

Whither political theatre?

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**ANTI-BIOGRAPHY OF A NATION BY FABRIZIO GIFUNI:
Can Present-day Italy Be Reproduced by Means of Theatre?**

Under the title *Anti-Biography of a Nation* Fabrizio Gifuni, an Italian theatre and film actor, has collected a couple of theatre productions, respectively called *'Na specie de cadavere lunghissimo* (*Something like a very long corpse*, texts from Pier Paolo Pasolini and Giorgio Somalvico, 2004) and *L'ingegner Gadda va alla guerra, o la tragica istoria di Amleto Pirobutirro* (*Gadda goes to war, or the tragic history of Hamlet Pirobutirro*, texts from Carlo Emilio Gadda and William Shakespeare, 2010). Gifuni is the author and the only player of the two shows which, as he says, were born «from the desire to compose a big tale about the transformations of our nation. About what we were, what we have become or what, after all, we have always been. [...] The result, some years later, is a double glance – cruel and inescapable – on the history of Twentieth-Century Italy».

I argue that *Anti-Biography of a Nation* is a strong attempt to give rise to that form of political theatre which was called “Teatro di Parola” (literally “Word Theatre”) by Pasolini in 1968. In Pasolini's opinion the actor of this kind of theatre «should base his success on the ability to [...] make his thoughts transparent: the more the spectator who is listening to him will understand that he has understood the text he is reciting, the more he will be judged as a good actor».

CURRICULUM VITAE

FABRIZIO DERIU (Ph.D. Sapienza University of Rome) is Senior Lecturer in Theatre History and Performance Studies at the University of Teramo, Faculty of Media Studies. He is a member of the board of the Ph.D. Program in “Music and Performing Art”, Sapienza University of Rome. He has previously taught at the University of Calabria, at the Sapienza University of Rome, at the University of Roma Tre, and at the Scuola Nazionale di Cinema in Rome. His main fields of interest are Performance Studies and the History of Actors and Acting in XX Century theatre, film and audiovisual media. Among his publications: *Il paradigma teatrale. Teoria della performance e scienze sociali* (1988), *Gian Maria Volonté. Il lavoro d'attore* (1997), *Lo schermo e la scena* (1999), *Opere e flussi. Osservazioni sullo spettacolo come oggetto di studio* (2004); *Metropoli e nuovi consumi culturali* (ed. with A. Ruggiero, L. Esposito, 2009); *Performático. Le arti dinamiche nell'epoca della riproducibilità digitale* (2012), *Mediologia della performance. Arti performatiche nell'epoca della riproducibilità digitale* (2013). He has also translated and edited an anthology of texts by Richard Schechner (*Magnitudini della performance*, 1999).

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