Antonio Scuderi

The Anthropology of Dario Fo: an Interdisciplinary Approach

Anthropological issues concerning socio-cultural evolution were important in the development of Marxism and led to the theories of cultural materialism. Besides Marx and Engels, anthropology was an important subject for other seminal Marxist theorists, such as Plekhanov. For the Marxist playwright-performer Dario Fo, Gramsci's theories of hegemony are fundamental to his ideas of the development of art from utilitarian activities, and explain his insistence on drawing from folk and popular forms of performance. In this article Antonio Scuderi investigates some of the major anthropological and folkloric themes in Fo's theatre, including the influence of anthropologists such as Toschi and Lévi-Strauss.
Antonio Scuderi is Professor of Italian at Truman State University in Missouri, where he founded the Italian programme. His interdisciplinary articles on Italian performance traditions have been published in leading journals of theatre, folklore, and literary studies, including *Theatre Journal*, *Oral Tradition*, and *Modern Language Review*. He is the author of *Dario Fo and Popular Performance* (Legas, 1998), *Dario Fo: Framing, Festival, and the Folkloric Imagination* (Lexington Books, 2011), and co-editor of *Dario Fo: Stage, Text, and Tradition* (Southern Illinois, 2000).

Key terms: Antonio Gramsci, Paolo Toschi, Marxist anthropology, passion play, totem.

DARIO FO is a committed Marxist, and from its inception Marxism encompassed anthropological issues concerning the development of culture and society. Anthropology was an important subject for Marx and Engels and both men read the works of early anthropologists, particularly Lewis Henry Morgan's studies of native American peoples. Morgan did groundbreaking work on kinship structures, and developed theories of social evolution that included the relationship between social and technological progress. His most important ethnological work on social evolution was *Ancient Society*, first published in 1877.[1] Marx left a body of unpublished notes on Morgan and other anthropologists, which Engels developed after Marx's death, publishing *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* in 1884.[2] Morgan's work continued to influence other early Marxist philosophers, including Georgi Plekhanov, as will be mentioned below.

For Fo, the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci is of course extremely important. His renowned theory of hegemony was an attempt to explain how the ruling classes keep the working classes in a subservient position by convincing them of their cultural inferiority. During Gramsci's lifetime (and Fo's youth), the contrast between the culture of the elite classes and the popular culture of the masses in Italy was very marked. The lower classes tended to be much less educated (illiteracy rates were very high) but they drew on a strong oral tradition.

According to Gramsci, in order to understand the masses, it was important for the Marxist intellectual to study their culture. He discusses the problem of conventional scholarship, which, in his opinion, typically considered folk culture as outlandish and quaint, and argues for the importance of formulating a serious approach to the study and teaching of folklore, in order to give the masses a better understanding of their own culture. It is the task of the Marxist intellectual to give to the masses a sense of dignity for their culture.

> Folklore should not be conceived as something bizarre, strange, or picturesque, but as something serious, which should be taken seriously. This is the only way to ensure that the teaching of

folklore will be more efficient and will truly determine the birth of a new culture among the popular masses, that is, the barrier between modern culture and popular culture or folklore will disappear.[3]

Validating and ennobling folk culture became an important part of Fo's mission and informs the overall *raison d'être* of his theatre. In fact he views the function of theatre itself as an instrument for bringing culture back to the people. As early as 1971 he stated: 'It is the duty of every intellectual to reconstruct folk culture, which has been stolen and falsified, in order to give it back to the people and make of it the highest and most progressive instrument of the revolution. And this work must be repeated with the masses, without end.'[4]

Fo's Performing Modes

Fo developed his theatre primarily on the basis of folk and popular forms. It would be difficult (and perhaps pointless) to try to determine at what point Fo's choice of popular performance became part of his Gramscian pursuit of promoting popular culture.[5] He was always drawn to storytelling, which was a primary form of folk performance in his youth near Lago Maggiore, where the local storytellers, known as *fabulatori*, were primarily fishermen and glassblowers.[6] Fo's first professional engagement as a performer in 1952 was a radio show called *Poer Nano* (*Poor Sod*), where he primarily sang songs and told stories. (Storytelling is also forms the basis of his signature one-man show, the *giullarata*, which he developed later in the 1960s.)

He made his debut on the Italian stage in 1952 in his first company, Parenti-Fo-Durano. In the following years they performed two pieces in the style of cabaret revue, *A Finger in the Eye* and *Fit to Be Tied*. After working in film for several years, Fo established a company with his wife, the actress Franca Rame. The Fo/Rame company performed two series of short plays. The plays in the first series, *Thieves, Dummies, and Naked Women* (1957), owe much to the tradition of French boulevard farce, in particular that of Georges Feydeau. Their next series, *Comic Finale* (1958), reflects the tradition of Italian popular theatre, much of which Fo learned from his wife's family – an itinerant company of players that went back eight generations.[7]

When Fo eventually developed his primary mode of performance, the satirical farce (such as *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!*), which makes up the bulk of his *oeuvre*, he borrowed heavily from popular and lowbrow theatre, such as forms of European variety theatre and circus clowning. His technique of interacting with the audience before and during a performance is borrowed from Italian vaudevillians, such as the Roman Ettore Petrolini and the Neapolitan Totò (Antonio De Curtis).[8] Into his satirical farces he inserts popular devices such as clowning, sight gags, puppets, and vaudevillian songs and music.

Apart from the satirical farce, his other signature mode of performance is his one-man show, the *giullarata* (such as *Mistero Buffo* and *The Holy Jester Francis*). The *giullarata* is based on his research into medieval street and piazza performance, heavily dependent on the widespread folk technique of telling a story while simultaneously acting out the various parts. To this list of popular modes, we can add his performances with folk singers in *Ci ragiono e canto* (as mentioned below) and with professional circus clowns in *Throw the Lady Out*.

In Gramsci's day one of the most significant and obvious dividing markers between the classes in Italy was language. Most people spoke a dialect, i.e. a local language, at home and in their communities.[9] Standard Italian was taught in school and used for official business and scholarship. Italian was also the language of high-culture art, such as theatre and opera. Gramsci considered the standard Italian of his day 'as a written language and not a spoken one, a language of the erudite and not of the nation'.[10]

Thus while Fo's satirical farces are in Italian, his *giullarate* are performed in dialect (mainly his native Lombard with elements of other neighbouring dialects), which he considers more genuine and expressive than standard Italian. In his satirical farces, Fo sometimes has a particular character speak in dialect in order to underscore his/her popular origins, such as Donnazza in *Almost by Chance a Woman: Elizabeth*, and Pizzocca in *The Devil in Drag*.

Nuovo Canzoniere Italiano – and After

In the mid 1960s Fo and Rame worked with a group that focused on researching folk songs. Nuovo Canzoniere Italiano (New Italian Songbook) was formed in 1962. Its focus was on folk culture, popular history, and protest movements as expressed through traditional songs. Based on their research they produced informative literature, sound recordings, and stage shows. Working with NCI, Fo gained a greater understanding of the oral tradition and a familiarity with the concepts of folklore research methodology.

He and Rame collaborated with NCI in 1966 to produce the stage show *Ci ragiono e canto* (*I Think it Over and Sing*), which featured popular performers from various regions of Italy, singing traditional songs with theatrical choreography. However, Fo had various disagreements with the members of NCI, which eventually resulted in the end of their collaboration.[11] In discussing some of the reasons for these disagreements, Joseph Farrell explains, 'Some NCI members were outraged when Dario wrote some musical numbers of his own which he wanted to pass off as original pieces.'[12] There is, however, an interesting passage in Gramsci's writing that might help to explain his justification for this:

> A division or distinction of popular songs, formulated by Ermolao Rubieri: 1) songs composed by the people and for the people; 2) those composed for the people but not by the people; 3) those written neither by the people nor for the people, but adapted by the people because they conform to their manner of thinking and feeling. It seems to me that all popular songs can and must be reduced to this third category, since that which distinguishes a popular song, in the context of a nation and its culture, is neither the artistic factor nor its historic origin, but the way in which it conceives the world and life, in contrast to official society.[13]

Fo revived *Ci ragiono* in 1969 and again in 1973 without NCI. In 1977 it became one of the live shows that Fo and Rame filmed for a television programme called *Il teatro di Dario Fo* (*The Theatre of Dario Fo*). Fo introduces the show, which is then performed by traditional Italian singers. The singers are choreographed and Fo's insistence on choreography was one of the points of contention that led to his falling out with NCI.[14] The songs cover a wide range of themes, but in the introduction Fo emphasizes work songs:

> Above all, our primary goal is to present to you, to help you understand the origin of popular music in relation to movement. All rhythm, progression, pauses, sounds, and even the melodies of popular music originate from the movements of work. We didn't discover this, it was Plekhanov, a Russian, a contemporary of Lenin, who, through his research and study of popular song, arrived at this great truth. Work-related movements determine the rhythms, the progression, the pauses, and even the melodies.[15]

Fo's reference is to Georgi Plekhanov (1857–1918), the founder of the Russian Social Democratic Party and a key figure in the formation of Russian Marxism. Plekhanov wrote on a wide variety of topics, including anthropology. The anthropology he studied included the writings of Herbert Spencer as well as Lewis Henry Morgan. With reference to what Fo says about the origins of music and dance as art and recreation, we find it stated in Plekhanov's writings: 'Activity pursuing utilitarian purposes, in other words, activity essential to the maintenance of the life of the individual and of society, is anterior to play and determines its content.'[16]

Plekhanov explored issues such as 'art for art's sake' and promoted a utilitarian view of the development of art. Explaining various aspects of culture as developing from pragmatic issues of survival and, later in history, from economic practicalities, are some of the basic tenets of Marxist anthropology and cultural materialism.

As far as the development of music and dance are concerned, the hypothesis is that they originate from the rhythms and movements associated with basic activities of human existence. For Fo this relates to the notion of Gramscian hegemony, whereby official culture appropriated the musical

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traditions of the folk and claimed them as its own. In an interview he explained, 'It begins perforce by riding a horse or driving a cart, rather than by composing madrigals in the courts.' He contends that all forms of music originated in folk culture:

> All art, even the most aristocratic, always derives from an art that originates with the folk – even music, the most aristocratic and certainly religious music. If you think of it, monadic singing comes from a popular tradition; the *Psalmus alleluiaticus* comes from popular singing. Popular singing is prevalent in religious chant. . . . *Agnus dei* derives from an ancient song.[17]

Toschi, Bakhtin, and Carnival

One of the most important scholars to influence Dario Fo early in his career was the anthropologist-folklorist Paolo Toschi, whose magnum opus *Le origini del teatro italiano* (*The Origins of Italian Theatre*) was published in 1955. Toschi presents evidence for the existence of a primordial Indo-European rite, designated as *Carnival*. This was an annual propitiatory rite that celebrated the earth's fertility. It coincided with solar and lunar cycles, and assured the return of the sun and a favourable harvest.

The theory of Carnival as the origin of many European annual celebrations – including Samhain (Halloween), Christmas, New Year, May Day, Easter, and of course Carnival – is still accepted by many contemporary scholars.[18] Toschi argues that ancient rituals and communal celebrations entailed elements of performance that influenced both secular and sacred theatrical traditions. In other words, he argues for a historical procession from ritual to theatre. Writing in the Italian context, he places a good deal of emphasis on Carnival traditions throughout the country that eventually informed the *commedia dell'arte*, including the various *maschere* or stock characters. In a reciprocal dynamic, the *commedia* in turn influenced many local Carnival traditions.[19]

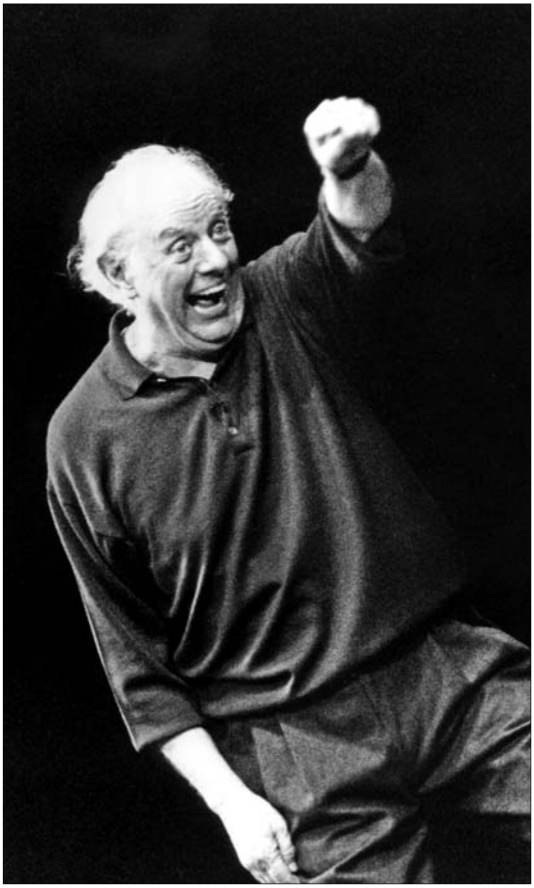
Fo explained that he was instinctively drawn to Carnival-related aspects of folk culture even before having read works such as Toschi's.[20] Yet these works gave Fo a deeper understanding of the traditions he was tapping into. Another work that must be mentioned is *Rabelais and His World*, by the Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Using Rabelais's masterpieces as a basis, Bakhtin (who coined the term *carnivalesque*) expounds on various elements of European culture that derived from or were influenced by the Carnival.

Franco Cardini, one of Europe's most prominent medievalists, underscores how popular and in vogue Bakhtin's Carnival theories were in Italy, when his book became available there in the late 1960s.[21] Once again, Fo anticipated some of the basic tenets presented in *Rabelais and His World*, but he could not have avoided being influenced by it as well. An essential point is that Bakhtin's work, like Toschi's, serves as an analytic tool for understanding Fo's theatre and this connection was made early on. In one of the earliest monographs on Fo, *Il teatro di Dario Fo* by Paolo Puppa, we find Bakhtin invoked many times, especially in the chapter on *Mistero Buffo*.[22] Bakhtin's principles, such as the 'grotesque body' and 'folk laughter', are prevalent in Fo's work and may have helped him to form his own theories on the emancipating power of laughter as a key element of satire. In a 1993 interview Fo said, 'People need laughter like they need sex, food, air. A people that doesn't laugh is criminal.'[23]

Mistero Buffo: an Archive of Sketches

The title of Fo's *Mistero Buffo* alludes to *Mystery Bouffe* (1918) by the Russian poet and playwright Vladimir Mayakovsky. *Mystery Bouffe* is an allegory of social revolution, presented as a mock medieval mystery play. First performed in 1969, *Mistero Buffo* is one of Fo's most famous, discussed, and analyzed pieces. It is a work that is constantly in flux, comprised of a series of sketches, some of which over time have been modified and/or substituted by other sketches.

Originally all the pieces were contextualized in the Italian Middle Ages (with some Biblical stories in the form of medieval popular performances). Most were performed by Fo, with the exception of a few by the late




Left: Dario Fo performing *Johan Padan Discovers America*. Right: Franca Rame in *Maria alla croce*. Photos by courtesy of Archivio CTFR Franca Rame Dario Fo.

Franca Rame. There were also originally some pieces that were in a serious/dramatic key, rather than Fo's usual comic register. In subsequent versions Fo added sketches from other historical periods and limited the sketches in dramatic mode. Over time *Mistero Buffo* became an archive of sketches and included pieces from other performances by Fo.

The most famous sketches from *Mistero Buffo* and the ones that have received the most attention from scholars over the years are 'Boniface VIII', 'The Birth of the *Giullare*', 'The Birth of the Peasant', 'The Zanni's Hunger' (also known as 'The Zanni's *Grammelot*'), 'The Wedding at Cana', and to some extent 'The Resurrection of Lazarus'. The latter stands as a *tour de force* of Fo's ability to represent an impressive numbers of different characters in a solo performance. In the prologue to the original edition of *Mistero Buffo*, Fo cites Toschi to give weight to his argument that certain poetic forms derive from the folk.[24]

In order to present an aspect of Toschi's *Le origini* and demonstrate its connection to *Mistero Buffo*, in what follows I would like to focus on one of the less popular and less studied sketches, 'The Passion of Mary at the Cross', which is in the tradition of the medieval passion play.

In *Le origini* Toschi discusses the development of popular religious theatre, some of which is still performed by communities throughout Italy. He suggests that early Christianity might have inherited certain aspects of Hebrew liturgy, which included processions, choral songs, music, dance, and elements of dramatization. Furthermore, he points to early dramatic elements present in the Byzantine mass of the fourth century that

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were then passed on to Rome. For Toschi the progression from liturgy and iconography to theatre, which began to be performed outside of the church walls, seems natural.

Once outside the church and in the community, the dramatization began to be defined by the annual rituals related to Carnival. The birth of Christ was already set to coincide with the Roman Carnival, the Saturnalia, by the Church in the fourth century, and Easter coincides with the Carnival-derived celebrations of the rite of spring. The most important popular dramatizations therefore are those associated with Christmas and with three key moments of Easter week: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the Passion and burial, and the resurrection and ascension. Toschi argues that for centuries these popular dramatizations were closely co-ordinated with the clergy, but that this changed with the crackdown of the Counter-Reformation.[25]

In the development of popular sacred theatre, Toschi emphasizes the theme of *Agnus Dei*, particularly the suffering and death of Christ, and the last conversation between mother and son. He refers to *Tears of the Virgin Mary* (*Pianto della Madonna*) by the thirteenth-century Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi, who was instrumental in the development of early Italian theatre. Toschi considers this work a masterpiece and the most beautiful sacred drama ever written. He believes that in certain regions of central Italy, popular versions of the passion of Mary represent the most powerful expression of vernacular sacred theatre.[26]

Some of the sketches in *Mistero Buffo* are based on popular sacred theatre. Although Fo has often been a critic of the abuses of power exercised by the Catholic Church, as a Gramscian-Marxist he does not simply reject religion. Gramsci realized that religion was far too important in Italian folk culture of his day to be thus dismissed. What we find in Fo is a tension between the religion of the folk with its roots in pre-Christian culture and the historical hegemony exerted by the Catholic Church. In the early editions of *Mistero Buffo*, four of the sketches came under the heading of Passion Plays. These included 'Death and the Madman', 'Mary Comes to Know Her Son's Sentence', 'The Madman Beneath the Cross', and 'The Passion of Mary at the Cross'. Both of the sketches about Mary were performed by Franca Rame.

Mary as 'Humble Woman of the Folk'

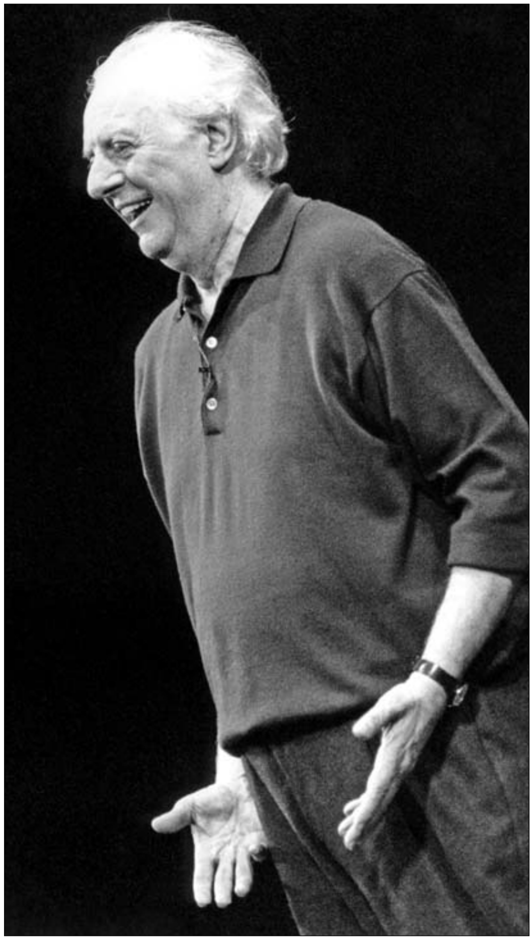
Toschi describes Jacopone's Mary as 'simply a mother, presented as a poor creature of this world. She speaks and acts like a humble woman of the folk.'[27] In a similar vein, Fo's 'Passion of Mary' underscores the human side of Mary's motherhood. Before Mary appears on the scene, as the other characters are considering stopping her or covering Jesus' face so that she may not recognize him, a character designated simply as 'a woman' states: 'I believe that if we were to cover the son of God completely with a white sheet, his mother would still recognize him. Even if only one toe or one lock of his hair were to show, because she, his mother, made them.'[28]

Mary appears and the intensity of her suffering is truly heartrending. She tries to defy the orders of a Roman soldier, refusing to leave her son to die alone: 'No I will not come! I will not let my son pass the night alone to die. And you cannot bully me because I am his mother! I am his mother!'[29] In 1977, on Italian television, Franca Rame delivered a stellar performance of 'The Passion of Mary at the Cross' that brings the written pages of the text to life. Fortunately this performance, which truly demonstrates Rame's talents, is available for viewing on various sites on the internet.[30]

Fo's Mary does not accept her son's fate and denounces the angel Gabriel: 'You! You were the first to betray me like a crook!' In a prologue to a later edition, Fo explains his intention to extend the target of Mary's tirade at Gabriel: 'That insult is aimed above all at power, both divine and terrestrial'.[31] Thus his use of sacred theatre is meant to address secular issues as well. And in the heat of her diatribe, Mary blasphemes against God, alluding to the classic icon of the Holy Spirit: 'Oh rest assured that I would not have wanted to be impregnated under these circumstances, not even if God himself came in person, instead of his pigeon-dove Holy Spirit to marry me.'[32]

Toschi gives examples of damned souls cursing God and their fate in popular dramatizations of the last judgement and points out that this is also found in the *Divine Comedy*. We cannot be sure if this is where Fo got the idea, but denouncing God the Father is a motif in his works.[33] This is part of Fo's dichotomy between the paternalistic God as an icon of hegemonic official culture and Jesus who is closer to the hearts of the folk. In 'Massacre of the Innocents', also in *Mistero Buffo*, a bereaved mother cries, 'Terrible, pitiless God! This killing is your doing! It was you who wanted this sacrifice in order for your son to descend. A river of blood for one little cup.' And in a later play, *Johan Padan Discovers America* (1991), Native Americans who learn the story of Jesus denounce God for not saving his son from the cross.[34]

Another motif that is present in this excerpt from Fo's 'Passion of Mary' is when she refers to the Holy Spirit as a 'pigeon-dove'. On several occasions Fo reduces the Christian icon of the winged archangel to poultry. In 'The Wedding at Cana', also from *Mistero Buffo*, a drunk drives off a solemn, authoritative angel: 'I'll tear your feathers out like a chicken, one by one, even from your ass! Get back here you overgrown rooster! Get back here.' And in 'The First Miracle of the Christ Child', from *The Tale of a Tiger and Other Stories*, the spectacular appearance of an archangel, announcing the birth of the Christ, scatters the shepherds' flocks. An irate shepherd vents his anger: 'If only you'd go and crash into the mountain



Left: Franca Rame in *Maria alla croce*. Right: Dario Fo performing *Johan Padan Discovers America*. Photos by courtesy of Archivio CTFR Franca Rame Dario Fo.

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so that your halo gets rammed down to your neck, with all your feathers scattered everywhere. Turkey!'[35] This motif is understood in the context of grotesque realism, as defined by Bakhtin, as the lowering of the spiritual and abstract down to the material level of earth and body.[36]

'Totem', Masks, and Memory

The influence of anthropology on Dario Fo's theatre works at many levels. In his *Manuale minimo dell'attore* (*The Actor's Handbook*) he discusses theatrical masks. Besides practical advice on their use, he also considers their origins. In his view the use of masks originates with the belief in totems. In a discussion of prehistoric cave paintings, he connects mask/disguise with the belief in a protector animal. He refers to a scene that seems to depict hunters dressed as animals. Besides the practical function of disguise,

> as anthropologists explain, it serves to block the taboo. Ancient peoples . . . believed that every animal could count on a certain protector deity. With the disguise, the hunter could avoid the revenge of the goat god, who would have rained down terrible hardships on any hunter who would dare to kill a protectorate without the pass of the counter-taboo. . . . Now, this heightened zoomorphism, the practice of transforming oneself into an animal, requires a certain ability. . . . The real problem is to imitate the movements of the goat or whatever animal is being hunted. The movements are different in each situation. The rite of dressing in animal furs and masks is linked to every culture of almost all the peoples of the world.[37]

As already stated, probably through Toschi's works Fo was aware of the direct link from primordial Indo-European Carnival rites to the *commedia dell'arte*. He notes the zoomorphic characteristics of the primary *commedia* masks, such as Arlecchino–cat, Magnifico/Pantalone–rooster, Dottore–canine, not only in their masks but in their movements.[38] He believes this is at the root of all theatre: 'The play between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic is a constant in the history of theatre, in every performance from ritual to theatre.'[39]

On various occasions, Fo refers to *memory*, in a Jungian sense, suggesting an innate collective memory of a distant past. For example, with reference to Plekhanov and the link between art and work, he states, 'I was trying to underscore the value that these roots assume even in our memory.' He goes on to tell of a documentary he saw on the Angolan revolution. Colonialism had eradicated the Angolans' traditional culture; thus in preparation for the revolution, the organizers knew that the people had to get back in touch with their cultural roots, because 'a people without a culture has no dignity . . . and has no incentive to be free, let alone to fight'.

The organizers therefore tried to re-establish their 'primordial rituals.' One of the most important rituals was the preparation for hunting the leopard, which entails miming the movements of the animal in order to assimilate its courage, speed, and agility: 'By means of the rites imitating the [leopard's] gestures, the body acquires wisdom and becomes an expression of balance, creativity and harmony.'[40]

Fo's tribute to anthropological notions of primordial rites, totem, and zoomorphism is 'Tale of a Tiger', the main sketch in *Tale of a Tiger and Other Stories*. Fo's tale begins with a Maoist soldier on the Long March from Jiangxi to Yan'an, who is wounded and left to die. He manages to drag himself to a cave, which belongs to a mother tiger and her cub. The tiger licks the soldier's wound and heals him. A bond is formed between the three and a symbiotic relationship develops: the tigers hunt and the soldier cooks the meat. The tigers become accustomed to cooked meat, and when the soldier returns back to village life, the tigers follow. They are adopted by the community and protect the village from various enemies, including the Japanese and the marauding army of Chiang Kai-shek. The villagers in turn learn to wear masks and imitate the tigers.[41]

The situation Fo presents is a reversal of a common Prometheus or fire-theft myth, such as the ones reported and analyzed in *The Raw and the Cooked*, Claude Lévi-Strauss's study of Amazonian mythology (1975). The fire-theft myths explain how humans acquired fire and learned to cook from a totemic animal.

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In one of the most common versions, the hero is taken in by the animal, often a jaguar, who introduces him to fire and cooked meat. The hero then returns home, and a group of humans, often in the form of animals or assisted by animals, return to the jaguar's abode to steal the fire. In Lévi-Strauss's title 'raw' and 'cooked' refer to 'nature' and 'culture' respectively.[42]

In Fo's story a human imparts fire to a creature of nature, thus inverting the mythological sequence. The crux of Fo's myth is not procuring fire for humans. From the metaphors he explains in his prologue, we understand that the soldier introduces fire (the proletarian struggle) to the tiger (human fortitude, courage, and perseverance).[43] Instead of procuring fire for humans, the soldier brings back the qualities of the tiger.

Another possible interpretation of the myth, from a Jungian perspective, is that the protagonist enters the unconscious (the tiger's cave) and assimilates these inner resources. Inverting the mythological sequence is a clever narrative strategy, because the tigers are brought back to the humans' world and continue as characters in the story. Enacting the tigers became a *tour de force* of Fo's *giullarata* performance: 'Not even in *Mistero buffo* did Fo create for himself such a platform for his acting talents'.[44]

Anthropology and folklore are a significant part of Dario Fo's Marxist world view and have played a prominent role in the development of his theatre. For him the stock characters of the *commedia dell'arte* contain the vestiges of primordial totem and the zoomorphic origins of carnival masks. Popular traditions of performance, both secular and sacred, co-ordinated with ancient carnival rites, represent important moments in the procession from ritual to theatre. The Gramscian struggle against hegemony and the desire to give dignity back to folk culture have contributed to Fo's commitment to popular forms. If, not too long ago, his interest in local cultures and languages was beginning to seem a little old-fashioned, these issues have now become important for a united Europe. And Fo's theatre continues to be relevant into the new century.

Notes and References

1. Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985). See Maurice Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology: the History of a Relationship* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

2. Karl Marx, *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, ed. Lawrence Krader, 2nd edition (Netherlands: Assen, 1974); Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (London: Penguin, 2010).

3. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), Q 27, par. 1. The convention for referencing Gramsi's *Prison Notebooks* is to designate the notebook number with Q (*quaderno*) followed by the paragraph number. All translations from Italian are by the author.

4. Dario Fo, *Fabulazzo*, ed. Lorenzo Ruggiero and Walter Valeri (Milan: Kaos, 1992), p. 76–7.

5. In 1969 Fo announced his intention of giving dignity back to popular culture in his play *L'Operaio conosce 300 parole il padrone 1000 per questo lui è il padrone*. The declaration is made by the spectre of Gramsci. See Antonio Scuderi, *Dario Fo: Framing, Festival, and the Folkloric Imagination* (Lanham: Lexington, 2011), p. 38.

6. For more on the *fabulatori* see Antonio Scuderi, *Dario Fo and Popular Performance* (Ottawa: Legas, 1998), p. 5–7, 23–5.

7. See Joseph Farrell, 'Fo and Feydeau: Is Farce a Laughing Matter', *Italica*, LXXII, No. 3 (Autumn 1995), p. 307–22. *Thieves, Dummies and Naked Women* includes *Bodies to Be Dispatched*, *One Was Nude and One Wore Tails*, *Housepainters Have No Memories*, and *The Virtuous Burglar*. *Comic Finale* includes *When You're Poor You'll Be King*, *Marcolfa*, *Corpse for Sale* and *The Three Suitors*.

8. Fo wrote a book on De Curtis: see Dario Fo, *Totò: manuale dell'attor comico*, ed. Liborio Termine (Turin: Adelph, 1991).

9. Although they are conventionally referred to as 'dialects', the local languages of Italy – categorized regionally, such as Sicilian, Lombard, etc. – are not really dialects of the standard language. Standard Italian as well as the local languages are related because they all derived from Latin.

10. Gramsci, *Quaderni*, Q 3, par. 76.

11. For more on Fo's collaboration and disagreements with NCI, see Tony Mitchell, *Dario Fo: People's Court Jester* (London: Methuen, 1999), p. 82–4; and Joseph Farrell, *Dario Fo and Franca Rame: Harlequins of the Revolution* (London: Methuen, 2001), p. 68–71. In 1975 Fo wrote and produced *La giullarata*, a performance involving Sicilian folk singers.

12. Farrell, *Harlequins of the Revolution*, p. 69.

13. Gramsci, *Quaderni*, Q 5, par. 156. Ermolao Rubieri (1818–79) was an Italian patriot, politician, and author.

14. Mitchell, *People's Court Jester*, p. 83.

15. Dario Fo, *Il teatro di Dario Fo*, video, Televisione RAI, 1977.

16. *Georgi Plekhanov, Selected Philosophical Works*, 5 vols., trans. V. Yeryomin, Vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), p. 312. Plekhanov refers specifically to Morgan in 'Fundamental Problems of Marxism', in Plekhanov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 117–83.

17. Dario Fo, interviews with Antonio Scuderi, Milan, October 1993. In folk traditions, for example, there are songs based on natural rhythms, such as carter songs that co-ordinated their rhythms with the gait of the horse. This is the sort of thing Fo was referring to in our discussion.

18. See Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'Carnivals in History', *Thesis Eleven*, III (1981), p. 52–9; and Philippe Walter, *Christianity: the Origins of a Pagan Religion*, trans. John E. Graham (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2006).

19. Paolo Toschi, *Le origini del teatro italiano*, 2nd edn, 2 vols. (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1976).

20. Bent Holm, 'Dario Fo's Bourgeois Period: Carnival and Criticism', in Joseph Farrell and Antonio Scuderi, ed., *Dario Fo: Stage, Text, and Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), p. 134.

21. Franco Cardini, *I giorni del sacro*: *il libro delle feste* (Novara: Editoriale Nuova, 1983), p. 242. Cardini is discussing here the future of Carnival celebrations in Italy.

22. Paolo Puppa, *Il teatro di Dario Fo: dalla scena alla piazza* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1978).

23. Fo, interviews, 1993. For more on Fo and Bakhtin, see Scuderi, *Popular Performance*, p. 79–108.

24. Dario Fo, *Mistero buffo* in *Le commedie di Dario Fo*, 12 vols to date, Vol. 5 (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), p. 6. In this specific case, Fo refers to the famous *contrasto* (dispute), 'Rosa Fresca Aulentissima' (fresh and perfumed rose), a poem in the form of a dialogue from the thirteenth century. He also cites Italian philologist and historian Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis, whose works were used by Toschi and provide good information on the medieval *giullare* (jongleur) tradition. All citations from *Mistero Buffo* are from this edition unless stated otherwise.

25. Toschi, *Le origini*, Vol. 2, p. 639–52. Important clues for Toschi were provided in the various manuscripts by the use of Latin, the official language of the Catholic Church, and popular vernacular languages, with examples of Latin verses inserted in vernacular texts and vice versa.

26. Ibid., p. 681, 685, 690.

27. Ibid., p. 685.

28. Fo, *Mistero Buffo*, p. 160.

29. Ibid., p. 162.

30. For more on Rame, see Walter Valeri, ed., *Franca Rame: a Woman on Stage* (West Lafayette: Bordighera, 2000); and Luciana d'Arcangeli, *I personaggi femminili nel teatro di Dario Fo e Franca Rame* (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2009).

31. Dario Fo, *Mistero Buffo* (Milan: Corriere della Sera, 2003), p. 205.

32. Fo, *Mistero Buffo*, p. 164–6. The text is set up with facing pages in Italian and dialect.

33. Toschi, *Le origini*, Vol. 2, p. 688. In the later edition of *Mistero Buffo*, cited above, Fo claims that the ideas for Mary's protest, her anger at Gabriel, and her blasphemy come from medieval manuscripts. See Fo, *Mistero Buffo* (2003 edition), p. 203–5. But on numerous occasions Fo has made such claims that were later proven to be false. For more on Fo's re-presentation of history see Scuderi, *Framing*, p. 39–51.

34. Fo, *Mistero Buffo*, p. 36; Dario Fo, *Johan Padan a la descoverta de le Americhe*, ed. Franca Rame (Florence: Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, 1992), p. 91. For more on Fo's motifs, see Scuderi, *Popular Performance*, p. 49–77.

35. Fo, *Mistero Buffo*, p. 62; Dario Fo, *Storia della tigre e altre storie*, ed. Franca Rame and Arturo Corso (Milan: La Comune, 1980), p. 85. For more on Fo's use of zoomorphic symbolism, see Scuderi, *Framing*, p. 77–95.

36. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 19–20.

37. Dario Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, 2nd edn. (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), p. 22. The title of Joe Farrell's English translation is *Tricks of the Trade* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

38. Ibid., p. 27–8.

39. Fo, *Fabulazzo*, p. 108.

40. Fo, *Manuale minimo*, p. 53–5. Fo mistakenly writes 'jaguar' instead of 'leopard' throughout the subchapter.

41. Dario Fo, *Storia della tigre e altre storie*, ed. Franca Rame and Arturo Corso (Milan: La Comune, 1989). Fo claims he had learned the story from a folk performer in China. But, as has happened on various occasions, it is clear that he invented the tale himself. For more on this and on the anthropological elements in 'Tale of a Tiger' see Antonio Scuderi, 'The Cooked and the Raw: Zoomorphic Symbolism in Dario Fo's *Giullarate*', *Modern Language Review*, XCIX, No. 1 (2004), p. 65–76; and Scuderi, *Framing*, p. 87–95.

42. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to the Science of Mythology*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

43. Fo, *Tiger*, p. 8.

44. Farrell, *Harlequins*, p. 215.