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INTRODUCTION

Any symbolic communication system, any form of artistic expression, as well as any human activity, though it may have reached levels of considerable complexity, is based on basic skills and has been conceived to respond to the provocations of reality. As Romano Guardini writes: “Kann man doch den Menschen geradezu jenes Wesen nennen, das fähig ist, mit seinem inneren Sein auf die Dinge der Welt zu antworten und ebendarin sich selbst zu verwirklichen.”¹ Theater can be defined as an expressive phenomenon of the innate human need of relationship, it's about experiencing one's humanity, sharing a lack/emptiness to seek/regain/relive a memory/grief/joy and their meaning. At the origin of theater there is a primordial need that is part of the elementary experience of everyone: the urgency of communicating with each other. Theater is the communion of an audience with a living performance.²

“Il teatro si rivolge, per natura sua, a una collettività. Bergson ha detto che ‘non si ride da soli’, per ridere bisogna essere in più; e questo vale per il teatro comico. Ma anche il pianto, la commozione, o qualsiasi forma di interesse, a teatro, sono di natura collettiva. [...] E dall'altro lato, uno spettacolo: ma spettacolo vivente. [...] Non sono teatro le pellicole fotografiche che, elaborate una volta per sempre fuori dalla vista del pubblico, e definitivamente affidate a una macchina come quella del Cinema, potranno essere proiettate sopra uno schermo, tutte le volte che si vorrà, sempre identiche. Il Teatro vuole l'attore vivo, che parla e agisce scaldandosi al fiato del pubblico; vuole lo spettacolo senza la quarta parete, che ogni volta rinasce, rivive e rimuore fortificato dal consenso, o combattuto dalla ostilità, degli uditori partecipi, e in qualche modo collaboratori. Sotto questo rapporto, chi ha chiamato ‘teatro’ la presenza di una folla a una partita di calcio, è andato meno lontano di chi, nella sua sedicente storia del Teatro, ha inserito una parte riguardante il Cinema.”³

What I perceive as often lacking in today's theater is the communion between actors and spectators, the sense of a common belonging, of being involved in a communal story, not a mere aesthetic enjoyment or just the narration of someone else's story. Bertolt Brecht, in his article *Das Theater als Sport* writes: “Man muss ins Theater gehen wie zu einem Sportsfest.”⁴ It is actually a very fitting comparison: football and theater do have a common “ritual” nature.

¹ Guardini, *Über das Wesen des Kunstwerks*, p.10.

² See D'amico, *Storia del teatro drammatico 1*, p.7.

³ D'amico, *Storia del teatro drammatico 1*, p.7-8.

⁴ Brecht, *Werke*, p. 21.

Each dramatic action relies on the antagonism between two sides, just as the course of the game consists of a similar bipolarity: there is attack and counterattack, triumph and disaster to finally end with a win or a defeat. Theater and football are unpredictable, everything happens live and creates a great interaction, sometimes almost a symbiosis, between the performers and the audience.

The word *performance* comes from the ancient French *parfournir*, “complete” or “bring to conclusion”: a performance is the proper conclusion of an experience. An experience is never truly complete until it is “expressed”, that is until it is communicated in intelligible ways to others. Culture is just the whole of such expressions: the experience of individuals made available and accessible to society. Theater is able to make life transparent, it is the space where the tensions of existence are acknowledged and conflicts arise, in the attempt of exorcising the void. The irrepressible function of theater is precisely turning the remote past into historical present and awakening the attendees’ desires and needs.

1. The necessity of theater in modern society

The evolution of theater goes hand in hand with the changes of civilization: the fragmentation of modern society leads to the loss of a collective consciousness and thus also of the ceremonies and rites of passage that used to be a necessary part of the community life. Theater therefore lost its function and ability to be in intimate dialogue with men, to profoundly affect their existence.⁵ It has also lost its function of being an escape from the misery of real life: cinema and television are much more powerful and effective in creating an illusory world where to find shelter. The mass media have thus accelerated the structural mutation of theater, which technologically has long been a backward communication medium. So why do people still go to the theater? What drives to theater is the same primary necessity that led to celebrating rites, namely the need to redraw and share experience, to live to the fullest, to express joy, sorrow and fear, to know oneself and to understand the world of

⁵ See Dalla Palma, *La scena dei mutamenti*, p. 219-221.

passions. The need for theater is the need for an experience outside of the everyday concerns, a chance for confrontation with desire and the ideal sphere. Quite opposite to the emphasis of the performance as cultural consumption, theater is actually called to establish aggregations, relationships: a relationship that is within the protected space of “as if”, which allows to come into deep contact with each other.

“Il mondo del teatro deve darsi una ragione del suo operare; deve ritrovare un'idea forte della sua presenza nella società, deve rinnovare le ragioni etiche e civili per cui esso ha saputo essere nel passato un punto di riferimento significativo per la collettività.”⁶

The scene needs to regain the relation not only to everyday life, but, more in depth, to the tensions and anxieties of a community, thus becoming a “true representation of man's destiny”, where “representation” also means dealing with questions and elaborating answers.⁷ A theatrical performance moves profoundly, not only in an intellectual way, it also involves corporeality, perceptions and emotionality.

Moreover, unlike cinema, the theatrical experience is always a unique and unrepeatable event, which takes place in a precise time and space shared by actors and spectators, and its repetition is not a mere replication, but making it happen again.

In *Towards a poor theater*, Grotowski argues that modern civilization brought to a partition of the human being in intellect and instinct, thought and emotion, body and soul, along with the assumption of roles and masks in everyday life, and that theater offers a chance to experience totality and fulfill ourselves:

“We suffer most from a lack of totality, throwing ourselves away, squandering ourselves. Theater - through the actor's technique, his art in which the living organism strives for higher motives - provides an opportunity for what could be called integration, the discarding of masks, the revealing of the real substance: a totality of physical and mental reactions. This opportunity must be treated in a disciplined manner, with a full awareness of the responsibilities it involves. Here we can see the theater's therapeutic function for people in our present day civilization. It is true that the actor accomplishes this act, but he can only do so through an encounter with the spectator - intimately, visibly, not hiding behind a cameraman, wardrobe mistress, stage designer or make-up girl - in direct confrontation with him, and somehow ‘instead of’ him. The actor's act - discarding half measures, revealing, opening up,

⁶ Dalla Palma, *La scena dei mutamenti*, p. 223.

⁷ See Bernardi, Cuminetti, Dalla Palma, *I fuoriscena...*, p.13.

emerging from himself as opposed to closing up - is an invitation to the spectator. [...] Why do we sacrifice so much energy to our art? Not in order to teach others but to learn with them what our existence, our organism, our personal and unrepeatable experience have to give us; to learn to break down the barriers which surround us and to free ourselves from the breaks which hold us back, from the lies about ourselves which we manufacture daily for ourselves and for others; to destroy the limitations caused by our ignorance and lack of courage; in short, to fill the emptiness in us: to fulfill ourselves. [...] We see theater - especially in its palpable, carnal aspect - as a place of provocation, a challenge the actor sets himself and also, indirectly, other people.”⁸

2. Jacques Rancière: *The emancipated spectator*

In his publication *The Emancipated Spectator* Algerian-born Jacques Rancière deals with what he calls “the paradox of the spectator”: there is no theater without spectator.⁹ Rancière asserts that from at least the time of Denis Diderot's *Entretien sur Le Fils Naturel* (1769) the spectator has been depicted as inert and deprived from both the capacity of recognition and the power to act.¹⁰ Such Humanist discourse claims that the spectator has to confront with a phenomenon without knowing whether about its production process nor the reality behind its appearance –above that, he has to stay immobile and passive on his seat. Such considerations would lead to the conclusion that theater should be described as something absolutely evil, as Plato defines it: theater is a place where ignorant persons are invited to see suffering people.”¹¹ The exposition of Pathos, sickness, desire and sorrow that teaches illusion and passivity is all the scene has to offer.

In response, at the center of the works of theater critic and playwright Georg Fuchs and many other twentieth-century theorists, there was precisely an ideal of theater as social event, in which the division between scene and audience was resolved.¹² Playwrights and theater directors have sought to transform the spectator into a committed agent and the spectacle into a communal performance, a new theater where there is no spectator and no optical passive

⁸ Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theater*, p.255-256.

⁹ See Rancière, *Der emanzipierte Zuschauer*, p.12.

¹⁰ See Ibid., p.2.

¹¹ See Ibid., p.13.

¹² See C. Bernardi, C. Susa, *Storia essenziale del teatro*, p. 285.

relationship, but Drama –that is action: the scene has to be the place where living bodies perform in front of other living bodies that need to be brought into motion as well. Bertolt Brecht’s epic theater and Antonin Artaud’s theater of cruelty attempted to create forms of theater in which all the attendees would be active participants instead of voyeurs, misled by images.¹³ The Living Theatre, founded in 1947 by Julian Beck, was a continuation of this project. To achieve such reformed theater Brecht claims that the spectator is supposed to learn keeping a distance from what he sees. He shouldn’t look at the characters on stage with compassion and identify with them, rather he should be watching the play like a detective or a scientist trying to find out its meaning. Quite the opposite, Artaud’s theory is that the spectator needs to completely get rid of any distance, he should be in the theatrical action not as an observer, but as a participant.¹⁴ In either case the reformers of theater have aimed to turn the theater into the place where the public can confront with itself as a collective.¹⁵ The reform of theater meant retrieving its core to an assembly or ceremony of a community. It’s not an esthetic revolution that is meant to change the state or the laws, much more it should change perceptions and human experiences. According to Piscator, leading exponent of the epic theater along with Brecht, theater is an assembly where people become aware of their situation and discuss their interests. It is the purifying ritual, in which a community takes possession of its own energies, as stated by Artaud.¹⁶ Therefore the reform is about achieving a theater that embodies a living community, in contrast to the spectacle as merely superficial illusion and mimesis.

According to Rancière, reformers of theater and pedagogues regularly assume that they need to overcome the chasm that separates activity from passivity.¹⁷ The author’s principal argument is that the audience can never be “passive”. There is no real opposition between collective and individual or image and reality. Collectives are made of individuals and images are a part of our sensory experience. Such oppositions actually exist only as long as capacities and incapacities get associated a priori to certain positions: for instance the spectator’s role as either passive or active by virtue of an opposition to the performer. The spectator is devaluated as inert out of a presuppositions and inconsequential opposition of concepts such

¹³ See Rancière, *Der emanzipierte Zuschauer*, p.4.

¹⁴ See Ibid., p.14.

¹⁵ See Rancière, *Der emanzipierte Zuschauer*, p.15.

¹⁶ See Ibid., p.4-5.

¹⁷ See Ibid., p.22.

as watching/knowing, appearance/reality, activity/passivity.¹⁸ A viewer, like a scholar, is actually involved in the action as well, he observes, compares, interprets what he sees and through associations creates his own point of view, learning something new –something unpredictable that not even the master knows about.¹⁹ The power of the spectator lays in his impulsive ability to associate and dissociate, to relate everything he sees to his own experiences, ideas, dreams. As a matter of fact, every spectator is also actor of his own story and every actor is spectator of the same story as well.

“Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting: when we understand (that) the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing, themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection.”²⁰

3. Copernican revolution of the theater

As already mentioned, the twentieth century is marked by the rise of new forms of expressions such as cinema, entertainment, television, sport, rock shows, discos and the following changing of people's perceptive habits and mentality. In a market dominated by shows born out of the technological revolution the economic survival of the theater seemed impossible. As a matter of fact the theater market had to drastically downsize and could overall survive on subsidies. Despite the adverse conditions, the theater could persist and adapt to modern culture. Its persistence lies in the “loss of a center”,²¹ the dissolution of a standard central model and its dissemination outside of the traditional bounds and channels. The renewal of theater happened through a process of differentiation, through the emergence of many different independent forms. Only few of them, the most financed, derived from the so called bourgeois theater of the nineteenth century. Alongside arose theaters of the most varied kinds: street theater, political, therapeutic theater, for propaganda, self-awareness,

¹⁸ See Ibid., p.22.

¹⁹ See Ibid., p.24.

²⁰ See Ibid., p.23.

²¹ “Teatro” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*, p.25.

together with happenings and performances –many different functions and forms. In short, theater didn't rediscover a new function, rather its possible functions proliferated.²²

The theatrical experimentalism that spread throughout the second half of the twentieth century is not associated with the particular intentions of an author, it was rather the outcome of the resulting marginality of theater and therefore its necessity of renewal in a time dominated by cinematographic and television showbiz. Besides, while theater previously referred to a largely uniform cultural context, in the second part of 1900 it had to deal with great cultural differences also within its own original context.²³

Experimental theater can be defined as a new phenomenon that left the traditional theater halls for cellars and tents and gave life to a theater of gesture and urge, opposed to the decayed bourgeois one –also called “bubble theater”. The theater of gesture has its origin in the theory of Brecht, according to which the theatrical performance is essentially based on acting, which is itself founded on the estrangement effect. The new acting technique aims to emphasize the gesture language. Brecht also brought back the idea of a didactic theater, which is distinguished by its extreme simplicity, the directness of its mediums and its ability of creating an immediate exchange between actors and audiences.²⁴

“A poor theater” was a great slogan of the twentieth-century theater all over the world. Behind that slogan there was not just a theory or a poetic, rather the efficacy of a new stance, suited to the time. No other book about theater had such a vast impact in 1900 –a time when there was a real need of commitment, renovation and social, political and ethical research. Written by Polish theater practitioner Jerzy Grotowski and published in 1968, *Towards a poor theater* deals with the main issues of a director and actor, starting from the technical preparation and moving forward to new dramaturgic perspectives. It introduces the vision of a theater that, overcoming its character of show or entertainment, reiterates its vocation of a collective ritual, both sacred and secular at the same time. This way theater would be free, non-commercial, outside of trends of the market and of ideologies. Grotowski was a significant innovator of the experimental theater movement.²⁵ He claimed that theater could

²² See Ibid., p.28.

²³ See Ibid., p.40.

²⁴ See Ibid., p.27.

²⁵ See “Jerzy Grotowski” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/jerzy-grotowski/>

never compete with film and television and it should never even attempt to: “No matter how much theater expands and exploits its mechanical resources, it will remain technologically inferior to film and television. Consequently, I propose poverty in theater”.²⁶ The term “poor theater” defines a performance style that strips away all of the excesses, such as lavish costumes and sets. The poor theater preferred non-traditional spaces such as buildings and rooms instead of mainstream theater halls. “By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theater can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc.”²⁷ His work centered on actor training, emphasizing the physical skills of the performer. Influenced by Brecht, his focus involved an intense exploration of the relationship between performer and spectator, with the purpose of eliminating the division between actor and audience, creating a communion between the two. Typically, the audience was placed on many sides of the action or in and amongst the action itself.²⁸

During the twentieth century took place almost a Copernican revolution of the theater: traditional roles and work patterns were subverted. The theater of words turned into a theater of image, physical action, gesture, of interpretation and emotion. The director gained a central role and became a reference and coordination point for both author and actor.²⁹ Among the most significant directors of the first half of the century deserve to be mentioned in particular Max Reinhardt, Jacques Copeau, and Anton Giulio Bragaglia. Starting particularly in the 1960s and supported by a strong political and utopian tension, all over Europe spread a new phenomenon of engagement that turned the audience into active participants of the performance and realized a new kind of popular theater in non-traditional spaces like basements, depots, factories and sport halls.

In the USA since the postwar period the practice of the happening and street theater became widespread and deliberately acquired political connotations. The daring productions of Peter Brook and the Living Theater, together with the Open Theater and the Bread & Puppet contributed significantly to the development the avant-garde stage.³⁰ The idea of poor theater

²⁶ Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, p.19.

²⁷ Ibid., p.19.

²⁸ See “Jerzy Grotowski” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/jerzy-grotowski/>

²⁹ “Teatro” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*, p.21.

³⁰ See “Teatro” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*, p.29.

was very influential, one great example of its incentive is Peter Brook's rough theater. Brook began his activity during the sixties in rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis in Paris, a street full of Indian shops, in aux Bouffes du Nord, an old theater building that had been closed for over twenty years and that he restored to the minimum necessary.³¹ The encounter with the research experiences of Grotowski, Brecht and Artaud helped him deepen his way of understanding theater.³² The search for the essential dimension of the scene let him develop a style that aimed to avoid the stiffness and conventionality of what he calls "mortal theater", that is standard professional theater. In his most famous essay, *The Empty Space* (1968), he describes the fulcrum of theater as the authentic relationship created between three components: an actor, a spectator and an empty space.

After the Second World War in Italy started to develop the so called Teatri Stabili or Teatri Piccoli (Piccolo Teatro of Milan was the first and the only one that maintained its original name), that is theaters financed by the State, by regions and municipalities.³³ Meanwhile, by the end of 1900 in almost every city some theater had established in old factories, warehouses, garage, deconsecrated churches or old abandoned buildings. In fact, in a cultural phase where there wasn't a single model of theater anymore, the theatrical structures began to also move in different spaces and also in Italy flourished new, young and unconventional networks. The Italian avant-gardes focused on an interdisciplinary approach, getting inspiration from all kind of art languages such as painting, video art and puppet theater. A whole generation of eminent directors such as Luchino Visconti, Giorgio Strehler and Luca Ronconi contributed to the renewal of the working approach, so that the production phase achieved a main role. The director undertook the role of the author, while actors became tools, and the text merely a starting point. The author then had to change his way of writing, and the actor, in order to reaffirm his personality, often turned into a director and author himself: that is for instance the work of Carmelo Bene and Dario Fo.

Dario Fo and his wife Franca Rame, together with Marco Paolini and other protagonists of teatro di narrazione, were able to regain and rework the dynamics of popular theater into new staging, narrative and acting techniques. Teatro di narrazione was born in Italy at the end of

³¹ Ibid., p.39.

³² See "Peter Brook" in *Enciclopedia Treccani* <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/peter-brook/>

³³ See "Teatro" in *Enciclopedia Treccani*, p.14.

the Eighties and established as a drama's genre since the mid-Nineties. Its roots can be traced back to Fo's monologues and particularly *Mistero buffo* (1969) represented a reference for recovering the strength of oral culture and popular narratives. The actor-narrator stands alone on stage with neither set design or costume, not as the protagonist of the story he tells, but as a witness of the same. The protagonists of teatro di narrazione, supported by a long and extensive research of material, kept alive a sense of community and publicly unraveled historical truths that were kept silent by the government or removed from the collective consciousness.³⁴

Out of this genre a variety of original attempts and paths outlined over the years: the term teatro civile started to come along around the 1990s, while Marco Paolini was working on his *Racconto del Vajont* and has become one of the most dynamic forms of contemporary theater in Italy.³⁵ Teatro civile originated from the need and urgency of human sharing and solidarity, of sounding out themes of collective interest to help inform the public, create awareness, stimulate active participation and offer the possibility of a change. It is in some way counter-information, an attempt to lift the fog of oblivion and manipulation from the heart of the social fabric, where the conflict, either explicit or latent, needs to be expressed. While in the 1970s the "teatro politico" was very popular, after the fall of the Berlin wall, its Brechtian ideological approach, its propaganda and indoctrination started to live an irreversible crisis. The stance of the director and actors of teatro politico is about being an avant-garde, convincing their public of a truth that they only possess. On the opposite, the stance of the authors of teatro civile is about placing themselves at the same level as the public, sharing the pursuit of the truth. The actors do not interpret characters, do not step on stage as experts but as people, with their own point of view and their credibility, and are charged with an informative and formative function.

Teatro civile offers an analysis of reality, keeping the testimony in the foreground in a way that allows an extensive understanding of facts through mind, body, emotion that does not exclude contradictions, questions and paradoxes. My focus is depicting how their work

³⁴ See "Teatro di narrazione" in *Enciclopedia Treccani* http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/teatro-di-narrazione_%28Lessico-del-XXI-Secolo%29/

³⁵ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 24-32.

contributed to the civil rebirth of the country, as expressed very well by these words of Marco Paolini:

“Troppo spesso saltano i contesti. Il problema della memoria del nostro tempo è che viviamo una rimozione velocissima: non abbiamo una coscienza civile molto salda, ma solo episodica e fondata su una grande capacità di reazione. È il dato familistico che caratterizza questo paese e la sua capacità di reagire ai terremoti, alle catastrofi e agli eventi più gravi con un impulso di solidarietà e di coesione che cessa fisiologicamente quando i titoli si spostano in un’altra direzione. È un’onda emotiva di grande tensione e anche di capacità –perché abbiamo un’ottima Protezione Civile–, ma destinata fatalmente a non tradursi in azione. Lo dimostrano le patologiche lentezze nelle ricostruzioni e nella chiusura delle ferite. [...] dietro alla pretesa delle grandi soluzioni il miglior governo di questo Paese è appena tollerante, non sensibile: appena tollerante nei confronti dei problemi altrui. La politica vive i problemi come tolleranza. Questo è imbarazzante e offensivo verso i cittadini. Io sento questa distanza, ed è questa la ragione per cui tocco la memoria, ho bisogno di un legame fisico, emotivo. [...] La cronica mancanza dei contesti legata alla rimozione è il problema maggiore di un lavoro sulla memoria.”³⁶

³⁶ Marco Paolini in Oreggia, *Archivio di voci incontri di teatro*, p.38.

CHAPTER I

I.1 Dario Fo and Franca Rame

Dario Fo developed a new way of being on stage and of storytelling that affected a whole generation of artists: “nel teatro italiano c’è una generazione con il gusto di ricordare e di narrarsi: gliel’ha insegnato, da caposcuola, Dario Fo.”³⁷

Receiving the Nobel Prize in 1997, Fo stressed that theater’s vocation is to deal with the present time:

“il nostro dovere di intellettuali, di gente che monta in cattedra o sul palcoscenico, che parla soprattutto coi giovani è di informarli di quello che succede intorno. Loro devono raccontare la loro storia. Un teatro, una letteratura, una espressione d’arte che non parli del proprio tempo è inesistente.”³⁸

As a matter of fact any theater can be defined as “politikòs”: civil and public, however having a political aim makes a big difference in the approach to the theatrical work. The theater of Dario Fo and his wife Franca Rame didn’t have primarily aesthetic and artistic goals, rather it had didactic and intervention purposes: it was the instrument of a broad cultural, political and civil project. The main focus was meeting the public and this approach was created through masterly pragmatic strategies as well as through the script. Fo's scripts are “mobile texts”, ductile material, adaptable to both place and circumstance, “works open to continuous variations, performance after performance, depending on what the news offered and the demand of the audience.” Fo was constantly attempting to adapt the show to the historical and geographical reality outside of the theatrical hall, with the intent of creating a political and civil theater that knows how to deal with current issues and to take a stand in the present.³⁹

“il teatro deve parlare del proprio tempo perché il testo interessi e l’interpretazione sia efficace. Bisogna sempre tenere il legame alla realtà, nel recitare, nello scrivere, nel mettere in scena. Uno degli errori più grossi della drammaturgia oggi è proprio questo

³⁷ Quadri, *Ritratto di gruppo degli anni Settanta*, in *La Repubblica*, 29.4.1995.

³⁸ Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l’arte*, p.69.

³⁹ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l’arte*, p.107.

sganciamento dalla realtà, il testo, invece, dovrebbe avere una corrispondenza al proprio tempo, alla vita politica, sociale, economica, morale, di grosso valore. Lavorare per un teatro che parli del proprio tempo non vuol dire mettere da parte la storia, ma al contrario, significa impostare un rapporto attivo con il passato.”⁴⁰

“Rappresentando ancora oggi le sue storie in luoghi non teatrali Fo dimostra come la scelta di spazi alternativi – che si è sviluppata sull’onda del fermento culturale e politico degli anni ’60-’70 – sia tuttora attuale e di stimolo per il “teatro giovane”. Il punto è che Dario Fo, sia quando agisce nella sala teatrale che quando opera in spazi diversi, restituisce al palcoscenico la sua originaria funzione, quella di un espediente perché attore e pubblico possano vedersi a vicenda, un modo per comunicare meglio, e per il quale “abbiamo scoperto” dice Fo “il problema di distruggere la quarta parete”.

⁴¹

The teatro-cronaca aims to stimulate the interest, participation, support, indignation towards some archetypal attitudes of society. “Il teatro politico vuole partecipare con i propri mezzi specifici al generale sforzo e processo di trasformazione della realtà sociale e quindi in definitiva dell’uomo.”⁴² The didactic effectiveness of a performance lies in passing on information with irony as a viewpoint, a theater that is representation and observation of history together with the public. The stage shall not be an enclosure for the actors, whether the orchestra an enclosure for the audience. Fo's theater is also one that demolish roles and hierarchies and eliminate the contraposition author-director-actor, rejecting the traditional idea of writing and direction as two separate moments.

“Con la scrittura parte in Dario l’esigenza di pensare e fabbricare una scena, meglio una sequenza di spazi scenici, di piani, dove rappresentare l’azione teatrale. Il suo teatro non è fatto di personaggi ma di situazioni. I personaggi tendono alle maschere, quindi a pretesti emblematici, al servizio di una situazione [...] Scrive a scrittura aperta, cioè non fa una scaletta completa del testo. Invento un dialogo su una situazione paradossale o reale e va avanti come per una logica geometrica naturale, conflitti che si sciolgono in una gag dopo l’altra, di pari passo con il discorso politico.”⁴³

Besides observing audiences’ reactions and having debates at the end of the performance, the great variations and continuous rewriting of the texts are due to the need to change it because

⁴⁰ Pizza, *Al lavoro con Dario Fo e Franca Rame*, p.76.

⁴¹ Artese, *Dario Fo parla di Dario Fo*, p.93-94.

⁴² Castri, *Per un teatro politico*, p.8.

⁴³ Franca Rame in Fo, *Le commedie di Dario Fo*, p.13.

of the pressure of current events, scandals and new political situation. This is an important contribution to increase the show's efficacy and sharpening of its political message.⁴⁴

I.2 Breaking down the fourth wall

The theory of the fourth wall was developed by Naturalism with the purpose of an accurate depiction of reality. Also, according to Naturalism the actor was supposed to ignore the presence of the public so that the character would appear "real". With Fo realism is about a viewpoint and the intention of acting on reality, focusing on concrete problems and offering possible solutions,⁴⁵ "allowing the audience to detach itself from the historical frame of reference of the pieces and make contemporary analogies".⁴⁶

The "fourth wall" is the condition in which the public finds itself attending the performance in the spirit of a "voyeur". That means spying in the dark, unseen, a story that actors are living beyond the proscenium, in full light, as if they were acting without realizing that they are being listened to by hundreds of people. This is the worst condition that can happen to an actor.⁴⁷

"La quarta parete sono anche le luci di taglio che creano una determinate atmosfera, I controluce, I velatini rosati e ambrati sui riflettori, sono le scenografie fortemente accidentate e il clima d'acquario in cui sono immersi attori e oggetti, è il trucco livido da cadavere sulle facce degli attori, è il loro gestire ed emettere con determinate cadenze cantate, sussurrate o gridate ad effetto per cui lo spettatore si trova nella condizione di un guardone a spiare una storia che non gli appartiene e che è appunto al di là della quarta parete."⁴⁸

The actor is supposed to be paying close attention to every signal that comes from his audience, in order to establish a dialogue. Inspired by Brecht and Strehler, this is how Fo sums up the ideal approach of an actor to his audience:

⁴⁴ See Behan, *Dario Fo: revolutionary theatre*, p.104-105.

⁴⁵ See Pizza, *Il gesto, la parola, l'azione*, p. 81.

⁴⁶ Mitchell, Tony. *Dario Fo : People's Court Jester*, p.11.

⁴⁷ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p. 159.

⁴⁸ Artese, *Dario Fo parla di Dario Fo*, p. 94.

“Fra di voi la maggior parte non ascolta con attenzione le reazioni e la partecipazione degli spettatori. Tendete a recitare come se in sala non ci fosse nessuno. Non avete ancora capito che non vi trovate su un carro dove i cavalli vanno per conto proprio, ma siete voi che controllate e determinate l’andamento del tiro. E quindi, per farlo da commedianti e non da ripetitori di battute, dovete ascoltarne i segnali, che comprendono oltre alle risate e agli applausi del pubblico, il respiro: voi determinate il fiato di ognuno, perfino il battito del loro cuore, se siete narratori di talento.”⁴⁹

Most of the modern theater is conceived in a way that puts the public in a position of total passivity. The complete darkness of the hall produces a kind of attention that is exclusively emotional, putting aside the psychical receptivity.

“Bisogna assolutamente distruggerla questa quarta parete, fare in modo che ogni spettatore esca da quello stato d’animo deleterio e ascolti libero da condizionamenti, o meglio con una partecipazione consapevole e, al contrario, trasformi la qualità della sua attenzione, a costo di assumere un atteggiamento critico nei riguardi del dramma o della commedia.”⁵⁰

The theater of Fo and Rame aims to break down the fourth wall and make sure that every spectator comes out of such a deleterious passive state and listens with a conscious participation, taking a critical attitude towards the drama or the comedy. It’s about demolishing the process of turning the stage into a particular space, separated from the everyday life and creating a “comunicazione collettiva”, able to involve and shake the spectator talking about common problems and communicating knowledge.⁵¹ “Quando siamo arrivati all’esigenza di distruggere la quarta parete, di parlare di problemi collettivi ci troviamo in completa alternativa rispetto alla preoccupazione di identificare l’attore col personaggio.”⁵² Their adoption of this concept and the method of addressing the audience directly are similar to Brecht's alienation effects.

“Because of his popularity and the fact that many of his shows are performed outside the commercial circuit at reduced prices, his performances are normally crowded [...] Not only for many years was there a ‘third act’ of general discussion, but alternatively a striking worker or the victim of a miscarriage of justice was often given the microphone to explain their situation and ask the audience for support, with Fo either taking part in the discussion or just letting people speak for themselves.”⁵³

⁴⁹ Dario Fo in Fo, *Manuale minimo dell’attore*, p. 172.

⁵⁰ Franca Rame in <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/08/27/nuovo-manuale-minimo-dellattore-tre-estratti-dallultimo-libro-di-dario-fo/1987802/>

⁵¹ See Pizza, *Il gesto, la parola, l’azione*, p.82.

⁵² Fo in Artese, *Dario Fo parla di Dario Fo*, p.100.

⁵³ Behan, *Dario Fo : revolutionary theatre*, p.106-107.

During the years they have developed many tricks to do so, such as having a drink in the foyer before the show, conversing with the audience and then spending the first few minutes directing people to empty seats and areas. He would also take advantage of a random accident or even create one, in order to break the rhythm of the play and awaken not an anonymous but a personal “presence” of each spectator. One of the best masters in the use of these techniques was certainly Totò.⁵⁴

“Col trucco, approfittando di un casuale incidente o addirittura creandone uno d’acchito, così da spezzare il ritmo e ricreare in ogni spettatore la cosiddetta “presenza”, non anonima ma personale. In questi vent’anni di palcoscenico ho raccolto un gran numero di espedienti, alcuni dei quali davvero geniali. Uno dei campioni assoluti dello sfascio di questo clima nefasto è stato senz’altro Totò. Un altro “spaccaparete” implacabile era Petrolini, che ricordo solo per i filmati. Da entrambi ho imparato il trucco dell’accoglimento.”⁵⁵

The audience is never sitting in the dark during Fo’s performances: “voglio continuare a vedere le facce, notarne le reazioni, studiare l’effetto di ogni provocazione, rompere i ritmi, agganciare gli argomenti e le varianti sul pubblico che mi trovo di fronte.”⁵⁶ That explains why, unlike Brecht, improvisation and laughter plays such a big role.

“Noi abbiamo sempre privilegiato l’improvvisazione, che in Brecht non esiste, la quantità di divertimento. I nostri erano veramente giochi nei quali il *fautrire* era la base fondamentale. Arrivare al *fautrire* era spingere il pubblico a una effervescenza, ad una partecipazione di godimento collettivo dove il riso ad un certo punto è inarrestabile.”⁵⁷

Such a direct bond to the public, which often invades even the stage, reflect a conception of the theatrical space as a square, an attempt to recreate the conditions of popular theater: “Il popolo in arte sa esprimere con semplicità cose profonde. Certi intellettuali con farraginosa complessità riescono ad esprimere solo idee profondamente vuote.”⁵⁸ Involving the public means a total and rational implication in a worldview, in collective problems and that leads to a language that has to be necessarily epic:

“Se io cerco problemi collettivi, il mio discorso, il mio linguaggio... sarà diverso... e sarà obbligato ad essere epico. Ecco perché tutto il teatro popolare è sempre epico.

⁵⁴ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell’attore*, p.160.

⁵⁵ Franca Rame in <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/08/27/nuovo-manuale-minimo-dellattore-tre-estratti-dallultimo-libro-di-dario-fo/1987802/>

⁵⁶ Pizza, *Il gesto, la parola, l’azione*, p.86.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.84.

⁵⁸ Bertolt Brecht in Fo, Rame, *Manuale Minimo dell’attore*, p.488.

Perché alla base c'è un punto ideologico ben chiaro. C'è l'ideologia della comunità, della comunione degli interessi, che sono interessi sociali, interessi di vivere insieme.”⁵⁹

For an author, an actor and director the public is the ultimate test and verification, the possibility of receiving a valuable collaboration. Although composed of different individualities, often the public melts up together so it is important to identify the character of the public. One of the methods experimented by Fo and Rame to address the audience is to always improvise a prologue and often even an anti-prologue, resuming the habit of the “old art” Italian theater, as a way to explore, approach and establish a connection. While people take their seats, for instance, they break the ice by teasing the eye-catching ones in the audience, make them feel deliberately comfortable or uncomfortable. These tricks help understanding the mood of the public and help actors adapt the text to the situations. Observing the reactions also let the author see what the public really asks for and discover the mistakes, the unclear and verbose parts of the text and improve it.⁶⁰

Each performance of the same play is supposed to turn into something new and partly spontaneous, as a result of a collaboration between the performer and a participating audience, who it is the comic's job to keep involved through a technique Fo calls “fishing for laughs”:

“The comic fishes for laughs by virtually throwing out a comic line, or a hook, into the audience. He indicates where the audience's reaction has to be gathered in and also virtually where the hook is cast, because otherwise the tension built up between stage and audience would die down. Winding in the hook doesn't mean snuffing out the audience reaction, but correcting its flow with a flick of the rod. The comic's ability lies in knowing that if he carries on for a while on the same tack he'll snap the audience's capacity to keep up with his theme. So he breaks into the stage action, using something extraneous (a spectator's funny way of laughing, for example). Then the comic casts out the hook again, for a bigger laugh (although he can fish for laughs by casting out the hook more than once before provoking one big laugh) [...] I think, however, the audience's real way of laughing can be divided into just two types: when it is symptomatic of involvement in the play and when it is not. The difference lies between the mechanical reaction of laughing and the relationship through which an audience collaborates in building the play. The first is about the star-satisfaction of the comic who sees the effects of his technique and is pleased with himself, and it is quite different from the comic's reaction to a sort of confrontation which prompts him immediately, on the spot, into developing what he is saying, preferably by means of improvisation, and the action he is building up on stage with

⁵⁹ Fo in Artese, *Dario Fo parla di Dario Fo*, p.100-101.

⁶⁰ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.277.

the audience. The comic provokes the audience's laughter with his resources, but audience laughter is a response which itself recharges the comic — it's not just a technique - maybe even feeding the yeast of his stage reactions in the course of a given play, or maybe just adding to the further exercise of his craft . . . All popular theater requires the audience to be 'inside' and take part in the rhythm of laughter.”⁶¹

I.3 Medieval jester and comici dell'arte

However, the idea of breaking the fourth wall was already nailed in the heads of the comici dell'arte. The term Commedia dell' arte denotes the great phenomenon of the teatro delle maschere and dell' improvviso that flourished in Italy in the sixteenth century, developed in France at the end of the same century and had its apotheosis throughout Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Commedia dell' arte is a form of theater that is not based on mere pantomime, but on a combination of dialogue and action, a monologue and gesture.⁶²

The comedians possessed an incredible baggage of situations, dialogues, gags, nursery rhymes, rigmaroles all learned by heart, which they used at the right moment and with great timing, giving the impression of improvising. It was a baggage built and assimilated by means of the practice of countless replicas, of different shows, of gags put together depending on the public, but most of them were certainly the result of practice and study. Every comedian learned by heart dozens of different sketches on various subjects depending on the role or the mask he would be playing and all of these cues had the possibility to be adapted to different situations and dialogues.⁶³ There are spectacular and entertaining aspects to the Commedia dell' arte that distinguish this kind of theater from all the others. The reason of such originality does not lie, as some might believe, in the particular use of the mask and of the characters as fixed stereotypes, but in a truly revolutionary concept of theater and the absolutely unique role that the actors take on. For the first time the entire theatrical game is supported only by the actor, who gets to be author, fitter and director as well. Some

⁶¹ Dario Fo in Mitchell, *Dario Fo: People's Court Jester*, p.12- 13.

⁶² See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.10.

⁶³ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.12.

researchers in fact call the genre of Commedia dell'arte more specifically "comedy of the actors".⁶⁴

Franca Rame, who is a daughter of art, had the extraordinary fortune of growing up in a close contact with the cultural environment of the *commedia all'italiana*. The repertoire of her family was at least three centuries old and so rich of comedies, drama, farces that the company could perform for months on the same square, presenting a new show every night without even having to revise them. It also happened that a brand new work was set up based on the news or a novel.⁶⁵ The poet would simply read to the members of the company the plot and without any kind of rehearsals they would step onstage and improvise. Of course everyone knew an infinite number of suitable dialogues he would adapt to the situation and above all everybody knew the opening and closing subjects, that is, the conventional phrases and gestures that warned the other interpreters about variations, changes of situation or about the approach of the end of an act. But the knowledge of many expedients wouldn't be enough if the actor did not possess the imagination and the ability to improvise, that is the faculty to give every time the impression of saying new things that have just being thought of.⁶⁶

Taking advantage of the accident, improvising out of the randomness of an event is part of the tradition of the *Commedia dell'arte* and, even before that, of the theater of the jesters, the itinerant players who performed to the peasants of Europe. *Commedia dell'arte* and the theater of the jesters are two historical moments that are grafted into each other, it is not known exactly when the activity of the jesters has ended and the *comici dell'arte* have taken over. Improvisation and accident are anyhow the fundamental elements that are common to all kinds of comedians, from the jesters to the clowns.⁶⁷ The theatrical tradition of the *giullare* is at the basis of almost all of Fo's more than seventy plays.

The jester is a mime who works with gesture, word and singing. In most cases, the jester does not write his texts, but transmits them orally, learning them by heart and often improvising.

The texts of the jesters have been written in fact by the troubadours, scribes, clerics or notaries that delighted in transcribing the ballads they had heard. The volumes that collect most of these transcriptions are actually notarial acts, collections of contracts and laws. On the

⁶⁴ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.21.

⁶⁵ See *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁶⁶ See *Ibid.*, p.16.

⁶⁷ See *Ibid.*, p.27.

back sides of these acts and deeds the scribe or notary had been taking notes just for pleasure of what they heard in a square or in a courtyard.

Obviously these documents have been handed on in the centuries until at us not because of the poetic works, but only because of the contracts and acts that were on the other side of the sheet.

The jester almost always played in first person, as one and only actor on stage –or table, even when they recited dialogues with more characters. Their peculiar talent was indeed performing scenes with dozens of different characters. They had their own eccentric costume, but also liked the disguises: during a market, for instance, they would suddenly mount on a bench –from which derives the term ‘saltimbanco’, dressed as a cop, a doctor, a lawyer, a priest or a merchant and began their performance.⁶⁸

The ‘giullari’ included a wide variety of performers: troubadour, musicians, acrobats, dancers, tumblers, itinerant cleric, storyteller and mimes. There were some jesters, the troubadours, who were even used as couriers by court poets, sent to other courts to recite or sing what the prince had written.

Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries during the peasant war in Germany jesters crossed the country far and wide, serving as a link among the various groups of rebels located in Swabia, Bavaria, Austria, Tyrol, Croatia and Bohemia. They were not simply messengers, but also carried out a real propaganda, as reported in the records of trials of jesters condemned to death.

With their representations they protested against the robbery of the great feudal lords, the corruption of the Roman clergy and the opportunism of the Lutheran priests. Among the documentation of the trials there are also leaflets that were distributed to the public during the performances, with lithographed caricatures and satirical sonnets. Other documents show that some of the jesters, on the contrary, put themselves at the service of the feudal police: they went around pretending to be sympathizers of the revolt, but actually they collected information to frame them.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.186.

⁶⁹ See Ibid., p.197-199.

I.4 Popular theater, theater of the situation

In 1947 Sartre wrote an essay titled *Popular theater, theater of the situation*: “without situations there is no theater.”⁷⁰ He reflects upon the experience of his generation of writers and audience:

“Our life as an individual which had seemed to depend upon our efforts, our virtues, and our faults, on our good and bad luck [...] seemed governed down to its minutest details by obscure and collective forces, and its most private circumstances seemed to reflect the state of the whole world. All at once we felt ourselves abruptly *situated*.”⁷¹

“Since we were *situated*, the only novels we could dream of were novels of *situation*, without internal narrators or all-knowing witnesses. . . . We had to present creatures whose reality would be the tangled and contradictory tissue of each one’s evaluations of all the other characters – himself included – and the evaluation by all the others of himself, and who could never decide from within whether the changes of their destinies came from their own efforts, from their own faults, or from the course of the universe.”⁷²

In other words, in Sartre’s “theater of situations” there are no more characters, the psychology and personality of the individual become irrelevant since his life is reduced to a single action, a single choice. “Each character will be nothing but the choice of an issue and will equal no more than the chosen issue.”⁷³ In this theater, “*doing* reveals *being*.”⁷⁴ The bourgeois theater of characters is hence replaced with a theater of deeds.

Inspired by Sartre’s theory, Fo describes the term “situation” in theater as the main structure of the drama, which is designed in a way that creates a tension that involve the audience throughout the progression of the story.⁷⁵ In order to address everybody, the attention shall not be focused on the psychology of the character, but rather on the situation and its narrative, as much as the actor is not supposed to live his character, rather to present it, retrieving the technique of *a parte* –observing the character together with the audience and being neither too close nor too distant, allowing a free exchange.

“Il teatro che vuole basarsi su un dialogo autonomo dallo sviluppo di un’azione, che non è espressivo di un’azione potenziale, non è teatro, è letteratura. Il linguaggio

⁷⁰ Sartre, *Pour un théâtre de situations*, p.8.

⁷¹ Sartre, *Situation of the Writer in 1947*, p. 147.

⁷² Ibid., p.155.

⁷³ Ibid., p.203.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.165.

⁷⁵ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell’attore*, p.203.

teatrale è sintetico, non consente indugi descrittivi della situazione o di stati d'animo a meno che non siano parte del ritmo che si vuole tenere.”⁷⁶

“Noi si era [...] una compagnia che faceva del sarcasmo e della denuncia civile il perno del proprio teatro. [...] recitare significa [...] convincere usando il minimo dei mezzi, [...] non strafare, evitare gli effetti facili e soprattutto comunicare.”⁷⁷

I.5 The actor's body

The actor needs to select carefully his gestures and be aware of them: a dull multiplicity of gesticulation would only nullify its communication at all. The movements, the attitude and posture must be weighted and essential.⁷⁸ Alone through his facial play and gestures he lets the public imagine also objects and figures. For much of his career Fo has been against ‘naturalism’, the use of lots of objects on stage. With precise and typical signs the public can visualize anything: not by doing gestures that describe the object but through the usual movements to interact with them, such as getting into a car and starting it. This technique only works if the movements are essentials and unequivocal, avoiding any detailed depiction of the situation.⁷⁹ By lowering one's voice volume and shrinking the gestures, one imposes a greater concentration and attention. On the other hand, by raising the voice and doing abundant gestures projected towards the audience one can expand the scenic space, and physically involve the audience so that it turns into a choir, it's about involving and displacing the public the whole time.⁸⁰ That must be achieved also through synthesis, which imposes on the spectator the use of imagination and intuition. Such a conception has its origin in the popular theater and the epic tradition: tapering all the superfluous and every descriptiveness.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Artese, *Dario Fo parla di Dario Fo*, p.22.

⁷⁷ Rame, Fo, *Una vita all'improvvisa*, p.109.

⁷⁸ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.77.

⁷⁹ See Vicentini, *L'arte di guardare gli attori. Manuale pratico per lo spettatore di teatro, cinema, televisione*, p.161.

⁸⁰ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.244.

⁸¹ See Ibid., p.249.

Practicing with the mask is a great method to achieve the control of your body language. The mask obliges to an extraordinary synthesis. As the Irish playwright Bernard Shaw said: “Let a hypocrite wear a mask and you will see that he will no longer be able to lie”⁸²: the mask forces you to tell the truth because it eliminates the fundamental element that is mostly used to express mystification with great ease, that is the face. If you can’t use the face, you are forced to communicate through the hands, the arms, the fingers –a language that has neither fixed stereotypes nor canons. With the body nobody is used to lying. In fact, Etienne Decroux was an unrivaled master of the technique of expressing through the body: “If you pay attention and you can read the language of the hands, the arms, the body, no lie can escape you”.⁸³ As a matter of fact, we are rarely conscious about the gestures we produce when we speak. If you are able to interpret the signs, you realize that many people say certain things with their mouth, while with their hands and arms tell something completely different. The actor’s body, its movements and the way he talks, every object he interacts with or simply evokes are filled with numerous meanings connected to moral, ideological and social values of their own community but should still be able to reach out to the world. That is why the actor needs to work on his consciousness of his usual postural behavior so that he can add to it on stage.

There are hundreds of gestures that are used in common parlance to communicate quickly: for instance bringing the hand on the belly and shaking it serves to indicate hunger or appetite. Moreover, going down with the thumb on the cheek means cunning, while the gesture of curling the beard indicates someone smart and bringing the palm of the hand against the cheek and recline the head means to be sleepy. A mime should put aside such conventional gestures, because they are banal and well known stereotypes. In theater, gestures need to be reinvented with imagination.⁸⁴ A good mime you must be agile, quick, flexible, be able to jump, tumble, do acrobatics... also learning to breathe according to the gesture is essential. Furthermore he needs to master manipulation, that is knowing how to draw objects in the air, giving the impression of grasping them, moving them, depositing them. To do such movements the mime should involve limbs, articulations and muscles which in reality wouldn’t be needed at all. This amplification of the gestures adds clarity to it. It is exactly the

⁸² See Ibid., p.79.

⁸³ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell’attore*, p.80.

⁸⁴ See Ibid.,p.385.

pretence of grasping an object that makes the action interesting at all. By merely applying natural gestures in the size and quantities of real objects, everything becomes banal, small and above all not credible. The real applied to the imagined is annoying and does not work. In order to achieve a believable effect, the actor needs to “manipulate” reality, reinvent it in an effective way.⁸⁵

Generally, in order to “hook” the attention of the public as individuals, Fo prefers facial expression over all. He uses his own eyes as reflectors and suggests through his face the moods and figures he evokes without merely imitate them, rather overlapping them with his own simultaneously. As already mention, people would be sitting also on the stage –to make the mimicry catch the eye of the public also from further away he would recourse to moments of fixation of a face expression, making it last longer and exaggerating its connotations and blinking, a technique he described with the cinematographic term “*primo piano*”: the face is also supposed to be looking up, to highlight the expression of the mouth.⁸⁶

I.6 Grammelot

The dedication to the rediscovery of popular traditions led also to a linguistic research aimed to create a “dialectic passport”, a language comprehensible by everyone a mixture of the various dialects of the Po valley, Lombardy, Veneto and Piedmont, which Fo adapted, sometimes modernized, and often completely invented, enhanced by the actor's physical illustration. Such a research traces back to the Middle age: “è il teatro di masse del Medioevo; ed è il principio del dramma moderno”⁸⁷ The invention of the grammelot and the usage of pantomime dates back to the comedians of the fourteenth and fifteenth century: gestures, sounds and rhythms able to evoke a whole speech in order to reach also the lower social

⁸⁵ See Ibid., p.387.

⁸⁶ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.23.

⁸⁷ D'amico, *Storia del teatro*, p.114.

classes. This onomatopoeic theatrical technique was probably invented by the comici dell'arte to escape censorship.⁸⁸

Going to a performance recited in a foreign language one is often surprised that it nevertheless seems to be understandable enough and indeed, at certain moments, absolutely clear. Certainly the gestures, the rhythms, the tones and, above all, the simplicity concur mostly to make the unknown language comprehensible. But this is not enough to explain the whole phenomenon. There is actually something more to it which pushes our brain to intuit even what is not completely and clearly expressed: over time we acquire notions of language and communication, with an endless number of variations of its forms. The hundreds of stories we have listened to, starting from childhood's fairytales to cartoons, movies, plays, television, books and comics, help prepare the brain to read a new story, even told without intelligible words.

“L'uso del suono e dei ritmi dentro un discorso, è un fatto determinante, indipendentemente dalla preoccupazione del valore intrinseco di quello che si dice, ma per l'effetto musicale e ritmico che si inserisce per esempio nella gestualità. Ci sono dei momenti in cui il gesto è talmente impostante che la parola diventa quasi inutile e fastidiosa per segnalare o per svolgere un discorso, allora ecco l'invenzione del grammelot. Il grammelot, nel quale suoni, timbri, onomatopeica, sproloquio, sfarfugliamento, gioco gutturale, addirittura delle parole diventano più importanti che se io avessi espresso un discorso con parole precise e definite.”⁸⁹

In Fo's comedies there are games upon words with double meaning, terms mangling, and, particularly in his monologues, the *Grammelot*, an invented language through which the dialect is transformed into sounds and rhythm. “Il lessico è volutamente basso, banalizzato con un preciso attacco alla lingua colta-letteraria della nostra tradizione teatrale novecentesca, fino a spingersi al gergale e al dialettale.”⁹⁰

To tell a story in *Grammelot* one must possess a sort of baggage of the most plain sonorous and tonal stereotypes of a language and know very well the rhythm and the cadences of the idiom. The technique of Grammelot consists of onomatopoeic sounds, clear and marked gestures, timbres, rhythms, coordination and especially a great synthesis.

⁸⁸ See Mitchell, *Dario Fo : People's Court Jester*, p.7-8.

⁸⁹ Dario Fo in Pizza, *Al lavoro con Dario Fo e Franca Rame*, p.105.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 102.

I.7 Fo and teatro di narrazione

Mistero Buffo debuts in Sestri Levante in 1969, but Fo actually started working on it in the early 60s, collecting material and rare documents by unknown authors, mostly by jesters dating back to the Middle age up to the Modern age. Fo's undertaking was the retrieval and recovery of the unofficial theater of the original repertoires of the Medieval jesters before it was appropriated and transformed by court influences.⁹¹ It's a prime example of "epic" theater in the true sense of the word, at once a recreation of popular history and culture and an affirmation of the political potency of this recreation. *Mistero Buffo* is a narrative monologue, in which Fo tells a story through a solo which is not an instrument for the psychological character analysis, rather a discourse provided in first person to a public whose imparted role is that of a scenic interlocutor.

As a matter of fact the elaborated scheme for *Mistero Buffo* set up an archetypical model for the "Teatro di narrazione" that started to spread on the Italian scene at the early 1990s thanks to Marco Baliani, Marco Paolini and Laura Curino.⁹²

Fo's dramatic writing is a process that consists of three phases: first he draws up a sort of plot alongside with a draft of the stage and costume design, afterwards he sets out a first auditing after the rehearsals, lastly the script undergoes further improvements during the several shows, according to the reactions of the audience. That is why their scripts have been defined as "testi mobili", constantly striving to adapt to the historical and geographical reality, coherently to the intent of accomplishing a theater able to deal with actual questions.⁹³

Fo's writing was also helped by the fact that he had access to old scripts from the previous century kept by the Rame family, one of the most famous theatrical acting families of northern Italy, with a performing history that could be traced back almost three centuries. Fo once said that what struck him of these old scripts were annotations which stated that the audience 'had to' laugh or applaud at certain moments, a noteworthy fact, as it views the public as an integral part of the show. As Fo explains, the writing of farces helped in a more general sense: "For me these farces were a very important exercise in understanding how to

⁹¹ See Mitchell, *Dario Fo: People's Court Jester*, p.4.

⁹² Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.105.

⁹³ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.110.

write a theatrical text. I had learned how to take apart and reassemble the mechanisms of comedy, how to write directly for the stage without any literary diversion. And I also understood how many old and useless things there were in so many theatrical texts, in the theater of words.”⁹⁴

Likewise for the performers of teatro di narrazione the dramaturgy becomes steady only after being tested out on the stage. The best actors perform their monologues on the basis of a draft reinventing it every night, taking into account any solicitations of the public. As Paolini points out, one of the greatest gratifications of his job resides in “suonare un testo a orecchio, invece che sullo spartito.”⁹⁵

Ascanio Celestino, another great exponent of teatro di narrazione, had an original work method that involved months and years of anthropologic fieldwork research in order to collect reference and testimony of the protagonists of all the historical and political happenings he intends to tell about, such as the Fosse Ardeatine massacre of 1944 in *Radio clandestina* and *Scemo di guerra* and the workplace in *Fabbrica* and *Appunti per un film sulla lotta di classe*.⁹⁶ This whole corpus of information and stories becomes in time part of his own personal backgrounds, to which he will get back to during his performances, through a sort of every night changing extemporary assembly, evolving and taking shape only through the *hic et nunc* of the performing event. “Io non ho un testo a memoria. Conosco la vicenda e la ri-racconto cambiando le parole, aggiungendo e togliendo... poi ogni tanto mi vengono in mente delle storie che ho ascoltato e mi torna naturale ri-raccontare anche quelle. alla fine lo spettacolo cambia ogni volta, ogni replica è una variante che può variare anche di molto.”⁹⁷

Fo also takes inspiration from the jester’s custom of starting the monologue introducing the characters, anticipating the plot and switching directly to the narration, where one performer plays all the roles. Similarly he recreates the jesters’ “grotesque” interpretive style, which shuns any classical ideal of harmony and verisimilitude, spontaneity and naturalness and rather comes closer to the carnival comedians tradition. It’s a kind of acting based on the waste of body energies and the amplifications of physical tensions, an exasperated dynamism

⁹⁴ Behan, *Dario Fo : revolutionary theatre*, p. 117.

⁹⁵ Marco Paolini in Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.108.

⁹⁶ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.109.

⁹⁷ Celestini, *Radio Clandestina. Memoria delle Fosse Ardeatine*, p.27.

and large, almost disproportionate gestures, since the boundless body language was for popular theater the only way to catch the attention of the noisy crowd of the streets.

This physical component differentiates Fo's theater from the *teatro di narrazione*, where performers put much more emphasis on the spoken word and focus the attention on its evocative value –in some instances the actor would even sit on a chair during the whole performance. In this case the account of the narrator proceeds through the description of the events as if his look was a camera, that evokes everything that's described through words. For Dario Fo, instead, images aren't just supposed to be evoked in the spectator's mind, rather they need to be translated into the body language as well: e.g. Fo would start describing an object and then eventually impersonalize the object itself.⁹⁸

Beyond reinventing the representative modalities of the medieval jesters, Fo also retrieves the language: since back then there was no national language yet, jesters developed a *koinè* that was comprehensible for most of the country since it was elaborated out of a combination of different dialects. In the same manner, Fo creates a “*passe-partout*” language for *Mistero Buffo*, echoing a mix of many dialects from the Po Valley and some from the South together with Latin. It's a language meant to represent a contestation of the academic tradition of the official theater and, in general, of the cultural homogenization that was taking place especially through the television during the 60s. Likewise the protagonists of *teatro di narrazione* kept on using their own dialect, as an expression of the own identity, keeping alive a sense of community and unraveling historical truths that have been removed from the collective consciousness.

I.8 Engaging the public

⁹⁸ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.110.

Some thinkers argue that it is impossible today to make dramatic texts related to the news. Live television reports bring images of tragic events, pain and destruction into all homes, showing the facts without mediation in every detail, with brutality. It's the new entertainment for the society of the spectacle. Having seen live broadcasts already, the audience would probably be indifferent to a theatrical or filmic reconstruction of the same facts. Therefore, state all the supporters of live news, it would be useless to try to expose issues of actuality and of our daily life mediated by the imagination: they are already old an hour after they happened.⁹⁹ Thus since there is television teatro civile has no point anymore. This way of thinking aligns with the interests of constituted authority, that is slowly getting people accustomed to not to use their own mind and imagination, avoiding the effort of developing different ideas of what is daily exposed by the mass media and abandon the habit of seeking detachment from the immediate reaction, re-elaborate and above all representing them through various forms.¹⁰⁰

“Sono piú che convinto del fatto che, oltre agli attori, bisognerebbe cercare di educare il pubblico mettendolo in condizione di assistere a spettacoli coraggiosi che svolgano tematiche diverse ma provocanti, che suscitino interesse oltre che dibattito, voglia di discutere e di fare.”¹⁰¹

Unfortunately, today the theater in Italy is above all commercial. Both public and private entrepreneurs do not want to take risks, both because of the collections and the approval of those who decide the grants: in short they want to be on the safe side and then rely on an already tested and successful repertoire.

“Questa di sollecitare la nascita di un teatro che proponga temi vivi e che dimostri di volersi rinnovare non solo nello stile ma soprattutto nei contenuti è una battaglia che conduco da trent'anni ormai. Io trovo che quello che vediamo intorno sia un teatro morto per gente morta. Qui siamo al solito alternarsi della domanda e dell'offerta. Ogni cultura ha il teatro che si merita. Oggi da noi sono morti avanti tutto gli autori, che non sanno proporre che testi letterari, che propongono temi fuori di ogni tempo. Si rappresenta il tempo nostro come fosse mitico e il tempo antico come se fosse defunto. Importante è prendersi i premi di avvio e i rientri.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.284.

¹⁰⁰ See Ibid., p.286.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.270.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.271.

I.9 Franca Rame: Fo's "completion"?

“Recitare con Franca è stata l'occasione di apprendere l'arte della scena, come frequentassi un'accademia.”¹⁰³

Due to typical male chauvinist preconceptions Franca Rame has been widely considered merely as an important and precious collaborator, editor and manager, a subordinate half of Dario Fo. Because of a mentality that unwillingly acknowledges the qualities of a woman, Franca Rame has barely been valued as an independent artist with her own identity and autonomy. Daughter of arts, Franca Rame grew up in a family with a three-centuries-long theater tradition and so acting for her was the most natural thing. Together with the rich heritage of her family tradition she also assimilated the drawbacks of the women's role within the company:

“Solo mio padre, che era il capocomico e direttore della compagnia, sapeva rivolgersi al pubblico, intrattenerlo, scherzare, provocarlo nei prologhi che lui solo eseguiva. [...] Noi femmine di compagnia[...] sul palcoscenico non affacciavamo mai a dialogare col pubblico. E così continuai a rivestire i panni e la logica della recitante non proiettata nella provocazione e nell'intrattenimento anche dopo, quando formai compagnia con Dario.”¹⁰⁴

Out of this starting point begins Rame's artistic growth together with Fo as well as in an increasingly autonomous way, especially around the 1970s. On stage Franca shows women that are subject to different kinds of oppression in a comic way, she's able to express all the instabilities, scandals, social injustice and corruption through laughter. In the comedies of Fo such a role was usually played by a man, only in 1964 *Settimo: ruba un pò meno*, dedicated to his wife, the protagonist Enea is an odd, alcoholic woman, teased by everyone and yet what might sound as her silly stories are actually the complaint of speculation and corruption.¹⁰⁵ Franca enriches those early roles that gave her notoriety in the 1950s, that is the dumbstruck, naive and a bit stupid woman and renews them into the role of a fool that unveils hidden truths under the disguise of the ludicrous. The naivety and childishness of her figures raise in

¹⁰³ Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.486.

¹⁰⁴ Fo, *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, p.293.

¹⁰⁵ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p. 95.

the spectator both mocking laughter as well as tenderness, sympathy and affective closeness – feelings that give credit to their convictions.

In the television broadcasts *Parliamo di donne* and *Tutta casa, letto e chiesa* (1977) Franca shows the female condition of ordinary subordination and discrimination, violence, pain, exploitation. During these years she also starts writing her own texts, wanting to raise awareness about the difficulties of women's life and the resulting inner unease. *Lo stupro* (1975) is one of her own plays, a long monologue describing her own rape, written with the political intent of supporting parliamentary approval of a law that would aggravate the crime of rape.¹⁰⁶

CHAPTER II

¹⁰⁶ See Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.98.

II.1 Teatro civile

“Molti anni fa dalle mie parti, la zona di Monte Sole, vicino a Marzabotto, ogni sera il nonno si metteva vicino al camino, caricava la pipa, beveva un goccio di grappa. Poi si girava e diceva a noi bambini: ‘allora...’. E iniziava un racconto: il vento che si infilava nella porta, lo scalpiccio dei soldati nazisti lungo i sentieri di Monte Sole, gli spari, le urla, il silenzio. Ogni sera lo stesso racconto, ma c'era sempre un particolare che lo rendeva diverso. Questo è il teatro civile, raccontare storie per non dimenticare. E, ormai, in Italia, il Teatro civile rappresenta la vera grande novità nell'ambito della drammaturgia nazionale, decretata da consensi di pubblico davvero straordinari. Pensiamo al *Vajont* di Marco Paolini, visto da almeno tre milioni di persone, o a *Radio Clandestina* di Ascanio Celestini che ha raccolto un milione di spettatori. Il vero teatro contemporaneo che il pubblico apprezza è proprio il ‘teatro civile’, che ha un significato doppio, perché tutto il teatro in sé è ‘civile’. Ed è politico nel momento in cui metti in scena episodi come quello di Marzabotto o Sant'Anna di Stazzema. Quello che fa la differenza è la tecnica della narrazione, che si discosta dal teatro politico e impegnato degli anni Settanta, che era più di stampo brechtiano. Allora, il teatro doveva far passare un'idea e fare di tutto per convincere il pubblico che è quella giusta. Ora si parte da un altro presupposto: attraverso le storie si dipana la Storia con la S maiuscola, quella del nostro Paese.”¹⁰⁷

The term “teatro civile” started to come along around the 1990s, while Marco Paolini was working on his *Racconto del Vajont* (1993).¹⁰⁸ Teatro civile was born and still lives outside of the theater building, to meet the need of overcoming the production and distribution ways and also the censorship of the theatrical system: not in order to repudiate it, rather to integrate the theatrical system together with other communication possibilities. Teatro civile has become one of the most dynamic forms of contemporary theater in Italy.¹⁰⁹ It's a work in progress, which grows and improves through a direct confrontation with the public. Teatro civile started from the need and urgency of human sharing and solidarity, of sounding out themes of collective interest to help inform the public, create awareness, stimulate active participation and offer the possibility of a change. The Nazi massacres of Sant'Anna di Stazzema and Marzabotto, the tragedy of the Vajont dam, the murder of Piazza Fontana, the Moro case and

¹⁰⁷ Daniele Biacchessi in Mazzocchi, *Luoghi e protagonisti del “Teatro civile” quando le storie diventano Storia*, *Repubblica Spettacoli & Cultura*, 23.9.2010.

http://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli-e-cultura/2010/09/23/news/passaparola_biacchessi-7344134/

¹⁰⁸ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ See “Teatro civile” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*. http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/teatro-civile_%28Lessico-del-XXI-Secolo%29/

many others, all the events sinking in the oblivion of the Italian contemporary history are brought on stage, awakening the desire to know and remember. It is in some way counter-information, an attempt to lift the fog of oblivion and manipulation from the heart of the social fabric, where the conflict, either explicit or latent, needs to be expressed.¹¹⁰

While in the 1970s the “teatro politico” was widespread, a few years after the fall of the Berlin wall, its brechtian ideological approach and indoctrination as well as the traditional models of collective mobilization started to live an irreversible crisis. Its predetermined and rigid interpretation of reality appears outdated. The stance of the director and actors of teatro politico is about being an avant-garde, convincing their public of a truth that they only possess. On the opposite, teatro civile is about placing themselves at the same level as the public, sharing the pursuit of the truth. The actors do not interpret characters, do not step on stage as experts but as people, with their own point of view and their credibility, and are charged with an informative and formative function.¹¹¹ The performer is not a specialist of the sector, it’s just a common citizen that got passionate about an issue or an historical episode and wants to share with the public his knowledge, accumulated with patience and transformed into a “racconto-spettacolo”.

Racconto del Vajont derives from teatro di narrazione, that started to emerge during the second half of the 80s, thanks to the work of Marco Paolini and Marco Baliani. Teatro di narrazione (a definition that underlines firstly a formal feature) and teatro civile (a definition that relates rather to its contents and the relationship with the public) cannot be considered synonyms, yet their genesis are closely bound.¹¹² The two performances that defined the origin of teatro di narrazione also anticipate some characteristics of teatro civile. *Kohlhaas* (1990) is a monologue taken from the homonymous tale by Heinrich von Kleist, written by Marco Baliani and Remo Rostagno and interpreted by Marco Baliani. It is generally referred to as one of the performances initiator of the genre teatro di narrazione. The protagonist of the story fights all his life in vain to regain truth and justice –and this is the kind of approach that teatro civile underpins when trying to dissect the dark pages of Italian recent history, searching for the truth and justice.

¹¹⁰ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 13-14.

¹¹¹ See Ibid., p.12.

¹¹² See “Teatro Civile” in *Enciclopedia Treccani* http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/teatro-civile_%28Lessico-del-XXI-Secolo%29/

“*Kohlhaas* ha colpito perché ha riproposto un genere di teatro che non si faceva più e che si era perso. Il fatto stesso di vedere un attore solo sul palco – seduto su una sedia e pronto non solo a raccontare una storia, ma a far rivivere un’incredibile serie di azioni e di scene solamente con la sua parola e il suo corpo – ha sicuramente incuriosito. Il corpo è una parte essenziale della narrazione orale: si capisce subito quando un attore ha solamente imparato la parte a memoria e quando, invece, si è preparato, ha provato e studiato il modo di stare sul palco, i movimenti giusti per coinvolgere lo spettatore. [...]”

Per me la funzione principale del teatro è quella di instillare dubbi negli spettatori, inquietarli, creare nel pubblico un disagio.”¹¹³

The *Album* (1987) by Marco Paolini are stories built upon the link between individual memory and collective memory, between personal experience and History, the same balance that teatro civile strives to reconstitute, reactivating the individual awareness to be able to share a collective and civil feeling.

In a theater dominated by the direction and the image, namely where the actor’s role is functional to an external project and the body is used in a formalistic and iconic way, some young authors-actors felt the necessity to redeem the word and the position of the actor. The need of reinstating a direct relationship between the two indispensable elements of the theatrical encounter, the spectator and the actor, lead to reinvent the archetypal and original form of expression of the oral storytelling. The oral narrative allows an immediate communication, free from any intellectualising filter.

“In una società come quella di oggi, sovraccarica di stimoli visivi, mi sembra che il racconto orale funzioni ancora: i ragazzi parlano in continuazione fuori dalle scuole e si raccontano di tutto. L’umanità, in fin dei conti, è nata quando gli uomini si sono incontrati e hanno iniziato a parlarsi e ad ascoltarsi.”¹¹⁴

For their first experimental performances, the narrators started by taking ‘already made’ texts, like Baliani did with the tale by Kleins or Paolini’s *Adriatico* (1987), the first story of the *Album*, is taken from *Petit Nicolas* by Renè Goscinny. Later on they began to write their own

¹¹³ Marco Baliani in Frisco, “*Kohlhaas*”, *il teatro e la necessità del racconto orale. Intervista al regista e attore Marco Baliani*, *Il Flaneur*, 30.11. 2017.

<http://www.ilflaneur.com/spettacolo/teatro/kohlhaas-il-teatro-e-la-necessita-del-racconto-orale-intervista-al-regista-e-attore-marco-baliani-22524/>

¹¹⁴ Marco Baliani in *Ibid.*

contents and so teatro di narrazione became also teatro civile. *Il racconto del Vajont* and *Corpo di stato* (1998), dedicated to the Moro kidnapping, were the first productions. Fo's creative process for his monologue *Mistero Buffo* was a great inspiration. Within a few years emerged a new generation of artists with many performances of significant impact: *Radio Clandestina* (2000) by Ascanio Celestini about the Ardeatine massacre, *I-TIGI Racconto per Ustica* (2001) by Marco Paolini about the crash of the Itavia flight, *Mai morti* (2003) by Renato Sarti together with Bebo Storti about the Italian colonial slaughter in Ethiopia, the bombardments of the Second World War in Rome seen through the eyes of a child in *Scemo di guerra* by Ascanio Celestini. Furthermore *Reportage Chernobyl* (2012) by Roberta Biagiarelli about the nuclear incident at the Ukrainian atomic power station, *Storie di scorie* (2005) by Ulderico Pesce about radioactive waste management and *FIATo sul collo* (2005) on the Fiat workers' struggles, *Linate 8 ottobre 2001: la strage e Do ut des: riti e conviti Mafiosi* (2008) by Giulio Cavalli, *Gomorra* (2007) by Mario Gelardi, *Italiani cincali* (2003) and *La turnata* by Mario Perrotta about the Italian migration in Belgium. Elaborations of economic issues are also not lacking: e.g. *I miserabili* (2009) by Paolini, *Previsioni meteo* as well as *Banca Antonveneta* by Eugenio de' Giorgi and *Gente come uno* by Elena Lolli and Manuel Ferreira about the Argentine financial collapse.¹¹⁵

As this short list already shows, it was a phenomenon that spread rapidly and involved many different artists and spectators. Certainly one of the reasons of such a success was the low cost of the production and distribution of a monologue compared to a real show. Besides, just like Fo and Rame did, such solos could be easily replicated everywhere: on the street, on a square, in political and cultural circles, in apartments and stadiums, in sports halls and train stations, in abandoned and occupied factories. But there was indeed something more than the economic convenience: these poor and essential performances met the interest of the public and of the media, they could actually respond to the deep and widespread need of narration, of stories and of History, of truth and of identity.

In time various manifestations of the genre flourished, which can be categorized as following:¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 14-16.

¹¹⁶ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.16-17.

- inspired by a specific event. The counter-information of democratic journalists after the Piazza Fontana Bombing in Milan, 1969, was the archetype of this subgenre.
- narration of an historical moment or period, such as the Sixty-eight, brigandage, Second World War.
- biographical, the prototype is the story of Camillo Olivetti (1996) by Laura Curino.
- autobiographical, or better said, monologues that deal with civil matters through the autobiography of the protagonist-narrator, e.g. *Album* by Paolini and *L'età dell'oro* by Laura Curino.
- focused on a specific problem or issue, for instance dealing with the theme of work, such as *Appunti per un film sulla lotta di classe* by Celestini, *Fabricas* by Ferreira-Lolli, *Fiat* by Pesce, or *Braccianti* by Armamasa; or handling gender issues, e.g. *Dissonorata* and *La-borto* by Saverio La Ruina, *Racconti di giugno* by Pippo Delbono, *Nata in casa* by Giuliana Musso and *Virus* by Garabombo Teatro about Aids.

Some performances of course concern many subjects at once, for instance those dedicated to the theme of work usually also comprise the various facets of the Southern matter, the post-unity banditry (*Briganti* by Gianfranco Berardi or *Il sole del brigante* by Alfonso Santagata), migration and the widespread organised crime.

Teatro canzone, a musical and theatrical art form launched by Sandro Luporini and Giorgio Gaber at the beginning of the seventies, also had a great influence on the growth of teatro civile. This hybridization generated a further subgenre, which include *Un pò dopo il piombo* by Giangilberto Monti and *Formidabili quegli anni* with Giulio Casale about the sixty-eight in Milan. Even teatro danza confronted with civil matters, see *Festino* by Emma Dante.¹¹⁷ Additionally, performances were often supported by the use of multimedia, videos and animations and sometimes involved more than one performer. However, the main features of the genre stabilized in a short time.

One of the significant and problematic aspects of teatro civile is about the viewpoint, the attitude and authority of the performer. As already mentioned, the creators do not place

¹¹⁷ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.18.

themselves as experts, but as normal people that assumed an informative and formative function. They step on stage as individuals, as citizens that take to heart the collective ethos: their legitimation, their credibility is based precisely on the fact that they stand up for what they say and establish an honest relationship with their audience. Since there is no distinction between the actor and the character, they need to be consistent: a performer of a civil monologue about environmental protection who has ecologically improper habits would inevitably lose his trustworthiness. Luca Ronconi explored exhaustively the rapport between actor and character. He never looked for an overlap of the “I” and its theatrical mask. Even when working on performances with civil themes, such as *Il silenzio dei comunisti* and *Lo specchio del diavolo* –typical subjects of teatro di narrazione- he still chose to emphasize the theatrical dimension and the fiction by selecting actors with a very different appearance and age compared to the real protagonists of the story and adding allegories, fictional and symbolic elements.¹¹⁸ In many respects the performers of teatro civile are much closer to comic actors than those of the prose theater. Not by case they both share the use of local dialects. Speaking in their own dialect is an integral part of their character and it contributes to make it familiar, authentic and credible. *Signor Rossi* and *La Costituzione* by Paolo Rossi are examples of the encroachment in teatro civile of comedians and cabaret artists.

Another important and as well problematic aspect is the rapport with history and memory. Most of teatro civile deals with recent history that needs to be brought and brought back to the collective awareness, because it has been forgotten or because the facts have been concealed or distorted. Such an approach implies the civil duty of the individual and of the community to get to know the history of the nation. The inspiration of the creators of teatro civile is somehow analogous to Antigone, who can't leave the dead unburied and has to serve them justice.

Nevertheless the boom of this genre might also indicate that perhaps school, historians and mass media didn't do their job right in communicating and sharing the History. Furthermore there is a popular conviction that the recent Italian history, with all of its omissions and mysteries, is after all unknowable. Teatro civile has tried to solve some of these mysteries and commence a scientific reconstruction and a rational interpretation of the historical processes.

¹¹⁸ See Ibid., p.20.

Performance after performance, they write the History –or maybe a counter-history of contemporary Italy. Carlo Freccero, at that time director of RaiDue, noticed this potential and by the end of the 1990s introduced some performances of teatro civile in the programme schedule, starting from the clamorous success of *Vajont*.¹¹⁹

“Questo è un Paese che non ha memoria, perché ricordare significa anche mettersi davanti ad uno specchio e mettersi in discussione. Ed è anche un Paese anormale quello che consegna a noi cantastorie il compito di raccontare la storia collettiva di una nazione, comprese le pagine più buie: gli anni degli eccidi e della strategia della tensione, il senso di impunità, i depistaggi compiuti dagli uomini delle istituzioni, gli scempi e i disastri ambientali, i morti sul lavoro. Lo doveva fare la politica, ma le commissioni stragi e antimafia hanno concluso poco o nulla. Era compito degli storici che hanno invece pensato bene di riscrivere la storia parificando i partigiani ai repubblicani di Salò. Era anche compito della società civile che ha perso il senso dell'indignazione. E allora? E allora libri, dischi, teatro, letture possono servire a smuovere le coscienze rattrappite. Una rivoluzione culturale che metta in primo piano la difesa di quello che Pietro Calamandrei definiva ‘il patto giurato tra uomini liberi’, la Costituzione”.¹²⁰

If school, information, historiography and politics had done their duty, if there were moments of shared memory, such performance-lessons about the recent past of the country wouldn't be so urgently needed. Also, from the beginning there was a convergence between investigative journalism and civil dramaturgy: Daniele Biacchessi was a journalist before starting to work for the theater, *Teatro Civico* by Marco Paolini was commissioned by *Report*, an independent journalistic TV program, *Chi ha paura muore ogni giorno. I miei anni con Falcone e Borsellino* (2009-12) by and with the politician and magistrate Giuseppe Ayala, and *Promemoria* by Marco Travaglio represents an effective example of a synthesis of investigative journalism, political satire and teatro civile. Gigi Gherzi developed the formula of teatro-giornale: journalism brought on stage by reading the newspaper, commenting and discussing the news with the audience.¹²¹ The documentation centers of teatro civile, beside creating an archive and cataloguing the performances, also have the purpose of connecting those who found interesting stories with those who are looking for stories to tell.

¹¹⁹ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.22.

¹²⁰ Daniele Biacchessi in Mazzocchi, *Luoghi e protagonisti del “Teatro civile” quando le storie diventano Storia*, *Repubblica Spettacoli & Cultura*, 23.9.2010.

http://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli-e-cultura/2010/09/23/news/passaparola_biacchessi-7344134/

¹²¹ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 23-24.

“Ho scoperto in questi ultimi dieci anni di lavoro che la cosa che mi interessa di più è l’osservazione, o meglio, trattandosi di testimonianze orali, l’ascolto del “reale”. Reale è l’esperienza concreta delle singole persone, la vita vissuta, che io amo chiamare il vivente. La testimonianza del vivente mi consegna un dato che non è già stato tradotto o trasferito sul piano teorico e che quindi non è stato ripulito da quei dettagli che rivelano la complessità delle vicende, la vulnerabilità e l’unicità degli esseri umani. Quando il testimone riporta la sua esperienza del reale, nel suo racconto fluiscono e si intersecano in un unico processo cognitivo l’aspetto razionale (la cronaca), quello intellettuale (il giudizio) e quello emotivo (il dramma personale).”¹²²

The very nature of theater is ultimately civil, for the community lives one more time the represented story, which involves at least potentially the whole polis, the whole population. The rite of the performance is a moment of reinstatement of the collective identity and emotion, so that the theatrical space becomes a place of the memory. Almost all of the performances of teatro civile have a form of narrative, with good intentions, accurate reconstruction of the facts, quest for truth and inevitable indignation. Teatro civile offers an analysis of reality, keeping the testimony in the foreground in a way that allows an extensive understanding of facts through mind, body, emotion that does not exclude contradictions, questions, and paradoxes. What is probably missing in many works is the capacity of transcending facts and open to a visionary, poetic and philosophic perspective, because of the tendency to reduce civil commitment to complaint. It’s also important to point out that most of the works are animated by a militant commitment –it is not enough to inform, remember, move, share, outrage. The achieved awareness should mobilize to act, testify and try to transform the political and social reality. Instead, this hard search for truth has very little practical effects, it even seems counterproductive in creating a more mature civil conscience.¹²³

“Gli spettacoli di *Itineraria Teatro* non sono semplici esibizioni. Nascono dalla necessità e dall’urgenza di scandagliare un tema di interesse collettivo, per contribuire a creare consapevolezza. Pur essendo allestiti con un’attenzione quasi maniacale ai particolari, i nostri spettacoli non costituiscono un fatto estetico, ma rispondono alla necessità di informare il pubblico, portarlo alla presa di coscienza e, partendo dall’indignazione, stimolare la partecipazione attiva. Perché indignarsi non basta, non basta più. È necessario che il pubblico intraveda una possibilità immediata di

¹²² Giuliana Musso in *Teatro “civile” o teatro del “vivente”*, May 2012 <http://www.giulianamusso.it/about-me/pensieri/teatro-civile-o-teatro-del-vivente/>

¹²³ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.25.

cambiamento, in un'ottica di condivisione e solidarietà umana. In definitiva il Teatro Civile è proprio questo: un percorso emozionale e culturale verso una realtà più giusta".¹²⁴

II.2 Marco Paolini, *Il racconto del Vajont*

"Teatro civile si differenzia da un certo tipo di teatro politico, un teatro a tesi molto in voga negli anni Settanta. Quel teatro politico si ispira agli anni Trenta, e in particolare a Bertold Brecht. L'attore deve istruire il pubblico su una determinata visione ideologica del mondo. Io invece non devo istruire nessuno. Semmai cerco temi, argomenti su cui confrontarsi ed emozionarsi con il pubblico. Certamente anch'io faccio teatro politico, ma non devo certamente essere io a metterci un'etichetta. Gli artisti ci devono mettere la faccia, prendersi la responsabilità dei loro gesti, delle loro parole."¹²⁵

Il racconto del Vajont (1994) marked a decisive turning point in the career of Marco Paolini and represented the manifesto of a civil theater. The show had a major spectacular, political and media impact, with impressive audience ratings during the live broadcast on RaiDue on October 9th, 1997: over three and a half million spectators. *Vajont* came to life outside of the theater halls, in open rehearsals and replicas in social centers, hospitals, cultural and political circles, in schools and parishes. Born in 1956 in Belluno and raised in Treviso, Marco Paolini, whose performances until then have had only a few dozen spectators, did not achieve such a success by chance, even though his career had followed unpredictable ways, as that of many other extraordinary authors-actors of his generation like Marco Baliani and Paolo Rossi.¹²⁶

Paolini said that initially his idea of theater was that of a sort of extension of political militancy. In fact, his interest for theater grew out of the study of the Brecht's didactic dramas. "All'inizio la mia idea del teatro era poco più che un megafono per veicolare delle idee, un teatro politico immediato che non richiede professionismo."¹²⁷ Grotowski's *Towards*

¹²⁴ Fabrizio De Giovanni in *Itineraria Teatro* <https://www.itineraria.it/chi-siamo#teatro-civile>

¹²⁵ Marco Paolini in Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 33.

¹²⁶ See Ponte di Pino, *Marco Paolini: una scheda, ateatro n.080*, 17.1.2005.

<http://www.ateatro.it/webzine/2005/01/17/marco-paolini-una-scheda/>

¹²⁷ Marco Paolini, Radio interview on Rai, 4.1.2018 <http://www.rai.it/dl/portaleRadio/media/ContentItem-673c624d-7b4d-4e28-807d-897333b333c7.htm>

a poor theatre changed completely his vision. While for Brecht the most important thing is the text, Grotowski teaches a discipline: his training is intended to regain the rapport with the space, with the own body and with others' bodies.¹²⁸

Paolini started his formation as an autodidact, learning to reinterpret the *commedia dell'arte* within the association of the TAG Teatro in Mestre. Afterwards he joined the Teatro Settimo by Gabriele Vacis, who will also be his co-author and director of the *Vajont*. During the Eighties the works of Teatro Settimo focused on various projects closely related to those of the narration, with the attempt to bring on stage non-theatrical materials: from the table of chemical elements *Esercizi sulla tavola di Mendeleev* (1984), to the novel *Le affinità elettive –Elementi di struttura del sentimento* (1985), the first neorealist film *Riso amaro* (1987), and a bizarre interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* (1991), where the story was told by the survivors after the death of the two lovers. Another influential encounter for the creation of the *Vajont* was Luigi Meneghello, and particularly *Libera nos a Malo*, his most significant work. Published in 1963, the book draws a portrait of the Vicenza province from the Thirties to the Sixties and combines linguistics and history, autobiography and anthropology. He describes the customs and social life he has known during his childhood and youth using an ironic and innovative poetic language, scattered by typical expressions of the Venetian dialect. In 1989 it becomes also a “spettacolo-laboratorio”, *Libera nos*. For Paolini this work meant the rediscovery and awareness of his own roots, of a language, of memory and its relationship with modernity.¹²⁹

Paolini's *Album* was above all the extraordinary experience that laid the keystone for the *Vajont*. The autobiography tells the story of the protagonist-narrator from the early sixties to 1977 through an imaginary alter ego, the little Nicola, inspired by Goscinn's *Petit Nicholas*.¹³⁰ The four monologues were written over a period of almost ten years. The first monologue of this tetralogy, *Adriatico* (1987), was meant to be a show for children. “Con *Adriatico* ha compreso che la memoria è uno strumento potente che risveglia l'interesse dei

¹²⁸ Marco Paolini, Radio interview on Rai, 4.1.2018. <http://www.rai.it/dl/portaleRadio/media/ContentItem-673c624d-7b4d-4e28-807d-897333b333c7.htm>

¹²⁹ See Ponte di Pino, *Marco Paolini: una scheda, ateatro n.080*, 17.1.2005. <http://www.ateatro.it/webzine/2005/01/17/marco-paolini-una-scheda/>

¹³⁰ See Ponte di Pino, *Marco Paolini: una scheda, ateatro n.080*, 17.1.2005. <http://www.ateatro.it/webzine/2005/01/17/marco-paolini-una-scheda/>

giovani e che crea complicità con chi quelle storie le ha vissute”¹³¹ Only over the years and through the many replicas the *Album* assumed the value of almost a Bildungsroman and autobiography of a whole generation. Through such a complex work on the individual autobiography and the collective memory, on identity and on narration, on the recent history of Italy and its relationship with the present, Paolini refined the abilities that allowed him more than thirty years later to measure himself with one of the greatest collective tragedies in Italian history: a forgotten –or rather removed catastrophe, with trials dragged on for years in the courts of the whole country.

The unpredictable success of *Racconto del Vajont* was by no means a foregone conclusion. The same day of the live broadcast on RaiDue Dario Fo coincidentally won the Nobel Prize. That evening one single actor, with the help of only a table, a blackboard and some archive footage, spoke for three hours of liters and cubic meters, of civil engineering and of thousands of deaths in few terrible minutes, conquering millions of spectators that would become *Vajont* propagandists themselves. Paolini stands on the stage not only as an actor, he is also the author of his texts as well as the creator of his own stage and public character. He is a spokesperson for a collective memory that the mass media concealed or neglected, namely not the pacifying and consoling memory of a revival: it is an identity memory, that is, where the narration of tragedies creates a powerful “glue” that unites people; his show takes on an immediate political meaning and calls for action.¹³²

“Sulla capacità di incorporare fino in fondo le lezioni delle tragedie e di impedire che si ripetano ho dei dubbi.”¹³³

On October 9th, 1963 at 10:39 pm from the northern slope of Mount Toc, located on the border between Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto, 260 million cubic meters of rock collapsed and plunged into the artificial lake, formed by the Vajont dam,¹³⁴ producing a huge wave, almost a tsunami.¹³⁵ Longarone, Castellavazzo, Erto, Casso and the hamlets of Patata, San

¹³¹ Marco Paolini, Radio interview on Rai, 4.1.2018 <http://www.rai.it/dl/portaleRadio/media/ContentItem-673c624d-7b4d-4e28-807d-897333b333c7.html>

¹³² Marco Paolini, Ibid.

¹³³ Marco Paolini, Ibid.

¹³⁴ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.30.

¹³⁵ See Sonnino, *Un disastro preannunciato: la frana del 1963 del Vajont* <http://simposio-italiano.org/vajont>

Martino, Frassen and Cristo are swept away.¹³⁶ 1917 deaths in only four minutes.¹³⁷ An ONU document of 2008 classifies the Vajont tragedy as the worst example of preventable disasters caused by man.¹³⁸

The Vajont Dam was conceived in the 1920s to meet the growing demand for industrialization.¹³⁹ On August 4th, 1928 professor Giorgio Dal Piaz presents the first relation on the artificial basin of the Vajont, convinced that its conditions poses no particular problem, and so in 1929 the Società Idroelettrica Veneta deviates the Vajont stream to produce electricity. During the Second World War the project is still taken further.¹⁴⁰ The Società Adriatica di Elettricità (SADE), the electricity supply and distribution monopoly in northeastern Italy, started to build the “tallest dam in the world” in January 1957,¹⁴¹ four months before receiving the Government’s approval. The lake can reach up to 266 meters height and the container can store at least 150 million of cubic meters of water.¹⁴² Even after the president signed the concession, the Consiglio Superiore dei Lavori Pubblici (Supreme Council responsible for overseeing public works) makes enquiries on the hydro-geological risk and on the safety of the local population.¹⁴³ The reports of the geological instability of Monte Toc are for a long time not even taken into account. In 1959 shifts and fractures were noticed during the construction of a new road on the side of Monte Toc¹⁴⁴ and that same year a landslide of 3 million of cubic meters of rock fell into the basin and killed a worker.¹⁴⁵ Despite all, the construction of the Vajont dam was completed in October 1959. In 1960 a landslide of about 700,000 cubic meters collapsed into the lake. An umpteenth warning sign ignored by both SADE and the Italian Government.¹⁴⁶ In 1962 the dam comes under the control of ENEL as part of the Italian Ministry for Public Works.¹⁴⁷ On the morning of the 9th of October 1963 the technicians and workers of ENEL-SADE already observe the mountain

¹³⁶ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.30.

¹³⁷ See Ibid., p.27.

¹³⁸ See *Il corriere delle Alpi*, *Al Vajont il primato Onu dei disastri ambientali*
http://ricerca.gelocal.it/corrierealpi/archivio/corrierealpi/2008/02/13/BL5PO_BL501.html

¹³⁹ See Wikipedia, *Vajont Dam* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajont_Dam.

¹⁴⁰ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 27-28.

¹⁴¹ See Wikipedia, *Vajont Dam* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajont_Dam.

¹⁴² See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 28.

¹⁴³ See Ibid., p. 28

¹⁴⁴ See Wikipedia, *Vajont Dam* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajont_Dam.

¹⁴⁵ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁶ See Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁴⁷ See Wikipedia, *Vajont Dam* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajont_Dam.

slowly falling down but don't realize the gravity of the situation: the attempt to control the landslide by lowering the lake level was too late. The impact of the huge landslide caused massive inundating and destruction of the whole Piave valley.¹⁴⁸ On December 17th, 1969 takes place in Aquila the trial of first instance. The prosecution asks for all the defendants twenty-one years for the crimes of manslaughter disaster and multiple murders. The court, however, hands low sentences, up to six years and for only two defendants. The judicial authorities do not recognize the linchpin of the accusation: that landslide was totally predictable.¹⁴⁹ On July 27th, 2000, thirty-seven years later, the settlement agreement for the compensation for damage is signed: ENEL, Montedison and Government will each pay 33% of the sum.¹⁵⁰ “In un paese in cui le verità giudiziarie arrivano troppo tardi o non arrivano, uno dei compiti del teatro è quello di non seminare facili e rassicuranti certezze, ma di stimolare i dubbi.”¹⁵¹

Paolini writes *Il racconto del Vajont* with Gabriele Vacis and the collaboration of Gerardo Guccini and Alessandra Ghiglione. As already mentioned, it was conceived in 1993 and developed through the numerous replicas before being broadcasted on RaiDue four years later. Paolini stands alone, dressed in black, with no special effects, and reaches a record of audience, relying only on the power of words. On stage he is very precise and places notes on the blackboard of dates, places, names, so that they don't go lost during the narration.

“Da quel lavoro, ho imparato che c'è un ruolo da attore che non può essere più scrollato di dosso come un personaggio qualunque. Ruoli e personaggi sono due categorie distinte. [...] Dopo Vajont sono diventato narratore civile, continuamente mi vien chiesto di raccontare questa o quella storia italiana. Ho cercato di ribellarmi al ruolo, ho provato altre strade, altre chiavi di racconto, altri soggetti, ma dentro di me il ruolo vive, *Vajont*, 9 ottobre '63 è nato come racconto privato, poi è diventato teatro, poi orazione civile; è passato dalle case alle scuole, ai teatri, alla televisione e infine alle librerie.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ See Wikipedia, *Vajont Dam* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajont_Dam.

¹⁴⁹ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 30

¹⁵⁰ See Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁵¹ Marco Paolini, Radio interview on Rai, 4.1.2018 <http://www.rai.it/dl/portaleRadio/media/ContentItem-673c624d-7b4d-4e28-807d-897333b333c7.html>

¹⁵² Marco Paolini in Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 34.

Paolini's dramaturgical procedure goes from the detail to the collective tragedy, from the single story to the common, popular disaster –it gives the sense of an encounter with something that affected only a few and suddenly belongs to many: a political datum that emerges from a context of invented autobiography. This subjective point of view is the way he can relate with the events, it is the red thread of the narrative and this way he avoids turning into a professor who explains and becomes someone who lives again.¹⁵³

“Mi interessa sia il dato civile che il dato dell’elencazione. Ma la cosa più importante non è il passaggio dall’uno all’altro, uno non nasce dall’altro. Serve solo a creare un punto di vista. È pura drammaturgia. Io ho orrore della retorica di Stato, degli anniversari e di una memoria congelata alle lapidi: provo davvero orrore per quei parchi delle rimembranze del nostro tempo presente che sono le pagine dei giornali quando si ricorda una data. Questo calendario, questa liturgia, mi sembra sempre più svuotata, perché le cose vivono separatamente, per titoli e non per storie. L’unico modo che ho di capire gli altri allora è quello di immaginare che potevo esserci anch’io.”¹⁵⁴

“Il rapporto tra realtà e finzione, memoria e rielaborazione fantastica varia a seconda delle storie. In alcuni casi si tratta di storie interamente vere in ogni dettaglio, in altri si tratta di un montaggio di punti di vista, storie reali montate assieme. In altri casi ancora si tratta di una completa invenzione.”¹⁵⁵

“Non si tratta di passare oziando dai miei ricordi personali a quelli pubblici: mi interessano le due cose, ma non oserei fare un percorso di questo tipo, come attore, perché mi sento terribilmente esposto dall’idea di usare un mezzo inadeguato per giungere a parlare di quelle cose. Quando decido di parlarne, però, ho bisogno di crearmi il contesto. Se ad esempio mi rivolgo ad un ragazzo di vent’anni durante uno spettacolo parlando di Democrazia Cristiana, non posso dire semplicemente democrazia cristiana pretendendo che capisca. Devo contestualizzare. La cronica mancanza dei contesti legata alla rimozione è il problema maggiore di un lavoro sulla memoria.”¹⁵⁶

His texts develop out of notes that he continuously makes, without a sorted script-writing technique:

“Non avevo mai tenuto un diario, soltanto appunti, fogli. È iniziata la scrittura dei quaderni: una breve scrittura diaristica a volte precisa e che in altri momenti conosce spazi e intervalli di cui non mi preoccupo. Il sistema dei quaderni mi permette di

¹⁵³ Marco Paolini, Radio interview on Rai, 4.1.2018 <http://www.rai.it/dl/portaleRadio/media/ContentItem-673c624d-7b4d-4e28-807d-897333b333c7.html>

¹⁵⁴ Marco Paolini, 20.1.2000 in Oreggia, *Archivio di voci incontri di teatro*, p.36.

¹⁵⁵ Marco Paolini in *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹⁵⁶ Marco Paolini in *Ibid.*, p.38.

accumulare tutto grazie a un semplice ordine numerico. Questi scritti contengono il percorso degli spettacoli in fieri, gli appunti di viaggio, le notazioni di lavoro per i libri e altre cose. Sempre e solo grazie a una numerazione progressiva: a un a certa pagina smetto di scrivere di un argomento e inizio a scrivere di un altro. Questo mi consente di avere come sistema di lavoro quello di una scrittura continua. Non decisamente orientata alla produzione del testo, ma una scrittura di percorso, a cui mi è utile tornare quando devo lavorare attorno a un'idea o quando ho bisogno di raccogliere delle strutture più precise per un racconto. Quasi sempre l'occhio casca su un dettaglio, un particolare, e quasi mai il dettaglio o il particolare registrato è esattamente pronto a essere raccontato; quasi mai coincide esattamente con il mio ricordo. Però il cortocircuito tra queste cose fa nascere a volte l'input per l'avvio di una ricerca, di una verifica, una curiosità o qualcosa da cui parto. Io non ho una grande memoria.¹⁵⁷ [...] Ciò che resta fondamentale è la "costruzione". Quei quaderni sono un'architettura. Nulla cade nella mente così, se non costruisco l'edificio della memoria. Ma non si tratta soltanto di traghettare il passato nel presente, anche perché ciò che chiamo memoria in realtà è fiction. Per il settanta per cento è elaborazione e montaggio di dati biografici di persone diverse ricondotti a un unico personaggio in chiave autobiografica. A me non sono accadute le cose così come le narro, ovviamente. I francesi la chiamano "autofiction": qualcosa tra autobiografia e fiction."¹⁵⁸

The passage from the notes to the oral narration is also a long process:

"Il testo diaristico non è mai un testo pronto ad essere raccontato. La parola detta rende dieci volte di più della scrittura sul piano della sintesi, perché nella scrittura manca il tono. Il ritmo c'è: manca il volume e il tono. Il ritmo è importante, e in un testo lo puoi trovare, ma il tono e il volume narrano, dicono in un modo proprio. (...) Quasi sempre pubblico un testo dopo averlo detto. Scrivo, poi dico, dicendo cambio tutto, e finalmente trascrivo. Tra quello che ho trascritto e quello che avevo pre-scritto c'è un abisso: il filtro decisivo della ripetizione orale, in cui ho potuto guardare le facce dagli ascoltatori, capire cosa funzionava di più e cosa non funzionava per niente. Trovo debole il testo scritto per lo spettacolo. È una scrittura di servizio a quella dell'oralità. A volte, dopo aver prodotto una scrittura per andare in scena, mi accorgo che un'intera frase è sintetizzata da un'alzata di spalle o da un'espressione del viso. Soltanto attraverso questa stratificazione di tentativi più o meno riusciti inizi a formare l'intuito di capire in anticipo ciò che funziona e ciò che devi scartare. (...) degli elementi sensoriali, per esempio, non posso fare a meno: un ascoltatore deve riuscire a figurarsi le cose che sto narrando, almeno quelle di volta in volta indispensabili all'inquadratura come caldo, freddo, notte, giorno, e così pure quanti siamo, se soli o in compagnia, il colore, l'ambiente..."¹⁵⁹

"Dieci anni fa, o anche solo cinque, non sarei mai venuto in scena senza sapere il testo a memoria, senza avere provato fisicamente tutta una serie di cose che ritenevo essenziali per stare sul palcoscenico e su cui è comunque fondata la mia cultura.

¹⁵⁷ Marco Paolini, 20.1.2000 in Oreggia, *Archivio di voci incontri di teatro*, p.33.

¹⁵⁸ Marco Paolini in *Ibid.*, p.35.

¹⁵⁹ Marco Paolini in *Ibid.*, p.44.

Scientemente, negli anni, ho abbandonato questa idea di compiutezza e ho distrutto sempre più la preparazione. Mi interessava sempre meno il teatro inteso come confezione. Scene e luci, ad esempio, sono ridotte all'osso nei miei spettacoli individuali. Uno spazio enorme inoltre, mi imbarazza. Ciò di cui avrei bisogno è un cerchio o un semicerchio, o comunque un luogo dove la voce arrivi fino all'ultima fila e sia possibile vedere anche lo spettatore più lontano. Il mio sogno per questo tipo di lavoro sarebbe quello che non ci fosse neanche la luce: solo una voce che racconta. Un giorno o l'altro ci provo. Qualche anno fa avrei curato di più la forma. Ora ho scoperto questa possibilità di non controllare, di non dominare la reazione della gente: non usare in maniera circense la presenza. Di natura io sarei domatore, e ho scoperto invece una direzione contraria. Non credo che ci sia una formula o una ricetta: non mi interessa la codificazione di queste cose, e rimango ogni volta molto stupito davanti alla reazione e all'interesse della gente.”¹⁶⁰

As a narrator, he does not merely convey notions but experiences, he tells a story that consists of many voices of people telling stories. With his physical presence he moves the spectators not only intellectually, but also emotionally, raising questions and allowing them a real comprehension of the facts. In a few hours it is not possible to be exhaustive about such vast issues, hence it is important to awake the desire in the spectator to deepen the knowledge of what he heard.

“Quando facevo lo spettacolo sul Vajont dicevo al pubblico: fatevi un nodo al fazzoletto per ricordare, ma dubitate di quello che vi ho detto, informatevi, studiate. Il teatro non può bastare a chi sta cercando di sapere qualcosa. Anche perché in teatro al massimo in tre ore si raccontano settanta pagine, correndo forte, ma settanta pagine sono un capitolo di un libro. Il teatro, se uno vuole capire, può creare dei cortocircuiti ma non può bastare. Dal mio punto di vista, prendo dei rischi perché non ho mai studiato abbastanza la materia di cui mi sto occupando. Per scoprire cosa è successo fai dei collegamenti, ma puoi anche sbagliare. Fare un teatro “impegnato” comporta dei rischi che bisogna prendersi. [...]

Come narratore devi trovare un punto di vista, che è quello di chi non sa ed è curioso di sapere. Non può mai essere il punto di vista del professore. È insopportabile che un attore si camuffi da professore, però a volte succede che il comico diventi sapientone. A mio avviso, da un lato non devi fare il professore, dall'altro chi ti ascolta non sa nulla di quello di cui tu stai parlando, allora non puoi fare un racconto troppo semplice, ma allo stesso tempo devi farti rispettare da chi ha studiato quelle cose, perché l'esperto, se sente che maltratti la sua materia, si offende e rischi di essere definito superficiale. Il teatro rischia spesso di essere superficiale perché, come dicevo

¹⁶⁰ Marco Paolini, 20.1.2000 in Oreggia, *Archivio di voci incontri di teatro*, p.40.

prima, deve sintetizzare volumi di informazioni; nella leggerezza quindi deve avere una certa pesantezza. Per quanto riguarda la verifica delle fonti, questo lavoro è necessario e lo si deve fare con tutto il tempo che serve. Il mio punto di vista è quasi sempre quello di provare a sintetizzare un percorso che mi sta affascinando.”¹⁶¹

As Ascanio Celestini says, the “narr-actors” could be described as “theatrical soloists”.¹⁶² Sometimes the narration is accompanied by music and usually there is no (or a very poor) set design. Still the narrators of teatro civile do have varied acting and performing techniques: for instance Ascanio Celestini always uses the same voice, even if he’s telling the story from different points of view, while Laura Curino sometimes also imitates the voice of the characters. Ascanio Celestini collects many oral testimonies and works on how to tell people and their stories, while Marco Paolini works mainly on written texts. Also the ways they use their body is diverse. Ascanio Celestini uses body language in a minimal way, while gestures play a big role in Baliani's narrations. Marco Paolini has also a very precise control of the body, particularly of the expressivity of the face.¹⁶³ “Rispetto a un giornalista che fa l’inchiesta io uso il corpo come un attore, cioè non racconto soltanto con le parole, ma con le pause, con la postura, con il linguaggio teatrale.”¹⁶⁴

“Tutti pensano che il narrare sia legato al testo e alla sua costruzione. Invece finché il corpo non riesce a sentire le cose che sta raccontando non diventa narrante. La parola è un medium, un veicolo, e arriva solo se la sensorialità del corpo è attiva, potente: solo in questo modo gli spettatori vedono quello che non c’è. Puoi anche avere un bellissimo testo, ma se lo dici “attorialmente” (in quella maniera tradizionale, un po’ roboante), è un fallimento. Perché rispetto alla recitazione, la narrazione è una cosa più rozza e più raffinata allo stesso tempo. È qualcosa che ha a che fare con la vita di tutti i giorni: si deve sentire che il narratore è impastato della stessa materia degli spettatori; non è qualcuno che è più alto.”¹⁶⁵

After the triumph of the *Vajont* Paolini followed various research directions. On one hand he deepened also through poetry and music the reflection on the language, on the other hand he

¹⁶¹ Marco Paolini in Tamburello, *Il coraggio di mettersi in gioco e guardare avanti, intervista a Marco Paolini* 12.5.2014 <http://www.klpteatro.it/marco-paolini-intervista-2014>

¹⁶² See Lazzarin, *Intervista sul teatro di narrazione in Padova Cultura*, 17.1.2005 <http://padovacultura.padovanet.it/it/attivita-culturali/intervista-sul-teatro-di-narrazione>

¹⁶³ See Ibid., <http://padovacultura.padovanet.it/it/attivita-culturali/intervista-sul-teatro-di-narrazione>

¹⁶⁴ Marco Paolini, Radio interview 4.1.2018. <http://www.rai.it/dl/portaleRadio/media/ContentItem-673c624d-7b4d-4e28-807d-897333b333c7.html>

¹⁶⁵ Marco Baliani in Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.8.

dealt with the identity crisis that followed the prodigious modernization of his region Veneto, e.g. *Bestiari* and *Il Milione* (1997), about his relationship with the lagoon metropolis and its myth as well as the intertwining between Europe and the East. He also kept on bringing on stage some dramatic pages of recent Italian history, such as the monologues *I-TIGI canto per Ustica* (2001) about the Ustica massacre and *Parlamento chimico* (2002) on the petrochemical plant of Marghera. In 2003 Paolini realized five monologues for the television broadcast *Report*. The monologues were a prologue of the episode and introduced the surveys without illustrating them. In this case he developed a new working method, searching for a difficult compromise between the theatrical and the cinematographic-television aspects, between the artistic necessities that involve the collaboration of the public and the necessities of a TV production. The monologues were “tested” in some live previews in front of an audience before being recorded.¹⁶⁶

In more than twenty years of career Marco Paolini explored and experimented with many different forms and means. He was able to discover the effectiveness and immediacy of a form of ancient communication such as the oral tradition and adapt it to modern technologies and methods of communication.

This interview of Paolini (17.1.2005)¹⁶⁷ is a valuable contribution to better understand his way of making theater.

-Dicevi che in questi giorni stai "mastegando" i racconti. Mi parli di come ti metti in relazione con il pubblico, del tuo ascolto del pubblico?

In generale, più si è insicuri, più si prova a dominare il pubblico. Chi ha un atteggiamento domatorio fa così perché non ha un altro modo di tenere la situazione sotto controllo: è come nell'illusionismo dove tutto è fondato sul fatto che non si deve spezzare mai una catena, e quindi c'è una carica, una suggestione. Io da ragazzo ero, credo, più portato a quel tipo di atteggiamento: a dominare il pubblico. Con l'età e con l'esperienza c'è sempre meno bisogno di *fare*, perché si è, e quindi pian piano ho imparato che i meccanismi per reggere l'attenzione non sono solo di tipo attivo ma sono anche passivi: sono meccanismi di ascolto, che producono comunque un filo, un'empatia, un qualcosa di vivo tra chi fa e chi è lì per ascoltare. Di solito in un racconto nuovo ho bisogno... Quando racconto le prime volte in pubblico scopro delle

¹⁶⁶ See Ponte di Pino, *Marco Paolini: una scheda, ateatro n.080*, 17.1.2005.

<http://www.ateatro.it/webzine/2005/01/17/marco-paolini-una-scheda/>

¹⁶⁷ Lazzarin, *Intervista sul teatro di narrazione in Padova Cultura*, 17.1.2005

<http://padovacultura.padovanet.it/it/attivita-culturali/ascoltare-il-pubblico-intervista-marco-paolini>

cose, cioè scopro le reazioni. Una parte dell'attenzione è rivolta all'ascolto. Altrimenti faccio una cosa, che sembra banale ma non lo è: mi registro e in un secondo tempo mi riascolto. Evidentemente la percezione che hai mentre fai una cosa è diversa da quella che hai riascoltando. Io per esempio mi annoio riascoltando, quindi è meno positiva come percezione, mentre è più interessante e più intenso quello che si riesce sentire facendo. Senza esagerare, perché non puoi fare lo spettatore, o il regista: devi fare l'attore che ascolta. E le cose che si ascoltano per le prime volte sono così stupefacenti... per esempio il silenzio, oltre all'applauso, la risata, l'intensità dell'ascolto danno delle grandi emozioni e insegnano tantissimo. Ti insegnano la strada giusta per raccontare una cosa, perché sicuramente ce n'è una più giusta delle altre. Quando pian piano hai trovato quella strada, ci sono ancora delle variabili. E' come la strada di casa, da casa al lavoro: puoi ancora trovare dei pezzi che non hai mai fatto oppure ci sono dei cambiamenti, ma hai imparato a fare così bene quella strada che camminando puoi leggere in giornale o fare delle altre cose. Ecco, in qualche modo accade un po' anche questo: posso concentrarmi su una nota o su un dettaglio o su un'immagine, posso concentrarmi sul viso di una persona. A volte si dialoga con pochissime persone in mezzo alle altre, per piacere, per sfida o per dispiacere, ma io credo che sia proprio un esercizio di vitalità che fa sì che siccome le facce cambiano, così come cambiano i luoghi, è difficile che si faccia una replica di qualcosa che si è già fatto. Per quanto riguarda i racconti, che si fanno sempre guardando in faccia il pubblico (a differenza degli spettacoli che hanno la quarta parete, dove l'interpretazione ti fa staccare dal pubblico), io ho bisogno di parlare e quindi per me la variabile pubblico, assieme alla variabile luogo, sono sicuramente qualcosa che condiziona, ma condiziona di più per esempio la musica, il ritmo di quello che faccio, l'esecuzione, di solito non il contenuto. Per me è molto interessante cercare di non lavorare troppo e solo nella ricerca del consenso del pubblico, perché è chiaro che va bene che c'è anche quello, ma non puoi giudicare il tuo lavoro sulla base del consenso, se no ti fai una specie di parallelo dell'auditel, che poi ti frega perché non è detto che... per esempio questi racconti qua non sono accattivanti, e io soffro un po', perché sto muovendomi su cose che sono diverse da quelle che farei io. Di solito sono cose vive. Qui il pubblico è così lontano che io non sento nessuna reazione e anche dal pubblico si percepisce questa cosa: non sento ridere, non sento sospirare. Non so se le donne, a storie così maschili, sentono oppure si staccano, e allora la presenza è come un dialogo. Per questo i primi spettacoli li faccio sempre con tutto il pubblico visibile, molto vicino. Solo quando conosco bene lo spettacolo posso allontanarmi. A volte resto lì, ma aumentano gli spettatori, così i primi sono vicini come i primi delle prime volte, e gli ultimi sono lontani. Quei venti metri di distanza sono... tanti!

-Hai fatto spettacoli diversi in luoghi diversi: mi parli della relazione con il luogo in cui viene fatto lo spettacolo e come il luogo può cambiare il linguaggio?

Cambia, in due modi. Da una parte si possono usare i luoghi come dei set cinematografici, quindi usare quello che ti offrono come scene naturali, come quando lavori in una stazione dei treni o su una diga oppure in un campo da rugby. Dall'altra si può lavorare nei luoghi e in questo modo invece di dover descrivere, per esempio invece di descrivere un campo da rugby, invece di evocare come faccio di solito, agisco dentro la cosa. Quindi devo asciugare tutta l'enfasi che di solito serve per creare

il luogo, perchè so che ce l'ho già dietro. Devo essere più asciutto, più concreto, perché agisco dentro una cosa che gli altri già vedono. Invece è diversissimo il fatto di esplorare altri territori facendo teatro nelle scuole e in luoghi non teatrali. E' faticoso perchè in questi posti trovi la gente che di solito non va a teatro. E' un modo di togliersi la pigrizia: invece di essere solo scelti si va con il rischio di scegliere qualcuno.

-Perché è così importante essere vicini al pubblico?

Lo dicono già i maestri del teatro, Stanislavskij e tutti gli altri: l'attenzione è un fatto di cerchi, cerchio piccolo cerchio medio e cerchio grande. E' inutile cercare di governare un cerchio grande di spettatori se sei capace al massimo di reggere il cerchio piccolo. Io adesso sono capace di fare il teatro davanti a due o tremila persone. Ho imparato, all'inizio me la sarei fatta addosso. Poi invece scopri una regola dei grandi numeri, che mille persone si comportano come una mentre cento si comportano come cento. Quindi è più facile far ridere mille che cento, questo lo fanno tutti i grandi comici. Invece per quanto riguarda il mio lavoro, che non è fondato sul consenso e sulla risata ma anche su meccanismi come: "capiranno?", ho bisogno di sapere se interagire più o meno. Prima di fidarti a farlo davanti a mille, devi aver imparato gli stessi meccanismi che servono a una maestra a governare una classe di quaranta alunni invece che una di venti. Diventi bravo nel tempo: non credo che ci siano scorciatoie per arrivare prima a conquistare l'attenzione di un grande pubblico. Tutti i grandi predicatori prima sono stati parroci di campagna, più o meno.

-E per quanto riguarda il linguaggio, il ritmo di cui parlavi prima, la sonorità delle parole?

Il linguaggio è musica. Quindi occorre sia imparare a suonare la musica già scritta, le poesie, i testi, la letteratura, sia imparare a improvvisare, cioè a suonare come nel jazz, e per me sono due musiche molto diverse ma mi piace l'idea di usarle tutte e due. Quando uso le parole degli altri cerco di suonare come nella musica classica, quando uso le mie posso improvvisare di più. Ma sempre se stai scrivendo, componendo o anche a volte suonando le parole degli altri bisogna ricordarsi di non usare troppe note e di non usare troppe parole, non è bella la musica se ha troppe note. Lo sai? Ti intendi di musica? Se un musicista, un compositore scrive con troppe note... se un jazzista mette dentro troppe robe è fumo negli occhi. La buona musica ha poche note e anche chi fa teatro deve imparare a usare meno parole possibile.

-In che senso? Questo influisce sull'ascolto?

La poesia insegna a risparmiare sulle parole, la poesia è anche sintesi. Quando racconto tendo ad accorciare, e una volta che ho accorciato posso, per esempio, allungare un po' le pause, i tempi. Però puoi allungare un po' le pause e i tempi solo quando hai già tolto tutte le parole che dovevi togliere, perché per me la cosa essenziale è riuscire a dire una cosa nel modo più semplice e con meno parole possibili. Gli aggettivi, per esempio: meglio uno, perchè se si scrive si sopportano due aggettivi, se si parla no. I verbi a volte si possono alterare, le frasi a volte possono essere lasciate incomplete perchè è così sott'inteso quello che viene dopo che basta un

tuo gesto a completare la frase e spesso il teatro è questo, un'integrazione tra i gesti e le parole che porta lo spettatore alla cosa, perché viene chiamato a finire la frase. Una frase può iniziare con una parola e finire con un gesto. Anche chi scrive fa fatica ad immaginarselo se non conosce bene il linguaggio della scena, per cui spesso gli scrittori, non fidandosi degli attori, mettono troppe parole. Bisogna a volte toglierne qualcuna.

-E per quanto riguarda la parte emozionale in quello che racconti o in quello che fai?

Bisogna non essere prigionieri delle emozioni che si vivono, perché bisogna provarle negli altri, non viverle in maniera privata. Una certa corrispondenza c'è, ma non è vero che l'emozione che vivo io è quella che passa a loro; io devo provocare in loro l'emozione, ma il modo in cui ci arrivo potrebbe essere sia attraverso la stessa emozione che vivono loro, sia attraverso un'altra roba. Il modo in cui ciascuno riesce a fare questo è un po' il segreto di ogni attore. Io non so come fanno gli altri, e del mio modo non parlo mai.

-Mi parli del tuo corpo in scena?

Ah! Fa ridere, no? Non ho un corpo eroico io, ho un corpo antico. "L'attore è un corpo antico fondato sul lavoro" ho detto una volta da qualche parte. Lavoro che ti fai addosso. Ti ricordi Gelmino Ottavini che dice che nel tempo tutte le doti che non hai sviluppato si seccano? E tu sei solo quello che hai imparato a fare? Vale anche per il corpo: il corpo impara a fare, a essere quello che tu gli hai insegnato a fare. Avresti voluto ballare, avresti voluto suonare la chitarra, avresti voluto essere... Il corpo nel tempo si ricorda: stare sulla scena è come nuotare, andare in bicicletta, per cui quando sei giovane devi imparare un movimento, studiarlo. Io imparavo anche a fare sequenze complicate di movimenti perché a teatro si studia anche questo, come nella danza. Adesso è come se non ci pensassi più, è come se lo lasciassi fare, mi devo un po' fidare e lui... Io-lui, non è che parlo con il mio corpo come se fosse un altro, ma so che ormai la gestualità, per il tipo di cose che faccio quando racconto, c'è e non la devo cercare più di tanto. Chiaro che se devo mettermi a fare un lavoro su qualcosa che è completamente nuovo, come un personaggio, non posso fidarmi che i gesti e che quindi il corpo parli nello stesso modo.

-Anche se la parola è dominante, è importante la presenza del corpo?

Sì, perché la parola è sempre il prolungamento di un'azione fisica e l'attore... il corpo è la somma delle azioni fisiche che fai ma è anche la cosa più evidente. Non può contraddire quello che stai dicendo il corpo. Un corpo a sacco, un corpo abbandonato rende debole quello che stai cercando di dire con intensità. Allo stesso modo un corpo che si muove in maniera nervosa innervosisce. A volte ci sono dei gesti che mi scappano, io so che mi tocco la testa, o mi accorgo che ci sono dei gesti che non ho controllato, sono scappati. Succede, ce n'è un tot di gesti casuali, su alcuni lavori per cambiarli; altri so che faranno parte dello stereotipo di come sono io per gli altri: ormai chi mi conosce di più sa che faccio certi gesti, certe cose, mi prendono anche in giro per questo.

-Dici diverse volte, in *Vajont*, o in *Parlamento chimico*: "Un po' di teatro lo devo mettere per tenervi svegli". In che senso?

Scherzo sul fatto che una parte di quello che faccio è poco teatrale, però in realtà quando dico "metto un po' di teatro" intendo dire "metto un po' di spettacolo". So benissimo che tutto quello che faccio è teatro, se no non lo farei.

-Qual è il tuo intento nel fare questo tipo di teatro di racconto?

Non lo so. Lo faccio, questo è importante.

-Spesso il mantenimento dei ruoli sociali va a scapito delle relazioni o dei contenuti delle relazioni stesse. In questo senso il ruolo di narratore che assumi in scena può subire il pericolo di sovrastare i contenuti oppure si mette al servizio dei contenuti?

Il rischio c'è sempre, perché quando scopriamo che uno sa fare una cosa, siamo abituati a dargli molto potere. Chiunque si trovi in una posizione pubblica come la mia può abusare della sua funzione, e l'abuso della funzione del narratore è il demagogo. La demagogia è l'intortamento, cioè è subire il potere e il fascino di chi manipola gli eventi e riscrive le storie senza avere un senso etico di ciò. Quando svolgi un ruolo pubblico sei come un medico: sei capace di dare vita o morte, magari non alle persone, ma alle cose: devi stare attento all'uso che ne fai. Non credo che ci sia una ricetta per salvarsi o salvare quello che fai. Credo che ultimamente il rischio di fare una puttana ci sia e ci sarà sempre. Bisogna essere svegli, se ci si addormenta si fanno puttane.

II.3 Marco Baliani, *Corpo di stato*

May, 9th 1978, via Caetani, Rome. The fifty-five days of the kidnapping of Aldo Moro end with the discovery of his dead body in the trunk of a red Renault 4. Fifty-five days that shook Italy and opened wounds in the society that have not been healed yet. In the 1970s the Italian state was under assault from terrorist forces. By 1978 several of the founders of the Red Brigade, the dominant grouping in left-wing terrorism, were under arrest, but that did not diminish their power: political violence was increasing dramatically. On March, 16th 1978 at 9am Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democracy party, had just left his house when the BR ambuscaded his car in Via Fani, murdered his escort and took him hostage. That same day at 8.30am several witnesses state to have heard on Radio Città Futura someone speaking of

the possibility of a terrorist attack on a public figure on the occasion of the formation of the new government. On March, 16th 1978 at 9am in Via Fani was present the officer of the SISMI (Military Intelligence and Security Service) Camillo Guglielmi. Years later he declared he was there by chance, he was on his way to visit a friend. March, 16th 1978 during the ambush two motorbikes transit through Via Fani and shoot two witnesses. No investigator has ever identified these persons. On March, 17th 1978 the Police Board receives a report saying that in Via Gradoli 96 there is a hideout of the Red Brigade. The next day the police searched all the apartments in Via Gradoli 96, all except the one occupied by the Brigades...¹⁶⁸

The Moro case is perhaps under many aspects –from the judicial to the political, from the cultural to the sociological- the most dramatic and decisive historic phase for Italy after the end of the war. The documentation material is infinite and there are as many contradictory elements as gaps and dark areas. Many questions remain unanswered to the present day: could Aldo Moro have been saved? Did the Brigades tell the whole truth? Did the investigating authorities know about the plans of the terrorists? During Moro's captivity, the country was split over the valuation of negotiating with terrorists. The Christian Democracy and the Italian Communist Party refused to accept any of the Red Brigade's demands, while the Italian Socialist Party advocated negotiations.¹⁶⁹

At the origin of *Corpo di stato* there is a request by the public television: twenty years after his death, on May, 9th 1998, RaiDue wants to remember Aldo Moro differently and commissions Marco Baliani a show.

Baliani's theatrical piece reconstructs those days in a clear and honest way, with the need to understand the meaning of justice. The intense pages portray a man imprisoned in a factional struggle, a symbol of power that suddenly became inconvenient, and an astonished country, confused by the succession of declarations and denials. *Corpo di Stato* is an historical document, the depiction of a divided generation before the tragedy of conscience as well as the story of a man who began to work in theaters during those years. It's theater production that depicts the Moro case better than many political or sociological texts on the 1970s, as Leonardo Sciascia wrote in his *Affaire Moro* (1978): “Lasciata, insomma, alla letteratura la

¹⁶⁸ See Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.147.

¹⁶⁹ See Ibid., p. 150.

verità, la verità – quando dura e tragica apparve nello spazio quotidiano e non fu più possibile ignorarla o travisarla – sembrò generata dalla letteratura”¹⁷⁰

“Chi ha visto e ascoltato un’altra mia narrazione, il *Kohlhaas* tratto da Kleist, potrà meglio comprendere le ragioni di questo *Corpo di Stato* e il filo che li lega, poiché il tessuto è lo stesso: il rapporto conflittuale tra esigenza di rivolta contro l’ingiustizia e assunzione del ruolo di giustiziere. Ma questa volta non siamo nella Germania del 1500, ma nel nostro passato prossimo, solo vent’anni fa. È sempre difficile raccontare qualcosa che ci è tanto vicino, specie se quel qualcosa ha inciso profondamente sulle nostre esistenze e sulle nostre scelte. La materia è ancora così pulsante e non dipanata dalla lontananza, che si rischia allora di leggerla col senno di poi, filtrandola e mettendola a distanza di sicurezza. Ho cercato allora di ritornare laggiù, in prima persona, ricordandomi di me in quei giorni, trovando nelle mie esperienze di allora quelle ‘piccole storie’ che sole possono tentare di illuminare la Storia più grande. Ho ripercorso momenti dolorosi senza perdere però le atmosfere di quegli anni, gli entusiasmi, i paesaggi metropolitani, le contraddizioni. Nei 55 giorni della prigionia di Moro ho raccontato di una lacerazione, di come il tema della violenza rivoluzionaria abbia dovuto fare i conti con un corpo prigioniero, e come questa immagine sia divenuta via via spartiacque per scelte fino ad allora rimandate, abbia fatto nascere domande e conflitti interiori non più risolvibili con slogan o con pratiche ideologiche. Ho raccontato le mie storie, prima ancora che su un palco teatrale, davanti a una telecamera; l’emozione della diretta televisiva è cosa diversa dall’eccitazione inquieta con cui ogni volta entro in scena a narrare. Ora torno sulle tavole di legno a me care, non devo più cercare l’occhio di una telecamera, ma gli occhi di spettatori in carne e ossa; non sarò né personaggio né narratore esterno, questa volta, ma io stesso narrante, un’esperienza nuova, una messa in gioco del personale, una dichiarata visione soggettiva di quegli anni. Amici, compagni, avversari, potranno avere i giusti motivi per non essere d’accordo o per trovare identità, per quelli che non c’erano, i giovani d’oggi, sarà come visitare un mondo che appare tanto lontano, quasi incredibile; spero che per tutti, come è già accaduto dopo la trasmissione televisiva, scatterà il desiderio di parlare, di contraddire con altri racconti: è un modo di uscire allo scoperto, di raccontarsi agli altri, di rievocare quei tempi difficili e densi. Quando si esce da momenti e tempi in cui la vita è stata piena di avvenimenti, quando il vivere è sembrato intenso anche nel dramma, dopo, col tempo, ci si sente sempre un po’ stranieri, come reduci, testimoni di eventi troppo densi per essere dipanati. Camus dice ‘Non essere ascoltati: è questo il terribile quando si è vecchi’. Il narratore compie sempre questa sfida, straniero nel tempo cerca di vincere con il racconto la vecchiezza che stende sulle cose del mondo un manto spesso di oblio.”¹⁷¹

Baliani’s first work, *Kohlhaas* (1990) represents, as already mentioned, one of the performances initiator of both the genre teatro di narrazione and teatro civile. The monologue anticipates the issues raised also in *Corpo di stato*: the conflicting struggle between the need for revolt against injustice and the role of avenger.

¹⁷⁰ Sciascia, *L’affaire Moro*, p.169.

¹⁷¹ Marco Baliani in <http://www.marcobaliani.it/corpo-di-stato/>

Maria Maglietta has been working for twenty-five years with Marco Baliani, sometimes as a playwright, sometimes as an actress, and in *Corpo di stato* as a director. In their idea of theater the various elements that make up and determine a theatrical creation are closely interlinked. The dramaturgical hypothesis is often preceded by a literary and thematic research, by arising questions and reworking the material with the actor: the possible paths are developed through improvisations and the continuous exchange of ideas. Thus they begin to draw what Baliani calls the "map", made of crossroads, places to visit, ways and territories still to be explored.

“Dirigere un narratore in un racconto è cosa diversa che dirigere un attore in un monologo. Un vero narratore, quando è tale, ha un modo d’essere sulla scena che appare del tutto organico, come se tempi, ritmi e gesti appartenessero a un “sapere” dove le tecniche affabulatorie sono state interiorizzate a punto di divenire “naturale” veicolo di quell’espressione. Allora la funzione del regista in quella parte che riguarda la direzione dell’attore, è qualcosa che assomiglia a far volare un aquilone: bisogna corrergli dietro, stare insieme a lui col vento per farlo volare più alto, tenere un filo sottile che possa richiamarlo a terra se necessario, per evitare che si impigli o si perda.”¹⁷²

“Ad uno dei primi incontri di lavoro, con il tavolo ingombro di libri, giornali, videocassette, dopo aver lungamente dibattuto sulle ipotesi drammaturgiche e il punto di vista da tenere, chiedo a Marco Baliani: ‘Ma tu come ricordi Moro?’. Dalla memoria affiora prepotente l’immagine di un corpo ritorto nel bagagliaio di una macchina. Per il resto Moro è un volto come tanti, anzi meno evidente di altri. Un nome che in manifestazione si grida di meno. Le manifestazioni con quel misto di giovanile baldanza e di latente aggressività, ancora un po’ in quell’atmosfera di trasgressione creativa del Sessantotto insieme alla più recente durezza delle rivendicazioni politiche... e così, naturalmente, nei ricordi di Marco il racconto fluisce attraverso le immagini di quegli anni, pieni di vitalità e di contraddizioni.”¹⁷³

The thread of the narration is not the meticulous reconstruction of the 55 days of the abduction of Aldo Moro and his tragic conclusion. From the very beginning of the work it was clear that the dead of Via Fani, the leaflets, the images of the captivity, the statements of politicians, the appeals of family members, the positions taken by the trade unions and the civil society, the investigations, the suspicions, the hideouts, Moro’s letters, all that has been said in the four trials and all the historical reconstructions –all of the tangle of events could not be narrated in a theatrical piece. Maybe it's simply impossible, or maybe it's up to others.

¹⁷² Maria Maglietta in <http://www.marcobaliani.it/evento/corpo-di-stato-orestiadi-di-gibellina-tp/>

¹⁷³ Alessandra Rossi Ghiglione, playwright, director, social theater expert.

The starting point for the theatrical narration was the image of that sacrificed body, stronger than any word and impressed in the mind of everyone who got through that period.

“Fin dall’inizio la vicenda Moro mi è apparsa sotto la forma della tragedia; più andavo avanti nella lettura dei testi, degli atti dei vari processi, le autobiografie dei brigatisti, l’infinita mole degli articoli giornalistici, in quell’intrico in cui più volte ho rischiato di precipitare... Non dovevamo lasciarci irretire dalla figura politica di Moro, dallo scenario di trame e intrighi che la sua morte portava con sé, no, su quella strada saremmo ricaduti facilmente nelle dietrologie e nei commenti; no, il corpo di Moro era l’asse calamitante del mio raccontare, proprio la fisicità di quel suo corpo divenuto ingombrante, sia da vivo, corpo prigioniero, sia da morto, corpo immolato/destinato a diventare il capro espiatorio.”¹⁷⁴

The profound reason for narration is not just the need to save historical truths from oblivion or to communicate it to the public in an engrossing way, but the necessity, through the narration, of experiencing the deep lacerations that marked the personal story within the horizon of History and read them in light of the profound changes that these have generated. For Baliani the only act of justice to be done through theater is to plunge again into the contradictions of those years, a confused horizon of collective violence and ideological absolutism. Only the authenticity of the autobiographical narrative made it possible to question the historical truth of the Moro case –that is not by telling about the story of Moro, but telling about himself and what the killing of Aldo Moro meant for a whole generation, with the courage of portraying that dramatic disorientation between euphoria, ferocity and pity.¹⁷⁵ Marco Baliani goes through personal memories and expresses the unbridgeable gap between generations, divided by very strong ideal tensions: the Liberation front and its humanitarian policy on one side, and the front of the line of firmness on the other.

The already complex work on the Moro case was also characterized by the peculiarity that *Corpo di stato* was a theatrical piece which however would have seen its debut on live television. It was filmed in the Roman Imperial Forums and broadcasted on RaiDue on the evening of May 9th, 1998. Taking into account the different times management as well as the technical limitations of television and maintaining the effectiveness was challenging. Nonetheless the adaptation to a new medium enriched the performance as well: Baliani worked with modifications of the voice through the microphone and integrated his monologue

¹⁷⁴ Marco Baliani in Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.152.

¹⁷⁵ See Baliani, *Corpo di stato* <http://www.marcobaliani.it/corpo-di-stato/>

with visual and sound means, intermissions of montages of images of those years on a sound taken from newscasts, radio announcements, fragments of music of those years mainly with the function of activating an emotional memory, particularly for those who hadn't lived that time. After the television success, the dramaturgical design of the work was redefined to finally bring it to the theater. Time and rhythm in theater are dilated and so the already configured structure had space for further elaborations such as the possibility of lingering over a question of not easy answer or simply sharing a moment of silence with the audience. Some of the text for the television version was eliminated and the multimedia support was kept also for the theatrical performance, only with a different duration, as to represent the History that the narrator enters and leaves through his own personal viewpoint.¹⁷⁶ The monologue opens with two parallel intense and fast sequences of facts of chronicle of the same day (May 9th, 1978) but in different places: the first crime takes place in Rome, in Via Montalcini, the second on railroad tracks in Cinisi, Sicily. The protagonists are two bodies: one is that of Moro, handed over to the collective memory in the indelible frames of his corpse found in the red Renault; the other is the body of the left-wing militant Giuseppe Impastato, killed by the mafia's laborers, the same people he denounced every day on his radio channel. This forgotten story of the young Sicilian, buried in the general oblivion, thus becomes a piece of a mosaic, which will be recomposed together with other stories.

The accurate historical research included many sources: newspaper articles, dossiers of judicial acts, autobiographies of Red Brigade members and literature such as the essay *L'affaire Moro* (1978) by Leonardo Sciascia and *L'ombra di Moro* (1991) by Adriano Sofri.

Italian intellectuals and writers were as divided as politicians both on the moral and political questions raised by the dilemma of the value of an individual life and the consequences of negotiation. The term "tragedy" was routinely used by journalists as an appropriate description of the Moro case.

"La tragedia è fatta di pochi ingredienti essenziali: una grandezza abbattuta, una catastrofe annunciata e dilazionata, centellinata, un pubblico che conosce già l'esito funesto ma non riesce fino all'ultimo a rinunciare alla speranza. Questo è stato il caso

¹⁷⁶ See Baliani, *Corpo di stato* <http://www.marcoaliani.it/corpo-di-stato/>

di Moro. [...] Una tragedia personale, com'è inevitabile nelle vere tragedie, diventò comune.”¹⁷⁷

“the recourse to theater terminology of tragedy and morality play indicates an imprecise feeling that, whatever political perspective was adopted, the crisis transcended the political dimension. At a deeper level, the case presented Italy not merely with a dilemma or *realpolitik*, but also with a crisis of spiritual vision for which a largely secularized society was unprepared and ill-equipped.”¹⁷⁸

A tragedy that recalls, for the pity and the horror that continues to arouse, that of Antigone and Creon, in which the cumbersome body, removed from the public gaze and that shall not be buried, becomes a symbol of guilt and injustice.

“Quel titolo, Corpo di stato, subito mi aveva convinto, c'era qualcosa che risuonava, l'idea di un corpo alla mercé di uno Stato, ma anche il gioco di parole tra corpo e colpo di Stato. Andando avanti nel lavoro, via via avremmo scoperto che era proprio quel corpo, Moro come uomo, l'elemento che avrebbe mosso e attivato il fluire dei racconti. Per una settimana mi andai ripetendo in testa quel titolo, in attesa che affiorasse qualcosa, che quel corpo mi cominciasse a parlare. La prima immagine a raggiungermi fu proprio quella scena antica, Antigone e il corpo insepolto del fratello: tante volte era già venuta a visitarmi nel mio percorso teatrale, e adesso tornava, ma con un segno diverso, come è proprio dei miti la capacità di rivelare ogni volta allo sguardo sostanze diverse, anime nascoste.”¹⁷⁹

II.4 Dario Fo, *La tragedia di Aldo Moro*

The Moro case compelled both Dario Fo and Franca Rame to face the plight and intercede for Moro's life. The question of how to stage the issues of the individual conscience and collective moral responsibility was a great challenge for Fo. In an interview he admitted that Moro's kidnapping was the one thing he wasn't able to bring on stage, a dramatic failure.¹⁸⁰ Until that point he considered comedy or farce, that is the only appropriate genre that would suit contemporary sensibilities. The representation of any form of absurdity or irrationality,

¹⁷⁷ Sofri, *L'ombra di Moro*, p. 91.

¹⁷⁸ Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p.133.

¹⁷⁹ Marco Baliani in Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.152.

¹⁸⁰ See Valentini, *La storia di Dario Fo*, p.186.

the modern tragedy, had to be based on laughter and humor. In his poetic, laughter amplifies the moment of rational reflection on things.

“Laughter at painful events allows the underlying tragedy to remain in the mind, but the laughter is not the nihilistic variety which suggests that all life is senseless and all philosophies futile, but an uncomfortable laughter followed by anger, and hence, in Fo’s view, by action and hope. Laughter is an indispensable element both of Fo’s theatrical poetics and of his philosophy of life. Mere compassion for victims or grief at wrongs endured was not a preliminary to action, as political theater should be.”¹⁸¹

“Noi facciamo un teatro popolare. Non popolaresco. Il teatro popolare ha sempre usato il grottesco, della farsa –la farsa è un’invenzione del popolo –per sviluppare i discorsi più drammatici...”¹⁸²

The style of the tragic farce was inadequate as a response to the shock caused by Moro’s plight.

“In quel periodo stavo ripassando i greci e mi ero accorto che tanto Aristofane quanto Euripide denunciavano con la parodia la stessa cosa: il bisogno del potere di crearsi un capro espiatorio. Mi spiego meglio. Nella divisione storica dello scontro c’è da un lato la sacralità del potere e delle sue leggi, dall’altro la diabolicità di una sorta di contropotere, dell’inferno. [...] basta pensare al Filottete o all’Ifigenia. Filottete, come Moro, deve essere sacrificato al bene superiore del potere. Ulisse, che pure è suo amico, è disposto a tutto pur di prendere Troia. È pronto ad abbandonare Filottete, ad immolarlo, a trasformarlo in un vile, un traditore che non vuole morire. Ma l’arco di Filottete deve vivere, perché quell’arco è il segno del prestigio, bisogna dunque uccidere Filottete ma prima sottrargli l’arco... Moro reagisce esattamente con le stesse parole con le quali, in Aulide, la madre di Ifigenia cerca di sottrarre la figlia al sacrificio. [...] Nell’edizione che ho già scritto c’è Moro che si trova, in chiave di oracolo, prigioniero di fronte ai ministri del potere. Lui dice, a voce, le sue lettere e il potere, sempre a voce, espone i suoi proclami. (...) Lo schema era chiaro: la Dc insieme al Pci dice che non si può salvare Moro. Se lo si salva, salta lo Stato. Moro muore. La gente vuole che si faccia il processo allo Stato. Ma il potere rovescia la situazione e fa comparire dei nuovi imputati. Il polverone è indescrivibile, non si distingue più nulla. Salta tutto, inchiesta parlamentare e teatro.”¹⁸³

For the very first time he gave up the comic and the grotesque and searched for new means. *La tragedia di Aldo Moro* (1979) is a sort of trial of Moro, who stands as defendant in the

¹⁸¹ Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l’arte*, p. 141.

¹⁸² Dario Fo in Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l’arte*, p.141.

¹⁸³ Dario Fo in *E intanto Fo chiude Moro nel cassetto*, *L’Europeo*, November 1979 ["L’Europeo": intervista a Dario Fo sul testo "La tragedia di Aldo Moro" e sui motivi per i quali lo spettacolo non è stato mai rappresentato.](#)

middle of the scene and explains his reasons, defends himself and fights for his life. Interpreted by Dario Fo, his text consists of quotes of the letters he wrote during the captivity or what had been declared by his closest associates. In a semicircle in front of him stand eight figures dressed in black with the faces covered by masks. Also their words are taken from real announcements of politicians, or opinions published on newspapers. On the scene there is also a jester, played by Franca Rame, who speaks words taken by Greek tragedies such as *Prometheus* and *Philoctetes*.¹⁸⁴ Fo was dissatisfied with it, he allowed it to be published but the play was never performed -and since it was never rehearsed, the work also didn't receive the routined rewriting.

In 1980 he tried again to bring the Moro case into a dramatic form. *Clacson, trombette e pernacchi* premiered in 1981 and was written in his own style. The basic elements of the plot were inspired by Plautus' *Menaechmi*, again a classical author, but this time a writer of comedies, not tragedies.¹⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

The individual sustains the whole society by communicating his experience in reference to the nucleus he belongs to. Culture is precisely the set of such expressions of individuals, and, as already mentioned, a performance is the appropriate conclusion of an experience ("parfournir", "complete"). Through the performance, what in normal conditions is inaccessible to daily observation and reasoning is brought to light. In fact theater and rite,

¹⁸⁴ See *Fo ne fa una tragedia*, *Panorama*, June 1979 ["Panorama": articolo su "La tragedia del caso Moro" di Dario Fo](#)

¹⁸⁵ Barsotti, Marinai, *Dario Fo e Franca Rame, una vita per l'arte*, p. 152.

ceremony, carnival and any other type of cultural performance are explanation of life.¹⁸⁶ The German philosopher Dilthey argues that the lived experience itself is already a process that “presses out” towards an expression that completes it for the benefit of one's own and of others: the term “ausdrücken” (“express”) means literally “press out”.¹⁸⁷

In one of his last interviews, Dario Fo described disinformation as one of the main issues of society today: “Il nostro guaio di popoli e di comunità è quello di essere dei disinformati, tutti siamo disinformati in Europa, non conosciamo nemmeno il nostro vicino...” and also stated that theater making means above all to inform oneself : “Recitare significa soprattutto informarsi, tenere in considerazione, studiare le cose che molte volte ti sembrano banali e scoprire che sono la base fondamentale della nostra cultura.”¹⁸⁸

Keeping alive the memory of collective history means comprehending the past, questioning oneself and build the identity of a country. Teatro civile originated from the need to give dignity back to those who have lost it in the oblivion and general indifference that was spread in Italy after the Second World War. The years of the postwar massacres and the strategy of tension, the sense of impunity, the false leads and the corruption of the men in institutions, the environmental disasters and the workplace deaths would have been left unsaid. It should be a duty of politics, but the anti-mafia commissions actually concluded little or nothing. It should be a task of the historians, who instead rewrote history in connivance with politicians. The Italian civil society itself lost the sense of indignation. In a country without memory, the task of remembering was performed by books, records and theater, that served to stir up the shrunken consciences. Teatro civile represents a cultural revolution that turned the remote forgotten past into historical present.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the necessity to stage personal stories is not only for the purpose of paying a tribute to the victims, but also aimed to recreate an identity that had become indistinguishable through faceless institutions.

¹⁸⁶ See Dalla Palma, *La scena dei mutamenti*, p. 69.

¹⁸⁷ See Dilthey, *Critica della ragione storica* in Turner, *Dal rito al teatro*, p. 36.

¹⁸⁸ Interview on SOUL [Tv2000it](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MIsYP5f3Po&feature=youtu.be), published on Jan 16, 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MIsYP5f3Po&feature=youtu.be>

¹⁸⁹ See Daniele Biacchessi in Mazzocchi, *Luoghi e protagonisti del “Teatro civile” quando le storie diventano Storia*, *Repubblica Spettacoli & Cultura*, 23.9.2010.
http://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli-e-cultura/2010/09/23/news/passaparola_biacchessi-7344134/

“Lo spettacolo *Fabbrica* nasce da una mia esigenza: come un individuo riesce a raccontare un’esperienza dopo che l’ha vissuta. A me interessano la fabbrica, la scuola, il manicomio, il call center, il supermercato. Tutte quelle istituzioni o paraistituzioni in qualche modo totalizzanti che chiedono all’individuo un abbassamento della sua identità. Così l’istituzionalizzato diventa come una specie di bambino rispetto all’istituzione. [...] Quando questa persona decide di raccontare la sua storia, realizza un’operazione interessante sul piano drammaturgico e letterario, rimette insieme i pezzi della sua vita e riproduce come una sorta di carta d’identità raccontata, narrata.”¹⁹⁰

The testimony includes the rational (the chronicle), the intellectual (the judgment), and the emotional aspect (the personal drama) that converge in a single cognitive process. Working with personal stories also offers the dramaturgical starting point that allows a deeper understanding of the events. Teatro civile is not merely about an historical reconstruction, a listing of names, facts and datum: that is namely the kind of frozen remembrance that the State offers, a plain rhetoric of anniversaries, a calendar ritual and titles on the newspaper that have no meaning –because there is no story behind them. As Marco Paolini asserts, the major difficulty in working on memory is the chronic lack of historical contexts.¹⁹¹ The Italian civil conscience is based on the strong emotional reaction to earthquakes, catastrophes and the most serious events and the very fast removal of the same –an impulse to solidarity and drive for cohesion that is barely episodic and ceases in a short time.

The work of teatro civile, even if it is only a niche theater, contributed and still contributes to safeguard collective memory, to inform –particularly young people- and encourage to participate as citizens in public life for a change within the optic of a solidarity that overcomes individualism, lived as co-responsibility of individuals in the social, political and civil life of the country.

¹⁹⁰ Ascanio Celestini in Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p.78.

¹⁹¹ Marco Paolini in Oreggia, *Archivio di voci incontri di teatro*, p.38.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Begriff „teatro civile“ entstand um die 1990er Jahre, während Marco Paolini an seinem *Racconto del Vajont* arbeitete. Teatro civile zählt zu einer der dynamischsten Formen des zeitgenössischen Theaters in Italien.¹⁹² In den 1970er Jahren war Brechts politisches Theater sehr populär, allerdings begannen nach dem Fall der Berliner Mauer sein ideologischer Ansatz, seine Propaganda und Indoktrination eine tiefe Krise zu erleben. Das Vorgehen der Autoren des Politischen Theaters ist das einer Avantgarde, welche behauptet die Wahrheit zu pachten und versucht, ihr Publikum davon zu überzeugen. Im Gegenteil dazu, geht es den Autoren von Teatro Civile darum, sich auf das gleiche Niveau des Publikums zu stellen, und das Streben nach der Wahrheit zu teilen. Die Akteure erscheinen weder als Experten noch interpretieren sie eine Figur, sondern sind sie auf der Bühne als Menschen, mit ihrem eigenen Standpunkt und ihrer Glaubwürdigkeit. Grotowskis *Armes Theater* und *Mistero Buffo* von Dario Fo haben ein archetypisches Modell für die Aufführungen des Teatro Civile aufgestellt.

Teatro civile entstand aus dem Bedürfnis, Themen von kollektivem Interesse auszuloten, die Öffentlichkeit zu informieren, Bewusstsein zu schaffen, aktive Teilnahme zu stimulieren und eine Möglichkeit zur Veränderung zu finden. Die Erinnerung an die kollektive Geschichte wachzuhalten bedeutet, sich selbst zu hinterfragen, die Vergangenheit zu verstehen und die Identität eines Landes aufzubauen. Hinter Teatro civile steckt die Notwendigkeit, die Würde jenen zurückzugeben, welche diese in der Vergessenheit und allgemeiner Gleichgültigkeit verloren haben, die sich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Italien ausgebreitet hat. Teatro civile stellt eine Kulturrevolution dar, welche die vergessene Vergangenheit in eine historische Gegenwart verwandelte.¹⁹³ Die Jahre der Nachkriegsmassaker und die Strategie der Spannung, das Gefühl der Straflosigkeit, die Unstimmigkeiten und die Korruption der Menschen in den Institutionen, die Umweltkatastrophen und die Todesfälle am Arbeitsplatz wären

¹⁹²Vgl. Biacchessi, *Teatro civile*, p. 24-32.

¹⁹³ Vgl. Daniele Biacchessi in Mazzocchi, *Luoghi e protagonisti del "Teatro civile" quando le storie diventano Storia*, *Repubblica Spettacoli & Cultura*, 23.9.2010.

http://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli-e-cultura/2010/09/23/news/passaparola_biacchessi-7344134/

unausgesprochen geblieben. Wo die Politik und die Historiker diesen Auftrag nicht erfüllen konnten und selbst die italienische Zivilgesellschaft das Gefühl der Entrüstung verloren hatte, wurde die Aufgabe des Erinnerns durch Bücher, Schallplatten und Theater erfüllt, welche dazu dienten, die geschrumpften Gewissen aufzurütteln.

Die Arbeit des Teatro civile, auch wenn es nur ein Nischentheater ist, leistet immer noch einen Beitrag zur Wahrung des kollektiven Gedächtnisses, zur Information -insbesondere für junge Menschen- und zur Förderung der Bürgerbeteiligung im öffentlichen Leben, für eine Veränderung im Sinne einer Solidarität, die den Individualismus überwindet und als Mitverantwortung der Individuen im sozialen, politischen und zivilen Leben des Landes gelebt wird.