

Revolutionary theatre vs. reformist theatre

Dario Fo as a revolutionary rather than a reformist.

Maria Pinelli as a representative of reform.

How reform as a way of diverting attention.

The reformists insist that the state apparatus must be defended.

For the average citizen, uncovering a scandal is enough. Doesn't want all the dirt to disappear.

Journalist: When there aren't scandals, they need to be invented, because it's a good way of maintaining power and defusing people's anger.

Merely exposing scandals do not weaken the systems that create it.

Superintendent: That would be like saying that scandal is the fertiliser of social democracy.

Scandals don't become harbingers of change, they simply become a way of maintaining the status quo.

Why was the play a success? The use of the farce. There are many gags, mistaken identities and the use of props-and the maniac frequently changes his appearance.

In Milan, the message of Fo's play was well received. During the rallies commemorating the first death anniversary of the anarchist there were banners which declared. 'Repression harms workers-reformism disarms them.'

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Fo on the success of the play:

What has been the real reason for the show's success? ... It has been above all the way it deals with Social Democracy and its crocodile tears, the indignation which can be relieved by a little burp in the form

of a scandal; scandal as a liberating catharsis of the system ... The indignation of the good democratic citizen grows and threatens to suffocate him. But he has a sense of satisfaction when he sees, in the end, these same organs of this rotten and corrupt society, pointing the finger at this selfsame society, at its own 'unhealthy parts', and this gives him a sense of freedom throughout his whole being. With his spirit suitably decongested, he shouts, 'Long live this bastard shit society, because at least it always wipes its bum with soft, perfumed paper, and when it burps it has the good manners to put its hand in front of its mouth!'

Fo's script was an evolving one. It closely followed the trial of the inspector, Calabresi and the latest developments were worked into the script.

Attempted Obliteration of an Anarchist

The real terrorists have never been captured. Fo's play has contributed to a lasting awareness of this failing.

Even thirty years later, nobody has been convicted. The establishment refuses to acknowledge any kind of mistake on its part resulting in Pinnelli's death.

Through the play Fo illustrates how one scandal should be generalised to understand and illustrate the common patterns according to which the state normally works.

Fo on the power of laughter: The end of satire is the first alarm bell signalling the end of real democracy. (Mayakovsky)

Ultimate prison.

I have come back and been imprisoned.

Once, I thought myself exceedingly lucky.

I supposed I could not be touched.

There was no need for me to be clever,

Luck would see me through.

And I was clever too, to boot.

But now, I see that no amount of luck or grace or clarity of thought could free me from the fetters I willingly take up.

Oh I see that these will be fetters unless by a superior will I turn lesser minds to loftier concerns.

Woe is me that never wanted to rule over but am given an inferior desert land to make flower.