To Be True to Audience or Author

A Brief Literature Review and Comparison of Linguistic Humour in Two Translations of Dario Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*

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1 Introduction

When Dario Fo was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, in 1997, his linguistic ability to jest the (political) power in society was the prime motivation for election, according to the Nobel Prize Committee\(^1\). Several countries in Europe, including France, Germany, Belgium and Spain, were early in their produced translations of Dario Fo’s political satire plays from the 1950-1960’s. However, it was in the late seventies, 1978, that the first translated production of Dario Fo’s plays reached the British theatre audience, in London, with Robert Walker’s production of *We Can’t Pay? We Won’t Pay!* which was written by Fo in 1974. The reason for this late introduction was due to the obstacles translators and producers encountered in cultural adaption of the context of the “particular Italian political situations” displayed in Fo’s plays, which was not the case for the more culturally similar European countries mentioned (Mitchell 95).

My own first contact with this play was in the mid-eighties, at The English Theatre in Stockholm. However, it was after studying Italian in Italy in 2002, and then taking a course in Translation and Translation Theories at Dalarna University, that I began to appreciate the real satire and humour in Fo’s plays. Since then, translation has become the applied linguistic field that interests me the most.

Hence, I will conduct research on two different translations of the same comic play by Dario Fo: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. (Original title in Italian: *Morte accidentale di un anarchico*). The first translation is by Gillian Hanna – adapted by Gavin Richards, and the other by Simon Nye. As the original text is both satirical and comedic, which is always the typical style in the plays by Dario Fo, one of the things investigated is how these satirical and comical features of the original text are translated. Questions asked include whether these comical and satirical features are sometimes omitted or altered for any linguistic reason, or if the “jester-like” satire of the original text is preserved. In order to answer these questions, the context of the text will first be explored, as this context may present linguistic obstacles for a translator. These possible linguistic obstacles will mainly be established through Fitzpatrick & Sawczak’s *Cultural Translation Model*.

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Chapter 2 of this essay will consist of an explanation of my methodology of gathering data through primary and secondary literature sources, and, eventually a comparison of the two translations to the original text. In Chapter 3, I will present a review of the relevant theories, and the theoretical literature which may offer explanations about the linguistic properties of humour and the comedic process. Thus, a brief linguistic description of humour, satire and the comedic process, and their important features, will be included. Further, Dario Fo’s particular style of political satire will be presented in Chapter 4, together with an investigation of the particular use of satire in theatre performances, and Commedia dell’arte - as background for his comedic style.

In Chapter 5, linguistic obstacles for translating humour and satire for stage will be presented. Various adaptation strategies of translation will also be briefly displayed, as well as a short account for Accidental Death of an Anarchist in adaptation. Finally, a comparison between some short segments of the two translations and the original text will be conducted, in Chapter 6, in order to establish whether some satirical and comical features have been preserved or altered in the translations.

The plot in Accidental Death of an Anarchist is claimed to be based on some real-life events taking place in 1969, as the working class struggled for better working terms and better wages. After a bomb explosion in the National Agricultural Bank in Milan, police squads decided to search for anarchists to arrest (Behan 64). During custody, Behan affirms, an illegally arrested anarchist then died, falling out of a window, in the Milan police headquarters (66).

The main characters in Accidental Death of an Anarchist consist of Inspector Bertozzo, the Maniac (Il Matto, observing and commenting on the suspicious events), Inspector/Pizzani (Commissario sportivo, portraying the most prominent of the policemen in the real incident), one Superintendent (Questore), two Constables, and a female journalist (Giornalista) named Felletti (Behan 64-70). The humorous plot in the play and the satirical dialogue of the characters will be further discussed in Chapters 5-6.
2 Methodology

The approach of the translations will be through the lens of comparative pragmatics, semantics, and discourse analysis, since this play mostly consists of various comical and satirical dialogues. Furthermore, it will be important to study how the translators have overcome, or not overcome, the obstacles with the cultural contexts in their translations, and whether these obstacles may have affected the comical and satirical features of the original text positively or negatively.

Primary data will be gathered through the original text and the two translations. However, only a few, small segments of the texts will be analysed since the limit of a C-Essay (Bachelor’s Degree Essay) is constrained. The secondary sources will include books on approaches in translation of theatre performances. In addition, literature and articles will be used that present the basic of humour and satire, as well as humour in translation. Some biographical books about Dario Fo and his text tradition will also be included, in order to establish the cultural context and background of the political satire of the original text. Furthermore, I will conduct searches of academic journals within the field of linguistics to establish if any of these contain articles which might help explain the comic style used by Dario Fo, as well as for an indication of previous research in this field.

Since previous research on Fo’s play seems to investigate mainly Gavin Richards’ adaptation of Gillian Hanna’s translation, staged in London in 1979 and, eventually, the most popular adapted version for television in 1983 (Mitchell 98-99), it would be interesting to compare this with Simon Nye’s more recent translation from 2003. Thus, I hope new light will be shed on the comical and satirical linguistic features of this popular play.

3 Literature Review – How Humour Works Linguistically

According to Attardo: “A commonly accepted classification divides theories of humor into three groups: incongruity theories […], hostility/disparagement […], and release theories” (47). As seen in table 1 below, these theories have then been divided, by Attardo, into three families with their focus on either cognitive, social, or psychoanalytical behaviour/motives. Thus, there exist several theories which claim there are reasons for human beings to use humour as a means or tool to express this behaviour or motive and, for the same reasons, to react to humorous situations. For example, Hodgart argues: “Satire, [is] ‘the use of ridicule,
sarcasm, irony etc. to expose, attack, or deride vices, follies etc.’ (as the dictionaries define it), [and] has its origin in a state of mind which is critical and aggressive, usually one of irritation at the latest examples of human absurdity, inefficiency or wickedness” (10). By contrast, as the classifications show, humour can, for example, also be a means of release of tensions or a reaction to incongruities or unexpected contrast in jokes.

Yet, all these previous and varied theories of humour, with two exceptions, have been restricted to only include humorous puns (Attardo 46). Instead, Attardo insists, Raskin (1985) was the first linguistic theorist to develop a “full-fledged application of a coherent theory” by the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (207).

For instance, in order for a verbal joke (VJ) to be funny (F), Raskin (6) has found a “formula” where, he claims, the essential parameters are taken into account:

\[
VJ(S, H, T, E_s, E_h, E_{s,h}, P_s, P_h, S_I, S_O) = F
\]

By this, Raskin postulates that there must be an interaction between the speaker (S), hearer (H), text (T) as a means of provoking stimuli, experience (E), psychology (P), situation (SI), and society (SO) - in order to evoke the funny part of a verbal joke. With this in mind, I will now look into how semantic and pragmatic features of humour work in written texts. As it is also context based, the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) will be further presented in the pragmatic section (3.2).
3.1 Semantic Humour

According to Chiaro, in *The Language of Jokes*, there are many ways of creating semantically functioning word plays such as with “a transposed sound or syllable or a misplaced preposition”, which, in turn, can create a “havoc [that] provokes laughter” (17). Examples of these are: *malapropisms*, using an inappropriate word in place of the appropriate one but similar in sound; and, as in the example below, ‘*Spoonerism*’, which means to transpose sounds:

“This is how we go to Berkland and Oakley? – Erkland and Boakley? – no, Boakland and Erkley? – darn it! Oakland and Berkley!” (19)

Another example is misplaced words: “In search for economic and military aid, Anwar Sadat has not exactly been greeted by open arms.” (20)

One can also use phonology to *stress* differently as in:

“How do you make a cat drink? - Easy, put it in a liquidizer.” (33)

However, while the phonological stress can be used to resolve the ambiguity, a lack of stress, on the other hand, makes the joke work.

Other examples, from Chiaro (35-39), are word plays with *word boundaries, word formation*, and *lexis* (homophones, homonyms and polysemes). A humorous example of the latter, from *The Two Ronnies*, is:

“There was a record number of births in Kilburn this week. Apparently, it was due to the Irish sweep. He has now moved to Camden town.” (39)

Aside from the homonym, “sweep”, this joke also has a pragmatic element - it depends on the hearer: 1. knowing that the Irish Sweep is a horse race and 2. that Kilburn and Camden Town are both districts in London.
A common feature for all these examples is the ambiguity which provokes the humorous effect. This ambiguity is also evident when playing humorously with syntax (Chiaro 40):

“Child: Mummy, can I go out to play? Mother: With those holes in your trousers? Child: No with the girl next door.”

Humorous semantic ambiguity can also be created by omitting a word and thus changing the syntax, as in figure 2, below.

2. Chiaro The Language of Jokes, p 41

However, one cannot select just any word to create a humorous effect as “All words are ambiguous, vague, or unspecified if they are not taken in context” (Attardo 133). There must also be an organization of senses in a pun, meaning that “two different senses […] must be present at the same time” and, furthermore, four possible variants of connotations between these two senses (Attardo 134, 136), as seen in figure 3, below. In the wafer joke, below, which plays with phonemic strings, there is no connotation between the two senses in those strings:

“The graphic cannot be displayed for reasons of Copyright

“Why did the cookie cry? Its mother had been away for [a wafer] so long” (Attardo 128).

In the other three possible examples, however, either both senses coexist or there is a forced connotation from sense 1 onto sense 2 or vice versa. For example, both senses coexist in the utterance from Bastille prisoner Bassompierre when he commented on why he was flipping the pages when reading a book: “I am looking for a passage, but I cannot find it” (Attardo 137). According to Attardo, this leads to the fact that “Puns are metalinguistic because their
decoding [by the listener] presupposes the presence of a metalinguistic assertion along the inferential processing involved in the decoding” (168).

3. Attardo Linguistic Theories of Humor, p 136, Figure 3.1: The Organization of Senses in a Pun

3.2 Pragmatic Humour

This metalinguistic feature is also mentioned by Nash when he states that “A complex piece of humor involves diverse relationships between what is overt - [in] the text – and what is covert – [in] the generic detail and the narrative concept”, as seen in figure 4, below (33).

4. Nash The Language of Humour, p 33

Thus, there exist structural relations in the context of linguistic jokes, which lead into the linguistic field of pragmatics. In addition, these context-based relationships can be found in Raskin’s main hypothesis (99-100) which states that, “A text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying text if […]: The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts [and] [t]he two scripts with which the text is compatible is opposite […]”. Furthermore, according to Attardo, “A script is an organized chunk of information about something (in the broadest sense) [and] it is a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker [or listener] which provides the speaker [or listener] with information on how things are done, organized, etc.” (198). As an example of this, the doctor/lover scripts are told, by Raskin (100), where these two underlying opposed scripts together create the joke as follows:

“‘Is the doctor at home?’ the patient asked in his bronchial whisper. ‘No,’ the doctor’s young and pretty wife whispered in reply. ‘Come right in.’”
Further examples of these opposed scripts are: actual/non-actual, normal/possible, possible/impossible, goodness-related/badness-related, life-related/death-related, and high-stature-related/low-stature-related (Raskin 127).

In addition, Attardo stresses that: “Script-theory explains connotation by showing that scripts weakly activate distant scripts [and] [r]egister is [also] explained with a generalization of this idea” (252). These links of activation is schematically shown in figure 5, below, where the inner-most circle represents all linguistic scripts (known to any native speaker of the language), and the three external ones represent non-linguistic scripts, associated with any word or expression in the linguistic script circle and accessible to speakers in general. Consequently, in this model, the distance between scripts belonging to the same circle will always be less than the distance between scripts not belonging to the same circle. This, in turn, accounts for the “connotation” and register-based features of the SSTH.

5. Attardo Linguistic Theories of Humor, p 247, Figure 7.1: The Arrangement of Scripts

Furthermore, Attardo stresses (204), there must exist some overlapping – total or partial – between these two opposed scripts, previously mentioned, as shown in table 6, below. If this overlapping does not take place - it results in a non-humorous text.

6. Attardo Linguistic Theories of Humor, p 204, Table 6.1: Combinations of Script Overlap and Oppositeness
By contrast, Attardo points out: “for the SSTH [Semantic Script Theory of Humor], verbal (puns) and referential humor involve the same mechanisms […] and according to the SSTH, the two are indistinguishable […] which creates] a problem since the two phenomena ‘behave’ differently in certain situations (e.g. puns cannot be translated while non-punning humor can)” (220). For this research, it is positive to note, however, that there is the possibility to translate the kind of humour which goes beyond puns.

However, as Raskin says: “a seriously tabooed subject is hardly to amuse the person who maintains the taboo” (129). On the other hand, Chiaro stresses, in *Translation, Humor and The Media* (135), that research has shown there must be a cultural as well as emotional closeness to the subject in order to evoke the humorous effect. Consequently, the joke must inherit a shared - but not too strongly emotionally charged – experience between speaker/text and hearer.

The central importance of this shared experience is also shown in Raskin’s figure 7, below, where a successive reduction into the actual shared script between speaker and hearer is displayed. Firstly, their respective knowledge of the language gives them their own limited lexical scripts. Then, previous personal experience, the text and the situation reduces the actual shared script(s) into “sub subset of scripts”. Finally, influence from society and culture, as well as individual psychology, make some scripts more readily available than others to the speaker and the hearer (Raskin 129).

According to Attardo, the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) has - since it was developed by Raskin in 1979 - “been applied to various languages and cultures, always proving useful, thus reinforcing its universal attitude, i.e. that the mechanisms of humor are universal and transcultural” (209).
Nevertheless, the restricted scope of the SSTH, to only involve linguistic puns, has led Attardo and Raskin, in 1991, to try to broaden it into a “General Theory of Verbal Humor” (GTVH) by adding five other “Knowledge Resources” to the script opposition (SO) of the SSTH: the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI) (Attardo 222-223). In addition, these parameters are arranged in a hierarchical organisation (SO→LM→SI→TA→NS→LA) so that the higher parameters always determine the limits, or options available to choose between, in the lower parameters, when creating any humorous linguistic text.

Some important points are made by Chiaro in Translation, Humour and Literature. She has found that there still exists some confusion, and no clear-cut boundaries between referential (or conceptual) humour, which conveys meaning through stories or descriptions, and verbal humour which, for example, uses word-formation and sentence structure. Also the term “verbal humour” is disputed, and, according to Chiaro, even Raskin deviates from this term in his analysis, so that it more encompasses “verbally expressed” humour. In addition, Chiaro observes that a measurement of “translatability” has sometimes been used as a means to distinguish between the two types of humour. This is also the case in Attardo’s General Theory of Verbal Humor. However, Chiaro does not agree this is a reliable criterion as the definition of “translatable” in itself is unclear. She argues there will always be differences in the number of languages and cultures the two different types of humour can be translated into - and therefore the scale of translatability will never be absolute (34-35).

3.3 Aspects of the Comedic Process

As humor is universal and transcultural, one may also conclude the same for the “comedic process” (Cavaliéro 21-22) where humour is created with different purposes. Nash cites Fine’s definitions (1983) that “joking has both control functions and conflict functions. Laughing, kidding, and satire reveal expectations and enforce norms within the group, whereas sarcasm, irony and parody direct aggression at outsiders” (Nash 145). In fact, Nash (1985) dedicates a whole chapter to describe the controlling function allusions\(^2\) can have in parodical texts.

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\(^2\) **Allusion** noun: 1. A passing or casual reference; an incidental mention of something, either directly or by implication: an allusion to Shakespeare. 2. The act of alluding. 3. Obsolete. A metaphor; parable. Dictionary.com Unabridged. See biography.
In contrast, as one can see in table 7 (from Attardo) allusive, non-opposed scripts will result in a plain narrative. Attardo explains this discrepancy further, in his article *An Approach Based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)* in *The Translator* (182), as a lack of “local antonymy” in, for example, ambiguous, metaphorical, mythical or allusive texts. Here, he states that these types of texts may very well be overlapping, but not in the same explicit sense as a joke consistent with this local antonymy. These “local antonyms” have been defined by Raskin as: “two linguistic entities whose meaning are opposite only within a particular discourse and solely for the purpose of this discourse” (108). Thus, Nash’s view on how linguistic humour is created, supersedes the limited vision of Raskin and Attardo in that only overlapping scripts - strictly defined by the SSTH – create a humorous effect.

However, in *The Alchemy of Laughter* (21 ff), Cavaliero develops these aspects of the “comedic process” further. He describes, for example, parodic comedy as the separation of elements, ludic comedy as the dissolution of elements, ironic comedy as the conjunction of opposites, and satirical comedy as the disjunction of opposites. I will now look further into this particular description of satirical comedy.

4 Satire and Theatre Performance

Theatre performance involves all forms of humour previously mentioned. However, according to Hodgart: “True satire offers both a more fantastically distorted vision and a sharper criticism of life than the traditional stage comedy can support if it is to meet its audience’s expectations.” Hodgart also stresses that this leads to an obstacle in the “allegorical […] as its characters have to stand for something beyond the literal level” (189). Meaning that beyond the already allegorical feature in the actor’s stage “impersonation”, a new level of symbolism has to be kept in mind, when satire is performed. Thus, one could expect a satirical play to go beyond slapsticks and simple puns and, instead, aim for a more intriguing version of reality.

One may find a clue to this intriguing version in Cavaliero’s description of satire as “disjunction of opposites,” as he points out that: “[s]atire dissolves the ironical mock-marriage of opposites; the monolithic partner is divorced, brought into court and arraigned, and its pretentions analysed in the context of a scheme of values that are once more in the open.”

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3 *Impersonation* noun Imitation, impression, parody, caricature, takeoff (informal), mimicry. *Collins Thesaurus of the English Language.* See bibliography.
addition, “[s]atire may ridicule its object but it possesses a controlling seriousness of purpose, is essentially moralistic and refuses to judge the monolith by the monolith’s own standards” (30).

However, according to Hodgart, “[t]he basic technique of the satirist is reduction: the degradation or devaluation of the victim by reducing his stature and dignity.” Furthermore, Hodgart points out that, “[t]his [reduction] may be done on the level of the plot and will almost always be continued to the level of style and language” (115). As an example of this reduction, he mentions the plot in *Gulliver’s Travels*, where the contemporary participants of the political scene in England are portrayed as extremely small creatures (115).

Another example of this satirical reduction may be the nakedness of the king, in H. C. Andersen’s (1837) famous fairy tale *The Emperor’s New Suit*, where no one - except a child - will admit that the king’s new suit does not exist at all 4.

This last example of satirical reduction technique may also be an example of “the destruction of the symbol,” as Hodgart describes it as: “related to techniques of ‘undressing’ but it goes even further and it is fundamental to satire” (123). In this way, the suit as a symbol of the emperor’s power is reduced to nothing, and the (political) power of the emperor is accordingly reduced by this satirical description.

Other types of satirical reduction, mentioned by Hodgart, are impersonations from the animal world or even the realm of the robot machines (119). By this, the “satirist shows his enemy as condemned to repeat the same meaningless movements again and again, like the damned in Dante’s hell” (Hodgart 119-120).

Furthermore, according to Hodgart, W. H. Auden points out that: “the satirical strategy consists in […] presenting the object of satire either ‘as if he or she were mad and unaware of what he is doing’, or ‘as if he or she were wicked and completely conscious of what he is doing without feeling any guilt’” (119). However, Hodgart concludes that only the first alternative is relevant for satirical reduction.

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4.1 Commedia dell’arte

According to Scuderi: “[h]istorically, the Italian comic tradition, with its roots in Roman Saturnalian\(^5\) forms and the extensive influence of the *commedia dell’arte*, is germinal to the development of European comedy as a whole” (Farell & Scuderi 39). He also claims that the “spirit of the Saturnalian sub-inversion of the power hierarchy was encoded in the [ancient] Roman *palliate* comedies; in related medieval forms, such as the *sotie*\(^6\); and in the *commedia dell’arte* [which eventually] continued in the European *guilleria*, and were adapted by Fo in what he refers to as his *guillarata*” (39-40). These *giullari* (in English: jugglers or jesters) are described by Mitchell as “medieval strolling players who performed in the streets and piazzas of Europe” (10).

Furthermore, Scuderi describes these Saturnical satirical spectacles as being “pagan” with “performers of the lower classes [who] portrayed and parodied authority figures of the nobility and the clergy, such as the King of Fools, the Bishop of Fools, and even the Pope of Fools.” Eventually, according to Scuderi: “*commedia dell’arte* continued the social inversion and the brazen destruction of social conventions, with subversive servants replacing subversive slaves” (42). With this historical context in background, I will now look further into the particular style of Dario Fo.

4.2 Dario Fo - Political Jester

According to Raskin, “The typical message of a political joke is that a particular leader or political figure, a political group, its ideas, or the entire way of life are not what they are supposed or purported to be.” Furthermore, Raskin claims that “The opposition between the script for what they are supposed to be and the script for what they actually are is the opposition which forms the joke” (222). In addition, according to Hodgart, “There is an essential connection between satire and politics in the widest sense: satire is not only the commonest form of political literature, but, insofar as it tries to influence public behavior, it is the most political part of all literature” (33).

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\(^5\) *Saturnalia* An [ancient] Roman holiday period in which customary social restraints [were] abandoned, distinctions of rank and status [were] turned upside down, and institutions normally sacrosanct [were] subjected to ridicule, mockery and burlesque. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. See biography.

\(^6\) *Sotie* noun A satirical and topical comedy employing actors dressed in traditional fool's costume, popular in France during the late Middle Ages, and often used as a curtain raiser to mystery and morality plays. *Origin*: 1785–95; < French, Middle French: literally, foolishness, equivalent to sot fool + -ie -y. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. See biography.
As a result, in her article *Dario Fo’s Guillerate: Dialogic Parables in the Service of the Oppressed*, Piccolo has noted that Fo uses “Elements of the farce and of the giullarata [which] are present and mixed in all of his works […] and [t]he latter structure is more useful in general knowledge stemming from universal divisions, as, for example, the dichotomy oppressor/oppressed, dominant/subordinate, hero/villain, and so on” (131).

An important point is made by LaFollette and Shanks in their article *Belief and the Basis of Humor* as they state that: “the teller is part of the humor’s context. If the teller is a member of the oppressing group, the humor will more likely be seen as a form of oppression [but] if the same joke [is] told by a member of an oppressed minority to other members of that minority [it] might well elicit a humorous response” (337). This fact is also stressed by Maceri in his article *Dario Fo: Jester of the Working Class*. According to him, “Fo’s giullare serves the people, entertains them, but especially uses satire to show them their condition and spur them to action” (5).

Yet, Piccolo categorizes *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* to be more of a farce, as it contains greater contrast and mobility. As an example, the protagonist “Il Matto relies on a multiplicity of discourses to subvert point of view: one needs only to think of the grammanian, of the psychologist, of police bureaucracy, of the army, of the church” to find this multiplicity (Piccolo 136). In spite of this, according to Farell in his article *Variations on a Theme: Respecting Dario Fo*, Fo’s plays lack obscenity and vulgarity “and in none of Fo’s works is there any material which could, in the linguistic register employed, offend the most demanding Calvinist or Carmelite conscience” (20).

Thus, one can conclude, there are multiple factors to take into account when translating any of Fo’s texts. The Nobel Prize Committee confirms this when they stress that “Translating Fo’s texts with their topical references and use of grammelot (sic!) the jesting language that Fo has developed based on dialect and onomatopoeia offers particular problems”. As a consequence, they claim, this forces translators to choose a particular approach to the text. Either they can choose to stay close to the original text; or make changes which are not faithful to Fo’s original “allusions.” In Chapter 6, I will look further into some excerpts of Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, in order to see how the text has been approached by Richards and Nye.

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5 Linguistic Obstacles in Translating Humour and Political Satire for Stage

Black states that “context is crucial to all utterance interpretation.” In addition, she claims, as “a preliminary to any discourse, it is helpful to know who produced it and the circumstances surrounding its production” (150-151). Thus, one may conclude that - for any translator - context interpretation relies both on a close knowledge of the original author and a familiarity to the cultural background of the text produced. However, culture is a vast subject as shown, for example, in figure 8, Brake’s Iceberg, below.

Yet, according to Katan, one strategy to deal with this cultural interpretation, during translation, is to use “logic questions” as shown in figure 9, below.

8. Katan Translating Cultures, p 233, Figure 39: Brake’s Iceberg of Cultural Orientations

9. Katan Translating Cultures, p 215, Figure 35: The Mediator’s Task by Logical Level
In addition, in order to avoid any cultural misinterpretations, Katan stresses the importance of the translator being a “mediator” between the two cultural frames, in the source text and the target text (210), as shown in figure 10, below. In consequence, there may lie a risk in a direct translation of a text, as “a direct translation leads the reader [or audience] to a different set of values, and hence distorts the writer’s intention” (Katan 212).

Furthermore, Chiaro states in *The Language of Jokes*, that “when a comic situation is too culture specific it will not be amusing outside the culture of origin […and] if a joke contains a situation which is heavily culture oriented, it too will not travel well” (10). If Chiaro is correct, then it can be expected that some translated texts are likely to be less poignant or effective when taken too far from their originating culture.

5.1 Fitzpatrick & Sawczak’s Cultural Translation Model

According to Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, “there will always be a slippage away from the impossible ideal of translation towards the less ideal but pragmatically necessary notion of adaptation – it is only a question of extent and of the explicitness with which such strategy is admitted” (15). Thus, they find it inevitable to avoid any distortion of the original text, and more a matter of “overcoming the invisible obstacles imposed by language, and finding a suitable theatrical or linguistic structure which has the dual function of transposing the sense of Fo’s text, and at the same time making sense in the English language and context” (18).
These obstacles are described in, what one could name, Fitzpatrick and Sawczak’s *Cultural Translation Model*, below. It shows the complexity of influence between dialectical relationships (double headed arrows) and textual interdependence (single headed arrows) as well as general and specific theatrical ‘knowledge’ of the audience and producers of performance (represented by the circles), (16).

11. Fitzpatrick & Sawczak’s *Cultural Translation Model*

However, even if these obstacles, encountered by the translator of the play, seem overwhelming one may conclude that there is a need for some kind of adaptation strategy.

5.2 Adaptation Strategies

In order to generate choice in adaptation, Katan mentions a special “chunking” technique, illustrated in figure 12, below (199-202). However, Katan stresses the importance of keeping close to the original context and use context associations when moving from one level to another. In this way, the translator will be able to take into account the context of the situation, the context of culture, and move between culture specific and culture inclusive without making an erroneous, word-for-word translation.

12. Katan *Translating Cultures*, p 205, Figure 28: *Chunking to Generate Choice*
On the other hand, in some cases the humoristic features of a text may lie in a homophonic linguistic expression such as *good genes/good jeans*, as in Chiaro’s figure (13) below. In these cases, Chiaro stresses in *The Language of Jokes*, it is impossible for a translator to both translate the joke and at the same time respect style and form (84-99). This is confirmed by Dunnet in her article *To Pun or Not to Pun*, as she contends that “most puns will fall by the wayside in the struggle to reconcile two warring elements since to sacrifice either of these elements is to miss the point of what one is translating” (157).

Instead, Chiaro discusses the possibility of “moving away from the text and replacing an untranslatable joke with another one which would work in the target culture, even if it is completely different from the original” (85).

This adaptation approach is taken a step further by Boase-Beier, when he suggests that to “focus on constraints imposed by the target text [as] intratextual coherence in meaning and style of the target text is more important than the intertextual coherence between source text and target text” (54-55). In other words, the reader/audience should not consider it to be a translation at all, but rather they should think of it as an original text.

In addition, as stated by Maher in her article *The comic voice in translation: Dario Fo’s Accidental Death of an Anarchist*: “One key issue that distinguishes theatre translation from other kinds of literary translation is the notion of performability.” She also stresses that the type of adaptation chosen “often is dictated by financial concerns” and that a famous adaptor is more likely to draw an audience (370). Consequently, the plot of the play may be altered for many reasons.
5.3 Accidental Death of an Anarchist in Adaptation

As mentioned in the introduction, the plot in Dario Fo’s play *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* has taken the story from an event, in 1969, during working class struggle for better working terms and wages. Eventually, one day after a Labour Charter was signed between the government and the unions, a bomb exploded at the National Agricultural Bank in Milan. Police then claimed “the bomb had originated from anarchist or far-left circles [and at] the same time police squads were rushing around Milan’s State University looking for anarchists to arrest – without any evidence yet available” (Behan 64). Furthermore, Behan reveals, one of three illegally arrested anarchists died, suspiciously falling out of a window, in the Milan police headquarters. His name was Giuseppe Pinelli, a middle-aged railway worker with two children.

The incident was, after investigation by Judge Giovanni Caizzi, claimed to have been “an accidental death” and he eventually dismissed the case. Subsequently, another judge claimed it was suicide. Furthermore, none of the policemen were suspended; on the contrary they had opportunity to “tamper” with the evidence. People thus began to feel it was a political “cover-up”. In addition, the editor of a newspaper reporting the news in the case later received a lawsuit from one of the police officers, Luigi Calabresi, for “slander” (Behan 66-67). Calabresi is portrayed by the nervous character of *Inspector sportivo/ Inspector/ Pissani* in Dario Fo’s play, as he was dressed in a sports jacket and showed nervous behavior during the successive libel trial (Behan 68).

However tragic this may seem, Fo has his own way of critiquing this political event. As Jennifer Lorch describes in *Dario Fo: Stage, Text and Tradition*, Fo’s “language [in this play] is colored by expressive idioms, popular slang, and frequent puns [and it] is a fast moving, energetic dramatic prose that gains it effects less by vulgarism than by being strongly verbal and by the frequent use of consonantal clusters beginning with the sibilant s, for instance *sferrare* (to land a blow), *sfottuto* (fucked about), *sfuttare* (to exploit), *sghignazzo* (scornful laughter), *stracciare* (to tear up), *stronzata* (bullshit), and *strumento* (instrument)” (Farell & Scuderi 147).

According to Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, at one place in the text, Fo also uses “careful repetition and placement of the words ‘importanza’ [importance], ‘importante’ [important] and ‘la
scarpa’ [the shoe], …in] phrasing as a means of creating a joke” (19). Thus, there may be a challenge for any translator to either come up with equally strong expressions/repetitions beginning with the same syllable or, alternatively, translate into an equally strong language but omitting the coherence of the initial syllable/repetition.

Regardless of the choice, as one has seen, there must, however, be an adaption strategy behind the selection. Thus, Lorch discloses, it is no surprise that the translators and adaptors of this play have found their own solutions and they may, or may not prioritize stage adaptation rather than the original linguistic meaning of the source text (Farell & Scuderi 145).

As mentioned earlier, previous research seems mainly to investigate Gavin Richards’ adaptation of Gillian Hanna’s translation, which was firstly staged in London in 1979, and eventually became the most popular adapted version for British television in 1983 (Mitchell 98-99). However, as Jennifer Lorch comments, some of the older translations and adaptations of this popular satirical and political play are inevitably leading away from the original version (Farell & Scuderi 145). According to Mitchell, especially “Richards’ adaptation and the style of his direction of the piece […] severely distorted the meaning and intention of the original, cutting it extensively and adding speeches and stage business which often went completely against the grain of Fo’s plays” (98-99). Furthermore, Lorch claims that “Richards’ version keeps the title and the incident but attempts to compensate for lack of immediacy by introducing a range of [contemporary] political references” (Farell & Scuderi 151). Even Fo himself, although not knowing English, judged Richards’ version of the play to be “overplayed and excessively crude and [more of a] slapstick”, and this to such an extent that he tried to ban it from future English speaking theatre productions (Mitchell 103).

In contrast, Simon Nye’s version - written and staged in London 2003 - is described, in the forewords of the play, as being “faithful to the Italian version” (Nye [abstract]). Therefore, I will compare Gavin Richards’ adaptation with Simon Nye’s more recent translation, in order to investigate if this newer translation will reveal any differences in the humorous and satirical parts of the original play.

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8 **Slapstick** noun 1. A boisterous form of comedy marked by chases, collisions, and crude practical jokes.
2. A paddle designed to produce a loud whacking sound, formerly used by performers in farces.
*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.* See biography.
6 A Comparative Analysis of Some Satirical and Comical Features in the Translated Texts

In order to display the text fragments analysed in a readable fashion, I have chosen the table format. However, as the two translated texts differ from the original version, the length of the fragments will also be different. In addition, the layout of the single text will also differ between the three text versions. Thus, in order to preserve the authenticity of the texts, these differences will remain. Furthermore, the “silent” stage acts appear in italics throughout the three versions, as shown in the original layouts.

The first text that I will investigate is taken from Act One, Scene One, in which the Maniac (Matto) is initially interrogated by Commissario Bertozzo/Inspector Bertozzo/Bertozzo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FO</th>
<th>RICHARDS</th>
<th>NYE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In scena il Primo agente e il Commissario Bertozzo che sta interrogando un uomo: il Matto.</td>
<td>CONSTABLE encounters a mouse trap hidden in the filing cabinet and he yells.</td>
<td>Bertozzo Get his file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMISSARIO BERTOZZO (sfogliando degli incartamenti, rivolto al Matto che se ne sta seduto tranquillo) Ah, ma non è la prima volta che ti travesti! Qui dice che ti sei spacciato due volte per chirurgo, una volta per capitano dei bersaglieri… tre volte vescovo… una volta ingegnere navale… in tutto sei stato arrestato… vediamo un po’… due e tre cinque… uno, tre… due… undici volte in tutto… e questa è la dodicesima!</td>
<td>BERTOZZO: Please bear with me.</td>
<td>The Constable indicates that his hands are full. Bertozzo sighs heavily and walks the few feet to his desk, where the Maniac’s file is in a pile of others. Bertozzo studies the file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATTO Sì, dodici arresti… ma le faccio notare, signor commissario, che non sono mai stato condannato… ho la fedina pulita, io!</td>
<td>INSPECTOR BERTOZZO picks up a visiting card and studies it, looking up at the MANIAC.</td>
<td>Bertozzo Ah good, there’s a charge outstanding against you: impersonation. Again. Let’s look at your previous… Surgeon, twice. Captain in the Ghurkhas. Bishop, three times. Naval engineer. You’ve been arrested a total of… two and three is five… one, three, two… eleven times. So this is the twelfth little performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERTOZZO: This isn’t the first time that you’ve been up for impersonation is it? In all you have been arrested… let me see… He leafs through the papers in front of him.</td>
<td>BERTOZZO: Twice as a surgeon, three times as a bishop, army captain, tennis umpire…</td>
<td>Maniac Yes, but I would point out, Inspector Bertozzo, that I’ve never been found guilty. My nose is clean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERTOZZO: Ah good, there’s a charge outstanding against you: impersonation. Again. Let’s look at your previous… Surgeon, twice. Captain in the Ghurkhas. Bishop, three times. Naval engineer. You’ve been arrested a total of… two and three is five… one, three, two… eleven times. So this is the twelfth little performance.</td>
<td>BERTOZZO: Eleven arrests altogether, but I’d like to point out that I have never actually been convicted, Inspector.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a first glance, the settings for this episode in the play are rather different, especially if one compares Fo’s text with Nye’s. In Nye’s translation, Bertozzo’s assisting constable is a reason for Bertozzo to indicate resignation with his subordinate’s unwillingness to cooperate and take care of the file. Nevertheless, this may bring a humorous tone to the setting.
By contrast, in Richards’ translation, the scene commences with a long presentation by Inspector Bertozzo (not taken into account here) and then a humorous slapstick created by the incident of the Constable in the mouse trap. Yet, the original humour may lie in the word-play with the Italian reflexive verb *ti travesti* which literally means “you disguise yourself” and which also carries the meaning of the English transitive verb phrase “to make a travesty of”9.

Secondly, the actual characters performed during “impersonation” can be a source of ridicule since *vescovo* (in English “bishop”), for example, contains an implication of the seriousness of the ruling religious power.

Finally, Bertozzo’s act of counting the number of times the Maniac has impersonated someone may be a source of parody, since it is done verbally and with what may seem as a big effort to Bertozzo.

In Nye’s translation, the impersonated “army captain” has been adapted into the British Empires “Captain in the Ghurkhas” which then may indicate the fearlessness of and, at the same time, by impersonation, the ridiculousness of the British Army. However, Nye has kept Bertozzo’s original verbal counting.

Finally, Nye has adapted a new angle on the original *ho la fedina pulita* (in English “I have a good [i.e. clean] conscience”) into “My nose is clean.” This implicates he has recently blown his nose, which is totally out of context and thus may be a source of laughter in the audience.

Consequently, in Richards’ translation/adaptation almost the entire original humorous setting, as described above, has been excluded. What remains, from the original, are some of the ‘impersonated characters’ with the adaptation of “tennis umpire” instead of either the original *naval captain* or *surgeon*. The tennis umpire may carry the implication of a judge at Wimbledon tennis tournament in London which, in turn, carries the implication of the British pride for this “true home of tennis.” Instead, slapstick is adapted into the plot, which, in turn, may support the criticism of Richards’ translation - made by Fo himself (Mitchell 103) - that the original satire here becomes altered.

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9 **Travesty**: 1674, from adj. meaning “dressed so as to be made ridiculous, parodied, burlesqued” (c.1662), from Fr. travesti “dressed in disguise,” pp. of travestir “to disguise,” from It. travestire “to disguise,” from L. trans- “over” + vestire “to clothe.”

*Online Etymology Dictionary.* See bibliography.
The second text that I will investigate is taken from Act 2, Scene 1, in which the Maniac questions how it came about the anarchist accidentally fell out of the window, without anyone from the police force interfering. The personages involved here are Commissario sportivo/Pissani/Inspector, Secondo agente/Constable/Constable 2, Matto/Maniac (in both translations), and Questore/Superintendent (in both translations):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FO</th>
<th>RICHARDS</th>
<th>NYE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO</td>
<td>PISSANI: It all happened very quickly.</td>
<td>Inspector It all happened so quickly…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma è stato così all’improvviso…</td>
<td>CONSTABLE: He was very athletic. Very fast.</td>
<td>Constable 2 And he was a slippery bugger, like a bloody poltergeist! I only just managed to catch hold of his foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECONDO AGENTE E lei non ha idea di come fosse agile quel demonio… io ho fatto appena in tempo ad afferrarlo per un piede!</td>
<td>MANIAC: I see.</td>
<td>Maniac Ah, you see how my system of goading you mercilessly works! So you caught him by the foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATTO Oh! Vedete, vedete che la mia tecnica della provocazione funziona: lei l’ha afferrato per un piede!</td>
<td>SECONDO AGENTE: I only just managed to grab him by the foot.</td>
<td>Constable 2 Yes, but his shoe came off in my hand and he proceeded in a downwardly direction without me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECONDO AGENTE Si, ma mi è rimasta in mano la scarpa, e lui è andato di sotto lo stesso.</td>
<td>MANIAC: Ah ha! My tenacity pays off, you see. You grabbed him by the foot?</td>
<td>Maniac Not to worry. The main thing is that a shoe remained behind. That shoe is incontrovertible proof that you wanted to save him!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATTO Non ha importanza. Importante è che sia rimasta la scarpa. La scarpa è la prova incontrovertibile della vostra volontà di salvare! (Osserva attentamente uno dei documenti).</td>
<td>SECONDO AGENTE: Yes, but his shoe just came off in my hand.</td>
<td>Inspector Incontrovertible, there you go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO</td>
<td>MANIAC: That’s it! Brilliant! Why didn’t I see it before? The vital thing was you had the shoe in your hand.</td>
<td>Superintendent (to the Constable) Well done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certo, è incontrovertibile!</td>
<td>CONSTABLE: Yes, but his shoe just came off in my hand.</td>
<td>Constable 2 No problem, sir –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUESTORE (all’Agente) Bravo!</td>
<td>MANIAC: That’s it! Brilliant! Why didn’t I see it before? The vital thing was you had the shoe in your hand.</td>
<td>Superintendent Shut up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGENTE La ringrazio signor quest…</td>
<td>SECONDO AGENTE: Yes, but his shoe just came off in my hand.</td>
<td>Maniac Hang on, though…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUESTORE Zitto!</td>
<td>MANIAC: That’s it! Brilliant! Why didn’t I see it before? The vital thing was you had the shoe in your hand.</td>
<td>Something’s not quite right here. (Holding up a sheet of paper.) Had the suicide victim been wearing three shoes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATTO Un momento… ma qui, qualcosa non quadra. Il suicida aveva tre scarpe?</td>
<td>SECONDO AGENTE: Yes, but his shoe just came off in my hand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, this is the passage where Fo repeats the significant words *importanza* (importance), *importante* (important) and *la scarpa* (the shoe) in order to create a phrasal joke (19). To create the same humorous effect with the very same words literally translated into English would, however, be “syntactically impossible,” they claim. This is due to the fact that the same “syntactical stress” - created when the subject (shoe/importance) is placed at the end of a sentence - cannot be achieved in English as this attempt would instead create a “rhetorical” or “poetic” text (19-20).

Nevertheless, if one would try to make an attempt of literal translation of the passage, with the same syntactical stress, it would be something like this: *It does not have any importance. The
important thing is the remaining shoe. (or: Importance lies in the remaining shoe.) The shoe is the incontrovertible proof of your willingness to save him. In this way, the original poetic sense Fo has created may be retrieved.

However, as one can observe, neither Richards nor Nye have tried to keep importance/important in their translations and adaptations. Instead, the shoe is the only remaining “object” – in both senses!

Despite this, Nye has succeeded in creating a translation that keeps the main essence of the original text intact. For example, his translation “And he was a slippery bugger, like a bloody poltergeist! I only just managed to catch hold of his foot” keeps the satirical hint of a demonic creature (demonio) intact. The satirical allusion here is, thus, that the anarchist is demonic by nature. This satirical allusion is completely lost in Richards’ adaptation, as he, instead, lets the Constable utter: “He was very athletic. Very fast.”

Furthermore, Richards has kept “the shoe,” as mentioned, but adapted the utterance to include praise for the rectitude of all the policemen. This is then followed by a (more typical British) applause and a toast in liquor. In this way, the whole successive scene has been inserted/adapted in Richards’ version, and prolongs, and alters, the original fast shift from the first scene into the Maniac’s humorous question of the third shoe. In fact, the shift is initiated by Questore’s/Superintendent’s exclamation Zitto! (Be quiet!), which literally prevents the praise from becoming excessive.

Thus, Richards has not only altered and adapted the scene to be coherent with British culture, but he has totally altered the original intent of this passage in the scene. Yet, there may be a humorous allusion in keeping liquor, instead of (accurate) files concerning the case, in the filing cabinet.

Finally, a humorous remark that is more ironic than the original is also Richards’ allusion of a “triped” anarchist. In the original text, the connection between il suicida “the suicide victim” and the (remarkable) finding of a third shoe (tre scarpe/three shoes), supposedly belonging to the victim, may instead create a direct satirical implication from opposed evidence. However, Fo uses the same ironic remark of a “triped”, later on in the scene.

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The third, and final, text that I will investigate is the dialogue that immediately follows. Here, the Maniac is about to offer the police a humorous explanation of why the anarchist still had two shoes on his feet when he hit the ground:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FO</th>
<th>RICHARDS</th>
<th>NYE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO</strong> Non capisco come possa essere successo... MAITTO Neanchéi! A meno che quest’agente velocissimo abbia fatto in tempo, precipitandosi per le scale, a raggiungere un pianerottolo del secondo piano, affacciarsi alla finestra prima che passasse il suicida, inflargli la scarpa al volo e risalire come un razzo al quarto piano nell’istante stesso in cui il precipitante raggiungeva il suolo.</td>
<td><strong>PISSANI:</strong> Don’t know how that’s happened. <strong>MANIAC:</strong> Unless the Constable here, moving like the clappers, had time to belt down to the balcony a few floors below, lean out and slip the suspect’s shoe back on as he came sailing by.</td>
<td><strong>Inspector</strong> I don’t know how that happened. <strong>Maniac</strong> Nor do I! Unless the policeman here had rushed down the stairs to a second-floor landing, got to a window just as the anarchist was plummeting, put his shoe back on in flight, then hared back upstairs, reaching the fourth floor just as the body hit the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUESTORE Eccò, vede, vede, riprende a fare dell’ironia! MAITTO Ha ragione, è più forte di me... mi scusi. Dunque, tre scarpe... Scusate, non vi ricordate se per caso fosse tripede? QUESTORE Chi? MAITTO Il ferriero suicida... se per caso aveva tre piedi, è logico portasse tre scarpe. QUESTORE (seccato) No, non era tripede! MAITTO Non si sceli, la prego... a parte che da un anarchico ci si può aspettare questo e altro! AGENTE Questo è vero! QUESTORE Zitto! <strong>COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO</strong> Che guai, per la miseria... bisogna trovare una ragione plausibile, sennò... MAITTO L’ho trovata io! QUESTORE Sentiamo. MAITTO Eccoli: senz’altro una delle scarpe viene a dimostrare che doveva essere troppo grande. MAI Non si portava dietro un equipaggiamento troppo grande. <strong>COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO</strong> Che guai, per la miseria... bisogna trovare una ragione plausibile, sennò... MAITTO L’ho trovata io! QUESTORE Sentiamo. MAITTO Eccoli: senz’altro una delle scarpe viene a dimostrare che doveva essere troppo grande. MAI Non si portava dietro un equipaggiamento troppo grande. <strong>COMMISSARIO SPORTIVO</strong> Che guai, per la miseria... bisogna trovare una ragione plausibile, sennò... MAITTO L’ho trovata io! QUESTORE Sentiamo. MAITTO Eccoli: senz’altro una delle scarpe viene a dimostrare che doveva essere troppo grande. MAI Non si portava dietro un equipaggiamento troppo grande.</td>
<td><strong>PISSANI:</strong> Jesus!! <strong>MANIAC:</strong> Well you find a plausible explanation! <strong>PISSANI:</strong> (Beside himself with panic) Very well. Obviously one of the suspect’s shoes must have been too big for him – so, not having an insole to hand, he had previously put a smaller shoe on inside the bigger one which came off in the Constable’s hand! Or one foot was considerably smaller than the other and the same means was employed to even-up the feet for cosmetic reasons! Pause. <strong>PISSANI looks manically triumphant. MANIAC sits back to enjoy the scene.</strong> <strong>SUPERINTENDENT:</strong> Two shoes on one foot? <strong>PISSANI:</strong> Precisely. <strong>CONSTABLE:</strong> It’s not as mad as it sounds, sir. <strong>SUPERINTENDENT:</strong> It’s fucking deranged! There’s no mention in the autopsy of abnormally disproportioned feet. <strong>CONSTABLE:</strong> That’s not the point I’m pursuing. I’m saying that what I held in my hand may, in fact, have been a galosh. <strong>SUPERINTENDENT:</strong> Nobody wears galoshes these days. <strong>PISSANI:</strong> Anyway, it wasn’t raining. <strong>CONSTABLE:</strong> Ah, but the anarchist may have thought it was about to. <strong>SUPERINTENDENT:</strong> Galoshes are ridiculous garment. An anarchist wouldn’t be seen dead in them. <strong>CONSTABLE:</strong> Exactly! <strong>SUPERINTENDENT:</strong> Bloody balls, Constable. <strong>CONSTABLE:</strong> Only trying to help. <strong>SUPERINTENDENT:</strong> Cock! Complete cock! <strong>PISSANI:</strong> Anarchists are often very eccentric; he may well have been wearing galoshes.</td>
<td><strong>Superintendent</strong> You see, you see, sarcasm again. <strong>Maniac</strong> I apologise, I am hopelessly susceptible to irony. So, three shoes. Can anyone remember if he was a triped? <strong>Superintendent</strong> Who? <strong>Maniac</strong> The suicidal railwayman. If he had three feet that would account for the three shoes. <strong>Superintendent</strong> (curtly) No he was not a triped. <strong>Maniac</strong> Don’t be tetchy. Anarchists are capable of anything. <strong>Constable 2</strong> I’d agree with that. <strong>Superintendent</strong> Shut up. <strong>Inspector</strong> We need to find an explanation or... we are in deep shit. <strong>Maniac</strong> I’ve got it! <strong>Superintendent</strong> Let’s hear it. <strong>Maniac</strong> One of the shoes was a bit too big, and he didn’t have an insole on him, so he put on another, smaller shoe underneath. <strong>Inspector</strong> Two shoes on the same foot? <strong>Maniac</strong> Yes. What’s odd about that? Don’t you remember galoshes – those rubber overshoes people used to wear? <strong>Superintendent</strong> Exactly – used to. <strong>Maniac</strong> Some people still wear them. So I put it to you that the constable had in his hands not a shoe, but a galosh. <strong>Inspector</strong> No, that’s not possible – an anarchist wouldn’t wear galoshes – far too old-worldly and conservative. <strong>Maniac</strong> Anarchists are actually very conservative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, the humour in the first part of the original scene (before marked line) is created through a “combination of absurdity and pace.” With the means of the “subjunctive” ‘A meno che... abbia,’ and a “string of [present] infinitives,” the Maniac stresses the improbable cause for a third shoe to really exist (20).

In their analysis of Richards’ translation, they find his adaptation to be close to the original sense without a “word-for-word substitution” (Fitzpatrick & Sawczak 20-21). For example, Richards has used “unless” to imitate the original “hypothetical nature,” and the infinitives: to belt down, lean out and slip instead of the more common English use of “verbs in past tense” (20).

If one compares this with Nye’s translation of the same passage, Nye has used a more word-for-word translation and, in addition, some verbs in past tense: had rushed, got and hared back (also a British idiom). Thus, he has kept close to the original in length and sense, but loses some of the “pace and the idiocy” Fitzpatrick and Sawczak mention to be the cause of the original humour (20).

In the second passage (below the indicated line), Richards has altered the Maniac’s entire monologue and, instead, he lets Pissani (Commissario sportivo, in the original text/Inspector, in Nye’s translation) make the ponderous reflections on why there exists a third shoe. According to Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, this is a common strategy among the former translators, including Richards, in order to create an adapted dialogic “ensemble” built on “comic stereotypes” rather than keeping the original sense in the “monologic structure” (26).

In fact, as Fitzpatrick and Sawczak point out, this particular passage consists of a speech-act of the Maniac which intends to be an “assertion of an assertion” (29). The original “metatextual” meaning of “Ma c’è chi le por... anzi, sapete che vi dico? Che quella che è rimasta fra le mani...” (‘And do you know what I say? I say that...’) is here translated by Nye into: “Some people still wear them. So I put it to you that the constable had in his hands...” In Richards’ translation, instead of the Maniac, the Constable says: “That’s not the point I’m pursuing. I’m saying that what I held in my hand...” Thus, neither Nye nor Richards have entirely grasped the essential “theatrical frame” of this particular passage.

In addition, Richards uses a more harsh language with swear-words and, for example, cock together with the naming of Pissani give the text a rude character that does not exist in the original text. As mentioned in Chapter 5.3, this was also one of the reasons why Fo reacted negatively to Richards’ adaptation (Mitchell 103). However, swear-words and the allusion to
"Piss Artist" (a slang expression denoting a drunk person who talks nonsense) may evoke comic reactions for some in the British audience. Maher remarks on this fact in her article *The Comic Voice in Translation: Dario Fo’s Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (372) that "Richards appears either not to value the comedy of the text as much as British humorous styles, or not to consider it something his audience could be expected to appreciate."

In contrast, as one can see, Nye has kept a "word-for-word" translation and keeps the entire dialogue close to the original. However, he does not entirely succeed in keeping Fo’s original alliteration as in, for example: “Eccola; senza un altra scarpa più stretta, prima di infilare quella larga.” Here, Nye’s translation is: “One of the shoes was a bit too small, and he didn’t have an insole on him, so he put on another, smaller shoe underneath.” As mentioned in Chapter 5.3, “consonantal clusters” are typical for Fo’s alliterations (Farell & Scuderi 147). Even if such a “consonantal cluster” is only found in the Italian word *schofield* and he didn’t have an insole on him, so he put on another, smaller shoe underneath. As in a "consonantal alliteration," as in *from stem to stern*, or with a vowel sound that may differ from syllable to syllable (vocalic alliteration), as in *apt alliteration’s artful aid*.
7 Conclusion

When examining a humorous joke, it often proves to be not only semantic features, but also pragmatic and context based features that determine if the joke, or pun is to be successful. Another feature that is essential, according to Raskin and Attardo, is the presence of overlapping scripts. Furthermore, these overlapping scripts must be shared scripts between the hearer and speaker, in order for the hearer to detect the funny part of the utterance.

However, Attardo admits that the limited scope of Raskin’s Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) only can apply to linguistic puns. Therefore, he has, since 1991, tried to broaden the scope by developing a General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) which also takes into account the logical mechanism, the target, the narrative strategy, the language, and the situation. Still, Attardo claims (2002) that, for example, allusions, metaphors and ambiguous texts often lack the correct (according to SSTH) overlapping of scripts to be considered funny.

Yet, both the linguistic humour theories of Raskin and Attardo, as well as Fitzpatrick and Sawczak’s Cultural Translation Model show the importance of taking the impact of society and culture into account in order to create a humorous linguistic text, or analysing linguistic humour for translation and adaptation.

Various techniques are available to translate and adapt the source text into the target language and culture. Even if there is no linguistic reason for altering the implications and symbolic approach of the original text, the translator may adapt the stage performance into the cultural realm of the native public. Thus, the translator can either exclude the humorous parts in the original text, or adapt the satire into domestically accepted jokes, or add new humorous events into the play.

The main objection against Richards’ adaptation has been his altering of the original plot and adding crude elements and slapstick in order to create a humorous stage performance. My research shows that there are, indeed, such elements in his adaptation, and that the original style with monologues is partially transposed into dialogues. In spite of close observation, no evidence for use of puns is found in Fo’s original text. At the same time, Richards’ use of

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12 As mentioned in Chapter 3.2.
13 As described by the linguistic humour theories in Chapter 3.
stereotypes and slapsticks adapted to the target culture may create humorous effects, but at the expense of the original and more *satirical* and *allusive* type of humour.

Nye, on the other hand, has mainly used a “word-for-word” translation and thus created a text close to the original. However, using this technique, the original *alliterations* and *rhythm* are not automatically transposed into the target language, as shown in Nye’s translation and adaptation. In contrast, according to Fitzpatrick and Sawczak, Richards has in some parts succeeded better in this transposition of the original sense and rhythm – even if he has made an adaptation obviously more focused on the target culture. Consequently, in some cases, the original humorous sense may be kept only when the text is adapted beyond a word-for-word translation.

To translate and adapt any humorous text is then a balancing act, when taking the target culture into account as well as keeping the sense in the original text. In regard to translating Fo, the Nobel Prize Committee mentions this as one of the major obstacles for any translator of his texts, mainly because of his particular style and use of allusions. Furthermore, in the case of Fo, there is not only the allusions but also the alliterations – the use of, for example, *consonantal clusters beginning with the sibilant s* - that creates problems for the translators. The tradition Fo relies his texts on is not only Commedia dell’arte. It can be retrieved to an older version of satire that lies rooted in the Italian text tradition since ancient Roman times. In this festive tradition, once a year, the roles of the oppressed was changed and they could for a brief moment take charge of their situation and mock the oppressors. Yet, as my literary review demonstrates, regardless of the author, there will always be parts in any (humorous) text that cannot be translated or, at least, harder to translate than the rest of the text.

To be true to the author (in keeping the original sense of the source text), or true to the audience (in the sense of creating an amusing play adapted to the target culture), will not entirely be a matter of choice for the translator. As my investigation displays, the obstacles encountered in the original texts limit these choices. In other words, a translator with the urge to be faithful to the original text may be less successful in pursuing this task than intended as he or she encounters these obstacles. Thus, as Fitzpatrick and Sawczak have put it, there will always be an inevitable deviation from the original text in any translation.
8 Bibliography

**Primary Sources**


**Secondary Sources**


9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix I Fulltext Morte accidentale di un anarchico by Dario Fo

ATTTO PRIMO

SCENA PRIMA
Una normale stanza della Questura centrale di Milano. Una scrivania, un casellario, un armadio, qualcosa di sedia, un attaccapanni con appeso un soprabito sestro, un cappello nero, una borsa, una macchina da scrittore, un telefono, una finestra, due porte. Accanto al Mastro una voluminosa borsa.

In scena il Primo agente e il Commissario Bertozzo che sta interrogando un uomo: il Mastro.

COMMISMAO BERTOZZO (sfogliando degli incartamenti, rivolto al Mastro che se ne sta seduto tranquillo) Ah, ma non è la prima volta che ti tralasci? Qui dice che ti sei spacciato due volte per chirurgo, una volta per capitano dei bersaglieri... tre volte incassato... una volta ingegnere navale... in tutto sei stato arrestato... vediamo... due e tre cinque... uno, tre... due... undici volte in tutto... e spera è la dodicesima!

MATTO Si, dodici arresti... ma le faccio notare, signor commissario, che non sono mai stato condannato...

COMMISMAO BERTOZZO Be... non so con che razza di gabelle te re l'abbia fatta a scassinare... ma ti assicuro che stavolta farà una vita: lo può gio...

COMMISMAO BERTOZZO Be', la capiscia, commissario: una fedina im... macroata da sporcare fa un po' gola a tutti...
Forsberg 34

Morte accidentale di un anarchico

do, era solo perché il sole non era ancora tramonta-... tramontava più tardi: all’una, come in Norvegia di lugh. O

questore: Ma no, l’avemo appena ap-... per far cambia... l’aria della stanza... figli altri due veri? commissario sportivo Si, c’era molto fuo...

agente. Su, l’anarchico vuole molto.

questo avveva aperto i vetri... e pure le imposte? commissario sportivo Sì, anche le imposte.

questore: Di dicembre? A mezzanotte con il termome-

tro che scende sotto zero, la nebbia che ti inge-

sia... e Via, via, aúa! Ma che ci frega della polmo-

nati? Avviate sì... il cappotto?

commissario sportivo No, stavamo in giacchetta.

questore: Che sportivi! commissario sportivo Ma non faceva sì... fatto freddo, gli assicuro!

questore: No, non faceva freddo.

questore: Ah sì? Quella sera il servizio meteo-

ologico ha dato per tutte l’Italia temperature da far bar-...

bellare un orso bianco, e loro non avevano freddo, anzi... sembravano una mongola. Ma che cosa avete: un mon-

tone africano personale che passa di qua di ogni not-

te, e ci è il corrente del gelo che vien su per le doc-

che del Naviglio e vi passa sotto casa con le fogne?

commissario sportivo Scusi signor giudice, ma non capisco, poco fa ha asserito di essere qui aposta per aiu-

are, e invece non fa che mettere in dubbio ogni nostro testimonia... sportivi, morti... morti di dubbio.

questore D’accordo, forse io esagero, forse metterà
troppa in dubbio... ma qui pare d’essere davanti a uno di quei giovani per deficienzi e ritardati che si leggono sulla settimana estremica: “trovare i tren-

nare errori e contraddizioni in cui è caduto il com-

missario Badiccio Stupido”.

questore Non ci sono... analisi sulle finestr... che... la finestra, non fanno in tempo a intervenire.

commissario sportivo Ma è... un’idea così all’improvviso...

Morte accidentale di un anarchico

secondo agente. E lei non ha idea di come fosse agi-

ge quel demonio... io ho fatto appena in tempo ad averlo! commissario sportivo Che? Vedere, vedere la mia tecnica della pro-

vocazione francese... lei l’ha afferrato per un piede!

secondo agente. Si, ma mi è rimasta in mano la scar-

pa, e lui è andato di sotto lo stesso.

questore: Non ha importanza. Importante è che sia ri-

masta la scarpa. La scarpa è la prova incontestabile

della vostra volontà di salvare! (Osserva attentamente)

un documento.

commissario sportivo Cerca, è incontestabile!

questore (all’Agente): Bravo! comissario sportivo La ringrazio signor quest...

questore: Zitto! questore (all’Agente): Zitto! commissario sportivo Che, per la messa... bhs!... va trovo

un ragionamento plausibile, senso... questore: O l’ho trovato! commissario sportivo Aveva una di quelle scarpe gli... ci un po’ grande, e allora, non avendo una sottopiede a por-

ta di mano, ha inflato un’altra scarpa più stretta, prima di infliggere quella laga.

questore: D’un altro scarpa nello stesso piede?

questore: Sì, che ci è di strano?... Come lo... di calza, vi ricordate? Quelle soprascarpe... de gomma che si portavano una volta.

questore: Appunto, una volta!

questore: Ma c’è chi ha pe... anzi, capire se... c’è che fa... e che c’è è rimasta tra le mani dell’agente non era una scarpa, ma una calza!

questore: Ma no, è impossibile: un anarchico con le calze! roba da gente all’arti-

ca... da conservatori.

questore: Gli anarchici sono molto conservatori.

questore: Ecco, vede, vede, riprende a fare dell’ironia.

questore: Ha ragione, è più forte di me... mi scus... Dun-

que, tre scarpe... Sussiste, non vi ricordate se per caso fosse troppo?

questore: Chi?

questore: Il ferrovieri suicida, se per caso aveva tre piedi, è logico portare tre scarpe...

questore (secco): No, non era trepiede?

questore: Non si, la pro... a parte che da un anarchico ci si può aspettare questo e altro!

questore: Questo è vero!

questore: Zitto!

questore (all’Agente): Zitto! commissario sportivo Che... ha... pulgaria... bisogna trovare una ragione plausibile, senso... questore: L’ho trovato...

questore: Sentiamo...

questore: Zitto! commissario sportivo Eccola: senso’altro una delle scarpe gli... ci un po’ grande, e allora, non avendo una sottopiede a por-

ta di mano, ha inflato un’altra scarpa più stretta, prima di infliggere quella laga.

questore: Due scarpe... In un altro piede?

questore: Sì, che ci è di strano?... Come lo... di calza, vi ricordate? Quelle soprascarpe... de gomma che si portavano una volta.

questore: Appunto, una volta!

questore: Ma c’è chi ha pe... anzi, capire se... c’è che fa... e che c’è è rimasta tra le mani dell’agente non era una scarpa, ma una calza!

questore: Ma no, è impossibile: un anarchico con le calze! roba da gente all’arti-

ca... da conservatori.

questore: Gli anarchici sono molto conservatori.

questore: Ecco, vede, vede, riprende a fare dell’ironia.

questore (all’Agente): E il piantone, dice che gli
alla porta c'è una giornalista che chiede di lei, signor questore...
questore: Ah sì... le avevo dato un appuntamento per oggi. E quella dell'«Espresso» o dell'«Europa», non mi ricordo... chieda se si chiama Peltéri.
commissario sportivo (guardando al telefono). Si chiama Peltéri? (Al Questore) Sì, Maria Peltéri.
questore: Allora è lei... voleva un'intervista. La pregherei di passare un altro giorno che oggi non ho tempo...
questore: Ma neanche per idea; non permetto che a causa mia voi abbiate delle grane.
questore: In che senso?
questore: La conosco quella, è una che corre, ed è capace d'avercela a male... è d'un pernacchissimo... È capace per riprova di farvi uno di quegli artigli... La faccia passare, per carità!
questore: Ma la sua inchiesta?
questore: Può aspettare. Ma non avete ancora capito che io mi trovo nella stessa vostra barca; e gente come quella bisogna cercare d'averla amica, non contro! Mi dica retta.
questore: D'accordo. (Al Commissario sportivo) La faccia passare.
commissario sportivo (al telefono) Accompagnala su da me. (Rattocca)
questore: E lei che fa, ci lascia?
questore: Ma neanche per idea... Io non abbandono mai gli amici, specie nel momento del pericolo!
commissario sportivo e questore: Resta?
questore: E io che veste? Vede che quell'avvoltoio di giornalista venga a scoprire chi è lei e che cosa è venuto a fare qui, per poi scrivere a tutta pagina sul suo giornale? Ma allora lo dica che ci vuol rovine!
questore: Ma no, non vi voglio rovinare... state tranquilli! L'avvoltoio non saprà mai chi io sia veramente.

ATTO SECONDO

commissario sportivo: Ah no?
questore: No di certo, cambierò di personaggio... Per me è un gioco da ragazzi, credetemi psichiatria, della sezione criminale, direttore dell'Interpol, dirigente della scientifica, a vostra scelta. Se l'avvocato vi dovesse mettere in imbarazzo con qualche domanda vigliaca, voi non fate altro che strizzarvi l'occhio e intervenire io... importante è che non vi compromettiate voi.
questore: Lei è troppo generoso, signor giudice! (Gli stringe le mani comunemente)
questore: Non mi chiami più giudice, per carità. Da questo momento sono il capitano Marcantonio Bianchi Piccinni della scientifica... vu bene?
commissario sportivo: Ma esiste davvero il capitano Bianchi Piccinni? sta a Roma...
questore: Appunto. Costi, se la giornalista scriveva qualcosa che non ci piace, sarà facile dimostrare che s'è inventata tutto... chiamando a testimoniare da Roma il vero capitano Piccinni.
commissario sportivo: Ma lei è un genio! Se la sente proprio di recitare la parte di capitano?
questore: Non si preoccupi, durante l'ultima guerra ero capellano dei bersaglieri. (Spedace la borsa e vi affondono entrambe le mani.)
questore: Silenzio, è qui.
giornalista (dall'esterno): È per me?
questore (dirigendosi alla porta): Avanti signorina... si accomodi.

Entra la Giornalista.

giornalista: Buon giorno. Il signor questore per favore?
questore: Sono io, piacere signorina. Noli ci conosco solo per telefono... purtroppo.

giornalista: Piacere, L'agente giù alla porta mi fece qualche difficoltà...
Appendix II Fulltext Accidental Death of an Anarchist in adaptation by Gavin Richards

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

An ordinary office in the Central Police HQ, Milan. A desk littered with papers and files, telephone and card listing, extensions, a bench, chairs, filing cabinet, a wastepaper bin, and a coat stand on which hang various coats and hats. The room is drab and bureaucratic; it is dominated by a large window. There are two doors. The view from the window indicates the office to be on the first floor. Enter INSPECTOR.

BERTOZZO: And a CONSTABLE who takes the Inspector’s coat and hat to the coat stand.

Act One
Scene One

An ordinary office in the Central Police HQ. Milan. A desk littered with papers and files, telephone and card listing, extensions, a bench, chairs, filing cabinet, a wastepaper bin, and a coat stand on which hang various coats and hats. The room is drab and bureaucratic; it is dominated by a large window. There are two doors. The view from the window indicates the office to be on the first floor. Enter INSPECTOR.

BERTOZZO: (To Audience) Good evening. I am Inspector Francesco Giovanni Battista Giacomo Bertozzo of the Security Police. This is my office on the first floor of our notorious headquarters here in Milan. Notorious following a social little incident a few weeks ago when an anarchist, under interrogation in a similar room a few floors above, fell through the window. Although my colleagues claimed, quite reasonably, that the incident was suicide, the official verdict of the enquiry is that the death of the anarchist was ‘accidental’. Bit ambiguous you see. So there’s been public outrage, accusations, demonstrations and so on flying around this building for weeks. Not the best atmosphere in which a decent nine to five plainclothes policeman like myself can do an honest inconspicuous day’s work.

I get all types in here. Tea-leaves, junkies, pimps, anarchists – this is a sort of clearing house. NEXT!

Exit CONSTABLE. Return with the character known as ‘MANIC’ who sits opposite the desk. He looks like the cliché idea of a disciple of Freud: wild hair, thin spectacles, dirty beard, shabby suit or mac. He sits calmly. He carries about four plastic carrier bags stuffed with god knows what.

BERTOZZO: I ought to warn you that the author of this sick little play, Dario Fo, has the traditional, irrational hatred of the police common to all narrow-minded left-wingers and so I shall, no doubt, be the unswerving butt of endless anti-authoritarian jibes.

CONSTABLE: encounters a mouse trap hidden in the filing cabinet and he yelps.

BERTOZZO: Please bear with me.

INSPECTOR BERTOZZO picks up a visiting card and studies it, looking up at the MANIC.

BERTOZZO: This isn’t the first time that you’ve been up for impersonation is it? In all you have been arrested… let me see. He leafs through the papers in front of him.

BERTOZZO: Twice as a surgeon, three times as a bishop, army captain, tennis umpire…

MANIC: Eleven arrests altogether, but I’d like to point out that I have never actually been convicted, Inspector.

BERTOZZO: I don’t know how the hell you have been getting away with it, but this time we’ll have you. That’s a promise.

MANIC: Mouthwatering, isn’t it? A nice clean record like mine just begging to be defiled.

BERTOZZO: The charges state that you falsely assumed the identity of a professor of psychiatry and former don of the University of Padua. That’s fraud.

MANIC: But I am a lunatic. A certified hygienist! There’s my medical report.

He hands BERTOZZO a crumpled piece of paper.

MANIC: Committed sixteen times, same thing every time –

MANIC: I have never swindled anyone.

CONSTABLE: Not much.

MANIC: I applied for a grant from the Ministry of Culture but I hadn’t got the right connections.

BERTOZZO: According to my notes, as this psychiatrist you were charging your clients two hundred thousand lire a visit.

CONSTABLE: Jesus wept!

MANIC: I beg your pardon?

CONSTABLE: I could retire on that.

MANIC: It’s a reasonable fee for a man with my qualifications.

BERTOZZO: What qualifications?

MANIC: Twenty years of intensive training in sixteen different psychoanalytic schools under some of the best shrinks in the biz. Unlike your run-of-the-mill man I immersed myself in my studies, slept with them as well as when the beds run out – head to toe, three in a kip, make our own enquiries. I am a bloody genius! Look at my brilliant diagnosis of that millionaire’s schizophrenic son in Palermo. Superb!

BERTOZZO: Superb fee, OK.

MANIC: The fee is an indispensable part of the treatment. If I didn’t retrieve these twits of the odd two hundred thousand I’d lose all credibility. Any less and they’d think I was no good, a beginner or something. Even Freud… Ah, Sigmund (he crosses himself)… even Freud said a fee is the most effective panacea especially for the doctor.

BERTOZZO: Pit your client filed a complaint, wasn’t it.
ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

his heels like Beau Brummel.

PISSANI: He had no ruddy springs in his bloody heels!

MANIAC: Fine. All right. But here was a man of 5 foot 4, give or take an inch, on his own, without stepladder, spring, accomplice, trampoline, bri-nylon rope with crampons attached or any other device and he manages to get from there... (Indicates chair, indicates window)... to here and within three seconds he becomes jam sponge and there's four highly-trained policemen just standing there. Look at the room, gentlemen. Surely one of you must have been in the vicinity of the window.

PISSANI: It all happened very quickly.

CONSTABLE: He was very athletic. Very fast.

MANIAC: I see.

CONSTABLE: I only just managed to grab him by the foot.

MANIAC: Ah ha! My tenacity pays off, you see. You grabbed him by the foot?

CONSTABLE: Yes, but his shoe just came off in my hand.

MANIAC: That's isn't Brilliant! Why didn't I see it before? The vital thing was you had the shoe in your hand.

Incontrovertible proof of your efforts to save the suspect. You've done it, gentlemen. Well done, Constable.

They slowly tug they are in the clear.

PISSANI: Of course! It works."

SUPERINTENDENT: Well done. Constable!

PISSANI and SUPERINTENDENT take drinks from filing cabinet, applaud and shake the Constable's hand.

CONSTABLE: Thank you, Sper, thank you, sir.

MANIAC: Just a minute. Sorry. Everyone freezes.

PISSANI: There's one little detail doesn't quite sit here.
PISANI: I only did it on your orders!
SUPERINTENDENT: Me?? Me?? You weren't involved at all of a sudden.
CONSTABLE: Please! Sir!
SUPERINTENDENT: Keep out of it! It's all me now! You didn't enjoy yourself, of course?!
PISANI: I was having a laugh. Yes. You said that. didn't you Constable?
CONSTABLE: Yes.
SUPERINTENDENT: Some laugh! Ha! Laughing now, aren't we?
PISANI: I was just scary him. You are the matter!
SUPERINTENDENT: I'm a matter?!
CONSTABLE: Please.
PISANI: Well you bloody pushed him, chum!
SUPERINTENDENT: Did I? Did I? That is a laugh alright!
All on my own, was I!
Suddenly all three realize at the same instant that the MANIAC is listening. They freeze. Slowly turn. The
MANIAC has a beauteous smile. Pause. No one speaks.
Phone shatters the silence. It rings. No one moves.
MANIAC: Better answer it.
PISANI: But you...
MANIAC: I never heard a word, Inspector.
PISANI picks up receiver.
PISANI: (On phone) Hello... Just a minute... (To
SUPERINTENDENT) Some journalist for you. She's
waiting downstairs.
SUPERINTENDENT: My God, it's that Feletti woman from
L'Unita. I'd forgotten I told her we'd see her today.
PISANI: Not about this business, surely?

SUPERINTENDENT: What else? I didn't have any choice.
City Hall ordered me to see her and try to quieten her
down.
PISANI: I've read her stuff. She's a bloody viper.
MANIAC: Well you'd better see her then. Don't want to get
her back up any more.
SUPERINTENDENT: What about your enquiry?
MANIAC: It'll have to wait.
SUPERINTENDENT: If you wait in my office we'll get rid of
her so quickly as possible.
MANIAC: I'm fine right here.
PISANI: But if she finds out who you are it could ruin
everything.
SUPERINTENDENT: On the other hand the Professor's
quick thinking would be an invaluable asset if she starts
asking loaded questions.
PISANI: The main things is that we aren't compromised.
SUPERINTENDENT: Constable clear this mess up.
CONSTABLE: Right away, Superintendent.
MANIAC: I'll just stay in the background. You tip me the
wink if you want me to stick my oar in.
SUPERINTENDENT: You are too kind, your Honour.
PISANI: You see, one 'your Honour' and we're done for.
CONSTABLE: Can't the Professor pretend to be someone
else?
PISANI: What?
SUPERINTENDENT: Wonderful idea!
MANIAC: Yes! I could be a psychiatrist from the criminal
department.
CONSTABLE: Terrific.
SUPERINTENDENT: No no no. I know. Captain
9.3 Appendix II Fulltext Accidental Death of an Anarchist in translation by Simon Nye

Act One

Scene One

A modest room at central police headquarters, somewhere in England. A desk, a cupboard, a fan, chair, computer, telephone, window and two doors. The time is now.

A man’s face appears at the window. We are clearly high up, on the third floor. He looks inside, then exits the window, which opens. He pulls himself inside, carrying a large bag. He stands there, very much at ease: the Maniac.

The door opens and Inspector Bertozzo comes in, followed by a uniformed Constable. The three men freeze as they notice each other. Bertozzo and the Maniac know each other.

Bertozzo What are you doing here?

Maniac I’m here to – no, you work it out, I’m a tax-payer. Potentially.

Bertozzo Nods to the Constable, who grabs the Maniac with some force.

Bertozzo Get his fit.

The Constable indicates that his hands are full. Bertozzo sighs heavily and walks the few feet to his desk, where the Maniac’s file is in a pile of others. Bertozzo studies the file.

Bertozzo Ah good, there’s a charge outstanding against you: impersonation. Again. Let’s look at your previous . . . surgeries, twice. Captain in the Gurkhas. Bishop, three times. Naval engineer. You’ve been arrested a total of . . . two and three is five . . . one, three, two . . . eleven times. So this is the twelfth little performance.

Maniac Yes, but I would point out, Inspector Bertozzo, that I’ve never been found guilty. My nose is clean.

Bertozzo Yeah, I don’t know what stories you came up with to manage that, but this time – fact – I’m going to dirty your nose.

Maniac I know what you’re saying; I’m the same with lovely fresh snow, I can’t walk past it without wanting to piss on it.

Bertozzo Yeah, be funny. And now you’ve attempted to pass yourself off as a ‘Professor of psychiatry and former lecturer at the University of Des Moines’. You realise that constitutes fraud and you’re looking at a prison sentence?

Maniac Yes, if I were a sane person. But I am mad. I have a certificate. It’s all there in my medical records. I’ve been admitted sixteen times with what’s called ‘acting mania’. It’s more of a hobby, really – playing other people. I’ll do anybody! But the thing is I’m a huge fan of the Theatre of Life, so my fellow actors have to be real people . . . who don’t know they’re acting. Which is just as well because I’m a bit short of funds, so I can’t pay them. I asked the Arts Council for a grant but I don’t know anyone who’s anyone, you see, so . . .

Bertozzo So you can these so-called fellow actors.

Maniac I have never exploited anyone in my life.

Bertozzo (glances in file) As a phoney psychiatrist you charged two hundred pounds per consultation.

Constable (standing behind the Maniac) Push me.

Maniac That is the standard rate for any self-respecting psychiatrist who’s studied for as many years as I have.

Bertozzo Uh huh, what form did this study take?

Maniac Twenty years spent in sixteen different mental institutions studying thousands of lunatics like myself, day by day. And at night too. Because, unlike your bog-standard psychiatrist, I’ve always dealt with my patients – three at a time to save you from the bed, you see. Anyway, judge me by my record – in this case my startling but accurate diagnosis of a posh boy’s schizophrenia, his treatment tragically curtailed by my arrest.

Bertozzo Two hundred quid’s pretty startling, too.

Maniac Well, honestly enough, it’s important that they pay a lot of money.

Bertozzo That’s part of the therapy, is it?

Maniac Oh yes. If I hadn’t mugged him for two hundred do you think that poor bastard’s family would have been satisfied? If I’d asked for fifty quid they’d have thought: ‘Oh, he can’t be much good, maybe he isn’t a real professor, he must have just qualified.’ This way, after they’d recovered from the fee, you could see them thinking: ‘Well, he must be up there with Professor Anthony Black, and they skipped off happily. ‘Thank you, Professor.’ Lots of weeping.

Bertozzo You’re not bad at the old chatting, then.

Maniac I’m not making this up. Even Freud says: ‘Big fee, quick recover-y . . .’ And doctor and patient are both literally laughing.

Bertozzo I believe you. Let’s take a look at your business card, Oosh, look: Professor Anthony Black, Psychiatrist. Formerly lecturer at the University of Des Moines. Get out of that!

Maniac First of all, I do lecture – I teach drawing at evening classes down the road at the Church of the Sacred Redeemer.

Bertozzo Congratulations. But it says here ‘Psychiatrist’.

Maniac Very good, but after the full stop. Are you familiar with syntax and punctuation? Look closely: Professor Anthony Black. Full stop. Then Psychiatrist with a capital P. You’re not impersonating anyone if you say, ‘I’m a bit of a psychiatrist.’ We all say, ‘Hey, I’m a bit of a
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Maniac One anarchist is stirred by this rapto - we'll come back to this later and find a less dodgy reason why - leaps to his feet, takes a run-up... Hang on, who gave him a leg-up?

Inspector A leg-up?

Maniac Yes, which of you stood at the window with your fingers interlaced, at about waist-height - like this - for him to put his foot in? There's one. One heave and he's out over the railing and flying!

Inspector Your Honour, I hope you're not suggesting that we.

Maniac No, calm down, I was just wondering how anyone could get up so high with such a short run-up without any help... I'd hate anyone to get the wrong idea.

Inspector There's no wrong idea to get... he did it all by himself.

Maniac There wasn't one of those mini-trampolines lying around.

Inspector No.

Maniac Was the anarchist wearing bouncy rubber shoes by any chance?

Inspector No, normal shoes.

Maniac Okay, what have we got... A man of about five feet there, wearing alone, without a topknot. And balf a dozen coppers, standing a few feet away, one of them right next to the window, none of whom manage to intervene in time...

Inspector It all happened so quickly.

Constable 2 And he was a slippery bugger, like a bloody polecat! I only just managed to catch hold of his foot.

Maniac Ah, you see how my system of poaching you mercilessly worked! So you caught him by the foot.

Act Two, Scene One

Constable 2 Yes, but his shoe came off in my hand and he proceeded in a downwardly direction without me.

Maniac Not to worry. The main thing is that a shoe remained behind. That shoe is incontrovertible proof that you wanted to save him!

Inspector Incontrovertible, there you go.

Superintendent (to the Constable) Well done.

Constable 2 No problem, sir.

Superintendent Shut up.

Maniac Hang on, though... Something's not quite right here. (Holding up a sheet of paper) Had the suicide victim been wearing these shoes?

Superintendent Three shoes?

Maniac Yes, one remained in the policeman's hands, as he testified later. (Show these) Here. Yet in this other document we learn that as he lay dying on the pavement the anarchist was wearing two shoes. That was confirmed by a number of bystanders including the reporter who arrived on the scene first and several other passing journalists.

Inspector I don't know how that happened.

Maniac Nor do I! Unless the policeman here had rushed down the stairs to a second-floor landing, got to a window just as the anarchist was plummeting, put his shoe back on, flung, then hared back upstairs, reaching the fourth floor just as the body hit the ground.

Superintendent You see, yes we, sarcasm again.

Maniac I apologise, I am hopelessly susceptible to irony. So, three shoes. Can anyone remember if he was a tripped?

Superintendent Who?

Maniac The suicidal rainmaker. If he had three feet that would account for the three shoes.

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Superintendent (angry) No he wasn't a tripped.

Maniac Don't be tetchy. Anarchists are capable of anything.

Constable 2 I'd agree with that.

Superintendent Shut up.

Inspector We need to find an explanation or... we are in deep shit.

Maniac I've got it.

Superintendent Let's hear it.

Maniac One of the shoes was a bit too big, and he didn't have an inside on him, so he put on another, smaller shoe underneath.

Inspector Two shoes on the same foot?

Maniac Yes. What's odd about that? Don't you remember galoshes - those rubber overshoes people used to wear?

Superintendent Exactly - and to.

Maniac Some people still wear them. So I put it to you that the constable had in his hands not a shoe, but a galosh.

Inspector No, that's not possible - an anarchist wouldn't wear galoshes - far too old-worldy and conservative.

Maniac Anarchists are actually very conservative.

Superintendent Oh yes, I suppose that's why they're always assassinating monarchs.

Maniac It is, actually. Paradoxically, it's a way of preserving them for ever. If you want for your king to die in old age, all warmed, as sick as a dog, then he decays and decomposes and you're too late. Whereas if you kill them while they're fresh and attractive...