert Walker -- this latter also directed it. It passed rather unnoticed. However, after that first episode, it was performed many more times and its political value was stressed -- the title, We Can't Pay? We Won't Pay!, was changed into Can't pay? Won't Pay!. It revealed itself as one of the most popular and successful play in England together with Accidental Death of an Anarchist. Jules Aaron, "Enter Dario Fo", Theater, II, No. 3, Summer 1980, pp. 119-122; David Hirst, Dario Fo and Franca Rame, London, Macmillan,

At Dartington College, as well as during the following tour around England, the play has such a great success that Ian Albery, the producer of West End Theatres, asks the company to move there and

this led Belt and Braces into a political dilemma: whether to risk accusations of a political sell-out into what they described as "the minefield of commercialism" or, alternatively [...] to attack the political values they are founded on, and reaching for a mass audience (16).

After moving to the West End the play remained on the programme for two years more.

The new circuit deeply conditioned the register of the language and the play changed from a satire to a comedy (17). Fo writes also a note to introduce Richards' version,

teatro di Dario Fo. Dalla scena alla piazza, Venezia, Marsilio, 1978; Martin W. Walsh, "The Proletarian Carnival of Fo's *Non si paga! Non si paga!*", *Modern Drama*, XVIII, No. 1, March 1985, pp. 211-222.

16 Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo, cit., p. 102.

17 However, the play represents a progress for the English theatre as it has many times confirmed, even if not completely faithful to the original. John Lahr, "A Playful Polemic", New Society, LI, No. 910, 13 March 1980, p. 560:

which is published at the beginning of the text (18). Fo admits that the effect on the audience would be different in any case because of the different political environment:

the English public, seeing this play in its present adaptation, obviously cannot feel the real, tragic, tangible atmosphere which the Italian public brought with them when they came to the performance. It can share this only by act of imagination or -- better still -- by substituting for the violence practised by the powers in Italy [...] equally tragic and brutal facts from the recent history of England (19).

He also added his personal doubts on some of Richards' changes of lines:

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Although the West End venue slightly mutes its high spirits, Accidental Death of an Anarchist is a loud, vulgar, kinetic, smart, sensational show. In other words, everything theatre should be.

John Lahr will be the adaptor of Accidental Death of an Anarchist at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in January 1983.

18 Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, London, Methuen, 1987, pp. XV-XIX.

19 Ibidem., p. XVII.

I have the impression -- more than an impression -- that some passages which have been skipped in Gavin Richards' version may have produced some erosion at a satirical level, that is to say the foundation of the original work, in favour of solutions which are exclusively comic (20).

Fo also comments the fact while he is in London in 1983; in this occasion he clearly disagrees with the visible changes to his text:

obviously, the shows have to be altered when they're transported into a British context. They take on other values, other modes of expression, other cultural styles etc. But at the same time some of the shows - Accidental Death of an Anarchist seem to me very overloaded, verging terribly on the grotesque [...] excessive buffoonery that they introduced into it. For us this buffoonery is "anti-style" [...] not "style" in some vague sense, but "style" in the sense of a satirical form of theatre that seeks to wound, to disturb people, to hit them where it hurts. Obviously, to achieve that effect, you are going to use elements of the grotesque. Many of the gags in Accidental Death of an Anarchist were, precisely, ours [...] precisely because these gags are so strong, you have to be able to use them discreetly, with detachment. But in that production they were overplayed. they made too much of them (21).

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20 Ibidem.

21 Dario Fo and Franca Rame, Theatre Workshop at Riverside Studios, London, 28 April, 5, 12, 13 and 19 May 1983, London, Red Notes, 1983, pp. 67-68.

In his comment on this play, David Hirst, says that the adaptation has so much betrayed Fo, that it is more similar to one of Orton's than Fo's: he sees the reason for this in the translators' ignorance of its farcical structures (22). This gives the critic a difficult task (23).

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22 David Hirst, Dario Fo and Franca Rame, Macmillan, London, 1989, p. 15:

the (almost willful) misinterpretation of his work in Britain coupled with the inability of the British theatre to forge a genuinely productive alliance between popular dramatic forms.

23 Ibidem. p. 40:

either he (the critic) discusses the original (thereby forcing his readers who do not speak Italian to take what he says on trust) or he discusses those adaptations with which his readers are familiar (and which depart from what Fo wrote).

However, if this second method is followed, the reader is lead "to take the additions, alternations as Fo's own words" as Tony Mitchell says in Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo, cit., p. 101.

A positive thing happens: populist tickets are sold, at special prizes, for unemployed people and many of them have the first opportunity in their lives to go to the theatre: as Fo said, theatre must be brought to great audiences.

When Anarchist opens in 1979, the Italian political climate to which it refers -- Italy in the 1970s -- is appealingly similar to that in Britain at the time: Margaret Thatcher has been elected Prime Minister -- that means a defeat of the Left -- and the case of Blair Peach, a man killed by the police during a race riot in London, has risen a great interest in police oppression at any attempt of creating disorder. But those recent tragic events are put aside and satire loses its power: the comedy of the play has been intensified at satire's cost. The audience has missed the force of Fo's attack to the fascist establishment, and it is astonishing to think that this has

been the only version of the play present on the English market for more than ten years. Britain must wait over twenty years to taste at least some of Fo's Anarchist's political value.

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### **2. 3. 1: English criticism of Gavin Richards' adaptation of Accidental Death of an Anarchist**

The opening of Accidental Death of an Anarchist in Wyndham's Theatre precipitates many of the most important reviews and critics. Most of them attack the same audience who come to see it because of its political strength (24),

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24 To a question on reviewers, the leader actor as well as director, Gavin Richards, answers (Sandy Craig, "Accidental Staging of an Anarchist", The Leveller, April 1980, pp. 26):

as well as for its bringing back into use the Italian commedia dell'arte genre (25).

Indeed, the remembrance of the censorship suffered by Fo because of his offenses to the world of the untouchable politics (26), makes the audience wait for the same to happen in London (27).

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The extraordinary thing is that they're so shocked that there is this different audience that wants to come to the theatre. They're so shocked that they turn and abuse the audience.

25 Geoff Brown, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Plays and Players, XXVI, No. 8, May 1979, pp. 30-31:

Fo's play [...] demonstrates that Italy is the home of Commedia dell'Arte, that ancient popular brand of theatre with its broad physical clowning revolving around the activities of well-known stereotypes, from the lustful greedy old man Pantalone to the darting servant Harlequin.[...] And it was a shrewd move of Dario Fo [...] to apply the genre to contemporary political ends. [...] The framework of popular farce makes political theatre's natural, yet wearying, insistence that characters adopt fixed, embattled positions seem like an essential comic strategy.

26 John Lahr, art. cit., pp. 559-560:

Richards impersonates the Maniac and in doing it he also maintains Fo's role of "political" actor (28) even if

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as a clown and as an activist, Fo has discovered in the farce a strategy for emotionally detaching both audience and actors from the tragic issues his plays debate. "In farce", he says, "you have the possibility of going beyond character. You can comment on the situation while you're in it." Political laughter wants to disenchant; and farce's artificiality keeps the audience from being spellbound. The play becomes not only a criticism of life but of theatre. [...] Political theatre and the clown's protean personality find their apotheosis in Fo's shrewd finale. Amid the tumult of confused identities, violent chases and biting one-liners. Fo is debating all sides of the question of reform or revolution.

27 Asked about the danger of being censured in the institutionalized structure of West End, the administrator of Belt and Braces Roadshow Company, John Ellis, says (Ibidem.):

One evening I sat at the back of the stalls and the nearer to the end the more electric it got. That really struck me. The audience were expecting the police to come in or the plugs to be pulled by the manager and they were really rooting for the play and enjoying it. Perhaps more than anything that's been picked up by the Press.

28 Steve Grant, "Laughter on the Rampants", Time Out, 7-13 May, 1982, p. 8.

he admits to have been impressed by the thought of being acting in front of an audience used to show hostility to that kind of theatre (29). The circuit of the National Theatre has its habitual audience consisting mainly of people who accept what they are proposed because they know the administration reflects their (middle-class) ideals. The

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Fo's language is intensely idiomatic, his natural platform that of the improviser, the raconteur: both Accidental Death of an Anarchist and Can't pay? Won't Pay!, written in response to particular events on the Italian political scene, were stripped of their context and their political punch in London, though in both cases the farce was retained immaculately and, with actors of the calibre of Gavin Richards and Frances de La Tour, the manic centre of Fo's own acting genius was preserved.

29 Ibidem.:

Because here (West End) we are exposed to the full glare of industry. From the stage we can sense that the audience are quite aware of the danger. On the first night we were aware on stage that there was a real edge of worry in the audience. I had a number of extra rude things which I was going to throw in, which I didn't in the end because I felt the audience were on the edge of their seats already with worry about the political bits.

introduction on the programme of a play of contestation of this system is not part of the mechanism and it is rejected mainly because of this.

Much is said about this staging in comparison with Alan Cumming and Tim Supple's one.

Everyone points out the characteristic farcical features of that adaptation (30). Indeed, the text clearly presents English additions to Fo's script that make it very different from the original most of all in its aim (31).

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30 Michael Billington, "Whe Farce Goes out the Window", The Guardian, January 9th 1991:

My cheif memory of the [...] Belt and Braces production back in 1979 is of a breakneck farce with Alfred Molina as the protagonist.

31 Benedict Nightingale, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", The Times, January 9th 1991:

why sholud we be interested in a piece which was topical years ago, and anyway involves someone else's scandal? In 1980, fun was almost too much the answer.

Fo wants to stress the political meaning of his "investigation of investigation" (32) whereas Gavin Richards concentrates himself on the comicality of the piece (33). It is easy to think that a few Londoners understand the harsh remarks on the structure of institutions (34).

32 Mary Karen Dahl, "State Terror and Dramatic Countermeasures", John Ow, Dragon Kläic, eds., Terrorism and Modern Drama, Edimburgh, Edimburgh Press, 1990, p. 115.

33 Christopher Cairns states this difference in an interview with Simon Fuddy. Simon Fuddy, "Review of Accidental Death of an Anarchist", submitted to Living Marxism, London:

Belt and Braces in 1979 [...] fell to the temptation of concentrating on the comedy of the piece. "It drained away all the political bite and they exaggerated the comedy elements to the extent that very little of the original ideological farce was left. They also cut large sections... when you dress the policemen as clowns, when you make the inspector a Glaswegian lookalike for the policeman in Porridge (Fulton Mackay) which is what that production did, then you drain away the seriousness of Fo's political intention".

34 Benedict Nightingale, "Accidental Death", cit.:

certainly, there must have been many who left Wyndhams's not quite realising that they had been laughing merrily away at an Italian

The text also presents many Italian words that a foreign audience cannot understand and that fail to give the savour of the Italian setting as perhaps the director tries to do. The text shows also an unexplainably changed end: with a consequent misunderstanding of Fo's ideology. This also carries no little misinterpretations of his work (35).

Anyway English critics still attribute a great importance to that first London production -- as indeed the same company did when they staged the play (36) -- as for communist's attack on bourgeois society and its institutions.

35 Ibidem.:

Richards was rightly criticized for an ending which appeared to recommend left-wing terror as a risposte to right-wing atrocity.

36 On the fact that the theatre has always been full during the staging of the play in London in 1980, the same company realizes that it is a good sign (Sandy Craig, art. cit., p. 27):

In real life you can't respond, you have to keep your mouth shut. but on the stage we offer this little moment of fantasy... That's what the

the improvement in the relationship between the fringe and the theatre of the establishment (37).

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theatre is there to do. The real debate about society is actually taking place in the cultural forum. It's the public conscience being debated in public in terms of culture. [...] And that's way the playhouse has to be full, because if there's anything less than 500 people there then it's just not a good cross-section of public opinion. It's just not a good representation.

37 Jane Edwardes, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Time Out, January 16th 1991:

Belt and Braces' production of Dario Fo's farce, which transferred from the Half Moon to Wyndhams in 1980 and ran for several years, was heralded as the first step in transforming West End audiences from ageing, sleepy and easily shockable into young, radical and chic.

2. 4: Introduction to Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist , trans. Tim Supple and Alan Cumming, Methuen, London, 1991

This newest version -- and not translation, as Supple and Cumming call their text (38) -- of Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist refers to the staging at the end of 1990 in Towngate Theatre, Pagel Mead, Basildon, Essex and then, after a ten week's tour through Britain, it opens at the Royal National Theatre (Cottesloe), London, on 4 January 1991 -- which can be considered as the arrival at the top of the circuit. The West End is, indeed, the most representative group of theatres in London and in the whole Great Britain because of their great tradition.

The text has been translated by the director Tim Supple together with the actor Alan Cumming, who plays the main role, the Madman. In a note on the text, dated October

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38 Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Methuen, London, 1991, p. XXVI.

1990 (39), they state their intentions: to give a version as near as possible to the original as far as both language and satire are concerned. However, the translators have thought to change some peculiar Italian references into topical facts that involve the English audience: the Guildford and Birmingham bombings (40) : Italy is seen through a British filter, even if the two environments are very different (41).

39 Ibidem., pp. XXIII-XXIV.

40 See also Christopher Cairns, "Introduction", in Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. XX:

the handling of the judicial process continues to cause public involvement in such cases as the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six is intense. That has fuelled the impression that audiences, continuously exposed to media examples of wrongful arrest [...] no longer [...] dismiss such illegalities as remote from present-day realities.

41 Hirst defines the difference in term of a different conception of terroristic ideology, while discussing 1980 adaptation. David Hirst, Dario Fo, cit., p. 42:

the situation was very different from that of the IRA in Britain, where the ethical and political implications of terrorism are much more clear-cut. [...] Indeed, "ideology" is a

Moreover, the case of Freda's jailing, which lasted more than ten years is another similarity with Birmingham Six and Guildford Four's experiences (42).

term much more appropriately applied to terrorism in Italy than to its counterpart in Britain.

42 It is a recent news the release of the six Irishmen after nearly 17 years from their imprisonment. David Pallister, "Irishmen freed as appeal is allowed after new evidence", The Guardian, 15 March 1991, p. 1:

jailed for life in August 1975 after 21 people were killed by bombs in two Birmingham pubs [...] used as political scapegoats, [...] (in) one of the gravest miscarriages of justice in British history.

Indeed, one of the six, Paddy Hill, declares his anger in an interview, John Mullin and Vivek Chaudhary, "Anger blazes amid the celebrations", Ibidem., p. 2:

"we were made scapegoats to appease the public. It could not have been done without the connivance right up to the top level. It could not have been done without people in high places",

and Paul Hill, one of the Guildford Four comments his story and that of the Birmingham Six. Paul Hill, "Reclaiming Their True Identities", Ibidem., p. 19:

unlike the Birmingham Six, whose agony in the Court of Appeal is finally over, in my own case

The adaptors feel safe in their operation also because Fo himself, in his last interview in London (43), about the new staging, declares that the theatre is substitution: it must be a live theatre which refers to the reality of the time in which it is staged. Fo was present at one of the rehearsals of the play and he explained to the young actors how to render some passages in the best way. Moreover, Fo thinks politics to be the base for a satiric play and he agrees with the updating of some references to current English events.

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the legal system is still proving its ability to engage in legal inanities. [...] As it has been proved beyond doubt to the whole world that both the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six are innocent.

Now, as it happened for the Guildford Four case police officers are to face criminal proceedings. The confessions the six gave should have forced judges to think immediately of political connivences. For example the numbers of bombs differed one from the other as well as the places where they should have been put.

43 Kate Kallaway, "Perennial energy of an anarchist", The Observer, 30 September 1990.

As a general introduction on stage directions and cues, a few things can be pointed out as recurrent in the text. In general, stage directions have been omitted and sometimes substituted by cues with the same aim. However, much is left to the actors' or director's decisions as for the mood and the exact way in which to act a great part of the play. Many cues have been shortened, not only because of the different language but also as a planned way of dealing with them that looks for a speeding up of the rhythm.

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#### 2. 4. 1: English criticism of Tim Supple and Alan Cumming's production of Accidental Death of an Anarchist

The first thing on which any critic agrees is Alan Cumming's skill in impersonating the Madman. He manages to

unite the farce with the political aim of the play and moreover to show his gift as a comic actor (44).

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44 Melanie McDonagh, "Falling Foul of the Law", Evening Standard, January 8th 1991:

the part was played with patent enjoyment and infinite pleasure to the audience by Alan Cumming. [...] Mr Cumming is effortlessly comic, but combines this with political intelligence.

Also Charles Spencer, "An Italian Lesson in Agitprop", The Daily Telegraph, January 9th 1991: "Mr Cumming carries the evening almost single-handed".

Also Irving Wardle, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", The Times, January 9th 1991: "Alan Cumming is a show all to himself".

Also Maureen Paton, "Mad Mimic's just Dying to Preach", Daily Express, January 14th 1991:

it really is appalling funny, thanks to the inventive mimicry of the clever young Scottish actor Alan Cumming.

Also Jane Edwardes, art. cit.:

in a hilariously inventive and quixotic performance, Cumming's pointed, clown-like face quivers with delight at the success of his self-imposed mission.

The other actors have been praised, as well, (45) even if in some cases they seem under the powerful influence of Alan Cumming (46).

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45 Melanie McDonagh, art. cit.:

the police, for their part, are played remarkably well -- especially Lorcan Cranitch as the dunderheaded Inspector and Trevor Cooper as the stolid and obtuse Superintendent.

Also Michael Billington, art. cit.:

(Cumming) well supported by Trevor Cooper as a beefily nervous Super and by Lorcan Cranitch as a thuggish Inspector.

46 Macom Rutherford, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Financial Times, January 9th 1991:

there is a young female journalist who was partly responsible for exposing the police cover up. In this production, where she is played by Emma Hewitt, it is not much of a part. She is overshadowed by the Madman. The police get a look in: there is a nice sense of hierarchy between them, but even they are frequently under the spell of Cumming.

Tim Supple's direction has been noticed for his intelligence (47), but also criticized for a presumed lack of a definite style according to which his production might be classified (48). There are also critics who regret Richards' production (49).

47 Michael Billington, art. cit.: "Mr Supple [...] directs with scrupolous intelligence".

Also Jane Edwardes, art. cit.: "Tim Supple's production is very funny while never forgetting Fo's underlying serious point".

48 Sheridan Morley, "How to Render Bible As Pedestrian Musical", International Herald Tribune, January 16th 1991:

Tim Supple's staging is uneasily caught between conflicting styles, unable to choose between anger and anarchy.

Also "Accidental Death of an Anarchist -- Rewiew", Sunday Times, January 13th 1991:

Supple directs it as simply a batty farce; he forgets that farce can be dangerous, and that Fo exploits this brilliantly, with a sense of menace which is both hilarious and shocking. This is a harmless, jolly English production.

49 Benedict Nightingale, "Accidental Death", cit.:

Much of the disagreement comes from the updating of some Italian references to political events of the time (1970) with some topical English ones. They are said to loose Fo's "complexity" (50) and this staging is considered

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the style of Supple's production is not as relentlessly burlesque as Richards's. It is not as funny, either.

50 Melanie McDonagh, art. cit.:

monstrous libetiies have been taken with the original text to make the production an indiciment of present abuses of authority.

Also Michael Billington, art. cit.:

(this production) treats the play as moral satire rather than grotesque farce. It turns the Milanese fuzz into corrupt boobies rather than Mafioso monsters. And it constantly heightens the play's local relevance with references to the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, with allusions to the police's role in ransacking TV cutting-rooms and guarding nuclear bases and by showing, somewhat tendentiously, a portrait of James Anderton adorning the Milanese cop-shop. "It can be here", we were told in the original production: the moral of this version is that it all too frequently does. [...] This is Fo shrewdly updated but without his carnivalesque danger.

to be similar to a "situation comedy". Because of this Tim Supple has also been charged with political propaganda (51).

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Also Benedict Nightingale, "Accidental Death", cit.:

there is not much juice in Cumming and Supple's replacement, in which some sniffy remarks about social democracy and President Reagan are followed by a curiously incoherent passage about Guilford Four and the Birmingham Six. This parallel is predictable, yet still feels tacked on as an afterthought. Italy 1969 and Britain 1991 do not, after all, seem as close as we are meant to think.

Also Malcom Rutherford, art. cit.:

this new version by Alan Cumming and Tim Supple is strewn with references to the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and Lord Denning. The Italian connection has become almost incidental.

Also Sunday Times, January 13th 1991:

Supple has turned it into a flaccid sitcom. He tracks on some heavy-handed references to the Guildford Four at the end, clearly assuming that the audience can't make the mental connection between monstrous miscarriages of justice in two different countries.

51 Maureen Paton, art. cit.:

This production has also been noticed not to object to the system of the establishment, a phenomenon, after all, not new in a circuit backed by the latter (52).

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## 2. 5: Accidental Death of an Anarchist in 'prison'

It is worth noticing that Christmas 1990 saw also a performance of Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist in a

Cumming weakens his case as a promising new writer with heavy-handed propaganda about the Guilford Four and the Birmingham Six.

52 Paul Taylor, art. cit.:

the drama needs some opposition -- which, one hears, this production has received on tour from certain audiences. But the liberal establishment gathered at the National Theatre first night was laughing supportively in advance of the jokes.

British prison, and precisely the Wayland Prison, Norfolk(53).

Some of the convicts who play in this staging had already been actors, but this one-night performance surely had a deeper meaning. Fo himself was very glad to be informed of that staging in a prison. The only 'outsider' was the actress that impersonated the woman, the journalist.

The text had been adapted by Paul, a convicted, and it had been updated with references to the War in the Persian Gulf and other current British events, strictly political.

Beyond the value of a performance in a prison, the play demonstrates once again how touching its matter is. Moreover, its being staged inside a prison can easily be considered a revenge against the system that it itself condemns.

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53 Murray Armstrong, "For One Night Only At Her Majesty's", Weekend Guardian, December 29-30, 1990, pp. 24-25.

Tim Supple and Alan Cumming's translation has also been used for another staging inside a prison: on 19 April 1991 at Horfield prison, Bristol (54). The five male actors who play the parts of the characters of the play have been condemned to serve life sentences. Their audience is formed by the 150 guests of the prison. They worked six months to stage the play. The director is the educating director for the Bristol Old Vic.

The importance of this staging is undeniable:

Accidental Death of an Anarchist has performed, once again, its function of incentive to reach a conscience of the real mechanisms of government. What these people have done before does not matter, this staging has given them the opportunity of working for the community.

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54 Cf. Simon Tait, "Killers Act Out Anarchist Farce", The Times, 19 April 1991.

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### 2. 5. 1: Franca Rame and Soccorso Rosso

The choice of staging Accidental Death of an Anarchist in a prison can also have to do with Franca Rame's experience with her group Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid). She formed it at the end of the Sixties with the aim to help people in prison and their families. As she herself said in an interview:

about 70 per cent of those currently in prison for terrorist offences are still awaiting trial. In Italy it is possible to be five or six years in jail before being brought to trial (55).

The great number of political prisoners was created by the social revolution in 1968 and the years round. The

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55 Joseph Farrell, "Women Need their Share of the Limelight", The Scotsman, 27 September 1984, p. 8.

Italian court system was inefficient and the great number of prisoners made it collapse (56).

Accidental Death of an Anarchist, indeed, deals with an "unclear" case of those years (57).

Rame and her organization worked with more than 800 cases and the number of members of the group was around 100, among whom there were also famous personalities such as, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre. For many people Soccorso Rosso

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56 On the situation of prisons in Italy before 1976 and after, when there was a famous reform, see Franco Bricola, ed., Il carcere "riformato", Bologna, Il Mulino, 1977. On the situation of prisons and the laws governing them in Europe and the United States see Dario Melossi and Massimo Pavarini, Carcere e fabbrica, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1979. The opinions and experiences of peoples imprisoned are reported in Aldo Ricci and Giulio Salierno, Il carcere in Italia, Torino, Einaudi, 1971.

57 Serena Anderlini, Franca Rame: Her Life and Works, Theater, vol. XVII, No. 1, Winter 1985, p. 36:

Franca became involved with the issue of prisoners' rights as she thought that at least on a humanitarian level, something could be done to relieve these people's frustration.

became a valid shield against the violence of institutions they were suffering from.

When the group was at the peak of its success, Franca was kidnapped for a whole day by fascists and she suffered from harsh violence.

At the outbreak of terrorism the members of the organization were themselves suspected of being terrorists because of their interest in treatment of political prisoners. Many members suffered from harassment and the most activist and militant were obliged to stop their activity. Dario Fo commented:

during the whole crisis that hit the movement of prisoners, Franca continued to fight, to such an extent that she has been accused of being a member of the most extremist of organizations... or rather, extreme. Just because she concerned herself with questions that were taboo. For example, the problem of political trials, or prison conditions; or she would get involved because in such-and-such prison [...] an act of violence had been carried out against the women prisoners (58).

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58 Dario Fo and Franca Rame, op. cit., p. 60.

In the end, only after a few years from its birth the whole organization had to be disbanded. However, Rame did not stop helping prisoners in order to have their rights respected.

**CHAPTER 3: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE  
TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH OF DARIO FO  
ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST**

CHAPTER 3: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE  
TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH OF DARIO FO'S ACCIDENTAL  
DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST

3. 1: Introduction to the problems of rendering  
Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist in a foreign  
language

Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist has been structured not by a unique register: a contaminatio (contaminating) acts at different levels. In successive moments, for example, the rhetorical language of judges or the comic register typical of revue actors are to be found.

Such as in:

MATTO: [...] Ecco qua secondo i verbali (sfoglia alcune carte) numero... venticinque ventisei ventisette e ventotene... (Il commissario ha un moto di tosse per il fumo che gli va di traverso). La sera del... la data non ci interessa... un anarchico di professione manovratore delle ferrovie, si trovava in questa

stanza per essere interrogato circa la sua partecipazione o meno all'operazione dinamitarda alle banche che aveva causato la morte di ben sedici cittadini innocenti! (1)

Fo's language is the Italian used in 'town-conversations' -- or sermo familiaris -- but never the dialect as such -- or sermo rusticus --: it is not a working-class idiom but a middle-class one which supports working-class ideas. And he never works on improvisation:

his style is rigorous even when everything seems haphazard and accidental. Only superficial people can in fact think that Dario's theatre is 'handmade'. On the contrary, it is all reasoned out in advance, written, rehearsed, rewritten and rehearsed again (2).

Moreover, he sometimes tends to reach a higher level, such as in the above-mentioned piece on judges where the playwright makes his parody of the matter dealt with in the play and where he looks for special comic effects in figures

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1 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale di un anarchico, Verona, E.D.B., 1972, p. 39.

2 Franca Rame, "Introduction", in Dario Fo, Can't Pay? Won't Pay!, London, Methuen, 1987, p. 19.

created by the sounds of words or by the same words: ventotene instead of ventotto, that is a clear reference to a big Italian prison, Ventotene.

Indeed, the structure that derives from this includes the creation of new words or the most unexpected word games; this helps Fo to create his 'fantastic' reiteration of the tragic event, the 'accidental' fall. Fo is not realistic in a strict sense, it can be said that he is iper-realistic in his daring to do what people would like to but cannot in real life: that is the chatartic effect his plays want to have.

To reach his aim, he works on two main levels: figures which spring either from expression or from meaning. The meaning he looks for can derive from single words, or from sentences. The example of ventotene is one of the first kind, one of the second can be this exchange between the Matto and the Questore (Superintendent):

MATTO: Guardi, mi permetta di dirglielo immediatamente: lei mi è come dire... quasi familiare... come se l'avessi già conosciuto.. tanti anni fa. Non è che lei per caso è stato al confino?

QUESTORE: (Balbettando) Al confino?

MATTO: Ma che dico? Un questore al confino? Ma quando mai?! (3)

The interaction of these two mechanisms reaches a comic effect that must have at its basis a new relationship between the truth and the falseness of the statements. Fo's language has created a reality for itself -- based on what the establishment has tried to cover up -- and plays with it(4).

The translator cannot always render this process of 'manipulation' of language by using the exact words

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3 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 38.

4 For a treating of this topic, the figures of language, see Francesco Orlando, "Che la metafora non può essere regina", in Francesco Orlando, Illuminismo e retorica freudiana, Torino, Einaudi, 1982, pp. 65-127.

corresponding to the original in a word-to-word translation. He must render the joke with words that for his foreign reader will be as valid for the purpose as the original ones. The most common way to maintain all these characteristics should be to use "the source language cultural context as frame text" (5), but at the same time this will cause such a big ideological shift that the whole meaning of the text seems to change (6).

5 Susan Bassnett-McGuire, "Ways Through the Labyrinth. Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts", in Theo Hermans, ed., The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation, London, Croom Helm, 1985, p. 90.

6 Ibidem.:

The result of this type of translation [...]: when Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist was performed in English [the writer is referring to the 1980 version], it had become a farce about the absurdities of Italians and their forces of authority, rather than being a savage satire on the corruption of the police and system of power.

The original script is always identical to itself whereas any translation will always appear to be linked to the cultural atmosphere and venue in which it is worked out. On the translator's critical function in

However, when Fo plays on the figures created by the sounds or the graphic aspects of words, the translator has even a more difficult task. It will be impossible to find words in the foreign language exactly corresponding to the original ones as for their sounds and for their graphic aspects. The translator will be obliged to change nearly the whole sentence with the danger of obtaining another text that has quite nothing to do with Fo's. Sometimes they try to avoid arguings on this result by declaring that theirs is an adaptation or a version instead of a translation (7).

translating a play, being it Shakespeare's or not, see Alessandro Serpieri, "Libertà e vincolo nel tradurre Shakespeare: per una teoria della traduzione drammatica", in Elizabeth Glass, Francesco Marroni, Gabriella Micks and Carlo Pagetti, eds., Metamorfosi: Traduzione-Tradizione, Pescara, C.L.U.A., 1988, pp. 37-72.

7 Ibidem., p. 101:

translating for the theatre is an activity that involves an awareness of multiple codes, both in and around the written text. [...] Because of this multiplicity, any notion of there being a "right" way of translating becomes a nonsense, as does the whole question of defining "translation" as distinct from "version" or "adaptation".

But this does not exclude that the reader can be led to a wrong interpretation of what Fo wants to say (8).

As far as peculiar political events dealt with in the play are concerned, the culture of the "target" audience must not be forgotten (9) : to make a foreign audience

8 It is recognized, however, also an unintentional constraint due to the social context in which the translator lives and by which he is inevitably influenced. Gianfranco Bettettini, "Pragmatica della traduzione", in Processi traduttivi: teorie ed applicazioni, Brescia, La Scuola, 1982, pp. 165-166:

quando si "traduce" [...] non si opera soltanto una translazione, più o meno completa, del senso e dei valori immanenti al primo testo nel secondo, ma si costruisce, anche involontariamente, una nuova strategia comunicativa, subordinata a circostanze di consumo completamente diverse (fisicamente, fisiologicamente, percettivamente, psichicamente, socialmete, antropologicamente) da quelle caratteristiche della prima manifestazione discorsiva.

9 R.G. Davis, Seven Anarchists I Have Known: American Approaches to Dario Fo, The Theatre Quarterly, II, No. 8, November 1986, p. 315:

a literal, word-for-word substitution from one language to another at best distorts its idiom [...] and flattens its satire. [...] A more sophisticated approach is a sense-to-sense translation. One attempts to render the meanings of the original text into their closest

conscious of the hidden complexity of the play means also to offer them some examples of their own country political life by updating and adapting those of the text that are no longer effective. The same problem should be faced up by a director, who is not Fo and who wants to stage Accidental Death of an Anarchist, in Italy. On the ideological level he finds a different environment from that in which the play was born and not the audience Fo encountered who were conscious of what had happened. Moreover, Fo's plays live first of all thanks to him and to his acting, but the texts in themselves have not a great value. On the contrary, the strength of the plot remains unaltered as the time passes. This is the reason for the great success his plays have

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approximation in the target language. Such a translation preserves much of the humour [...] idiomatic flavour [...] of the original. Yet to translate this obviously political play from one society to another, to a new, non-Italian audience, requires a third layer of translation that engages society. It requires a culture-to-culture transmigration of the piece. An analysis of the play in its new socio-political context must precede the matching of words.

abroad but not at home where only Fo can successfully stage them. Fo has demonstrated that he can also re-stage it as such after many years and have a great success, as in 1987, because his charismatic figure makes up to the, so to say, "incongruities."

The most important thing remains the "performability" of the piece that includes what the original author wanted to say through the gestures and the way of acting: things that do not appear in the written text (10). However, the

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10 The same mechanism can be found in film trasposal of a written text. What the audience sees on stage is a system of visible signs that lead them to a guided understanding of the text, whereas the reader is free to give personal meanings to the words. See Gianfranco Bettetini, op. cit., p. 172:

nel testo letterario, qualunque rappresentazione, anche descrizione più minuziosa di un carattere o di un oggetto, lascia sempre un ampio margine interpretativo all'integrazione fantastica del lettore, perché si realizza per mezzo di segni astrattamente simbolici molto più costrittiva e direttiva, perché si manifesta per mezzo di segni iconici fortemente motivati sia nel loro rapporto dinamico con l'oggetto, sia nella verosimiglianza che presiede (quasi sempre) alle loro strutturazioni discorsive.

text must not be submitted only to the law of putting a text on stage in the foreign country. The starting point must always be the written text in its original features. The result must be accuracy but not at the expense of a bad target language (11), and actors must not feel safe if they change the whole dynamics of a scene or a sentence, they do not have to betray the author (12).

11 Andre Lefevere has studied what happens if a text is wrongly translated into a foreign language -- in his examples it is Brecht's Mother Courage, mainly --, it can lose its strength, and this can be also worse if it has a political relevance. Andre Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in Theory of Literature", Modern Languages Studies, XII, No. 4, Fall 1982, pp. 3-21.

12 For a different consideration of translating for theatre completely devoted to the needs of actors, see Robert W. Corrigan, "Translating for Actors", in William Arrowsmith and Roger Shattuck, eds., The Craft and Context of Translation, Austin, The University of Texas Press, 1961, pp. 95-106. The author exposes a contrary idea of translating from that of Susan Bassnett-McGuire who proposes to start from the written text and not to think to a possible successive putting on stage of it; Susan Bassnett-McGuire, op. cit., 1985, pp. 101-102. Serpieri, as well, proposes not to lose touch with the original script even if he has to admit that the translator creates an inevitably "new" text; Alessandro Serpieri, "Libertà e vincolo", cit..

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### 3. 2: Comparative analysis of the three translations in English of Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist

This analysis considers some peculiar points in the three texts particularly important as far as the way in which they have been rendered in English and their following meaning for the foreign audience are concerned.

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It is worth noticing that in 1987 and 1991 stagings the translators appear in the cast. In a certain sense, they have the function both of authors and actors that Fo usually has. Fo is used to writing texts for himself and in

Accidental Death of an Anarchist he impersonates the main character, the Matto. In 1987, Gavin Richards is the adaptor and, when the play is transferred to West End he himself impersonates the Maniac. In 1991, one of the translators, Alan Cumming, impersonates the Madman and the other one, Tim Supple, is the director. This is also much more similar to Fo's habit to be actor/director/scenographer of his own plays.

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The three texts render in three different ways the names of the characters. In the original the cast is as follow:

COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO  
QUESTORE  
GIORNALISTA  
MATTO

AGENTE  
COMMISSARIO BERTOZZO  
UN AGENTE (13).

In 1979, Cowan translates as:

CASUALLY DRESSED POLICE INSPECTOR  
POLICE CHIEF  
REPORTER (WOMAN)  
FOOL  
POLICE OFFICER I  
POLICE OFFICER II  
INSPECTOR BERTOZZO (14).

And can be noticed the funny translation of  
Commissario Sportivo into Casually dressed Police Inspector.

The translator has thought he is dressed in a sportive way  
whereas he has a particular task, he is an Official  
Inspector.

In 1987, the translator changes the general names into  
the surnames of the characters, where they are known:

MANIAC  
BERTOZZO  
PISSANI  
CONSTABLES  
SUPERINTENDENT

13 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., p. 3.

14 Dario Fo, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", in  
Theater, X, No. 2, Spring 1979, p. 14.

FELETTI (15),

and Pisani has been called Pissani without any specific reason.

In 1981 the list is similar to that of 1987, it maintains the surnames of the characters.

INSPECTOR BERTOZZO  
MADMAN  
CONSTABLES  
INSPECTOR PISANI  
SUPERINTENDENT  
MARIA FELETTI (16).

It is worth noticing the different nouns used for the main character, the Matto.

Suzanne Cowan translates it with "Fool" that is used to refer to an idiotic person lacking judgement or good sense and also with a silly conduct: but not necessarily suffering from a mental disease or mania which the Italian word includes. Moreover, for a British audience the figure

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15 Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, London, Methuen, 1987, p. XX.

16 Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, London, Methuen, 1991, p. XXVI.

of the fool is one of the concepts linked to the world of tragedies(17) : the fool of the Middle Ages who was a manservant employed by a ruler or noble as a clown or a jester, whose duty was to amuse his master and whose skill was in hiding the truth among the lines of his comic pieces, so that laughing was like a victory over reality (18).

17 Among others Shakespeare's King Lear. See also Vanna Gentili, La recita della follia, Torino, Einaudi, 1978, p. 48:

una prospettiva estraniata da cui guardare il mondo, è costituito dall'impiego del "fool", figura composita per le sue molteplici ascendenze e perciò articolabile in una gamma abbastanza vasta di significazioni, e allo stesso tempo già catalogata in partenza come creatura dal cervello menomato o balzano, o comunque deve comportarsi, per ragioni professionali, in base al presupposto di essere tale per natura.

18 Ibidem., pp. 9-10:

cosapevolezza oggettivamente limitata dall'obbligo di esercitare la propria combinatoria entro un repertorio di motivi e figure già fissati, e sotto il condizionamento della malsicura collocazione sociale dell'intellettuale, stretto fra la dipendenza dal patrocinio dei nobili e dal favore della corte e il bisogno di accattivarsi un pubblico composito, perentorio quanto fluttuante nei suoi

Perhaps the best choice is that made by Gillian Hanna in the 1987 edition: he calls him "Maniac" who is a man suffering (or thought to be suffering) from a mania of some kind. Indeed the character himself says to suffer from "histriomania" (19).

The translators of the newest edition, Tim Supple and Alan Cumming, prefer to use "Madman" who is simply a person who is mad, who suffers from a disease of the brain.

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To begin with the analysis of pieces which have been cut or changed, the Prologue appears complete only in 1979:

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gusti e nelle sue esigenze di identificazione  
con il mondo che gli viene rappresentato.

19 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 3.

In this play we wish to relate an event which actually occurred in America 1921. An anarchist by the name of Salsedo, an Italian immigrant, "precipitated" from a fourteenth-story window of the central police headquarters in New York. The police chief declared that it was a case of suicide. A primary investigation, followed later by a major inquiry, was held by the court, which discovered that the anarchist had literally been hurled out of the window by police officers during the investigation. In order to make this event more real, and therefore more dramatic, we have taken the liberty of carrying out one of those stratagems to which the theater often has recourse. That is to say, we have transported the entire event to our time, and instead of setting it in New York, we have placed it in any Italian city... let us say Milan. Wishing to avoid anachronisms, we have been logically obliged to call the various police investigators commissari, the chiefs questori, and so on. We must point out that, if there should appear to be any analogies with facts or individuals of our current events, this phenomenon must be ascribed to that imponderable and constant magic of the theater, which on innumerable occasions has operated in such a way that even preposterous, completely invented stories have turned out to be freely imitated by reality!

(20) --

and it is an accurate translation of that present in 1972:

con questa commedia vogliamo raccontare un fatto veramente accaduto in America nel 1921. Un anarchico di nome Salsedo, un emigrante italiano "precipitò" da una finestra del quattordicesimo piano della questura centrale di New York. Il comandante della polizia dichiarò trattarsi di suicidio. Fu condotta una prima inchiesta da parte della magistratura e si scoprì che l'anarchico era stato letteralmente scaraventato dalla finestra dai poliziotti durante l'interrogatorio. Al fine di rendere più attuale quindi più drammatica la vicenda, ci siamo permessi di mettere in opera uno di quegli

stratagemmi ai quali spesso si ricorre nel teatro. Cioè a dire: abbiamo trasposto l'intera vicenda ai giorni nostri e, invece che a New York l'abbiamo ambientata in una qualunque città italiana... facciamo conto Milano. E' logico che, per evitare anacronismi, siamo costretti a chiamare commissari i vari sceriffi, questori gli ispettori e così via. Avvertiamo ancora che, qualora apparissero analogie coi fatti e personaggi della cronaca nostrana, questo fenomeno è da imputarsi a quella imponderabile magia costante nel teatro che, in infinite occasioni, ha fatto sì che perfino storie pazzesche completamente inventate, si siano trovate ad essere a loro volta impunemente imitate dalla realtà! (21)

Indeed also in the Italian edition of 1988 (22) the prologue has been omitted, as in 1987 . In 1991, there is only a short adaptation of it:

Milan, Italy. Police Headquarters: Some months ago, a man, a self-confessed anarchist, fell from a window on the fourth floor. He was found dead on the pavement below. The police said it was suicide: an inquiry, however, said it was accidental. But we begin on the second floor, in the office of Inspector Bertozzo (23).

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21 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, pp. 11-12.

22 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale di un anarchico, Torino, Einaudi, 1988.

23 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 1.

There are no reasons to cut the Prologue because it introduces the scene and the fact dealt with in the play. It ironically explains the similarity of Salsedo's death in 1921 in New York with the facts happened in Italy in the 1970s when the play opens. This transposition has been introduced to avoid censorship but there is a sharp satire of that reactionary institution because the play must hide its real meaning. It is part of the wish to make the audience conscious of the need of a militant response (24). Fo knows that his audience agree with him, they know what he

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24 Paolo Puppa, Il teatro di Dario Fo. Dalla scena alla piazza, Venezia, Marsilio, 1978, p. 201:

la scena diviene così la proiezione simbolica di una violazione collettiva di trasgressione, poter vedere, contemplare, in chiave quasi allucinatoria, l'umiliazione e lo spernacchio della controparte e insieme la ritualistico-antropologica confessione in pubblico delle forze del male, del negativo.

wants to say and answer also to the chronological change of perspective (25).

Moreover, the Matto himself speaks of this transposition:

MATTO: [...] Un giudice supervisore? Lo mandano apposta da Washington? Sì voglio dire da Roma. Ogni tanto mi dimentico che c'è la trasposizione... (26),

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25 Joylynn Wing, "The Performance of Power and Power of Performance: Rewriting the Police State in Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Modern Drama, XXIII, No. 1, March 1990, p.141:

in the process of enactment, however, it becomes clear that more than one notion of author/authority/authorized has been set in motion. On the one hand the authority of Dario Fo, the author of the play, is challenged by the very characters he has created. [...] Concomitantly, Fo's ostensible [...] fiction in turn challenges the officiality authorized version of Pinelli's fall. Meanwhile, the authority of theatrical representation itself is subverted by a series of disruptive strategies which persistently undermine the integrity of the performance text.

This can be true also for the scenes added by the translator in 1987 where actors rebel against their creator.

26 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 24.

and also later, he continues to maintain the fictitious transposition even if he himself reveals once again the joke:

MATTO: [...] io mi ricordo, ero a Bergamo, dovrei dire San Francisco ma c'è la trasposizione, ero a Bergamo durante gli interrogatori a quella cosiddetta "banda del lunedì" (27).

In 1979, the two passages are accurately translated:

FOOL: [...] A supreme court judge? They're sending him from Washington? -- oops, sorry, I mean from Rome; once in a while I forget about the theatrical transposition (28),

and:

FOOL: [...] I recall once I was in Bergamo -- I should say San Francisco, but there's the theatrical transposition -- I was in Bergamo during the interrogation of that so-called "Monday league" (29).

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27 Ibidem., p. 68.

28 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 17.

29 Ibidem., p. 29.

But if the prologue has been cut -- as in 1987 or partially in 1991 -- there is no reason to maintain that lines so they have been omitted, but satire certainly loses something of its original strength.

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During the play some characters change their names: at the beginning the Matto is called Indiziato (Suspect) and Bertozzo is the Commissario (Inspector); later the Matto is called Capitano (Captain) for a few pages, when he impersonates Captain Marcantonio Banzi Piccini. Only in 1979 this changes are signalled not only during the play but also with a kind of note at the end of the text. They are short hints, one of them is:

(They exit from the left. On the right, the Fool [Suspect] sticks his head in the same door from which he had gone out) (30),

and another is "FOOL, as CAPTAIN" (31), but they are very useful to make the reader understand Fo's true intention.

The fact that two of the roles played by the Matto are stressed by a change in his name can be referred to Fo's previous wish to change any time it is needed in the text, to stress his dressing-ups, but then this intent is not brought to an end.

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30 Ibidem., p. 17.

31 Ibidem., p. 33.

Some peculiar differences of the Italian language from the English one are pointed out. For example, when the original script says that the Commissario begins to address the Matto using the courtesy form:

COMMISSARIO: Ma è proprio matto (senza rendersi conto ha cominciato a dargli del lei)... cosa c'entra la virgola! (32),

in English there can only be a change in the tone, such as it is said in 1979:

INSPECTOR: You Know, you really are crazy. (Without realizing it, he has begun to address the Suspect in a more respectful tone) What does the comma have to do with it? (33)

On the contrary, in 1987 and 1991 those lines have been omitted to avoid the problem. The same happens when the Matto asks to use a more confidential way of addressing each other. In the original it is:

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32 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 17.

33 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 15.

INDIZIATO: [...] Io sono uno dei vostri... caro commissario. Diamoci pure del tu! (34)

In 1979, Cowan finds a way to render the sentence as follow:

SUSPECT: [...] I fit right in with your kind of people, dear Inspector. Why don't we call each other by our first names? (35)

In 1987, the Maniac does not mention his wish to use a confidential way of addressing and limits himself to say "I'm like you, Inspector" (36).

Alan Cumming and Tim Supple use another way to render it but nonetheless they manage to obtain the same effect as in the original:

MADMAN: [...] In fact, we're one and the same, Inspector. Let's not be so formal (37).

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34 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 19.

35 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 16.

36 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 6.

37 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 7.

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The 1987 and 1991 editions tend to update peculiar references to the Italian situation, both economic and politic. For example they both change the figure of ventimila- lire (twenty thousand Lire) into "200,000 £":

MANIAC: The fee is an indispensable part of the treatment. If I didn't relieve these twits of the odd two hundred thousand I'd lose all credibility(38).

and:

BERTOZZO: You could pay your actors out of the 200,000 lire you conned out of that poor bloke who thought you were a psychiatrist (39) --

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38 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 3.

39 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 3.

so that the value is more incisive for the audience which are struck by the high bill the Matto's patients have to pay.

Another example of updating current particulars at Fo's time are the speeches about women's conditions. In 1987 and 1991 editions they are said by the Matto at the beginning of the questioning at the Police Headquarters:

MANIAC: [...] Housewife, there's a job, she never retires either, but the older she grows the more she does the less she gets and ends up with nothing (40).

In 1991 the use of computers in the modern factories has also been mentioned:

MADMAN: [...] The factory worker. She's been on the same part of the assembly line for years. Suddenly all change. Everything's computerized and all she has to do is press a few buttons and watch a screen. Her eyes hurt, she can't cope. Get someone younger and cheaper in. "Never mind

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40 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 7.

darling, at least you'll have more time to look after your old man" (41).

Judges' career, as well, has been modified according to the British system. Instead of:

INDIZIATO: [...] più sono vecchi e rinco...  
svaniti, più li eleggono a cariche superiori,  
gli affidano cariche importanti...  
assolute! (42),

it is:

MADMAN: [...] And the judge, half-blind, half-crippled, half-senile. Give him a knighthood, a rise in salary and put him in charge of a commission that's going to affect the lives of millions of people (43).

The attack to middle-class profession is here directed to the most modernized branch of business, which should have improved the welfare of the country. There is also a precise attack to Lord Denning, a judge that had an important role

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41 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 7.

42 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 20.

43 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, pp. 7-8.

in the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six cases (44). He was convinced just from the beginning of their guilt even against any contrary proof. Here, a British audience can certainly recognize him in these words:

MADMAN: [...] Let's see (Gets judge's wig out of his bag, sits and shakes) "And another thing... Juries, we don't need juries, I don't want any Tom, Dick or Harry telling me how to do my job, I remember the days when the juries were middle-class and middle-of-the-road, not any more though... and another thing, if the suspect's guilty, hang the bastard. It would save money and stop all these moudly stupid campaigns to persuade us that cold-blooded murderers are innocent... and it would let me forget about them... and another thing, I do not want Yids or Germans coming over here telling me how to spend my money, we beat them in two world wars and

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44 Lord Denning expresses precise fascist ideas on the cases in an interview appeared on The Spectator, 18 August 1990 (A.N.Wilson, "England, His England", The Spectator, 18 August 1990, pp. 8-10). He states that

We shouldn't have all these campaigns to get the Birmingham Six released if they'd been hanged. They'd be forgotten, and the whole community would be satisfied (p. 10).

And if they had been the wrong people? He only said that "there is always that danger".

we're letting them win the third... and another thing (Fall asleep) (45).

The wish to update old references that can be no longer incisive on the audience makes the translators change also single words. For example, in 1991 sceneggiata (46) has been translated into "day-time soap opera" that is a genre in fashion now.

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Vulgar sentences are sometimes different not only because of the difference of the language and its idioms but also because they are rendered in a less vulgar register. An example of changing of register is the way the Matto's

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45 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 14.

46 Ibidem., p. 36, 1991, p. 36; Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 57.

speech on how violent policemen are with their suspects is rendered. In the original it is:

MATTO: Per favore non minimizziamo... E che, non sarete mica dei violinisti voi due... andiamo, tutti i poliziotti di 'sto mondo vanno giù di brutto che è un piacere, e non capisco perchè, proprio voi, dovrete essere gli unici ad andarci con la vaselina? Ma è nel vostro diritto che vi comportiate così! Ma che, scherziamo?(47)

In 1979 (48) the Fool says the policemen uses "kid gloves": surely a satiric way of referring to their violence, but not so vulgar as the original.

In 1987 it is only said that they "play a few dirty tricks" (49). In 1991 it only remains a little mention to the original in the words "to play a little bit dirty every now and then" that are not vulgar and also miss the incisiveness of Fo's image.

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47 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, pp. 42-43.

48 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 22.

49 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 24.

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Other problems arouse when jokes on the names of the real Inspector Calabresi -- charged with Pinelli's death -- must be rendered.

Both in 1979:

FOOL: [...] Bertozzo here just made a really funny crack. Promise not to get mad and I'll tell you what he said. You won't blow up? All right, then, I'll tell you: he said -- ha, ha! -- as soon as that judge-auditor winds up his visit here, you'll be sent down south, maybe to the smallest backwater town in the pit of Calabria, where central police headquarters consist of one story and the inspector's office is in the sub-basement (50) --

and 1987:

MANIAC: [...] That was Bertozzo blowing you a raspberry. He says you can both rot for all he cares, you've stood in his way long enough, about time you were re-posted or pensioned-off... Where?... Where?... South, probably, some flea-infested station in the harsehole of the world where the bandits use the fuzz for target

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50 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 17.

practice when the melons are out of season... ha  
ha (51) --

there has been given a description of a village in the South as bad as possible but the sense of Fo's words on Calabria does have nothing to do with this. On the one hand, it is difficult to make a British audience understand the joke on the words Calabria-calabrese-calabresi of the original:

MATTO: [...] Ah, ah, c'è il Bertozzo che ha detto una cosa molto spiritosa... se non t'arrabbi te la dico... non t'arrabbi? E va bene allora te la dico: ha detto che... ah, ah... che dopo 'sta visita del giudice revisore ti spediranno nel sud, magari a Vibo-Valentia Calabrese... dove c'è il palazzo della questura che è a un piano solo e l'ufficio per il commissario è nel seminterrato(52).

On the other hand, however, at least the 1991 edition, which updates the Italian references, should have given a joke on the name of an important person implicated in the process taken as a basis for the version. On the contrary the joke is quite completely omitted.

51 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 13.

52 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 26.

MADMAN: [...] Bertozzo's just said something really funny. I'll tell you if you promise not to get angry. You sure? Promise? Cross your heart and hope to die? OK. He says that after Malipiero has finished with you, the only place you'll get a job is the police morgue. And you know what that is? A dead job (53).

Only Cowan explains the joke on the names in a note on the text.

In another occasion Fo satirizes on Inspector Calabresi by involving his way of dressing. Pisani, the character who represents Calabresi, is said to wear a girocollo nero (black round-neck shirt) (54) : a fetishistic object of the real inspector. In 1979 the same line appears.

In 1987 he is said to be "fascist" (55) : a clear misreading of the meaning of the colour black.

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53 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 13.

54 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 28.

55 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 14. In the play policemen are considered to be, and also said to be, fascist, but here it is not the case and the translator should have maintained the words of the author.

In 1991 Bertozzo is said to wear "cowboy boots" (56) without a specific reason.

A bit of a confusion has been done in all the three text as for Pisani's nickname Finestra-cavalcioni (57). In 1979 Cowan translates it with "window riding instructor" (58) where the mention to a teacher has no reason to exist.

In 1987 it is "Window Straddler" (59) that can be quite perfect except for the fact that it seems he is the person who stays on the window-sill while he is the one who forces others to.

In 1991 on the contrary, the translators have renounced to render it and call him "Inspector

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56 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p.15.

57 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 82.

58 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 33.

59 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 49.

Playschool"(60) which has nothing to do with the accident and the force of irony. The entire joke seems now reduced to a game among school fellows.

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Sometimes the order of cues has been changed this is not dangerous if the story remains the same. But, when the characters who have to say them are changed, the sense itself is changed. This happens mainly in 1987 and 1991 versions. A clear example of this can be seen in 1987:

PISSANI: (Beside himself with panic) Very well. Obviously one of the suspect's shoes must have been too big for him -- so, not having an insole to hand, he had previously put a smaller shoe on inside the bigger one which came off in the Constable's hand! Or one foot was considerably smaller than the other and the same means was

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60 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 53.

employed to eye-up the feet for cosmetic reasons! (61)

Pissani reveals the policemen's confusion after their confession. It should be the Maniac to have the role of disclosing the truth. Similarly, in 1991:

SUPERINTENDENT: Yes, and maybe the dancer refused to take any notice and so our railwayman began to suspect that even he was an agent provocateur (62),

it is Superintendent to speak about a provocateur sent by police among the anarchists when it should be the Madman to say it. Indeed his function is that of suggesting the policemen how things happened before the anarchist's fall and make them agree with him, when they have definitely lost their superiority. Here it seems as if they accept the Superintendent's version.

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61 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 44.

62 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 36.

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In two of the texts, 1979 and 1991 -- in 1987 the line has been cut -- it is sensational that the same word has been misread and consequently mistranslated.

In Italian the Matto speaks of an appuntato who had been witness to the fall. The translators render it with "a note" (63) or "a footnote" (64) whereas it is a grade of non-commissioned officer of the Carabinieri (65). The important thing, beyond the unacceptability of both the words, is that the English audience miss Fo's stressing the presence of witnesses.

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63 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 28.

64 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 39.

65 Carabinieri are Italian army corps which are also a police force.

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Throughout the text there are a few hints to Fo's predecessors, to the artists of revue or even to mountebanks.

In both 1991 and 1987, the stage direction that says the Matto has two bags with him, one of which is full with things of the most different nature, has been omitted. Fo writes:

MATTO: (Spalancando le braccia) E allora! (Si siede, estrae dalla borsa alcuni documenti, ci rendiamo conto che ha con sé anche un'altra borsa, enorme, dalla quale estrae un sacco di carabattole: una lente, una pinza, una graffettatrice, una mazza di legno da giudice... un codice penale. Vicino alla porta il commissario sta parlando sottovoce all'orecchio dell'agente) (66),

His dressing-ups on stage need the props typical of the ancient mountebanks and of their built-up at the minute

66 Dario Fo, Morte accideantale, cit., 1972, pp. 34-35.

performances on the streets. Fo puts their art into practice and he is proud of this, so this reference should be maintained also for its meaning as a cultural rescuing of ancient traditions.

No translations maintain the reference to Fregoli, the famous revue actor:

BERTOZZO: [...] (Quindi rivolto al matto) Tu invece adesso mi fai il piacere, caro il mio Fregoli del porcogiuda, di dire ai signori chi sei veramente... o, siccome m'hai scocciato, ti sparo nelle gengive... chiaro? (67)

They have tried to give a name which includes in itself the actor's art.

In 1979 it is said "my sonofabitch friend from the funny farm" (68) which is quite a vulgar line and which looses all the meaning that Fo wants to give to his comparison with Fregoli.

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67 Ibidem., p. 115.

68 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 42.

In 1987 it is again a vulgar line -- "you asshole!" (69) -- without meaning Fregoli at all.

In 1991 it is said "Mr. Crackpot" (70). Crackpot means weak-minded or eccentric person and in a sense Fregoli was an eccentric in his skill to play many roles in the same show, but certainly not weak minded.

The other and perhaps also more important mention to Fo's 'teachers' is that to Totò:

MATTO: Eh ma lei si distrae un po' troppo dottore... Stia più attento... Dunque, come diceva Totò in una vecchia farsa, "a quest'ora il questore in questura non c'era"! Ma c'era il commissario (71) --

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69 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 66.

70 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 75.

71 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 66. As far as Totò's importance in Fo's theatre is concerned see Dario Fo, "Totò: the Violence of the Marionette and the Mask", Theater, Summer/Fall, 1987, pp. 6-12. Among many other considerations that Fo does about Totò's art at least a few of them are relevant to be quoted:

he becomes like a lens. He obliges the public to concentrate its attention on him, by

but it has been omitted in all the three texts taken into consideration.

In 1979 and 1991 the tongue-twister about the Superintendent not present in the Police Headquarters at the time of the fall in 1979 and 1991 has been changed into two other not very similar to the original but that reach the same effect of alliteration:

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exaggerating the details -- [...] he obliges the public to focus on his face, on his eyes, on a hand or -- on the contrary -- on the ensemble of his movements until Totò becomes in himself, the entire scene (p. 8);

and:

the result was that the habitual mode of representation where the public is kept at a distance was completely subverted and the spectators completely implicated. Totò also took advantage sometimes of the rude remarks of the spectators, whether directed at the actors or himself, of their violence (p. 10).

These are also the effects of the Matto's interrogation of the policemen. For Totò's way of playing see also Claudio Meldolesi, Fra Totò e Gadda. Sei invenzioni sprecate del teatro italiano, Bulzoni Editore, Roma, 1987, pp. 17-55.

headquarters had no head, 'cause the head man  
was in bed (72) ;

and "the chief cop popped out the cop-shop, chief" (73).

However, the mention to Totò's invention of the sentence has  
been cut in both texts. In 1979 there remain only a few  
words that say it is "an old vaudeville routine" (74) but  
this has nothing to do with the meaning of Fo's comparing it  
with one of the Italian greatest actors.

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Fo's cues where he can express his skill in playing  
different roles at the same time are not only difficult to

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72 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 28.

73 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 42.

74 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 28.

be translated but also to be rendered with the same register. They are like dialogues but it is the Matto alone to act them. There is an example of this effect when he speaks of the final stage of the anarchist's interrogation, just before the fall happens. In 1979 it is quite literally translated:

FOOL: [...] They say two people were holding him... and as it often happens in these cases, each one was relying on the other -- should I hold him? Do you want to hold him? -- and wham-bam, down he went (75).

In 1987:

MANIAC: [...] each of the officers thought the other had the stronger hold, you know the sort of thing -- "To me Giacomo" -- "OK Batista!" and whoops, out he goes! What more can you say? (76)

It is not the same as in Italian but it renders the effect; this is obtained also by adding the names of the police

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75 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 34.

76 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 53.

Constables that are the protagonists so that it is as if they were calling and talking to each other.

In 1991 the register has been changed:

MADMAN: [...] The two policemen who were holding him were unfortunately unable to maintain their concentration and in a moment of confusion he was dropped (77).

The fact has been reported as a story by using the third person plural and the result is not only different from Fo's scene, but also much less incisive.

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One of Fo's aims in writing a play is to create a theatre made of facts drawn from the real life and to make his audience more and more aware of being present at a

77 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, p. 57.

dramatizing of reality and not of made-up facts. He uses the language to maintain this contact between the speaker and the addressees: it is the so called funzione fatica (78) -- as defined also by Paolo Puppa while commenting when the police supervisors reveal themselves among the audience (79).

78 Roman Jakobson, Saggi di linguistica generale, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1986, p. 188:

Vi sono messaggi che servono essenzialmente a stabilire, prolungare o interrompere la comunicazione, a verificare se il canale funziona, [...] ad attirare l'attenzione dell'interlocutore o ad assicurarsi la sua continuità. [...] Questa accentuazione del contatto (la funzione fatica [...]) può dare luogo ad uno scambio sovrabbondante di formule stereotipate, a interi dialoghi il cui unico scopo è di prolungare la comunicazione.

79 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, p. 100. Paolo Puppa, Il teatro di Dario Fo, cit., 1978, p. 208:

ecco lo spettacolo ricorrere ad un tipico trucco pirandelliano [...] perchè il funzionario, battendo le mani rivolto alla platea, chiama confidenti che rispondono puntualmente dalla sala, esaltando così il momento fatico, cioè la verifica del contatto e la familiarizzazione col destinatario.

See also Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo. People's Court Jester, London, Methuen, 1986, p. 63:

This Pirandello-like episode has been maintained only in 1979 edition (80). Pirandello, in Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore (1921), provides a metaphor for the contradictions of existence in the equivocal relationship between actors and the characters they represent. They are characters rejected by their author and that materialize on stage. They throb with a more intense vitality than the real actors, who, inevitably, distort their drama as they attempt its representation. This is the so-called theatre-within-the-theatre.

In 1987 and 1991 this scene has been omitted without any apparent reason. However, in 1987 another device has been added to rescue at least in part the effect created by

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the play uses a provocative, Pirandello-like device after the journalist questions the police about their use of intelligence infiltrators in left-wing extra-parliamentary groups.

80 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 37.

Fo. At the beginning, in the middle and in the end of the text the translator has added scenes where the actors directly address themselves to the audience. At the beginning:

BERTOZZO: I ought to warn you that the author of this sick little play, Dario Fo, has the traditional, irrational hatred of police common to all narrow-minded left-wingers and so I shall, no doubt, be the unwilling butt of endless anti-authoritarian jibes (81),

Bertozzo talks also of Dario Fo in person, as he will do in the end:

BERTOZZO: Get back to the script!

SUPERINTENDENT: This is an insult to Dario Fo! (82)

It is like a rebellion of the character against his creator: he pretends to be saying things which he does not believe

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81 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, p. 2.

82 Ibidem., p. 68.

in. It is a satire which obtains its effect by denying the truth: a negative technique, it can be said. In the middle of the play, just after the beginning of Act One, Scene Two:

MANIAC: (to STAGE MANAGER) Remind me not to appear in these cheap touring productions again. Can't even afford a decent-sized cast.

VOICE OFF: Sorry (name of actor)... (83),

the translator adds an exchange about actors used for different roles in a single play, between the Maniac and the Stage Manager who answers from the hall, as if this latter were the spy asked to speak by the Superintendent in Fo's play. Moreover, there is a hint to the previous condition of the company -- before coming to the West End -- in the reference to not institutionalized productions.

Realism on stage has been destroyed by a contamination with the hall. Then, at the beginning of Act Two, Scene One:

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83 Ibidem., p. 17.

ALL: Bravo! Well done Magnificent!

Knock on the door right. STAGE MANAGER with tray  
and coffee, handed to CONSTABLE (84) ,

the same Stage Manager comes on stage but he does not talk. At the end of the play (85) when the Superintendent is said to give the "name of the actor who is playing the part" of the Maniac and to say also that "this isn't Fo" when he refers to the play acted on stage, on the one hand this is an extreme attempt of updating the play because the actor on stage at that precise moment is made reference to. On the other hand, it is as if the circle closes on itself by coming back to the beginning when Dario Fo was named for the first time. Then there are also Pisani's words: "Get back to the script". They can be considered as the translator's self-accusation of having made too many changes to the

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84 Ibidem., p. 38.

85 Ibidem., p. 68.

original text of Accidental Death of an Anarchist to the extent that the same actors ask for the reason of this "insult to Dario Fo". However, beyond these insults that are part of the translator's wish to create comic effects, there is the wish to destroy definitely the so-called fourth wall and ask the audience to recognize them as actors and their acting as a device. The reference to Dario Fo can also be considered as a way to introduce to a foreign audience a playwright who is still alive and whose political works they are not yet used to. Indeed, when the play first opened -- in 1979 -- Fo was rather unknown in England.

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The only impersonation of the Matto that has been differently dealt with is the last one. When he pretends to

be a bishop (86). In 1979 it is rendered literally. In 1987 the translator has decided to omit it. In 1991 the Madman impersonates a "priest" (87) instead of a bishop: to impersonate a priest has less ironical strength because a bishop is an important personality. Fo is surely critic of the temporal power of the church and of its devotion to worldly affairs as opposed to religious ones.

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A great problem to face is the different way the play can end. The three translations end in different ways.

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86 Dario Fo, Morte accidentale, cit., 1972, pp. 107-114.

87 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, pp. 70-74.

In 1979 edition, Cowan follows 1972 and 1988 texts up to the end except for an occasion in which she adds the Fool giving different examples of scandals in America -- the only reference updated to the time of the translation --, where indeed the text is published:

FOOL: [...] The important thing is to convince people that everything is going fine. America, which is certainly a highly developed nation, is up to its ears in scandal. They murder a president, because he's not conservative enough... The C.I.A. and F.B.I. themselves are involved in the assassination... About twenty witnesses get bumped off... public opinion is stunned, scandalized... there are investigations, trials; the press and television scream, make accusations and denunciations -- and as a direct result, to replace the murder victim, they elect Johnson and then Nixon, no less! (88) ,

but then she adds a second end (89) : lights go out and then a cry and an explosion are heard. The policemen think the Fool has thrown himself out of the window. The Reporter wants to interview the chief and he states the same false

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88 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1979, p. 41.

89 Ibidem., pp. 42-43.

"raptus" theory -- which is said to be the cause for the anarchist's fall -- must be the a reason for the fall. Then a Bearded Man enters; he resembles the Fool, and introduces himself as the real examining magistrate. The questioning starts again and little later space is given to the discussion with the people present in the theatre, the audience. This end leaves everything unresolved. It avoids catharsis (90).

In 1987 edition, at the very end a few last cues have been changed (91). After giving the journalist the keys to handcuff the policemen, the Maniac exits and he is said to "appear round the set" and "talk to audience": he explains

90 For Fo and Brecht similarity in dealing with audience's participation, see Tony Mitchell, Dario Fo, cit., 1986, p. 65:

in leaving the audience's anger and indignation without an outlet, Fo and La Comune hoped, as Brecht did in his didactic plays, to stimulate a desire for political change.

91 Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, pp. 73-75.

that now the journalist has to decide and she has only thirty seconds left. She goes away, the bomb explodes but after a blackout the Maniac reappears and says that there cannot be "a happy ending": and lights show again the stage as it was before the explosion. Feletti now "unlocks" the policemen because beaten down by her middle-class audience. The policemen thank her but the thought that she can be a witness of their confessions make them handcuff her to the same window and leave her there alone with the bomb. The Maniac closes the play by leaving to the audience a kind of invitation to give their own judgement of what has happened. Fo has no intention to deal with the terrorist matter: police have to be openly condemned for their causing Pinelli's death and their accordance with the Fascists' bombing of Piazza Fontana. On the contrary, Richards -- in 1987 edition -- invents a terroristic aim for the Maniac: he blows up the police station. In so doing the translator does

a great injustice to Fo, he supports this latter's opposers, that ideologically misinterpret him.

The 1991 version is the only one to follow both the 1972 and 1988 texts. The only change introduced in the text is the updating of some peculiar Italian political events into well-know British ones, and in particular the Birmingham Six case.

## **CHAPTER 4: THEATRICAL CRITICISM OF DARIO FO'S EXPERIENCE**

## CHAPTER 4: THE THEATRICAL CRITICISM OF DARIO FO'S EXPERIENCE

### 4. 1: The English political theatre before and after Dario Fo

The twentieth century has seen a proliferation of artistic and literary movements all at a breach with the immediate past and struggling to find new and original forms of artistic creation.

During the war theatre banished again entertainment from the plays and a social sharp dissatisfaction was the characteristic of the "Kitchen-sink-School". Its realistic tone adopted elements from the music-hall and shock tactics

to provoke the reader. The lower classes were taken as subject matter.

It is generally admitted that the more interesting developments began to take place with the first performance of Osborne's Look Back in Anger at the Royal Court Theatre in London on 8 May 1956: a lively drama against the emptiness of contemporary life (1). However, individual "anger" proposed as such, had no opportunity to be put into action and it rapidly turned into disillusionment because no novelties came for the country.

Then, with Beckett's plays came "The Theatre of Absurd". Its subject matters regard the fundamental

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1 On John Osborne life and works see R. Hayman, John Osborne, London, 1968; Salvatore Maiorana, Ricorda con rabbia. La crisi dell'uomo in John Osborne, Palermo, 1974. See also the chapters dedicated to the author and to his time in Charles Marowitz and Simon Trussler, Ribellione e Rassegnazione. Teatro inglese dal 1957 al 1967, Bari, Di Donato, 1969; A.E. Kennedy, Six Dramatists in Search of a Language, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976; John Elsom, Post-War British Theatre Criticism, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976; John Russell Taylor, Anger and After, London, Eyre Methuen, 1977.

questions concerning human life and universe. Such questions are given a forceful and original form and their impact on the public is so strong as to be shocking, but a real answer from the audience was never looked for. The audience remained relegated in a submitted position and middle-class values were maintained as such (2).

The theatre of the Sixties was encouraged to use the body of the actors as a means of expression instead of words which people had lost faith in. The actors do no longer dominate their audience: in the triangular relationship

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2 Martin Esslin, Il teatro dell'assurdo, Roma, Edizioni Abete, 1980, p. 426:

il rifiuto dei concetti tradizionali di intreccio e di stile nel Teatro dell' Assurdo, la svalutazione del dialogo e dello stesso linguaggio, hanno indubbiamente giocato la loro parte nel favorire la formulazione di negazioni molto più radicali da parte dei creatori di un'arte, che va oltre il teatro stesso, come quella del'Happening.

On Beckett and the theatre of absurd see also R. Hayman, Samuel Beckett, London, 1974.

writer/director/actor/ now the director gained in importance (3).

The problem of having an audience, in a certain sense, "right" for this "new" theatre, remained still unsolved; there were impulses coming only from the middle class (4).

Joan Littlewood is the first English director to make actors actively partake in the creation of the text. And also the new theatre buildings were built up according to the needs of this new relationship performer/audience. She

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3 Ronald Hayman, British Theatre since 1955. A Reassessment, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 129-147.

4 C. W. E. Bigsby, "The Language of Crisis in British Theatre: The Drama of Cultural Pathology", in C. W. E. Bigsby, ed., Contemporary English Drama, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, XIX, London, Edward Arnold, 1981, p. 15:

theatre, at least in the mid 1960s, was not only produced by graduates, it was also, it seems, watched by them [...]. It was this fact which, in the 1960s, provided some of the impetus for the fringe theatre which sprang up in London, and in the 70s for the establishment of socialist theatres intent on creating new audiences [...] followed by the creation of a number of socialist touring theatres.

was an influential British theatrical director but she rejected the standardized system and its innocuous social content in favour of experimental productions of plays concerned with contemporary social issues. Indeed, her merit was also that of "bringing the work of new playwrights on stage" (5).

Littlewood started from the idea that theatre should become a means of entertainment as well as of political discussion. She came from the Workers' Theatre Movement (6),

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5 David Bradby and David Williams, Directors' Theatre, London, Macmillan, 1988, p. 2.

6 Workers' Theatre Movement was a theatre organization at work mainly in the years from 1926 to 1935 which put emphasis on class struggle but which also had a restricted field of interest. Raphael Samuel, Ewan MacColl and Stuart Cosgrove, Theatres of the Left 1880-1935, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, p. 58:

one restriction on experiment, which the Workers' Theatre Movement shared with its Labour-Co-op predecessors, was a thoroughgoing suspicion of popular culture. Even dialect plays seem to have been viewed with suspicion, as insufficiently dignified for the revolutionary cause. [...] Satire was restricted by the need to convey the urgency of the political message.

but she went beyond its denial of popular culture. Moreover, her first works were strongly influenced by Meyerhold's idea of theatre: she rescued popular traditions (7).

In 1945, in Manchester, she founded Theatre Workshop, which was organized, as a workers' co-operative, on the principle of collaboration.

Her initial productions of classics never renounced the hidden popular characteristics of the plays (8).

7 David Bradby and David Williams, op. cit., p. 26:

with its close integration of speech, movement and lighting, bore the stamp of Meyerhold's influence. Like the Russian director, Littlewood wanted her actors to be as supple as acrobats so that a specifically theatrical form of physical expression could be developed -- one that was based not on close imitation of everyday life but on traditional forms of popular expression: the clown show, the circus, the carnival.

8 Ibidem., p. 36:

Littlewood's emphasis in her production of the classics was always on discovering the popular voice she believed to have been the essential ingredient in the greatness of playwrights such as Shakespeare and Jonson. In her view this meant rediscovering the urgency of their plays

Gradually the group developed its own style and put into practice its aim of encouraging the audience's participation by using techniques originally drawn from music-hall (9).

When Littlewood and her group's approval of Left wing movements caused a shortage in subsidy from the Art Council, they were urged to make larger use of improvisation and of a working progress of creation in order to stage many plays at short intervals. In this way they managed to gain sufficient money to continue their experimentation.

Littlewood's first success both with London critics and financial, was The Quare Fellow, by Brendan Behan, which

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and making them sharply relevant to today. Her methods in pursuit of this aim did not generally involve ruthless updating but were more complex.

9 Music-hall derives from pleasure gardens of the XVI century in England and it is mainly related to entertainment: among others it conglobates singing, storytelling, dancing and harlequinades. Audience are mostly of working-class origin. The ticket is lower than that to enter a theatre and for many years this habit is maintained. The Theatre Act in 1843 ratifies the end of the monopoly of Patent Theatres and allows minor theatres to stage prose texts. Moreover, selling of drinks during the performances is now allowed and many locals open in the following period.

was even transferred from the provincial circuit of Startford, east of London, to Wyndham's Theatre for a year.

Then, in 1963, she directed her last production for the Theatre Workshop, the "devasting musical satire" (10) of Oh What a Lovely War!, a criticism of the First World War which conglobates all the aspects of her directional technique(11). After this successful experience, her interests became less narrowly theatrical and the company was disbanded because lacking its leader. Short afterwards, she also stopped her theatre work altogether.

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10 John Elsom, Post War British Theatre Criticism, cit., 1976, p. 111.

11 David Bradby and David Williams, op. cit., p. 44:

the play achieved its effects entirely by means of ironic contrast and counterpoint. Suspicious as ever of first-degree naturalism, Littlewood used the device of a pierrot troupe [...] to present the play. [...] With its roots in both clowning and popular ballad traditions, the format of the pierrot show provided Littlewood with a chance to exploit her feel for popular forms of entertainment.

Many aspects of Littlewood experience can differ from Fo's but their wish to find a new spur for a contemporary theatre which should include and use a total vision of theatrical means, is very similar.

In the Sixties "an increasing fragmentation and specialization among the public at large" (12) is to be found mainly because of the mass media -- mostly television and radio -- which began to be influentially used also by artists, but with some exceptions (13). The same features of the theatres changed, they, or at least a great part of

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12 John Russell Taylor, The Second Wave, London, Eyre Methuen, 1978, p. 12.

13 Salvatore Maiorana, Lo spazio diviso, Venezia, Marsilio, 1984, p. 12:

l'ipotesi di utilizzare la televisione per lo sviluppo di un teatro "popolare" di massa che parli alla classe operaia non è condivisa da altri drammaturghi socialisti come Bond, Breton, McGrath che considerano lo strumento televisivo come un apparato ideologico, dove la censura establishment "incorpora" nella sua ideologia i significati politici alternativi della produzione teatrale.

them, did not fit the institutional circuit any longer; they got in contact with cultural circles (14), and this consequently brought "an enormous broadening of the range of theatrical subject matter" (15) that had been out "of the scene" because of the Lord Chamberlain's censorship, that will be definitively abolished in 1967. Indeed in the Sixties Great Britain was still suffering from a law for art

14 Ibidem., p. 13:

Few of the new theatres conform to the old repertory pattern [...]. Instead, a lot of them are linked with universities and educational establishments, and many more are improvised by groups and companies in whatever accomodation happens to be going. In London these informal and often peripatetic art centres have largely taken the place of the old theatre clubs.

For a story of the Old Vic, the famous theatre in London, opened in 1818, in which "life" it is possible to retrace the development of theatre in England from the XIX to the XX century, see Gigi Lunari, L'Old Vic di Londra, Bologna, Cappelli, 1959; Theodore Shank, Theatre in Real Time, Lodi, Studio Forma, 1980.

15 Michelene Wandor, Look Back in Gender, London, Methuen, 1987, p. 68.

censorship which dated back to 1737, later strengthened with the Theatres Act in 1843 (16).

In the Seventies the "Anger" of the Sixties had disappeared as it would have had certainly to because of the inconsistent basis on which it had grown (17), and theatre itself came back to conservatism, the new wave had been absorbed again by the establishment (18). However, theatre

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16 Kenneth Tynan, "The Royal Smut-Hound", in Ibidem., pp. 73-85.

17 C. W. E. Bigsby, "The Language of Crisis", cit., p. 20:

in one sense the "new" playwrights of the late 1950s were more conservative than the press and critics were prepared to acknowledge. Readily making the classic mistake of assuming that plays featuring the working class are necessarily revolutionary, journalists and critics collaborated in creating the fiction of an iconoclastic drama. But the sound they heard was [...] a bitter despair of the inability of their own age to generate myths with the same compelling quality as those of the past.

18 On performances in those years in England, see Alberto Arbasino, Grazie per le magnifiche rose, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1965, pp. 197-234; John Elsom, Post-War British Theatre Criticism, cit., 1976.

took its great revenge again with the 1968 movement: the contradictions which life had been based on up to then were under discussion. An alternative theatre able to give voice to these protests took its first steps (19). An "alternative" theatre grew up meant to oppose itself to the establishment, the fringe theatre (20). The dramatists of this movement had also to look for a new language able to

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19 Michelene Wandor, op. cit., p. XV:

the period of post-war British drama from 1956 to the early 1980s. This quarter of a century has seen an extraordinary development in British theatre, from the post-war challenge to West End drawing-room drama, to the politically highly self conscious work of many playwrights in the 1970s.

20 Salvatore Maiorana, op. cit., p. 3:

l'analisi delle forme del teatro politico prodotto nel "fringe" (frangia) o all'interno dei teatri istituzionali come il National Theatre, il Royal Court o la Royal Shakespeare Company, fa riconoscere che il tempo nel quale la pratica teatrale si muove è un terreno di lotta politica contro il sistema capitalistico e l'egemonia culturali delle classi dominanti.

reflect a new relationship with reality (21), conscious of the fact that language was such a powerful means of expression. Many groups were born at that time, among them 7:84 Theatre Company and Belt and Braces Roadshow Company -- the first criticized the fact that the 84 per cent of the richness belonged only to the 7 per cent of the people; the second was the first to stage Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist in 1979, that is part of their search for new opportunities of "fight." Many of the companies were itinerant and their aim was to reach people that were not

21 The main characteristics of this language can be summarized in three main points, as Andrew Kennedy does. Andrew Kennedy, Six Dramatists in Search of a Language, cit., 1976, p. 1:

- 1) The dramatist's awareness of naturalism as a tired or exhausted style which yet survives -- since the dramatist cannot wholly lose touch with everyday speech without sterility -- as a constant pull towards mimetic dialogue.
- 2) His awareness of a whole "imagery museum" of possible languages, usually conjoined with a self-imposed and restless search for a "new" language, worked out in and for his own drama.
- 3) His awareness of the shrinking uses and powers of language itself, as the mediator of thought and feeling, and as the meaningful counterpart of action.

used to going to the theatre. Theatre now asked for these latter's active participation and judgement, not for a homologated answer as it had happened in the "regular" circuits. It became possible to see plays in pubs, in the streets, and other places normally considered non-theatrical settings. There started also the habit to prefer an actor as the director of the company, a process that can be considered part of the democratizing of the theatre (22). This is true also for the stagings of Fo's plays: the two London stagings -- even if the first only when it passed to the West End -- have their director in the cast, and moreover impersonating the Matto, the main role.

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22 Michelene Wandor, op. cit., p. 90:

the collaborative work between individual writers and companies was different from the ensemble work of Joan Littlewood in the 1950s and 1960s; most of the groups were run by performers rather than by artistic directors.

The government subsidies began to be of such a great importance for the survival of the companies that they had to organize themselves to benefit from them. This phenomenon characterizes also the Eighties and now the theatre tends again to be conditioned by the consumeristic circuit to the extent of hindering "revolutionary" expressions with politic and satiric relevance in order to survive. Indeed the radical right ideology proposed in this last period by Thatcher's government puts the new proposals in serious danger.

The state-subsided venues continue to maintain hierarchical structures. On the contrary, in the fringe movement producers and writers also restore different cultural forms derived from traditional genres, such as music-hall or revue, that are more apt to the real world in which the plays appear (23). However, from 1974 on, these

23 The main aims of this new political theatre can be summarized in some points that have as common

groups tend to become more intellectual in their choices. In 1975, the Trades Union Congress decides to give the workers the opportunity to contribute to the theatre expenses (24). Because of this need of suiting their supporters dramatists are to be found looking for a more conventional language that deviate from that of the previous agit-prop (25). They also decide to take their shows in

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characteristic a research for a new system of values, both on the part of the actors and on the audience. Salvatore Maiorana, op. cit., p. 21:

il "fringe" politico si opponeva alle norme, alle categorie, agli obiettivi del teatro convenzionale o teatro borghese. La diversità tra i due tipi di teatro riguardano: 1) la stessa "funzione" di teatro all'interno della società; 2) il "linguaggio" teatrale; 3) il tipo di rapporto con il pubblico; 4) il diverso uso dello spazio scenico; 5) la diversa gestione dei mezzi della produzione e le forme dei processi produttivi (per esempio l'organizzazione del lavoro, i rapporti di produzione).

24 For a report of the main events regarding political theatre in England, from 1968 on, with particular attention to the laws and proposals for it, see Theodore Shank, op. cit., pp. 121-140.

25 This term is used to define the political theatre which aims to change things in society. The word derives from Lenin's definition of a theatre whose aims are "agitation" and "propaganda".

other towns different from London, which had always been the centre of all the movements. This change of spaces interests the structure of the plays that first of all turn the stereotypes into more definite individuals in order to make those people who are presumably less literate or not used to the theatre circuit understand the plays more easily (26). Also the audience have changed: there are many more students and politically committed people than at the time of the utopical and logorrheic protest of Look Back in Anger and "its" movement. Moreover, this influences the structure of the theatrical space that must answer to new requests.

It is worth noticing that the political theatre worked out inside the establishment structure faces a different

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26 Theodore Shank, op. cit., p. 132:

il pubblico è [...] strappato bruscamente al mondo fittizio e portato ad analizzare l'azione appena presentata o a cercare la contraddizione in ciò che sta per essere mostrato.

relationship with its audience because this latter's approval is assured. Outside this circuit the company must look for an approval which can also be denied.

Nowadays to find the fixed role of the author turned upside down is more and more common. The final staging of a play tends to be a collective work: the producer, the author and the actors work together.

The English theatrical experiences of this last century shed light upon the criticism of Fo and of Fo's works in this country. The English audience and critics understand Fo by comparing him to their own traditions.

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#### 4. 2: Dario Fo and the English theatre

Fo considers ideological commitment to be the base of his theatre but on the contrary it must be noticed that the British performances of his plays are in great part opportunistic. He is considered to be an actor for a bourgeois venue. This happens because of the British presumed lack of collective political motivations.

On the one hand, Fo criticizes the British Left intellectuals because of their cult of a working class that they think is lacking a culture. On the other hand, British intellectuals criticize Fo's anti-intellectualism.

The model of reception -- for the so-called phenomenon of co-optation (27) -- in British culture, which Fo is most of the times compared to is that of the comedy-of-manners

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27 In literature co-optation means the act of considering a foreign writer as part of the literary tradition of a country by comparing him to already existing national models.

playwright, as if he were a new Orton (28) -- for his witty social satire against the injustice of institutions.

The translations of Fo's works have deeply changed the original scripts by cutting a large number of long speeches, turning them into comic gags and consequently by destroying the fine balance between serious and comic hints. However, Orton was different from Fo because he tended to go "beyond satire to imaginative subversion" (29). But the most

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28 Joe Orton was born in 1933 and was killed by his cohabitant in 1967. His first short stories deal with homosexual problems. His following works for the theatre deal with satire and grotesque vividness of sexuality, solitude and in general the tremendous fight to survive. Their characteristic is a network of cues that follow each other in rapid succession to obtain an exaggeration of the genre of vaudeville. Two famous works are Entertaining Mr Sloane and Loots. In this last play there is also a similar episode to what happen to the Matto in Accidental Death of an Anarchist: a false eye falls out to a character and the others have great fun in finding it. On Orton's plays and their challenging of tradition, see Martin Esslin, "Joe Orton: the Comedy of (Ill) Manners", in C. W. E. Bigsby, ed., Contemporary English Drama, cit., pp. 94-107.

29 Michelene Wandor, op. cit., p. 57. Moreover, his use of parody appears void of a valid aim. See Martin Esslin, op. cit., in C. W. E. Bigsby, Contemporary English Drama, cit., p. 102:

regretful thing is that from this interpretation come many misconceptions and also the belief of Fo's terrorism (30).

However, Fo is not sophisticated in his language and structure. His scripts are as complex as the society which he refers to; the symbols Fo uses belong to the system of close codes of his society: this is his ethnocentrism (31). The impossibility to translate or only rightly define Fo's

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Orton uses a device which has a long tradition in one of the minor bye-ways of literature: parody. [...] Orton [...] uses mock Biblical language to convey a banal sentiment.

30 David Hirst, Dario Fo and Franca Rame, London, Macmillan, 1989, p. 49-50.

31 Vittorio Felaco, "Notes on the Text and Performance in the Theatre of Dario Fo", in Michael Herzfeld and Margot D. Lenhart, eds., Semiotics 1980, New York and London, Plenum Press, 1982, pp. 136-137:

the "bundle of relations" which characterize the subtext of Fo's works [...] are best described with the "deep structure" of the etnopoetic canon [...] (the bundle of relationships of the non-formal parts of the literary whole) [...] can only be defined in terms of conflict and class struggle [...] his work is thus dialectical.

style comes also from this. His language as such survives only with him, and especially his grammelot: his "idiolect" (32).

Fo's renouncing to accept established values as such, makes British critics compare him to Edward Bond and the epic theatre (33). Moreover, Bond is known for his socialist commitment and his work for the low classes' better life, that have much in common with Fo's experience.

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32 Roman Jakobson, Saggi di linguistica generale, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1986, p. 33: "il modo di parlare di un singolo individuo in un dato momento, cioè l'idioletto".

33 David Hirst, Dario Fo, cit., pp. 40-41:

it is because Fo -- like Edward Bond -- does not accept traditional values (either of the establishment or of established Marxist theory) but rather is concerned to put speculation and theory to the test that he lives out in the theatre Gramsci's fundamental approach to discovering a valid -- because practical -- Marxism. His dramas, and particularly his farces, are an equivalent of Bond's extension of epic theatre into an area where the play is capable of "Dramatizing the analysis".

Bond, in his Lear, uses the figure of the fool, the Gravedigger's Boy, to discuss the value of the established and institutionalized world of the King: morality is made practical. Lear resists to the truth presented to him as such but he is not able to withstand the vision of much more impressive fantastic images. It is similar to the Matto's dramatizing the accidental death of the anarchist in front of the police officers, then pushed to act the same and stopped when they are on the point of throwing themselves from the window. In Lear the Boy is also Edgar of Shakespeare's King Lear -- the play to which Bond refers --: the symbol of the man rejected from society because of his mental disease.

The history of the nation gives significance to the criticism made in the play: Bond's is an epic theatre as Brecht proposed it should be. It is an objective discussion of what people experience in their lives. The hero of the

play is the link between the episodes he passes through. However, the idea of the group has been lost and the world of Bond's play is made only of individuals closed in their self-centredness. Theatre has the duty to teach what the state, school and church are no longer able to and in this the link with Fo's is undeniable (34) Bond, indeed, renounces the theatre as entertainment void of any meaning for its audience (35).

34 Patricia Hern, "Epic/Rational Theatre", in Edward Bond, Lear, London, Methuen, 1983, p. XIX:

(Bond's) conviction that every response is political (in that every response is governed by the individual's relationship to his society) springs from a dramatically powerful conception of the continuous interaction of thought and feeling, reason and emotion, of the outside world and the individual's inner life.

35 Ibidem., p. XII:

the theatre -- even though it at present operates largely within a system of state subsidy and commercial enterprise and so might therefore be suspect -- can offer a platform for protest. It can vividly reinterpret the political and economic processes underlying our history, our traditions, our culture and our

Fo's link to the political situation is difficult to be captured in translation because the play must face a different environment, and seems to turn it into a comforting celebration.

Fo's theatre has been considered a unique phenomenon and, while forgetting Joan Littlewood's experience, similar ways of making theatre seem not to be remembered to have been put into practice in Britain (36).

Moreover, Fo has also been compared to Stoppard because of this wish to deal with daily life and real

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life-style. Art, especially the theatre, in other words, is not to be seen as an ornamental and essentially frivolous retreat from the soul-destroying business of living, nor as an elaborate, self-justifying distraction for aesthetes and intellectuals, nor as a complacent celebration of contemporary civilisation.

36 On the contrary many new "experiments" were tempted. For example, from Littlewood's theatrical experience come out many authors who continue to put into practice what they have learnt. As far as the "new" way of acting a famous exponent is Clive Barker, who wrote a book on the method he developed while working with her: Clive Barker, Theatre Games, London, Methuen, 1982, first edition 1977.

problems (37). However, the list can continue with names of artists that tried to stick to real life in their works, but it must always be remembered that Fo has his personal development and that no contact with English artists can be proved.

Without doubt, in Italy Fo's influence has changed from the powerful one of the Fifties and Sixties, but in general this is a period of ebb tide (38). Something

37 Benedict Nightingale, "Calls-to-Arms", New Statesman, IC, No. 2556, 14 March 1980, p. 405:

we listen to the cross-examination of Fo's villains for some of the same reasons we listen to the arguments in a Stoppard play, because we are ribbed and jollied into doing so; and the cross-examination has real content.

38 Stefano De Matteis, Martina Lombardi and Marilea Somarè, eds., Follie del varietà. Vicende Memorie Personaggi. 1890-1970, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1980, p. 359:

il decennio va distinto tra una prima metà, ancora aperta alle speranze di rinnovamento sociale e culturale del '68 e '69, e una seconda metà, di sconfitta, ripiegamento, disillusione.

similar has happened in England and John Osborne pointed it out in his plays (39). However, on the one hand for Fo is different, his theatre being not an individual experience but on the contrary one of a community, whose values are well defined. On the other hand, Osborne's topicality has become commercial and today its value can be defined only in terms of social resonance. Look Back in Anger was undoubtedly very relevant sociologically but the reasons of its enormous success should probably be looked for, beyond the work itself, in the characteristics of the audience of the Fifties.

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39 John Osborne, Look Back in Anger, Milano, Arnoldo Mondadori, 1986, p. 132, Jimmy Porter says: "there just aren't any good, brave cause left".

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX: INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

### Appendix 1: Introduction

The first time I met Dario Fo was on February 23, 1991 at the Teatro La Pergola in Florence. On that occasion his last play Zitti, stiamo precipitando was on the programme. That was an informal encounter and I let him know about my study on Accidental Death of an Anarchist in England which he was very glad of. He made some considerations on the stagings that he had the opportunity to see in London, and on the fact that he considers the play one of the most important of his repertory.

Later, I contacted him for a summary interview to be inserted at the end of my work. Its aim is to focus with the author some important points of the play and its success in England and all over the world.

Dario Fo is one of the most famous Italian playwright-director-scene designers still at work as writer, director and actor after such a long career. The opportunity to ask him his personal opinion on a matter which is still topical nowadays after more than twenty years from the first night, has revealed itself to be unique: it is rare to the point of being unique to discuss the importance and the great success of a work with the author in person and to find him still committed more than ever with a theatre of real life when the trend of contemporary theatre is towards staging well-known and successful classics. Dario Fo, on the contrary, represents his theatre with his person and his deeds, even in his private life.

I have eventually met him on May 11, 1991 in Milan. He has been very kind to find the time to see me and to answer all my questions, because he is always at work with new plays or re-stagings of old ones.

In the interview he states once again his belief in the value of Accidental Death of an Anarchist as a denunciation of the institutions and of their violence. He realizes that the contemporary theatre does not offer many occasions to think about what really happens in the world and that this play can be an incentive to make people think over.

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## Appendix 1. 1: Interview with Dario Fo

1) Question: Morte accidentale di un anarchico fino ad oggi è stata rappresentata in più di quaranta paesi di tutto il mondo, quale lei pensa sia il motivo di questo successo?

Dario Fo: Credo che sia prima di tutto il fatto che si prende a carico un fatto realmente avvenuto e che si sente mentre si recita. Il pubblico lo sente mentre gli attori recitano, che si tratta di qualcosa che ha un fondamento diretto sulla realtà. Che le battute dei giudici, le loro sentenze, le loro escamotages, le loro ipocrisie, la polizia eccetera eccetera, sono reali. E siccome la polizia e la giustizia in ogni paese si assomigliano va a finire che strumentalmente Morte accidentale di un anarchico viene usato molte volte (1) specialmente in quei paesi dove si

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1 Dario Fo himself used the text a few years ago, in 1987, because Pinelli's case came again in the limelight, and the text performed its function of finding fault with the deeds of the institutions. In the previous interview, on February 23, he retraces that event:

vuol sottolineare la mancanza di libertà, la mancanza di uno stato che difende i cittadini, la violenza della polizia e degli organi costituiti in genere (2). Per ciò, che so io, a Berlino, al Berlin Ensemble è in repertorio ancora oggi, no, al Deutsch è in repertorio ancora oggi, di Berlino, e poi che so, in Corea, in India, in Israele, con riferimenti ben chiari all'Intifada, è recitato tanto dagli arabi che dagli israeliani. Poi in Sudafrica è stato recitato un sacco di

l'abbiamo ripresa ultimamente a Milano quando c'è stato il tentativo di eliminare la targa di Pinelli in Piazza Fontana. Avevano chiesto alla polizia di toglierla. C'è stata una sollevazione popolare e mi hanno incitato perché mettessi in scena questo lavoro e io l'ho fatto. E' uno degli spettacoli fondamentali del teatro anche come struttura, come chiave, il fatto di ridere della tragedia. Il modo di sottolineare l'orrendo è di ridere.

2 In the previous encounter with the author he spoke about what the play wants to say of the institutions and of their way of dealing with justice:

il gioco della follia, il gioco per cui il potere ad un certo punto viene portato a livello di esasperazione critica nella satira che organizza il matto, i matti sono loro, quelli del potere.

volte ed è ovvio, la polizia in Sudafrica... Ed è molto bella la polizia: in Sudafrica il giudice pazzo era stato recitato da... cioè, in tutta la cosa c'è una bella trovata perché il maniaco è un nero, è un pazzo, un nero, il quale però quando deve fare il giudice si traveste (3), si trucca la faccia completamente di bianco. Si tinge la faccia da bianco e le mani da bianco poi quando fa il vescovo torna invece come vescovo nero. Poi il capo della polizia diventa ancora nero.

E' stato recitato e bloccato anche a Montevideo, lì hanno messi tutti in galera a quel tempo c'erano i Tupamaros. Furono arrestati, tutta la compagnia fu arrestata e portata in galera. E' stato recitato anche in Cile e lì l'allusione è ovvia; è stato recitato in Argentina al tempo dei Desaparecidos. Oggi sono più di quaranta paesi, molti di più. A parte, a Londra, dove è stata recitata per tre anni

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3 Cf. Jean Genet, Les Nègres, 1958.

consecutivi (4). Adesso l'hanno ripresa ancora e la stanno recitando.

2) Question: In Italia, qualcun altro ha portato in scena quest'opera?

Dario Fo: Dei dilettanti ma non li ho visti, non ho visto il gruppo di dilettanti che l'ha realizzato, non ho fatto in tempo ad andarli a vedere.

3) Question: E per quanto riguarda la traducibilità dell'opera?

Dario Fo: E' stato tradotto in alcuni casi in modo stupendo, alcune volte hanno caricato un po' sul grottesco(5). Per esempio ultimamente in questa di Londra

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4 The play is known to remain on the programme at the West End for two years.

5 In the previous interview about Gavin Richards' production in 1980, he said:

hanno inserito tutta la scena che riguarda la loro ingiustizia terribile compiuta contro dei presunti terroristi che poi si sono rivelati essere tutti innocenti. Sono stati torturati, sono stati picchiati, hanno dovuto dire di essere colpevoli per evitare di essere massacrati.

4) Question: Passiamo al teatro inglese. Il teatro comico inglese contemporaneo è giustamente diverso da quello italiano perché deriva da una diversa tradizione; però le sue opere hanno in quel paese un grande successo. Pensa abbiano dovuto essere adattate al nuovo ambiente o pensa che tutto fosse già nel testo?

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io ho visto solo una volta lo spettacolo, mi ha impressionato... La prima edizione non è che mi piacesse molto, anzi, ho litigato con Gavin perché caricava l'effetto, non era totalmente corretto nel sottolineare la tragicità. Cosa succedeva, che caricava... in alcuni casi, caricava giusto e c'era una specie di pantomima.

Dario Fo: Ma... io credo che in questo caso non bisogna eccedere sul discorso dell'umorismo. I contatti fra l'umorismo inglese e quello francese e il nostro sono antichi. Non bisogna dimenticare che Swift l'abbiamo letto tutti. E abbiamo letto Pope e letto tutti gli altri autori... Poi i film, la possibilità di comunicazione incredibile che ci permettono i film, la televisione. Quindi pian piano cosa succede: che certi elementi legati al modo di recepire l'umorismo si intrecciano. Diciamo che la forma importante non è soltanto legata all'umorismo, è la satira che è qualcosa di più del normale umorismo. Nella satira difficilmente si cade in questo gioco del fine a se stesso, perché tutto è impregnato da una chiave, dalla tragedia. La satira, l'abbiamo già detto l'altra volta (6), nasce dalla tragedia. A differenza, così, dal pagliaccesco che nasce dal melodramma. Sono due elementi fondamentali di discordanza. E

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6 Fo refers to the previous interview in Florence.

questo è quello che unisce molto di più, che determina il carattere di comprensione del gioco ironico.

5) Question: E il teatro politico inglese, pensa che anch'esso sia profondamente diverso da quello italiano?

Dario Fo: Io ho visto delle cose loro. Prima di tutto facciamo attenzione: non facciamo confusione fra teatro partitico o di gruppo partitico o politico nel senso che è legato al sostegno di un'ideologia piuttosto che dell'altra o via dicendo. No, io quando parlo di politico parlo del problema della socialità, della presa di coscienza contro l'abnormità. Senza particolarmente dover essere, così, il portavoce battente di una certa posizione politica particolare. Così come non lo era l'Anarchico. Qualcuno l'ha interpretato pensando addirittura che io fossi anarchico dal momento che ho fatto questo spettacolo. O che fossi un ex-comunista quando ho fatto l'altro spettacolo che ha per

titolo Non si paga! Non si paga!. Allora voglio dire: non esiste il discorso delle differenze. Poi dipende dalla lettura che tu fai. Io ho fatto Molière ultimamente e mi è venuto naturale farlo attraverso quelle che sono le mie conoscenze del comico, e ho usato la commedia dell'arte perché mi è consona. Ho notato che lui evidentemente l'aveva usata a mani piene e infatti collimava tutto preciso. Come un esercizio geometrico-politico.

6) Question: Nel 1980 lei ha dichiarato (7) che la sinistra inglese ha un'idea diversa dalla sua di classe operaia e della cultura ad essa propria. In che senso? Pensa che la situazione sia ancora la stessa?

Dario Fo: Diciamo che loro hanno usato a piè pari il comunismo come forma, e la loro classe operaia è piuttosto socialdemocratica con degli accenni molto forti. Loro hanno

7 Cf. Interview with Catherine Itzin in London in 1980, Tribune, March 14, 1980.

avuto anche loro delle lotte straordinarie. I loro sindacati hanno una grande tradizione. Mentre i nostri movimenti sono legati anche alla vita dei contadini, a grandi manifestazioni regionali che sono partite addirittura dagli scariolanti, le mondine e il fenomeno delle occupazioni delle terre. Da loro questo fenomeno non c'è, non esiste. Esiste solo con i minatori, con le filande, ma sono altre direzioni. E poi è la cultura di fondo, la cultura base che è differente e quindi diverso è il modo di concepirla. Anche il lazzo, l'ironia, il grottesco, le zannate come si chiamano. Non bisogna dimenticare poi l'altro aspetto: noi siamo dei cattolici e loro sono sì dei cattolici ma del tutto particolari poi inficiati da tutto il quacquerismo, il presbiterianesimo, un'idea del rapporto fra successo, denaro e anima molto particolare. Noi siamo dei pagani, fondamentalmente il nostro cristianesimo è intriso di paganesimo: il gioco dei santi che non sono altro che gli

dei, i miracoli e i riti sono tutti legati... e quindi questo fa cambiare molto il nostro modo di vivere, di parlare, il linguaggio, la struttura.

7) Question: Lei, come autore di Morte accidentale di un anarchico, come considera i testi in inglese che hanno liberamente adattato molte parti cambiandone perfino la struttura, si considera ancora l'autore di quei testi, come *l'autore di quei testi* del resto il pubblico inglese pensa?

Dario Fo: Certo, certo, perché la struttura non è stata cambiata... ma la sovrastruttura che molta volte diventa struttura. Ma poi i personaggi rimangono quelli, si sono inseriti dei brani, delle finestre. E' diverso, non è stata cambiata in generale e quindi l'andamento del testo non soltanto è stato rispettato, a mio avviso, ma è stato sollecitato ad essere vivo perché se avessero fatto direttamente quello che è scritto fregandosi di trasporre la

dimensione italica in quella britannica, o quella tedesca o quella svedese e via dicendo...

8) Question: Qual è il suo rapporto di autore con le sue opere?

Dario Fo: Io non mi sgancio mai dalla totalità, voglio dire non riesco a sganciarmi dall'essere attore-capocomico-scenografo-regista. Per me è tutt'uno. Anche quando ragiono su un testo di un altro ragiono sempre come se fossi io l'autore, lo scenografo, anche quando non lo faccio lo scenografo. Non è che invado gli altri ma insomma cerco di chiudere il cerchio, di legarlo e portarmelo appresso.

9) Question: E il suo rapporto di autore con gli altri autori italiani?

Dario Fo: E' difficile perché non ci troviamo. C'è della gente con la quale mi incontro, parlo, discuto e

quindi c'è dello scambio. Ma non è profondo, non è un lavoro... Non si riesce più a creare insieme. Io ho degli amici, tra cui per esempio Benni; con Benni sono molto amico, parliamo, io leggo le sue cose, e si lavora anche, si collabora spesso. Sono molto amico dei giovani, per esempio di Paolo Rossi poi di altri giovani autori che mi scrivono, mi sollecitano.

10) Question: E il suo rapporto da autore, con le sue opere?

Dario Fo: Si può dire uno entra nell'altro. Quando recito metto a posto le cose che ho scritto e viceversa. Mi ricordo della mia voce, dei tempi, dei modi, degli andamenti dell'attore quando scrivo. Non si distinguono mai queste cose... Questo discorso poteva farsi con Eduardo, era lo stesso.

11) Question: E con gli altri attori italiani?

Dario Fo: Qualche amico, qualcuno, poco, ma c'è.

Capisci, la nostra esperienza, la mia e quella di Franca, è così fuori dalla chiave, dagli interessi. Insomma, quest'anno c'è stato il problema della guerra e io facevo quarantacinque minuti di introduzione sulla guerra, parlavo della guerra. Ho addirittura buttato all'aria un testo che funzionava perché avevo bisogno di entrare in merito a questo fatto. Ma gli altri, nessuno ha fatto questo.

Capisci, non è che io dico, ah voi pensate soltanto alla struttura della vostra scena e non ve ne frega niente di quello che succede nel mondo. In fondo è la verità, è così. E' un teatro che io insomma detesto questo qua: del fare un lavoro, non importa quale basta che ci sia una bella parte, che al pubblico piaccia, non si sa come ma piaccia. Pensa a quel che succede ora a Milano. C'è Gaber, che inquieta l'establishment anche se fa Aspettando Godot ma ci dà

dentro, ci pesta. Gaber e Jannacci. Noi che siamo qui. Rossi che sta facendo un lavoro. Altri gruppi di giovani autori... ed è l'unico teatro che si muova, di cui la gente affolla la platea.

12) Question: Da attore, come pensa che gli attori inglesi abbiano messo in scena la sua opera?

Dario Fo: Quest'ultima messa in scena a me è piaciuta molto. L'altra era piena di verve, un po' caricata, un po' troppo sopra le righe, era meno drammatica in fondo. Perché l'importante è che nel gioco del comico, nel ridere, rimanga sempre l'indignazione, si solleciti l'intervento da parte del pubblico nella chiave. I primi erano un po' troppo sopra le righe, ma funzionava, erano bravi, facevano arrivare il discorso. Questi altri li preferisco, insomma, si ride lo stesso (8).

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8 On the latest edition of 1991 he also said, in Florence, :

13) Question: I copioni del 1980 e quest'ultimo del 1991 vedono nel loro cast il regista o uno degli adattatori, che in questo caso è anche autore se consideriamo i cambiamenti apportati al testo, interpreti del ruolo principale: questo rispecchia la sua esperienza di autore-attore-regista. Pensa che ciò possa influire sulla stessa messa in scena?

Dario Fo: Positivamente, sicuramente. Quando uno è dentro... Poi io gliel'ho detto quando sono andato là, che mi hanno detto questa cosa con molto timore, pudore, pensando che io fossi il solito autore... Ma io gli ho detto: avete fatto benissimo, è quello che dovevate fare. Bisogna sempre reinventare, ritrovare il nuovo. Aristofane

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quest'ultima è più fedele: parte tutta uguale ma poi ha una rielaborazione centrale. C'è questo ragazzo [Alan Cumming] di ventisei ventisette anni, con una grinta e una forza eccezionali.

quando gli è capitato una volta di rifare Le rane, mi pare, l'ha riscritta.

14) Question: Pensa che il suo modo di recitare, il suo rappresentare nella sua stessa persona l'opera da lei scritta, sia destinata a rimanere un'esperienza irripetibile, e che quindi le sue opere perdano qualcosa senza di lei?

Dario Fo: Ma no, non necessariamente. Ho visto degli attori straordinari che recitavano le mie cose: perfetti veramente, anzi certi pezzi erano migliori. Sì, alcuni hanno fatto delle cose eccezionali. Ho visto l'edizione di Clacson, trombette e pernacchi in Scozia, era buona, anche come regia, come ritmo, la gente moriva... sono stati su due anni.

15) Question: Morte accidentale di un anarchico in Inghilterra è stata interpretata anche come un testo di propaganda, pensa che i valori che lei voleva proporre con essa siano stati fraintesi? e perché?

Dario Fo: Di propaganda hai detto? Ah la critica, sono i conservatori che dicono questa cosa qui. In tutti i paesi pensano che denunciare la polizia sia una cosa che non si debba fare. Lo dicevano per Bernard Shaw. Bernard Shaw è stato accusato di far propaganda ai partiti, al partito della classe operaia perché faceva i discorsi nell'autocensura. Ci sono delle commedie che lui non è riuscito da vivo a mettere in scena: sono state messe in scena quando lui era morto.

16) Question: C'è qualche domanda che avrebbe voluto le facessi su Morte accidentale di un anarchico e che non le ho fatto?

Dario Fo: Ma... Per esempio se si può continuare lo stesso discorso oggi come oggi in vista di quello che sta succedendo al processo Sofri (9) e senz'altro il grottesco continua, basta leggersi questo libro di Ginsburg. Io poi sono andato al dibattito che c'è stato sul libro, ed è impressionante la quantità di riferimenti che si possono ritrovare a proposito di quello che è saltato fuori. Cioè, siamo ancora, di nuovo, al paradosso, al paradosso del giudice che non ha nessun pudore ad esprimere concetti, a sotterrare... La forma più grottesca, farsesca che ci possa essere: la mancanza di pudore che rasenta sempre il clown perché non hanno senso umoristico, che se dicendo una cosa si rendessero conto, si mettessero a ridere, subito si renderebbero conto della orrenda storia che cercano di portare avanti. C'è la mistificazione proprio bieca. Come

9 Adriano Sofri has been accused of the murder of Inspector Luigi Calabresi -- on 17 May 1972 --, who was present when Giuseppe Pinelli accidentally fell from the window of the Police headquarters in December 1969. Sofri is still awaiting a "definitive" trial

sempre quando il potere ostenta presunzione, che sente le spalle coperte allora non ha limiti, non ha misura, e la mancanza di misura diventa ridicolo.

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## **Appendix 2: Introduction**

On the occasion of meeting Dario Fo on May 11, 1991, I have had the opportunity to ask some questions to Franca Rame, his wife. They have always shared their profession and their commitment for people needing a culture as well as financial aid. However, Franca Rame has also developed her own artistic skill and has performed her own texts, which are famous all over the world together with those of his husband.

In my study she has been cited for her commitment with the problems of prisoners for political offences and her group Soccorso Rosso. That organization was born from a direct experience she had of the imprisonment of her friends' son. In a short time the phenomenon reached such a wide spread that she had no time for her artistic work. The group had to be disbanded but she still puts herself at the disposal of people in need whenever she can.

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## **Appendix 2. 1: Interview with Franca Rame**

1) Question: Cosa pensa dell'attualità dei testi scritti da suo marito Dario Fo, che vengono rappresentati in tutto il mondo?

Franca Rame: Io penso che sono testi per molte cose, per molti versi ancora attuali e si tratta di prenderli, riprenderli in mano e magari metterci dentro cose nuove. Perché il discorso è che questi testi e tutto il teatro di Dario è rappresentato in tutto il mondo, vuol dire che gli argomenti sono veri e attuali.

2) Question. Può parlare della sua esperienza con Soccorso Rosso?

Franca Rame: E' un discorso lungo, sintetizzo. Diciamo che la tensione di fare degli spettacoli per questa cosa o per l'altra cosa, il fatto di avere i biglietti per gli operai con grosse riduzioni, era abituale per la compagnia di Dario e me. Soccorso rosso nasce esattamente un giorno che è arrivata la bambinaia di mio figlio, la vecchia bambinaia di mio figlio, piangente, perché avevano arrestato suo figlio ad una manifestazione a Firenze. Avevano

arrestato questo ragazzo più altri sette otto ragazzi ad una manifestazione fascista: erano andati ad ascoltare un comizio di fascisti. Quindi questa donna era sconvolta e stravolta e mi ha talmente coinvolto perché erano tutti figli di proletari, non c'era nessun figlio di principi o di duchi e di getto, alla gente in platea, ho raccontato questa storia come la racconto adesso e dico: chi di voi vuol mandare due righe di solidarietà o mille lire, eccetera, si faccia vivo. Alla fine dello spettacolo fa conto che saranno venute quattro persone alle quali ho dato l'indirizzo di questi ragazzi. Poi l'annuncio l'ho fatto ogni sera e nel giro di, adesso non mi ricordo più se di due mesi o forse erano tre mesi, eravamo in diecimila. Per cui è stata una cosa... Con diecimila persone cosa succede, che ti trasferivano dal carcere di Milano a che so io, Poggibonsi o Messina, tu arrivavi a Messina e trovavi già il compagno o la compagna che ti facevano trovare il pacco, che ti

trovavano l'avvocato e che ti davano diecimila lire... E' stata una bella storia... però è costata qualcosa magari sul piano del lavoro. Quando andavo in scena era l'unico momento in cui non c'avessi una madre che mi dicesse: per favore hanno arrestato mio figlio, cosa devo fare per trovarmi l'avvocato, l'hanno trasferito, chiami i Ministeri, eccetera. Però è stata una bella storia.

3) Question: Avete avuto molti problemi con le istituzioni?

Franca Rame: No, sai, fino ad un certo punto perché cosa vuoi, il fatto di essere così in tanti... poi noi avevamo grandi platee. Che so, eravamo a Bologna al Palazzetto dello Sport e c'erano settemila persone. Quando hanno tentato di arrestarci c'è stata una mobilitazione a Milano... Era un periodo di totale fantasia. Il fatto di Soccorso Rosso poi, non è che ci abbiano fatto qualcosa,

hanno tentato molto, ma ripeto, per questo seguito di opinione pubblica e di mobilitazione era difficile perché poi di illegale non c'era niente. Poi sai è vero che se avessero voluto appiopparci qualcosa ce l'avrebbero appioppata perché bastava che due pentiti dicessero qualcosa e venivano creduti. Ma nessuno per fortuna ci ha tirato dentro in nessuna storia. Comunque alla fine erano più di ottocento i detenuti di cui mi occupavo perché c'erano i detenuti per reati politici e poi c'erano i detenuti per reati comuni che avevano acquisito una coscienza di classe. Sono quelle parole che non posso più dire: acquistare una coscienza di classe in carcere, a contatto con i politici, però non so trovare altre parole.

4) Question: Pensa di ricominciare con un'iniziativa sulle carceri?

Franca Rame: Ho smesso, ma tutte le volte che serve qualcosa: un trasferimento, centomila lire, una macchina da scrivere, mi muovo; però è proprio diverso il momento politico. Mi occupo di aids, di bambini violentati, poi se tu hai la voglia e la passione di occuparti di questi problemi sociali ne trovi dieci al giorno, devi soltanto scegliere, hai diecimila cose da fare.

5) Question: I vostri rapporti con il teatro italiano?

Franca Rame: Diciamo che sicuramente uno come Dario non può passare nel panorama del teatro italiano soprattutto come scrittore e anche come attore, per le doti molto grosse che lui ha, così, senza lasciare niente. C'è tanta gente che fa pezzi nostri, specialmente giovani ma non ne abbiamo visti. Questi legami, queste influenze si scopriranno più avanti quando saremo morti. Ma tanta gente fa testi nostri, soprattutto dilettanti, però bisogna vedere come li fanno,

come crescono, che possibilità hanno. Ti ripeto, non hanno spazio in Italia, non hanno spazio.

6) Question: Dove vede la maggior differenza tra il vostro teatro del cosiddetto periodo borghese e quello di oggi?

Franca Rame: La dolce ingenua del periodo borghese... sono queste etichette che ti dà la stampa perché io la dolce ingenua del periodo borghese non so cos'è. Non so nemmeno che significato possa avere il periodo borghese perché Dario quando ha scritto Il dito nell'occhio e Sani da legare erano spettacoli che apparivano nelle liste davanti alle chiese dove c'erano gli spettacoli sconsigliati e tra quelli c'eravamo sempre noi... Bisogna dire una cosa diversa: il periodo di maggior censura. Allora c'era la censura, ti capitava che la sera prima del debutto ti trovavi in platea tre tipi vestiti di nero... con il copione in mano che ti

facevano fare lo spettacolo dicendo questo no, questo no, questo no... anche quelle cose più che innocenti. Allora dovevi cambiare. E noi ci siamo ribellati e abbiamo detto: o voi ci pagate le prove per due mesi o noi si va in scena e i tagli non li facciamo perché non siamo in grado di ristrutturare questo spettacolo... Però all'interno di quello che è chiamato il teatro borghese era la struttura che era vecchia: i testi erano quelli ed erano tempi in cui non si poteva parlare... o accettavi questo o non trovavi teatri che ti facessero lavorare.

7) Question: Ora i meccanismi della censura sono più subdoli?

Franca Rame: La satira politica che fanno adesso non è satira politica, è qualunquismo. Il fatto che ci sia un modo subdolo di boicottare uno spettacolo se è centrato sulla satira politica e sociale è chiaro, però attenzione, gli

anni sono passati. Vale a dire, il signore qui presente è l'autore più rappresentato in assoluto nel mondo e uno che non ha mai fatto cilecca, uno che ha un grosso seguito di pubblico e quindi le strutture cosa devono fare: siccome i tempi sono cambiati, ti accettano perché sanno che riempi i teatri e che la gente va via contenta. Sono loro che semmai hanno chinato un pochino la testa... Ci hanno boicottato per una vita, sono tre quattro anni che ci permettono di recitare nei loro teatri. Vent'anni siamo rimasti fuori. Io sono tornata in un teatro E.T.I., Ente Teatrale Italiano, nell'87. Lo scontro politico in qualche modo si è attenuato, in generale nel paese si è attenuato e quindi è tutto un po' più facilitato: siamo la compagnia che ha meno sovvenzioni d'Italia però grazie a Dio abbiamo sempre i teatri pieni.

8) Morte accidentale di un anarchico, le sue esperienze riguardo a quest'opera?

Franca Rame: Prima di tutto, l'Anarchico, diciamo, è stato un grosso servizio per Valpreda. Poi, con questo testo abbiamo raccolto spessissimo i nostri soldi dell'incasso per gli avvocati, per i famigliari, eccetera. Avevamo un grosso collegamento con la madre di Valpreda e poi è un testo di grande denuncia e farlo oggi è uno scherzo però fatto oggi in, che so io, in Sudafrica è uno scherzo diverso o in Cile come l'hanno fatto. Per me è uno dei più bei testi di Dario. Questo di Londra, bello, l'hanno stretto e poi hanno tolto cose che erano troppo legate all'Italia. E' un grosso testo e pensare che regge tutti questi anni. Anche gente informata, che seguiva la politica ridevano per delle cose, come il fatto delle tre scarpe e si diceva: guardate che è tutto vero, è scientifico. Sono inventati i personaggi ma solo fino ad un certo punto. Il personaggio principale è inventato però la storia è quella che è, come è uscita dalle ricerche che abbiamo fatto, che ha fatto Dario.

9) Question: Le sarebbe piaciuto recitare una parte nell'opera, c'è solo una parte femminile, quella della Giornalista?

Franca Rame: Assolutamente, non l'ho voluto fare io, nessuno me lo avrebbe impedito. E' una parte troppo piccola che non mi interessa. Stavo facendo qualcos'altro. Avevo uno spettacolo mio. Comunque quel personaggio non è che mi interessasse, la Cederna.

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Cumming and Tim Supple, London, Methuen, 1991.

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## Books

Dario Fo and Franca Rame, Dario Fo and Franca Rame Theatre Workshops at Riverside Studios, London, 26th April, 5th, 12nd, 13rd, and 19th May 1983, London, Red Notes, 1983. This book reports Fo's workshop in London in 1983. He answers questions put by students come to the Riverside Studios. He also gives examples of miming and acting, even together with volunteers. He analyses peculiar characteristics of his art and resolves the doubts of his foreign spectators that have just had the opportunity to see his play Accidental Death of an Anarchist staged in London. The book also includes the texts of Franca Rame's Waking Up, I Don't Move, I Doon't Scream, My voice Is Gone and The Mother. Moreover Franca Rame has her own workshop on women's acting of political texts and she acts some pieces from the texts published in this book.

\_\_\_\_\_, Dialogo provocatorio sul comico, il tragico, la follia e la ragione, with Luigi Allegrì, Bari, Laterza, 1990. Dario Fo is interviewed by Luigi Ballerini on all the most important aspects of his theatrical career. Fo explains what he has inherited from the various popular genres and how his theatre has changed from the beginning to the his recent plays.

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### Articles

Fo, Dario, "Dialogue with an Audience", tran. Tony Mitchell, Theatre Quarterly, IX, No. 35, Autumn 1979, pp. 11-16. Fo states his idea of a theatre that must go "to" the audience.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Sandstorm Method", trans. by Peter Caravetta, James Cascito and Lawrence Venuti, Semiotext, III, No. 3, 1980, pp. 214-216. The essay reports some important definitions Fo gives of his idea of a theatre which must raise the mass media and the audience's attention with its attacks.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Popular Culture", tran. Tony Mitchell, Theater, XIV, No. 3, Summer/Fall 1983, pp. 50-54. Fo states his conviction that it must be given voice to the lower classes and to the Left bourgeoisie. Moreover, to make people understand the power of that culture Fo understands he has to go to the roots of it. It is not a mechanical restoration but a process which follows people's needs.

\_\_\_\_\_, "When They Beat Us, We Suffer", Index on Censorship, XIV, No. 1, 1985, p. 59. Fo focuses on some of his and his wife's experiences with censorship at home and abroad. From Franca's kidnapping to the denied entry to the USA.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Aspects of Popular Theatre", tran. Tony Mitchell, New Theatre Quarterly, I, No. 2, May 1985, pp. 204-216. Fo explains why he rejects the definition of his theatre as political, and instead he calls it a popular theatre which depends mainly on situation and not on character. Then he points out the peculiarity of it that lies in its conglobating tradition with a critical consideration of the present situation.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Totò: the Violence of the Marionette and the Mask", tran. Stuart Hood, Theater, Summer/Fall 1987, pp. 6-12. The text is a transcription of Dario Fo's speech and improvisations on Totò's way of acting made in the theatres that saw the great Italian revue and film actor playing: Sala Umberto and Ambra-Jovinelli in Rome. Fo points out Totò's great ability to make his body act, which he admires.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Hand off the Mask", tran. Gail MacDonald, New Theatre Quarterly, V, No. 19, August 1989, pp. 207-209. Fo speaks of the language of masks which derives from conventions born with the Greek theatre.

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### Interviews

Luigi Ballerini and Giuseppe Russo, "Dario Fo Explains", trans. Lauren Hallquist and Fiorenza Weinpple, The Drama Review, XXII, No. 1, March 1978, pp. 34-48. There are reported also some pieces of the comedy Fo was rehearsing at the time of the interview, La Signora è da Buttare (The Lady Has To Be Trown Away). Then Fo is asked to retrace his career from the beginning. He remembers his experience with censorship and other important episodes, such as that with the Piccolo Teatro in Milan.

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Boothman, Derek, "Popular and Political Theatre", Marxism Today, August 1983, pp. 37-39. Fo is asked to talk about his alternative theatre and the difficulty to find supporters for his idea of a dialect theatre as the basis of the Italian one.

Esposito, Antonella, "Dario Fo 'Papa' in attesa delle 'comédie'", Ridotto, III-IV, 1990, pp. 38-40. Fo talks about his last successful play Il papa e la strega and of his acting Molière in Paris. He confirms once again the wish of a theatre at the disposal of the writer as well as of the audience.

Farrell, Joseph, "Women Need their Share of the Limelight", The Scotsman, 27 September 1984, p. 8. After her performance of It's All Bed, Board and Church at the Edinburgh Festival, Rame talks about the women's problems in using the stage as an opportunity for a critical discussion of their life struggles.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Fo and Rame", Plays and Players, No. 405, June 1987, pp. 9-10. This interview was held at the time of Fo and Rame's private separation which seemed to be the moment of the dissolution also of their cultural-political theatrical experience.

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Greenstreet, Rosanna, "The Questionnaire -- Dario Fo", tran. Christopher Cairns, The Weekend Guardian, 16 February 1991. This short exchange of questions and answers is half serious and half comic but reveals Fo's natural gift to be an actor, even in his private life, outside the stage.

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Kellaway, Kate, "Perennial Energy of an Anarchist", The Observer, 30 September 1990. In this article the first impressions on the new staging in Great Britain of Accidental Death of an Anarchist are summarized. One day Fo has been present to the actors' rehearsal and after that he once more realizes the topicality of this play in a foreign country, even after more than twenty years from the first opening.

Mitchell, Tony, "Plotting to Create Mirth", Glasgow Herald, 3 May 1983, p. 4. Fo speaks of his wish not only to make people enjoy their coming to the theatre but also to "educate" them.

Rosemberg, Scott, "Dario Fo, Italy's Political Clown, Pays a Visit", The New York Times, 25 May 1986, p. 4. Fo eventually manages to go to the USA after the episode of the denied visas.

Vaughan, Tom, "Artistic Marriage of Political Drama", Morning Star, 17 May 1982, p. 2. Fo and Rame are briefly interviewed on their theatre before Rame's performance of Female Parts at Riverside Studios, London.

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## SECONDARY SOURCES

### Full-Lenght Studies

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Marina Cappa and Roberto Nepoti, Dario Fo, Roma, Gremese, 1982. After a general introduction on Fo's theatre and biography, the book analyses one after the other Fo's plays to Il fabulazzo osceno (1982). It contains also a great number of photographs of the Italian stagings of the various plays.

Cowan, Suzanne, Dario Fo. Bibliography, Biography, Playography, London, TQ Publication, 1978. This is the first full reference English guide for Fo's works, and it also contains material on and about him. His plays up to La giullarata (1976) are briefly analysed.

Hirst, David, Dario Fo and Franca Rame, London, Macmillan, 1989. Hirst analyses Fo and his relationship with Great Britain, both as far as his way of making theatre and his plays are concerned. The book still presents some misunderstandings of Fo's work. It is the first comprehensive study on this new branch of Fo's celebrity and influence.

Meldolesi, Claudio, Su un comico in rivolta. Dario Fo il bufalo e il bambino, Roma, Bulzoni, 1978. Meldolesi attentively analyses Fo's career from the beginning with the "fables of the lake". Some interventions of the actor on his inheritance from the ancient techniques of the mountebanks and of the workmen with their songs are here reported.

Mitchell, Tony, Dario Fo. People's Court Jester, London, Methuen, 1986. The book traces Fo's experience dividing it in chapters according to the peculiar significance of the successive periods taken into consideration. There is also a section on Fo's plays in Britain and USA.

\_\_\_\_\_, File on Dario Fo, London, Methuen, 1989.

Any of Fo's plays has been summarized and the author also gives some important critics' pieces on each of them.

Puppa, Paolo, Il teatro di Dario Fo. Dalla scena alla piazza, Venezia, Marsilio, 1978. In this book Puppa discusses Dario Fo's plays written from the Fifties to the first half of the Seventies. He follows the evolution of Fo's theatrical art in those years. Fo's choices sometimes present some contradictions but his undeniable great acting skill is always clear. Indeed, Puppa examines not only the plot of the plays but also their stagings.

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Anderlini, Serena, "Franca Rame: Her Life and Works", Theater, XVII, No. 1, Winter 1985, pp. 32-39. In this essay Franca Rame's experiences as an actress as well as a woman are well retraced.

Anderson, Michael, "Dario Fo", in Michael Anderson et als., eds., A Handbook of Contemporary Drama, London, Pitman, 1974, pp. 152-153. Fo's life and works are rapidly reported.

Bently, Eric, "Was This Death Accidental?", Theater, XVI, No. 2, Spring 1985, p. 66. This text has the form of a letter where the author manifests his doubts on the British staging of Accidental Death of an Anarchist. He discusses the deep changes incurred in the plot that comes to be politically meaningless, just, he thinks, because of them.

Bianchi, Ruggero, "La teatralizzazione permanente. Happening proletario e rituale della militanza nel teatro politico di Dario Fo", Biblioteca teatrale, XXI/XXII, 1978, pp. 160-180. Ruggero points out the various stages in which a performance is divided. Fo always looks for his audience's active participation in any moment from the beginning to the end of the performance.

Cairns, Christopher S., "Introduction", in Christopher S. Cairns, ed., The Commedia dell'Arte. From the Renaissance to Dario Fo, Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989, pp. I-X. The author gives a brief summary of the various reports made at the conference on the unbroken tradition of commedia dell'arte from the fifteenth century to Dario Fo, the most famous live representative of this art, held at the Italian Institute in London on 11 and 12 November 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Introduction", in Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1991, pp. XV-XXI. Cairns briefly analyses the structure of the play and focuses on the Madman's function of provoking irony by his reversal of roles.

Cowan, Suzanne, "The Trow-Away Theatre of Dario Fo", The Drama Review, XIX, No. 2, June 1975, pp. 102-113. Cowan discusses Fo's way of making theatre in his group Nuova Scena and, then, in the early years of La Comune. The attention to the actors' physical movement and to their dynamic interaction is the most notable thing in the texts produced in those years. To this must be added the unusual refusal of using great props or equipment.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Dario Fo, Politics and Satire: an Introduction to Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Theater, X, No. 2, Spring 1979, pp. 7-11. Cowan briefly introduces Fo's life experience and the background of the play Accidental Death of an Anarchist. She also gives few details on how she has intended to translate the text.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Dario Fo and Franca Rame", in Franca Rame and Dario Fo, Orgasmo Adulto Escapes From the Zoo, adapt. Estelle Parsons, New York, Broadway Play Publishing Inc., 1988, pp. IV-VII. The author gives a brief outline of Fo and Rame's intellectual experiences.

Dahl, Mary Karen, "State Terror and Dramatic Countermeasures", in John O'Connell and Dragomir Kläic, Terrorism and Modern Drama, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1990, pp. 109-122. Three plays on political repression are compared: Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Ronald Harwood's The Deliberate Death of a Polish Priest, and Athol Fugard's Statements After an Arrest Under Immorality Act. The three texts present astonishing similarities that state the topicality of the problem dealt with.

D'Aponte, Mimi, "From Italian Roots to American Relevance: the Remarkable Theatre of Dario Fo", Modern Drama, XXXII, No. 4, December 1989, pp. 532-544. The author takes into consideration some of the most important Italian actors from whom Fo inherited something of their art, such as Totò, Eduardo De Filippo and also Luigi Pirandello. Then he cites examples of American studies of his works by new companies.

Davis, R.G., "Dario Fo Off-Broadway: the Making of the Left Culture under Adverse Conditions", Theatre Quarterly, X, No. 40, Autumn-Winter 1981, pp. 30-36. Davis was the director of the San Francisco Mime Troup in the Sixties and the director who had the copyright of Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist for North America. Here he takes into consideration some stagings of this play and of Can't Pay? Won't Pay! in USA and Canada.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Seven Anarchists I Have Known: American Approaches to Dario Fo", The Theatre Quarterly, II, No. 8, November 1986, pp. 313-319. Davis states that Accidental Death of an Anarchist is differently accepted in foreign countries mainly because of the political environment in which it opens. If the politics of the play is ignored the audience cannot understand its and its writer's importance.

Emery, Ed, "Dario Fo's Trumpets and Raspberries and the Tradition of Commedia", in Christopher S. Cairns, ed., The Commedia dell'Arte, cit., pp. 330-335. In Fo's play Trumpets and Raspberries, Emery finds features of the Commedia dell'arte such as the mask, the characters, the use of gags and the way power is represented.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Dario Fo -- Zanni and Giullare", in Christopher S. Cairns, ed., The Commedia dell'Arte, cit., pp. 315-329. Farrell sees Fo as a political progressist but also as a theatrical conservative in his adopting in his plays the figure of the zanni-giullare since 1968. Fo rescues the value of entertainment as denunciation.

Felaco, Vittorio, "Notes on the Text and Performance in the Theatre of Dario Fo", in Michael Herzfeld and Margot D. Lehnhart, eds., Semiotics 1980, New York and London, Plenum Press, 1982, pp. 131-141. Felaco thinks that socio-semiotics can help to analyse Fo's works as for some crucial points. Indeed, he sees the social situation dealt with by Fo at the basis of the symbolical system considered by socio-semiotics. In Fo literary and situation theatre live together.

\_\_\_\_\_, "New Teeth for an Old Shark", in John Fuegi et al., eds., Beyond Brecht: Brecht Yearbook Vol. XI, 1982, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1983, pp. 57-71. Fo's popularity is considered to be a consequence of his interest in the perspective of the ordinary people. Political theatre is not inferior to the institutionalized one. Felaco also sees that Fo goes beyond Brecht, who can be considered one of his teachers.

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Hood, Stuart, "Introduction", in Dario Fo, Accidental Death, cit., 1987, pp. VII-XIV. Hood briefly retraces Fo's career from the beginning in revue, then the leaving of the national television and the breaking with PCI (Italian Communist Party). The author also underlines Fo's plays characteristic power of waking up anger in their audience.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Open Texts: Some Problems in the Editing and Translating of Dario Fo", in Christopher S. Cairns, ed., The Commedia dell'Arte, cit., pp. 336-352. Hood points out some problems in editing Fo's works that come from his open texts which follow the evolution of the situation. Then, the quarrel on language between Fo and Pasolini in the Seventies is here analysed.

Jenkins, Ron, "Dario Fo. The Roar of the Clown", The Drama Review, XXX, No. 1, Spring 1986, pp. 171-179. This essay is on Mistero Buffo and The Story of the Tiger. Jenkins considers Fo's montage, his skill in involving his audience in his political poetry.

Meldolesi, Claudio, "Dario Fo, l'attore come persona della 'tradizione orale'", Quaderni di Teatro, I, No. 3, February 1979, pp. 72-84. Meldolesi introduces an essay written by Fo on Bonvesin da la Riva's Disputatio mensium. He states Fo's skill in being the actor who rescues the ancient oral tradition still present in the contemporary one.

Mignone, Mario B., "Dario Fo Jester of the Italian Stage", Theatre Quarterly, XXII, No. 85, Summer 1981, pp. 47-62. Mignone surveys Fo's works up to 1980.

Minore, Renato, "Teatro umoristico e satirico. Campanile, Flaiano, Fo", in Teatro Contemporaneo, I, Roma, Lucarini, pp. 571-603. Humouristic and satiric theatre is analysed through the works of three main authors: Campanile, Flaiano and Fo.

Mitchell, Tony, "Dario Fo's Mistero Buffo: Popular Theater, the Giullari and the Grotesque", Theatre Quarterly, IX, No. 35, Autumn 1979, pp. 3-11. Here Mitchell has united various reports on Fo's Mistero Buffo.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Dario Fo -- The Histrionics of Class Struggle", Gambit, IX, No. 36, 1979-1980, pp. 55-59. At the time of this essay Fo's plays have not been translated, yet, and the author thinks it is because of their harsh seizing of the Italian current political issues. This characteristic would consequently appear in any other language and it would have been difficult to foresee how it can be accepted. Fo focuses on how dangerous is the strategy of homologation carried out by authorities.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Open House with Dario Fo and Franca Rame", Theater, XV, No. 3, Summer/Fall 1984, pp. 87-90. Mitchell relates on Fo and Rame's staging of Coppia Aperta, quasi spalancata (Open Couple -- Wide Open, Even) in Milan in 1983.

Pertile, Dino, "Dario Fo", in M. Caesar and P. Hainsworth, eds., Writers and Society in Contemporary Italy, Berg, Leamington, 1984, pp. 167-190. This essay is a brief survey of Fo's works and life -- his political changes and theatrical innovations up to the beginning of the Eighties.

Puppa, Paolo, "Tutti uniti! Tutti insieme! Ma scusa, quello non è Dario Fo?", L'erba voglio, Year II, No. 5, April 1972, pp. 23-28. The author discusses Dario Fo's Tutti uniti! Tutti insieme! Ma scusa quello non è il padrone? as far as some political takings of position are concerned.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Comico cencioso e comico filosofico", in Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, eds., Il Novecento, Milano, Garzanti, II, 1987, pp. 783-849. Puppa analyses the different kinds of comic theatre of this last century in Italy.

Rame, Franca, "Introduction", in Dario Fo, Can't Pay? Won't Pay!, London, Methuen, 1987, pp. 12-19. Rame gives not only some particulars about the play and its staging but she also writes about her husband's theatrical techniques.

Schechter, Joel, "Dario Fo's Obscene Fables", Theater, XIV, No. 1, Winter 1982, pp. 87-90. Schechter analyses Fo's Fabulazzo Osceno.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Beyond Brecht: New Authors, New Spectators", in John Fuegi et als., op. cit., 1983, pp. 43-53. Brecht's influence on modern theatre is seen to be very strong no matter the actors or producers' nationality of the actors or producers. In Italy the most representative actor as well as producer who uses Brecht's teachings is Dario Fo.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Un-American Satire of Dario Fo", Partisan Review, LI, No. 1, 1984, pp. 112-119. The episode of denying Fo and Rame, his wife, the visas to enter the United States is seen as a lost opportunity for the American theatre to know a great satirist of politics and politicians, as Fo is considered to be by Schechter. Then Accidental Death of an Anarchist, the play involved in the case of the visas, is analysed.

Shade, Ruth, "Female Parts: One Woman Plays", Gambit, X, No. 38, 1981, pp. 137-139. Shade reviews this play adapted by Wymark and published by Pluto Press.

Sogliuzzo, A. Richard, "Puppets for Proletarian Revolution", Drama Review, XVI, No. 3, September 1972, pp. 71-77. This essay resumes Fo's works with his group Nuova Scena.

Wade, Alan, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Theater Journal, XXXVI, October 1984, pp. 416-417. Wade writes about Accidental Death of an Anarchist in Washington, February 1984. He is particularly proud of the American references included in the text.

Walsh, Mart W., "The Proletarian Carnival of Fo's Non si paga! Non si paga!", Modern Drama, XXVIII, No. 1, March 1985, pp. 211-222. Walsh wants to discuss Can't Pay? Won't Pay! as a traditional drama and he focuses on its carnivalesque structure.

Wing, Joylynn, "The Performance of Power and Power of Performance: Rewriting the Police State in Dario Fo's Accidental Death of an Anarchist", Modern Drama, XXIII, No. 1, March 1990, pp. 139-149. Wing considers Fo's analysis of the relationship power/violence/comedy in his plays and mainly in Accidental Death of an Anarchist as one of the most important characteristics of the Italian playwright's work.

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### BACKGROUND STUDIES

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Bettettini, Gianfranco, "Pragmatica della traduzione dalla lettera all'immagine", in Processi traduttivi: teorie ed applicazioni, Brescia, La Scuola, 1982, pp. 163-186. In this essay, which is part of the records of a seminar on translation held in Brescia in 1981, the problems that can arise when a literary text is transferred to a visual one are punctually analysed. The new form must follow another system of signs and therefore of meanings.

Bigbsy, C. W. E., "The Language of Crisis in British Theatre: The Drama of Cultural Pathology", in C. W. E. Bigbsy, ed., Contemporary English Drama, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, XIX, London, Edward Arnold, 1981, pp. 10-51. Bigbsy analyses some of the most important plays from the 1960s to the early 1980s and finds in their language the expression of the feelings of crisis of that period.

Bisicchia, Andrea, Aspetti del teatro comico italiano del Novecento, Milano, Ghisani, 1973. At the beginning of the twentieth century Italian literature "finds out" the grotesque. Bisicchia analyses Campanile, Japolo, Brusati, Mauri and Fabbri's works.

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Cowan, Suzanne, "Theatre, Politics, and Social Change in Italy since the Second World War", Theatre Quarterly, VII, Autumn 1977, pp. 25-38. In this essay Cowan describes the development of theatre in Italy from the early Fifties to the late Seventies.

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De Marinis, Marco, ed., Mimo e mimi, Firenze, La Casa Usher, 1980. The book is an outline of the major theories on mime in Europe in this last century. The author also presents some pieces of the artists named in it.

\_\_\_\_\_, Il nuovo teatro. 1947-1970, Milano, Bompiani, 1987. The most important theatrical experiences of modern and contemporary theatre all around the world are here summarized.

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the new usage of language made by six of the most  
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\_\_\_\_\_, Fra Totò e Gadda. Sei invenzioni sprecate del teatro italiano, Roma, Bulzoni, 1987. Meldolesi studies six great Italian actors and producers of this last century, their characteristics and importance for the improvement of the Italian contemporary theatre. They are: Totò, Eduardo De Filippo, Mario Apollonio, Giorgio Strehler and Gadda.

Nepoti, Roberto, Jaques Tati, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1978. After a biographical description, the famous French mime's technique is presented while analysing his films.

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Serpieri, Alessandro, "Libertà e vincolo nel tradurre Shakespeare: per una teoria della traduzione drammatica", in Elizabeth Glass, Francesco Marroni, Gabriella Micks and Carlo Pagetti, eds., Metamorfosi. Traduzione-Tradizione, Pescara, C.L.U.A., 1988, pp. 37-72. In October 1986 a congresso on translating in contemporary time was held in Pescara. Serpieri spoke about the troubles he himself encountered in translating Shakespeare. He pointed out the idea that a translation is always contaminated by the set in which it is written whereas the original script is always identical to itself.

Shank, Theodore, Theatre in Real time, Lodi, Studio Forma, 1980. The book is an history and dramatic criticism of the American and English Theatre from 1968 on. Many companies and their performances are discussed and the latter are presented through many pictures.

Taylor, John Russell, Anger and After, London, Eyre Methuen, 1977. When the book was first published in 1962 it was the first guide the new drama and movement started in 1956 with Osborne's Look Back in Anger. Then it has been revised to include younger British playwrights that continue to refer themselves to peculiar characteristics of this movement.

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\_\_\_\_\_, The Second Wave. British drama of the Sixties, London, Eyre Methuen, 1980. With this book the author wants to continue his former Anger and After. Here he analyses the new generation of writers of the Sixties that will lead to the theatre of the Seventies.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Art and Commerce: the New Drama in the West End Marketplace", in C. W. E. Bigsby, Contemporary English Drama, cit., pp. 176-188. Russell deals with two of the latest playwrighters working in the West End: Robert Bolt and Petr Shaffer, that he defines as the writers of the new drama.

Wandor, Michelene, Look Back in Gender, London, Methuen, 1987. In the plays of the last thirty years, after 1956 and Osborne, Wandor analyses the way of dealing with the family and sexuality, which have always represented an important structure for the plays. She reaches her aim by investigating the plays of the main authors of the time.

Quadri, Franco, ed., Il teatro del regime, Milano, Mazzotta, 1976. Various experiences of sufference from censorship in Italy, expecially during the Fifties and until 1962, year of the abolition of that law, are here reported. The people concerned with these events personally write about their feelings, among them there is also Dario Fo.

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## UNCONSULTED WORKS

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Jenkins, Ron, "Clowns, Politics and Miracles. The Epic Satire of Dario Fo", American Theater, III, No. 3, June 1986.

Schechter, Joel, "Dario Fo: the Clown as Counter-Informer", in Durov's pig: Clowns, Politics and Theater, New York, Theatre Communication Group, 1985, pp. 142-157.

Valentini, Chiara, La storia di Dario Fo, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1977.

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