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THEATER ON THE SMALL SCREEN: THE VERNACULAR PERFORMANCE OF
EDUARDO DE FILIPPO AND DARIO FO

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation examines the structural transformation of theater through its adaptation for television in the works of Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo. By focusing on two political playwrights who write, direct, and star in their plays, I am able to explore how the social role of the comedian evolves through the adaptations necessitated by the medium. Both Eduardo and Fo worked closely with RAI, Italy's state-run television broadcaster since its inception in 1954 through the 1970s, the period covered in my study. The unique circumstances surrounding these professional relationships that I investigate include the political ramifications of government control over the creative process. Since its inception, television has transformed the cultural landscape and the way that people consume culture. Theater has consistently held a prominent position on the airwaves but while the medium multiplies the potential audience that a performance will reach, it also inherently transforms the nature of that performance. Finally, I analyze how alterations of the language are in themselves a political statement.

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Chapter 1

Introduction Theater on the Small Screen: the Vernacular Performance of Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo

This project analyzes the relationship between Italian theater and television from 1950 through the end of the 1970s by focusing on Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo, two prolific playwrights who enjoyed a working relationship with RAI during this time and who simultaneously embody the roles of writer, actor and director, both on stage and on screen. This study is particularly informed by the fact that during these twenty years, RAI, under the political control of the ruling Christian Democrats, enjoyed a state monopoly over the airwaves and was guided by a strategy of “pedagogic enlightenment” in an effort to educate the public.

The texts under investigation in this study: Eduardo De Filippo’s Napoli milionaria!, Arte della Commedia and Il sindaco del Rione Sanità and Dario Fo’s Dito nell’occhio, Mistero buffo, and Morte accidentale di un anarchico. Each of these works represents defining characteristics of the playwrights’ work during this time in both content and form, on stage and on screen.

Each broad chapter topic compares one aspect of the two playwrights. Chapter Two, "The Social Role of Theater" analyzes how the two dramatists compare in their understanding of the function of comedy in society and focuses on the theater philosophy of Eduardo and Dario Fo. As I mentioned earlier, the centrality of the playwrights to their work is crucial, in so far that they are writer, actor, and director, they maintain total control of the process. I begin this chapter with an analysis of Fo and the figure of the *giullare*. Fo imagines himself as descending from the lineage of minstrels, jesters, or

performers who serve as a mouthpiece for the struggles of the masses in the face of injustice or oppression. In this mode, he, as a modern *giullare*, as he explains in Mistero buffo, reveals to the people the truth of their condition. Through satire, humor, and even the grotesque, the oppressive forces, and injustices are mediated and served to the public. Eduardo's play Arte della commedia serves as a sort of treatise on his philosophy of theater. There are echoes of Carlo Goldoni and Luigi Pirandello in this play. Though Eduardo's process is different than Fo's, the conclusion, that theater is an indispensable part of a healthy society, is the same. The proof for both of them is in the way that historically the figure of the actor was marginalized or even condemned by those in authority. By reflecting the struggles of the masses, and challenging the official history that is written by those in power, theater can indeed threaten the status quo.

The following chapter, "Catharsis and Its Absence" explores how television, especially in light of the political implications that RAI embodies, transforms the effect of theater. I use the concept of catharsis to show how the reception of a performance is transformed in its adaptation to television. Through the theoretical framework of Hayden White and Cathy Caruth, I reveal how Eduardo's Napoli milionaria! demonstrates that theater can serve as a platform to act out and work through trauma. Eduardo accomplishes this through the structure of the play, and through the character of Gennaro. Furthermore, I explore how the message of the play evolves along with the contemporary context of each of its adaptations: theater, film, and television. For Fo, the concept of catharsis is anathema. His work is greatly influenced by the German Expressionist Bertolt Brecht who believed that for theater to be effective it needed to avoid tying all the loose ends for the audience. By performing in a highly improvisational manner and

involving the audience, the spectators are essential to creating meaning in the performance. Ideally, the dialogue that is begun in the theater creates a conversation that extends into the outside world. It is here that I apply the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas. In Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, he Habermas analyzes how mass media is able to commodify culture in a way that leads to a general homogenization. This is acutely felt through the medium of television. Additionally, as the locus of the performance is moved from the public sphere, or the theater, to the family living room, the receptions and effect of the performance is greatly altered. I supplant my analysis with RAI's mission statement from 1954, the "Codice di autodisciplina" to demonstrate how the RAI television apparatus, which includes government influence, sought to take manipulate the power of television to create a unified, if not homogenous, cultural landscape.

The final chapter, "Language, Dialogue, and Grammelot" specifically examines the use of non-standard Italian in the playwrights' work and the consequences of their respective adaptation for broadcast. In the case of Eduardo, my analysis focuses on the ways that he adapted his plays from Neapolitan to approach standard Italian. I use the theory of Pierre Bourdieu as a theoretical framework to explore how language, and dialect in particular, can be manipulated to uphold or subvert power. In its initial iterations, the dialect in Eduardo's dramas served to consolidate the idea that the performance was an authentic reflection of the audience to which it was directed. Eduardo was speaking the same language as the spectators and was representing their reality. The linguistic *bona fides* identified him as a member of that same social group, what Antonio Gramsci would call an organic intellectual. Furthermore, I explore how the

standardization of the dialect, through its adaptation for broadcast, transforms this "authentic" connection to the masses. Alternatively, Fo also understands the relationship between language and power and creates a nonsense language, in *grammelot*, that defies is at once incomprehensible and also has the ability to be universally understood. Fo's didactic introductions to the audience create a symbiotic relationship in order to co-construct meaning. *Grammelot*, insofar as it is an imaginary form of communication that exists solely in the space of the performance, is also the strongest element that achieves the lack of catharsis to which Fo aspires. In this chapter, I explore precisely how this process is most undermined in the translation to television specifically in light of the improvisational nature, and dependence upon the audience reaction, of Fo's performance.

The history of RAI, from its beginnings as a state monopoly through the era of *lottizzazione* to the political developments of today, offers the key to understanding the role that the medium has played in shaping and reflecting the cultural fabric of Italy. This project spans RAI's inaugural broadcast, in 1954 and concludes in 1977. Several key moments during this time period inform and the scope of this dissertation. In its early years, RAI followed an educative model for its programming. Part of its mission was to inform and educate the public. Initially, television programming assumed similar terms as pre-established literary genre. Not surprisingly, theater easily assumed a prominent role and Friday evenings on RAI were dedicated to airing televised productions of notable plays.

RAI's first television broadcast was in January 1954 and it enjoyed a state monopoly over the airwaves until 1975 when local stations were allowed to broadcast unique programming. During this time, there seems to be a revaluation of regionalism and

dialect. The effect of television on the Italian language is notable and has been studied by many scholars. Perhaps more than any other force, television was able to unite the Italian population linguistically and culturally. The role that RAI plays in constructing a national identity will form the crux of the analysis of its history. My research will move from the early years of RAI's history through the 1970s. A major development came with Law 103 of 14 April 1975, which reconfirmed RAI's monopoly, but transferred control from the executive to parliament. This replaced a monopoly under the hegemony of the ruling party, the Christian Democrats, with a monopoly shared between networks and news programs. The breakdown of the channels and their political governance is as follows: RAI 1 Christian Democrats, RAI 2 Socialists, RAI 3 Communists. This splitting up of the station is known as *lottizzazione*. During this era there were no regulations of the private sector. From 1974 through 1979, local private tv stations began to flourish. From 1979 through the early 80s, private broadcasting was gradually concentrated in publishing groups, which subsequently came under the control of Silvio Berlusconi, by then the owner of Fininvest, a large media group.¹

The 1970s were a crucial time in the history of Italian television for many reasons. One major factor was due to the economic crisis of the decade. As a result of little expendable income, many families began to stay home for their entertainment, which television readily provided. RAI, meanwhile, continued to provide educational and cultural programming. These years were informed by a strategy called “pedagogic enlightenment”, a mission to educate the public and raise cultural awareness. This was a

¹ Elena Dagrada, “Television and its Critics: A Parallel History”, Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction, eds. David Forgacs and Robert Lumley, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996) 241.

country hurtling through industrialization and into modernity, but parts of which still suffered high illiteracy rates. RAI's pedagogic mission statement serves as the springboard for my analysis of Eduardo and Fo's appearances on RAI's TV schedule.

Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo are two prominent figures that serve as counterpoints to one another in my analysis of the role of theater in raising cultural and political awareness during a period of great turbulence, growth and renewal on the Italian peninsula. Eduardo and Fo have very different approaches to theater, but they both derive from the tradition of an actor's theater which culminated in the sixteenth century with the *Commedia della'Arte*, a form of theater in which the actor is at the center of the performance and in control of the business aspects of the profession. In the age of television, and especially in the case of the aforementioned dramatists, this takes on an additional technical element. One will recall that both figures were at the center of both theatrical and televised performances of their comedies.

Eduardo and Fo are also both firmly rooted in expressing subaltern traditions and identities. To that end, the use of dialect, in the case of Eduardo, and *grammelot*, in the example of Fo, in their work enhances their proximity, at least linguistically, to the viewing public. When adapting dialect for a national audience the issue of translation is raised. The transition of dialect from the regional theater to the national stage is an important question that reveals the contradictions that television can embody. At a time when Italy's national identity is being consolidated, these examples represent an almost concerted effort to integrate regional identities into the national fabric. The post-World War II era especially saw substantial economic and political shifts that caused great social upheaval.

If the use of dialect produces a work that is “closer” to the viewing public, paradoxically, the camera, and by default the television, removes the public from the theatrical experience even while multiplying the audience. Eduardo and Fo are both noteworthy for the importance of improvisation to the creation of their art. For Fo in particular, an emphasis on performance over text leads to improvisations based on audience reactions. “This approach to theater exalts a performance tradition that is historically more akin to popular cultures over the literary tradition of official, dominant cultures”².

With this in mind, one calls into question the role of the actor, playwright and producer of theater in respect to his relationship with television. My project will explore the relationship between the artists and their productions within this framework in order to highlight how their particular theater is translated onto the small screen.

In Fo’s own words, pronounced during an interview on French television in 1992:

The task of theater has been to serve and reinforce power structures. For those who are opposed to established power, it is a matter of fighting, of winning spaces, of letting people see an alternative system, a different culture, another vision of the world. That’s why many actors and performers in the middle ages ended up being burned at the stake.³

The fact that Fo’s career included a relationship with a medium very much in the hands of the Italian ruling class serves as an interesting counterpoint to his view of theater’s role as an opposition, or not, to the “established power”. Fo’s career begins with a series of monologues, Poer nano, produced for RAI radio in 1950. The great success that followed

² Valeri, Walter. “An Actor’s Theater”. Dario Fo: Stage, Text, and Tradition, es. Joseph Farrell and Antonio Scuderi. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000) 23.

³ Farrell, Joseph. “Fo and Ruzzante: Debts and Obligations.” Dario Fo: Stage, Text, and Tradition, ed. Joseph Farrell and Antonio Scuderi. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000) 89.

led to his and Franca Rame's work on Canzonissima, a variety show that centered on the state lottery but included original sketches. As Fo and Rame's work became more controversial, so did the efforts of the censors. In 1962, after a particularly controversial episode required more cuts, Fo and Rame left the show and were effectively banned from RAI for 15 years. After the success of Mistero buffo, Morte accidentale di un anarchico, among others plays, Fo was invited back in 1976 by RAI to do Il teatro di Dario, a series which began with the television production of Mistero buffo. When Mistero buffo was first shown on Italian television in 1977, it was declared by the Vatican as "the most sacrilegious work in the history of broadcast media"⁴.

While Fo's relationship with RAI is initially stormy, De Filippo enjoys years of steady television production beginning in 1956. Already a giant of the stage and, though in somewhat smaller proportions, of the cinema, RAI saw in Eduardo a dependable collaborator for cultural production. In 1962, "Il Teatro di Eduardo" debuts with eight major works, shown weekly, and in the decades that follow, Eduardo continues to produce many of his plays for RAI, with complete creative control, albeit while beholden to the censors as well.

While Fo is from Lombardy and spent much of his formative time in Milan, Eduardo represents the Neapolitan tradition. As stated earlier, these artists, though very different, share an important similarity as they are each marked by their adherence to their region of origin. This aspect is of particular importance to this project. Their insistence on using non-standard Italian in screen productions in a sense elevates regional identities to the national stage. It is important to note that the language used is intended to be

⁴ Joseph Farrell, "Dario Fo", Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2007) 743.

understood by the general public, thus is not necessarily a representation of the true spoken dialect, rather a combination of its syntactical and grammatical structures with that of standard Italian. If RAI's mission includes providing to its audience a common, unifying cultural patrimony and linguistic fabric, the inclusion of dialect and regional identities within this framework is significant. Naples undoubtedly occupies a privileged position within the cultural imagination. It is important to note that Naples, along with Torino, Milan and Rome, was not only a center of regional television production but also national. The studio, opened in the 1950s, provides for the filming and production of unique programming. Currently, the Archivio Storico della Canzone napoletana resides there as well. This multimedia resource archives a collection of over 40,000 Neapolitan songs, a testament to the importance of Naples as a cultural center for the nation as a whole. Being the southernmost city on the list of central TV stations, one can infer its status as representative of the south as a whole. As Nelson Moe notes in A View from Vesuvius, this role is not a new one for the city. Moe's study focuses on the image of Naples and the south in 19th century Italy. A major tool in his analysis is Illustrazione italiana, a news and culture magazine founded in 1873 by Emilio Treves. The magazine concretized a popular image of Naples, which was diffused throughout the peninsula as well as Europe. My analysis of RAI's treatment of the Neapolitan image is informed by the role Illustrazione inhabited as a popular medium during its own time. Undoubtedly, Naples occupies a unique place in Italy's cultural imagination and from Pulcinella to Totò the image of the Neapolitan is unmistakable.⁵

⁵ Nelson Moe, The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 207-23.

By analyzing the use and non-use of dialect in television and theater, I trace the parallel trajectories of the insistence upon a national identity alongside the maintenance of the many regional identities that inhabit the nation. Fo's youth was spent with the *fabulatori* or local storytellers of Lombardy. The importance of the oral tradition and folklore is notable in Fo's work. Filtering these elements through the popular medium is directly linked to the language question, and both Fo and Eduardo embrace this element.

Political engagement is integral to the work of both of these artists. Fo speaks directly to this point in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1997,

Our task as intellectuals, as persons who mount the pulpit or the stage, and who most importantly, address young people, our task is not just to teach them method, like how to use the arms, how to control breathing, how to use the stomach, the voice, the falsetto, the *controcampo*. It's not enough to teach a technique or a style: we have to show them what is happening around us. They have to be able to tell their own story. A theatre, a literature, an artistic expression that does not speak for its own time has no relevance.⁶

In addition to the influence of the *fabulatori*, Fo fashions himself as a modern "giullare" or court-jester. In "Rosa fresca aulentissima", a sketch from *Mistero buffo*, and also the title of a famous poem by Cielo D'Alcamo, a 13th century poet of the Scuola Siciliana,

Il giullare che si presentava sulla piazza scopriva al popolo quale fosse la sua condizione, condizione di 'cornuto e mazziato', come dicono ancora a Napoli: cioè bastonato, oltre che cornuto....Quindi il giullare era qualcuno che, nel Medioevo, era parte del popolo; come dice il Muratori, il giullare nasceva dal popolo e dal popolo prendeva la rabbia per ridarla ancora al popolo mediata dal grottesco, dalla 'ragione', perché il popolo prendesse coscienza della propria condizione.⁷

Fo's role, as the jester, is to subvert the accepted reality and reveal the true condition of the people.

Eduardo's political engagement differs from Fo's, but is not necessarily diminished

⁶ Dario Fo "Contra Jogulatores Obloquentes: Against Jesters Who Defame and Insult." Nobel Prize Award Ceremony. Stockholm, Sweden. 7 Dec. 1997. Nobel Lecture. Web. 11 Mar. 2011.

⁷ Dario Fo, *Mistero buffo*, ed. Franca Rame (Turin: Einaudi, 1997) 12.

by this fact. In one of his most successful plays, Napoli milionaria!, Eduardo looks at a city and its people ravaged physically and spiritually in the aftermath of war. Resolution and healing comes on the eve of a vigil over the youngest daughter. The final words of the play are pronounced by the patriarch, played by Eduardo, “Ha da passà ‘a nuttata”. These words are intended as much for the other characters in the play as for the viewing public as a whole. In a sense, the playwright is seeking to heal the wounds caused by war by displaying the baseness of many of the so-called good people on a national stage. In a cathartic moment, Eduardo is saying that the darkness will pass.

This cathartic element is another link between Fo and Eduardo that informs my project. While they represent two different regions, their material is addressed to the nation as a whole and serves in some instances as a cathartic stage on the small screen. The symbiosis between theater and television offers an interesting perspective on the role of the artist in the age of television. My project will pay special attention to this collaboration, within the context of negotiating a national and regional identity, in an effort to analyze how these two figures bring to light issues of national importance using regional reference points.

There are studies of television and of theater and there is a plethora of scholarship on both Fo and Eduardo. My study is different in two respects. First, it pairs these two playwrights in a comparative study of their very different approaches in creating a popular theater that is politically engaged. Second, it creates a comparative study of theater and television. By analyzing examples of works that have been adapted, by the playwrights themselves, from stage to screen, I can highlight how the genre evolves. The choices made by the artists are not limited to technical matters. Questions of censorship inevitably arise, particularly in light of the strong government influence upon the state-run television apparatus. The parameters of content and form are informed by the level of engagement of the artist.

The role of television in creating a unifying cultural landscape has been studied, but

the particular focus on its effect in Italy is limited. By focusing on the work of two producers of political theater, I explore the ways that the traditional goals of theater are transformed by its inclusion on the airwaves. By focusing on the representations of unique identities within the broader Italy, the use of dialect and the representation of regional theater, the political implications of government intervention, and transformation of society by mass media, this project reveals the tensions that can bolster or undermine the stated goals of popular theater. Both Dario Fo and Eduardo De Filippo, in very different ways, present interesting avenues of exploration on this point because they are firmly rooted in a long line of tradition that ties them directly to the cultural heritage that unites the peninsula. I will argue that it is this dichotomy that lends credence to the political themes of their plays. Indeed, they are snapshots that can be, and should be, applied to the Italian population at large, and do not remain limited to any one region in particular.

Chapter 2

The Social Role of Theater

A defining characteristic of Dario Fo's work has been his efforts to return popular culture to the masses. He does this in many ways, most notably in theater work early in his career. At once a product of the cultural zeitgeist of the 50s and 60s as well as a revolutionary himself, it is undeniable that Fo translates political and personal ideologies into his art. Fo takes up the mantle of the left and exploits his role as an intellectual to become a modern-day jester, laying bare the myriad hypocrisies of post-war Italy and its so-called economic miracle. Reminiscent of the philosophy of Antonio Gramsci, Fo sees history and culture as having been usurped by those in power. The role of the intellectual therefore is to restore the perspective of the people in the historical narrative.

Fo's upbringing plays an important part in the development of his particular form of theater. He was born on March 24, 1926, in San Giano, a town in Lombardy. His family moved around and eventually settled in Porto Vartraglia near Lake Maggiore. Oral tradition was a strong element in the region and played an essential role in Fo's formative years. Some forms of popular entertainment with which Fo had contact included puppet shows and professional storytellers as well as the local storytellers known as *fabulatori*, who perhaps had the greatest influence on Fo's artistic development. The *fabulatori* were comprised not of professional storytellers but of local fishermen, vendors, and the like, who would often tell stories to pass the time as they worked. Fo's own grandfather was rather well known in this regard. He was nicknamed *Bristin*, which means, "pepper seed", for his pungent wit, and would use his talent as a way to attract customers to his

cart. Bristin would often take his young grandson along.⁸

The influence of the *fabulatori* becomes evident early in Fo's career. In 1952, Fo produced a series of monologues for RAI radio. The show was entitled Poer nano and was a scripted production based on the tales he had heard from the *fabulatori* of Lake Maggiore. The series was to comprise 18 shows, but the censors ultimately put a stop to them. The work emphasized paradoxes in an attempt to turn "a common-sense view of the world on its head".⁹

Another important work of this period was A Poke in the Eye, a series of 24 sketches co-written by Fo. It was comprised of a sequence of mime created by Jacques Lecoq, a French mime expert. This collaboration deeply influenced Fo in that it taught him many physical movements, facial expressions, different kinds of laughter, and various gestures to communicate myriad meanings.¹⁰ These elements subsequently become an intrinsic element of Fo's artistic expression. The use of physicality as a form of expression is as much an ideological choice as an aesthetic one. While it hearkens back to a more traditional theatrical form it is essential to keep in mind the essentially popular nature of this artistic form.

The title of the project refers to his desire to "poke in the eye" traditional views of history. Rather than focus on the heroes and the great people that make up official historical narratives, Fo turns his attention to the common man, an element that becomes more pronounced throughout the years. In this work, for example, Fo recounts how the Egyptians and not the Pharoahs built the pyramids and later how a simple soldier gave

⁸ Antonio Scuderi, Dario Fo and Popular Performance, (New York: Legas, 1998) 5.

⁹ Tom Behan, Dario Fo: Revolutionary Theatre, (London: Pluto Press, 2000) 8.

¹⁰ Behan 8.

Ulysses the idea to build the Trojan horse. The show was an immediate success. One reason for this was the fact that the political content spoke to the mounting political unrest of the era as well as a society being transformed by the rise of industry, creating an emerging working class.¹¹ Additionally, the rise of industry during the "miracle years" led to massive internal migration in Italy, further destabilizing the post-war landscape of the peninsula. This shift was accompanied by many tensions that are reflected in Fo's work during this era. The 1950s in Italy, during the height of the Cold War, saw rising tensions between the ruling Christian Democrats and the Communist party, which was growing in power. Students, workers, and progressive members of the bourgeoisie began to support Fo's work.¹²

The 1954 work, These Sane People Should Be Locked Up, took a rather pronounced political stance targeting the North and its treatment of the middle-class and poor within its many institutions. One sketch entitled "Vassilic's Return" takes a critical view towards Stalinist Russia as well as anti-communist censorship. Fo's anti-Stalinism was ahead of Khrushchev's denunciation of the same, in 1956, which would cause great division within the Communist party. This political view would eventually cause friction between Fo and the PCI as well. The play was a success though met by great resistance from the censors and the anti-communist authorities. Often, plays were performed for audiences of solely censors before being opened to the general public.¹³

After spending three years in Rome, during which time he and Franca Rame were married and had a child, they returned to Milan in 1958. During the time in Rome, Fo

¹¹ Behan 9-10.

¹² Behan 8-9.

¹³ Behan 9.

did not produce any new plays but worked in the cinema as a screenwriter. He did not find much success on this front and could not adjust to the scene. A theatrical contract for Rame eventually brought them back to Milan, which had just discovered the plays of Bertolt Brecht, the German Expressionist playwright who developed a sort of epic theater in which the actor approached the art as an alienated object, thus also alienating the viewer. The 1960s in Italy also produced some notable work in the avant-garde theater.

Fo produced seven plays between 1958 and 1967, known as his Bourgeois period. The break came in 1968 upon a realization that his audience was laughing at his satire but was simply being entertained. “We were tired of being the jesters of the bourgeoisie, on whom our criticisms had now the effect of an alkaseltzer, so we decided to become the jesters of the proletariat.”¹⁴ He had become a part of the structure that he was intent on criticizing, and his message had become effectively muted. In order to truly realize the political activism inherent in his work, it was necessary to break out of the bourgeois institutions and go directly to the people. In 1968, he formed La Comunità, which was a theatrical movement of the revolutionary left. With the support of students and activists, the troupe travelled mainly to rural and semi-rural towns and performed in Case del Popolo, the meeting houses of ARCI, Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana (Italian Cultural Recreational Association), literally bringing the theater to the workers and Fo gives up writing comedy and returns to farce, with his plays becoming intentionally political.¹⁵ These performances also included speeches and debates among the workers who would gather in the spaces. Eventually, the PCI realized that they too were the

¹⁴ Dario Fo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, trans. Simon Nye (London: Methuen, 2003) viii.

¹⁵ Nye viii.

objects of the criticism and very soon Fo began to fall out of favor with the organization. Fo, whose politics were obviously leftist, chose not to identify himself with the PCI, an institution fraught with inconsistencies and within its political agenda.

A look at the European theatrical influences can elucidate the fervor that had gathered on the political theater stage during this time. 1967 to 1971 saw a great change in Italian political theater. The Italian avant-garde had essentially stagnated with futurism, but was revived in the 60s with the discovery of the French avant-garde and the absurdist theater of Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and Jean Genet. "The shock was revitalizing for Italian theater, which had been setting itself imaginary goals of social redemption and simultaneously choking within the narrow limits of scholasticism and bourgeois entertainment".¹⁶ Beckett's vision for example was essentially a negative, as in alternate, perspective of understood realities. The prevalence of dark comedy and an insistence on unearthing humor amidst tragedy are also themes in his work. We can draw parallels to the Pirandellian view of humor as well as trace an affinity to Fo's use of humor and irony to reveal the truth of a certain situation. Additionally, absurdism invited the Italian playwrights to rethink the "official" view of reality and embrace the "negative perspectives", or alternative realities. "Absurdism, considered by many to be an insult to 'positive values', allowed for a release of energy and an incitement of the imagination to free itself from 'correct' intentions. Expressing the irrational, chaotic and grotesque undermined the official belief in the rationality of human progress."¹⁷ The French Absurdist movement seems to align itself ideologically with aspects of Fo's theater with

¹⁶ Mario Prospero, "Contemporary Italian Theatre," The Drama Review: Italian Theatre Issue. 22.1 (1978): 18.

¹⁷ Prospero 18.

its emphasis on negative and opposites. One thus sees the use of parody to critique social and political issues. Not surprisingly, Fo's body of work includes parody of classical plays and forms. These influences move the theater away from bourgeois art and the influence of Brecht's epic theater.

Interestingly, the change in Italian theater, which is reflected in Fo's work as well, was not based on writing but centered upon the *mise-en-scene*. The shift produced works that were pronouncedly more political than the Brechtian fables that had been popularized by theatrical institutions up to that time.

They dismantled the play, then examined its pieces with the estranged, critical eye of the sociologist, pointing out the implications of language and behavior, unmasking the class structure underlying a given morality, and expressing – most unscientifically – a value judgment against the object of unmasking. These parodies themselves eventually became "fables," getting at the "real" aspect of the work. The interpreter went beyond a faithful or sympathetic reading and treated the work as "an alienated object, a source of criticism" according to Brecht's definition.¹⁸

Though its influence on Fo's work is notable, the Brechtian model was at odds with his goal of giving voice to the grievances of the masses and thereby inciting political engagement. The use of satire and irony belie "negative" meanings within his work. Whereby Brecht would treat the works as an alienated object, the Fo model emphasizes interaction with the audience, even during the performance itself. Simon Nye notes the following regarding Fo's intentions,

Fo wished to ensure that his plays did not produce catharsis, since he believed that this effect left spectators drained of all anger, and hence of all will to act. It has always been his conviction that laughter produced by farce is more likely to lead audiences to think over the topics discussed in the play, and would eventually lead them to action.¹⁹

¹⁸ Prosperi 19-20.

¹⁹ Nye 100.

Though it may be impossible to quantify the actual effect of Fo's plays upon the political world, the very real shift from bourgeois theater to a more popular art form in 1968 coincides with what Paul Ginsborg defines as the era of collective action, spanning from 1968 to 1971.²⁰

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1997, Fo addresses the artist's responsibility to be politically engaged. The insistence that artistic production have a bearing on contemporary events is embodied in Accidental Death of an Anarchist, which subject matter was literally ripped from the headlines. The play is a satirical slapstick comedy written by Fo in 1970. It was inspired by the true events surrounding the death of Giuseppe Pinelli in 1969, a railway worker and anarchist who was arrested and interrogated for three days in connection to a bombing at the Milan Bank of Agriculture. After those three days, he fell to his death from a fourth floor window of the police headquarters, an apparent suicide. Conflicting reports from the police and misinformation followed; the death was eventually ruled "accidental". Fo wrote this play in reaction to these events, which brought to the fore the corruption of the police and the state, the tensions between the Left and the Right, as well as the untrustworthiness of the authorities.

The main character in the play, "The Maniac", acts as a deranged clown, who impersonates several different characters throughout the comedy. Through jest, he manipulates the already distorted version of events provided by police and arrives, finally at some semblance of truth. The very end of the play leaves the audience with a warning of how people can be manipulated with political scandals, for example, that serve simply

²⁰ Paul Ginsborg, A History of Contemporary Italy, (Harmondsworth: Penquin, 1990) 298-347.

to incite anger and subsequently let off some steam, a tactic that results in lulling the populace into complacency, “So we can stand shoulder-to-shoulder in our social democracy and say, ‘We are in the shit up to our necks, which is why we’re walking with our heads held high.’”²¹

The figure of the giullare, or jester, is at the heart of Fo’s political message and in Anarchist, the jester is known as the Maniac. In order to shed light on the role of the Maniac in the play, it is important to understand the function and history of the giullare in society and literature. While Fo imbues his particular form of theater with political subtext referencing contemporary events, and is no stranger to controversy as a consequence, his artistic lineage can be traced back to the figure of the giullare of the middle ages, Beolco Ruzzante, actor-playwright of the Commedia dell’Arte, and of course the afore-mentioned fabulatori from Lake Maggiore.

These three sets of influences represent the multi-faceted approach that Fo takes towards political theater. The giullare is not only a structural choice to performance but also a philosophical one. In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in 1997, Dario Fo espoused in relatively few words a manifesto of his creative philosophy and the title of the lecture, “Contra jogulatores Oblequentes” (“Against Jesters Who Defame and Insult”), speaks volumes about Fo’s understanding of his role as a performer and artist. The title was a reference to a “law issued by Emperor Frederick II (Messina 1221), declaring that anyone may commit violence against jesters without incurring punishment or sanction.” As he explains, for example, in the introduction to “Rosa fresca aulentissima”, a sketch from Mistero buffo,

²¹ Fo, Anarchist 24.

Il giullare che si presentava sulla piazza scopriva al popolo quale fosse la sua condizione, condizione di ‘cornuto e mazziato’, come dicono ancora a Napoli: cioè bastonato, oltre che cornuto....Quindi il giullare era qualcuno che, nel Medioevo, era parte del popolo; come dice il Muratori, il giullare nasceva dal popolo e dal popolo prendeva la rabbia per ridarla ancora al popolo mediata dal grottesco, dalla ‘ragione’, perché il popolo prendesse coscienza della propria condizione.²²

A brief analysis of Mistero buffo provides excellent insight to the philosophical importance of the giullare, in respect to medieval and modern day culture, thus providing a sort of background to the manifestation of the character in the form of the Anarchist's Maniac.

When Mistero buffo was first shown on Italian television in 1977, the forceful condemnation of the Church betrays its fear that the satirical work, and by extension its controversial playwright, may indeed be successful in using satire to poke holes in the sacrosanct veneer that so long had maintained the authority of the Church. The work itself is comprised of a series of one-man sketches based on well-known Biblical stories, Shakespeare plays, history, et al and marks Fo's adoption of the medieval giullare as the vehicle for his creative voice.

In the text, as well as the performance, each sketch is preceded by an introduction in which the author contextualizes the piece in terms of history, politics, literature, etc. In the very first pages of Mistero buffo, Fo defines the work as follows:

Attore: «Mistero» è il termine usato già nel II, III secolo dopo Cristo per indicare uno spettacolo, una rappresentazione sacra. Ancora oggi, durante la messa, sentiamo il sacerdote che declama: «Nel primo mistero glorioso...nel secondo mistero...», e via dicendo. Mistero vuol dire dunque: rappresentazione sacra; mistero buffo vuol dire: spettacolo grottesco.

Chi ha inventato il mistero buffo è stato il popolo. Fin dai primi secoli dopo Cristo il popolo si divertiva, e non era solo un divertimento, a muovere, a giocare, come si diceva, spettacoli in forma ironico-grottesco, proprio perché per il popolo, il teatro, specie il teatro grottesco, è sempre stato il mezzo primo d'espressione, di

²² Fo, Mistero buffo, 12.

comunicazione, ma anche di provocazione e di agitazione delle idee. Il teatro era il giornale parlato e dramatizzato del popolo.²³

Fo sees the theater as an organic creation of civilization. Additionally, he underscores theater's importance in its function as a source of information for the public as a spoken newspaper. The insistence that theater reflect social reality is evident throughout Fo's work. From these lines, one can infer many characteristics of Fo's particular brand of theater especially its accessibility in regards to the intended audience. Fo manages this structurally, thematically and linguistically in Mistero buffo.

The first level of access is provided through the prologues, which serve to contextualize each of the sketches. In a sense, Fo inhabits the role of interpreter of his own creation in order to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed to the public. The use of dialect is another element that ensures a more intimate connection to the audience. Throughout the play, Fo exhibits sketches, pictures and paintings that are intended to add yet another dimension of understanding to the material. Finally, though the sketches are derived from the Bible and folklore, Fo treats the themes of each story in light of contemporary social issues.

The figure of the *giullare* is thus important for Fo because it is predicated upon all of the above-mentioned criteria. In the sketch, aptly entitled "Nascita del giullare", Fo inserts the *giullare* into the Christian canon.²⁴ The story includes many of the important elements of Fo's work. The would-be *giullare* is a man who owns no property. He aspires to be a *padrone*, or landowner, and so he appropriates a piece of non-arable land on a mountain, with the intention of creating something more. He slowly brings soil to

²³ Fo, Mistero 5.

²⁴ Antonio Scuderi has written extensively on this aspect.

this mountain and proceeds to farm it. Finally possessing a house and land, he is able to provide for his family. The land that was previously unwanted has been transformed into something quite desirable. Soon enough, the true *padrone* of the town seeks to reclaim the piece of property that was essentially created by the *giullare* who subsequently begins receiving intimidation by the local landowner in person, through the priest and through other local townspeople. His wife pleads with him, telling him to set aside his pride. The land is soon destroyed; no longer able to feed his family, he loses everything.

Finding himself alone, he receives visitors, among them Jesus himself. The story reads like a parable. The *giullare* opens his doors to strangers and feeds them what he can and somewhat ironically suggests that it may in fact be Jesus. He subsequently is bequeathed the power of being the voice for all those non-landowners. He thus becomes a voice against the authority and against the oppression of those who would simply take without working with their own hands. It is in this manner that the *giullare* is born.

Within Fo's invented history of the *giullare* are several elements that make the *giullare* the ideal figure to be at the center of Fo's popular theater. First, it is necessary that the *giullare* be a man without property because it is precisely this lack that allows him the freedom to undermine the oppressive authority figures that take advantage of the lower class citizens. The parasitic relationship between those within the power structure and those without provides for Fo a line along which to trace through history and arrive at present day. It is also not by chance that Mistero buffo is entrenched in the parameters set forth by Christianity, specifically the Church. As an institution, the Church is here characterized as an arm for oppression and corruption. In fact, within "Nascita del

giullare”, rather than take the side of the peasant farmer, the priest acts as the mouthpiece for the padrone by ferrying veiled intimidations to the would-be giullare.

In the introduction to “Rosa fresca aulentissima”, the opening sketch of Mistero buffo, Fo analyzes why the peasant class has such an affinity to the figure of Jesus Christ. In Fo’s view, Jesus as a symbol reflects the people’s own mistrust of authority. While God, the Father, the ultimate authority figure, asserts his power unflinchingly and indiscriminately, Jesus offers a direct link to the people who see in him a reflection of their own suffering. The *giullare* becomes a Christ figure in the sense that he is allowed to speak directly to the people. Whereas Christ is the voice of God, the *giullare* is the voice that undermines the establishment and becomes a voice for the people. Fo often speaks of the persecution of the giullare in the middle ages and, as mentioned earlier, specifically cites the law of condoning violence against jesters in 1221. The jester, or *giullare*, posed a threat to authority in his ability to incite laughter among the populace and in the use of satire to reveal the reality of the people's condition.

The central purpose in Fo’s work is to engage with politics and history in a way that may veer from the accepted official perspective of history but that speak directly to the people in a language and style that is easily accessible to all, no matter the social class to which they belong. His use of a physical acting style inspired by mime is one aspect but so is the use of drawings and paintings. An edition of his collected works of theater includes many reproductions of original works of art. Other editions also include traditional and classical paintings, for example in Mistero buffo which he references throughout his work to serve as illustration of certain points but also in a sense to lend an official character to his work. Not only are the works visual evidence of Fo’s place in the

canon of Italian literature and tradition, they also serve a purely pragmatic function, which is to allow comprehensibility on various levels. This point can most easily be illustrated by looking at Fo's Nobel Prize acceptance speech. Throughout the speech Fo bolsters his words with his own original abstract works of art, and indeed references the fact that the images will help those who understand neither Italian nor English. In a sense, Fo seeks in every way possible to make his art as universally comprehensible as is the message.

Dario Fo thus resurrects the medieval *giullare* in modern times to act as a counterpoint to the official culture, a role which the Maniac perfectly embodies from the very beginning of Anarchist, and the premise of the play is to bring to light, through farce, the deliberate misinformation provided by the authorities.

The opening scene finds him being interrogated by Commissario Bertozzo and another officer. The audience learns that the Maniac has been arrested, but never charged, twelve times for impersonating, among others, a psychiatrist, a docent of the University of Padua, a surgeon, a naval officer, a bishop three times, and a bersaglieri captain. This list is not haphazard. Dario Fo is here highlighting an inherent hypocrisy that unites these careers. They are all elements of the power structure of the state, including educators, the military, educated doctors, and the clergy, thus implicated in the scandal. The scene also reveals that the Maniac has worn, and will present, many different masks to the play's other characters that represent the authority of the State. To the spectators, however, the masks are revealed from the outset.

The Maniac's insanity defense to the police, with the medical certificates to prove it, establishes his *bona fides* as a jester. His mental status provides him a destabilized view

of reality in order to become the mouthpiece of a counter-history to that which was established by the State. The Maniac has also proved a disregard for authority in his list of impersonations thus is ready to question the accepted truth of those interrogating him. Much like the jester of Shakespeare, or a baroque vision of the world, the Maniac's condition exempts him from the ties that bind ordinary citizens to society and its acceptance of the status quo. Additionally, the Maniac defines his malady as follows:

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 "istrionomania", viene da istriones che vuol dire attore. Insomma, ho l'hobby di recitare delle parti sempre diverse. Soltanto che io sono per il teatro verità, quindi ho bisogno che la mia compagnia di teatranti sia composta da gente vera, che non sappia di recitare. D'altra parte io non ho mezzi, non potrei pagarli...ho chiesto sovvenzioni al ministero dello Spettacolo, ma siccome non ho appoggi politici...²⁵

This quote reveals several important keys with which to proceed through an analysis of the rest of the play. As mentioned earlier, there is an insistence upon the abnormal mental state of the Maniac. Secondly, Fo equates himself with the Maniac by defining the Matto an actor. In a sense, Fo here espouses a sort of manifesto of his variety of theater with which to headline the play: *il teatro verità* or Truth theater. In fact Fo was doing precisely that in performing his plays in the midst of the working class people, and not big cities. His work is also often highly improvised which at once directly engages the audience with the entertainment before them and keeps the play fresh and revitalized with each new performance. More importantly, Fo presents his Maniac as a character of the people, underscored with the statement that he has no political ties.

The play begins at a base level, humor wise, with a simple gag, the Maniac who impersonates. As the play continues, the humor is consistently imbued with higher levels

²⁵ Dario Fo, *Teatro*, ed. Franca Rame, (Turin: Einaudi, 2000) 551-2.

of meaning, reflected quite literally when the Maniac moves from the third to the fourth floor of the police headquarters. With the political undertones, and overtones, the gags become more overt and physical, especially in the second act. The Maniac is elevated in stature through his impersonation of a judge, while the police, are relegated to the level of buffoonery. Finally, Fo implicates the spectators as accomplices to the crimes perpetrated upon them by members of the authority.

Anarchist is Fo's most performed play and continues to be staged today. There are several reasons for this success. First, it is inspired by a real event and hearkens back to a specific moment in history. Specifically, for Italy, it recalls years of terrorism, tension between the Left and the Right and the dissatisfaction and distrust of authority figures by the people. Alternatively, this list of grievances can be adapted to the histories of many nations, in both hemispheres.

Another reason why the play is still being performed is that the Maniac is so utterly human, just as he implores the police to be. Finally, in the denouement, the comedy takes on nearly epic proportions, especially in regards to what amount to political monologues by the Maniac directed to the journalist, there to report on the events that had transpired. While the close of the play rejoins history with the sobering words of the Maniac, the rest of the characters degrade to comedy types and engage in physical slapstick comedy. It is with this final flip that Fo grabs the audience members and throws them back into reality. Caught off guard and through the laughter, it is the spectators who are suddenly all the fools.

While Dario Fo's *giullare* occupies an outsider status that allows him to comment on the ills of society, Eduardo De Filippo presents himself, and his theater, as organically

arising from the community that is the setting for the majority of his plays. In this way, it is the perceived authenticity of the themes, characters, and language that lends credence to the underlying political message that he conveys. Eduardo De Filippo was a Neapolitan actor, director, author, poet, screenwriter and playwright who, over the course of a career that spanned practically all his life, wrote about forty-five plays. He was born in Naples 1900 and at the age of four, first appeared on stage as a crying infant for the acting company of his natural father, Eduardo Scarpetta, himself a noted Neapolitan actor and playwright. In 1921, Eduardo writes his first play, a one-act, Farmacia di turno. By 1929, he has formed, together with his brother, Peppino, and his sister, Titina, the company Teatro Uморistico i De Filippo. This lasts until 1944, when Peppino leaves the company. The following year, Eduardo, with his sister, forms Il teatro Eduardo. The same year, he debuts Napoli milionaria! at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. After the war, Mario Mignone notes, Eduardo “acquired a more universal sense of history” and begins to demonstrate a greater commitment to social and human causes.²⁶

Some influences of Eduardo’s theater are the Neapolitan theater, the Commedia dell’arte, and Pirandello. The influence of traditional Neapolitan theater can be seen in many aspects of Eduardo’s work, especially his early productions. Vito Pandolfi asserts the roots of De Filippo in Giovanni Verga and Raffele Viviani.

However, he proposes that, rather than talk about influence, one should consider the process from Verga to De Filippo an evolution of thought and even of point of view. Pandolfi shows that De Filippo represents the latest phase in the linguistic evolution of the dialect theater and that he develops traditional themes of the Neapolitan theater, particularly ones evident in the works of Eduardo Scarpetta: poverty as the mother of inventiveness, the desperate sense of humor peculiar to Naples, and the freewheeling mimic skits that made up the genre of the “pulcinellata”. This development occurs, as Pandolfi points out, because of the growing moral commitment that De Filippo feels

²⁶ Mario Mignone, Eduardo De Filippo, (Boston: Twayne, 1984) 69.

toward society, a commitment revealed in his increasing emphasis on the psychology of his characters as they appear in their environment.²⁷

In regards to Pirandello, it is important to note that early in his career, Eduardo, at the behest of the Sicilian, staged a Neapolitan version of Liola in 1932 to great success. This is followed in 1935 by a staging of Caps and Bells, also in Neapolitan. Finally, Pirandello and Eduardo co-write a theatrical adaptation of the short story The New Suit, and it is staged in 1937. Professional collaboration notwithstanding, critic Silvio D'Amico was one of the first to note the influence of the Sicilian playwright on De Filippo's work.

D'Amico felt that the comedy in De Filippo's plays transforms the Sicilian author's "pirandellismo", accentuating the innate tragedy of the individual situations and rendering them, as a result, all the more pitiful. Thus, he rightly affirms that Pirandello's literary influence is finally of marginal importance to De Filippo's finished product.²⁸

Finally, the *Commedia dell'Arte*, which is an important point of reference for both Dario Fo and Eduardo, figures prominently in Eduardo's work as an actor and playwright. The influence can be seen, for example, in the main character he portrays.²⁹

The play L'arte della commedia, 1964, is a two-act play, with prologue, and recalls Goldoni's Teatro comico. The play serves as a kind of declaration on the role of theater in a functioning society. It begins with a prologue, which serves to introduce the main character, the actor Oreste Campese, though the audience/reader would not know at this point, who he is, there are obvious parallels with Eduardo himself, a capocomico. The prologue serves to underscore Eduardo's presence as author in addition to providing the setting of the scene, a courtyard within a village. It is very cold. Additionally, the

²⁷ Mignone 2.

²⁸ Mignone 2 .

²⁹ Mignone 11.

description given in this introduction demonstrates Eduardo's sensibilities as an actor, insofar as we see a reflection of the intimacy with the character.

As the first act begins, Campese is seeking a meeting with De Caro, the prefect of the village, in regards to rebuilding a theater, which has been destroyed by fire. Campese recounts how he began in his youth to aspire to be an actor, much like Eduardo's own beginnings on stage. Though he found great personal satisfaction in this endeavor, he found that the actor was not considered among those professions held in high esteem by society at large.

Campese: A diciassette-diciotto anni già interpretavo la parte di Osvaldo negli *Spettri*. Il pubblico approvava con lunghissimi applausi... come attore mi aveva accettato; ma io mi dicevo: «Faccio l'attore, farò l'attore»... Ma l'uomo che fa l'attore svolge una attività utile al suo paese o no?... Sillabario alla mano: a, e, i, o, u... e si tirava avanti. Facevo progressi, cominciavo a compitare. Una pagina di quel libro mi lasciò contrariato.

De Caro: Quale?

Campese: Quella che comincia a inculcare nella mente dei bambini il rispetto che si deve avere per gli uomini che con la loro attività onorano il proprio paese. In cima alla pagina c'è scritto: «Arti e mestieri». Il medico c'è, l'avvocato c'è, l'ingegnere c'è, il magistrato c'è; poi c'è il sarto, il falegname, il fabbro, il maniscalco... c'è perfino l'arrotino... l'attore non c'è.³⁰

The actor, according to the state is considered a baser occupation than even a knife-grinder through its omission on a list of professionals that honor the country with their service. In fact, actors were considered second-class citizens and were assessed a tax because of this; some acted as "musicians" in order to avoid this bias. By pointing out this hierarchy, Eduardo is asking the spectator to reflect on the role of actors, theater, and popular entertainment in their society. An easy comparison with contemporary entertainers reveals how much mass media has altered the impact that an actor may have

³⁰ Eduardo De Filippo, *Cantata dei giorni dispari*, vol. 3, ed. Anna Barsotti, (Turin: Einaudi, 1995) 268.

on an audience, highlighting the integral role that actors, and theater in general, have occupied in our society. The concept parallels that of Fo's *giullare*. The comedian's ability to access public spaces allows him or her to address social injustice directly to the people. By superimposing the public square onto the stage and eventually television, Eduardo is providing the viewer an amalgam of venues by which the actor can convey his or her message.

Campese goes on to recount the efforts to rebuild the country in the immediate postwar years and describes how theaters were not included in a law regarding the reconstruction of the country.³¹ The attitude of the state towards the theater contributes to what Campese sees as a crisis of the theater. The dialogue between De Caro and Campese at this point demonstrates two competing views on the status of theater and the causes of its so-called crisis.

De Caro: Il vero motivo che determina la crisi del teatro è la mancanza di copioni. Nessuno più scrivere per il teatro. Il pubblico non si interessa più alle commedie degli autori moderni: si annoia, sbadiglia. Gli spettatori di oggi o si trovano di fronte a componimenti pieni di «paglia» la cui trama è scontata in partenza... dialoghi privi di umorismo, lunghi, noiosi... oppure, quando nel testo c'è la famosa «denunzia», il messaggio, debbono assistere alla rappresentazione ripugnante di un racconto immorale che l'autore «impegnato» vuole fare passare per un fatto di cultura avanguardista. È d'accordo?³²

With this passage, we find an obvious criticism of the avant-garde movement. However, the words are not spoken by Campese, whom we can argue acts as a surrogate for Eduardo, the *capocomico*, but by the Prefect, De Caro. One characteristic that is important to note regarding the Prefect is that he considers himself a connoisseur of the theater and once had aspirations to be an actor. In his role as Prefect, he embodies the

³¹ This parallels Eduardo's efforts to rebuild theaters during/after World War II in Naples.

³² De Filippo, vol. 3, 261-262.

stereotypical bourgeois authority figure that may not understand as much about the world as he believes. It is precisely this dichotomy that comes into play during the second act, where Eduardo showcases a parade of characters that blur the distinction between art and reality.³³ Further in the discussion between Campese and De Caro, the capocomico defends the state of the theater and goes on to say that its purpose is to reflect human life,

Campese: Il teatro non è morto, Eccellenza, il teatro è vivo e vitale.

DeCaro: Ma se fosse vivo darebbe altri risultati.

Campese: E la confusione dove la mettiamo? È un fatto scontato che il teatro deve essere lo specchio della vita umana, riproduzione esatta del costume e immagine palpitante di verità; di una verità che abbia dentro pure qualcosa di profetico.³⁴

One will note that with these words, Eduardo is insistent that theater ought to reflect the truth of human existence. That this truth is "palpitante" and "profetico" underscores the responsibility that theatrical art has in providing the public a mirror with which to see themselves. Through this identification, the spectator will also understand the world around him.

Campese: I comici dell'arte, quelli che recitavano «a braccia», per le loro battute sferzanti contro la borghesia, l'aristocrazia, contro i Governi, furono sempre perseguitati, costretti a fuggire da un paese all'altro, da questa a quella repubblica, spesso raggiunti, messi in prigione, alla tortura e persino impiccati. In Inghilterra ci deve essere ancora una corda che mise fine alle tribolazioni di un Arlecchino. Eccellenza, se non c'è la censura, c'è l'autocensura, a cui l'autore deve spontaneamente sottostare. Infatti, la gente di teatro muove i propri passi in funzione di una volontà precisa, di un indirizzo obbligato, non verso lo scopo vero, che sarebbe quello di dare al pubblico l'immagine della verità.³⁵

In these words, one can draw specific parallels between Eduardo's description of Arlecchino and Fo's *giullare*, who faces persecution for his attempts to reveal the truth to the public. Eduardo also makes references to the forces of censorship that the author

³³ Mignone 142.

³⁴ De Filippo, vol. 3, 262.

³⁵ De Filippo, vol. 3, 262-3.

must face. These are not abstract grievances but in fact reflect Eduardo's own personal experiences in this matter. In the beginning of his career, during the Fascist years, his work was censored because of laws that strictly forbade literature and theater that were published in dialect, though Eduardo escaped harsh consequences because of his immense popularity even during that time.³⁶ The relationship of these playwrights with censorship will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Eduardo reiterates the pressures faced by artists to maintain the status quo and to avoid speaking in an ill fashion against those authority figures, aristocrats and other sections of society who prosper to the detriment of the lower classes:

Campese: Ecco, lo ha detto lei, non l'ho detto io: «coraggioso». Perché l'autore dev'essere coraggioso? Se ci vuole coraggio per dire una verità in teatro, vuol dire che nell'aria qualche cosa che fa paura ci sta.³⁷

In the following citation, it is easy to see Eduardo making the case for an author such as himself, or the image of him that is projected onto the public at large. The playwright insists upon a written text rather than a series of improvisations, a point upon which Fo and Eduardo diverge, though Eduardo likewise improvised dialogue during his performances. We also note the popular element of the author himself who, in Eduardo's image, leaves the stage arm in arm with the public and does not return to his ivory tower. He makes clear his criticism of the elite intellectual who lacks a relationship to the public he is addressing:

Campese: [...] il pubblico è maturo, vuole il suo autore, quello che gli racconta i fatti di casa sua, e che gli fa riconoscere se stesso fra i personaggi della commedia. L'autore riconosciuto per tale, entra dalla porta del palcoscenico ed esce insieme al

³⁶ See Mignone for other instances of censorship. Also Maria Procino Santarelli, Eduardo dietro le quinte: un capocomico-impresario attraverso cinquant'anni di storia, censure e sovvenzioni (1920-1970) (Rome: Bulzoni, 2003).

³⁷ De Filippo, vol. 3, 263.

pubblico a braccetto, da quella della platea. I male intenzionati, entrano dalla porta del palcoscenico e dalla stessa porta escono, e di corsa vanno fino a casa loro e si chiudono dentro e non escono più.³⁸

In the following citation from act one, Eduardo underscores how his art, though it is meant to amuse, is more importantly based in some way upon reality. “De Filippo’s original priority was to amuse the public, but the intention to teach became ever more important. Gradually, amusement became less important as an end in itself, but served a secondary and complementary role to the *stimulation of moral reflection*”.³⁹

Campese: Ma non sono buffonate. Si tratta di fatti veri, casi crudeli, tragici, grotteschi, accaduti sul serio, raccolti e annotati da Gualtiero e Filippo durante le nostre peregrinazioni per i paesi, per le montagne...⁴⁰

The neorealist elements can be noted in Eduardo’s work as far back as Napoli, milionaria!,⁴¹ In fact, the opening sequence of the 1950 film, directed by Eduardo and also starring Totò, reads: “1940-1950. Diario napoletano. Di cose accadute nel mondo, ieri, oggi, domani?”

While act one of Arte reads like a treatise on theater, act two becomes a performance of the themes, plots, characters, and comic devices that serve as hallmarks of Eduardo’s theater. As Campese leaves the Prefect’s office, he warns that it will be difficult to tell the difference between the real people that will come to the office and his actors:

De Caro: Li mandi pure questi “Personaggi in cerca di autore” troveranno buona accoglienza...

Campese: No, Eccellenza. Pirandello non c’entra niente: noi non abbiamo trattato il problema dell’ “essere e del parere”. Se mi deciderò a mandare i miei attori qua sopra, lo farò allo scopo di stabilire se il teatro svolge una funzione utile al proprio

³⁸ De Filippo, vol. 3, 263.

³⁹ Mignone 143.

⁴⁰ De Filippo, vol. 3, 266.

⁴¹ Mignone and Barsotti, among others recall the neorealist character in Eduardo’s work. Further readings that delve deeper into the relationship between Eduardo and the neorealists needed.

paese o no. Non saranno personaggi in cerca di autore ma attori in cerca di autorità.⁴²

The last line of the above citation is an apparent allusion to Pirandello's Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore. Mignone notes the difference between the goals of Pirandello's and of Eduardo's work. While Pirandello focuses on the metaphysical, Eduardo remains tied to the social and moral aspects.

The second act sees the entrance of a doctor, a priest, a madwoman, and a pharmacist, who ultimately takes his own life. Neither the Prefect, nor the spectator are quite sure, from the beginning of the act right through to the end of the play, whether what he has just witnessed "were the masks of reality or the masks of comedy, whether those tragic human case histories were the fruit of the actors' imaginations or cruel and distressing real-life experiences."⁴³ The conclusion is indeed purposefully open-ended. With the news that the pharmacist had poisoned himself, the prefect, who had counseled him to do so, demands to know, from Campese, whether or not the death is real. Campese responds as follows:

Eccellenza, ma che gliene importa a lei, se si è trovato di fonte a un farmacista vero o a un farmacista falso? A mio avviso dovrebbe essere più preoccupante un morto falso che un morto vero. Quando in un dramma teatrale c'è uno che muore per finzione scenica, significa che un morto vero in qualche parte del mondo o c'è già stato o ci sarà. Sono le circostanze che contano; vanno considerate e approfondite le particolari condizioni di vita di una persona umana, che ci permettono di chiarire le ragioni di una morte, un suicidio, un delitto... Ecco perché le ho detto stamattina: «Venga a teatro, Eccellenza, venga a mettere "l'occhio al buco della serratura"».⁴⁴

⁴² De Filippo, vol. 3, 140.

⁴³ Mignone 142.

⁴⁴ De Filippo, vol. 3, 296-7.

Not only does Eduardo reiterate the important ties that bind his theater to reality, but he also provides auto-referential commentary that sheds light on earlier plays, for example, again, Napoli, milionaria!, which contains the famous scene of the “finto morto”.

The opening scene, or prologue, of the television adaptation of Arte sheds important light on the rapport that Eduardo seeks to establish between himself and his audience. As the performance begins, the spectator sees Eduardo in the role of Campese in an empty square. There is a dense fog in the scene that produces a dreamlike atmosphere denoting a departure from reality, even while the character will go on to argue the importance of reality and truth in the theater. In a sense, this is Eduardo’s way of capturing his audience and transporting them to a world that is completely of his creation.

Another play that illustrates Eduardo’s beliefs on the role of authority figures in society is Il sindaco del Rione Sanità (1960). With this play,

Il problema non è soltanto quello della crescita del pessimismo eduardiano, con l’età e con i tempi difficili che si trova a riflettere, ma anche quello di un'eventuale “autorità” che l’attore-scrittore si sentirebbe ormai in diritto di esercitare, finite l’epoca in cui era considerato dalla cultura nazionale (e forse si sentiva lui stesso) un dialettale. Alcuni ipotizzano che da questo momento in poi egli ritenga di avere il permesso (dal rango e dalle circostanze) di “andare con le dita negli occhi agli spettatori” come diceva Pirandello, rovesciando la prospettiva normale della visione specialmente nel finale delle sue commedie.⁴⁵

The play opens onto an apartment and a doorbell is ringing. Antonio Barracano’s three children awaken one by one to prepare the room. Initially, as the stage directions will

⁴⁵ Anna Barsotti, 5-6, in the preface to Il sindaco del Rione Sanità. She goes on to say that she prefers instead to read the conclusions of Eduardo’s plays as ambiguous rather than optimism or pessimism seeming to her and other critics that Eduardo never goes so far in sticking “un dito nell’occhio” of the spectator, preferring instead to rely on a comedy that according to F. Taviani (in Barsotti) was a precondition of his theater and that provoked laughter “ma con la bocca storta”.

show, the spectators are led to believe that the table is being prepared for a meal. The gag is finally revealed when the room is in fact transformed into an operating room.

Anche [Geraldina], come Immacolata, indossa una vestaglia. Ammucchiando i capelli e fermandoli con una forcinella raggiunge un mobile lo apre e prende un ampio quadrato di mussola bianca e una camicia da intervento chirurgico; il primo lo stende sul tavolo centrale, come per imbandire una mensa, il secondo lo adagia sulla spalliera di una sedia. Da un'altra stanza entra Gennarino, suo fratello, ventitré anni, capelli in disordine e pigiama. Un po' più pigramente di sua sorella, apre un secondo mobile e prende un grande scatolone di latta rettangolare che contiene ferri chirurgici, una pila sterilizzatrice cromata, due grandi bottiglie, una piena di iodio, l'altra di sublimato, e un fornello ad alcool. Intanto torna Immacolata recando due bacinelle di ferro smaltato bianco, una certa quantità di bende arrotolate, un grande pacco di cotone idrofilo e una pila di candidi asciugamani di lino. Da questo momento i tre, muti e compresi della gravità del momento, con movimenti ritmati e precisi in ogni particolare, improvvisano una vera e propria camera operatoria.⁴⁶

Regarding this scene, Dario Fo has noted, “si apre il sipario e stanno stendendo la tovaglia, [...] poi, la beffa: sopra ci stendono un disgraziato con una pallottola nel ventre che deve essere operato d'urgenza, strano rito grottesco che allude subito all'abbuffata sul corpo di Dioniso servitor a tavola, da sbranare”.⁴⁷

Act one begins *in media res* with a shooting victim who is operated upon. The main character, Don Antonio Barracano, is introduced to the spectators first through what the other characters say. When he finally makes his physical entrance, Don Antonio looks like an old man, and is dressed in pajamas. This entrance is similar to that of Gennarino in Napoli milionaria!, whereupon the patriarch is heard then seen, also in underpants, no doubt undermining by way of comedy the authorial figure, par excellence (the figure of the patriarch). Don Antonio is presented, physically in the most humble way possible, even though he is surrounded by obsequiousness. His initial physical appearance does

⁴⁶ De Filippo, vol.3, 20.

⁴⁷ Anna Barsotti, Nota storica-critica, Cantata dei giorni dispari, vol. 3, by Eduardo De Filippo (Turin: Einaudi, 1995) 6.

not conform to the image that had up to that point been created by the other characters in the play. Immediately it becomes clear to the audience that Don Antonio commands respect, but he is also very funny, and Eduardo does not take him as seriously as do the characters that surround him. For example, early in act one, Don Antonio says, to his maid, “Purtatme ‘o scostumato...’O parlanfaccia...L’unica cosa di questo mondo che quando parla dice la verità: ‘o specchio...No mi sbaglio: c’è un’altra cosa che non dice mai bugie: ‘a morte’”. This riddle of sorts, throws the maid off, evidently not accustomed to such witticisms. In order to fully comprehend this protagonist, it is necessary to analyze Don Antonio’s entrance unto the scene. Eduardo provides a rather lengthy description in the stage direction:

Don Antonio compare sulla soglia. I settantacinque anni dell’uomo sono invidiabili: è alto di statura, sano, asciutto, nerboruto. La schiena inarcata gli conferisce un’andatura regale; il colorito bronzio della sua pelle darebbe più risalto al bianco vivo degli occhi, se un senso di difesa istintiva non lo costringesse a sorvegliare, più che a guardare, intorno a sé appesantendogli le palpebre, come se avesse perennemente sonno; ma nei rari momenti in cui quegli occhi si aprono e si increspano ai lati per sorridere con voluta bonomia si scorge in essi uno sguardo agghiacciante che ricorda molto da vicino quello apparentemente mansueto della belva intristita perchè costretta a vivere in cattività. Indossa con dignitosa disinvoltura una vestaglia di taglio perfetto e di colore sobrio, verde scurissimo. Dagli ampi risvolti di questa appare il candido collo della camicia da notte, bordato di galloncino vermiglio; i legacci dei mutandoni all’antica pendono dalle caviglie e sfiorano i piedi nudi infilati in comode pantofole. Il dottore scatta in piedi alla vista di don Antonio e lo saluta rispettosamente con un mezzo inchino. Immacolata indietreggia di qualche passo accennando un timido sorriso all’indirizzo del suo padrone per dargli l’augurio di buona giornata, ma rimane sul chi vive, in attesa di una parola, un segno qualunque di don Antonio, che le possa chiarire di quale natura sia l’umore della «bestia», ai fini di prendere, con la certezza di non incorrere in errori irreparabili, un atteggiamento adeguato. Don Antonio, enigmatico, ricambia il saluto ad entrambi con un doppio cenno del capo, poi si avvicina lentamente al tavolo e vi siede accanto. Lunga pausa durante la quale si svolge una scena muta, piena di interrogativi, fra Immacolata e il dottore. Finalmente Antonio fissa Fabio per un attimo indicandogli col mento la sedia che si trova all’altro capo del tavolo, come per dire: «Sedetevi». Fabio capisce e siede.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ De Filippo vol. 3, 28-9.

Don Antonio's character is revealed and commands a great amount of respect. It soon becomes clear that Don Antonio is a man of influence in the neighborhood as his children and doctor discuss Don Antonio's schedule for the day. As the spectator begins to understand Don Antonio's role in his community, he begins to dress and in the scene in which his son and daughter dress him, he is transformed from a tired, old man to "il sindaco", Don Antonio Barracano, uniform of which consists of fine suit, shirt and tie, jewelry, rings, watch, and chain.

Antonio is a dynamic figure, at once a philanthropist and a neighborhood heavy. What distinguishes his character is his moral compass, which directs his actions. It is not until the second act that the spectator is made aware of the entire backstory to the character. At sixteen years old, Antonio was on trial for attacking Giaocchino. This person had attacked him after his sheep trespassed into his land. After the incident, Antonio became obsessed with fear towards Giaocchino. As he recounts it, he had no other recourse than to seek vengeance upon his assailant. During the trial he is found guilty and runs away to America, where presumably he makes the acquaintance of unsavory business types. After several years he returns to Naples, and with the help of his friend he has a retrial, with falsified witnesses that he can afford with the money he earned in America, and he is acquitted.

Don Antonio's history does not detract from his role as the moral compass of the play and of the neighborhood. As various city dwellers enter his abode asking for assistance in this manner or that, Don Antonio continually seeks justice, even using humor and wit to outsmart the interested parties. One example of this is in a scene in which, attempting

to settle a debt between two people, he has the creditor count invisible money to satisfy the debt.

The central plot twist revolves around Rafiluccio, a young man who has been disinherited from his father and has intentions to kill him. Encouraged by his woman, Rita, he seeks counsel from Don Antonio who attempts to orchestrate a reunion between father and son. Ultimately, it is essentially this crusade that brings about the death of Don Antonio. In the end, rather than reveal that he has been shot, he gathers the interested parties together one last time, and convinces his doctor to report it as a heart attack. His sacrifice, which should be a grand heroic gesture that serves to expiate the sins of the community and bring everyone together, does not succeed in changing the status quo. At the news of his death, the citizens of the neighborhood cry out that they will be lost without him, even though in life, they only went to him to do, essentially, their dirty work. And in the end, with a chance to lend a helping hand to someone who had done so much for them, they turn and run. The final words of the play belong to Fabio, the doctor who for decades had been Don Antonio's right hand man. Earlier in the play, when Fabio seeks to leave the employ of Don Antonio, he is essentially strong-armed into staying put. By the finale, addressing a dinner party made up of the many people Don Antonio had helped throughout the play, Fabio says,

Non sai niente? Don Artu', voi nemmeno sapete niente? Qua abbiamo preso l'abitudine di mandare continuamente la coscienza in lavanderia. Ma non soltanto noi: tutti senza salvare la faccia di nessuno, dal pezzo grosso fino all'ultima ruota del carro. E io dovrei eseguire scrupolosamente la volontà di don Antonio per salvare chi? Due carogne che hanno paura di dire la verità, due schifosi che preferiscono la bugia, l'ipocrisia, la minaccia, il ricatto... Fa comodo a tutti un Antonio Barracano che se ne va all'altro mondo per collasso cardiaco dopo avere speso una vita intera per limitare la catena dei reati e dei delitti. Avrebbe dovuto spenderla per allargarla. Come spenderò i miei ultimi anni. Io non parto, resto qua [...] Voi racconterete quello che avete visto e sentito stasera, se lo volete raccontare. Io faccio il referto

medico come mi detta la coscienza. Usciranno i figli di don Antonio, i parenti di don Arturo, i compari, i comparielli, gli amici, i protettori: una carneficina, una guerra fino alla distruzione totale. Meglio così. Può darsi che da questa distruzione viene fuori un mondo come lo sognava il povero Don Antonio, “meno rotondo ma un poco più quadrato”. E comincio io col firmare il verto referto col mio nome e cognome: Fabio Della Ragione. Scannatemi, uccidetemi, ma avrò gioia di scrivervi sotto: in fede.⁴⁹

This passage at once indicts a community for its inaction in reforming unscrupulous ways, and incites the public at large to question their own social reality. Though don Antonio may have been the moral compass of the play, it is the aptly named Fabio Della Ragione, an educated doctor who is not a member of the same class as the community, that looks to don Antonio. Indeed, the spectator would look at the ending of the play with a certain moral judgment, Eduardo's conclusion is more open-ended than it may seem. Don Antonio was able to keep the peace, as it were, because he understood the rules by which the game was played, he was one of them. Fabio on the other hand, with a final act of protest, revealing the truth of don Antonio's shooting, risks throwing the community into a complete upheaval. In a way, the juxtaposition of these two characters mirrors the comparison that Campese makes in *Arte della commedia*, in which he describes the difference between the successful theater author who leaves the stage hand in hand with his public and the one retreats to his ivory tower, disconnected from the reality on the ground.

Though Fo and Eduardo have different approaches to the creation of theater, they both seek to use their authority as playwrights to bring to light social issues and attempt to balance the message with comedy. The authorial figures in Eduardo's plays are often tempered by humorous portrayals, as seen in the case of Don Antonio. For Fo, the figure

⁴⁹ De Filippo vol. 3, 89.

of the *giullare* wears his masks for all to see, as in the case of the Maniac. It is precisely the comic facets of the characters that make them ultimately human and relatable to the spectator. It is also the power to create comedy that allows them to reveal the truth hidden behind the masks that are worn by authority figures in everyday life.

Chapter 3

Catharsis and Its Absence

By 1962, television had become a rich field of exploration for both creative types and critics. The size of the national audience had grown at a fast pace in a very short time. Coincidentally, in the same year that "Il Teatro di Eduardo" premiered, Jürgen Habermas published The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Though much of his study is outside the scope of my analysis, his inquiry into the effects of television on social institutions casts RAI's television-theater experiment into an interesting light. Habermas focuses on how the shift in mass media in the 20th century channeled the sphere of cultural consumption from the public to the private, aka family, sphere. Habermas compares this to a prior era where, for example, one would enter a theater to experience a communal cultural experience. One could then follow to a cafe or salon for discussion. This all changes when television viewing becomes the central vehicle for cultural consumption. While it is true that through this medium more people could gain access to what might be considered high culture, the public discourse that results becomes much more narrow in its reach. Within his work, Habermas cites a case study on the impact of television on school children that

came to the conclusion that in nine out of ten families no conversations took place: "It appears that the increased family contact brought about by television is not social except in the most limited sense: that of being in the same room with other people. Whether the shared experience of television programs gives family members a similar perceptual framework with which to view the world, so that there are fewer differences in point of view among family members and fewer grounds for conflicts, is a matter which cannot be appraised with the data on hand."⁵⁰

⁵⁰ E. E. Maccoby, "Television: Its Impact on School Children," Public Opinion Quarterly 15, no. 3 (1951): 421f, quoted in J. Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society. Trans. T. Burger. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989) 281, note 54.

Based on this data it would appear that the main effect of television and its inevitable ubiquity would be its power to homogenize culture on a macro- (public) and micro (private)-scale. This chapter will analyze how the insular nature of the television audience affects traditional theatrical catharsis as demonstrated in the work of Eduardo De Filippo and the denial of a cathartic experience that Dario Fo poses with his comedies.

In 1954, at the onset of its inaugural television broadcast, RAI and its management were acutely aware of the potential that the new mode possessed in setting the terms for a unified cultural identity. Filiberto Guala, who had been appointed the managing director, thus penned the "Codice di Autodisciplina Televisiva" (corporate code of governance), circulated internally in April of that year. Through the "Codice Guala", as the document came to be known, RAI gained a markedly didactic and cultural framework to guide its programming choices. A dogmatic emphasis on morality and ethics permeates the document, which is not surprising in light of the apparent religiosity of Guala, who after leaving RAI in 1956 became a monk and entered a monastery.⁵¹

The document is only a handful of pages long, and is divided into five sections: Introduzione, Principi generali, Norme particolari, Norme relative ai programmi per i minori, and Collocazione dei programmi e modalità delle riprese. The second section is the most expansive and details the application of the principles according to seven categories: a) della persona umana; b) della famiglia; c) dei sentimenti religiosi; d) degli ordinamenti sociali; e) del decoro nazionale; f) della moralità dei costumi; and g) della sensibilità degli spettatori. One can infer from these headings that Guala understood the potential of television to be able to influence each of these facets of Italian identity. RAI,

⁵¹ Massimo Emanuelli, 50 anni di storia della televisione attraverso la stampa settimanale. (Milan: Greco, 2004) 589.

as a state-run media enterprise, was in a unique position to set the parameters for what public discourse and mass culture ought to entail.

With the introduction, Guala lays out the rationale for the paper by first detailing the expansive influence of television that "può penetrare simultaneamente nelle abitazioni di tutto il territorio nazionale, con l'efficacia visiva delle immagini, oltre che con i suoni e le parole", thus RAI is aware of the "gravi responsabilità che, per i problemi di ordine educativo, morale e sociale, le derivano dalla formazione dei programmi".⁵² The text goes on to specifically delineate the sort of material that is acceptable for transmission as well as that which is otherwise censored. The general principle to guide the programmers seems to be, "È opportuno soprattutto che il delitto ed il vizio non siano descritti in maniera seducente od attraente, e che i sentimenti dello spettatore, rifuggendo da essi, siano per contro attratti verso i principi dell' 'oneste vivere' e del 'neminem ledere'"⁵³. Throughout the general principles section, in accordance with these terms, such things as violence, suicide, and divorce, among others, are specifically mentioned as concepts to avoid representing unless within a proper "moral" context. Such details would align with the governing Roman-Catholic Christian Democrats. Under the heading concerning the broadcasting of works derived from cinema or theater, it says:

I principi generali e le norme particolari su riportate delimitano chiaramente i confini della scelta in materia, nel senso che debbono essere esclusi dalla programmazione dei films ed opere teatrali che possono arrecare offesa alla persona umana, alla famiglia, ai sentimenti religiosi, agli ordinamenti sociali, al decoro nazionale, alla moralità dei costumi, alla sensibilità degli spettatori.⁵⁴

⁵² Filiberto Guala, "Codice di autodisciplina televisiva", 3 gennaio 1954, cinquant'anni di tv, (Rome: Documenti e Studi della biblioteca RAI-Teche, 2004) 64.

⁵³ Guala 65.

⁵⁴ Guala 70.

Guala's document demonstrates the restrictions that RAI sought to impose upon its content choices. Cognizant of the impact that television would have upon culture, RAI would seek control over the elements that would shape concepts of self, family, and national identity. The analysis that follows will explore how the work of Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo relate to the goals of the RAI establishment both thematically and structurally.

Napoli milionaria!, written in 1945, was Eduardo De Filippo's first play to deal with the events of World War II. As he said in an interview in May 1969:

Poche settimane dopo la liberazione -- dice De Filippo -- mi affacciai al balcone della mia casa di Parco Grifeo, e detti uno sguardo al panorama di questa città martoriata: così mi venne in mente in embrione la commedia e la scrissi tutta di un fiato, come un lungo articolo sulla guerra e sulle sue deleterie conseguenze.⁵⁵

In the character of Gennaro Jovine, Eduardo attempts to act out and work through traumatic events of the war. Through the theoretical framework espoused by noted trauma theorists Dominick LaCapra and Cathy Caruth, this chapter will analyze how Eduardo negotiates the various stages of the process within the confines of the theater. An analysis of subsequent film and television adaptations will expand the theory as it encompasses different historical time periods, media, and audience reception. As such, the work itself evolves from its initial iteration, not only because of the demands of adaptation but also because the author himself revises and updates the text.

Upon its first staging in the Teatro San Carlo, in Naples on March 25, 1945, the play enjoyed immediate success. In 1950, a film version starring Eduardo and Totò was produced which Eduardo wrote and directed. In 1962, Napoli milionaria! was one of the

⁵⁵ S. Lori, "Intervista con il grande autore-attore napoletano", in "Roma", May 7, 1969. In Maria Pia Granisso, "Napoli milionaria! La commedia, il film, l'opera lirica." Narrativa. 24.1 (2003) 195.

eight major works adapted for RAI television's weekly program "Il Teatro di Eduardo", again written, directed and starring Eduardo. In Radiocorriere, the in-house magazine that presented the television channel's weekly offerings, the following was written about Napoli milionaria! prior to its initial airing. It begins with a description of the play's premiere in Naples, in an effort to highlight the impact of the comedy from its outset:

per volontà dell'autore, a favore dei bambini poveri di Napoli: anche attraverso questo gesto era possibile senza dubbi, scorgere il nuovo impegno di Eduardo. Fuori di Napoli. Il timbro di Eduardo parve a molti poco riconoscibile (alcuni addirittura lo accusarono di una certa trasandatezza); ancora una volta giocò a sfavore l'equivoco dell'autore comico, quasi che Eduardo nella sua lunga carriera avesse tratto pretesto per le sue opere non da una realtà minuziosamente e implacabilmente osservata ma dal fiabesco o dal surreale.⁵⁶

The author of the article precedes the synopsis of the performance with a preamble that frames Eduardo in Naples, introducing him perhaps for the first time to Italians outside of that sphere. The abstract reveals an artist with close ties to the Neapolitan public, a fact highlighted later in the article by the contrast between the critics' ambivalence and the enthusiasm of the public at the outset of the performance.

Più sensibile di una parte della critica, il pubblico reagì prontamente al messaggio di Eduardo: i napoletani si riconobbero anche in situazioni e ambienti, i non napoletani si identificarono nella comune realtà di quel disagio morale che Eduardo acutamente sottolineava, in quella scabra speranza finale che Eduardo indicava.⁵⁷

The review underscores the strong connection to Naples but the mention of non-Neapolitans is compelling. In a way, RAI is preparing the palate of the television audience to appreciate the context and magnitude of the performance. The same applies to the pointed reference to Eduardo's conclusion as imbued with a "sparse hope". The

⁵⁶ "Teatro di Eduardo, Napoli milionaria" Radiocorriere, (22 Jan. 1962) 26-7.

⁵⁷ "Teatro di Eduardo" 27.

close of the comedy encourages the spectator to dwell on the outcome and its implications on the family structure, both fictional and actual.

Written in Neapolitan, the story centers on the Jovine family, made up of Gennaro, the father (played by Eduardo himself in the initial staging as well as the subsequent film and TV versions analyzed in this chapter); Amalia, the mother; Maria Rosaria, daughter of 19; Amedeo, son in his early 20s; and Rituccia, the youngest daughter of 5 years old. It is important to note here that Rituccia never appears on stage in the written version of the play. Her appearance in subsequent adaptations will be analyzed further in this chapter. Act one begins in 1942 in the thralls of World War II in the "bassi" of Naples. The family is of meager means and their flat reflects this poverty. The curtain rises on a large, dirty room crowded and cluttered with crude nineteenth-century furniture. There is a partition made of odds and ends, which forms a sort of cubicle, and is the room of Gennaro, an unemployed tram driver. During Act One we learn that Amalia, Gennaro's wife, is sustaining the family by selling coffee and other goods at inflated prices on the black market. Gennaro voices his objections, to no avail. Between acts one and two, Gennaro disappears and is presumed dead. In fact, he has been taken prisoner by German soldiers during a bombardment. The family and the audience learn later that he has been brought to a concentration camp, after which he eventually will escape and return home.

Act two opens after the Allied landing in Italy. More than a year has passed between the two acts when Gennaro returns. This time, when the curtain rises, we see that the house has undergone a transformation. The room is bright, colorful, decorated in gold and filled with gaudy furniture. Gone is Gennaro's cubicle and in its place is a marble shelf with an enormous coffee machine. Amalia has profited immensely during this time,

selling black market goods in partnership with a local crime boss. When Gennaro enters his home, he almost does not recognize his wife who is now elegantly dressed and bejeweled. His son has become a thief and is on his way to becoming a hardened criminal. His eldest daughter is pregnant and has been abandoned by the American soldier who put her in that state. And Rituccia is seriously ill. By the Third Act, the young child's health has taken a turn for the worst. The possibility of her death ultimately becomes the catalyst for the family to regain its moral bearings. The play ends with Gennaro's famous line, "Ha da passà 'a nuttata"⁵⁸. These words serve as a sign of hope in the first iterations of the play and are imbued with new meaning in subsequent adaptations.

Anna Barsotti, an important critic of Eduardo, sees the character of Gennaro as being able to overcome the limit that separates his microcosm, the low-class neighborhood of Naples on the margins of society, living day by day to survive, from the greater world, which sees an Italy bombarded and trampled by foreign armies. His transformation within the play is physical as well as existential. When he attempts to reenter his world, we see him in sharp contrast to Amalia who dons an elegant silk dress. Eduardo describes Gennaro's appearance in minute detail, "Veste miseramente con indumenta di fortuna. Il berretto è italiano, il pantalone è Americano, la giacca è di quelle a vento dei soldati tedeschi ed è mimetizzata."⁵⁹

Barsotti notes "il suo costume arlecchino a pezzi internazionale"⁶⁰ which prefigures his understanding for all the victims of the war, which he will continuously attempt to

⁵⁸ De Filippo, vol. 1, 98.

⁵⁹ De Filippo, vol. 1, 66.

⁶⁰ Anna Barsotti, Nota storico-critica: Napoli milionaria!, Cantata dei giorni dispari, vol

communicate. Eduardo intentionally writes and envisions Gennaro to be a universal stand-in for the players in the war. American, Italian, and German: former allies and former foes come together on the body of one man. The German jacket is understandably camouflaged, which further underscores the fact that after the war all men are the same. Eduardo lightens the scene by giving Gennaro the air of a clown. The ridiculous aspect of his costume reflects how his character has been looked down upon by the members of his family and will evoke pity rather than empathy. The audience will have a different reaction.

Gennaro remains an outsider, a status conferred unto him from the beginning of the first act. In fact, when the audience is first introduced to him, he is not seen but heard from his “camera di fortuna” formed by a divider within the room. The children disregard his opinions, though he acts as the moral authority, a sort of conscience or literally the ‘grillo-parlante’ of the family. Granisso describes *Napoli milionaria!* as a “commedia corale” and notes that Gennaro lives an isolated life in the *basso* who cannot provide for his family and “si limita a denunciare la corruzione e l’ingiustizia sociale”.⁶¹ When he criticizes his wife’s profiteering by selling black market goods like coffee and flour at highly inflated prices, his son says to him, “Papà, vuie cierti ccose nun ‘e capite...Site ‘e n’ata època”⁶² Though Gennaro symbolizes the head of the family unit, he cannot provide for them from a material standpoint; he is an unemployed tram driver, unable to work since after coming home from the first war. Soon a neighbor enters

1, (Turin: Einaudi, 1995) 9.

⁶¹ Granisso 196.

⁶² De Filippo, vol. 1, 19.

recounting of the youngest Jovine daughter, Rita, singing throughout the alleyway “Papa è fesso” and Gennaro defends himself:

Chesto però nun ‘o ssente p’ ‘o vico...chesto ‘o dice ‘a mamma...Ma papa nun è fesso! È un poco stonato...Pecché siccome ha fatto l’altra Guerra, quanno turnaie ‘a capa nun l’aiutava cchiù...Aggi’ ‘a fa’ na cosa e m’ ‘a scordo, ne penzo n’ata e doppo cinche minute nun m’ ‘a ricordo cchiù...Trovo ‘e maccarune di Amedeo, me credo ca songo d’ ‘e mieie e m’ ‘e mmagno...⁶³

During the first act, what could be described as shell shock is used to comic ends in a scene in which poor Gennaro eats his son’s plate of pasta, thinking that it is his own.

This scene serves as a reminder of the trauma of the First World War, both for Gennaro, for the audience, and Italy as a whole. Gennaro explains that since he returned from the other war (l’altra Guerra), his mind is not the same as it had been. Whereas he had previously suffered physical trauma, the next war will cause an existential one. By referring to WWI in this manner, Eduardo subtly draws the audience's attention to distinguish between the two at the same time that he is collapsing the idea of war upon itself.

When Gennaro finally returns from captivity in the second act, and recounts his harrowing experience, he begins by comparing the two wars. If during the first act a discussion of war's effects was encapsulated in a humorous scene, i.e. the plate of pasta cited above, here there is no respite from the tragedy. In speaking to his wife,

Ama’ ... E io so’ turnato ‘e n’ata maniera, ‘o ssa’? Tut e ricuorde quann’io turnaie ‘a ll’ata Guerra, ca ghievo trovanna chi m’accedeva? Nevraštenico, m’appiccecavo cu’ tutu quante... Ma sta vota, no! Chest, Ama’, nun è Guerra, è n’ata cosa...È na cosa ca nun putimmo ca nun putimmo capì nuie...Io tengo cinquantaduie anni, ma sulamente mo me sent’ommo overamente. ‘A sta Guerra ccà se torna buone...Ca nun se vo’ fa’ male a nisciuno...Nun facimmo male, Ama’...Nun facimmo male...⁶⁴

⁶³ De Filippo, vol. 1, 25.

⁶⁴ De Filippo, vol. 1, 71.

This quote illustrates several important points. First, Gennaro highlights the fact that he is a changed man, existentially as well as physically. The first war, "Ll'ata Guerra" caused him mental trauma that was evidenced on his body; the feeling that others were after him continued to haunt him. Eduardo repeats the description of the first war as the other war and quickly defines the new war as something different. He also demonstrates the failure of language to describe what he has witnessed; it is a horror that transcends what the known parameters of war had previously been. He repeats over and over again that we, "nuie" are incapable of completely understanding that which has transpired. Eduardo, however, seems to find hope in the tragedy. Gennaro explains that at 52 years old, he finally feels like a man. The war, with all the negative effects and tragedy that it has wrought, could displace the ability to cause harm. From this war, one returns good because it has exhibited the worst that man can cause. With the last line of the citation above, Gennaro implores Amalia to no longer do harm. It is as if he is saying to her, and to his audience, that this is the opportunity to look at the evil of men's hearts and willfully move to good. The hopeful element is the core of Eduardo's play and provides a direction towards healing.

In her introduction to Napoli milionaria!, Anna Barsotti draws a parallel between Gennaro's outsider status in the first and second acts. Because Gennaro is intentionally drawn as an outsider from the very first scene, he possesses the power to see clearly upon his return. Barsotti also equates the continual negation of Gennaro's pronouncements in the first act with those of the second act, when he is trying to recount the events of his

capture and escape. She terms these a leit-motif, which add to the chorality of the play as a whole and create an epic space for the denouement.⁶⁵

Throughout the second act, Gennaro underscores the incomprehensibility of the scenes he has witnessed,

Nun abbastanza ll'anne sane pe' te cuntà tutto chello che aggio visto, tutto chello ch'aggio passato. 'E mmuntagne 'e carte ce vularrieno pe' puté scrivere tutt' 'a storia 'e chisti tridece, quattuordice mise ca simmo state luntane...Sta ccà, 'o vvi', Ama'... (*mostra gli occhi*) dint' 'a ll'uocchie...ncapo...Ma nun ssaccio 'a ddó acci' 'a accumincià...⁶⁶

Eduardo uses hyperbolic imagery of mountains of paper that would never suffice to detail all that has passed. Gennaro insists upon having borne witness. He points to his eyes and explains that the experience is there and in his mind, but he lacks the capacity to put his experience into words. As Hayden White says,

narrative is a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted. Arising, as Barthes says, between our experience of the world and our efforts to describe that experience in language, narrative ceaselessly substitutes meaning for the straightforward copy of the events recounted. And it would follow that the absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself.⁶⁷

Through Gennaro, Eduardo epitomizes the last line of the citation above while at the same time making it problematic. In his conversation with Amalia, Gennaro explains that there is not enough time or words to narrate the events. However, in his final imploration to never do harm again, he seems to be searching for some significance at the heart of the events, or at the very least something useful that could grow from what is left over.

⁶⁵ Barsotti, vol. 1, 5-13.

⁶⁶ De Filippo, vol. 1, 67.

⁶⁷ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1987) 1-2.

Eduardo insists that the audience take note of the evidence of trauma upon Gennaro's psyche. The words and actions of the protagonist, coupled with the structure of the play itself, show Eduardo acting out and working through the trauma along Freudian terms. Though Gennaro may lack the capacity to articulate fully the odyssey he has survived, it does not indicate a negation of the effect on his part. Rather, it is his interlocutors, his family and friends, who reject his attempts at narrating his experience. Eduardo underscores this situation by transforming the response of Gennaro's interlocutors into the leit-motif of the second act.

The choral response to Gennaro's numerous attempts to convey the tragedy to which he has borne witness becomes "E va buono, don Genna', nun ce penzate cchiù" "A' Guerra è fernuta" (Very well, don Gennaro, don't think of it anymore...The war is over). Superficially, this response may seem to be an attempt to offer comfort but it belies the speakers' own denial of the very same trauma "it would follow that the absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself".⁶⁸

The response also takes on different meanings within the historical context of the three versions of the play. In 1945, Eduardo's audience is reminded that though the battles may have ended, the war is still very much a part of their daily lives. While many would want to move on and not think about it anymore, this will and should prove impossible. By forgetting that which transpired, as opposed to trying to process the events, it will be impossible to move on and rebuild. Whereas Gennaro's audience denies his voice, Eduardo finds a receptive audience in the theater. The Neapolitans identify

⁶⁸ White 1-2.

with the characters of Napoli milionaria! and through their struggles can find a way to process the events that transpired. The community represented in the play serves as a metonymy for countless others in the city and the peninsula. Eduardo takes great pains to create characters that are essentially flawed. Some have lost their way because of the war. Others may have already been corrupted. War inevitably reveals the true nature of those individuals and lays bare how delicate the ties of a community can be. As the conscience of the play, Gennaro, already marked by a peculiar mental state, is able to come through and create a space for hope.

In 1950, the film version takes on a decidedly more comic tone. Though a decade has passed, this insistence that the war has finished would force viewers to reflect on their history. Again in 1962, when it premieres on RAI, Italy would find itself in post-economic boom. It may be impossible to gauge an individual's response to the refrain that the war is ended and should be relegated to memory. Eduardo uses irony to remind his audience of the necessity to revisit this period in history as a way of reflecting upon contemporary society as well as a method of coming to terms with this past trauma.

The structure of the play itself mimics the experience of trauma, insofar as the inability to express it parallels its physical absence from the performance. First, the audience never sees Gennaro's capture or torture. In fact, it is between acts one and two that Gennaro is captured during a bombardment. A period of 13 to 14 months passes between the two acts. Eduardo's choice not to represent the moment of trauma reflects the repression of the trauma itself and the period of latency that follows. Upon his return, Gennaro further emphasizes this point when he states that he did not remember how he was captured, how he ended up on a train, or where he ended up. Quoting Cathy Caruth,

“The survivors’ uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns, as Freud points out, insistently and against their will.”⁶⁹ In this manner, the audience identifies with the “amnesia” of Gennaro by being denied witness to the traumatic event. It is important to keep in mind however that this identification changes with the circumstances surrounding the actual performance of the play. When Napoli milionaria! was first performed, it was literally staged amidst the rubble of the war in 1945 at the San Carlo Theater in Naples. In a review of the 1962 television production, quoted earlier, the Radiocorriere remembers the immense popularity that accompanied the first representation of the play. When it is produced for television in 1962, the audience, now the Italian population at large, as opposed to strictly Neapolitans, has the benefit of having lived through what should have been a period of healing and reflection. To what degree this interval transforms the experience of the play for both the audience and the author is difficult to pinpoint, but can be surmised to a certain extent through the longevity of the televised performances as well as the adaptations that Eduardo carries out, respectively.

In the span of time between the first staging of Napoli milionaria!, and its appearance on the television, the audience who had the opportunity to experience the play was twofold: live viewing in a theater and acoustic version on the radio. What makes the appearance of the play on television such a breakthrough is that the medium itself was so new that it was the very institution of theater that was creating television programming. Up until that point, the experience of theater was very much one of privilege. With the advent of the radio, the number of audience members was multiplied. However, with a

⁶⁹ Cathy Caruth, “Trauma and Experience”, The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings. N. Levi and M. Rothberg, eds. (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2003) 194.

radio performance, the lack of visual element and a "live" experience inevitably removes the essential element of a theatrical experience.

Insomma, è comunque ancora la drammaturgia teatrale a produrre quella radiofonica, disponendosi e dislocandosi, attraverso accorgimenti acustici, nello spazio ideale di un palcoscenico, articolato per piani sonori; e sarà poi il teatro, appena possibile, a produrre televisione, rendendo percepibile all'orecchio o all'occhio di un ascoltatore o di uno spettatore lontano quello che a volte il teatro può perdere o confondere, il volume di un sussurro, la mobilità di un'espressione. Non importa allora andare a cercare altrove quella peripezia che è già tutta contenuta nelle minuzie del tempo e dello spazio che abitiamo: e se il *medium* utilizzato perde lo spettatore e la sua presenza attiva, che amplifichi allora almeno l'attore e la sua tradizione espressiva.⁷⁰

Upon Gennaro's reentry, he responds to his son's questions about his whereabouts, "Nun 'o ssaccio. Io si ve voglio dicere addó so' stato, effettivamente nun 'o ssaccio di'⁷¹" Eduardo here is highlighting the inability of existing linguistic structures to express that which was experienced by the character. Gennaro does not know how to say where he has been or what he has seen because words will inevitably fail to communicate the horrors witnessed.

According to the terms set by LaCapra, Eduardo's method may at best prove problematic. Towards the end of the play, the character of Riccardo delivers a monologue in which he describes the loss of community. Before the war, Riccardo, having been employed in the Fascist ranks, was secure in the middle class. When Mussolini fell, Riccardo lost his economic security. At the end of the play, he is destitute and in severe debt to Amalia. A scene early in the act shows him begging her, in vain, for extensions on his loan so that he can feed his children. Ironically, when Riccardo arrives at the end of the play, it is to deliver the lifesaving medicine to Rituccia. When

⁷⁰ Antonella Ottai, "Eduardo dalla radio alla televisione". Eduardo l'arte del teatro in televisione, (Rome: RAI-ERI, 2000) 34.

⁷¹ De Filippo, vol. 1, 68.

Amalia asks what he wants in return, he replies that he wants nothing and goes on to recall a nostalgic past where a sense of community existed. Amalia is at this point bereft of power and in the ensuing scene it is Gennaro who has acquired the position of strength and authority as they sit vigil over their ailing child.

Though LaCapra maintains an important distinction between loss and absence, he concedes that, "When absence itself is narrativized, it is perhaps necessarily identified with loss (for example, the loss of innocence, full community, or unity with the mother⁷²". One could read Napoli milionaria! as a nostalgic yearning for a glorious past in which neighbors lent a helping hand, according to Riccardo's monologue, but the figure of Gennaro undermines this idyllic scenario. Early in act one, Gennaro comments on the threat that an "every man for himself" attitude has on the integrity of a community. I would suggest here that rather than a loss of community caused by the trauma of the war, there is initially an absence of a total, unified, and whole community. The marginalization of the *bassi* exemplifies the shortcomings of the society as a whole.

For evidence of this let us return to act one for analysis. Earlier in this chapter, I have talked about how Gennaro is inscribed as an outsider from the beginning of the play. One scene in particular from the opening act underscores this role and shows the complex relationships of the community. In a memorable scene, the authorities are about to walk into the Jovine household on suspicion of black-market goods. Like clockwork, Amalia stows the products under the bed. Gennaro takes his place as the "corpse" on top of the bed, while other neighbors play the roles of mourning women and priest. When the authorities arrive, though the officer suspects the ruse, social norms dictate that he cannot

⁷² Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss". Critical Inquiry, 25.4 (1999), 701.

disturb the corpse and Amalia's plan is proved successful. Adding to the drama, during the scene of the "finto morto", a bombardment begins and Gennaro is forced to remain dead for all intents and purposes. Gennaro in the end rises from the bed, much like how he will rise from the dead after his disappearance in act two. This scene demonstrates the priorities of the people involved. In the pursuit of material wealth and wellbeing, the sanctity of death is undermined. There is however a mentality amongst the people of the *basso* that the authorities are in collusion against the interests of the people, and even Gennaro, searching to give Amalia an alternative to the black market, stumbles his way through the argument until he finds that there is actually no alternative to the one that Amalia has found:

Amalia: (ponendo il problema perché lo risolva lui) E allora che s'ah da fa'?

Gennaro: E si nun me faie parlà. (Resta come assorto; poi d'improvviso) Ah sí... 'Atessera...Dunque...Se con la tessera nun se pò campà...(Perde di nuovo il filo del suo pensiero; se ne adonta; mormora) Sango d' 'a Marina, io avevo capito...Avevo capito proprio come si deve fare per vivere dignitosamente, senza ricorrere a questo guaio della borsa nera... (Trova il concetto) Ah! Se colla tessera nun se pò campà, allora si dive ricorrere alla borsa nera...Si deve vivere col pericolo che ti arrestano, che vai carcerato... (Non sa più dove parare con le sue argomentazioni; cedendo ad una ineluttabilità, dichiara con un tono umano, comprensivo) Ama', stàmmecce attiente...⁷³

Eduardo is transmitting the dilemma faced by many Italians during this time period.

Continually subjected with grim prospects, even before the war, they are forced to define what human dignity means to them. Is it living with respect for the law and community or not having to sacrifice every day to make ends meet? Gennaro can no longer see an answer clearly, hence Eduardo restrains himself from passing judgment on the members of the populace who, faced with a similar dilemma, decided one way or the other.

⁷³ De Filippo, vol. 1, 34-5. The sections in parentheses indicate the stage directions.

The problem for Eduardo is that while the vices wrought upon a community during the war are universal, these moral crimes do not culminate with a more united society. Since the only end is survival, it necessarily will tear through and destroy whatever semblance of community existed prior to the war. In this way, Eduardo undermines Riccardo's monologue in the second act where he recalls a unified community in the memory of the audience. This image had been heretofore lacking in the play itself. For the audience members of the Teatro San Carlo, a reminder may well have been necessary. When faced with Amalia's cold-heartedness in demanding his debt paid, regardless of whether his children go hungry, Riccardo muses,

Perché in fondo la vera casa era un poco tutta la città...(come ricordando un'epoca felice) La sera si usciva...S'incontrava gente calma, tranquilla...Si scambiavano sorrisi... saluti...C'era quella sensazione di protezione scambievolmente. Certe volte uno pure se si voleva divagare un poco, senza spendere soldi, usciva per vedere come erano aggiustate le vetrine...senza invidia...senza rancore...uno vedeva un oggetto... Diceva: quanto è bello! E faceva tutto il possibile per conservare i soldi e poterlo acquistare nei limiti della propria possibilità...Cambio casa...Oggi che solamente in casa propria uno si sente un poco protetto...Oggi che non appena metti il piede fuori di casa tua, ti sembra di trovarti in una terra straniera...⁷⁴

While this vision may be partly true, Riccardo represents the bourgeoisie and not the occupants of the basso. The motivations and aspirations of the two classes are very different, of which Amalia is quick to remind him. When finally we reach the close of the play, in spite of history, Riccardo chooses to heed the ideals brought back by Gennaro, to do no more harm. The community has been destroyed, and perhaps it never existed, but there is a chance to reweave the moral fabric that binds us.

The shift between acts one and two is abrupt, but while Gennaro is living the trauma of his journey through war, act three finds the protagonist back at his seat at the head of

⁷⁴ De Filippo, vol. 1, 59. The sections in parentheses indicate the stage directions; the ellipses are included in the original text.

the table. Now it is the Jovine family as a whole that is living an impending catastrophe: Rita, the youngest daughter, has taken a turn for the worse. For the whole of the second act, Rita is confined to a room offstage and her health is deteriorating. The young child, and the innocence that she symbolizes, is on the verge of being lost. While Amalia is preoccupied with planning a party for the local crime boss and her presumed lover, Gennaro seems to be the first one who pays attention to his dying daughter. Eventually Maria Rosaria, after being humiliated by becoming pregnant and abandoned, chooses to sit by her sister's side. Rita hence comes to symbolize the city and country as a whole and Gennaro arrives at this epiphany at the same time as the audience, "Ama', nun saccio pecché, ma chella criatura ca sta llà dinto me fa penzà 'o paese nuosto"⁷⁵. Ravaged physically and neglected morally, it is only with complete humility that one can begin to heal. It is essential to note that Eduardo is positing the trauma not as past but present. Indeed LaCapra's terms conflate the distinctions between time and space. The trauma is lived and relived continuously and exclusively in the present. Eduardo showcases this in several ways. First, Gennaro, upon his return, tries over and over to recount his horror. He ultimately concedes that this will be impossible. Then again, by transposing the place of trauma from the community to Rita's body, Eduardo is acting out the trauma through this act. By analyzing the conclusion to the original version of the play, Eduardo also seems to fall into the trap that LaCapra would have him avoid: that of imagining a future in which the community is whole again. With the return of Amalia as a maternal figure, worried over her child, and Gennaro's final pronouncements of "Adda' passa' a nuttata", Eduardo thus lays down a possible positive outcome for his characters and for the

⁷⁵ De Filippo, vol. 1, 95.

community. Whereas Gennaro may have lacked an empathic secondary witness to be able to work through his trauma, Eduardo finds a connection to the true interlocutor, the audience.



The film version of Napoli milionaria! coincides with the neorealist movement in Italian cinema. From the title screen it is clear what direction Eduardo will be taking,

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The credit roll commences: Eduardo (also screenwriter and director), Titina De Filippo, Carlo Nenchi, Totó, Mario Soldati, Aldo Giuffrè. The names are followed by the following quote, “Gli altri personaggi sono abitanti veri dal Vicolo Pallonetto a Santa Lucia.” The Nino Rota score accompanies documentary, newsreel footage of a religious procession, with people carrying a Madonna statue through the streets. Soon after, a voiceover accompanies a tracking shot that begins outside the city and lowers itself into the streets to finally light upon a family,

Questa forse non è nemmeno una storia. Del resto, anche se lo fosse, non sarebbe una storia originale. Da troppo tempo ormai di storie nuove non ce ne sono più. Capitano sempre storie vecchie agli uomini. Ma talmente vecchie che poi finiscono col sembrare un'altra volta. Si svolge in una grande città che tutti più o meno hanno

⁷⁶ Title screen, Napoli milionaria!, Produzione DeLaurentis, 1950.

visto, ma che pochi in fondo conoscono. Fatta di vicoli, angusti scuri, malodoranti, umanità afflitte, necessità batimenti. Uno a caso. Sono tutti uguali.⁷⁷

As the camera continues, it lowers itself into the *basso*, amid the chaos. The voiceover continues to narrate and introduce each of the characters, much like a *dramatis personae* at the beginning of a play, "Don Gennaro; Amalia la moglie; la sciacquiatielle di panni della figlia, Amedeo giocava a burrascosa partite a scopa "l'onore"; Rituccia giocando; Adelaide; Nipote e fidanzati; Peppe 'o Turco, E Settebellezza la guida autorizzata; Reclamo di fascista; la radio con musica riprodotta."⁷⁸ Eduardo's narrator maintains the same status over the filmic adaptation as the playwright. It will be remembered that Eduardo also introduced the play when it was first staged in Naples in 1945, between the first and second acts, he said,

Ogni anno di Guerra signore e signori, ha contato come un secolo della nostra vita di prima. Davvero non è più il caso di tornare alle vecchie storie. La commedia di stasera ha un primo atto che si riallaccia a quel che sono le conseguenze della Guerra viste attraverso la lente della farsa. Ma, dopo, state attenti, è il dopo che importa.⁷⁹

Eduardo is drawing the audience's attention to the great change that will happen between acts one and two. Gennaro embodies the transformation and will highlight its importance. The "dopo" that Eduardo refers to in his discourse can refer to both the third act of the play as well as to what the audience members will do after they leave the theater seats. Indeed, the open-endedness of Eduardo's pronouncements during the play are as open-ended as the end of the play itself. Eduardo, in reflecting upon the first performance of the play,

⁷⁷ Napoli milionaria! (1950). My own transcription of the voice-over narration that appears in the opening scene.

⁷⁸ Napoli milionaria! (1950).

⁷⁹ Granisso 200.

È nella mia città che ho provato la più profonda commozione della mia vita. Fu alla prima di Napoli milionaria! Quasi tutti i teatri erano requisiti. C'era il fronte fermo verso Firenze. C'era la fame, e tanta gente disperata. Ottenni il San Carlo per una sera. [...] - Vedrete che ci diffamerà -, pensava qualcuno allarmato. [...] Arrivai al terzo atto con sgomento. Recitavo e sentivo attorno a me un silenzio assoluto, terribile. Quando dissi l'ultima battuta, la battuta finale: - Deve passare la notte -, e scese il pesante velario, ci fu un silenzio ancora per otto, dieci secondi, poi scoppiò un applauso furioso, e anche un pianto irrefrenabile. [...] Io avevo detto il dolore di tutti.⁸⁰

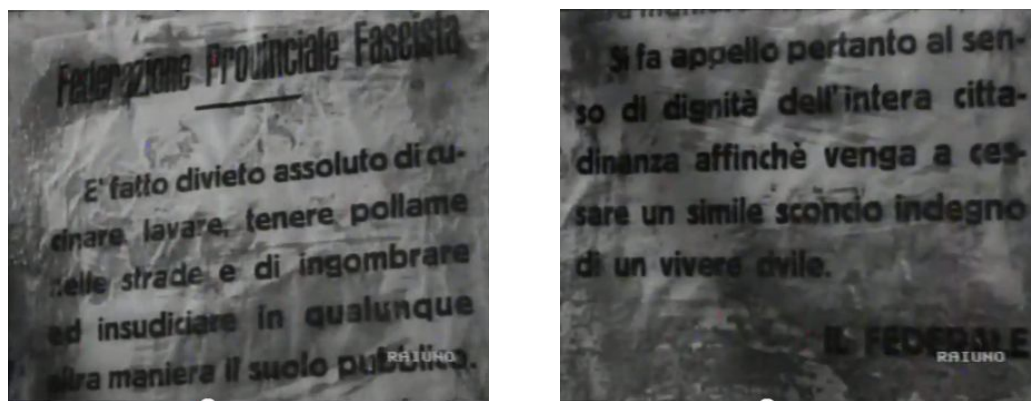
In the film, he introduces the story, the setting, and the characters. This role will be revisited with the 1962 television adaptation in which Eduardo again posits himself in the role of guide for his audience through his material. The didactic nature of his oeuvre cannot be denied and this element bolsters the function of the play as a working through of trauma.

The story, as Eduardo's filmic narrator explains, is one of many. It is age-old and universal. The city is Naples, everyone knows about it but nobody really understands it. By saying this, Eduardo calls up the actual community of Neapolitans who will identify with the place, language and characters creating a sense of exclusivity with this community. By insisting upon the story's universality, Eduardo is opening up the story to a new audience and allowing them the opportunity to identify with the characters. This narration occurs over a panorama of the Bay of Naples with Vesuvius in the background, a frame that appears in many of Eduardo's plays. The uniqueness of the city, according to the narrator, is that it is made of alleyways. They are stinking and overcrowded but they're dealing with same old things, "di umanità afflitta". The entire narration evokes the theme of survival prevalent in the beginning of the play. The film has already immersed the viewer in Naples even before the narrator begins, with the crowded street

⁸⁰ Fiorenza Di Franco, Le commedie di Eduardo (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1984) 140.

and energy of the procession. The community is gathered to carry the Madonna, the symbolic mother, prefiguring the fall of Amalia's own status as a mother.

In the opening scene, Adelaide exits into the vicolo yelling about Amalia's cooking. This too is musica riprodotta. Rather than an actual composed score, the music of the vicoli is people shouting because they are getting in each other's way. Everyone is trying to carve out his or her own space. Here it is hard to distinguish between self-preservation and selfishness. It is perhaps a little of both, but a fascist sign soon alerts the viewer that this scene, so full of life and chaos, is about to change because of nefarious outside forces:



The film does not end with Rita's life hanging in the balance (it is worth noting that while Rita does not appear physically in the play she does appear in the film, though has no speaking parts). Instead, the film ends in contemporary times in a piazza. The fascists have been replaced by political groups such as the MSI (post-fascist party). In the 60s their aim became to oppose the left wing and especially student uprisings. Toto's character is the one who is at the pulpit, comically gesticulating, a snide commentary on the part of Eduardo of the politics of the day.

The closing scene shows Gennaro (Eduardo) and Peppe (Toto) walking along the tramway, a scene that parallels one in the beginning of the film, in which Peppe and Gennaro discuss the likelihood of the war. At the time they dismiss the idea, after all, who would want a war? As they say this, a child runs by with a stick. The closing scene repeats the *mise-en-scene*, complete with the child. Gennaro and Peppe notice the parallel as well. Here Eduardo is alerting the audience that though the night has passed, things may not be safe after all.

With the culmination of the play and film version, one comes to the final version to be analyzed here, the 1962 television version. During this time, Eduardo produced a series of his plays for RAI, and Napoli milionaria! was of course one of them. If the 1945 version was to work through the trauma as it was still fresh, and the 1950 version was to remind the audience that perils still exist, then what is Eduardo's purpose for staging and directing a version for television nearly 20 years after the original? I would argue that on the one hand, Eduardo was keen to reach out to a broad audience that may not have previously had the opportunity to experience his plays. On the other hand, this follows in the long process of acting out and working through of the original trauma.

The resulting catharsis has a very different effect on the small screen than it does on the stage. Because the performance is removed from the communal experience, even more than in the case of a movie theater, the spectator internalizes the message rather than engage in a dialogue with other members of the community to realize the goals of the works.

Dario Fo's brand of theater is one that is very different from Eduardo and, as stated in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, he wished to avoid producing a cathartic

effect in his audience. According to his theater philosophy, the laughter that his farces elicits would encourage the spectators to synthesize the themes of the performance and eventually lead to concrete action. Conversely, a cathartic effect would eliminate the need for an active response to the material in the play.

Whereas Eduardo's play evinces truth in its verisimilitude, Fo frames true events within a farcical interpretation, as in the case with Accidental Death of an Anarchist. The characters, other than the Maniac, are grotesque versions of the archetypes that they represent. According to Joe Farrell, "Fo's stage persona is that of an anarchic clown who views indignation as a means of catharsis and liberation". Though the play was not performed for RAI, it demonstrates how Fo's political views materialized in his theater, thus making it all the more significant that years after his effective ban from RAI, he is commissioned to produce a television version of another controversial comedy, Mistero buffo, as the first in month-long series Il teatro di Dario Fo.

While Eduardo seemingly enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the national broadcaster, Fo's path was more than slightly controversial though it dates back to the very beginning of the station's history. In fact, on January 20, 1954, mere weeks after its inaugural transmission, RAI airs a series of Fo's farces, beginning with "Il dito nell'occhio", which is surprising given its focus on undermining the patriarchal versions of history. That Fo's theater was something unique and perhaps revolutionary was clear to RAI even then. The call to action that is implicit in the work does not impede Fo's successful relationship with RAI: four years later, a series of six farces were broadcast over the course of a week, airing at nine o'clock in the evening. In an article about "I cadaveri non si spediscono" in Radiocorriere, the reviewer describes the "farsa-gialla" as

"Inquieto e, entro certi limiti, inquietante esponente d'una nuova generazione teatrale, convinto della necessità di sollecitare la pigrizia del pubblico mirando alla polemica attraverso la risata⁸¹." The "nuova generazione teatrale" would believe that the audience, magnified through the airwaves, could be moved to continue the dialogue presented on the TV set, and set about a change in philosophy.

Since Italian television was still in its relative infancy at the time, it is interesting to see how they negotiated the terms of the new medium. Naturally, as in the United States, theater occupied a central role. In those early years, ownership of a television was limited to a fairly affluent, presumably theater-going, public. It was a natural fit that early on theater would come to occupy the small screen. The choice to produce Fo's farces is nevertheless surprising when one considers the tenets set forth in the Codice Guala. His theatrical success notwithstanding, as noted in Radiocorriere, Fo is able to reach his audience in "un linguaggio meno rigoroso e quindi più tagliente, più accessibile a un pubblico non obbligatoriamente tenuto a penetrare là dove intende l'autore⁸²".

In light of the Codice di Autodisciplina Televisiva, circulated internally in 1954, one gains an interesting perspective into the role and impact of theater on television. For Guala, theater represents an element of culture that is essential to what television should manifest. Early in the document, he references the importance of presenting the classics of literature, since they have been field-tested in a way through the classroom, and are thus worthy of contributing to the field of popular culture. Throughout the document, especially as part of the general principles, there is a desire to not offend any sense of

⁸¹ "Una farsa gialla di Dario Fo: I cadaveri si spediscono..." Radiocorriere, (2 Mar. 1959) 34.

⁸² "Una farsa gialla" 34.

morality, including references to sex, religion, and national decency ("decoro nazionale"). Thus it is an interesting choice to air Dario Fo, an overtly political dramatist. However, Fo's experiment of denying catharsis in order to lead to an extended dialogue beyond the theater is curtailed by its application to the television screen. It is precisely the social aspect of theatergoing that leads to a conversation, just as Habermas argued. By eliminating this essential element, and by moving the experience to the private sphere, the family home, the impact is diminished. One need only imagine the restrictions that an audience potentially only comprised of immediate family members would pose.

In 1969, upon the broadcast of Mistero buffo, as noted in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the Vatican declared it "the most blasphemous show in the history of television"⁸³. The sacrilegious elements of the performance do not prevent RAI from broadcasting the taped performance from the Palazzina Liberty in Milan in two parts on April 20 and 29, 1977. The piece inaugurated seven Friday evening broadcasts of four comedies: Mistero buffo (two parts), Settimo ruba un po' meno, Isabella, tre caravelle e una cacciaballe (two parts), and Parliamo di donne (two parts).⁸⁴

Mistero buffo is Dario Fo's most performed play and up to 3 million Italians are estimated to have seen it performed and it manifests his theatrical theories more clearly than most of his other work. The piece derives from medieval texts that Fo translated and rewrote from Latin and Provençal. This process was not new, in fact for A Poke in the Eye Fo adapted such stories as Cain and Abel and Samson and Delilah. Fo had long held an affinity for popular forms of storytelling in theater rather than those rooted in the

⁸³ Tony Mitchell, "Mistero buffo and the giullarate", Dario Fo: People's Court Jester (London: Methuen, 1986).

⁸⁴ Maria Letizia Capatangelo, ed., La maschera e il video: Tutto il teatro di prosa in televisione dal 1954 al 1998, (Roma: RAI Radiotelevisione italiana, 1999).

avant-garde. This interest led him, through research of medieval forms of theater, to the figure of the *giullare*, itinerant performers who exercised their art in public squares rather than perform for aristocracy or nobility.⁸⁵

The *giullari*'s connection to the common people is highlighted by a quote by Antonio Gramsci that Fo used to introduce the first edition of the text:

It was through a critique of capitalist civilization that the unified consciousness of the proletariat was or is still being formed, and a critique implies culture, not simply a spontaneous and naturalistic evolution.... Consciousness of a self which is opposed to others, which...can judge facts and events other than in themselves or for themselves but also insofar as they tend to drive history forward or backward. To know oneself means to be oneself, to be master of oneself.⁸⁶

Fo seeks to reveal to the spectator the truth about themselves and the world around them. By drawing attention to the inequities perpetrated by the ruling class, Fo seeks to enable "opposition through knowledge, together with real understanding -- not just a spontaneous explosion of outrage against justice⁸⁷". It is important to note the political context surrounding Mistero buffo. While Fo aligns himself with the working-class struggle, he also confronted the policies of the Communist Party:

The PCI always tends to put forward an inter-class position as it doesn't see culture as a class weapon. It more or less says the following: "Today Shakespeare isn't revolutionary, but it's good that workers go and see his plays because he's a great artist." Fine, but you have to read him in a revolutionary sense. What I mean is that if you use him for the proletariat he has one angle, if you use him for the bourgeoisie he has another. Culture isn't something neutral which everybody uses in an indiscriminate fashion: for example, you can make revolutionary use of Shakespeare and reactionary use of Brecht.

Then there is the question of "who's in control". If control means the intervention and the creative input of the working class, you produce alternative culture. If on the other hand your work arrives from on high then it's a conservative activity.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Behan 95.

⁸⁶ Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Political Writings, 1910-20, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977) 10-3.

⁸⁷ Behan 96.

⁸⁸ Nord Est, 26 December 1974. Cited in Behan 97.

With Mistero buffo, Fo displays an alternative to the dominant bourgeois culture. By mining history for texts that reflect an "autonomous culture of the oppressed classes"⁸⁹, Fo is legitimizing their struggles through his performance. Though it is a controversial piece, its provenance lays bare the literary tradition to which it belongs, thus conferring an official air to a form of theater that is not part of the canon of high culture.

Following the first performance of the play on October 2, 1969 at the Casa del Popolo outside of Milan, a debate ensued about whether or not the experiment to rehabilitate popular culture was related to class struggles. These issues are at the heart of the play itself, as Franca Rame recalls about the first performance:

He improvised a great deal, and people were enthusiastic -- the subsequent debates on popular culture were very heated.

Gradually Dario began to perform individual pieces, talking about where he had found them, the significance of popular theatre, popular culture, and popular language, and how it had been continually stolen and mystified by the powers-that-be...

Besides being a play, Mistero buffo is also a living newspaper, continually incorporating current news events and political and cultural satire into performances.⁹⁰

From its outset, the right wing was aware of its impact and in its responses commented on its ability to elicit a visceral reaction in its audience. From 1975-85, the comedy was performed mainly inside factories, which though was illegal, allowed Fo to interact with the working class who was his intended audience. The juxtaposition of the medieval *giullare* and the modern-day machinery brought into high relief the contradictions that Fo was laying bare with his play. What was essentially important however was the public,

⁸⁹ Behan 98.

⁹⁰ Behan 99.

who, through Fo's improvisation and audience interaction, was included in the performance as "coconspirators" and not merely passive spectators.⁹¹

The production enjoyed great success and in spite of its sacrilegious themes, did not receive any real condemnation until it was broadcast on RAI. During the airing of the first episode, Vatican officials tried and failed to get it off the airwaves. Instead they wrote several critical articles in L'Osservatore romano on subsequent days, accusing Fo of "encouraging the disintegration of the whole of Italian society". The Vatican went so far as to threaten to cut diplomatic relations with the government if the program continued to be broadcast. The Church's efforts failed, and the second part of the show aired the following week.

The main offense, which led to accusations of blasphemy, was that the Christ that was featured at the center of his work was one that challenged official versions of biblical history. Fo created a figure who arose from and was a part of the common people and who challenged the hierarchical forces of opposition. Fo viewed his appearance on the television station, and their refusal to cater to the criticisms of the Church in light of political maneuverings from the Left citing, "the pressure of a current of thought, the struggles that the left has fought in recent years -- also those that have carved out a cultural space. We're going back on television because we're one of the strongest cards that the left can play"⁹²

Indeed, by this time RAI's political leanings had greatly shifted since the early years under the leadership of Filiberto Guala. During that time, there was a concerted effort to promote programs that had strong moral and pedagogic underpinnings. The fact that RAI

⁹¹ Behan 99-101.

⁹² Behan 103-4.

enjoyed a nearly decade-long monopoly over the airwaves ensured that there could be no real challenge to editorial choices employed by the station. In 1960, however, the Italian judiciary challenged RAI's monopoly when a private broadcaster, Tempo TV, was denied a television license. Although the monopoly was upheld in light of the lack of terrestrial frequencies and the fact that television was considered a public service, it also included criticism of RAI's lack of impartiality. The court included a warning that the TV service should be both impartial and objective in light of its public service function.⁹³

The shift that happened in Italy from the 1950s to the early 1960s brought with it mass economic expansion as well as great migration from the south to the north. The changes in the landscape of the country brought with it a gradual shift to the political left. Amintore Fanfani, prime minister during this time, began incorporating socialists into the government. Cultural consumption also changed during this time, as reference earlier in the chapter. Specifically with regards to television, in 1956 there were 1.5 million domestic viewers, by 1960, 20 percent of households owned a television, in 1965 it was 49 percent and by 1970 the number was up to 80 percent.⁹⁴

When Ettore Bernabei was made head of RAI, his aim was to make significant changes to the old guard, who had thrived under Guala's leadership. He wanted to loosen the ties between the Christian Democrats and RAI and modernize Italy's television service to better reflect the political reality on the ground. There was still an insistence upon providing a cultural framework to the masses as Gianfranco Bettetini notes:

The project of "pedagogic enlightenment" informed television production in the 1960s and early 1970s. The role of the broadcaster was to provide "common-

⁹³ Matthew Hibberd, The Media in Italy: Press, Cinema and Broadcasting from Unification to Digital (New York: Open UP, 2008) 70.

⁹⁴ Hibberd 71.

denominator" programming, thereby appealing to all social groups and unifying its viewers. The emphasis was placed on providing a range of programmes pitched at a medium level of understanding. This included targeting groups furthest from this average level and promoting an empyrean culture, regarded as the minimum level required to uphold civil values and societal cohesion.⁹⁵

Throughout its early history, RAI sought programming that could reflect the cultural landscape and would incorporate the diverse identities that have made up the nation. The theater of Eduardo DeFilippo and Dario Fo at various times occupied a prominent place in the schedule. Thematically, they provided a reflection of and commentary on Italian society at a time when mass media was quickly becoming ubiquitous. The momentous shift of cultural consumption from the public to the private sphere underscored the importance of providing content that would educate and entertain the viewer. Politically, the two playwrights served to further the agenda of the RAI establishment, especially in the 60s and 70s, by giving a voice to the struggles of the left and balancing the ideology of the broadcaster to better reflect the public. Eduardo accomplished this by representing Neapolitans as a microcosm of Italy as a whole. With Napoli milionaria!, Eduardo demonstrates the acting out and working through of the trauma of war in order for the spectator, through catharsis, to reflect on the process and circumstances, both historical and contemporary. For Dario Fo, the television adaptation of his performances, especially Mistero buffo, legitimize the concerns of the working class and challenge the power of the ruling class. By avoiding a cathartic experience, Fo's work would engender a post-performance dialogue, one which is unfortunately stifled when the communal experience of theater is relegated to the family living room.

⁹⁵ Hibberd 71-2.

Chapter 4

Language, Dialogue, and Grammelot

In 1955, RAI inaugurated the first television transmission in Naples by live broadcasting a performance of Miseria e nobiltà, by Eduardo Scarpetta, from the Teatro Odeon in Milano. Eduardo De Filippo, the star and director, introduces the performance to the Italian and new Neapolitan audience. For the non-Neapolitan audience he prefaces the play by first explaining its history and popularity. He follows this with a note about the language, assuring the audience that though they may not understand each word, the gesture and the context would be clear.

Dario Fo debuted on RAI at about the same time as Eduardo. Fo's trajectory and goals are quite different than those of the elder Neapolitan playwright. By juxtaposing their unique approaches to adapting language forms to this medium, this chapter will demonstrate how the parameters defined by television and theater interplay with political subtext upon a national stage. Rather than modifying a local dialect to enable mass comprehension, Fo creates a tongue that is derived from yet dissimilar to any regional expression: *grammelot*. While Eduardo seems to be trying to avoid alienating the audience of the televised broadcasts, Fo goes to the other extreme with *grammelot* and performs in a language that is intended to defy universal understanding.

In 1977, after a long hiatus from working with RAI, Fo chooses to present Mistero buffo, a play whose broadcast led the Vatican to denounce it as the most blasphemous play ever staged. Fo engages with politics and history in a way that veers from the

accepted official perspective, and his language use in the play supports his irreverent view of the world.

The contrary linguistic treatments of the playwrights for their respective television performances highlight the relationship between language and power on a national stage. In this chapter, I will begin by analyzing the ways that Eduardo adapted Napoli milionaria! for television broadcast. This chapter focuses mainly on the standardization of the Neapolitan dialect in the play and its ramifications for both the Neapolitan speakers as well as the rest of the television audience. I also include some content changes that are relevant in that they reveal some of the tensions that would have existed between the playwright and the RAI producers. The second part of the chapter focuses on how Fo's nonstandard language works in concert with the material to create a theatrical experience that engages with the audience in a very unique way. By reading the application of their diverse linguistic approaches through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's⁹⁶ studies of the same, I will highlight the tensions between language and power that inform both Eduardo's and Fo's work. Ultimately, this tension is further illuminated by Antonio Gramsci's⁹⁷ work, especially regarding dialect theater and the role and types of intellectuals in society.

⁹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was an influential French sociologist, anthropologist, and intellectual. He viewed language not only as a form of communication but also as an instrument of power. Specifically, Bourdieu approaches language, dialects, and accents as a means to establish cultural identity and explores the effects on the same when such linguistic variations are erased, as through education. For further reading on Bourdieu's theories, see Michael Grenfell, especially Bourdieu, Language, and Linguistics (London: Continuum, 2011).

⁹⁷ Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist theoretician who wrote on sociology, political theory, and linguistics. Through his focus the cultural and political idea of hegemony, especially in regards to Southern Italy, has been especially influential. For more on Gramsci's theories see his posthumously published Prison Notebooks and Letters from Prison.

Eduardo's relationship with RAI thus begins and continues for several decades through different iterations. RAI does not focus exclusively on plays by Eduardo, in fact theater performances are aired weekly on Friday nights on RAI. Subsequently, Eduardo performs a series of one-act plays that are aired on RAI. Finally in 1962, RAI commits to a series of plays produced specifically for television. This is the first series, in black and white, that Eduardo produces. Later, in the 70s, he produces many of the same plays, in color, for RAI. The two series differ in some major ways. Though they are both performances produced and recorded for television broadcast, the first series was filmed on a closed set, with multiple camera angles, interiors and exteriors. The second series is very much intended to be a video record of a theater performance, as it would have been performed on the stage.

The first series is significant because it marks the first time that RAI entered into a creative contract with an artist. At the time, RAI had been looking to start a second channel with a greater focus on cultural transmissions. Adriano Magli, a director at RAI and head of the theater section of the second channel during this time, suggests the series with Eduardo at the helm. Ettore Bernabei, appointed by Amintore Fanfani, acquiesces.⁹⁸ Bernabei's predecessor had not held Eduardo in high esteem, denigrating his work as simply "dialect theater." Sergio Pugliese, former director of television programming, is quoted by Adriano Magli as saying that Eduardo's work was, "un teatro minore, dialettale, che aveva avuto sì degli esiti importanti, come quelli di Questi fantasmi!, Filumena Marturano, ma che rappresentava nel suo complesso, un fenomeno a latere."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ettore Bernabei, director of RAI, 1961-1974. Amintore Fanfani, prime minister of Italy, 1960-1963.

⁹⁹ Paola Quarenghi, Lo spettatore col binocolo: Eduardo De Filippo dalla scena allo

This quote highlights how dialect use was looked down upon during this time period. The fact that very shortly thereafter, Eduardo becomes the first artist to enter into a contract with RAI to produce content for the channel is surprising and sheds an interesting light into the politics of the day.

In 1962, the ruling Christian Democratic party, having consolidated its governing power at RAI, saw in Eduardo a chance to foster a relationship with an intellectual of the left, in order to show support towards the left in government. Eduardo, at that time, fulfilled the ideological criteria without being too revolutionary a choice. The decision also coincides with Fanfani, in 1962, having gained the support of the PSI (Italian Socialist Party) in government as prime minister. Bernabei's philosophies during his tenure at RAI tended to approach television programming from a pedagogical point of view, seeing an opportunity to strengthen the ideals that informed his party. To a certain extent, RAI's relationship with Eduardo further created an opportunity to reach out to a different audience. Eduardo did not agree right away to this deal but was convinced when Andrea Camilleri¹⁰⁰, the only person with a theater background at the station, as well as a noted Communist (thus further reinforcing Bernabei's appeal to the Left), was assigned to be the producer of the first series. According to Camilleri, the two worked well together and Eduardo saw him differently from those producers that would want to cut and change everything. They began to work together during a time in which live broadcasts of theater performances were beginning to go out of fashion, and so they

schermo (Rome: Kappa, 1995) 78.

¹⁰⁰ Andrea Camilleri was a notable Italian theatrical director and author. He rose to fame by staging plays by Samuel Beckett and Luigi Pirandello. He worked with RAI to produce series such as Inspector Maigret in 1962. For further information see: Michael R. Pitts, Famous Movie Detectives III (London: Scarecrow, 2004).

created programming that had not been previously done. What they intended to do was transform the experience for the spectator; rather than viewing a performance that had been presented to live audience members, the television viewer became the spectator in his own right, since the plays, for RAI, were produced in a different manner than those for the theater. Years afterwards, Eduardo apparently comes to change his mind as to the validity of this television exercise and so in the 1970s, he produces the second series to align more accordingly with his theater philosophy. The second series eliminates the conceit of attempting to produce a television performance. Gone were the multiple camera angles and sets. Each episode of the color series attempts to recreate what a spectator would see on stage. In fact, the illusion is announced at the start of each performance, which shows curtains being drawn to reveal a stage. The black and white series of 1962 thus remains a sort of theater-television hybrid.

The initial 1962 contract that was drawn up between RAI and Eduardo was unique in that only Eduardo himself was contracted with the station. He was allotted a budget of 82 million Lira and was subsequently responsible for hiring and paying the cast and crew. Additionally, it would seem that although there was a television director on the series, Stefano de Stefani, it was Eduardo himself who made the creative decisions. There are several elements that further complicate defining the genre of these productions. According to Aldo Nicolaj, who had the task of adapting the texts for the screen, the team did not write screenplays for the programs. Instead, they fully adapted the text into the new medium. They worked from the same manuscripts as would have been used in the theater. Therefore, his adaptation work was limited mainly to translating the stage directions from stage to screen. Nicolaj also had a censored function, e.g. substituting

profane language like "Perdio" with terms less offensive according to the guidelines that the conservative RAI had prescribed. In addition, the Italianization of the language occurred during rehearsals. The fact that the changes were made during the rehearsal process can also help us to understand the nature of these changes.

In an analysis of the 1962 television edition of Napoli milionaria!, one is able to delineate the precise linguistic variations that exist between the 1945 text of the play and the teleplay. For ease of discussion, I have categorized the changes by part of speech. The changes are further grouped according to the degree by which the language diverges along the spectrum between standard Italian and Neapolitan. The results are changes that are substantive, syntactical, or editorial. Substantive changes are those that modify words or phrases that are purely dialect and are not used outside of the Neapolitan language community. These authentic phrases speak directly to and for the Neapolitan audience for which and about which the play was written and ultimately performed. Syntactical changes are those that consistently substitute grammatical constructs of the original with forms that are more readily aligned with standard Italian. These modifications will approach standard Italian to greater or lesser degrees. The final changes are editorial. These will refer to comprehensive changes that are enacted within the script to adapt to the new medium or to reflect philosophical changes of the writer. The second portion of this section will analyze the technical elements such as camera angles, soundtrack, set design of the teleplay¹⁰¹. The final portion will focus on the linguistic variation and technical elements found in Act III. This analysis will further highlight the tensions that existed in Eduardo's adaptation process in addition to illuminating a sort of evolution of

¹⁰¹ For Eduardo, these changes are most profound in the 1954 film version of Napoli milionaria, directed by Eduardo and starring the playwright and Tótó.

the themes espoused in the play. The technical aspects in Eduardo's employ uniquely demonstrate how Eduardo was able to negotiate the terms of the new medium in realizing his theatrical vision.

The first group that I will analyze is the substantive changes. These modifications are defined by their divergence from terms that are generally used and understood by the Neapolitan-speaking population. The words that are found in the original text will be delineated with a T, for the televised edition instead, the teleplay, TP. For each set of terms, the original T will appear first followed by its modified form in the TP. In order to easily categorize the various terms I have chosen to group them according to part of speech.

Noun	Verb	Adjective
vascio → basso	scetato → svegliato	scioccante → noioso
mammeta → tua madre	susite → alzate	
soreta → tua sorella	ji → andare	
mbruoglie → pasticci	accattato → comprato	
scuorno → vergogna	si nun vi fanno pene → se non sentite pietà	

The group of lexical changes reflects modifications that are not simply the substitution of one isolated term for another. Instead they reflect a deliberate and consistent shift within specific grammatical forms. In the chart above, for example, one notices the possessive form for family members is originally written, reflecting the dialect, with the possessive

adjective attached to the end of the word. The script for the teleplay transforms the structure into standard Italian words and word order with no legacy traces remaining of the text's original construction. The choice to move the language in this direction naturally increases its comprehensibility but one could also argue that the original terms were more or less similarly intelligible. The end result then is a diction that removes its Neapolitan underpinnings to thrust itself into mainstream Italy via the standardization of the language. Eduardo, in Bourdieu's terms, is therefore trading in his Neapolitan "linguistic capital" and moving it from its "linguistic habitus" (actual language use) to the "linguistic market" (objective language use). Standard Italian would thus be defined in Bourdieu's terms as "legitimate language", or that which reflects the dominant social group. From this perspective, Eduardo is consciously trying to insert the subaltern Neapolitan identity into what is the dominant social group.¹⁰²

One must define what is the "dominant social group" in Italy, however, before continuing this discussion; and this question is complicated by the history of regionalism and division within the peninsula, and by the Southern question in particular. I would argue that editing his work for language serves not to distill the Neapolitan identity but to pollute it with the prejudices directed towards those that speak in any southern dialect. Ironically, during the years of Fascism, Eduardo's theater managed to escape the regime's censorship of dialect theater only to trade his linguistic capital decades later for mainstream acceptance and airplay on RAI. How much of this is due to censorship and dictates on the part of the RAI establishment is difficult to pinpoint but it would seem that

¹⁰² Michael Grenfell, Bourdieu, Language and Linguistics (London: Continuum, 2011) 7-66.

the changes were most likely determined during the rehearsals and tapings of the plays during the 1962 series.

The majority of syntactical changes are found in verb tense and usage and I have therefore categorized these changes according to their verb tenses, as follows:

Passato Prossimo	Present Indicative	Present Conditional	Imperfect	Imperfect Subjunctive	Passato Remoto
ve site fernuto 'e rimbambì → addirittura vi siete rimbambito	aggio → devi	ffacciarria → farei	íreve → eravate	avarrissev' → dovesse	ffacette → fece
	saccio → so	vularria → vorrei	porta → portava		iette → andai

It is no surprise that the majority of changes are found in the verb forms. As evidenced by the chart above, many of the dialect forms of the verbs vary greatly from the standardized form. This may reflect the artists' view that the comprehensibility of the text hinges on the verbal phrases. Unfortunately, as with the previously discussed grammatical edits, what is lost is the distinctly Neapolitan color of the text. The dialogue of the play becomes distinctly more formal, stilted, which is the antithesis of the themes of community and family at the heart of the drama. Conversely, by updating the language to reflect the Italian population at large, Eduardo can be seen as expanding the terms of the community defined in the play, in other words the audience is no longer

limited to the Neapolitan population therefore the language must include its new interlocutors. What is lost however, when analyzed in Bourdieu's terms, in other words the connection between language and power, is a certain authenticity that links the text with its origin.

The final category is the editorial modifications. These consist in the rewording of dialogue or reworking of scenes. In Act I, pages 26-29, Gennaro expounds in the original texts about the unsavoriness of the *calmiere*, or price controls, that have been set by the government for goods. In the teleplay, the discourse is greatly shortened and sanitized. Some things that were omitted in the screenplay include for example, the very beginning of the discourse: "E io vi dico che il *calmiere* è stato e sarà sempre la rovina dell'umanità...." The discourse then remains the same for quite a bit but changes again further along. In the original text for example Gennaro starts with the "*calmiere*" and the effect it has on the starving people and goes on to criticize the Fascist government. In his discussion, the agents include the *popolo* and the *professori*, the latter facetiously named to indicate the distance in class and education between them and the rest of the populace. I quote this lengthy passage in order to give a sense of the nuanced changes that Eduardo's message undergoes in the passage from stage to television:

Il *calmiere*, secondo me, é stato creato ad uso e consumo di certe tale e quale persone... che sol perché sanno tènere 'a penna mmano fanno 'prufessure, sempe a vantaggio loro e a danno nostro. Danno morale e materiale; quello morale prima e quella materiale dopo...E mi spiego. Il *calmiere* significa praticamente: "siccome tu nun saie campà, lèvate 'a miezo ça te mpar' io comme se campà!" Ma nun è ca nuie, cioè 'o popolo nun sape campà...È il loro interesse di dire che il popolo è indolente, è analfabeta, non è maturo... In questo caso 'e professore songo 'e fasciste....

Dunque...Siamo rimasti al fatto d' 'e rrétene mmano e che addeventano llo ro 'e padrone...E a poco 'a vota, sempe facenno vedé ca 'o ffanno pe' bene tuio, prima cu' 'o manifesto, po' cu' 'o discorso, 'a minaccia, 'o decreto, 'o provvedimento, 'o fucile...t'arredúcenno nu popolo..."o vi', comme avimmo fatto nuie ca ce mettimmo paura pure 'e parlà. [...] Popolo e prufessure se mettono allara a dispetto. 'E

prufessure pigliano pruvvedimente pe' cunto llo ro e 'o popolo piglia pruvvedimente pe' cunto suio. E a poco a poco tu hai l'impressione ca niente t'appartiene, ca 'e strate, 'e palazze, 'e ccase, 'e ciardine, nun è robba toia...ma ca è tutta proprietà 'e sti prufessure; ca llo ro se ne ponno servi' comme vonno, e tu non si' padrone manco 'e tuccà na preta. Po', in queste condizioni, se fa 'a guerra. "chi ha voluto 'a guerra?" "Il popolo", dicenno 'e prufessure. "Ma chi l'ha dichiarata?" "E prufessure", dice 'o popolo. Si 'a guerra se perde l'ha perduta 'o popolo; e si se vince, l'hanno vinciuta 'e prufessure. Voi mo dite: ma che c'entra questo discorso con quello che stavamo dicendo? E c'entra.¹⁰³

The teleplay features some variations:¹⁰⁴

Gennaro: Secondo te, perchè fanno la guerra? Pe' fa spari 'a robba. E il calmieri, e capito, Pecche quando 'o governo mette il calmieri è vero tu alimenti...l'astuzia del grossista ed il dettagliante. Succede 'o gioco 'e prestigio. è capito? 'O consumatore va elemosina. O si more 'e famme o va in galera. Il mio progetto il mio disegno di legge se io tenesse (interrupted by people entering Gennaro's house to buy coffee from Amalia) Dunque si parlava della mancanza di generi e io invece dicevo che la robba c'è ma è il calmieri che la fa sparire. Io farei in questo modo. Le città d'Italia quante sono. Sono.. be va be' non lo sappiamo. Non fa niente. Facciamo che fossero cinque per fare un conto facile. E facciamo che il fa bisogno che ogni città d'Italia fosse un chilo di farina al giorno a testa diciamo un milione di chili di farina. A te governo, che ci sono 50, 60 milioni va be, di nascosto apre uno spaccio facendo finta che si tratta di uno spaccio privato E lancia sul mercato 'a farina a dieci lire 'o chilo. Che succede?

Errico: E gli altri negozianti entrano nello spaccio e non sapendo che quello che vende lo fa per finzione. 'o pigliano e 'o tozzano co 'a capa sopra 'o pavone.

Gennaro: Viene la concorrenza. L'iniziativa privata. Voi site ignoranti.¹⁰⁵

The original text is much more critical of the ruling class than the teleplay. Gennaro creates two distinct classes: the *popolo* and the *prufessure*, or in this case the Fascist ruling class. In labeling the oppressors as professors, Eduardo is indicting the intellectual class by association. In Gennaro's *legge*, the *popolo* is taken advantage of because of its perceived ignorance. The ruling class manages, through things like price control, to

¹⁰³ De Filippo, vol. 1, 28-9.

¹⁰⁴ The cited portion of the dialogue is from the teleplay as transcribed by me. It was impossible to use the subtitles that the DVD provided as they were "translated" into standard Italian and thus are very different from the words spoken by the actors.

¹⁰⁵ "Napoli milionaria!" *Le Commedie di Eduardo*. Writ. and dir. Eduardo De Filippo. (01 Distribution, 2005) DVD, 14:38-16:00.

make the people entirely dependent upon the state for its survival. There are several differences between the two versions of the speech. The most obvious change is the length of Gennaro's diatribe. In the published play, Eduardo has Gennaro speak almost exclusively for almost four pages. The teleplay drastically reduces the content and includes several interruptions from other characters. One explanation for this is the medium choice itself. The dictates of a television production necessarily prohibit excessive speeches by a single actor. In fact, the teleplay version is livelier in form and content. Eduardo does not simply change the length of Gennaro's discourse, he also interjects other characters' reactions more frequently. The key to understanding the full scope of Gennaro's discourse comes at the very end in the text:

Gennaro: Perché il calmiera è una delle forme di avvilitamento che tiene il popolo in soggezione e in istato di inferiorità. Il mio disegno di legge sarebbe quello di dare ad ognuno una piccola responsabilità che, messe insieme, diventerebbero una responsabilità sola, in modo che sarebbero divisi in parti uguali, onori e dolori, vantaggi e svantaggi, morte e vita. Senza dire: io sono maturo e tu no!

Peppe: Don Genna', io nun aggio capito niente.

Gennaro: E si tu avisse capito, nun ce truvàrriemo accusí.¹⁰⁶

With this discussion, Gennaro is fitting the mold of an organic intellectual, according to Antonio Gramsci's definition of the term. The solution to the problem is predicated upon each member of the community taking responsibility in order for the popolo to rise together. This solution can also be seen as a criticism of both the intellectual ruling classes as well as the general population. Gennaro would see a reassessment of the every man for himself mentality that permeates the *bassi* of Naples, thus reaffirming the status quo. In fact, Napoli milionaria! concludes with an appeal to the collective conscience of the population. With the television series, the target audience is expanded to include

¹⁰⁶ De Filippo, vol. 1, 29.

broad swaths of Italians and not simply the Neapolitan audience for which and about which it was originally imagined. Whether or not Eduardo implies that everyone has agency to strive towards what is morally good for the greater good is left somewhat ambiguous with the concluding line of the play, "'A da' passa' 'a nuttata". The phrase can be translated into several different ways. In the passive voice, it can mean "the night must pass" and invokes a sense of resignation. The hope of a new day, which will inevitably follow, is left for the spectators to realize. Alternately, it can signify "the girl must pass the night", referring to Rituccia's survival. Finally, the phrase also says, "We must pass the night"¹⁰⁷ The nuance and ambiguity that exists in the original Neapolitan is unfortunately lost in translation but I believe it is willful on the part of the dramatist. If Rituccia symbolizes the victims of the war, then the "we" that can be translated refers to not just the Jovine family, but Neapolitans, and Italians, as a whole.

In the teleplay, Eduardo greatly edits Gennaro's discourse. Initially one notes the minimization of the "us" versus "them" mentality that pits the ruling classes against the masses. In fact, the word *prufessure* is not mentioned at all in the teleplay version. Eduardo's choice to refer to the ruling class as *prufessure* lumps together those with authority as well as the entire educated class. On the other hand, it also underscores the sense of subjugation on the part of the lower classes. Those who are in charge are trusted to know what's best for the people but the opposite is often true. The term is thus used ironically.

By eliminating the term in the teleplay, Eduardo thus also eliminates the populist ideology that permeates the original text. In fact, the teleplay speeches end on a very

¹⁰⁷ Carlo Ardito, trans, De Filippo Four Plays: The Local Authority, Grand Magic, Filumena Marturano, Napoli Milionaria (London: Methuen, 1992) 362.

different note. The later Eduardo steers the discussion towards the role of the markets in determining the economic climate, i.e. capitalism. Eduardo calls it competition and private initiative, which in the play translates into the black market. The teleplay version notably does not reach out to the audience or implicate them in their responsibility for what has happened, nor their responsibility for rebuilding a new and better society. Indeed, the events seem almost inevitable. In some ways, the teleplay version lacks the ideological underpinnings that define the original. By avoiding a discussion that would pit members of various social strata against one another, Eduardo avoids alienating members of either social group that would make up the broader television audience. The discussion is less sophisticated but also lacks the contempt that underscores the original. It is more concrete and less abstract. Responsibility is firmly planted upon the shoulders of the government and the *calmiere*. The *popolo* is characterized as puppets being controlled by those in power.

In the original text, there is a harsher tone towards his audience. Eduardo also uses many hyperbolic phrases that are reprised in Act II when Gennaro attempts to recount his experience of being captured, escaping, and returning home. Though the first iteration of these phrases is used for rhetorical effect, the second time, they are used in earnest as the subject matter of the dialogue changes.

The following excerpt appears in the text but not in the teleplay. Riccardo owes Amalia money and is pleading for her mercy as he cannot pay. Amalia responds coldly, reminding him of his ambivalence when it was her family that was struggling:

Riccardo: Si cambia casa, è una parola... Una volta era facile... Si cambiava casa con facilità... Perché anche se si andava ad abitarne una piú brutta, piú meschina, uno ce ieva cu' piacere... Perché in fondo la vera casa era un poco tutta la città... (Come ricordando un'epoca felice) La sera si usciva...S'incontrava gente calma, tranquilla...

Si scambiavano sorrisi... saluti... C'era quella sensazione di protezione scambievolmente. Certe volte uno pure se si voleva divagare un poco, senza spendere soldi, usciva per vedere come erano aggiustate le vetrine... Senza invidia... Senza rancore... Uno vedeva un oggetto... Diceva: quanto è bello! E faceva tutto il possibile per conservare i soldi e poterlo acquistare, nei limiti delle proprie possibilità... Cambio casa... Oggi che solamente in casa propria uno si sente un poco protetto... Oggi che non appena metti il piede fuori di casa tua, ti sembra di trovarti in una terra straniera...

Errico: (un po' scosso) Del resto, non è cosa mia... Se donn'Amalia vuole...¹⁰⁸

This is the only part of Riccardo's speech that is eliminated. What remains focuses entirely on the business aspect of the loan agreement that Riccardo had entered into with Amalia. In fact, through the omission of Riccardo's nostalgic look back, the teleplay highlights Amalia's harshness compared to Riccardo's meekness. In this way, Riccardo becomes the antithesis to Amalia and Errico, a juxtaposition that recurs during the climax of the play. The coldness with which Amalia dismisses Riccardo's plight brings into higher relief her eventual fall in Act III. In the penultimate scene of the play, it is Riccardo who is able to provide the saving medicine for Rita. At that time, Riccardo is allowed to have his say in the teleplay.

Also, because of Riccardo's words, in the text Errico is somewhat moved, willing to make a deal with Riccardo that might save his home. In the teleplay, there is no impetus for Errico to take Riccardo's side. This scenario furthers the characterization of Errico as Amalia's cohort. Errico seems to be stripped of any agency, while Amalia is presented as the driving force behind their criminal endeavors.

In both the text and the teleplay, Amalia responds by saying that it is too little too late. Amalia also remembers how when her family was starving and scraping by, there was no compassion showed towards them. In other words, in Amalia's eyes, Riccardo is getting what he deserves. Indeed the karmic retribution is then turned back on Amalia

¹⁰⁸ De Filippo, vol. 1, 59-60.

when her daughter lays sick and the saving grace lies in Riccardo's hands. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction and the conclusion of the play is the culmination of each character's decision to choose self-preservation over community.

The words that are eliminated in this scene echo certain aspects of the omitted section of Gennaro's *legge* discussed earlier. For example, the overarching theme of Riccardo's speech is that there once was community and now disorder reigns. For Gennaro, the problem and the solution lie in the community itself. If each took a small share of responsibility, the shared goals would lift each one up. Eduardo is seemingly eliminating the community from the past as well as the present. In the original text, Riccardo's speech serves as a foil for Gennaro who during Act II is absent. Thus in his absence Riccardo is the voice of conscience and morality. With the omission of the speech in the teleplay, Eduardo highlights the lack of moral conscience during Gennaro's absence, thus serving to elevate Gennaro's status in the third act of the play.

The third element that I will analyze is how the technical aspects of the teleplay serve to buttress the themes of the play. It is important to reiterate that the original black and white series of the 60s was filmed on a closed set with multiple camera angles. In the later adaptations, Eduardo abandons this conceit and returns to a more traditional filmed play, in which the televised version would look similar to a play performed on a stage. The most significant element in the original televised version comes in act three, when the camera perspective coincides with Gennaro's point of view, thus highlighting his reestablishment as the *pater familias*. At that time, there is also the inclusion of camera tracking shots, which are not seen up until that point. In this manner, the viewer is

allowed to see the setting through the viewpoint of Gennaro. The camera follows his gaze as he looks upon his home in a new light.

In both the text and the teleplay, the third act is centered around Gennaro who reaffirms his place at the head of the table. Literally, at the opening of the act, we find Gennaro seated at the table, speaking with the Brigadiere. The last time that we had seen the Brigadiere, Gennaro was playing dead in order to hide the contraband from the Brigadiere. In a reversal, here we see the two men seated as equals at the table. As a gesture of friendship, from one father to another, the Brigadiere reaches out to Gennaro in an effort to save Amedeo from eventual imprisonment. The Brigadiere alerts Gennaro to the crime that is about to be committed. Gennaro tries his best to implore his son to choose the right path, which he ultimately does.

The concluding act of the teleplay seems to emphasize Gennaro's influence in a more poignant way than the original text. One of the reasons for this is precisely the manner in which Eduardo is able to harness the camera as a storytelling and character development tool. This accomplishment is noteworthy when one remembers that the experiment that RAI and Eduardo had undertaken, to adapt theatrical plays into a television production, was an entirely new concept in Italian television at the time. For Eduardo especially, the parameters of the medium prompted many innovations in language, content, and technique in order to create a production that is wholly unique from other versions of his plays. This process, and the linguistic and stylistic alterations that result, produce a work that has a different impact than the original staged version. While it is difficult to pinpoint the intention of these changes, it is easy to decipher their effects. The language modifications do widen the appeal of the material, at least insofar as it becomes more

easily comprehensible to a non-Neapolitan speaking audience. This also, to a certain extent, elevates the concerns that are addressed in the play to a more universal level. However, in light of Bourdieu's theories, one can also see that by abandoning the authentic dialect, Eduardo is further reinforcing Neapolitan as a subaltern identity. With this series of productions, the potential influence imposed by RAI leadership is hard to quantify but inevitably informed some part of the editorial process. The political ramifications add another dimension to the influence of the teleplay.

The theater of Dario Fo presents a very different approach to linguistic expression and adaptation than that of Eduardo. First and foremost, one must acknowledge that the audience for Fo is very different from Eduardo's. Fo proclaims himself to be a modern-day people's jester, who espouses a form of theater that is politically motivated but also an organic reflection of the population. Whereas Eduardo represented a politically safe collaboration with an established artist of the left, Dario Fo enters the scene in a more radical fashion.

In 1962, RAI aired a series of one-act farces by Dario Fo. This was four years after the success of Il dito nell'occhio established his unique type of political theater. The reviews in the Radiocorriere, RAI's official weekly magazine, stress the newness of Fo's brand of theater, which includes the accessibility of his language as it is fused with gesture and physicality as well as the exploration of themes that reflect hot-button social issues. Ironically, these vocal political stances are what eventually lead to Fo and Rame's ban from RAI by the end of that year because of censorship issues during production of the popular variety program, Canzonissima. The series of farces by Fo was to inaugurate the second RAI channel. The one-act plays that were produced and aired on RAI were

Un morto da vendere (February 27), L'uomo nudo e l'uomo in frack (March 6), La marcolfa (March 13), Gli imbianchini non hanno ricordi (March 20).¹⁰⁹

Some of the farces (Un morto da vendere and La marcolfa) were adapted from 19th century *canovacci* developed by the Rame family and performed in the Lombardy region. At the time, the language that Fo utilized was criticized for being too Milanese and using too much dialect throughout the work. Additionally, it was observed that he used a "basso", or lower register, as opposed to a more literary and formal language. For Fo, this was a purposeful act. Thematically, he wished to avoid creating an art of high culture, inaccessible to the masses. The language therefore fell in line with his own theory of theater: an art form that comes from the people and is meant to speak directly to the people. This also resonates and continues the tradition of the medieval "giullare", insofar as it was meant as a way to challenge the authorities.

La lingua di Dario Fo era già stata precedentemente accusata di eccessiva povertà e di scarsa accuratezza, ma l'addebito si trasmuta in lode se si considera la consapevole volontà (da parte dell'autore) di usare un piano linguistico 'basso' con funzione provocatoria nei confronti della tradizione 'alta'.¹¹⁰

Fo chooses to communicate in a language that is stripped of rhetorical flourishes and approaches the vulgar. Because of his predilection for the language and culture of the masses, it is no surprise that Fo embraces television as well adapted to perform his agenda, though the limits on improvisation and audience interaction, central to Fo's work, are obvious shortcomings of the medium. To overcome the barriers that the language poses for the audience, Fo augments the text with a well-rehearsed physicality that expresses the message in a way not limited by words.

¹⁰⁹ In Capatangelo, La maschera e il video, one will find a chronological anthology of all the plays the RAI produced from its inception through 1998.

¹¹⁰ Marina Cappa and Roberto Nepoti, Dario Fo (Rome: Gremese, 1997) 44.

Grammelot, akin to gibberish, is an inventive use of language that Fo utilizes to strengthen his satire and communicate with his audience.

To perform a narrative in "grammelot", it is of decisive importance to have at your disposal a repertoire of the most familiar tonal and sound stereotypes of a language, and to establish clearly the rhythms and cadences of the language to which you wish to refer [...] First and foremost, it is important to inform the audience of the subject that will be discussed, as I have just done, then it is vital to elaborate through sounds and gestures.¹¹¹

Fo demonstrates and explains the concept in the introduction to the first part of Mistero buffo, "Il giullare e il grammelot". In this scene, Fo explains that the grammelot was a form of theater invented by the artists of the Commedia dell'Arte:

Cominciam, mistero buffo. La prima parte di questo mistero buffo è dedicata al grammelot. Grammelot è una forma di teatro inventata dai comici della commedia dell'arte, non quelli del cinquecento quelli ancora prima e organizzata come forma di teatro in chiave onomatopeica. Mi spiego subito la parola tremenda. Cioè il riuscire a fare arrivare concetti attraverso suoni che però non sono parole stabilite convenzionali ...(grammelot follows) e il grammelot è inventato dai bambini. Qualcuno aveva detto che il grammelot è stato inventato dai comici della commedia dell'arte per sfuggire la censura. Il più famoso dei grammelot è il Zanni.¹¹²

In a collection of Dario Fo plays and drawings published in 2000 and curated by Franca Rame, Fo includes a prologue to "Grammelot 'La fame dello Zanni'". In this prologue, Fo explains in detail the historical and artistic influences that lead to the creation of grammelot in the 15th century. In the century that followed, the Counter Reformation began to take hold, forcing the Church to take an offensive stance toward liberal intellectuals, including those taking part in the Commedia dell'Arte. According to Fo, many acting troupes were disbanded while they became famous throughout major European cities including Paris, Madrid, and Moscow, to name a few. The language

¹¹¹ Dario Fo, Tricks of the Trade, ed. Stuart Hood (Oxfordshire: Taylor, 1991) 57-8.

¹¹² Introduction to the televised version of the play: Mistero buffo. Dir. and perf. Dario Fo. (RAI, 1977) Web. 15 Jan 2012

barrier between the performers and the audience thus gave rise to *grammelot*. This form of expression proved gratifying for both the actors and the audience members:

Via via si perfezionarono fino a impiegare, oltre a una straordinaria gestualità, suoni onomatopeici che realizzavano l'immagine delle azioni o stati d'animo a cui si voleva alludere. Questo gioco imponeva agli spettatori l'impiego di una certa dose di fantasia e immaginazione che produceva loro l'insostituibile piacere dello scoprirsi intelligenti.¹¹³

It is telling that Fo mentions the effect that the actors' technique had on the spectators.

The symbiotic relationship between audience and performer is at the heart of Fo's form of theater. It is no surprise that Fo would utilize a form of expression that requires the audience to be complicit in making and deriving meaning from the performance.

Fo also sheds light on the ideological impetus for the anachronistic use of the technique in his realization of the "giullarate dei misteri medievali" by creating a parallel between the economic and social reality of contemporary Italy and the past. He goes on to introduce the character of Zanni, a "prototype of commedia dell'arte masks" as consumed by a desperate hunger, a result of the economic hardships of the time. Fo sets the stage for this hunger, by tracing the history of modern capitalism back to the Italian merchants of the 15th century. While the creation of banks and credit led to the rise of an upwardly mobile social class, it also created great economic disparity. He moves on to describes the scene that will follow, preparing the audience for the performance ahead. In addition, he explains that the language is based on a Brescian dialect but that the terms are few and would include terms from other dialects as well. This introduction imbues the performance with a didactic element that reflects the same aspect of the performances of Eduardo De Filippo, in which he presented the themes and language of his plays to the

¹¹³ Fo, *Teatro* 482.

audience prior to the curtain rising. For Fo, this not only serves a pragmatic function, assuring that the audience will be able to follow along with what is happening onstage, it also helps to create a symbiotic relationship between the spectators and the performers. The latter function is essential to Fo's work, which relies so heavily on audience participation and reaction to help steer the improvisational nature of the performance.

Throughout the performance, Fo proceeds to act out the scenes he had described to the audience. One does not comprehend each individual word or phrase, but the meaning is not obfuscated, because it is supplanted with gestures and pieces of language that, within the context, are easily understood by the public. The result is that the audience does not need to focus on the immediate meaning of individual words and phrases, but instead can appreciate the act in its entirety, observing the sounds, movements, and gestures as they interplay with one another to create meaning.

In addition to hearkening back to the foundations of the *giullare* and Commedia dell'Arte characters from which Fo derives his art, he sees the use of *grammelot* as a political choice as well. In an interview, Fo analyzes his satire and underscores *grammelot* as an ideological choice:

La satira sulla giustizia è sempre stata la chiave fondamentale in tutti i clown, i giullari, i comici, i satirici di tutto il medioevo e il rinascimento, per esempio. Mi viene in mente, in proposito, una bellissima situazione in cui Arlecchino veste i panni del giudice e fa la satira del giudice. Oppure si può pensare a quel pezzo in cui recito la parte di un avvocato inglese che difende uno stupratore. È una farsa recitata in *grammelot*, una falsa lingua, proprio per sottolineare maggiormente, tramite gli effetti comici, l'abberrazione della giustizia.¹¹⁴

This quote highlights an important aspect of Fo's work, that is, the importance of comedy for successful satire. Through the use of *grammelot*, a language that does not follow a

¹¹⁴ Dario Fo and Andrea Ciccarelli, "Intervista a Dario Fo", *Italica*, 81.4 (2004) 563.

preordained set of linguistic rules, Fo is able to underscore the aberrations that are inherent in society, and the injustices that result especially for the working class.

Another function of the *grammelot* points to the Brechtian¹¹⁵ influence in Fo's work. The introductions to the performances, the grotesque acting, and the nonsensical language all serve to alienate the spectator from the action on stage. For Brecht, this alienation served to prevent a catharsis on the part of the audience. The goal is to attempt to force the spectator to remain uneasy with the subject matter and to take the outcome of the performance with him when he exits the theater. Through catharsis, the spectator's suffering is resolved through what transpires on stage. What Brecht proposed with his art is that when denied this relief, the individual must, upon exit, take measures to resolve the conflict. Whereas Brecht emphasizes the alienation of the spectator, Fo relies on the audience to be complicit in the actions on stage. Fo leads them there initially by supplying the audience with the keys to understand and interpret the performance before them. In *Mistero buffo*, introductions to plays and grotesque acting remind the viewer that he is watching a play. This relationship between the audience and the actor becomes a symbiotic one, co-created by the actor and audience rather than a passive spectacle for the viewer to consume. Because the spectator does not walk away with a satisfying resolution, he or she is forced to internalize the consequences of the performance.

Whether or not this process leads to a tangible effect in the real world is hard to quantify, though one can measure the sustained popularity of Fo's work over the years as

¹¹⁵ Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) was a German Expressionist dramatist who developed the theory and practice of "epic theater", a type of drama that sought to alienate the spectator from the performance. For more on Brecht, see: Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work and His Opinions*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959).

proof of its resonance with the target audience. The fact that the plays have been translated into other languages and performed throughout the world attest to the universality of Fo's message and form.

The improvisational aspect of Fo's work is essential to the performance. Fo's creative process is sustained by his connection to the audience. It is precisely this element that is diminished when the performance is adapted for television, a medium that would seem to interrupt Fo's process.¹¹⁶ Mistero buffo, for example, implores the audience to participate, a process which is denied to the television audience directly and thus negates Fo's desired effect to be part of the process of creating and participate in the discussions throughout the play and to walk away and still be thinking about what happened.

By presenting a kind of fragmented iconicity -- fragments of characters, fragments of actions and interactions -- Fo has shaped a dramatic montage in which the shifting perspectives force a sense of community. There is no time to identify privately with one character or point of view; the spectator is too busy in every given moment, working on the collective creation of the event, an event which is tossed back and forth through the time and space of the theatrical protoplasm like Brecht's atomic particles of humankind.¹¹⁷

This analysis implies that the members of Fo's audience would naturally coalesce around the process used to generate the performance. In short, the experience engenders a sense of community, the ultimate goal of theater. Indeed if the first-degree experience of the performance creates unity amongst the spectators, the question remains as to whether a similar effect can be conferred upon the community that has a mediated encounter with the representation. In Fo's televised performances, he attempts to bridge the divide by including a live audience. In this respect, the approach is very different from that of

¹¹⁶ J. L. Wing, "The iconicity of Absence: Dario Fo and the Radical Invisible", Theatre Journal, 45.3 (1993) 315.

¹¹⁷ Wing 315.

Eduardo, who instead initially adapted his plays to conform to the parameters of the new medium. Eduardo's teleplays do not feature a live audience. The camera focuses on the actors on the closed set, much like one would see in a modern sitcom. The fact that Fo includes the audience in the televised performances proves that the spectator is as much a part of the performance as the actors on stage. By extension, the television audience may in fact be led to identify with their live counterparts sitting in the theater. The televised performance lacks the presence of time and space of the original performance, an element that Walter Benjamin discusses in his "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In missing direct contact with the work of art, Benjamin postulates, the spectator is denied a connection to the aura of authenticity. "The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity."¹¹⁸ How does Benjamin's concept apply to Fo's case and in general for television? "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced."¹¹⁹ I would posit here that just as television multiplies the audience, it is diminished in its authenticity by the same factor.

If the first-degree experience is the live audience, second-degree the TV audience at the time it premiered, subsequent viewings include: re-airing by broadcaster, viewer recording (VHS), DVD releases, Youtube, Internet downloads. In each of its iterations, the play reaches a different audience in very different historical and social contexts. While the ability to experience previously inaccessible recordings of performances via the Internet can revive works of art for posterity, it also risks transforming the pieces into historical artifacts. In the case of Dario Fo's work, the distance between the performance

¹¹⁸ Benjamin 220.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin 221.

and the spectator is acutely felt because of the process of co-creation of meaning between the viewers and the actor(s) on stage. In the first case the audience plays an important part in creating meaning during the performance. Fo famously improvises throughout his performance based upon the reaction and the mood of the spectators present. His didactic introductions with regards to the language in the play constructs a symbiotic relationship that in some ways remains closed off to the second-degree and subsequent experiences of the performance.

I would posit that Fo's use of *grammelot* is the most important feature of his improvisational technique that gets lost in televised airings, since it is contingent upon the audience's reception and reaction to create meaning. It would become clear to the actor if a certain phrase or gesture has not come across, which would spur the actor to modify his approach.

One of the most obvious features of *grammelot* is the fact that it is imaginary--having no existence outside of the temporal frame of the performance; it is a communication invented for a given group, which is assembled for a limited time. As such, *grammelot* cannot be didactic, as it does not teach its lingual code for post-performance use. Rather, the *grammelot* will have a freeing or liberating effect by its ability to create a space for communication, which relies little on accepted communicative linguistic codes outside the performance framework. In other words, one of the chief pleasures of *grammelot* is its apparent discontinuity from life, as it is experienced outside of the theatre. And one reason this separate nature is evident is that *grammelot* realizes a fantasy: it "imagines" language.¹²⁰

The citation above highlights how *grammelot* can serve to alienate the spectator in the same way that Brecht's performance techniques similarly did. However, Fo's process differs in that the seeking and making meaning that occurs in the audience becomes itself a cathartic process. As previously cited in the prologue, Fo partially attributes the

¹²⁰ Erith Jaffe-Berg, "Forays into Grammelot: The Language of Nonsense", Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, 15.2 (2001) 3-15.

success of "grammelot" to how the audience felt intelligent when they were able to create meaning during the performance. This pleasure replaces that which is created during a typical theatrical catharsis, but it achieves what Fo hopes is an enduring process that would carry with it the politically subversive themes of the performance.

There is a self-reflexivity implicit in grammelot where it becomes a performative game of metalanguage in which the actor allows the audience to "win" by guessing his meaning. While the audience and actor have words for the images performed, they are simultaneously aware of the word they would normally use to designate something, and of the distance between that and the sound the performer actually uses within his grammelot to designate the same thing. Thus, the pleasure of grammelot results from the inventiveness of the actor as well as from the audience's awareness of this inventiveness. Therefore, grammelot exposes to the audience the fact that the theatre is making fun of language, and, since language is part of theatre-making, this "pointing out" is self-reflexive. What the actor achieves in grammelot is a synthesis of sounds that make sense in their performance context. Like a cook, the actor mixes found ingredients, changing them, in order to create a new result.¹²¹

The self-reflexivity that is required in order to comprehend the performance creates an intimacy between the audience and the material. Thus, at the conclusion of the performance, the audience member would presumably leave with a sense of satisfaction. For Fo's political message to resonate, the result would be that the spectator would be spurred to a similarly poignant reflection upon the themes and message of the play.

Both Eduardo and Fo bring to light the relationship between language and power. In a sense, their use of non-standard Italian flies in the face of the hegemonic imposition of a homogenous language across the diverse regions of Italy. The disappearance or at least the minimization of dialect throughout the peninsula can be read as a falling in line with authorities. Antonio Gramsci addressed this in his writings on dialect theater. In the years leading up to his imprisonment, Gramsci wrote theater criticism and addressed the impossibility for a theater written in standard Italian to address the problems of the

¹²¹ Jaffe-Berg 3-15.

masses in way to which they could easily identify. In "The relationship between dialect, theatre, and power in Antonio Gramsci", Alessandra de Martino Cappuccio addresses the role that dialect theater played in allowing a space to counter the cultural hegemony imposed upon the masses, most notably through the imposition of a standard language. After the Italian Unification, the high percentage of illiterate Italians combined with the number of Italians that did not have access to standard Italian, prevented a large segment of the population from having their voices heard. In this way, dialect theater served an important function since it became a mouthpiece for large segments of the population, which may have been overshadowed.¹²² In light of this argument, it becomes clear that the work of Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo, among others, legitimized the real issues that affected members of their community. Producing their work for a television, thus national, audience elevated the status of their home audience and validated their experiences. Eduardo, by performing in Neapolitan and then in a Neapolitan-Italian hybrid, and Fo by erasing the barriers between dialects through the use of *grammelot*, are able to reach out to many subsets of the population in order to convey their message.

A Gramscian reading of the forces at play within Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo's work brings to light how they utilized language and the media to break through the cultural hegemony of the state. I would define Eduardo as fulfilling the criteria organic intellectual criteria in several ways. He is a product of the society that he describes in his art. The settings, characters, and stories reflect a particular population. He uses the Neapolitan dialect to recount the struggles and concerns of the people through the only language that can adequately reflect their truth. In so doing, he is presenting himself as

¹²² Alessandra de Martino Cappuccio, "The Relationship between Dialect, Theatre, and Power in Antonio Gramsci," *The Italianist*, 32.1 (2012) 67-83.

an ambassador of this social group. Indeed this role is in the foreground with his teleplays. If one looks back to 1955, one finds Eduardo introducing *Miseria e nobiltà* from the Teatro Odeon in Milan for the first time ever to a national television audience. In his introduction, Eduardo is cognizant of the significance of this exemplary Neapolitan comedy being performed for the first time on television. In this introduction, he provides historical, cultural, and linguistic context for the performance, "il testo è ancora palpitante. I napoletani questo lo sanno ma adesso sto parlando al pubblico di tutta l'Italia."¹²³ He reassures the audience that though the language is different from theirs, he and the other performers will ensure that through their gestures and physicality, they will eliminate the language barriers that may impede comprehension.

This is very similar to what Dario Fo does through the use of *grammelot* in his performances. Where Eduardo seems a natural fit for what Gramsci would term an organic intellectual, Dario Fo's role is somewhat problematic because unlike Eduardo identifying with a specific regional identity. Though it does not directly apply, a Bourdieuan reading of the interplay between language and influence isolates Fo from a natural "linguistic habitus". The precariousness of *grammelot* neutralizes this aspect of the interpretation. Because of the universality of this form of communication, any subaltern identity can claim it as its own. Fo strips away the influence of those who hold power to dictate the terms of language, thus returning that capacity to the masses, whatever language they speak. I would thus argue that Fo positions himself in the role of an organic intellectual as well. Both he and Eduardo belong to a separate social class,

¹²³ Introductory speech to the televised performance transcribed by me. "Miseria e Nobiltà." *Eduardo all'Odeon di Milano*. Milan: RAI, 1955. 11 Jul. 2015. Web.

artists. Both find ways to be didactic within their art in different ways. In the case of Eduardo, evidence can be seen most obviously in Arte della Commedia, which acts as a sort of treatise on the role of the actor in society. Eduardo sees the figure of the actor in much the same way that Fo understands it. Both figures posit themselves as actors who belong to a separate class of society. Both Eduardo and Fo's biographies support this.

The Gramscian distinction of two types of intellectuals, traditional and organic, is brought to the fore in Eduardo's Napoli milionaria!. In fact, Gennaro's discussion of the "calmiere" parallels the categorization that Gramsci uses. Eduardo, through Gennaro, explains how the traditional intellectual, who speaks the same language as the ruling class, can be co-opted by the very same authority. The power they gain is achieved through words and through a language that reflects power, in this case standard Italian. The immense gap between the ruling class and the lower class citizens becomes irreconcilable. This vacuum can only be filled by an organic intellectual or one who rises out of and speaks the language of the class that it represents. Gennaro himself could easily be defined as an organic intellectual and the people around him acknowledge his opinions and viewpoints. These viewpoints are a reflection of the reality that is experienced by those around him. It is more difficult to categorize Eduardo as an organic intellectual in this regard. His biography firmly places him in a class of artists, who are essentially outsiders of the people. In this respect, Eduardo uses dialect as a way to gain entry into the world of the lower class. At the same time that he is voicing the inequities of his society, he is also serving as a teacher.

technical labor must be tied to the formation of the new intellectual....All men are intellectuals...but not all men in society have the function of intellectuals....There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: "homo faber" cannot be separated from "homo sapiens". Each man ...

outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a 'philosopher', an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.¹²⁴

Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo both recognized the potential power of television to broaden their audience. The choice of medium mutates their work in different ways and the most significant of this is the use of language. As shown in this chapter, the creation of a performance language and the subsequent realization of meaning by the audience, becomes an important part of the political message of the plays.

¹²⁴ Gramsci 9.

Conclusion

Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo have in their careers embodied the figure of clown, jester, *giullare*, arlecchino, actor, or whatever term can be used to describe a performer who gives voice to the people. Whether it is in public square, an abandoned factory, a theater in the heart of a city, or television, the playwright and actor has an important responsibility to their audience. At best they reveal to the people the truth of their oppression. Through the performance of their work, the performer can create conditions for a dialogue to ensue among the spectators, spurring action or change. This ideology has informed the work of both Fo and Eduardo through the many iterations of their work.

Mass media has had an enormous impact on society, culture, and national identity. This influence is particularly acute in the Italian context. RAI was keenly aware of the potential of the airwaves to shape Italian national identity. It is important to keep in mind that at the time of its inaugural broadcast in 1954, television possessed a unique opportunity to unite linguistically and culturally a nation that was defined by disparate regional identities. The new medium was a double-edged sword. It is true that the homogenizing effect of mass culture could bring together and educate a population that, especially in the immediate postwar years, struggled with a huge proportion of illiterate citizens as well as a history of alienating subaltern regional identities. The Southern question has long been an impediment to true solidarity and an issue that one can trace to before the Italian Unification. On the other hand, the shift from the public to the private sphere that television demonstrates undermines the community element that is essential for theater to fulfill its stated goals: to engender debate and discussion among members

of its audience. Because television is consumed passively, and for the most part in the family home, its effect is to homogenize the conversation that would take place in the living room rather than promote a dialogue among neighbors. However, it is important to weigh this effect against the fact that in allowing theater to occupy a central position on its broadcast schedule, RAI allowed millions of Italians access to a cultural product to which they had previously been denied. Theater was no longer simply a form of entertainment limited to the elite.

The language question is acutely significant in any discussion of Italian cultural unification. From the South to the North, the peninsula is dotted with numerous dialects that define its varied realities. The 1950s and 60s saw a great economic boom and mass migration of people especially from the South to the North. In the case of Eduardo's appearance on national television, one can argue that it represents the inclusion of Neapolitans specifically, and southerners in general, to the national fabric. The adaptations that Eduardo implements in the language to allow access to non-speakers undermines in some ways the very Neapolitaness that make him an organic intellectual, even while he is broadening the scope and reach of his work. Authentic language is the most evident marker of belonging to a specific social group. Setting aside the earnestness of this experiment, making an identity mainstream in this way can also alienate the members of the group that is being represented. Fo's approach is very different. He does not represent a specific national identity and instead directs his message to the masses in general. Fo's philosophy of subverting traditional power structures is represented by the way that he extricates language from its traditional underpinnings.

In conclusion, both theater and television are defined by their ability to speak directly to and for the masses. Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo have built their artistic profiles around their ability to be mouthpieces for those members of the community that do not traditionally have an authoritative voice. Especially in its early years, television looked to theater as an apt genre from which to create new programming. It seems a natural fit that these two political playwrights would utilize the new medium to broadcast their work. The tensions that exist between the RAI political authority and the inherently popular and sometimes revolutionary message that the comedians express can at once bolster and also undermine the authenticity upon which their message hinges.

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