

# **Chapter 1**

## *Introduction*

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### Introduction

Every art contributes to the greatest art of all, the art of living.

(Bertolt Brecht 277)

#### 1.0 Statement of the Intent

This thesis intends to explore the subversive polemics of Dario Fo linked to the political and cultural struggle of the Italian working class against the status quo. Anatomy of these discourses like, his concern for the oppressed and his critique of the institutional power becomes very necessary in order to understand his theatre which functions as the revolutionary vanguard of the proletarian struggle for power. So, Fo's engagement with theatre is not simply an artistic activity rather, a social praxis embedded within broader socio-political, cultural and historical contexts. It is only within this framework one can appreciate the dialectics of oppression, revolution, and liberation interspersed in his plays. The present study will be done with the help of the analysis of Fo's select plays which are seen not merely as dramatic texts but as organisations of his critical commentaries on important issues of politics and culture, expressed through theatrical means. This selection accommodates two different theatrical expressions of Fo analysed in two different chapters. They include his '*Giullarate*' (Monologues) and his '*Satirical Farces*' which have been employed as two different mediums of protest. These plays will be analysed from the theoretical perspective of Gramscian hegemony which provides a theoretical framework to conceptualise hegemony in relation to the political struggle of the Italian proletariats. Moreover, this approach would enable the researcher to lay bare the revolutionary vein of Fo's plays.

#### 1.1 Research Questions

Although a considerable amount of researches have been produced on various issues in Fo's work, there remain crucial questions that needed to be explored.

What are the processes that turn Fo's theatre into a Political Theatre?

How his theatre is integrated with the political and cultural struggle of the Italian proletariat?

What has motivated him to choose popular modes of performance?

How his theatre becomes an arena of public protest and resistance?

How has he wielded theatre as a tool of political and cultural intervention?

What kind of social reform does he seek through his theatre?

What is the ideological thrust of his theatre?

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The objective of this research is to explore the components of protest, resistance, politics, and culture that Fo incorporates into his theatre. The proletarian concern of Fo and his use of theatre to further their cause that is to liberate them from oppression and exploitation, has motivated me to take up this study. The aim of this study is to foreground theatre as an instrument of social and political change and as an arena of cultural and ideological struggle in the context of Italy. It attempts to establish Fo's revolutionary creed through the Gramscian perspective of hegemony.

## **1.3 Dario Fo in Translation**

Since this study is based on translated works of Dario Fo, therefore, the researcher precisely wants to discuss some of the problems of translation with reference to Fo. The more basic definition of translation is transferring a text from the source language (SL) to target language (TL). Susan Bassnett-McGuire in her seminal work *Translation Studies*, defines translation:

What is generally understood as translation involves the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted. (02)

The above definition implies that striking hundred percent fidelity is not possible in translation, however, a balanced approach should be adopted. This is well represented by Hirst in his book *Dario Fo and Franca Rame*, where talking about translation and adaptation of Fo he says, "All translation is by its very nature a matter of compromise. There is no such thing as definitive translation, as what might serve perfectly in one period is rendered inadequate fifty, even twenty, years later" (74).

While translating a text especially a dramatic text, the translator faces certain type of problems that occur at linguistic, paralinguistic and cultural levels. In Fo's case, the translator is faced by the additional problem of finding an equivalence of the specific political references in most of his plays in the target society. As Mitchell says:

The most immediate difficulty which held up the arrival of Fo's works in the UK (and the USA, and the rest of the English speaking world) was the specific political content of most of his plays. Largely written as a direct response to particular Italian political situations, their reference points are difficult to translate into English context, even when their implications are universal. (243)

Moreover, Fo's recurrent criticisms of the Italian Left and the Catholic Church complicates the rendering of his work into non-Italian context. The translator has to find an equivalent for these specific political and religious references in the target culture which are not often possible. In order to comport this problem, Mitchell recommends that:

Where a word-to-word rendition is not possible in the idiom and social context of the target language, be it UK English, Australian English or American English, a sense-for-sense substitute can usually be found for Fo's jokes or political references. (245)

Referring to linguistic problems encountered in translating Fo, Mitchell cites Valeria Tasca, the French translator of Fo's works who states:

His tendency to use the regional dialects of Veneto and Lombardy, his use of the invented onomatopoeic language *grammelot* to mimic foreign languages, and his specific use of insults, swearwords, sexual terminology, blasphemies and obscenities all pose dilemmas for the translator. (245)

Paralinguistic features of his work and his use of a variety of theatrical genres make the translator's job more challenging. Ron Jenkins, the US translator of Fo proposes that:

Their work cannot be translated without reference to their performance technique, and translations of their work should not be performed without

taking their performance style into account. It is delicately balanced between detachment and passion, tragedy and comedy, intimacy and showmanship. These elements lose their equilibrium if the language, style, and rhythms of a production do not take Fo's theatrical politics and poetics into account. (65)

There are no established rules or set patterns for translating Fo from the source language to the target language rather they are contingent to theatrical traditions and techniques of the target society which are certainly going to affect the original text. "Both Emery and Jenkins acknowledge that no translation can do Fo's plays justice" (Mitchell 248).

#### **1.4 Theatre: A Historical Overview**

The theatre is the most celebrated form of literary art as compared to other forms of literature such as poetry and fiction. It is accessible to the wider populace and has been an inseparable part of our community life. It has a likeness to life and encompasses the totality of human existence; their habits, experiences, attitudes, dispositions and their interaction with the social environment in which they live. Bertolt Brecht opines, "The theatre is the most human and universal art of all, the one most commonly practiced, i.e. practiced not just on the stage but also in everyday life" (152). Theatre presents images from life and creates a world of experiences akin to real human experiences. Wole Soyinka in his 'Foreword' to *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre: Africa* articulates, "Theatre, despite its many masks, is the unending rendition of the human experience, in totality, and its excitement lies indeed in its very unpredictability ... [and] as a rehearsal for real life" (13). Theatre artist like a historian develops a narrative to interpret social, cultural, political and psychological realities of life. Erika Fischer-Lichte argues "Theatre is a social institution which is realised in the organization of public performances" (5). Thus any dramatic performance is a kind of social event engaging actors and spectators and communicating information on crucial issues which require immediate concern to be redressed. The theatre is responsive to the socio-political climate of its time. It is a battlefield on which, is continually fought a fierce struggle of human existence and his relationship with the society in which he lives. It also reflects the conflict between the desire for an established order and the alternative forces to

challenge that order. The theatre is seen as the microcosm of a larger human system intertwined with universal human activities and embedded within cultural practices.

Dramatic art has been used as a tool to propagate the hegemony of the dominant class, but it has also been employed to resist the myth of the superiority of the elite class, to question the status-quo and to raise certain social, political, economic and cultural issues. Its continuous concern with humanity and society makes theatre a more popular medium to express our experiences, thoughts, and opinions. The theatre is a medium of communication, a system of signification, an organisation of experiences and a workshop for exploring ideas which operate within a social framework. It is an arena of complex negotiations defined by presentational context. This is well represented by Schechner in his seminal work on performance theory where says, “Theatre is a model of or an experimentally controlled example of human interactions. The interactions played out in theatre are those which are problematical in society” (Schechner 205). In Vanden Heuvel’s opinion, “Theatre has maintained itself as an arena where potentially conflictual, even antithetical, issues and value perceptions about the world are transformed into interactive energies that can be made to sustain, rather than dominate, one another” (06).

The origin of theatre dates back to the prehistoric times. The first ‘theatres’ were ceremonial centres. Though the theatre has a cultural basis and is modelled upon universal human activities, it is difficult to say which of these activities prompted the origin of theatre because these activities have a different meaning in different societies and cultures resulting in a myriad of theatre-related forms. Imitation is unquestionably one of them, the testimony of which is the Palaeolithic cave paintings. This interest was not limited to pictorial representation but also performed on stage. Animals, supernatural beings, and heroic figures were personified by actors on festive occasions. George Thomson in *Aeschylus and Athens* 1973, argues about ‘mimetic rites’ as the origin of drama in which the animals were imitated. Another major activity that is shared by almost all cultures, is the art of storytelling. They include – myths, legends and the stories about Gods. Marvin Carlson quotes Eric Bentley “A impersonates B while C looks on” (2). In this quote the two verbs ‘impersonates’ and ‘looks’ emphasize the idea of imitation and spectatorship respectively. But this definition of Eric Bentley ignores one of the most critical aspects of theatre that is the storytelling.

The most commonly believed notion about the origin of theatre is that it sprung from myths and rituals. Classical Greece is considered the bedrock for the development and dissemination of the concept theatre, across Europe and in other parts of the world. Theatre has been part and parcel of numerous Greek festivals and three types of dramatic performances, tragedy, comedy and satyr plays were presented on these occasions in competition for honour and accolades from the authorities. Actors wore ornate costumes and would put on masks. Another substantial form of these theatrical presentations was 'chorus'. Theatre artists were allowed "festive freedom" to temporarily turn upside down the social order by ridiculing the power figures. But the growing influence of Christianity in the Western Empire restricts all dramatic activities which were eroded in the fifth century with the conquest of northern intruders. However, the itinerant players are supposed to have continued a part of this tradition during that span of time. To our surprise, previously objected by the Christian Church, these post-classical performances were encouraged by the now-dominant Catholic culture in the 10th century. By the early Middle Ages, Churches in Europe started the tradition of staging Biblical events on specific occasions like Easter. But their performance was limited to the Church and the priests, as these dramatic events were not allowed to be staged outside the Church premises with performers being the priests and the monks. It was not until the twelfth century that these spectacles were taken to public spheres, but still retaining their religious themes and subject. The English plays of this group were called Mystery Plays performed in series called 'cycles', on festivals commemorating Biblical events related to Christ which were accompanied by another most important form of medieval drama called Miracle Plays, based on the stories from the lives of saints. Another more popular form of medieval drama is the Morality Play which deals with abstract and personified ideas. 'Everyman' is the earliest and well-known example of a Morality Play.

The birth of renaissance and the renewed interest in classical learnings exerted great influence on theatre. The theories of drama prescribed by Aristotle have been vital in the development of Western dramatic art. They inspired neoclassicism, a doctrine developed by the Western scholars which governed the Western arts including theatre until the nineteenth century. This doctrine stressed upon the strict observance of the three unities, they are the unities of time, place and action. As an

output of this, neoclassicism France witnessed three major dramatists namely, Corneille, Racine and Moliere in the seventeenth century unlike their Italian counterparts, who have not produced long-lasting theatre with the exception of Commedia dell'arte, a non-literary theatrical tradition which was in vogue in the sixteenth century Italy. This theatrical genre consists of stock characters and relies on improvised actions and physical comedy to entertain the audience. This theatrical tradition had a great impact on European comic drama and visual arts. Even though, the practice of such medieval religious theatre was banned by Queen Elizabeth after the Church of England ended ties with Roman Catholic Church, but she encouraged the production of Secular Drama and it was during her reign that England produced some of the worlds' greatest playwrights like, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, John Webster and such others.

The era between the seventeenth and eighteenth century witnessed predominance of the French culture, together with arts and theatre which served as a model for the larger part of Europe. Racine and Moliere inspired playwrights across the border. Even Britain after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 borrowed French influence in all spheres of life including art and literature. During Puritan reign, the theatres were shut down officially but with the restoration of Charles II, we see a good deal of vigorous Restoration Comedies. Other noticeable changes observed in the English theatre of this period is the presence of women on the stage for the very first time and the emergence of the capitalist class which replaced the older system governed by the Monarchs. Thus Neoclassicism was challenged by Romanticism in the early nineteenth century which produced an extremely emotional and passionate form of theatre. J.L. Styan writes, "At its most vulgar level, the romantic theatre produced a sensational drama of strong emotions and unequivocal moral sentiment" (3). Melodrama is the most significant form of this age. Eugene Scribe and Sardou are considered the leaders of this Movement, followed by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, T.W. Robertson and Tom Taylor who are indebted to the Scribean model.

It would be unfair to turn a blind eye to theatre's contribution to the nationalist cause. Colonial masters used theatre as a tool to spread their cultural hegemony that has been later used by colonised communities as an expression of their own culture and identity. And the countries like, South Africa, USA, India, Australia, Canada produced theatre in the fashion of Western-style together rooted in indigenous

practices that gave birth to a hybrid form of theatre. To mention a few who toiled in this form are Derek Walcott in Trinidad, Wole Soyinka in Nigeria and Girish Karnad in India.

The highly emotive and exaggerated drama of the Romantic Period was later replaced by Realist Theatre championed by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. It is the more common belief that modern drama dates from Ibsen. He gave new dimensions to modern drama. His plays are called Discussion plays which closely followed the structure of well-made plays but ended with a discussion. He challenged the basic assumption of right and wrong. In his famous work, *A Doll's House* Nora forges the signature of her father to get money for the treatment of her sick husband because she thinks it is justified, as it brings no harm to her family. Towards the end of the play, we see Nora slamming the door on the face of her husband and leaving her doll's house with no idea where she will go. And what may happen to her? Thus the play ends with a discussion note. Ibsen left a strong mark on Bernard Shaw in England, Anton Chekhov in Russia and Arthur Miller in America who worked in Ibsenian tradition. Though they were staunch in their reaction to the romantic drama, they made skillful use of the very techniques they were criticising, which is of the 'well-made play'. This dramatic mode of presentation was later challenged by non-realistic modes like, Symbolism, Naturalism, and Expressionism which in turn were counter-challenged by Epic theatre of Brecht and Absurd theatre of Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett.

The modern period is known for its artistic experimentation and innovation. Up to this period of time, the traditional method of artistic expression dominated the European scenario. But with the breaking out of the First World War, there was a sudden expansion of knowledge, change in lifestyle, and proliferation of other socio-political issues. This new surge compelled the modern artists to explore new channels of communication as the traditional method proved ineffective to address these new issues. J. L. Styan in his Preface to *Modern Drama in Theory and practice* writes, "The story of the theatre is one of rebellion and reaction, with new forms challenging the old, and old forms, in turn, providing the basis for the new". And this is what makes modern art eclectic and transient. Modern artists experimented a lot, be it the subject matter, technique or language because this was the demand of the time and social change. In drama, this was met with certain questions, such as: What is theatre?

Whom was it projected for? And what are the subjects of theatre? Brecht argues, “The modern theatre must not be judged by its success in satisfying the audience’s habits but by its success in transforming them” (Brecht 161).

These are some of the major concerns of modern drama which expanded its horizon, brought it out of its traditional outfit and made it what audience expected it to be. For the first time the audience was given the central place in the construction of drama. Brecht states, “A theatre which makes no contact with the public is the nonsense” (7). Modern dramatists reevaluated the relationship between the text and the playwright, the actors and the audience and the playwright and the audience. According to Kristen E. Shepherd-Bar “The story of modern drama is a tale of extremes, testing both audiences and actors to their limits” (2).

Modern drama is all about the rejection of tradition. “Modern drama emerges through its attempts to shock the bourgeoisie, to provoke and outrage it, to prod it out of that passive and self-contained state” (Kristen E. Shepherd-Bar 7). The authority enjoyed by the director, the introduction of new theories and legitimizing theatre as a new academic discipline, established drama as the dominant cultural force. Emile Zola, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Jerzy Grotowski are some of the very important names who made a major contribution and have been instrumental in the development of modern drama. They tried to blur the distinction between actor and audience, theatre and life. Modern dramatists rejected the transcendental quality and ageless appreciation of theatre. Marvin Carlson is right when he says:

Theatre is no longer an isolated form, confined within a particular building, performed by a particular group of people in a particular style and following particular rules, but has become inextricably intertwined with human social activity in general. (26)

### **1.5 Political and Protest Theatre**

Theatre being a product of social, political and cultural forces occupies a central place in any political activity and provides insights into current socio-political issues. Any theatrical activity is grounded in the contemporary experiences, exploring the relationship between human and his social, political and cultural context. The association between theatre and protest is as old as the origin of this particular genre.

Protest Theatre is a powerful medium to procure social change. It was intended to raise the consciousness of the people and motivate them to act against all kind of discrimination. Protest Theatre is a dialectical practice, opposing the hegemonic forces and has been used to contribute to the wider social and political cause. But sometimes it merely explores certain problems and questions it. Theatre as a medium of protest and dissent has been used almost in all the ages that is why the censorship law was formulated by those in power. The plays were subjected to scrutiny to make sure that they were not critical of the ruling authority before their enactment on the stage. Sometimes heavy penalties were levied against the playwrights and they were even sued for censoring and defaming the country on many occasions. And in some cases, they met capital punishment.

The objective of Protest Theatre is to speak against injustice, exploitation, corruption prevalent in society and to give voice to the voiceless and the marginalised who were denied justice. Protest Theatre is intended to expose hypocrisy, prejudices and atrocities of the government, the politicians and the ruling class. It offers social, political and religious criticism. This is well articulated by Habib Tanvir, the famous Indian theatre personality:

Art is always on the left. All meaningful theatre then is always on the left. Why theatre alone? All activities in art and literature have to be anti-establishment to gain contemporary relevance. If for instance, a regime of the left wing gets established, then art and literature must move further left of the left. They must serve as gadfly to society, always stimulating progress. I am of course taking the broadest possible view of the term left wing. (64)

Protest Theatre believes in the transformation of society and proposes the model of an egalitarian society. It is interchangeably used as 'Political Theatre', but has a larger application. According to Pushpa Sundar, "Socially concerned theatre may raise consciousness about social ills for which individuals, and not the state, may be collectively responsible; thus, it may not be aimed at political authority at all" (2). Thus, Protest Theatre serves as a powerful commentary on the contemporary socio and political issues. It is always suspicious of the authorities and stimulates social progress by promoting social and political awareness among people. It often conjoins with the contemporary anti-establishment and revolutionary movements to stage

people's struggle for liberty and democracy with a desire to inspire social change, for instance, the association of theatre with the Civil Rights Movement in America, Black Consciousness or Black Power Movement in Africa, Anti-colonial Struggle in India and Vietnam War Protests. Protest Theatre is the product of social and political scuffles of its own time trying to educate people and influence their opinion on contemporary social, political and cultural issues with an intent to subvert the hegemonic powers.

The tradition of protest through theatre goes back to the itinerant artists who used to perform in the streets and other public places. They gave performances in a satirical manner in order to avoid the problem of censorship. This laid the foundation of the Greek satiric comedies, best of them were written by Aristophanes who worked in this tradition and was looked upon as a model for the rest of the world. Whereas the concern of Protest Theatre is social commentary, Political Theatre is engaged in ratifying or attacking a particular political position and was popular in Soviet Russia. In post-revolutionary Russia, theatre served as a political agenda, indoctrinating the workers in Marxist principles. It was used to propagate Marxist values and was performed in the streets and the working places. This is relatively a modern phenomenon and its origin can be traced back to the German theatre activist Erwin Piscator in the 1920s. His, *The Political Theatre* (1929) is an important work on the political nature of theatre, which reflects on the fact that Political Theatre has the power to transform the consciousness of the spectators and is actively involved in the contemporary events. He had a substantial influence on Brecht who in the later years developed the aesthetic of 'Epic Theatre' and served as a model for other dramatists who worked in this tradition. Brecht advocated an intellectual type of theatre that would develop critical thinking in the spectators. He opposed the kind of theatre, in which the audiences are emotionally involved in the action of the play taking place on the stage. Boal is another towering figure in the evolution of Political Theatre. He maintains that "All theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them" (xxiii). He does not believe in the separation of theatre from politics. Boal says, "Those who try to separate theatre from politics try to lead us into error" (xxiii). These playwrights used theatre to dramatize the plight of people in a hostile socio-political background. They wanted the audience to come out

from the comfortable zone, to ponder over their conditions and to protest against their oppressors.

The post-war period was one of the phases of social and political unrest. Radical movements of the 1960s, the mass mobilization of the students and the workers, protesting against government policies provided a fertile ground for the growth of 'Political and Protest theatre', which played vital role in letting out the dissatisfaction of the people resulting from the expectations of economic prosperity and delusions of the utopianism of liberal and Communist societies. The political and military realities of the Cold War period enraged the masses that led to massive protests. The cataclysms of 1968 ensured that the separation of theatre from politics was nearly impossible. The happening of these events enthused theatre activists to address growing socio-political dissatisfactions of the time, to attack the liberal and consumerist policies of the government in order to endorse international socialism. Amiri Baraka and Lorraine Hansberry in America, Wole Soyinka and Athol Fugard in Africa, Augusto Boal in Brazil, Safdar Hashmi, Badal Sircar and Utpal Dutt in India, Ervin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht in Germany, Dario Fo in Italy, Arnold Wesker, David Edger, David Hare and Edward Bond in England, politicised theatre and used it as a tool to spread political awareness. They agitated against the bourgeois drawing Room Comedy and promoted a type of theatre that had an intellectual appeal to the audiences and informed them about the existing social and political realities. The contemporary social and political problems were crucial in determining the nature of Oppositional Theatre as it flourished in response to the social problems of justice. Political Theatre does not always aim at influencing people's attitude but limits itself merely to expose certain issues and matters. Michael Kirby points out in his essay, '*On Political Theatre*':

It would be wrong, however, to consider the effectiveness of political theatre only in terms of changing the beliefs and opinions of the spectators. Some political theatre does not do this. It merely raises certain issues, explores certain problems, and asks certain questions. It does not proselytize, it is not didactic, and it does not support particular alternatives. (8)

Thus 'Political and Protest Theatre' had been a major force in the post-war period and were used as a subversive political and cultural strategies. They can be broadly categorised into the following types.

### 1.5.1 Epic Theatre

The term 'Epic Theatre' refers to the dramatic theories and practices endorsed by the German playwright Bertolt Brecht and his contemporaries Frank Wedekind, Erwin Piscator and the director Max Reinhardt after the World War I. They opposed the old aesthetics of the traditional or Proscenium Theatre and proposed a type of theatre that appealed to reason rather than emotion. However, it is most often associated with the techniques and style popularized by Brecht, the archetypical figure of Modern Epic Theatre. Two major techniques of Epic Theatre evolved by Brecht are 'theatricalism' and 'alienation effect' (*Verfremdungs-effekt*). By 'theatricalism', he wanted to make the audience aware of the fact that they are observing a performance instead of, giving them a feeling that they are watching real life. His purpose was to objectify everyday sociological reality. The 'alienation effect' (*V-effekt*) also served the same purpose. Brecht made use of this technique to preclude the actors and the audience from being involved in the action of the play hence, to prevent them from emotional identification with the characters or the events in the play. He ensured this by forcing the actors to step out of their characters to deliver a lecture or to sing a song, by changing backdrop in front of the audience and by introducing musicians on the stage. The theatre aesthetics developed by Brecht are very different from the aesthetics held by Proscenium Theatre artists. The Brechtian aesthetics are as follows:

- A detached description of objective reality.
- Appeal to reason rather than emotion and feeling.
- Distancing the audience from not being emotionally involved in the performance.
- Raising people's consciousness.
- Intelligible material.
- Alternative interpretations.
- Episodic scenes.
- Development of narrative in place of plot.
- Turning spectators from passive observers into active and detached observers.
- Arousing spectators' capacity to make decisions.
- Presenting a picture of the world rather than experiences.
- Offering argument instead of suggestions.

- Drive to action through knowledge.
- Social being is the object of inquiry.
- A human being is changeable.
- The knowledge accumulated exposes the flaws in the society.
- Not the individual wills but, the social and economic factors determine the dramatic action.

Brecht used theatre to hold a live debate, to present an argument about contemporary social problems and complexities. The aim of Brecht was to provoke the audience, to infuse rationalism and to inform them about their institutionalized suffering so that they can take necessary actions to improve their condition. The theories and practices of Brecht brought revolutionary changes in theatre and inspired theatre artists across the world.

### **1.5.2 Theatre of the Oppressed**

This concept of theatre was developed by the Brazilian theatre activist Augusto Boal in reaction to the Aristotelian model of theatre, where the audience is turned into a ‘peeping Tom’ by empathising with the characters and events staged. In this process, the audience momentarily suspends his thoughts and starts thinking from the protagonist’s mind. He believed that the bourgeoisie propagated this type of theatre to uphold their hegemonic power and to perpetuate the exploitation of the working class people. Centuries later Brecht realised this division between the stage and the audience and promoted non-Aristotelian aesthetics of theatre which helped to elude this temporarily identification with the characters and the events on stage and to arouse critical thinking in the audience. Inspired by Brechtian poetics Boal developed a new type of theatre for the oppressed class which he termed as the ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’. This theatrical concept is even more radical than the Brechtian concept of theatre. It is participatory in nature where the audience is encouraged to participate in the course of action being performed and to guide the actors on the stage instead of obeying them instinctively. Boal wanted to turn the spectators into Spec-actor who are given authority to appropriate the power of the actor, to offer solutions and to exchange ideas about change, thus taking control of the actors and actions on stage. Boal not only abolished the division between spectators and audience but also between the protagonists and other actors. He used theatre arena to prepare the

spectators for real action. He proclaims, “The theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution” (98). Boal wanted to liberate the spectator who is free to think and to act for himself instead of thinking from the character’s mind. He does not merely believe in arousing the critical conscience of the spectators but to motivate them for action. He used theatre to challenge and subvert the hegemonic forces in his country.

### **1.5.3 Agitprop Theatre**

The term ‘Agitprop’ is the combination of two different words, ‘agitation’ and ‘propaganda’. Agitation signifies the persuasion of people to support or oppose something while the word propaganda suggests, ideas, statements, and information often false or exaggerated, spread to support a cause. It was originated in the post-revolutionary Russia where it was used to instruct individuals in Marxist principles in order to endorse the government in power. C.D. Innes in his book, *Erwin Piscator’s political theatre: The Development of Modern German Drama* (1972), has tried to define and trace the origin of the ‘Agitprop Theatre’. He articulates:

Agitprop – short for ‘Agitation and Propaganda’ – was theatre at its most primitive. There was nothing dramatic about this when it first began in the U.S.S.R. after the Revolution as a means of communicating news to a largely illiterate population. It was similar to the earlier European tradition of the town crier. Bulletins were transmitted by telegraph to the towns and villages and read out by political officials through megaphones to local inhabitants gathered in the central square. The doctrinal nature of Communism and the fact that the majority of workers were neither Marxists nor revolutionaries led to this type of factual broadcast being combined with political exhortations and discussions conducted by the news-reader; and since the aim was not only to inform but to arouse enthusiasm, these public meetings were rounded off by playing the communist anthem, the International. The basic elements of theatre were there – a speaker, an audience and emotional involvement as well as rational communication. When music was added to underline points of importance and news-readers began to ‘exhibit’ events with bodily movements, it was a short step to a more formal kind of performance, and the first regular Agitprop troupe the Blue Shirts was founded by the National Institute of Journalists in Moscow in 1923. (23)

Hence, the dramatizing of news reports or the Marxian propaganda helped to evolve a new theatrical genre which came to be known as Agitprop Theatre.

Agitprop Theatre is political in nature because of its dealing with the political themes and issues. It is often used either, to support a ruling authority or to oppose it. It is radical both in its treatment of the subject matter and form. It is also called the 'living newspaper' of the people because of its concern with the existing social and political problems. The Agitprop performances take place on an open stage and in broad daylight, thus transforming the passive audience into an active and interrogative audience. The purpose of these type of performances is to take theatre to the larger population. Agitprop Theatre deals with everyday life events and occurrences. It emphasizes on the simplification of form and content, denouncing the idea of elaborate costumes, props, make-ups and unnecessary sound and light effects. This theatrical genre is goal oriented, willing to bring about social change by communicating information about a particular problem and stirring up audiences' emotions. Agitprop Theatre is an example of provocative theatre dedicated to raising the voice of the oppressed class. It violates the sacrosanctity and aesthetics of the Proscenium Theatre and offers a flexible kind of theatre which is adaptable according to the situation. There is always is a scope for improvisation. To involve people in the rehearsal of resistance against unjust social setup is the strategy of Agitprop Theatre. This theatrical activity led to the origin of Street Theatre.

#### **1.5.4 Street Theatre**

Street Theatre is a non-conventional form of theatre that is performed outdoors. It is participatory in nature and affords space for improvisation. The audience is allowed to intervene during the performance thus, contributing to the production of the play. Street Theatre reflects on contemporary social realities and invites the audience to act in order to change their condition. It is a process of empowering the powerless by providing an opportunity to the oppressed to voice their grievances and to protest against their oppressors. It communicates serious socio-cultural and political issue. This type of theatre is used as a weapon to effect social change. As Boal says, "The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it" (98). It played an important role in the anti-colonial struggle in India, in the Industrial Revolution in Europe, contributed to the Suffragette Movement in London, educated the illiterate

masses during the Russian Revolution, and engaged in the anti-war movements during the World War II and the Vietnam War. Its primary objective is to bring social and political reform through influencing people's opinion. Minimum use of props and costumes are the key features of Street Theatre so that the troupe can easily move from one place to another. Instead of, waiting for the audience to come and to see the performance, Street Theatre goes to the audience itself. Although separated by the mainstream theatre, this has been a major theatrical activity in the twentieth century. It is a radical, revolutionary and anti-establishment form of theatre, intended to educate people on certain topics. It does not merely aim to awaken people's conscience but also mobilises them to act against the authoritarian system. It deals with a variety of subjects, for instance, health, class discrimination, gender issues, the issues of race, education, justice, equality and many more. Forum Theatre, Guerrilla Theatre, Invisible Theatre and Community Theatre have been used as alternative forms of Street Theatre.

### **1.5.5 Feminist Theatre**

Allied with the women's liberation movement Feminist Theatre can be defined as theatre that resists the patriarchal structure of society and strives to represent the socio-political struggles of women. It highlights gender politics and protests against the marginalised state of women.

Even though, women participation in theatre stretches back to the origin of theatre in the fertility rites such as maenads, Feminist Theatre as an established genre is a twentieth-century phenomenon. The period after the World War I felt the presence of new women playwrights who expressed feminist concern and pioneered a new theatrical language, the female language. Among them, Susan Glaspell is best known for her play *The Verge* (1921). Federico Garcia Lorca is another male playwright who has dramatized the sufferings of women. He is well known for his trilogy: *Blood Wedding* (1932), *Yerma* (1934) and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1936). However, it gained momentum in the seventies with the rise of feminist theorists and critics who challenged the traditional approach and outlined new and diverse approaches to read a play. Sue-Ellen Case, Elaine Aston, Jill Dolan and Helen Cixous are important names whose theories and criticisms have made major contributions in the development of Feminist Theatre. Megan Terry, Caryl Churchill,

Tina Howe, Alice Childress, Marsha Norman, Rosalie Abrams and Mahasweta Devi are some other notable women playwrights considered to be the representatives of Feminist Theatre. These playwrights challenged the chauvinist attitudes of patriarchal society and demanded equal opportunities for women in all spheres of society. They questioned male rationality and sought to re-affirm feminist values.

### **1.5.6 The Theatre of the Absurd**

The Theatre of the Absurd can be called a kind of protest theatre in the sense that it depicts the harsh social and political realities of the post-1950s, just after the World War II. Beckett, Ionesco and Arthur Adamov are considered to be the pioneers of this non-conventional form of theatre. It highlights the post-War trauma and the growing disenchantment of Europeans with contemporary existential conditions embodied within a framework of tragi-comedy. It criticises a section of Europeans for ignoring the plights of other section which led to their alienation and isolation. These playwrights have emphasised this of break-down of communication through the irrational interaction of the characters which often contradicts their action. They seem to be stuck in an avoidable situation and repeat the same action again and again which signifies the futility of human existence. However, these weird sequence of events conveys a meaning. In the opinion of Martin Esslin:

Not only do all these plays make sense, though perhaps not obvious or conventional sense, they also give expression to some of basic issues and problems of our age, in a uniquely efficient and meaningful manner, so that they meet some of the deepest needs and unexpressed yearnings of their audience. (04)

These dramatists protested not only the inhumane attitude of humans towards each other but also countered the established canons of the conventional stage.

They are living proof that the magic of the stage can persist even outside, and divorced from, any framework of conceptual rationality. They prove that exit and entrances, light and shadow, contrasts in costume, voice gait and behaviour, pratfalls and embraces, all the manifold mechanical interactions of human puppets in groupings that suggest tension, conflict, or the relaxation of tensions, can arouse laughter or gloom and conjure up an atmosphere of poetry

even if devoid of logical motivation and unrelated to recognizable human characters, emotions and objectives. (Esslin 04).

## **1.6 Performance**

The rise of new critical theories profoundly influenced the modern art and literature, including theatre. The word 'Performance' as a new academic discipline juxtaposed to theatre studies has become a cause celebre in the twentieth century across Europe and in the United States. This new area of interest attracted the attention of theatre scholars and anthropologists alike around the globe especially, of the Western scholars, most notably, Richard Schechner, Ervin Goffman and Victor Turner whose intellectual thesis on this subject helped a lot in the development and expansion of this concept. Carlson in his *Theatre: A Very Short Introduction* has tried to trace the genealogy of performance. He writes "Like many modern English words, the ancestry of 'perform' is French, from the Old French term 'parfournir' 'meaning to do' or to carry out" (74). Performance is a very complex term to define because of its interdisciplinary nature. Goffman has defined performance as "All the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continual presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (13). Goffman's definition is very close to a theatrical performance emphasising on some kind of action performed before an audience at the specific time period and which has a cathartic effect. Schechner defines performance in these words:

The whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that take in/ among both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of the performance – the precinct where the theatre takes place –to the time the last spectator leaves. (Schechner 71)

The notion of performance provided by Schechner incorporates all the elements of theatre, a story intended to be enacted in front of a crowd (audience), by a group of performers and a stage where the action takes place. This whole activity is called performance. At another place, Schechner says, "A performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group" (Schechner 29). Thus, performance includes the varied viable series of events woven around theatre whose main drive is to stage performances of which audience is an inseparable part.

Schechner, Goffman, and Turner made distinctive contributions in the evolution and propagation of Performance Studies. Schechner edited the famous journal *Tulane drama review* in 1962 later renamed as *The Drama Review* in 1967 which has been the most influential theatre journal in the 1960s. The journal was devoted to the study of new emerging trends in drama and the essays contributed in it proved decisive in the rise of Performance Studies. New York University became the first to offer a course in performance studies and within a few years, the NYU drama department changed its name to the Department of Performance Studies. By the 1980s New York University was not the only institution to offer a course in performance studies. In 1984 the Department of Interpretation at Northwestern University changed its name to the Department of Performance Studies. And in the next few decades, it was not possible for the other parts of the world to remain intact from this widespread sensation of Performance Studies. Although the term performance is applicable to wide phenomenon such as theatre, visual arts, music, dance, body arts, anthropology, and sociology here it is discussed in relation to theatre art.

Whereas the Performance Studies grew in popularity across Europe in the twentieth century it acquired new dimensions in theatre. Though this is wholly a new phenomenon, its relationship with theatre is century old, going back to the Middle Ages. Earlier it was used to refer to a theatrical work or a theatrical occasion. However, the dominance of Performance Studies and its long-established association with theatre widened its horizon and provided novel perspectives on theatre, to the theatre academics and practitioners, since the old Eurocentric patterns of theatre seemed inadequate to accommodate new emerging trends in dramatic literature. This new discipline focused on the operations of theatre and challenged the age-old tradition of theatre based primarily on literary texts. It questioned the basic assumption of literary 'Canon' foregrounded on Eurocentric norms which did not accept the works outside the 'Canon', disregarding a large body of non-Western theatrical works as well as the works in the European tradition that does not fit into the 'Canon'. Instead of, focusing on themes, characterization, and structures the new dramatists turned to the processes of performance, for instance, the staging of the events, the setting, the props, the space (physical as well as the symbolic), and the role of the audience.

Performance Studies furnished new mechanisms and expanded the horizon of theatre by giving space to other non-Western and non-literary theatrical traditions. According to Marvin Carlson “One might characterize these major shifts as that performance encouraged in theatre as internationalization, democratization, and contextualization” (92). Thus, Performance Studies played a major role in abolishing the cultural and literary hierarchy of the West which has marginalised the other performance activities. It expanded the scope of theatre from being merely a literary piece to a particular kind of human activity rooted in his/her social and cultural milieu. According to Marvin Carlson, “Performance Studies contributed importantly to a new way of thinking about theatre, not as an isolated artistic object but as an experience embedded in cultural processes” (94).

### **1.7 Dario Fo**

Dario Fo emerges out as one of the pre-eminent figures of contemporary radical drama who practised theatre to inspire social change by challenging the political and religious status quo. He incisively questions the authoritarian style of functioning of these institutions of power aspiring to transform the existing power structure which he strives to achieve by changing the people’s opinion. Since the inception of this art form, it has been constantly used to propagate the hegemony of a particular social or political group, likewise, it has been used to deconstruct the prevailing hegemony and to establish a counter-hegemonic discourse. Fo used theatre as a weapon to intervene in contemporary events and as a medium to express a feeling of dissent which is unequivocally anti-establishment. His plays set off a larger discussion on politics, culture, religion, democracy and human right. He chose outmoded and illegitimate theatrical forms for his dialectical expression, adapted from the traditions of the Greek, Romans, medieval *Giullari* and the Renaissance *Commedia dell’Arte* that makes him the champion of popular culture. In his introduction to *Dario Fo Plays: 1* Stuart Hood writes:

Dario Fo represents a tradition in Italian theatre that gave the world comic figures like Pulcinella and Arlecchino. The Lineage of his writing and performance can be traced back to the *Commedia dell’arte* of the Renaissance which established the cast of cunning servants, swaggering swordsmen, lecherous old men and star-crossed lovers with their masks and conventional

costumes that held the stage for more than two hundred years and from which Punch and Judy derive. But further back still he draws on the older tradition of the giullari, the wandering performers of the Middle Ages with their tradition of disrespect for the authorities and the church, and on the slapstick of clowns like Zanni, which is the Venetian version of Giovanni and the name from which we get the word 'zany'. These Zannis – peasant clowns from the valley of the Po – developed a tradition of mime and the convention of *grammelot*: a mixture of dialect words and onomatopoeia, a language that was no language and yet one audience could latch on to and understand and still do. These are kind of theatre, Fo argues, that in turn have their roots centuries earlier in the Latin farces of Plautus and Terence (ix).

His work is the celebration or rather a continuation of Italy's theatrical past inspired by today's headlines. He addresses present with the hindsight of the past, offering an exciting blend of tradition and modernity. His theatre represents the underprivileged; voicing their needs, desires, and ambitions. His theatre is often seen in terms of class struggle; oppressor and the oppressed. The main conflict in his work is the patrician versus the popular. As per Farrell's argument:

It must be theatre which has roots in history and society, which grows from the experience of one class and instinctively or consciously expresses the attitudes, humour and resentments of that class. The basic polarity was patrician versus popular, hegemonic versus subaltern, not didactic versus escapist. Fo's ideal was the combination entertainment plus education; each in isolation fell short of his notion of theatre. His supreme models were the carnival and the character who could be associated with the carnival spirit – principally Harlequin and the jester. They displayed the impish or puckish spirit, but transcended it to give voice to the satiric, the tragic or the subversive. (257)

Although, he has a variety of techniques at his disposal, two –the '*Giullarate*' and the 'Political Satires' become the predominant channels of his dramatic expression. While the former is placed in broader socio-political, cultural and historical milieu the latter is a response to specific socio-political events. But, what is common between the two are their contemporaneity and the comic, farcical and

scurrilous nature of these performances, which serve as the subversive mechanism of Fo's theatre that is to destabilise the centre of power and to uphold the dignity of the downtrodden. He combines laughter with anger at injustice and abuse of power. Laughter is not just a simple, pleasure-seeking laughter. It's an uncomfortable laughter with tragic barebones amalgamated, which functions as a liberating force. As Fo says in *The Tricks of the Trade*:

Laughter denotes a critical awareness; it signifies imagination, intelligence and a rejection of all fanaticism. In the scale of human evolution, we have *Homo faber*, then *Homo sapiens* and finally *Homo ridens*, and this last is always the most difficult to subdue or make conform. (109)

His purpose is to blow the lid off the corrupt politicians and the religious figures through his knockabout farce which is his preferred genre and has a popular origin. In Hirst's opinion:

Farce, according to Fo, is an ancient dramatic form, traceable to the Greeks and much used in classical Rome, as well as by the entertainers of the Middle Ages. It represents a precise application of logic and at the same time leaves room for improvisation; and it is particularly in this context that we can appreciate the full meaning of the term 'improvisation' for Fo. (39)

The rumbustious humour of his comedies is not merely intended at arousing laughter but underlying that boisterousness is his serious political messages. His comedies are not the comedies of escapism or sheer fun rather they deal with serious political themes in a satirical manner. Emulating the jester of the Middle Ages he puts his art at the service of class struggle trying to give voice to the voiceless. Fo realized that it was not just enough to dramatize people's problems but they should be done in their own traditions and idioms in order to reach to the wider population and for more popular appeal. His theatre is the theatre of the oppressed, representing them, their culture and traditions. He used theatre as a public arena to discuss contemporary problems and issues. Because he believed that theatre is not only comprised of a stage, actors, directors, authors, technicians, mimes but also of the audience who is an integral part of it. He overturned the bourgeois aesthetics of theatre where the audience is turned into a voyeur who sits in the dark observing the performance with surprise and awe something which is prohibited in his theatre. He wanted to involve

them in the action of the play by breaking the 'fourth wall'; the imaginary divide between the audience and the performer. The purpose is to prevent them from emotional identification with the characters on stage so that they could easily grasp the politics discussed in the play and critically analyse their condition. He does not aim at creating an intellectual sort of theatre to philosophise or to moralise on certain issues and problems, to delve into abstract or metaphysical realities and to deal with the psychological dilemma of an individual, a group or a society. Rather, Fo is concerned with concrete socio-political, historical and cultural realities of the day who used theatre to educate people on crucial issues, to make them aware of the bourgeois politics and to provoke them to resist their oppression, exploitation, and marginalisation. His selection of the popular mode of performances clearly reflects his ideas on theatre, politics, history, and culture. As Farrell expounds:

Fo does not beguile academic critics by inviting their participation in the erudite dissection of psychic wounds or individual dilemmas. He has no interest in investigating fractured psyches, in portraying the plight of the human animal in a world made barren by the death of God or in delving into the adequacy of language for communicating emotional dilemmas. There are no subtexts to be uncovered, no hidden ambiguities to be revealed, no delicate psychology of character to be probed, no curiosities of flawed personality to be dissected and analysed, no alternative world of the fantasy to be contemplated. Further, he does not construct a philosophy, as does Pirandello, or offer a portrait of a bourgeois in thrall to a claustrophobic malaise as does Ibsen, or of a regime in terminal decline like Chekhov. Critics will search in vain for the metaphysical dimension constructed by fellow farceurs like Beckett or Ionesco. Nor does his theatre, unlike that of Artaud or early Strindberg, display neurotic symptoms of the creative mind which could be taken as a warped illumination of the senseless world in which men and women have their daily being. Fo stands with the buskers at the theatre door, singing and joking of matters of importance to the queues seeking admission to the gods. But who remembers a busker. (273)

He changed the basic assumption of comedy as a light-hearted entertainment, into a genre that can be used for serious purposes as well. He used it as an outlet for his dissenting political ideas intended to educate people on critical issues of the day,

arousing their consciousness against malpractices of the system and provoking them to act against the abusers of power. Theatre for Fo was a political tool for organizing anti-establishment resistance. “Fo’s performance is an allegory of rebellion camouflaged behind a mask of crude buffoonery” (Jenkins 173). At the innermost of its clowning, derision and irony are Fo’s deep-seated reverence for the oppressed. His theatre oscillates between fact, fiction, politics, religion, history, and anthropology. His insistent criticism of the Italian authorities and his continuous attempt to uphold the dignity of the downtrodden introduced him as the key figure of contemporary radical drama. Behan says, “Fo’s life and plays are a celebration of the oppressed, of those fighting against an unjust world” (141). Taking inspiration from the medieval *Giullari*, the Harlequin of the Commedia dell’Arte and the political and cultural theories of Antonio Gramsci, Fo has fashioned his revolutionary theatre which fostered the development of a vigorous, vernacular theatrical tradition.

Fo’s theatrical mission is therefore one with a trajectory that takes him away from the formal scholarly dramas of the Renaissance courts jester just as it does from the bourgeois plays of the nineteenth century and the ‘well-made’ plays of our own time. The art of comic acting, of working with masks, of mime and of grammelot he has taken and developed in order to create a modern popular theatre. (Hood ix)

Representation of class struggle especially the working class forms the dialectic of his theatre. Through theatre, he expressed his solidarity with the marginalised, for instance, workers, prisoners, students, and women. His theatre is the living example of contemporary Italian society and politics, therefore we cannot isolate his work from its social, political and historical setting. Mitchell states:

Fo has established himself as a giullare (jester) in the oral tradition of the medieval strolling players, presenting political satires against the Italian political and religious establishment, and making militant interventions in Italian political life. (xiii)

His theatre is a remarkable blend of art and politics with a desire to transform society. He used theatre as a weapon to fight against hegemonic forces of the society. Fo’s determined resistance to Italian religious and political powers is allied with his commitment to restore the popular culture reinforced by recovering illegitimate

theatrical forms which are of immense importance in the development of his Political Theatre. “His presentation of social and political issues is animated by European carnival culture” (Scuderi 3). He was in constant conflict with the Italian political as well as religious authorities due to the subversive politics of his theatre and his overt political contents. He was pigeon-holed as a “theatre anarchist” by state authorities, “blasphemous lout” by Catholic forces and “an exponent of comic Communism” by Marxists. But he walked through it notwithstanding his opposition and created a wave at the world stage. Fo has nothing to do with the psychological representation of his characters alienated from their social and political context rather, they are an embodiment of their social and political environment. He never dissociates himself from everyday social realities, neither is he a detached observer of those problems but actively participates in the people’s struggle for survival. He through his oppositional theatre scourges the perpetrators of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. As he says:

Mine has been a revolt, a rebellion, against a hypocritical and deceitful order, which dates back to my experience as a student. As Marx says, ‘the ruling ideas in a society are the ideas of the ruling class’, and that time it was only the ruling class which expressed its culture. Therefore my class, the peasantry, was viewed as being a parasite that lived off that culture and aped some of its products. (qtd in Behan 7)

But his is not the blind or impulsive opposition as Behan implies, “The basic tenet of Fo’s political theatre is: opposition through knowledge, together with real understanding –not just a spontaneous explosion of outrage against injustice” (96). Establishment of a proletarian counter-culture opposed to the mainstream culture was prerequisite for the Fovian theatre. His theatre sets the best example of contemporary radical drama defying settled conventions and authority. According to Hirst:

Fo has never concerned himself with observing the rules – either those of the establishment or those of the conventional Left. He is an iconoclast, an artist who in literal sense of the word wishes to subvert traditional values: to turn them upside-down. Yet there is method and purpose in his satire. He wishes to provoke. (26)

Dario Fo was born in 1926 at San Giano on Lake Maggiore, Lombardy into a middle-class family. His father Felice Fo was a station master and his mother Pina

Rota came from a farmer's family. One of the early influences on Fo was his maternal grandfather Giuseppe, nicknamed Bristin who used to vend vegetables in the nearby villages and amuse people with his improvised, subversive and outrageous stories and whom Fo refers as 'the first Ruzzante'. Among other significant childhood influences on Fo's subsequent theatrical career is that of the *Fabulatori*, the local storytellers who entertained the villagers by their imaginary and fantastic tales. Farrell states:

There were still travelling, professional story-tellers in the region, but the fabulatori who particularly fascinated Dario were the local fishermen who spun their yarns as they repaired their nets, or the glassworkers who recounted their narratives while blowing glass. These stories had no savour of humdrum realism. They were hyperbolic tales spiced with whimsy, in which the grotesque and the absurd, observation and surreal wit, mordant satire and resigned nonchalance mingled together. (8)

These early influences proved decisive in the development of Fo's narrative and in almost all of his plays we can observe the influence of this vital tradition. When the Second World War broke in 1944, he was summoned for military services which he deserted after a few months and collaborated with his father in the Resistance Movement. At the end of the War, he joined Brera Academy in Milan to study architecture but left it without receiving a degree.

In the late 1940s, Fo came in contact with different artists, writers, and actors of the age and it was during this period that he developed an instinct for theatre. Strehler was his first mentor who introduced him to the art of theatre-making but later they both retracted from each other, due to ideological differences. Later, he developed a rapport with Franco Parenti, the famous stage actor and the performer during the 1950s who helped Dario to get his first radio audition. He made his theatrical debut in 1952 when he was asked to write a series of monologues to be aired by the state radio channel. The collected monologues which came to be known as *Poer nano* (*Poor Dwarf*) were improvisational and paradoxical in nature written in regional Milanese dialect. They were performed at Odeon in 1952. This was Fo's first experience as an actor-author and it provided him with an opportunity to display his theatrical virtuosity of turning everything upside-down. His next venture was *Il dito nell' occhio* (*A Finger in the Eye*) 1953, written in collaboration with Franco Parenti

and Giustino Durano consisting of 21 sketches which caused a stir in Italy because of its subversive style and political commentary. It was here, he met his partner and life-long collaborator Franca Rame who had acted in his play. This was love at first sight and they tied nuptial knot in 1954. Their next joint project was *sani da legare* (*Sane to be Locked Up*) 1954 which consisted of 24 sketches dealing with contemporary realities. The play was subjected to heavy criticism because of its overt political messages which eventually led to the disintegration of their association. After their break-up, Fo moved to the cinema but after a few failed attempts he returned to theatre in 1958 with a newly formed theatre company, known as the 'Compagnia Fo-Rame'. He started to work with established theatre circuits during the period 1959-1968 which is labelled as 'bourgeois period' by the critics of Fo. But he should not be misunderstood by the term 'bourgeois'. His plays from this period are called bourgeois in the sense that they are performed at places of conventional theatre. Thematically, they involve the criticism of the authorities in a peculiar Fovian style combining the elements of farce, satire, and irony. Some of the notable plays of the period are, *Gli arcangeli non giocano a flipper* (*Archangels Don't Play Pinball*) 1959, *Aveva due pistole con gli occhi bianchi e neri* (*He had Two Pistols with White and Black Eyes*), 1960, *Chi ruba un piede e fortunato in amore* (*He Who Steals a Foot is Lucky in Love*) 1961, *Isabella, tre caravelle e un cacciaballe* (*Isabella, Three Sailing Ships and a Con Man*) 1963, and *La signora e da buttare* (*Throw the Lady Out*) 1967, the final play in the mainstream Italian theatre.

In 1968 he abandoned 'conventional theatre' for 'unconventional theatre' realizing the fact that he has been tired of being the 'jester of the bourgeoisie' and decided to be 'the jester of the plebeian'. Instead of performing at commercial theatre spaces and entertaining bourgeois audiences he preferred to organize his performances at alternative places provided to them by ARCI to promote the people's cause. Talking about their departure from bourgeois theatre to the theatre of clown Farrell says:

Dario and Franca made the decision that they had to break completely with commercial, or 'bourgeois', theatre. What success he may have had in integrating satire and politics into bourgeois comedy, Dario felt that the company was, both in its structure and stage policy, no longer appropriate vehicle for changed times or for the political vision he wished to propose. (75)

Not only Fo but a number of Left Wing European playwrights felt obliged to choose non-conventional forms of theatre. The reason behind this was the mass mobilization of the workers and the students who took the streets to storm and Italy was not an exception. It was these events and incidents that revolutionized Fo's theatre until then he performed his political invectives in conventional bourgeois theatre. His identification with the proletarian struggle and his commitment to putting his theatre at the service of the oppressed with his new brand of explosive and provocative satires directed at the rich and the powerful was one of the key factors of his breaking away with the commercial theatre. One of the functions of theatre is a projection of contemporary issues and problems for a better understanding of them. The events of 1968 were decisive in the development of Fo's Popular Protest Theatre because, "In 1968 Dario Fo set out to be the jester for his own times, the spokesman for Everyman" (Farrell 77). The new theatre was performed at public avenues facilitated by ARCI (the cultural and recreational division) of the PCI. The new theatre group which he formed in association with ARCI is called 'Associazione Nuova Scena'. The purpose of this coalition was to take theatre to the public instead of waiting for them to come and involve them in the performance. They were treated not simply as spectators but 'Spec-actors' who actively participate in the performative events thus, making valuable contributions to the performance. Audiences remain a major focus of his theatre whose suggestions and comments can bring changes in the script of the play. The alliance with Nuova Scena did not remain long and he parted in 1969. The reason of this breakdown was the uncompromising nature of Fo with the reformist approach embraced by the Left. The political commitment of Fo and his concern for proletarians compelled him to do so. He was prohibited to utilize those spaces provided by ARCI in the wake of which he initiated his own theatre company 'La-Commune' in 1970. Some of the important plays he produced during this brief union are, *Grande pantomima con bandiere e pupazzi piccoli e medi* (*Grand Pantomime with Flags and Small Big and Medium-Sized Puppets*) 1968, *Mistero Buffo* (*Comic Mystery*) 1969, and *L' operaio conosce trecento parole, il padrone mille: per questo lui e il padrone* (*The Worker Knows 300 Words, the boss 1,000, that's why he's the boss*) 1969.

The 1970s is recorded the most turbulent period in the political history of Italy as it witnessed a large crowd on the streets especially of the workers and the students

agitating against the hypocrisy and authoritarianism of the ruling party. Most of the plays of the period were a response to the then current social and political events. This period produced plays such as, *Morte Accidentale di un anarchico (Accidental Death of an Anarchist)* 1970, one of the most famous and widely performed plays of Dario Fo, *Guerra di popolo in Cile (People's War in Chile)* 1973, *Non si paga, non si paga (Can't Pay! Won't Pay)* 1974, *Il Fanfani rapito (Fanfani Kidnapped)* 1975, *La marijuana della mamma e' la piu bella (Mummy's Marijuana is the best)* 1976, *Tutta casa letto e chiesa (All Home, Bed and Church)* 1977 and *Storia di una tigre (Story of a Tiger)* 1979.

Towards the end of the 1980, Fo lost to some extent the political edge of the previous era and the reason for this was the gradual decline in the working class struggle. But he did not lack in his commitment and continued to produce political plays with different political contents as compared to the 1970s. To mention a few major productions, *Clacson, trombette e pernacchi (Trumpets and Raspberries)* 1980, *Fabulazzo osceno (Obscene Fables)* 1982, *Parti femminili (Female Parts)* 1986 and *Il papa e la strega (The Pope and the Witch)* 1989.

Fo's theatrical career can be broadly categorised into two periods addressing two distinct phases in the development of his theatrical paradigm. The first phase, starting from 1959 to 1968 is described as the 'bourgeois period' taking into consideration his involvement with the commercial bourgeois theatre and the bourgeois audience. The second phase begins after 1968, characterized as the 'revolutionary period' during which he produced his radical and militant plays in response to the contemporary political events. The revolutionary struggle of the workers who protested against their low wages and bad working conditions in the factories characterised this period. Strike was the most common practice which was used as a medium of protest against exploitative environment in the factories. This was high time for Fo to channel the political vision he wanted to communicate to the world. He was attributed with the highest title, the Nobel Prize in 1997 for the tremendous job he did in theatre. Unlike, other artists who generally sit in repose after such a big achievement he continued to participate in the burning socio-political issues and remains a cause-celebre in the theatre world.

Summing up we can claim that Dario Fo is a quintessential figure in Italian theatre, well known for his hilarious, agitational and scurrilous performances,

exposing the unscrupulousness of the political as well as the ecclesiastical system and patronizing the weaker section of the society in Italy. He is a versatile actor-director, stage-designer, painter as well as an accomplished writer who has at his theatrical root the great comic tradition of Italian past going back to the comedies of Plautus, the medieval *Giullari*, the Renaissance Commedia dell'Arte and the sixteenth-century theatre of Ruzzante which ushered a new comic trend throughout Europe. He is a theatre artist par excellence whose leadership of contemporary radical drama remains undisputed. He, despite his iconoclastic attitude follows a prodigiously rich theatrical tradition of the Italian past that enables him to connect with the lower strata of society and their culture.

This identification with the popular culture begins with its appreciation and culminates in the theatrical celebration which is firmly rooted in that culture. To give breadth and width to the culture of the masses and to redeem it from bourgeois appropriation becomes the sole mission of his artistic endeavour. He considers culture as an essential component of the hegemonic process and his attempt to retrieve proletarian culture is the part of that process, reinforcing proletarian hegemony. The theatre of Fo is an expression of his polemical ideas on politics, religion, history and culture which are inevitable to our social existence. Therefore, it becomes imperative to define the key terms of my thesis for a deeper insight into these components which are closely linked to his theatre.

## **1.8 Key Terms**

### **1.8.1 Politics**

The word 'politics' comes from the Greek word 'polis', meaning state and the word 'political' is the derivation of 'politikas' which means 'of or pertaining to the state'. Politics is an arguable subject and diverse definitions of politics have been provided by political thinkers and philosophers making it more difficult to grasp. In the broadest sense of the term, politics deals with the state and its governance. It is considered as an enterprise of public affairs, a kind of social activity, regulation of people's behaviour, resolution of conflict, compromise, allocation of resources, and is inextricably linked to public life. Aristotle in *Politics* says, "Man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident without a state is either above humanity, or below it; he is the 'Tribeless, lawless, heartless one,'" (28).

Greece and Rome have been considered the seedbed of politics where it was seen in terms of statecraft. There, politics was parallel to an activity and art, required to run the state which worked for the common good of the people. This concept is well represented by Aristotle:

Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or the political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims, and in a greater degree than any other, at the highest good. (25)

Now the question arises what is politics? An art of government, a public event, or power? In fact, it is a combination of all the three. A human being is not only the political but a social animal as well. Aristotle states, "A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature" (29). Family is presumed to be the earliest model of a political society and this concept is represented by both, Aristotle and Rousseau respectively. Rousseau in his *The Social Contract* says:

The family may be regarded as the first model of political society: the leader corresponds to the father, the people to the children, all being born free and equal, none alienates his freedom except for reasons of utility. The sole difference is that, in the family, the father is paid for the care he takes of his children by the love he bears them, while in the state this love is replaced by the pleasure of being in command, the chief having no love for his people. (46)

Aristotle too articulated that the family is the earliest model of the state. He says:

Out of these two relationships between man and woman, master and slave, the family first arises. But when several families are united, and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily needs, then comes into existence the village. When several villages are united in a single community, perfect and large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. (27-28)

Hence, it is proved that politics is an unavoidable phenomenon of our social existence, attempting to create a good society and improving our lives. As Aristotle

asserts, “For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all” (29). Now again the question arises that who will run the state and how? Political theorists and historians have discussed at length and tried to distinguish between different forms of government. For example, barbaric rule, despotism, autocracy, and democracy. Kenneth Minogue in his book *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* observes, “Politics is so central to our civilization that its meaning changes with every change of culture and circumstances” (2). A government is the ruling authority in any state and as Plato has mentioned:

Different forms of government make laws democratical, aristocratical, tyrannical, with a view to their several interests; and these laws, which are made by them for their own interests, are the justice which they deliver to their subjects, and him who transgresses them they punish as a breaker of the law, and unjust. (22)

Plato’s *The Republic*, Aristotle’s *Politics*, Machiavelli’s *Prince*, and Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*, are considered to be the major texts on this subject. They focus on the operations of politics, the role of citizens and the role of the politician whose primary task is to deliver the protocol, to introduce proper constitution for the state and once the constitution is enforced they have to take necessary actions to sustain it. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, has tried to make distinctions between different forms of government. He states:

For governments differ in kind, as will be evident to anyone who considers the matter according to the method which has hitherto guided us. As in other departments of science, so in politics, the compound should always be resolved into the simple elements or least parts of the whole. We must therefore look at the elements of which the state is composed, in order that we may see in what they differ from one another, and whether any scientific distinction can be drawn between the different kinds of rule. (25-26)

Plato in *The Republic* presents an argument about the construction of an ideal state. Rousseau in *The Social Contract* views politics a social activity that ensures the participation, association, and collaboration of each member of the state working for the common good.

Thus, a politician is analogous to a craftsman and politics is a kind of craft which requires skill to practice it. Since every society is a group of heterogeneous people, therefore, it was very difficult to maintain order by an abstract law, this problem of keeping order in such a society or state prompted the new politics. Furthermore, the insecurity of the rulers to preserve power and to make his subjects loyal through the use of different policies of the administration, gave way to the new politics. Machiavelli's *Prince* is a good example of this sort of art. There is no doubt that politics concerns the state, actions of the politicians and administrative policies. Everything else which falls out of this domain is called either social or private which again is a matter of concern. Since politics is defined as the public affair inevitably linked to public life, working through relationships between the people of the same society and the people from other societies, it becomes very difficult to discern between personal and political. With the expansion of political powers in the modern era and the rise of international politics, the boundaries between private and political seem to dissipate that makes it difficult to define. Furthermore, the everyday use of the word 'politics', its occurrence in all social interaction and its frequent association with corruption, deceit, and lie make the matter worse. Boal writes in *The Theatre of the Oppressed*:

Of all the arts and sciences, the sovereign art and science is politics, because nothing is alien to it. Politics has for its field of study the totality of the relationships of the totality of men. Therefore, the greatest good – the attainment of which could entail the greatest virtue – is the political good. (19)

From the very beginning, the subject of politics has attracted the attention of the literary people, historians, political thinkers and the philosophers. For instance, Aristotle, Plato, Rousseau, and Machiavelli explored the conceptual framework of politics, historians like Herodotus, traced its development through the ages and poets and playwrights wrote elegies and satires on political subjects. Broadly speaking, literature is categorized by the literary critics into two types, art for art sake and art for life sake. The former is meant for aesthetic pleasure while the later one is inherent to the social, political and cultural conditions of a community. And theatre is considered as one of the types of performative arts that has been successfully employed as a tool of socio-political commentary and its association with politics has long been contended. Boal affirms in his introduction to *The Theatre of the Oppressed*:

The argument about the relations between theatre and politics is as old as theatre and ... as politics. Since Aristotle, and in fact long before, the same themes and arguments that are still brandished were already set forth. On one hand, art is affirmed to be pure contemplation, and on the other hand, it is considered to present always a vision of the world in transformation and therefore is inevitably political in so far as it shows the means of carrying out that transformation or of delaying it. (2)

Theatre is not merely a source of entertainment, but a kind of cultural activity correspondent to the socio-political issues of its time. It was the political themes and events that enthused Aristophanes to write political satires, Shakespeare who took up the political situations as the themes of his plays and other dramatists who dealt with political problems in their works. There is no doubt that theatre has political significance and is inextricably linked to the political affairs of a community. Theatre is often used to support a political system or a political cause, as it has been used in Soviet Russia to instruct workers in the Marxist principles. It also has been used as a challenge to the establishment, as it is used by Brecht and other European dramatists and the dramatists of the postcolonial period. Theatre often has been used to inspire social and political change. A few of them are, the Epic Theatre of Brecht, the Revolutionary Theatre of Amiri Baraka, Popular Theatre of Dario Fo, Street Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, Forum Theatre, Guerrilla Theatre, the Postcolonial Resistance Theatre and Avant-garde Theatre.

### **1.8.2 Culture**

The rise of modern and postmodern theories and practices challenged the basic assumptions of life, expanded the horizon of knowledge and sought to redefine the previous knowledge. Words, like art, culture, religion, politics, and community achieved new significance during this period. Culture is a broad and all-encompassing term, acquiring different meanings in different societies. Anthropologists have attempted at diverse definitions of culture. Some have defined it as “totality of life”, some have described it as “pattern of behaviour and state of the mind”, some have rendered it as “the production of different forces of society”, while some have called it the “organisation of different activities and experiences of people”.

According to Raymond Williams culture is “A whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual” (xiv). He stresses on the idea that culture is all-encompassing, intrinsic to the social, political, economic and religious life of a society and changes with the change in the social, political and economic life. It forms and defines the identity of a particular ethnic group or a society and gives meaning to their experiences. He confers upon the idea that the association of production, the family, and institutional structure which govern our social relations and the means of communication are all characterized as a culture. For Clifford Geertz, “The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong” (452). His perception of culture is “As interworked systems of construable signs, a context” (14). He emphasized that culture defines a human being, steers his behaviour and gives meaning to his life. As he says:

Undirected by culture patterns –organized systems of significant symbols – man’s behaviour would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and exploding emotions, his experiences virtually shapeless. (46)

He further emphasizes, “Understanding people’s culture exposes their normalness –without reducing their particularity” (14). For Geertz culture is a kind of control mechanism which guides man’s actions. A human being is a composite of culture and his existence is bound to culture. He argues:

It suggests that there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture. As our central nervous system –and most particularly its crowning curse and glory, the neocortex –grew up in great part in interaction with culture, it is incapable of directing our behaviour or organizing our experience without the guidance provided by systems of significant symbols. (49)

Human beings and culture are reciprocal to each other and one feeds the other. Geertz affirms, “Without men, no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly, without culture, no men” (49). He claims that a human being is a product of culture who acts according to the information or misinformation provided by culture.

Our ideas, our values, our acts, even our emotions, are, like our nervous system itself, cultural products –products manufactured indeed, out of

tendencies, capacities, and dispositions with which we were born, but manufactured nonetheless. (Geertz 50)

Striped of culture, a human being is a savage who acts upon his animal instincts. Culture makes him a more sophisticated and domesticated animal, appropriates his behaviour and guides him through his life. Geertz negates the idea of culture as a 'learned behaviour' provided by Margaret Mead. Mead has described culture as "The term applied to the total shared, learned behaviour of a society or subgroup" (22). Geertz contradicts Mead by focusing on culture not as a set of behaviour or some kind of habit formation but the culture has a different meaning for him. For him, culture is, "A set of control mechanism –plans, recipes, rules, instructions –for the governing of behaviour" (44). Michael Ryan in his preface to *Cultural Studies: A Practical Introduction* writes:

Culture as a way of life tends to produce a commonality of thought and behaviour, as well as conformity with reigning standards, norms, and rules. It is what allows us to live together in communities by giving us shared signs and signals whose meaning we know and recognise. We recognise fellow members of our culture by dress, speech, behaviour, and look. In this sense of the word, culture means embedded norms all obey usually without thinking about it. (ix)

From the above-mentioned definitions, it is established that culture is an inseparable part of human life and plays a major role in shaping and determining the identity of a particular group or community. Culture includes almost everything for example; language, religious practices, food, fashion, entertainment (film, television, and radio), art and artifacts. It is important in a way that it assigns meaning to what we do, what we say, and what we think about others. In other words, we can say that culture is an organisation of signs and symbols used by different groups and communities in order to communicate with each other and to assert their position within society. Culture has been an important tool to engage in the power struggle within a social group or community. In words of Baz Kershaw, "Culture is the medium which can unite a range of different groups and communities in a common project in order to make them into an ideological force operating for or against the status quo" (36).

While talking about the correlation between theatre and culture, one should keep in mind that theatre is not merely an art of entertainment but also a cultural event, rooted in the social, political and cultural practices of a society. Therefore the idea of culture and community is central to a theatrical performance. In every age, theatre has been involved in reinforcing as well as to challenging the establishment. Towards the end of the twentieth century, theatre came to be associated with countercultural movements of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. For example, The Civil Rights Movement of America, Black Consciousness Movement of Africa, Gay and Lesbian Movements, anti –War and anti –Capitalist Movements. They were extensively engaged in spreading oppositional tendencies against the status quo and provided a model for oppositional theatre which advocated for an egalitarian society based on democratic principles. Thus theatre was intended not only for amusement but it also played a key role in stimulating social and political change. It has raised serious socio-political questions, represented the struggle of a community or a class and has been wielded as a weapon to fight the dominant hegemony prevalent within a society.

### **1.8.3 Protest**

Protest can be defined as an individual or collective expression of opposition, disapproval, and disagreement concerning to any theme. It can be articulated in a variety of ways, from explicitly overt demonstrations to implicitly covert actions. It's a reaction to certain social problems and stimulates social and political change by influencing people's attitude and convincing them to join in demonstrations. Protest always targets the status-quo and is usually driven by larger public interest, though it can be motivated by an individual interest. It arises out of the dissatisfaction and frustration with the existing socio-political system that prompts the people to vent out their discontent and oppose through various means, by organizing public protests to the most democratic recourse like, distributing pamphlets and involving people in the election campaign. Protest serves as a channel of communication via exchanging information on specific issues and mobilizing people to participate in the contemporary social and political struggle of a community or a nation. Protest defines the public space and secures the democratic rights of the civilians. It exposes the flaws and imperfections in the system and stresses the governing bodies to amend those inadequacies. It happens in all societies and enables its citizens to fight for their

civil rights which include social, political, economic and cultural rights as well. Protest highlights the role of the society and its media to ensure the privileges of the protesters, voicing their resistance and demanding the authorities to ensure their constitutional rights without any kind of discrimination. It is undeniable that art occupies a central place in social activism. In all the ages, art has been an active media to engage people in crucial issues related to society and politics from the ancient wall writings to modern-day graffiti. It is widely accepted, that art intends to circulate social awareness and develops critical thinking in people, as one of the prime functions of art is to depict objective social criticism. Art has the potential to mobilise people and change their way of thinking which in turn can change the structure of the society.

The theatrical protest has the power to articulate the unarticulated, challenging the dominant discourse and publicising the democratic discourse. Theatre is an effective medium to uncover the hegemony of the ruling classes and to highlight state oppression and state exploitation. The theatrical protest is an ingenious practice, having the ability to involve the relegated sects of society in socio-political dissension. The demonstration of protest and resistance exhibits the potential of theatre as a powerful medium to promote social and political change. Protest Theatre is a social and political activity intended to carry out social and political reform. It is, therefore, never free of its socio-political milieu. Erika Fischer-Lichte rightly observes, “The fundamental theatrical situation, therefore, always symbolises the *conditiohumana*, regardless of its different culturally-historically determined forms” (2). As mentioned above, theatre can be used to serve the interest of the state as well as to resist this. It has been successfully exploited as an institution of social criticism. Throughout the ages, theatre has been active to stage the social, political and cultural struggle of a community. Oppositional theatre questions the established order and encourages to retrieve the cultural identity of an individual or a community. It is committed to empower the powerless and the downtrodden factions of the society by motivating them to engage in the ongoing social and political struggle. Theatrical protest has often been associated with the revolutionary social and political movements resisting against the consumerist culture and propagating the subversive values and ideals. It reprimands the monopoly of the capitalist society and the gross socio-economic discrepancy. Protest Theatre is a performative act, giving expression

to the dissent of an underprivileged section of a society. This type of theatre tries to educate and instruct people in diverse social, political and cultural issues. It attempts to raise the consciousness of the people against any kind of discrimination and motivates them to transform their condition. Protest Theatre does not always propose action but at times means only to expose the prevailing social iniquities.

This is a widely accepted view that theatre is embedded within social and cultural activity of a community speaking about a number of social, political, and cultural issues. It proved very conducive to combat the ideological battle of a particular group, community or a nation. In every age, there have been theatre artists who articulated the discontent of the underprivileged section against the prevailing order and inspired social and political change. Throughout history, the theatrical space has been dexterously utilized to stage the discontentment of the people. Dramatists and playwrights from all the ages found dramatic art capable to organize a protest against the coercive and exploitative rule, ranging from the satiric comedies of Aristophanes to the most radical contemporary performances.

### **1.9 Chapter Division**

The present study is proposed to be presented in six chapters. The first chapter “Introduction”, gives a brief overview of theatre. A short history on the origin and development of theatre is provided with an addendum of performance theory assessing the fundamental change it has prompted in the field of theatre. The chapter also provides a historical perspective on ‘Political and Protest Theatre’ and its various forms in order to enable the readers to understand the militant nature of Fo’s theatre followed by a succinct biographical sketch of the writer. In addition to provide important perspectives on theatre in general and on Dario Fo in particular it tries to define the key terms of the thesis like protest, politics and culture which are important components of Fo’s theatre. Apart from this, it discusses the aims and objectives of the research and identifies important research questions which are going to be explored in the course of the study. Since this study is based on translated works of Fo therefore, the researcher has discussed some of the problems of translation with reference to Fo.

The second chapter “Literature Review”, discusses the available pertinent literature to this thesis. It tries to find out the gap in the previous studies done on Fo to underscore the significance of this research.

Third chapter “Marginalised Conception and the Role of Hegemony: Understanding Gramsci’s Concept of Power”, Explores Gramsci’s concept of power to contextualise Fo’s theatre in the power struggle of the workers. Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony, his concern with the political education of the workers and his emphasis on the role of intellectuals has been a great source of inspiration to Fo who has developed his theatre on theoretical principles provided by him. Therefore, the researcher felt it necessary to dedicate a separate chapter on Gramsci’s political theories for a deeper understanding and appreciation of Fo’s works.

Chapter four, “Analysis of Fo’s *Giullarate*” offers a detailed study of select monologues of Dario Fo. The plays discussed here are *Mistero Buffo*, *Obscene Fables*, *The Story of the Tiger* and *Johan Padan and the Discovery of the Americas*. This is an attempt to show how he turns his monologues into the spectacles of public protest and resistance against the exploitative authorities. A Gramscian reading of the aforementioned plays is attempted in this chapter.

Chapter five, “Analysis of Fo’s Satirical Farces” provides a critical analysis of select political farces of Fo. The plays explored in this chapter are *Archangels Don’t Play Pinball*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Can’t Pay! Won’t Pay!* and *Trumpet and Raspberries*. They are another major medium of theatrical protest and have been used a tool of socio-political and cultural intervention. They too are read from the Gramscian viewpoint.

The concluding chapter provides an outline of the findings extrapolated from the preceding chapters.

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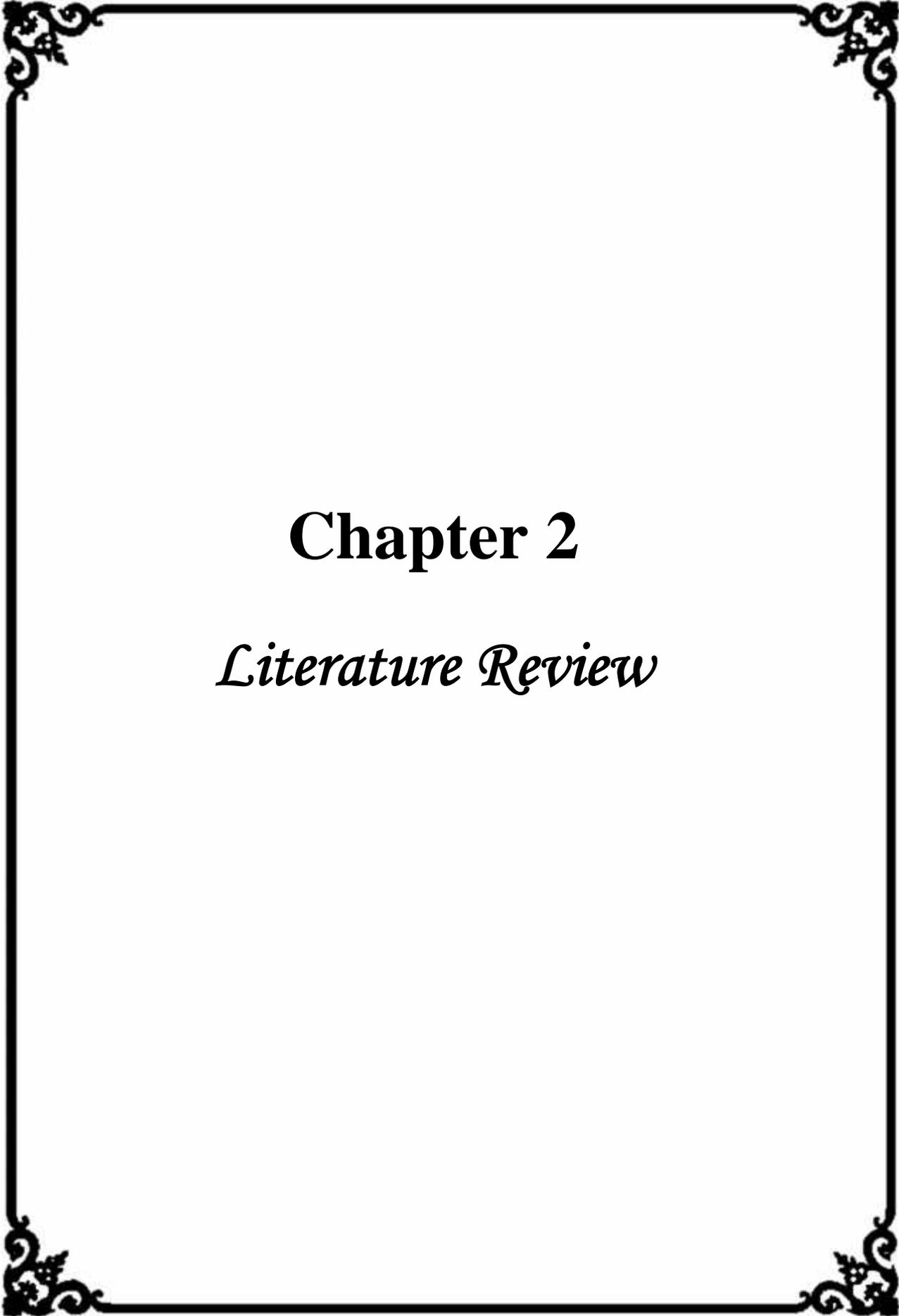
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# Chapter 2

## *Literature Review*