

Chapter 5

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The sleep of reason generates monsters. The sleep of the sense of humour and of satire generates imbeciles.

(Fo, *Obscene Fables* 27)

5.0 Introduction

This chapter intends to analyse Fo's satirical farces which were performed as a response to specific political events. They serve as a powerful commentary on the contemporary Italian state and politics. They can be termed as hard-hitting political dramas born out of contemporary socio-political problems combining the elements of farce and satire which have been used as a weapon to ridicule the people in power. This shows the dramatist's commitment to popular Political Theatre, a tradition traceable to the comedies of Aristophanes, Rabelais, Plautus and the renaissance Commedia dell'Arte who have been his chief source of inspiration in subverting the authority and creating an upside down world. He uses theatre for mass awareness, opening our eyes to injustice, inequality, corruption, and hypocrisy rampant in the contemporary Italian society. Fo is a keen observer of everyday socio-political realities and never dissociates himself from the pressing issues of the day. As Farrell says, "Fo's frame of reference is society, and he never strays on to the adjoining Beckettian wasteland where displaced individuals trade jokes while waiting for Godot or God" (49).

5.1 *Archangels Don't Play Pinball*

Fo started his theatrical career as a performer and a writer of revues and songs. His first full-length play *Archangels Don't Play Pinball* appeared in 1959; a period marked by economic affluence in Italy. This is the first successful production of his bourgeois association which lasted until 1968. Though the plays produced during this period are lacking the political vigour of his revolutionary period but they are not altogether insensitive to the political ambiance of the period. Like his other plays, this play is also the product of current affairs. The invention of pinball machines during this period enthralled the masses and became an integral part of the fashionable life of Italy to the extent that the Italian authorities proposed to ban it. It is in this context Fo

has framed his play borrowing the title from this new phenomenon. Farrell states, “Fo’s decision to give the title *Archangels Don’t Play Pinball* to his first full-length play had the double advantage of being both fashionable and polemical” (51). The play is about a group of young derelicts representing a social class of the underprivileged who trick people for a living. It reflects the Italian society of the early sixties claimed to be an age of ‘economic miracle’. Fo takes this opportunity to uncover the hypocrisy of the capitalist system with an ingenious mixture of farce and satire exploiting all comic possibilities of the situation. Mitchel expresses, “It is Fo’s first play to combine political-satirical content with a Brechtian form” (65). The protagonist of the play Lungo (Lanky in English) belongs to the group of these layabouts and becomes the butt of all their jokes. The play kicks off with the appearance of these ruffians upon the stage singing a song which represents an image of modern Italy and also reveals their profession.

The night is a big umbrella, full of holes
Somebody shot it up with lemon drops
The moon looks like a Jackpot special
From a giant pinball machine for King Kong.
And my city is one big pinball parlor
With girls who act like replay flippers.
We are a big gang of tough guys
We steal radios from parked cars
But cars are like flippers too
As soon as you touch them they scream out.

(Fo 239-40)

As they finish the song one of them suddenly falls over the stage groaning in severe pain. He is actually the protagonist of the play who is pretending sickness as instructed by his friends. They take him to a baker’s shop and accuses the shopkeeper of selling rancid and additive cannolis the consumption of which has caused food poisoning to their friend. First, the baker rubbishes any such claim but when they threaten him to take the matter to the Department of Public Health who will cancel his license and close down his shop he confesses his crime saying that he is not the only one to be blamed but also the big manufacturers who make these additives. The proprietor offers two thousand lire to settle down the matter and a big thank you,

unaware of the fact that he has been duped by these petty thieves. This is one aspect towards which Fo wants to draw people's attention that despite government's claim of economic prosperity people are hungry, jobless, homeless and therefore, driven to criminal or semi-criminal activities in order to survive. The other aspect which he brings to public notice is the corruption of business class who should also be held responsible for manufacturing additives and supplying them in the market. Another significant point which he has raised in the play is the violation of medical ethics where doctors, especially in private clinics, cover up cases for money. This is suggested through the conversation that occurs between Lanky's friends:

Fourth: What if we took him to some private clinic? Maybe they'd keep it quiet ... for a price.

Doctor: Yes. But do you know how much it would take to cover up a case like this. A couple of thousand before you even walk in the door. (Fo 246)

Next, they rope Lanky into a false marriage with an Albanian beauty whose name is Angela. After the marriage celebrations are over she tries to get rid of them even of Lanky. But to her utter surprise, she discovers that he is not a stupid person as he appears to be. He pretends to be a fool because it suits his purpose as he tells to the Blondie:

Lanky: Don't worry. My brain has been working all along. I know they make fun of me. In fact I'm usually the one who sets up the joke in the first place. They don't have much imagination, and if I didn't help them out, they wouldn't come up with much on their own.

Blondie: (Falls into a chair, astonished): What kind of fool are you? Not only do they make fun of you, but you help them. Why?

Lanky: (Takes a cigarette out of his pocket): For me playing the fool is something of a profession.

Blondie: You're a professional fool?

Lanky: Did you ever hear of a court jester?

Blondie: Of course I've heard of them. Court jesters were employed to evoke the laughter of the kings ... right?

Lanky: (Laughing): Absolutely. It's the same with me. The only difference is that they don't have kings anymore. So I evoke laughter from my friends at the café. I'm a poor man's Rigoletto. But the important thing is that it earns me a living. (Fo 259)

This is an important passage in the play because here for the first time Fo has referred to the significant role of *Giullare*. *Giullari* were itinerant performers in the Middle Ages who used to travel from town to town entertaining people and educating them through their subversive performances. Their ambition was to spread awareness amongst masses against feudal oppression. Following their imprints, Fo becomes the modern day *Giullare* by giving expression to contemporary problems. Moreover, he has taken into consideration the problem of prostitution in an ironical manner. When introducing herself Blondie says:

Blondie: And I remember being so mature as a child that at the age of fifteen they took me five.

Lanky: No. So young?

Blondie: Five dollars. Cash. (Fo 256-57)

By referring to this issue Fo exposes the evil side of consumerist culture where the unequal distribution of resources gives rise to such problems. They also exchange opinions about other subtle issues like the horror of war and the disadvantages of being ignorant.

Lanky: even the war made fun of me. Soldiers get wounded everywhere, I know in the arm, in the leg even the head. But I got shot in the coccyx. A bullet it knocked it clean away. Zac. Trach.

Blondie: When I began, I was more ignorant than I am now. And the ignorance is the worst flaw of all. (Fo 261)

Like the Gramscian intellectual Fo wants to instill awareness in the masses in order to make them intellectually autonomous so that they could critically analyse their situation and take necessary measures to reform it. Education and social change become the driving force of his theatre. It is revealed through their discussion that Lanky is differently abled therefore becomes eligible for special privileges. Act first closes with Lanky leaving for Rome to collect his pension which is due to him for the

injuries he has suffered during his military service and Angela indulged in a self-confessing scene where she confesses her love for Lanky which is followed by another hilarious sequence. While she expresses her feelings for Lanky there is a knock on the door. She thinks that it is probably him who has returned to collect his coat. Embarrassed she hides behind a curtain and expresses her love for Lanky not realizing the fact that it is his friend. She throws him out when she realizes her mistake and demonstrates her anger by throwing the radio on the floor which forecasts of a sunny weather in most of the region. Sunny is the surname of the protagonist given by his father who baptized him with three names: “Sunny, Cloudy and Stormy. According to the atmospheric conditions” (Fo 260).

Act II is set in a ministry in Rome. It is a superb mixture of farce and satire through which Fo vents out his anger against Italian bureaucracy. There are five counters in the office but they barely function. Lanky stands in a queue at one of them but when his turn comes the window closes as opens the adjacent window. Lanky tries there but he is late and the window shuts. This is repeated again and again whenever he thinks that he is close the shutter goes down and he has to try at another counter. Meanwhile, a waiter enters to serve coffee to the clerks. To take advantage of the situation Lanky follows the waiter who goes to one of the counters tapping the spoon against a cup. Immediately after the window opens, a hand comes out, takes the cup from the waiter’s hand and closes it down just before Lanky reaches. The waiter goes to another window followed by Lanky but the result is the same. This time Lanky tries to be smart and instead of going to the third window he waits for him at the fourth. But to his disappointment, the waiter goes to the fifth. He rushes to it but again he is late. He asks the waiter:

Doesn’t this one drink coffee? (Pointing to the fourth window)

Waiter: No. he takes tea with lemon.

(The waiter takes a larger cup and places it in front of the fourth window, which opens just long enough for the clerk to grab his tea before it slams shut).
(Fo 273)

This behaviour of the clerks irks Lanky who behaves like a madman shouting and jumping out of despair. In the meantime, the attendant quickly collects the empty cups from each of the counters, “Opening and closing like an assembly line” (Fo 273).

Lanky makes a failed attempt at each of them getting his finger smashed as the last window closes with a bang. The waiter finds it so funny that he cannot control his laughter and collides with a gentleman who goes unnoticed by him. A sound of broken cups is heard. The clerks open their windows and laugh in harmony then they shut it. An idea strikes to Lanky's mind to get the attention of the clerks. As the waiter tries to move he is deliberately tripped by Lanky with a loud crashing sound of the broken cups. All the clerks open their windows penetrating their heads out for a better sight of the waiter's fall. Taking advantage of this opportunity Lanky traps their heads on the counter by pulling down the windows like a guillotine. He attaches the stamping devices hanging around their necks to their forehead creating in words of David L. Hirst, "A sort of contraption which can process his forms efficiently. When this is fully in motion at the end of the scene it resembles, according to the stage direction, '*a Futuristic machine*'" (172). The investigation reveals that he has been classified as 'dog' by an ex-employee who made arbitrary changes in the registration files in order to create chaos. As a result, one died even before he was born, another was resurrected twenty years after his death and there was a general who had never spent a day in the military. It's a poignant satire on Italian administration and the reckless behaviour of the government officials. As a solution to his problem Lanky is advised by the clerks to live a dog's life for three more days in a city dog pound because there is a law that after three days if no one turns up to claim, dogs are recorded dead. He is assured that they will talk to the director of the pound a former colleague who will show him dead in the record thus the problem will be resolved and he could claim for his real identity. But what a coincidence? The former director of the pound gets replaced by a new one who is determined to eliminate corruption at least from the dog pound.

Director: I didn't make any deal with anybody. And I've never faked anything in my life. I've always believed in serious respect for the law. If three days go by and nobody picks you up, we'll finish you off. In a country plagued by favouritism and special interests, the last we can do is keep corruption out of the dog pound. (Fo 294)

In order to escape from this torture, he persuades a circus illusionist to take him out of this place who will be paid in return by his services.

Lanky: Look, there's the guard. Ask him to tell you what's happened, and then, when you hear the truth, you'll take me away from here. And you won't be sorry. I'll be good. I'll do everything you tell me. I'll eat my dog food and biscuits. I'll fetch your paper, your slippers, your pipe. If you want I'll even pee against a tree. Just get me out of here. (Fo 295)

The man takes Lanky out from the dog pound in return for his services. He serves his master out of gratitude and learns some of his tricks but when he gets to know his master's plan who wants to rent him to one of his friends for making money he escapes from there and boards on a train. This scene is the finest example of farce. Lanky who is just wearing an underwear breaks into the first-class section of the train and discovers that there is only a gentleman in the compartment. He notices a pair of pants that belong to the gentleman who is a politician. He steals them and locks himself in the restroom after having seen the conductor approaching towards him. Meanwhile, the politician wakes up from his sleep and finds that his trousers are missing. He asks for conductor's trouser in return for a pair of trousers in his suitcase. Finding the suitcase locked the conductor asks the politician for the key only to add to his despair, as it was in the back of the pant which is now stolen. Lanky enters into the politician's compartment and seeing no one around he also takes his shirt and jacket. This situation creates a wonderful comedy of mistaken identity. Lanky confused with the senator is received with warm welcome by Mayor and other officials while the politician who is the real guest is confused with the thief and gets threatened by the conductor.

Conductor: I'll teach you to play tricks on people who work for a living. Your career in government is over, you fraud.

Politician: My career's over? What are you saying? Oh, no. Tell the congressional investigators I didn't know anything about it. I swear. I'm innocent. Trust me. Trust me. (Fo 304)

Act II ends with his reunion with Angela and his popularity as a politician-conjurer.

In the final act, it is disclosed that all these farcical events have been a dream except his marriage with Angela and the money. The play is a pungent satire of socio-economic and political conditions in Italy in the early sixties. The playwright has

employed a variety of techniques including circus clowning, parody, farce, and satire to discuss these issues. Commenting on the play Hirst says, “This play –a strange mixture of revue sketches, farce, Pirandellian theatrical games and political satire –is an important and attractive work from Fo’s early career” (174). He uncovers the corruption of the Italian authorities and the upper echelon of the society in a fast-growing capitalist society. The Characters in the play are representative of marginalised community relegated to an unimportant position by the exploitative forces of capitalism. It is a wonderful synthesis of comedy and satire opening our eyes to the injustices and oppression prevailed in the Italian society. He never makes us miss the tragic implications of his comedies dealing with serious socio-political issues. Grotesque and tragedy coincide in his plays for aesthetic and political purposes which show Fo’s versatility as a theatre artist. Tony Mitchell writes:

Fo uses the metaphor of the pinball machine –a novelty in Italy at the time, and both Fo and Rame were fanatical pinball players –to parody mechanisation and conspicuous consumption. But he rejects any deterministic, tragic notion of human actions being manipulated by a higher force (the archangels), and replaces it with a farcical situation in which the protagonist’s wit and ingenuity enable him to succeed in life. (67)

When Lanky comes to know that he has been dreaming and all the crazy events happened in a dream even his marriage with Angela who was more beautiful than the disguised Angela whom he is married in reality, he is heartbroken and starts cursing the archangels for playing with human beings like a pinball machine.

Lanky: I’m fed up with whomever’s in charge of manufacturing dreams. I want to know who’s got that job. Which one of you archangels is it? Gabriel? Michael? Raphael? Who is it? Speak up, you archangels. If it’s true what they told me when I was a child that the Lord put you in charge of dream-making, why did you have come and pick on me? Giving me two-timing dreams ... why? Now I’m going to start screaming such filthy curses that you’ll have to plug up your ears with corks. What the hell do you think I’m? A goddamn pinball machine that you can put your money in and bang around as long as you feel like it? (Fo 325)

But when Angela breaks her disguise by removing the wig she has worn and exposes her beauty to him he is petrified and thinks that he is dreaming again.

However, convinced of the fact he apologizes to archangels for falsely accusing them of playing with human emotions. Hirst states:

He rails against the archangels, saying they have rigged everything and that they play with human beings as with pinball machines, sending them all too readily into tilt. But his amusing travesty of Gloucester's 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport' is tempered by the fact that Angela removes her wig and glasses to reveal the beauty he fell in love with. Moreover, the money he had obtained in the dream is also real, so that the two of them can begin a life together. (173-74)

Oppression and liberation, humour and anger, tragedy and comedy coexist in Fo's play which distinguishes it from simply being a farce on the one hand and from a didactic political satire on the other hand. It is a tale of the protagonist's liberation from unjust social and political oppression and his struggle for survival. First, he escapes from the humiliation of his friend's crude jokes. Then from living as a dog caged in the city dog pound and finally from the circus illusionist who wants to make money by renting out his services as a performing dog. Fo does not involve in moralizing or philosophizing on the issues related to social justice rather treats them with laughter which has a subversive function in his theatre.

5.2 Accidental Death of An Anarchist

Very few plays have received such a wide acclamation as Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (1970). It is probably one of the most performed plays of Fo's repertoire and is a hard-hitting political satire on Italian politics of the late sixties documented as the most turbulent period in Italian political history because of a series of scandals and political disruptions which shook the entire country. Moreover, the rise of the Left Wing and the Right Wing terrorist groups had been a constant threat to the country's unity and democracy. The Italian politics of that time was dominated by two political parties; the Christian Democratic Party and the Italian Communist Party. And it is said that to curb the growing influence of the Italian Communist Party and to thwart the demand for a new government, the Christian Democratic Party then in power resorted to the 'strategy of tension' followed by a number of explosions for which the Left and the anarchists were wrongly accused. One such event of the series was bombing the Agricultural Bank in Milan which left at least sixteen dead and several

wounded. This horrific incident led to the infamous arrest of Giuseppe Pinelli and his mysterious death in police custody which triggered nationwide protest and raised serious political questions. This provides the context for this major satirical farce which has been a tour de force throughout Fo's theatrical career. It does not only recount the violence perpetrated at poor Pinelli by police authorities but to the violence committed against wider democracy. It interrogates into the inconsistencies in Pinelli's case with the intention to expose the real culprits who carried out this heinous crime which claimed many innocent lives. Mitchell states:

Fo's play was a response to what had become known as the 'strategy of tension' in Italy, in which the new Christian Democratic government, having deposed the centre-left coalition, tried to crack down on the left and dissipate its forces. Since 1969, according to statistics, there had been 173 bomb attacks in Italy, 102 of which had been proved to have been organized by fascists. More than half the remaining 71 appeared to have been organized by the Right with the intention of bringing suspicion and blame on the left. (101-102)

This farce of Fo is an exceptional blend of laughter and anger which gives subversive vigour to the play to incite people against the delinquencies of the police and the state. Fo's motive in this play is to provide counter-information into the Pinelli's case and to unmask the fascist structure of the government who instead of punishing the criminals encouraged them to create an environment of unrest just to maintain their power. In an interview with Anders Stephanson and Daniela Salvioni Fo comments on the political situation in the late sixties:

We immediately took a stand against the violent provocatory machine, and the right-wing terrorism supported by or acting in collusion with the fascist elements within the state. We all know about the Masonic Lodge P2, the connections between the police and the early terrorist acts. It was this that ignited the explosion of terrorism. (165)

By inventing the famous character of a maniac who is suffering from 'histrionomania', Fo conducts an inquiry into the controversial case of Pinelli. The maniac who has a special ability to impersonate different roles exposes the hypocrisy of police officers by showing contradictions into the explanations provided by them about Pinelli's death. As he says, "I have a thing about dreaming up characters and

then acting them out. It's called 'histrionomania'- comes from the Latin *histriones*, meaning 'actor'. I'm a sort of amateur performance artist" (Fo127).

The action unfolds in a central police headquarter wherein inspector Bertozzo accompanied by a fellow constable is investigating a maniac charged with impersonation. The character of maniac who goes unnamed throughout the play has its antecedents in the theatrical tradition of Italian past reminding us of the Lord of Misrule and the Harlequin of the *Commedia dell'Arte* who enjoy the momentary freedom of speaking against the authorities and provoking the audiences through their agitational and nonsensical performances. Fo's maniac shares much common ground with the Harlequin and the Lord of the Misrule. For, Fo madness is a method or you can say, an outlet to vent out his anger against the corrupt system. According to Farrell:

His madness, itself a common enough device in Fo's theatre, is madness with method, an outlet for the earthiness, guile and low cunning showed by the classic Harlequin. He is gifted with a wit, perspicacity, divine insouciance and fearlessness denied those of conventionally sound mind. He enjoys a fool's license to blurt out truths which the authorities would prefer to suppress, but in an upside-down world, where the worldly wise have made their peace with a society of unreason policed by violence, the madman is the only arbiter of decency and reason. (100)

Although his preferred genre for this play is farce, he avoids it from simply being a caricature intended to stimulate unsavoury humour. Rather combines laughter with anger which has an undercurrent of seriousness well directed against the abuse of power. As Farrell says, "But the laughter is not the nihilistic variety which suggests that all life is senseless and all systems equal, but an uncomfortable laughter followed by anger" (101). Here, the purpose of Fo is to facilitate information which is either held back by the authorities or manipulated in order to distract people from the real problem. He mocks the people in power by putting them into a ridiculous situation but he does not restrict himself only to the mockery of these people rather exploits humour as a device to uncover their unscrupulousness. As Maceri states, "Although Fo certainly pokes fun at the police officials, he does not present them merely as comic figures but rather as devious abusers of power" (13). The play is a scathing

satire of the Italian establishment including police, judiciary, and media which are used as a tool to perpetuate the status quo. In scene one of Act One, he offers a critical view of the judges in Italy for their unrestrained power and the freedom enjoyed by them.

No, unfortunately. Chance never arose. I'd love to, though: best job in the world! First of all, they hardly ever retire ... In fact, just at the point when your average working man, at the age of 55 or 60, is already ready for the scrapheap because he's slowing down a bit, losing his reflexes, your judge is just coming into his prime. A worker on the line's done for after the age of fifty –can't keep up, keeps having accidents, chuck him out! Your miner has silicosis by the time he's 45 –get rid of him, quick, sack him before he sues for compensation! Same goes for the bank clerk, after a certain age he starts getting his some wrong, starts forgetting the names of the bank's clients, can't tell a discount rate from a mortgage rate. Off home, you ... move along, son... You're past it! For a judge it's quite the opposite: the more ancient and idio (correcting himself) ...syncretic they are, the higher they get promoted, the classier the jobs they get! You see them up there, little old men like cardboard cut-outs, silly wigs on their heads, all capes and ermine with two pairs of glasses on cords round their necks because otherwise they'd lose them. And these characters have the power to wreck a person's life or save it, as and how they want: they hand out life sentences like somebody saying: 'Maybe it'll rain tomorrow'. Fifty years for you. Thirty for you. Only twenty for you, because I like your face! They make the law and they can do what they like. And they're holy too. Don't forget, in Italy you can still be done for slander if you say nasty things about judges. (Fo 131-32)

The maniac is not a stupid person. His madness is just a false pretence, a mechanism that enables him to play multiple roles and to broaden the range of his target. He has managed to impersonate a bishop, a surgeon, a captain, a marine engineer and a psychiatrist. As the inspector points out:

So this is not the first time you have passed yourself off as someone else! Here it says that you have been caught twice posing as a surgeon, once as a captain in the bersaglieri, three times as a bishop, once as a marine engineer, in all you

have been arrested... let's see... eleven times in all. So this makes the twelfth.
(Fo 126)

He targets everything that is part of the repressive power structure. His drive is to spread political awareness among the masses through his jeering at serious issues that would not end in laughter but will allow its underlying tragedy to stay longer in the mind of the spectators. He puts the police officials into an uncomfortable position through his persistent derision of them. Inspector Bertozzo's remark clearly reflects their frustration. Addressing the maniac he says, "Will you stop pissballing about! I think we can all agree that you've got performance mania, but I'd say you're just pretending to be mental. I'd lay money you're as sane as me!" (Fo 130).

In order to get rid of the maniac, he clears him out of the room and himself leaves the place to attend upon somebody. The maniac who has forgotten his papers sneaks back to collect them and finding no one in the room he goes through the heap of files dumped there. Suddenly he stops at one of the files titled 'Judge's Report on the Death of the...' 'Judge's Decision to Adjourn the Inquest of...' The file refers to the case of an anarchist. His search is interrupted by a phone call which is answered by him. Through their conversation, it is revealed that it is the inspector from the fourth floor who wants to talk to Bertozzo about the anarchist's case. He discloses to maniac that very soon a High Court judge will be visiting them to reopen the case of the anarchist's alleged suicide therefore, he needs a copy of the judge's reasons and the copies of their statements to put off the inquisition. He also says that they will be in great trouble if he arrives. This statement of the inspector implies of their possible involvement in the anarchist's death. Observing his nervousness maniac provokes him, "I'd be very happy to see your boss the superintendent up to his neck in shit. Yes, I meant it sincerely, and you can tell him I said so" (Fo 135).

The conversation between the two is replenished with humour simultaneously evocating a feeling of distressed over the tragic death of the anarchist. Provoking the inspector maniac says that he will be transferred to some far off place once he is exposed by the judge. He also succeeds in creating an argument between him and inspector Bertozzo by passing on offensive gestures and derisive remarks purportedly from Bertozzo. Availing himself of the situation he starts rehearsing the gestures and postures of a judge that would assist him to act out as the anticipated judge. He

burgles all the necessary documents related to the case. As he prepares to leave Bertozzo shows himself up and for a moment is deceived by maniac's new appearance but when comes to know of his true identity he throws him out. He is so nervous to get rid of him that he overlooks his warning to be careful of a lunatic who is looking for to smash him for his insolent behaviour. The scene closes with him being punched in the face by the enraged inspector from the fourth floor who has just turned up.

As the play progresses its satirical tone gets more intense pouring scorn at the Italian authorities and their complicity in the organized crime which turns it into a politically charged play. The next scene shifts to an office on the fourth floor of the police station where the interrogation with anarchist had taken place. With maniac already taken up his stance as the judge who has come all the way from Rome to re-open the inquiry into the anarchist's death. The opening dialogues have determinants of a farce arising from the mistaken identity that can be seen in the early confrontations between the maniac and the police officials.

Sports Jacket: (Murmuring to the Constable standing at the door) what does he want? Who is he?

Constable: I don't know, Sir. He came sweeping in here like he was God Almighty. He says that he wants to talk with you and the Superintendent.

Sports Jacket: (He is continuously rubbing his right hand) wants to talk, does he? (He goes over to the Maniac) Good morning, I gather you want to see me.

Maniac: (He looks him up and down, coolly, and barely moves his hand to raise his hat) Good morning. (He watches continuously as the Inspector in the Sports Jacket continues massaging his hand) What have you done with your hand?

Sports Jacket: Er, nothing... Who are you?

Maniac: Nothing, eh? So why do you keep rubbing it? An affectation, is it? Or is it a nervous tic?

Sports Jacket: (Getting annoyed) could be... I said, with whom do I have the pleasure...?

Maniac: I knew a bishop once who used to rub his hand like that. A Jesuit.

Sports Jacket: Are you suggesting?

Maniac: (Ignoring his reply) you should see a psychiatrist. When people keep rubbing their hands like that it's a sure sign of insecurity, guilt complex and a lousy sex life. Do you have problems with women, perhaps?

Sports Jacket: (losing his temper) right! That'll do! (Fo 140)

The maniac irks them by his provocations. The inspector in the sports jacket becomes even more nervous when he learns that the person whom he is talking to is "Professor Maria Malipiero, first counsel to the High Court" (Fo 141). His misery does not end here. He is asked by the maniac to issue a peremptory notice to the superintendent who is his superior in rank. The scene is bound to be hilarious one. The superintendent bumps into the inspector's office all indignant at given orders by a junior officer.

Superintendent: What exactly did you mean by that, Inspector, to come to your office if I can, and even if I can't?

Sports Jacket: I'm sorry, Super... It's just that since...

Superintendent: Just that since be damned! You're getting too damn big for your boots, d'you know that? What's more, I'm not amused by your insolent style of behaviour... Especially when it comes to punching your colleagues in the face! (Fo 143)

But the moment he comes to know that he is in the presence of a senior judge he becomes more humble and reverential. Trying to recover from the shock:

Superintendent: Your Honour... I really don't know.

Sports Jacket: (Coming to his help) His Honour the Judge is here to re-open the inquiry into the case of the...

Superintendent: (In an unexpected reaction) Oh of course, of course, we were expecting you! (Fo 145)

From the very beginning, the maniac seems to be in full command of the situation and disconcerts the police officers through his unremitting sarcasm. The lighter moments in the play poise the tragic tone. After this brief comic venture, the attention is diverted to the heart of the matter that is to conduct an inquiry into the

anarchist's case. The maniac starts the investigation by picking the word 'raptus' used by police officials to explain the anarchist's alleged suicide.

We'll stick with the 'right at the start' for the moment. One step at a time. So, at about midnight, the anarchist was 'seized by a raptus' –these are still your words –he was seized by a 'raptus' and went and threw himself to his death from the window. Now, what is a 'raptus'? Bandieu says that a 'raptus' is a heightened form of suicidal anxiety which can seize even people who are psychologically perfectly normal, if something provokes them to extreme of angst, in other words, to utter desperation. (Fo 145-46)

And to ascertain the cause of this anxiety he asks them to reconstruct their inquisition of the anarchist starting with the threatening entrance of the superintendent. "So we need to find out who or what it was provoked this anxiety, this desperation. I suspect that the best way would be if we do a reconstruction. Superintendent, the stage is yours" (Fo 146). In their reconstruction of the event, they admit that they had lied about the evidence which they did not have in order to frame the anarchist in the bombing. They threatened him to lose his job, they fabricated that his partner in crime had confessed and that his alibi had collapsed. By re-enacting their interrogation of the anarchist Fo affirms the wrongdoing of the police officials by showing glaring inconsistencies in their accounts which they provided in justification for their action. Fo holds them responsible for inducing the 'raptus' which resulted in the alleged suicide of the anarchist. As he says:

We all make mistakes. But if I might say so, you went right over the top: first you arrest an innocent citizen more or less at random, then you abuse your powers by detaining him beyond the legal limit, and then you go and traumatise the poor man by telling him that you have proof that he's been going round planting bombs on railways; then you more or less deliberately terrorise him that he's going to lose his job; then you tell him that his card-playing alibi has collapsed; and then comes the *coup de grace* –you tell him that his friend and comrade in Rome has confessed to the bombings in Milan. In other words, his best friend is a mass murderer. Thereupon he becomes terminally depressed, observes that 'this is the death of anarchism', and throws himself out of the window! I mean, are we crazy or what? If you ask me, when

you give a person the run-around like this it's no wonder he gets seized by a 'raptus'. No, I'm sorry, in my opinion you are all extremely guilty! I regard you as totally responsible for the anarchist's death –you should be charged at once with having driven him to suicide! (Fo 150-51)

He makes them realize that they have been used as a scapegoat by the politicians who exploited them for their own political gain and then left them to public disgrace. He recounts an old English proverb that appropriately defines their condition, "The Lord of the Manor set his mastiffs on the peasants. The peasants complained to the king, so the Lord of the Manor went and killed his dogs, to make amends" (Fo 152). Finding no other way they turn to the maniac-judge seeking for his advice who suggests them to throw themselves out of the window as there is no hope left for them in this bastard world except scorn and humiliation. He forces them to the window to jump out of it as the anarchist did. When they object he justifies that it is not him who is pushing them rather they are seized by a 'raptus', the same explanation provided by them in the anarchist's case. He is interrupted by the sudden appearance of the constable who had left the place at the start of the investigation. There is some sigh of relief for the distraught police officers as they are told by the maniac-judge to cheer up because everything he told was a lie. He says, "Not a word of what I said was true! I made it all up" (Fo 155). He further states that he wanted to make them realize that their approach or tactic of interrogation was inhumane. As he explains, "It was just one of the 'tricks of the trade' which we visiting judges also like to use every once in a while, in order to demonstrate to the police that such methods are uncivilized, not to mention criminal" (Fo 156). He asks them to give a more plausible account of the anarchist' suicidal jump and his subsequent death if they want to get out of this mess. They now come up with a changed version which indicates the gap of four hours between the start of the investigation and the accidental fall of the anarchist trying to justify that 'raptus' might not be induced by their producing fabricated evidence against him. As per the Superintendent's report, "Yes, well, you see, we stated that our session with the anarchist, when we tried to trick him, didn't happen at midnight, it happened at about eight in the evening" (Fo 157). He further adds, "There was a 'raptus', but we just wanted to show that it couldn't have been caused by our feeding him false information... precisely because there was a gap of four hours between then and the time of his suicide" (Fo 158). Act

one closes with a recap of the details established so far in the anarchist's case raising questions over the certain involvement of the police in the alleged crime. They are blamed to harass him by lying about the evidence which eventually led to his death. As uttered by Maniac:

You say one thing, then you contradict it. First you give one version, then half an hour later, you give a completely different one. You can't agree among yourselves. You tell the world's press, and, if I am not mistaken, the TV news as well that 'naturally' there are no written minutes of your interrogation of the anarchist, because there wasn't time, and then all of a sudden, a miracle, we find that we have two or three –and all signed by his very own hand. (Fo 163)

The act ends with maniac and policemen singing the anarchist's favourite song as it is the only option they can expiate themselves for the wrongdoings they have done.

People would be happy to forgive all your cretinous blunders if they could only see two decent human beings behind it all –two policemen who, just for once, allowed their hearts to rule their heads, and agreed to sing the anarchist's favourite song with him just to make him happy 'Nostra patria e il mondo intiero'. It would bring tears to their eyes. They would sing your praises, shout your names from the rooftops, hearing a story like that! So please, for your own sakes sing. (Fo 164)

Act two commences from where the Act one finished with chorus still singing the song that ends with the coming up of the lights. The Act retains the previous mode of inquisition. The maniac ridicules the police officers for the account that they were investigating the anarchist jocularly extracting the maximum comic possibility of the situation as he talks about the depressives who come to the police station for a good laugh. As he says:

You have no idea how many completely innocent parties move heaven and earth just to get themselves arrested and brought to this station! You think they're anarchists, communists, autonomists, trade unionists. No, the truth is, they're all just poor, sick manic depressives, hypochondriacs, gloomy people, who disguise themselves as revolutionaries just so's they can be interrogated

by you and at last have a damn good laugh! Get a bit of enjoyment, for once in their lives. (Fo 168)

The unrelenting mockery of the police officers does not only upset them but they also get suspicious of the maniac. According to the Superintendent, “I would say that you’re not just making fun of us, your Honour, you’re taking the piss” (Fo 168). Gradually the conversation gets serious bringing in new perspectives in the investigation which prove discrepancies in police reports. For instance, the maniac questions why the window of the police station was open on such a coldest night of the winter despite the warning of the weather forecast.

It was going to be cold enough to freeze the knackers off a polar bear, and you weren’t cold. In fact it was positively spring-like! What do you have here –your own personal Gulf Stream running through the drains under police headquarters? (Fo 170)

He also questions the credibility of their statements that how a supposedly calm anarchist as stated by the police suddenly throws himself out of the window and the constable’s claim that he tried to save him by gripping his foot but only managed to get hold of his shoe which came off in his hand and could not prevent him from falling. But the original report says that he had both shoes on his feet when came down which was observed by a journalist from *L’Unita* who was present at the site of the accident and several other passers-by. The interrogation is interrupted by the arrival of a journalist who has come to conduct an interview with the Superintendent. Her entrance is marked by a vital shift in the political vein of the play which reaches its crescendo in this final act. To conceal his identity from the journalist he disguises himself as the Captain Marcantonio Banzi Piccinni from the forensic department and volunteers to help the police officials when needed.

I could just be someone else. It’d be child’s play for me, believe me. Criminal Psychopathologist... Head of Interpol... Head of forensic... Take your pick... Any time the journalist gets you in tight corner with a particularly nasty question, you just give me a wink and I’ll join in... The important thing is to keep you two in the clear. (Fo 174)

The maniac’s reaction to the journalist’s intrusive investigation baffles the officers as they cannot understand whether he is helping them out or aggravating their

problem. She starts questioning the Inspector in Sports Jacket that why people call him ‘The Window-Straddler?’ She produces a copy of a letter from an anarchist in which he has made shocking revelations about the inspector. He writes as she reads from the letter:

The inspector on the fourth floor forced me to sit on the window-sill with my legs hanging over the edge, and then he started provoking me: “Go on, throw yourself out,” and insulting me... “Why don’t you jump? Too scared, eh? Go on, get it over with! What are you waiting for?” I had to grit my teeth and hold on tight, because I really was on the pointing of jumping. (Fo 177)

The maniac obstructs the journalist’s argument and sides with the Inspector. “What do you take us for –a TV ad for washing powder? You’re trying to suggest that we do the window test with every anarchist we get our hands on?” (Fo 178). To establish the truth whether the anarchist was alive or dead at the time of jump she inquires about the trajectory of his fall. In her own words:

It would enable us to tell whether the anarchist was alive or dead at the moment that he came out of the window. In other words, whether he came out with a bit of impetus, or whether he just slithered down the wall, as appears to have been the case... Also whether there were any broken bones in his arms and hands which there were not –which suggests that the alleged suicide did not put his hands out in order to protect himself at the moment of impact –a gesture that, if he had been conscious, would have been normal and absolutely instinctive. (Fo 178)

The above-mentioned statement proves that the anarchist was already dead when he came out of the window. This time the maniac sides with the journalist pissing off the officers. The journalist raises another significant question about the timing of the ambulance which was called five minutes earlier the anarchist fell down and there have been witnesses who were there when the accident happened. Now the maniac comes to the rescue of the police officers by providing a rhetorical explanation of the journalist’s query, “What’s so strange? We’re not in Switzerland, you know. In Italy, people set their watches as and how they feel like... fast, slow... this is a nation of artists and rebels, Miss Feletti! Individualists who set their own

terms with history” (Fo 180). The journalist retaliates to the maniac’s rhetoric and her tone is mocking:

We were talking about how we’re a nation of artists and rebels... and I must say, I have to agree with you: some of our judges seem to be particularly rebellious: strange how they can write off perfectly satisfactory alibi witnesses... not to mention losing vital evidence like cassette tapes and forensic reports on trajectories, and neglecting to ask themselves how come ambulances turn up five minutes before time... All mere trifles, of course! And what about the bruises on the back of the dead man’s neck, for which there has not as yet been any satisfactory explanation. (Fo 180)

The maniac supports the journalist’s claim and brings up entirely a new angle in the case. He points out that the anarchist was beaten up in police custody which left him paralysed. And in order to get him back to normal, they made him lean out of the window for fresh air. Because of a slight confusion between the officers who thought that the other one is holding him they lost grip on him causing his fall. While the ongoing discussion carries a sense of gravity the comic tone is maintained by maniac’s stupidity and gags. The political tempo is stepped up as the journalist comes up with new facts, for instance, the declination of the alibi of the old age pensioners. She states:

I’m surprised you’re not up to date on this! In his summing up, the judge who closed the inquest said that the three alibi witnesses offered by our anarchist friend were inadmissible. Those were the ones who said they had spent the tragic afternoon of the bombing playing cards with him, in a bar along the canal. (Fo 182-83)

The old age, sickness, and disability of the workers were stated as the reason for the unreliability of their testimony. The journalist quotes the judge, “The people we are dealing with here are old, sick, and in at least one case disabled” (Fo 183). At this point, the playwright slightly digresses from the main issue as the maniac delivers a lecture on the general condition of the workers in Italy blaming the society and the capitalist system for their pitiable condition. Contending the journalist’s opinion that they themselves are responsible for their own plight he ironically says:

Its society's fault! But we're not here to sit in judgment on the world capitalist system, we're here to discuss whether witnesses are reliable or not. If a worker's a wreck because he's been over-exploited or because he's had an accident in the factory, that should not concern us; our concern is with justice and law and order. If you don't have the money to yourself vitamins, proteins, wheat germ, Royal jelly and calcium phosphate for your memory... well so much the worse for you, I, in my capacity as judge, must tell you no... I'm sorry, but you're out of the game, you're a second-class citizen. (Fo 184)

Responding to the journalist's comment, "That when we got down basics we'd get back to class prejudice and class privilege" he says, "Our society is divided into classes, and so are witnesses –there are first-class witnesses, and second-, and third-, and fourth-class" (Fo 184). Inspector Bertozzo sudden arrival prompts a decisive change in the temperament of the play. The following events are the superb example of a farce arising from the maniac's mask. While Bertozzo identifies the maniac his colleagues afraid of the fact that he will expose his true identity to the journalist try to stop him with kicks and blows which is unexpected for him as he cannot make out why they are whipping him. Bertozzo is holding a bomb duplicate of the one that exploded in the bank. The journalist questions why one of the bombs recovered from the Bank of Commerce was blown up instead of submitting it to the Forensic department to get examined. "Could you explain to me why, instead of defusing it and sending it to Forensic –which would be normal practice, so that it could be thoroughly examined –when they found it they took it straight out into the yard and blew it up" (Fo 187). She is also inquisitive about the fascist and right-wing infiltrators working secretly among the Left and the anarchist groups to watch over them as stated by the Superintendent and the Inspector in Sports Jacket, "Our agents and informants are our strength. They help us to keep an eye on things and keep one jump ahead" (Fo 191). The maniac interrupts and surprises everybody with his comment, "And to plant bombs so as to have a good pretext for a police-state crackdown" (Fo 191). The journalist hits back at them asking them why the information furnished by these informants was not acted on immediately. "Since you had every member of that pathetic little band of anarchists under close surveillance, how was it that they managed to organize such a sophisticated operation without you intervening to stop them" (Fo 191-92). She hints at complicity between police and the fascist groups in

the explosion, carried out with the intentions to create an atmosphere of unrest and to put the blame on the Left. She reads from a report:

Out of a total of 173 bomb attacks that have happened in the past year and a bit, at a rate of twelve a month, one every three days –out of 173 attacks, as I was saying (She reads from a report) at least 102 have been proved to have been organized by fascist organizations, aided or abetted by the police, with the explicit intention of putting the blame on Left-wing political groups. (Fo 193)

The maniac intervenes suggesting a very significant thread that could have led to the crux of the matter but was intentionally overlooked by the police as they themselves are part of the corrupt system. Addressing to the journalist he says:

Are saying that if the police, instead of wasting their time with a raggie-taggle bunch of anarchists, had concentrated on more serious possibilities –for example, paramilitary and fascist organisations funded by big industrialists and run and supported by leading figures in the armed forces –then maybe we'd have got to the bottom to the bottom of all this? (Fo 193)

He stuns everybody disclosing the reason behind this violence.

It wouldn't be very hard to discover that the main intention behind the massacre of innocent people in the bank bombing had been to bury the trade-union struggles of the Hot Autumn and to create a climate of tension so that the average citizen would be so disgusted and angry at the level of political violence and subversion that they would start calling for the intervention of a strong state. (Fo 195)

He goes a step ahead speaking on the significance of scandal in democracy stating that such kinds of scandal are deliberately created to perpetuate the authority of the governing state as he says, "Let the scandals come, because on the basis of that scandal a more durable power of the state will be founded" (Fo 200). He also explains how media becomes the part of the process by unreasonably associating certain individuals or social groups to such unlawful activities instead of blaming the system for its inability to cope with those issues thus neutralising the people's anger against the establishment and diverting their attention from the truth. It is used as a cover-up

of the corruptions of the state. He labels media persons as, “The privileged high priests of the process” (Fo 201). Mocking the Journalist’s notion of justice he says:

Are the people calling for true justice? Instead of that we’ll give them a justice that is just a bit less unjust. And if the workers start shouting ‘Enough of this brutal exploitation’, and start complaining that they are tired of dying in the factories, then we give them a little more protection on the job and step up the compensation amount rates for their widows! They want revolution and we give them reforms... reforms by bucketful. We’ll drown them with reforms or rather we’ll drown them with promises of reforms, because we’re never going to give them reforms either! (Fo 195-96)

The maniac stokes anxiety in the police officials by laying bare various scandals in the Italian politics as they are afraid to be exposed. Driven by anger Bertozzo pulls out the maniac’s fake wooden leg attached to his knee. Sensing the danger that he will unveil to the journalist the maniac’s real identity who in turn will create a scandal out of this they block his mouth with a rubber stamp. Again, Fo derives maximum humour from the comic situation. To calm down Bertozzo the maniac injects him a tranquiliser saying that, “It’s a Benedictine tranquiliser” (Fo 199). After then, he injects the Superintendent without his permission who gives a muffled whimper. Finally, Bertozzo handcuffs them all and forces the maniac to reveal his identity. The maniac takes out a dozen of papers from his bag and hands over to Bertozzo who distributes to each of them. As they are absorbed in reading the documents produced by maniac he pulls out the bomb from Bertozzo’s bag and threatens to explode it. He announces that he has recorded everything in the tape-recorder which he got in his bag. He further says that he will make hundreds of copies out of it and will send it to all the newspapers in order to create a huge scandal making Italy parallel to other democratic counties like America. He utters:

The important thing is to have a good scandal! So that the Italian nation can march alongside the Americans and the English, and become a modern and social-democratic society, so that finally we can say: ‘It’s true –we’re in the shit right up to our necks, and that’s precisely the reason why we walk with our heads held high!’ (Fo 206)

The play engages in one of the most volatile political situations in Italy with a purpose to provide counter-information and to uncover the criminal behaviour of the police and the state. Using the subversive technique of farce which has an undercurrent of seriousness Fo turns every logic and every reason provided by the police on their heads. By inventing the famous character of Maniac he unmasks the hoax of the political class. Pretending as the judge maniac forces the police officials to reconstruct the events of the anarchist's inquest to show contradictions in the details provided by them. He compels them to accept the responsibility of unlawful prosecution of the poor anarchist. But, the play provides much deeper reflections on contemporary politics and democracy than merely furnishing information in the anarchist's case.

Gramsci exerts enormous influence in shaping up Fo's political ideology communicated through his theatre. His ideas on hegemony, culture, education, and intellectuals are the chief motivational drive of Fo's vigorous involvement with the existing socio-political scenario. The major thrust of his alternative theatre is the empowerment of the weaker section of the society through educating them on contemporary issues so that they could resist their institutionalized exploitation by the upper strata of the society and be on equal terms with their counterparts.

Although based on the specific event, the play has deeper implications. It tells us how the powerful take recourse to 'Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses' to maintain their hegemony over the underprivileged. Fo explains that how the media is used by the ruling authority to manipulate people's opinion. It works as a propaganda machine of the state. Not only this, the police and the court too work in collaboration with the ruling government. The play is a good research in power politics and provides valuable insights into the contemporary political crisis endangering the collapse of Italian society. It expresses strong resistance against the fascist structure of the state which is a serious threat to its stability and sustainability. He strongly condemns the horrendous violence perpetrated by the state authorities on harmless and poor citizens to benefit from it. Though, he uses farce as a medium to express his anger against the corrupt and manipulative system the overall tragic tone of the play cannot be disregarded. Laughter coincides with anger aimed at the abuse of power and irregularities in the administration of justice by the Italian authorities. "His obligation is to temper his capacity for arousing indignation, hilarity or rage by a

willed decision to direct these emotions towards a cause which is worthwhile” (Farrell 278). Following the line of Moliere, he intends laughter to scratch people’s consciousness and to decolonize their mind from bourgeois conformity.

There is a Fo-land, as much as there is a Greene-land, situated somewhere between the wasteland and Wonderland, and the sounds most frequently heard are the rage of indignant denunciation and the cackle of laughter. The Lord of Misrule is on the throne, and comedy is his servant, but the laughter is not necessarily the laughter of blasphemous derision. Laughter can be a response to elements normally identified as tragic. Dario was fond of quoting Moliere to the effect that tragedy was emotionally comforting but laughter defiant. Nothing characterizes his own thinking on theatre more than this quest for a synthesis of laughter and tragedy. Laughter is the identifying mark of humanity. In laughter, the human being becomes fully conscious of his own potential, of his individuality and his ability to assert his autonomy from convention and rule. (Farrell 257)

He uses laughter as a device to unmask the hypocritical government. The maniac does not just entertain audiences from his stupidity but also introduces them to urgent social and political problems that needed to be addressed with immediate effect. He is the very epitome of reason and logic. Like the *Giullare* he satirizes the unscrupulous and exploitative system which does not mind massacring the innocent people to uphold its sovereignty. He is anti-establishment and his madness is mere a façade which gives him enough space to move from one character to another and to extend the compass of his satire. His provocative techniques unnerve the police officers who confess to have been conspiring with the government in carrying out the strategy of tension. The play has been crucial in provoking people to fight against the political corruption. It is considered one of the best protest plays of the century.

5.3 *We Won’t Pay! We Won’t Pay!*

One of the recurring themes in Dario Fo’s comedies is the theme of liberation from all kind of repressions i.e., socio-economic, political, moral and religious. The following play *We Won’t Pay! We Won’t Pay!* first performed in 1974, aptly represents the characters’ struggle to liberate themselves from their financial as well as social, political and religious restrictions. The metaphor of hunger used in the play does not

only imply their hunger for food but also for justice and dignity. As Antonia declares, “People are hungry. They’re not just hungry for food. They’re hungry for dignity. They’re hungry for justice, for a chance” (Fo 65). The general atmosphere in Italy in those years was the political crisis caused by the grave economic recession. The inflationary policies introduced by the government created much hue and cry among the citizens and triggered the famous *autoriduzione* (self-reduction) movement, a mass movement of civil disobedience sprang up in Italy in the seventies. It was a form of resistance through which people refused to pay the high prices of goods, rents, electricity bills and transports or offered to pay the only amount they considered reasonable. Observing the situation Farrell states:

Anger at inflation produced a genuinely spontaneous rebellion. Men, and more specially, women took matters into their hands by embarking on a course of action to which political activists, who had not initiated it and could not control it, gave the dignified name of ‘proletarian expropriation’, or ‘self-reduction’. Badly stated, people refused to pay increased fares for public transport, higher bills for gas or electricity, higher tariffs in factory canteens and, above all, rising prices for goods in supermarkets. Some customers continued to pay the old price, others offered only what they themselves deemed a fair price, while in other cases groups of women simply took what they wanted from supermarket shelves and refused to pay at all. It was, in its own way, a challenge to the system and to the economic status quo, but it was a campaign which dismayed all sides of the political spectrum. (145)

This slump down in economy badly affected the lives of the masses as they struggled to make their ends meet because of inflation and unemployment generated by this crisis. The firms laid off the workers temporarily on the pretext of the recession that did not only lower down the living standards of the working classes but also reduced production. This ill-thought-out policy made the matter worse. Fo’s play is a by-product of the socio-economic condition. The play is a social protest against the lack of proper civic amenities for the working classes. It is a brilliant combination of farce and satire dealing with civil disobedience of the underprivileged who forced by starvation are ready to defy the law in order to feed themselves. It entails their everyday social realities and their struggle for survival in the classic example of farce where the natural laws of human reproduction are flouted; men becoming pregnant,

women giving birth to cabbages and amniotic exudate is consumed with meal. Although, these absurd events are the chief source of humour in the play they also contribute to the satiric purposes of the playwright. Based on the *autoriduzione* movement of two housewives; Antonia and Margherita who largely drive the action of the play, the dramatist has discussed a range of substantial issues. Besides, the appropriation of rising prices the play scoffs at the reformist approach adopted by CPI, signified through the character of Giovanni who is an incarnation of the Party's policies. Whereas his wife Antonia harbours revolutionary ideals and is a critic of her husband's hypocritical Leftism. Dissenting her husband's moderatism she pronounces:

I'm sick of this lousy life! And I'm fed up with your sermonizing about law and order, and how you follow the rules, rules, rules with such pride. Bullshit! You swallow your pride every day. And then when other people try to find a little dignity by breaking free of the rules you call them looters, bums, terrorists. Terrorism is being held hostage by a minimum-wage job. But you don't want to know how things really are. (Fo 63)

The prime concern of Fo has been the political indoctrination of the masses realised through engaging them in much required political and ideological debate on contemporary problems. Like his other plays, *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* is an attempt at mobilising the masses to challenge the systematic discrimination that has forced them to live a second-rate life stripped off honour and dignity. The play opens in Antonia's home which is described as, "A modest working-class home" (Fo 9). She along with her friend Margherita enters the house who is helping her to carry many shopping bags overloaded with food products. Margherita is desperate to know how Antonia managed to buy all those stuff as she is aware of their poor financial condition. After a few unsuccessful attempts to convince her friend, Antonia finally reveals the truth. She tells Margherita about a group of rebellious women who barged into a store stealing away what they needed and paying only what they thought considerable in revolt against the inflated prices. "We had enough! This time, we're setting the prices. We'll pay what we paid last month. And if you don't like it, we won't pay nothing" (Fo 10).

Subsequent actions, those are the women's frantic efforts to hide the stolen merchandises from their indoctrinated husbands and the cops create dramatic tensions

as well as induce laughter. The two women make major contributions in the development of the plot than their principled and righteous husbands especially Giovanni who is a fanatical advocate of moderatism and austerism preached by CPI. Antonia describes him:

He's a law-and-order freak. Who knows what kind of tantrum he'll throw! "How could you do such a thing?" he'll say. "My father built a good life for his children by following the rules. I follow the rules. We're poor, but we're honest!" he does not know that I've spent everything, that there's nothing left to pay the gas, the electric or the rent. I don't even know how many months behind we are. (Fo 12)

To avoid her husband's moralizing she hides some stuff under the bed and donates some to Margherita who covers it under her coat. As she is about to leave Giovanni enters the house and gets surprised to see her swollen belly. In order to convince her husband about Margherita's false pregnancy, Antonia comes up with so many explanations including her reference to Pope's strict instruction against using pills which she says is, "Declared to be a mortal sin" (Fo 15). Allusion to Pope is a deliberate attempt by Fo to attack religious institutions for their unnecessary interference in people's lives. Fo's target has never been the religion rather the authority enjoyed by the Popes and the Clergies who used religion as a tool for exploiting the people. She somehow manages to persuade Giovanni who updates her about factory workers' revolt against the bad food quality served to them. He further informs her about a similar incident at the neighbouring supermarket where a group of women was involved in the auto-reduction movement. He reproaches the husbands of these women for the unlawful activities of their wives declaring that "If my wife ever did anything like that I'd make her eat every tin can she stole" (Fo 16). He goes on to the extent of saying that he would murder her first and divorce her later. This reflects the patriarchal mindset of the suspicious Giovanni and of the society in general who always have exploited women and used them as commodities. Fo articulates that patriarchal oppression should be critiqued and dissented because this odious practice denied the significant contributions they could have had made to the society at large.

As the play progresses we are informed of their living condition from Antonia serving pet food to Giovanni. They cannot even go outside because they are left with

no money. This shows the impoverished state they are reduced by exploitative capitalism. She decides to go to her friend Margherita to borrow some foodstuffs in order to feed her husband. Meanwhile, some shouts are heard on the street and it is revealed that a door to door search is being conducted by the police to recover the stolen goods from the supermarket. They too are attended by a police sergeant who wants to conduct a search in their house in an attempt to recapture the looted stuff. He, who is a tool of state oppression becomes the mouthpiece of Fo promoting revolutionary Communism in contrast to Giovanni's Leftist dogmatism. Fo's idea behind projecting this analogy is to re-examine the role of Left in shaping the space for the segregated workers in the public and political sphere. He blamed the moderatism policy of CPI for growing invisibility and alienation of the workers and therefore, bolsters the revolutionary Communism of Mao and Gramsci as a solution to their socio-political ostracism. This idea of Fo is put forth in the succeeding argument between Sergeant and Giovanni.

Giovanni: We need police, don't we? Without them, we'd have chaos... someone has to lay down the law!

Sergeant: And what if the law is wrong? What if it's just a cover-up for robbery?

Giovanni: well, uh, then there is the political parties... the democratic system... laws can be reformed.

Sergeant: But who's going to do the reforming? Where are the reforms? What is reform! Lies, that's what reforms are! They've been promising us reforms for umpteen years, but has that gotten us better health care, or less homeless people on the streets. Believe me, the only real reform will come when people start thinking for themselves and reforming things on their own. (Fo 22)

Justifying women's actions in the store sergeant mocks reformist outlook of Giovanni and propels radical communism for marginalised assertion, the type Fo tunders, because he thinks that nothing is going to change through reform, the change is possible only through action. Fo's mission of practicing theatre was to inform, to instruct, to provoke and to change. His sympathies lie with the people without power and he fights tooth and nail to defend their privileges never giving a second thought to his rivalry with the establishment. The problems of the oppressed are the heartfelt

concern of Fo. The foremost objective of Fovian theatre is to abolish the ruling class hegemony and to produce a counter-hegemonic discourse of the oppressed that will take them out of rigorous conditions.

After coming to know about police raid Antonia hurries back to her home to inquire Giovanni if the cops who are conducting a house to house search to confiscate the stolen goods from the supermarket have recovered anything from their house. Her incisive questioning surprises Giovanni but she cleverly handles the situation and diverts his attention to Margherita standing at the door. She then lectures about women exploitation and their position in a society ridden with patriarchal prejudice. The following utterance of Antonia reverberates with feminism.

Antonia: We run the errands, we make the babies. You just give us the pay-checks and then it's, "Pay the bills!" You make us pregnant and then, "Take care of it yourself! Take the pills." And who cares if the poor wife, who's a strict Catholic, dreams all night of the pope saying, "It's a sin you must procreate! (Fo 24)

Fo's commitment to empowering the oppressed embraces women's problems as well. Antonia's statement verifies that he is not merely concerned with the workers and their welfare. It is true that the worker's problems occupy larger space in his theatre but the issues related to women, poverty, drugs, sex, power, politics, religion, culture and history have also been explored in his plays. The argument between Antonia and Giovanni is interrupted by a knock at the door. It is a state trooper who has come for a second round search. To avoid search Antonia asks Margherita to feign to be in labour pain. To show off his concern for the public the state trooper extends help to Margherita by taking her to hospital. The incongruous and unusual occurrences produce much humour in the play. But Fo never misses a chance of ridiculing the authorities. He objects the foray into the houses of the poor workers as an attack on their autonomy. He scourges the government and its agents for violating the workers' right to personal freedom. He deprecates the authorities for their hypocritical behaviour. For instance, their maintaining silence over the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists. But whenever their interests are at risk the government starts harassing them by placing them into humiliating situations. Fo targets the government for vesting so much power and authority to the capitalist bosses to exploit

the workers. This is conveyed through Antonia's remark. While talking to the state trooper she says:

Sure, your job is to make sure we comply with orders. Why don't you ever check to make sure that management is honouring our contracts, that the air in our workplaces is breathable, that they are not downsizing our jobs so that they can exploit child workers in third world countries, that they are not evicting us from our homes, and starving us to death! (Fo 27)

After the departure of Antonia, Margherita and the trooper Luigi comes in looking for his wife. He is told by Giovanni that his wife is pregnant and has been taken to hospital for premature delivery. This disclosure is a shock for Luigi because his wife never told him about her pregnancy. Furthermore, she is suffering from a malfunction and could not conceive babies. This is part of the development of the story but Fo never deviates from the main problem he wants to highlight in his play. Upon being asked the reason of coming home so early Luigi tells Giovanni that the work has stopped as they were protesting against the increased prices of their travel passes. Not only this, they demanded free commuter passes because he says, "The Company should pay for our commute. And they should also pay us for the time we're on the train. Because we lose those hours, and believe you me, it ain't no vacation" (Fo 34). Unlike his brainwashed, law-abiding Communist friend Giovanni, Luigi detests the poor life they are conditioned to live. He is disgusted at the kind of life they are stuck into and wants to break free from this mechanised life inside the factories where they sweat for their bosses whole day and night but still have no prospects of a good future. They have even deprived of basic living facilities. The contradictions in their opinions are reflected through the following lines:

Luigi: We need some relief from this life of shit we're forced to live.

Giovanni: Well, let's not get carried away. It's not exactly a life of shit, is it... we're better off than we used to be. We've got a house, maybe a little run-down, but it has what we need ... of course some of us have to work overtime.

Luigi: So what if I've got a stove and a refrigerator, if I'm disgusted by my life... goddammit... with a job that could be done by a trained monkey. Weld! Hammer! Drill! Weld! Hammer! One piece finished, here comes the next.

Giovanni: Hammer, drill, weld ... weld (stops himself suddenly). For God's sake what you have got me doing. You're making me crazy.

Luigi: No, I'm not the one making you crazy. It's the way we live. Everything is going down the drain... look at all the factories closing, toxic dumping, ethnic cleansing all over the world. Earthquakes. Hurricanes. The pope. (Fo 36)

Fo is a clever artist, he exploits maximum of the comic possibilities as in the case of Giovanni. He is reduced to eat pet foods and amniotic fluid. Though, outwardly it seems to be funny but a deeper reflection of the event agitates us at the miserable condition of the working class. Fo also jibes at the negligence of the Communist Party to address the workers' cause. Act one wraps up with Luigi and Giovanni preparing to leave in search of their wives.

Act second opens with the arrival of Antonia and Margherita, the later still having a belly. Margherita expresses her exasperation over the mess they are in because of their action. She regrets to have been the part of Antonia's scheme. Antonia rebuffs Margherita for her complaining nature and decides to grow a belly herself in order to dispose of the stolen materials. With the change of the scene and our attention is diverted to Luigi and Giovanni who are seen to be chased by the state trooper for stealing a sack. At first, Giovanni resists Luigi's proposal because the Communist conscience bothers him to do this. Discarding his suggestion he utters, "Are you crazy? Do you want to lower yourself to the level of thieves and looters? I don't take stuffs that's not mine. I work for what I have" (Fo 42). But changes his mind after being persuaded by Luigi who informs him about downsizing in the factories as they would not be paid for a couple of weeks.

Luigi: Listen. What I was trying to tell you before is ... starting tomorrow we're all being downsized.

Giovanni: Downsized?

Luigi: Yeah. I heard it on the train. Six thousand out of twenty-six thousand employees are being downsized now. And the rest of the plant closes in the next few months.

Giovanni: They're closing the plant?

Luigi: Not only that. We won't get paid for our last two weeks.

Giovanni: Come on. Help me load up this stuff. Let's take it all. (Fo 42)

This is a reference to the situation of layoffs precipitated by the economic crisis. As a result, thousands of workers lost their jobs. Moreover, the exorbitant prices of goods gave rise to nation-wide protest. There were incidents of auto-reduction by which the buyers paid the only amount they considered appropriate or bought at the older prices. This phenomenon is known as the movement of civil disobedience. There is a change in the scene and our attention is once again directed to Antonia and Margherita attended by the state trooper who is complaining about all the women in the area being pregnant even an eighty-year-old woman. The farcical tone is stepped up further as Antonia driven by the surprise visit of the state trooper manufactures another story about the Festival of Saint Eulalia that is being celebrated by all the women in the neighbourhood who assume false pregnancy by stuffing food under their coat to commemorate the miraculous pregnancy of Saint Eulalia even at the age of sixty.

Trooper: Let's stop playing games. Your scam's an open book: the husbands go out to commit the robberies, pass the bags to the wives, and all day long I see nothing but pregnant women! Now why is it that all the women in this neighbourhood got buns in their ovens at the same time! Mature women, teenagers, little girls... Today I even saw an eighty year old woman who was pregnant with twins!

Antonia: That's because of the festival ... the Festival of the Patron Saint ... Santa Eulalia.

Trooper: The Patron Saint?

Antonia: You don't know about her? What a saint! The holiest of the saints! A good woman who wanted to have a children, she was obsessed, she wanted to get pregnant, but she couldn't do it! Poor saint. Hard as she tried, she never succeeded up to the point where the Heavenly Father Above took pity on her and: pscium! She was pregnant! At sixty years old! A miracle!

Trooper: Sixty years old?

Antonia: Yes, you can imagine, and her husband was over eighty!

Trooper: But?

Antonia: The power of faith! They say, though, that he husband died immediately. Anyway, in memory of this miracle all the women in the neighbourhood go around for three days with false bellies. (Fo 45)

The sceptical state trooper disbelieves her story and compels the women to show what they have stuffed under their coat. He is not perturbed by the curse that befell on saint Eulalia's incredulous husband who questioned her pregnancy and lost his eyesight as a punishment by God. Meanwhile, the lights of the apartment go out and the state trooper convinced by the two women starts believing that he has been afflicted with blindness as he did not pay heed to their warning. Trying to flee from the house in nervousness, he hits his head somewhere and falls down unconscious. Afraid of that the trooper might be dead they try to give him oxygen instead they give him hydrogen that swells his stomach resembling that of a pregnant woman. These implausible events are ample source of comedy in the play. The play reaches its climax with the arrival of Giovanni's father who unravels the farcical twists and turns of the play and we see Giovanni a completely transformed man venting out his frustration of having been exploited for so long. Speaking to his wife he says:

Giovanni: I know how things are. And I can see. I'm mad as hell and I'm frustrated and I'm not the only one. Nobody can make ends meet. There's Aldo across the street whose wife him when he lost his job. And how about our neighbours next door. They sleep four to a bed. People are hungry. And when they ask for help nobody listens. And the rage I feel isn't at you, it's at myself, and at the impotence I feel when I'm being screwed over every day because I don't see a way out. And it seems there's nobody out there who gives a shit about the people who end up on the street with no place to live. (Fo 64)

The play is a critique of an imperfect society crippled by corruption. It operates at two levels: the farcical structure and the conflict of views between Giovanni (the hare-brained Communist) and his wife, friend, and the police sergeant, (the band of rebels). The play is a brilliant combination of a conventional farce and political satire underlining the predicament of the working class and their struggle for survival. It also includes criticism of Catholicism and police officials who are

representatives of the conservative institution. The play is an exhibition of Fo's limitless potential as a dramatist who is both a traditionalist and an iconoclast. Fo successfully recreates situations that make an impression upon the viewers and the readers as if they have been observing a Commedia performance or a play by Ruzzante. Farrell opines, "In addition to focusing on a new situation, *Can't Pay! Won't Pay!* dramatized those basic human urges he always identified as motivating Harlequin in Commedia dell'Arte or as present in the theatre of Ruzzante" (146).

Apart from highlighting the exploitation of the workers concomitant with the unfairness of the social system the play deplores the indifferent attitude of the Italian Communist Party towards the workers' cause. Farrell points out, "The PCI in the mid-seventies was more papist than any pope, to employ the Italian expression, and had adopted the Puritan ethics of the secular humanists and the law-abiding politics of caution and moderation" (147). It successfully creates a dialectic between the revolutionary socialism and evolutionary socialism. Fo is one of the great exponents of change and offers revolutionary solutions for change discarding the idea of parliamentary socialism as upheld by the then CPI. But he also believes that it is possible only when the people are aware of the status quo, the ruling class hegemony, the functioning of the government as well as their own culture and history. And to accomplish this goal he appeals to the intellectuals to come forward to educate the masses about politics, history, and culture. Fo holds that one cannot understand others' history and culture unless and until he/she is aware of his/her own culture and history.

5.4 Trumpets and Raspberries

Trumpets and Raspberries first performed in 1981, is another important play that fits into the category of political farce. The play deals with the issues of realpolitik and terrorism which were the cause of much social disturbance in Italy in the early eighties. Like the above-discussed plays, this play is also inspired by contemporary events and treated in the similar manner of a conventional farce. This is considered to be the last play of this genre. "Dario would write many more plays, and have much more success, but this was the last of the noisy, rumbustious, didactic political farces for which he is best known" (Farrell 237). Apparently, the plot revolves around the kidnapping of Gianni Agnelli, the owner of Fiat Company and one of the most

powerful industrialists of Italy, obliquely it refers to the famous case of kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro by Red Brigades in 1978. After the resignation of Andreotti's government, Moro was working on the alliance between the Christian Democrat Party and the Italian Communist Party and he was successful in his attempts. One day, when going to parliament his car was attacked and he was held hostage by the terrorists who demanded the release of political prisoners in return for Moro's life. Entire Italy was divided over the prospect of bargaining with the terrorists. While some were in favour of negotiation some opposed it. Dario Fo and Franca Rame were among the few who advocated for a negotiated settlement. But they were unable to persuade the pig-headed government and after fifty-five days of his captivity he was murdered and his body was found halfway the headquarters of the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party. The event has preoccupied Fo which culminated in the production of this play after two years of the incident. The play is a comic critique of the intolerant political climate in the late seventies and early eighties.

The play opens in the recovery ward of a hospital. The scene is surrounded by some hospital ORDERLIES, a doctor and a woman named Rosa. She is there for the identification of a patient who is supposed to be her husband and is completely disfigured in an accident.

Rosa: Oh my God, Antonio, what they have done to you?

Doctor: Come on, come on... Be brave... Breathe deeply.

Rosa: His nose... He hasn't got a nose any longer! It's all mashed to a pulp! And he already had sinusitis! And his chin... That's gone too. Let me near him!

Doctor: (To the ORDERLIES) No, keep her away!

Rosa: They have obliterated my Antonio. There is nothing left of him apart from his ears. Antonio, Antonio! You see? He's got two ears, but he doesn't hear me! (Fo 217)

She blames Angelli, the head of Fiat Corporation for the critical condition of Antonio assuming that the accident might have happened at work where he was employed. The following comment of Rosa gives insights into the precarious working

conditions in the factories which have been one of the apprehensions of Fo as he expressed his concern for the safety and the security of the workers.

Rosa: What about Angelli? Those bastard managers at FIAT with Angelli at their head! They sent him to service some generator, hanging God knows how many feet up in the air, without safety gear. One careless moment and splat! A triple somersault with no safety net! (Fo 217)

She is told that the accident did not happen in the factory because her husband was absent from the work on that particular day, it rather seems to be a hit and run case. She then starts accusing his mistress of such a condition of Antonio and her criticism goes beyond the personal level.

Doctor: so. You're communists are you?

Rosa: Oh, we've been communists for generations, from father to son... it's a custom we hand down in our family. As I was saying, the *Unita* festival, he was always there, in charge of everything: he used to put up the stalls, sell the books, and buy them too. In his Party branch too, in the discussions, he would put forward the counter-arguments, as well as the self-criticism. But don't go thinking that he was a fanatical bigot. No, far away from it, he was always having arguments, particularly with the leadership even if he had accepted the Third Road to socialism... he was also prepared for the Fourth Road ring road to socialism, and the bypass of the Fifth Road... because, as Karl Marx says, 'the roads to socialism are infinite'! Of course she was always there behind him... the bitch, egging him on! Because she's an extremist. She does not even have a Party card... Nothing! Not even a Socialist Party card! She is one of those intellectuals who are always trying to teach us, the working class, everything. The kind of people who are crazy about the masses, but can't stand crowds! She isn't here, is she? She isn't hiding under the bed? (Fo 219)

These lines are extremely important in the play slamming the terroristic adventure of some of the Left Wing political groups. But as a human right campaigner Fo never promoted violence. He honoured the sanctity of life, therefore, objected terrorism because this will lead to further chaos instead of solving the problem. He desired constructive change not destructive.

Since it is a farce, ample of humour is derived from medical apparatuses. For instance, while speechifying Rosa unintentionally takes hold of one of the strings stitched through the patient's body making him jump off the bed. Up till now, the audiences were made to believe that the person in the hospital is Antonio. But the dramatist surprises audiences by introducing Antonio at this stage of the story who narrates the whole incident. He tells that he was with one of his colleagues in his Fiat 128 at the outskirts of Milan around two o'clock discussing downsizings in the factories when he noticed two cars racing nip and tuck. Suddenly one car skidded resulting in a terrible crash. He rushed to the site of the accident in order to save people trapped inside the car. There were four people inside the car he managed to save. The fourth one was brutally injured with his face all smashed up. As he dragged him out all of a sudden the car engine burst into fire and the victim was caught into it. He tried to save him by wrapping his jacket around him but still he sustained burning. He put him inside his car and the moment he started his engine the people whom he saved opened fire at him. He had a narrow scape and drove to the town where he was able to find a Red Cross ambulance. He handed the victim to them who were looking at him as if he was responsible for the causality. To avoid arrest and police investigation he absconds. But he is informed by Lucia that the person he saved is Angelli. He is also told that there are rumours all-around of his abduction and he is a prime suspect of this conspiracy. The complicacy of situation he is now in makes him censorious of the capitalist bosses.

Antonio: So... I'm done, now... I'm an accomplice! Or rather, the main organiser of the kidnap... What an idiot! You go and play the Good Samaritan, you go and save the life of bosses who gamble with your life like they were playing gin rummy. The bastards! (227)

The story resumes where it was left off and audiences' attention once again is shifted to the hospital. This intervention was deliberately made by the playwright in order to prevent the actors to identify from the characters they are playing and also to make the audiences realise that they are watching a play. This was a kind of flashback or exposition scene to make the spectators aware of the characters and the situation so that they could follow up the action and enjoy it. Scene one winds up with the disfigured identified as Antonio. "Well, Antonio, you've been positively identified as

my very own Antonio Berardi” (Fo 235). But the audiences know that he is not Antonio.

Scene II unfolds with the introduction of Double (Angelli) who is very replica of Antonio after the facial surgery performed on him which is done with the help of a photograph of Antonio. The Double is confused with Antonio by everyone except Lucia. The confusion resulting from mistaken identity creates abundant humour in the play. This scene is very important because it untangles several threads that indicate the clandestine terroristic activities of the Right Wing officials. For instance, when police officials investigate the Double suspecting that he might be affiliated with terrorists he gives vital clues about right-wing terrorism involving some high ranked officials such as, judges, ministers, admirals and generals. He also tries to recall some names such as, Anderot. But being raked up by the Double the magistrate orders the doctor to sedate him.

Double: Ah, now, that period I remember well, really clearly... All big-nobs, all their names... There was even an admiral involved... a judge... a minister...

Examining Magistrate: Will you stop remembering.

Inspector: Doctor do something.

Double: If I make a little effort, it'll all come back to me. I could name all five hundred of them... Now, I'll start in alphabetical order, from 'A'... The first is Anderot. (Fo 252)

The police officials' frustration speaks the truth. There are several references such as, arm trafficking, right-wing plot, destabilise, Secret services, Special services, Whitewash that apprise us of the sensitive political climate of Italy in those years.

Act II opens in Rosa's house which turns into a madhouse later in the scene as both Antonio and the Double turn up in the house. This double identity enables Fo to extract maximum from the comic situation. For example in the scene where Rosa is mincing meat which is supposed to be fed through the nose. The audiences know that it is meant for the Double but Antonio becomes the victim.

She takes the serviette out of his mouth, and inserts the clarinet's mouthpiece.

Antonio moves the fingers of his right hand up and down the keys of the

clarinet, which gives out a blues sequence of high and low notes, commenting grotesquely on the situation. (Fo 284)

This machine becomes a torture device in the hands of the police who use it to extract confessions from the suspect and Antonio is the victim this time also.

Inspector: Alright, we will set you free, if you do us a little favour. You're going to tell us a few details about the Angelli kidnap. You were there, weren't you, that evening, on the embankment?

Antonio: Yes, certainly I was there, on the embankment...

Inspector: Very good!

Antonio: But I had nothing to do with the kidnap. In fact, it was me who saved Angelli.

Inspector: Give the handle a little twirl!

Antonio: No, no! Stop it! Yes, it's true... I confess! I am the head of the armed gang that kidnapped Angelli.

Inspector: What a wonderful little machine! We ought to have a little gadget like this down at the nick! (Fo 286)

The audiences know that Antonio is innocent and Angelli has never been kidnapped. Scene one ends with the arrest of Antonio.

The comedy takes a serious note in the final scene showing the state's approach to deal with the issue of terrorism. Lucia comes with the information of letters received by Prime Minister Spadolini which are supposed to be written by Angelli demanding an immediate exchange of the political prisoners for his life. These letters are actually written by the Double which are copies of Moro's letters he wrote to the Italian government during his kidnap. The purpose of these letter is create an analogy between the power of a politician and a capitalist.

Double: Well, I want to find out what the government and the state think of me, what value I have, for them... I want to see whether the government, and the parties, will have the nerve to sacrifice me as they sacrificed Aldo Moro. I want to see whether, in my case too, they will reject any exchange even with a prisoner who was seriously ill. (Fo 295)

The political tone is stepped up as the government agrees to the condition made by the terrorists in return for Angelli's life even terminating all anti-terrorist projects. This decision of the government not only shocks people but also infuriates them. Targeting the politicians they say:

Inspector: All the work that I've done, my hard work, flushed down the pan!
It's disgusting! Bastard politicians!

Rosa: Bastard politicians is right. They let Moro be killed like a lamb led to the slaughter; everyone agreed that he should be sacrificed. Be firm! And now, with Angelli, they've done a somersault... The loathsome pigs! (Fo 308)

Fo here, reinforces that capitalism represents the state and is the supreme authority. The state, government and other institutions of power are subordinate to capitalist forces who run the system. They make policies which are implemented by the state.

Double: You don't understand? Tell me, have you never read Karl Marx? Ah yes, of course... These days only we captains of industry study *Das Kapital*... Especially where it says: 'The only true power is financial economic power, in other words, holding companies, markets, banks, commodities... In other words, Capital.' And then he adds a sentence, which children should memorise and sing in the play ground: 'The sacred laws of this state... the economic state... are written on watermarked paper money. So government, state and institutions are nothing other than supporting services, for the real power, which is economic power.' Supporting services... you see? So, Aldo Moro was sacrificed in order to save the respectability of the aforementioned financial state, not for the supporting services, for which nobody gives a damn. Get it into your heads: I am the state! The capital which I represent is the state! It is my dignity that you must save, even at the cost of your own lives! How could they think of sacrificing me, in order to save the state? For I am the state! (Fo 309)

These lines sum up the play. Fo lashes at the materialistic government by creating this analogy between the case of Angelli and Moro. The farcical structure of the play allows Fo to criticise the government's attitude to terrorism. For example, the presence of the Agents and the group leader exemplifies the paranoiac state

preoccupied with the idea of terrorism. The play comments on fraught issues related to power, politics, and terrorism. It explores different dimensions of power in which the main player is not the state but the capitalist.

5.5 Inferences of Theoretical Aspects of Fo's Plays

Fo's preoccupation with the political education of the working classes resonates very much with Gramsci who too had stressed on the need of indoctrinating the workers for their intellectual emancipation so that they could challenge bourgeois authority and reaffirm themselves at socio-political and economic levels. The social and political theories laid down by Gramsci have revolutionized the minds of many thinkers and writers including Fo. The Gramscian concept of hegemony and his reflections on politics, culture, education and the role of intellectuals were decisive in outgrowth of Fo's Political Theatre. "Fo's early familiarity with Gramscian theories caused him to see cultural change, which could be worked by theatre, as an indispensable tool for the decolonization of the mind, of the will, of the imagination" (Farrell 17). Culture is an integral part of Gramsci's analysis of power because he held as Santucci explains, "Culture plays a decisive role in the making of men and historical subjects and thus is an essential part of politics" (39). Gramsci elaborated that culture was used as a tool of social domination and exploitation of the working classes. He adduced that the upper classes popularized a discourse about the inferiority of the popular culture and the superiority of the ruling class culture in order to perpetuate their authority over proletarians. Farrell explicates:

Gramsci included culture in his analysis of the power structures in society, since for him it was a means by which privileged elites maintained their authority. In Gramscian terms, culture is a pre-rational complex of ideas, values and assumptions, or a dimension of consciousness which shapes human life as powerfully as any physical or economic force. (17)

He offered ideological solution of a specific political situation because he claims that power relations operate at ideological level. "Ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is "psychological"; they "organise" human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc." (Gramsci 707).

He asked the intellectuals who according to him are proponents of the cultural tradition of a society as well the architects of hegemonic and counter hegemonic process to emancipate the workers from their subservience to the ruling authority through their educational empowerment.

Making the base of Gramsci's political theories Fo has developed his art whose primary goal is enlightenment of the working classes. "Any attempt to put flesh on the theatrical poetics of Dario Fo must begin with Gramsci, whose main contribution was to switch the emphasis of Marxist theory away from economics to culture itself" (Farrell 17). He informs them of intricate socio-political structures through which power relations are maintained in the society thus, contributes to their struggle for freedom by acquainting them with the Machiavellian politics of the consumerist culture. Workers' dignity, democracy, culture and education remain central to Fovian theatre. He is not simply the promoter of their cause but also the representative of their prodigiously rich cultural legacy which has found due expression in his work. Recovering people's culture and their tradition has been vital to Fo's cultural politics. He attached immense importance to culture as it was integral to gain political control, further he realized the subversive power of the popular culture and used it as a potent weapon against the dominant culture. Farrell states, "Dario appealed to a long tradition stretching back to the Middle Ages of a people's culture which was critical and which cast a satirical eye on the activities of those in power or authority" (141). He associated power with culture, ideology and knowledge. He emphasised that we cannot oppose, resist, affirm and reaffirm an idea or a social discourse unless and until we are familiar with that. He further elaborated that capitalism does not directly or forcibly control the society rather govern through ideological forces which are intangible. They define social reality for the majority of population which becomes a universal truth. They readily subscribe to these ideas without questioning them thus, become vulnerable to exploitation. For him culture is also knowledge. It means that awareness of the things is culture. Moreover, it is the principal provider of identity.

Therefore, he dedicated his art to educate the workers and to infuse awareness into them. He unmask the institutions of power; social, political and religious who ostensibly pose to patronize people's democratic rights are actually the exploiters of humanity. Fo also reveals the interconnectedness of these networks who conjoin to

exploit people and to perpetuate status quo. They are the beneficiaries of all profit who flourish at the expenses of poor. The aphorism that 'the best protector is always the best thief', is quite pertinent to the post-modern institutions of power.

The above discussed plays are clear manifestations of Fo's anti-establishment stance. He pulls down every figure of authority and exposes the hypocrisy of the power institutions in a typical Fovian style that is the farce. All the four plays re-map the socio-political landscape of Italy of the late sixties and seventies and are response to some specific event.

Archangels Don't Play Pinball is a satirical representation of an era marked by economic progress and prosperity. He presents a bunch of social derelicts who instead of getting engaged in a desirable activity or profession rely on their wit to make a living. The point Fo wants to drive home is that despite the government's claim of fiscal steadiness why people are living on the margin, why women are forced into prostitution as in the case of Blondie and why people are compelled to indulge into unlawful activities. It exposes the darker and evil side of the capitalist system. The characters in the play are representative of the perennial oppressed class without social and political clouts. Apart from its socio-political relevance the play is also important for entailing reference to the famous figure of *Giullare* who has been an inspiration to Fo's theatrical activism.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist, one of the best of Fo's oeuvres, speaks about the political crisis that Italy had undergone in the seventies. It provides counter information into the famous case of Pinelli, the prime accused in one of the several bombing outrages that rocked the entire Italy. Although, the play deals with a specific political situation it has multiple bottom lines. The accidental death of the anarchist (Pinelli), in police custody does not only show the delinquency of the police and the state but the crime committed against wider democracy. The play also draws our attention to state sponsored terrorism which has been used as a strategy to maintain power by creating an atmosphere of unrest. It gives to the world one of the most famous theatrical character in the form of Maniac reminding us of the Lord of Misrule of the *Palliata* comedies performed by Plautus and Terence. He enjoys the license of fool (*licentia*) which is a momentary freedom from restrictions and autonomy to

subvert social hierarchy. Fo's fool follows no rule and turns everything upside down. His madness is a method to unmask the truth.

Can't Pay! Won't Pay is a play about civil disobedience, an outgrowth of the constrictions of life. The play is produced in the backdrop of economic depression Italy was plunged into in the late seventies. The carnival spirit is unleashed in the play producing madcap humour which is used a device to expose the glaring social inequity and to propel proletarian revolution.

Trumpets and Raspberries is inspired by the political assassination of Aldo Moro, the former Italian Prime Minister and statesman. Fo has criticised the government for its treatment of the issue of terrorism by creating a parallelism between the case of Angelli and Moro in which the later one is sacrificed to save the dignity of the capitalist state and the earlier one is saved because he owns the state.

5.6 Summing Up

All the four plays are situated in the socio-political context of contemporary Italy addressing four distinct junctures in the Italian politics. They are inextricably linked to the socio-political events of the period providing useful insights into those events and occurrences. The farcical structure of these plays enables Fo to comment on those issues supplying necessary information to the spectators.

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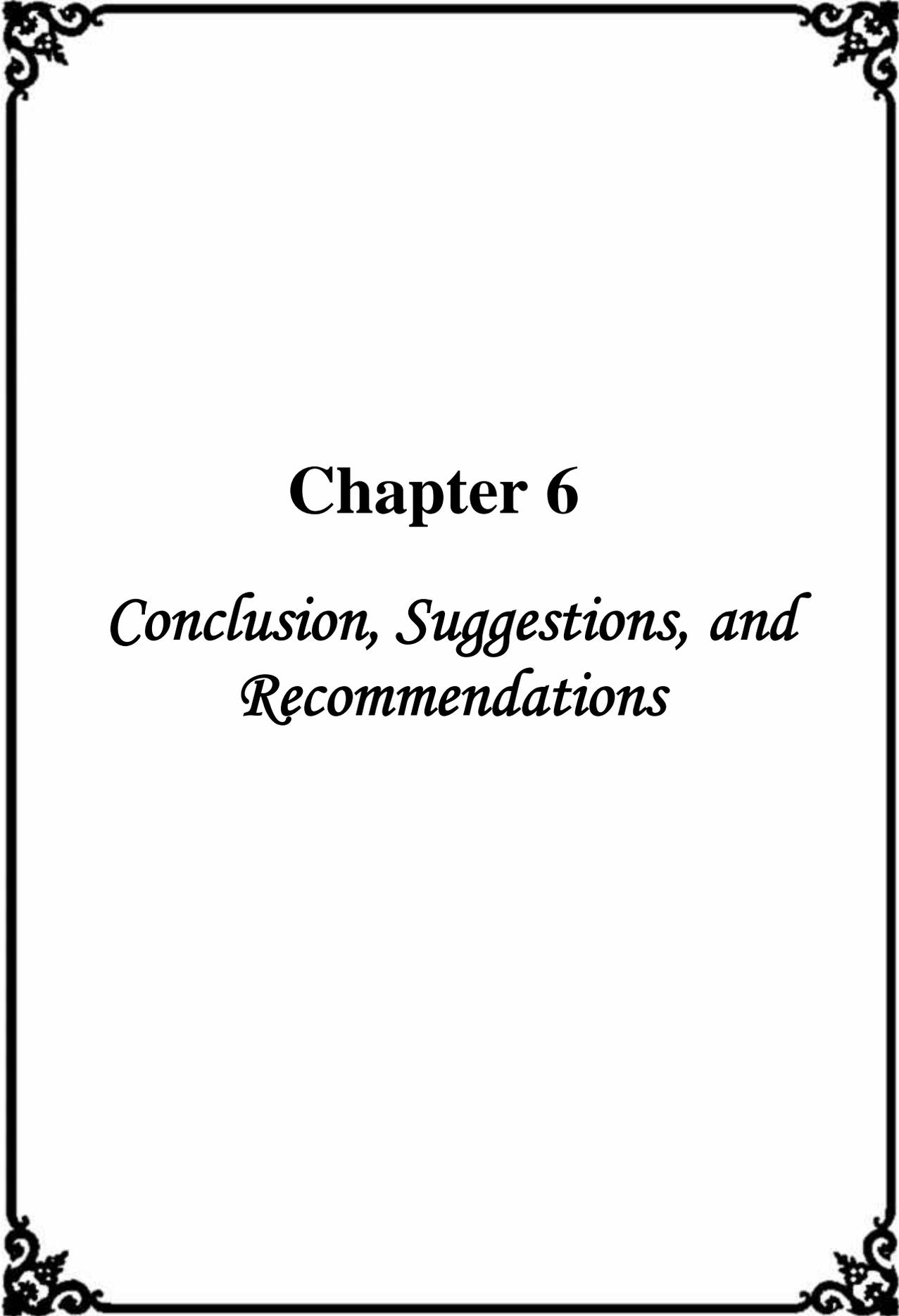
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Chapter 6

Conclusion, Suggestions, and Recommendations