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*La presenza di Antonio Gramsci nell'opera di Dario Fo*

Since the publication, in 1947, of his *Lettere dal carcere*, Antonio Gramsci has played a crucial role within the *field* of intellectual production in Italy. Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* and his reflections on a wide range of issues - from the sociological implications of taylorism to the formation of the Italian State and the "questione meridionale" - provided the leadership of the Italian Communist Party with a powerful instrument of consensus among the majority of the Italian intelligencija in the post World War II period. For many decades, even after the relations between intellectuals and the Communist Party had started to become more controversial, Gramsci remained a constant political and cultural reference point as well as a totemic figure often manipulated in order to legitimate contingent or sectarian ideological standpoints. My dissertation focuses on the presence and influence of Antonio Gramsci in Dario Fo's works. In particular, through the analysis of his most significant plays, I investigate how the playwright incorporates and manipulates both Gramsci's symbolic figure and his thought, by using them as a source of ideological authority. The choice of this particular case study lies, on the one hand, on the position, at the same time central and marginal, that Fo has occupied in the Italian cultural scene; and, on the other hand, on the overt influence that Gramsci has had in the political overtones of his *oeuvre*.

As early as the mid '60s, in fact, with the play *Isabella, tre caravelle e un cacciaballe*, and more so, after Fo joins the '68 movement, political engagement becomes the dominant inspirational force of his production. The ideological framework of all the comedies of this period offers a particular perspective of Gramsci's theoretical analysis of fordism, heavily influenced by the cultural climate of those turbulent years. The very same mixture of recognition, recuperation and manipulation can then be identified in the way in which Dario Fo deals with popular culture especially in *Mistero buffo* and the other monologues that go back to the medieval and early Renaissance jesters' and carnivalesque tradition.

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