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**MASKS PRAXIS: THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN
MODERN DRAMA**

by

Malcolm Yates Knight

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of**

PhD

University of Glasgow

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Malcolm Yates Knight

28 July 2004

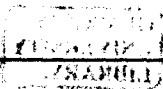
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MASK PRAXIS: THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN MODERN DRAMA

By Malcolm Yates Knight

For The Convenor of The Board of Examiners:

Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies

Mask Praxis is an investigation of the theories and practices behind the uses of the mask in modern drama from 1896 to 2004. The study traces the crisis in humanism through the use of idealist and materialist masks by theatre practitioners and explains how the search for a unified field was overlaid by fractured identities and a slide into dissonance. More than fifty major directors, designers and theatre practitioners had used masks in over three hundred plays before 1939. Since masking is largely misunderstood and considered by many to be an isolated and self-conscious phenomenon, the existence of this substantial body of work challenges the common belief that Western masks are either outdated ritual objects or simple appendages to make-up and costume. The Encyclopaedia Britannica states an antithetical position that in the West 'the mask has unquestionably lost its importance as a theatrical convention in the 20th century'; while others assert that Western masks have no anchorage in continuous performance traditions.

How important are the masks that people adopt on the stage for understanding their actions in society? How does the metaphorical power and perceptual ambiguity of the mask correlate with intentions of its maker and performer? What is the relationship between the mask and the face of the actor, and what does the mask do that cannot be done unaided? What are the main approaches to actor training that have used masks, and how are these training systems connected to wider belief systems? What is the meaning of the process which the mask-maker uses to pass from his or her ideal or schema to its material realisation? What do we learn from the act of masking about self-perception and social being, and what are the principal cultural and political considerations that this gives rise to?

This investigation proceeds from a consideration of major theories and practices. Chapter 1 examines mask performance theories, conventions, and typologies. Chapter 2 analyses the specificity of the mask, materials and methods, representative mask-makers and provides casebook studies on the Sartori family and the Masks for Menander Project. Chapter 3 evaluates actor-training under the mask from Copeau to Lecoq. Chapter 4 assesses the masks of idealist modernism and Chapter 5 considers the masks of materialist modernism. The final chapter is dedicated to transnational flows, multinational productions and the notion of connectivity. It brings new evidence to bear on the emergent field of masks, puppets and performing objects and sets down a major overview of the mask as a primary iconographic tool and as a liminoid instrument from which to mediate and direct the flow of power in a system.

The problem of the mask is one of the most complex in modern drama. In modern and post-modern terms, mask *praxis* may be seen to oscillate between the search for a unified field (previously occupied by ritual) and a slide into dissonance and fractured realities (contemporary performance and performative identities).

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Supplementary Materials:

- Colour copy of Craftwork Magazine Summer 1987 on Mask and Puppet making
- Photocopy of 'Ricostruite le maschere della Grecia di Menandro' September 2002
- Three published articles on Masks by the author from Animations Magazine 1985/86
- 'Masks by Ninian Kinnier Wilson' published by the author in 1996
- 'Noh Masks'. An Exhibition Catalogue published by the author in 1994.

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Introduction

The main argument of this thesis is that there is a continuing crisis of humanism taking place in Western capitalist society throughout the entire trajectory of modernism to post modernism and that this crisis is specifically exemplified in the theatre through the theory and practice (*praxis*) of the mask.

The beginnings of the mask in modern drama are rooted in the second half of the nineteenth century, which was marked by a vision of life strongly influenced by Realism. According to Susan Harris Smith's chronological listing of two-hundred and twenty-five mask plays only Georg Buchner's *Leonce and Lena* (written 1836, produced 1911), Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Thespis* (1871), Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* (written 1891, produced 1906), Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi* (1896) and George Bernard Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* (1897) used masks during the nineteenth century.¹

Each of these plays is in many ways an exception during a century of mask scarcity. Buchner and Wedekind sought to attack the mechanistic view of living things and were radical in their criticism of Romanticism and idealist philosophy. In order to satirize the falseness of their social behaviour Buchner places Leonce and Lena in cardboard masks on their wedding day. Wedekind, on the other hand, has a darker view of human nature and depicts Life as an elegant masked philanderer disguising his hypocrisy and compromises. Shaw chose to parody *commedia* masks at a masked ball and to mock the audience's expectations of the masks, while Gilbert and Sullivan heralded the arrival of mock Hellenism.

The spaces that theatre anthropologists and ethnologists traverse in the practice of fieldwork and writing are often punctuated by masks, which have a particular agency and history. Every mask is initially associated with a genre, group or historical family, because it was created and invented within a pre-constituted horizon of expectations (codes, rules, assumptions) within a belief system to enable a qualifying reception. Far from being enshrined within a fixity of 'types' each mask should be studied in its changing interrelationships with other masks, audiences and environments. When the initial context of time, place and culture in which the mask was created is removed and the object is transformed through time and space, the secure anchorage points of genres, groups and historical families can often become lost or distorted. This is the reason we need history, because historical meaning fulfils the potential of the logic connecting the non-reality of the mask to its social being and origins.²

There has not been a systematic investigation of the mask in modern Western drama as a means through which theory and practice meet ('praxis').³ How important are the masks that people adopt in the theatre for understanding their actions in society? For some theatre critics, masks have a history of their own and develop quite independently of the activities of real people. For others, masks are no more than a gloss, a practical appendage, which can provide style or decoration in specific theatrical productions. The central concern of this study is the relevance of the mask to modern drama both as a physical object and as a concept – and its specificity as a unique category of performing object.⁴ This work does not, however, provide an exhaustive account of the nature and content of the mask; nor reproductions, descriptions and interpretations of every mask developed in modern drama. Such a task would lead far beyond the scope of a single work. It is also not styled on a genre-based literary study of

the mask in modern drama (Smith, 1984), nor on an investigation of the self and other through ritual and theatre in the theatre of Asia (Emigh, 1996). It is rather a selective interrogation of the central problems of theory and practice (*praxis*) explored by the uses of the mask in modern Western drama. The course of this enquiry will seek to demonstrate the range and scope of the subject in terms of a body of theory and its nature as a theatrical practice. The generic term 'mask drama' is not equivalent to 'dramatic theatre' nor to 'theatre' in general. It covers a field both more inscribed and much more vast.

As Roger Caillois has demonstrated in his seminal work *Masques* (1959), the mask is older than the wheel, the bow, or the harpoon.⁵ It is an ancient tool, the veritable symbol of the protean nature of the theatre and a composite symbol corresponding to basic needs. For this reason to study masks and masking demands a knowledge and understanding of many disciplines that are normally regarded as falling outwith the realm of theatre. Ethnologists, anthropologists, folklorists, theologians, philosophers, psychologists and sociologists have all applied their methods of research in this field. In the introduction to his classic work *Masks of The World*⁶ (1936), Josef Gregor described the mask as 'a subject, which belongs "par excellence" to the favourite class of borderline subjects'. By this he did not mean that the subject was 'borderline' but that the dominant forms of scholarship and research had resulted in marginalisation and trivialisation. Thus a study of masking may be said to constitute a subject and a field of study 'par excellence' in this age of practical field-work and academic border-crossing with all its associated 'jumbled categories' and Geertzian 'blurred genres'. We are firmly situated in the arena of 'symbol systems' or as Geertz

called them 'extra personal mechanisms for perception, understanding, judgement and manipulation of the world'.⁷

In this study of mask *praxis* in modern drama I shall be dealing with: the theatrical effectiveness of the mask; the role of the mask as a mediator between mask-maker, mask performer and audience; the contribution of the mask to actor-training programmes; the craft techniques of mask design and construction; and the role of masks in performance studies and intercultural theatre. My aim has been to compile and assess data in these areas; and in addition to investigate how ideas and practice are synthesized in the mask; how beliefs about the mask in society are historically and socially determined; and how the social values ascribed to masks are interwoven into the fabric of the theatre.

All of this constitutes a specific enquiry that is intended to contribute to knowledge about the anatomy of art of the performer in terms of theatre anthropology as developed by Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese (1991)⁸; and the nature of masked performance as presented by John Emigh (1996)⁹ and the field of study of performing objects as identified by Frank Proschan (1983)¹⁰ and elaborated by John Bell (1999).¹¹ It is also important to examine the connections and differences between the aesthetics of mask theatre and its theme of metamorphosis with that of puppet theatre and performing objects as developed by Henryk Jurkowski (1988, 1998, 2000)¹², Steve Tillis (1992)¹³ and Stephen Kaplin (2001).¹⁴ While the valuable applications of semiotics to puppet theatre can be extended to the field of the mask, the landmark contributions of great puppet practitioners who regularly included masks in their productions - Remo Bufano, Sergei Obraztsov, Michael Meschke and Peter Schumann et al - should not be overlooked.¹⁵ We must also acknowledge the enormous contribution made to the

understanding of popular, traditional and folk theatre by scholars such as Charles Magnin, Paul McPharlin, George Speaight, John McCormick; and those who have examined the debate on significance of 'high culture' and 'low culture' from György Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno to Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton and Frederic Jameson.

In this regard the revival of interest in the mask coincided with a renewed interest in puppets and performing objects. The mask may be regarded as a distinctive type of 'performing object' in Frank Proschan's term because it refers to 'material images of humans, animals, or spirits that are created, displayed or manipulated in narrative or dramatic performances.'¹⁶ The strong connection of all these forms of performing objects to folk theatre, popular culture, anthropology and religion has sometimes led to an eschewing away from a concentrated focus on their use in performance.

In the sister field of the puppet theatre theoretical analysis has moved forward through structuralism and semiotics as scholars have examined standard definitions and new bases for definitions. In this arena the mask has often been regarded as an appendage of the puppet. Arnott (1964) stated that 'whenever an actor dons a mask' he is 'abnegating his individuality and making of himself a puppet.'¹⁷ Baird also described the mask as 'just an evolutionary step or two away from the puppet' that occurred when 'the mask moved upward, off the head and was held in front of the body' moving farther away and brought alive by manipulation.¹⁸ Tillis (1992) refuses to annex the 'mask/costume' in this manner, but argues mistakenly that 'they are not and cannot be, given speech, in that any speech associated with them is simply the speech of the actor or dancer who wears them.' There are many examples in masking of the modified voice

or persona, both vocal and visual, (Greek masks, Commedia masks, Topeng clowns) to disprove this assertion. Equally, it is also far too restrictive¹⁹ to state that while mask/costumes may be given movement, their animation is so limited that one can wonder whether it exists at all'; or 'that the movement given them is but the performance movement of the actor or dancer who wears them and is accorded to the performer and not the object'. Again Tillis is both too prescriptive and incorrect when he says: 'a mask or costume is nothing more than an object worn by a living being, be this person an actor or dancer; life is not imagined to inhere in the mask or costume itself, but in the living being who wears it.' ²⁰

We might usefully note the approaches of Zich and Bogatryev from the Prague school of linguistics towards understanding popular Czech and Russian folk theatre and the threefold sign-system of design, movement and speech attributed to the puppet by Tillis. This sign-system plus the idea of double vision implied between the object versus life may be just as applicable to the mask as to the puppet. By way of differentiation, one of the tasks of this research is to attempt to articulate a contemporary concept of the mask as a mask: what may be called the 'specificity' of the mask.

The methods undertaken to effect the research apart from reading published and much unpublished literature have included museum visits, viewing mask theatre productions, interviewing performers, directors and mask-makers and my own fieldwork in *commedia*, *topeng*, *noh* and other forms as well as my own activities as a practitioner (mask-maker and mask teacher).

This research seeks to put to the test the limits of previously proposed generalisations about drama that were based in nineteenth century ideas concerning the narrow Realism of the well-made play performed by unmasked actors within the

proscenium arch stage. In particular it seeks to evaluate the antithetical idea, articulated in no less an authoritative source than the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1998-2000), that in the West 'the mask, however, has unquestionably lost its importance as a theatrical convention in the 20th century and its appearance in modern plays is unusual'.²¹ This idea raises a host of secondary questions. Does this idea of the loss of the importance of the mask as a theatrical convention also apply to actor training with masks and to the mask design work of painters and sculptors for the stage during the same period? Is the appearance of the mask in modern plays an unusual phenomenon when considering the work of playwrights and directors? Has the mask been replaced by other theatrical conventions? Is it therefore absent from the work of major theorists and practitioners?

Lesley K. Ferris (2000) has also stated that although 'some wonderful and exciting performance work' has been generated in these areas, 'it has not been able to reinvigorate a form of mask performance comparable to the earlier traditions. In contrast, Asian masked theatre, still so strongly linked to ritual, has maintained a continuous performance tradition'.²² Are there really points of comparison with earlier traditions and with Asian theatre? Do the data and the sources indicate that the mask was at its strongest when it had a ritual context before the modern period? Are there really no continuous performing traditions that use the mask in modern Western theatre? Is it valid to assume a bi-polar model that equates Asian forms with traditions and European forms with innovation?

The guiding principle informing this research is that while masks may appear in a multitude of instances, their predominance during major transitional periods in Western modern drama of the twentieth century is evidence of their appropriateness in the context of formal change. In the words of A. David Napier:

They provide a medium for exploring formal boundaries and a means of investigating the problems that appearances pose in the experience of change.²³

When the player wears a mask there is a built-in imperative that appearances are being manipulated in the context of a changing point of view. The investigation for Napier, however, was about mask *praxis* in the ancient world with a primary focus on myth, mysticism and the relationship between the world of the natural and the supernatural. The investigation for me is about mask *praxis* in the modern and post-modern world with a central focus on belief systems, ideologies and social revolution. When a director or playwright chooses to use masks, they are consciously adopting iconic or indexical symbols through which to describe transitions in substance and in idea. The 'formal boundaries' in this instance are initially examined in selected examples derived from theoretical and practical contexts, from idealist modernism and materialist modernism and then in terms of 'transnational cultural flows'.²⁴ From this analysis I seek to illustrate the transition in formal models of masking and the interplay and reciprocal flows between Europe, Britain and North America and other parts of the world.

Mask *praxis* in modern drama is also a study of some of the historical particularities in modernism (from 1896 to 2000) because it marks the period when the mask re-emerged as both sign and symbol of the theatre. The manifestations of the mask may not arise uninterruptedly, but they are, nevertheless, sustained expressions of interventions, agencies and histories by real and creative human beings. Given the variety of work under scrutiny it is important to define some boundaries for the study. We are looking primarily at Western mask theory and practice in modern drama through a broader lens than text-based theatre and from a cross-disciplinary (anthropology,

philosophy, psychology, sociology) and intercultural perspective. The term modernism will be used to suggest something new, avant-garde and disturbingly at odds with the past. The dialectical relationship between the masks of idealist modernism and materialist modernism is not fixed, although the former tends to be characterised by a tendency towards primitivism and the latter by a tendency towards socialism. At the end of the twentieth century both currents stream into intercultural and transnational flows of masking involving cross-cultural workshops, exchanges and collaborations. Understanding of these mask practices is neither simple nor consensual and different practitioners often offer conflicting interpretations of the value and relation of performance to public identity.

Before the eighteenth century religion had provided the framework for explaining society. During the 1800's classical humanism (represented by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Voltaire) replaced religion in the period known as the 'Age of Enlightenment'.

In the nineteenth century the coming of the industrial revolution, scientific developments and the urge to develop a scientific and systematic study of social phenomena in the West led to the supplanting of the popular mask theatre by increasingly non-masked naturalistic, realistic and presentational forms within theatre buildings. The mask ceded importance at all levels to the primacy of the human face in all its typological and stereotypical forms. The language of the actor was rooted in a physical and gestural repertoire derived from the popular broadsides and ballads which when allied to a known face in the theatre could lead to the marketing of a 'star'. This close-up on the face of the 'star' was to lead directly into film technology and early cinema continuing to the present day in television 'soaps'. The impetus towards

developing a scientific approach to studying objective facts about the presentation of the self in the social world was consolidated by the positivism of Comte.

The re-emergence of the mask as an instrument and as a social metaphor in the theatre occurred as a reaction to this positivism through the work of five main contributors: Goethe, Kleist, Büchner, Brentano, Schopenhauer, Wedekind, Shaw and von Hofmannsthal. These creative artists and forethinkers contributed to the expansion and diversification of mask use in the theatre and had a significant influence on those who came after. With the exception of these contributions in theatre and literature, however, the only two sources of masking in the West at the end of the nineteenth century were the European carnivals and folk festivals (Bakhtin's 'essence of the grotesque') and the British pantomime.

If the first protest against the commercialised bourgeois theatre came from the naturalists, who looked to art for 'absolute truths' in life with a view to changing the lives of the poor, manual workers and peasants, there is no evidence of a naturalistic masked drama of this time. This is unsurprising since the use of the mask as an artificial covering or false face or disguise could hardly respond to the demands of a 'truthful' presentation of life. In questions of 'truth', perhaps it is the very 'theatricality' of the mask that is its greatest strength for as Oscar Wilde said when you give a man a mask he'll tell you the truth!

The mask achieved status in the following period when the idealistic reaction against crude Naturalism promoted by some philosophers, writers and artists expressed itself as the cultural trend known as modernism. In visual art the overturning of the convention of one-point perspective, inherited from the Renaissance, led to the

fracturing of reality and a disjuncture of the eye, brain and object that became known as Cubism.

Modernist artists in the theatre discovered in the mask a major tool to counteract the commercial bourgeois culture and to escape from the aesthetics of naturalism. Some of the conditions which gave rise to a resurgence of the mask in theatre at the turn of the twentieth century that constituted the crisis within humanism were: a preference for symbolism over representation; a new interest in non-Western cultures and an influx of art from the Orient and Africa; a deep-rooted questioning over the nature of the identity of modern man in the urban environment; the birth of psychology and psychoanalysis; rediscovery of the great theatrical traditions; new research and experimentation of a plastic and spacial kind by painters and sculptors working for the theatre; and contestation and political action related to social change and transformation. It was not until Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896) that a decisive point was reached in presenting the human figure as a dehumanised cipher, first as a mask and then as a puppet, which heralded the arrival of an abstract theatre.

In terms of working definitions, the word 'drama' is used in the sense of an action or a 'thing done' or 'something in the manner of doing' rather than pertaining simply to a script or a stage play. This definition admits scenarios, improvisations, mime and physical theatre, dance as well as non-text based theatre in all its forms.

The prefix 'modern' before 'drama' denotes something existing now or in a recent period in the past, from 1896 to the present day. I have taken this marker from the theatrical landmark of 'the savage God' *Ubu roi*; although developments from 1848, the year of European Revolutions, onwards were repeatedly designated as 'modern' by social and economic historians of the time. Through the nineteenth century 'modern'

became virtually synonymous with improved, satisfactory or efficient in the sense of a continuation of the Enlightenment project. Additional 'modernist' tendencies will be identified in more specialized contexts as appropriate, but it is worth noting that these are sometimes referred to with a pejorative connotation. Elinor Fuchs (1983) postulated, for example, that the death of the notion of character and its representation of itself into object and abstract theatre had rendered a united landscape impossible.²⁵

Mask praxis is not an isolated self-conscious phenomenon within the 'modern' nor a simple genre reflecting a resurgence of anti-naturalism, but rather a mainstream iconographic and indexical tool in more than 300 plays written for the Western theatre since 1896. The beginnings of this phenomenon underline the protean and non-uniform appearance of masks across all areas of modern drama, including the overlapping zones of contact with cabaret, music-theatre, mime, puppet theatre, performing objects, dance and opera.

The rediscovery of the mask coincided with a period of heightened change during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In particular the mask was used to explore formal boundaries and investigate the problems posed by appearances in the experience of change. The heterogeneity of data spans masks being used to effect psychological transference, archetypal shifts in consciousness, modifications of social roles, gender transitions, multiplicity of identity, reinterpretations of myths and legends and cultural and political osmosis. What Christopher Innes called 'The Politics of Primitivism' involved masks being used to denote 'a utopian alternative to the status quo'; containing aspects that he has categorised as philosophical, populist and primitive. Innes has convincingly argued that the historical avant-garde movement of this period was not so much characterised by overtly modern qualities – Depero's mechanical

figures, Picasso's costumed managers, Schlemmer's geometric art figures – but by a tendency towards primitivism. In this regard the main thrust may be seen as a reaction against the fragmentation of modern life and the atomisation of the 'divided self'²⁶ into a return to earlier roots and 'original forms' of a more holistic kind. In mask theatre this was expressed through the elemental demands of Craig for an *Übermarionette*; by the Jungian archetypes of O'Neill and the Celtic archetypes of W.B. Yeats; by experiments with Archaic and Hellenistic drama; by the search for the lost tradition of *commedia dell'arte*; by a renewed interest in non-Western theatre forms; and by the tradition of the grotesque or satirical masks in theatrical forms of political and social contestation. Many artists sought a way of transcendence through the idealization of the primitive and the elemental in theatre together with the rediscovery and adapting of remote or archaic models. In all this the mask was a central instrument of connection between the object and the subject, the appearance and the reality, the individual and the society, the stage and life.

In Chapter One I am concerned to present and examine some of the main theories about the representation of *praxis*. The field of the mask in modern drama is defined by the specifics of masked human activities within a material culture. The mask leaves a physical trace or objective form beyond the time and place of its use in performance. It is made by the human hand with tools (and occasionally with machines) and fittingly begins in an 'enculturation' process linking theatre archaeology and theatre anthropology. Any constitutive theory of practice goes beyond the questions of sources and origins into the arena of transmission across beliefs, cultures and boundaries. Like language it is 'a dynamic presence and a constant regenerative process'.²⁷ The title 'Mask Theories' is intended to point up the importance of intentional praxis in the

invention of typologies and morphological characteristics, classification systems, etymological roots and methodological approaches. Five examples of mask groupings or historical families are selected for analysis – Greek New Comedy, Javanese *topeng babakan*, African Pende dances, Italian *commedia dell'arte* and Japanese *noh* drama. The main modern theories about masking are then selectively contextualised and evaluated: universalism, functionalism, ritualism, interactionist play, pluralist identity, power and structural functionalism.

Chapter Two, 'Mask Practices', contains an inquiry into the craft of mask-making and its 'specificity' together with a personal eye-view of what is involved in *praxis*. Non-western Balinese and Japanese approaches to mask-making are described in detail and the perspectives and backgrounds of selected Western mask-makers are presented. A section dedicated to materials and methods evaluates what masks are made of and how they are made; followed by a casebook study of the Sartori family *praxis* in Padua and a fieldwork analysis of the *praxis* of Masks for Menander Project in Glasgow.

In Chapter Three, the specific relationship between the mask and the actor in modern French drama is analysed in terms of idealist training and craft and the forms and types of mask-use in actor training programmes are evaluated. The Western contributions of Copeau, Dullin, Saint-Denis, Chancelrel, Dasté and Lecoq are detailed and evaluated. The pedagogical content of specific actor-training exercises with masks and their effects on participants is described and the central question of mind-body harmony is discussed. The aim here is to highlight the nature of particular contributions and to underline the seminal French legacy in mask work that has now been widely disseminated throughout Europe, Britain, North America and Canada.

In the work of major theorists and practitioners the mask acts as a primary iconographic tool for transformation of the human face, body and mind. Like a seismograph of the human brain, the mask may be used to take readings of underlying realities and surface appearances. The mask performer is engaged in a powerful and symbolic transformation, which involves a profound mutation from the self to the other. In terms of the art of the performer, the mask is a language of gesture that challenges the primacy of the word and it is also a root discipline for understanding the art of the theatre.

In Chapter Four, the aim is to delineate the legacy of nineteenth and twentieth century mask praxis from the impulse towards primitivism through to the emergence of new humanism and its roots in idealistic modernism. In the period up until 1945 the concepts of primitivism and new humanism were based on the search for a unified field, although the slide into dissonance and fragmentation was occurring simultaneously and became more accentuated and nihilistic in the work of Artaud, Ionesco and Genet .

Chapter Five: Materialist Modernism was derived from historical and social theory through Marx, Nietzsche and Freud and most clearly articulated through the works of the Russian Constructivists, the Bauhaus, the Workers Theatre Movements Piscator and Brecht, Arden and Fo. It used masks to push towards politicisation of history and placed its focus on the desirability of social change and revolution, but was not without its own struggles, contradictions and crises of identity.

As the formulations of modernism (Lukács, Benjamin, Adorno) and post-modernism (Harvey, Lyotard, Jameson) give way to global flows, transnational public spheres and ruptures emphasised by electronic mediation and mass migration (Appadurai, Friedmann, Tsing), the lens necessarily widens. In this regard my purpose

is to reveal how mask inventions and innovations in modern theatre have been situated in time, context and locality. Throughout the text, the lines of mask development within national traditions are related to intracultural and intercultural influences; and the idea that as we work backward from the masks to their underlying theatrical, social, cultural, political and economic bedrock we will come upon some closed set of performance practices untouched by the world at large will be decisively rejected.

Finally, in Chapter Six, the investigation shifts to examine the ways in which individuals, artistic groups, production companies and cultural organisations have increasingly operated in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities. A transnational analysis of the mask is provided to yield a series of insights regarding the traditional and innovatory in terms of mask 'flows', the significance of intercultural collaborations, exchanges, workshops and productions that have contributed to what has been described as the cultural dynamics of de-territorialisation.

The conclusion is dedicated to mask *praxis* (unity of theory and practice). The idea is presented that there are specific considerations of legitimation within the sociology of culture that are best tackled with the use of masks. The mask may be used as an ideological touchstone and iconographic tool to delve below appearances and to battle against the bewitchment of language and what Sanchez-Vasquez has called 'ordinary consciousness'.²⁸ Behind every mask there is an idea. That idea is linked to a conceptual scheme or 'symbol system' and to a working convention and sometimes to a tradition. In this sense the facts about masks never speak for themselves. To be effective the mask is always part of a wider set of beliefs in society. As a specific tool for thinking and communication beyond language, the mask, requires a consensual base. The beliefs to which it corresponds are widely divergent according to who invests them

with meaning, in whose interests and why. If, however, the connection can be made between the mask as an entity and its conceptual scheme then it can be rendered both intelligible and empirical – ‘non-reality becomes fact.’

The conclusion of the work raises the spectre of a masked popular theatre that can unmask and demystify the nation-state and bourgeois liberalism while contributing to the on-going discourse on the nature of popular culture. In the modern European mind, masks can all too readily suggest the ‘magic’ of objects washed up on the beach. Often they have been removed from their original context by the process of collection and separated completely from their original meaning and purpose. European museums are bursting with tribal booty from colonial expeditions of the last two centuries (with the masks often hidden away in drawers or vaults).

In the words of Ken Baynes from *Masks: A Welsh Arts Council Touring Exhibition* (1976)²⁹, the fact that there are so many ethnic masks from other cultures located in museums ‘provides evidence of the worlds we have destroyed and of the contradictory nature of the enlightenment from which scientific enquiry has developed. If we attempt a feat of the imagination and try to recapture the original spirit that resided in these masks, we can ask ourselves some important questions: What have we lost, what have we gained?’ Also we should ask, since many past societies used masks as a means of entering and transforming reality, then why can’t we?

The trafficking in masks represents much more than a peripheral and self-conscious phenomenon. The body of work examined here is documentary evidence of a neglected mainstream tradition of modern drama. In Western theatre the masking concept has been part of most forms of theatre, only retreating temporarily in the face of a narrow realism. In Asian theatre the masking concept is at the root of many major

traditions. This thesis presents the hypothesis that the mask is a primary iconographic tool and a transitional object and mediator that can aid today's search for more expressive theatrical symbols. The meanings behind the masks of modern drama are not confined to the residual role of relics in traditional rituals. The mask has been used on a consistent and regular basis by major theatrical innovators - playwrights, directors, designers - throughout the twentieth century. The work of Jarry, Craig, Yeats, O'Neill, Meyerhold, Piscator, Brecht, Pirandello, Copeau, Artaud, Barrault, Decroux, Lecoq, Ionesco, Arden, Handke, Gatti, Sartori, Strehler, Fo, Barba, Kantor, Schumann, Brook, Mnouchkine has focused in various moments on the protean aspects of the mask. Equally, the work of major theatrical ensembles from 1950 to the present have explored the mask in its power to supply a ritualistic need for communal expression: The Living Theatre, The Bread & Puppet Theatre, Welfare State International, Dogtroep, Le Théâtre du Soleil, La Comune, Horse & Bamboo Theatre and Trestle Theatre.

In the new millennium for some people, the theatre in Britain is still largely dominated by the word and literature. Even in the hands of dedicated practitioners, such as Peter Brook and Peter Hall, the art of the word is given precedence over the theatre of gesture. Both directors tend to trace the British theatre back through Granville-Barker, Poel, Macready, Kean, Garrick and Betterton in an unbroken line to 1660. Hall, in particular, describes this tradition as winning for the British the vaunted title of 'the best makers of theatre in history'.³⁰

The great Asian theatre traditions of India, Japan, China, Korea and Indonesia, by virtue of their content and antiquity, ought to make us cautious about what we choose as our best examples from the West. The art and craft of the mask is concerned with traditions and skills which while they may have evolved within a national

boundary have acquired an intercultural and intracultural significance beyond that boundary.

Indeed, to look closely underneath the Elizabethan theatre is to locate a great popular Catholic Medieval theatre of secular entertainment: the residue of which reappeared after the Puritan offensive in the puppet theatre, circus, barn theatres, music halls, mummings and folk plays and peasants and workers theatres from 1660 to 1945. It took a subsidised theatre regulated by the Arts Council to briefly absorb the mask into written plays and occasional musicals, ballets, operas and modern dances. Here it was marginalised and rendered ill of aestheticism, to become an adjunct of costume and make-up in the theatre and an special effects appendage to science fiction and horror in the cinema. The tendency towards trivialisation of the mask therefore raises the question of the entire content of our theatre traditions and the direction of contemporary theatre and theatre training.

During the last twenty years mask work of many expressive means has been undertaken by physical theatre companies, (The Medieval Players, Trestle, Unfortunati, Théâtre du Complicité, Improbable Theatre), celebratory theatre companies (Welfare State International, Medium Fare, I.O.U. Horse and Bamboo) and puppet and object theatre companies (Green Ginger, Faulty Optic, Doo-Cot) have offered non-text based intercultural alternatives.

What was designated earlier as the spectre of the mask is defined by the level of separation between the performing object covering the face or body and the performer underneath. In this sense, each mask is a sculptural expression and gestural instrument imposed from without. The successful externalisation of the object demands, however, that it be in intimate contact with the flesh beneath the surface covering and with the

actor-performers' own centre of gravity. It is also defined by the ambiguity and paradoxes on a metaphysical level between the appearance of form and content in the formal context of categorical change and transition.

Mask *praxis* may not be easily encapsulated by orderly descriptions and analyses of dramatic forms and acts, because in the mask we are confronted by 'a thing being and not being at the same time'.³¹ For we know that meanings have been less well studied than forms. The meaning of mask *praxis* is not to be found only in the object itself nor even in its multifarious associations, but also in 'something in the manner of doing' that we call drama. This 'thing done' is usually an ephemeral act of transformation that reverberates between the properties in the mask itself and the ideas and associations that it evokes in the minds and hearts of performers and audiences: the unity of theory and practice. Indeed, we may need to recognise that we are dealing with something bigger than positivism or empirical validity, but rather with the role of a complex polythetic understanding between mask performers, mask-makers, masks and audiences.³²

1. Mask Theories

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the praxis of representation of theatre masks of idealist modernism and materialist modernism and their contemporary trajectory into intercultural and transnational arenas. Instead of examining rites of passage and curative ceremonies in a ritual context in the archaic and residual drama, mask praxis in modern drama is located in psychological transference, archetypal shifts, depersonalisation, changing social roles, multiplicity of identity, reinterpretations of myths and legends, gender transitions, intercultural exchanges and cultural and political osmosis.

The boundaries in all these areas have been pushed by artists, sculptors, musicians and performers. The resurgence of the mask in twentieth century theatre has occurred during a transitional period of heightened changes marked by unparalleled speed and technological innovation. It is possible to discern, just as Napier suggests in relation to the ancient world, the predominance of mask use in the context of formal change in the field of innovation of modern drama:

Throughout the anthropological literature, masks appear in conjunction with categorical change. They occur in connection with rites of passage and curative ceremonies such as exorcisms. They are, as well, frequently associated with funerary rites and death. Though they occur in a multitude of instances, their predominance during transitional periods attests to their appropriateness in the context of formal change...Masks, that is, testify to an awareness of the ambiguities of appearance and to a tendency toward paradox characteristic of transitional states. They provide a medium for exploring formal boundaries and

a means of investigating the problems that appearances pose in the experience of change.¹

I would like to suggest that modern theatrical mask praxis bifurcates philosophically into two poles: 1. passive retreat into private faces, personifications and projections, inner worlds and dream role-play; and 2. active advance into social life through the public masks of ritual, myth, spectacle, satire and the inherent struggle with real material problems. Theories about the work of modern theatre companies, directors, playwrights and actors can be analysed within the spectrum between these two poles of idealism and materialism. The mask is a theatrical instrument of social metaphor – a unique synthesis of theory and practice – more than mere disguise, more than an act of historical reconstruction, more than an agency of satire and subversion.

David Wiles has argued that modern western culture has ‘never found a comfortable home’ for the mask in either its classical or eastern forms and that it has come to see the medium as a ‘concealment designed to prevent one from seeing the real thoughts and feelings of the wearer’ or as a mere ‘disguise which is seen as a condition of social survival.’² It is a view shared by many actors, directors and playwrights in the West (particularly in the United Kingdom) who value text-based theatre and character analysis based on empathy over all else. The antithesis of this position is the use of masks to explore the fluidity between self and other, to become charged projective mechanisms between the audience and the performer and to open up more roles and possibilities beyond typecasting according to gender, age and visual appearance.

Themes and Definitions

What are people referring to when they talk about masks? Is there any consistency from one interpretation to the next or a common idea that crosses eras and cultures without mediation? In a fundamental sense the word 'mask' is ambiguous because it carries more than one meaning. Masks are both concepts and physical objects. They embrace a wide range of concepts and classes of objects. The Greek word *prosôpon* could simultaneously denote the mask, the dramatic part, the person or the face; the Latin *persona* had a combined meaning of the person and something to sound through; the Piedmont *masca* signified both witch and evil spirit; the Medieval *larva* indicated the presence of an evil spirit, incubus or succubus in possession of the human being; the Arabian *maskaharat* implied both covering and veil; the Indonesian *topeng* refers to facial covering and to various types of masked dance-theatre; and the Korean *t'al* signifies both a facial covering and a calamity, disease or illness. (See Appendix A on Mask Etymology). It should be noted that the English term *mask* in the primary sense of 'an object used to cover the face' dates from 1534 according to the *OED*, but that the word generally did not have this use until the 1580's.³ In short the word *mask* is a relatively recent phenomenon and was not used until the late sixteenth century.

Non-reality becomes fact

We have forgotten entirely that the primary symbol of the theatre
is the mask....In the mask lies a law and this is the law of the drama.

Non-reality becomes fact.⁴

The mask is a physical mediator between appearance and reality. If our definitions of culture consist of an immense series of systems of concepts in constant

change and interpenetration, then we may observe that the masks developed within these systems stand in symbolic relationship to our experience as well as fashion it so that we can discriminate what is important for us. Traditional and tribal masks usually occupy a 'higher-order' system; that is to say, they have been refined by past generations of people relative to their experience, but we may have long since forgotten why they chose to create masks with the properties that have been bequeathed to us. If the writer Kenneth Burke in his study of literature has described culture as 'forms of symbolic action'⁵, we might look upon masks as encoded symbols of these forms. The masks embody the meaning we, or our ancestors attribute to events or forces, which are part of the events. However, it would be wrong to see masks as in any sense unreal reflections of reality with which we should grapple directly. Masks are not a substitute for reality, but one mode of constructing it, for we can know no other reality than the one which presents itself to us in terms of culture and in terms of the meaning of the symbol form of the mask by which we identify it.

Each new mask that is created is made by people who are part of a long accumulated cultural tradition with all of its previous layers of accretions and assimilations. An individual mask shorn from the time, place and culture of its origin may contain an infinity of traces gathered together in a particular configuration but without the aid of an inventory we do not know – or often do not have time to explore – the jumbled catalogue of lines, shapes, allusions, hints and cross-references that occur in particular masks. The question 'What is a mask really?' is a meaningless one that may better understood by another question: 'What is a mask outside of any system?' For it is the system in which the concept of a mask is involved at any given time and place, which renders it meaningful, which classifies it with comparable items.

To Articulate the Past Historically

The issue of what kind of history informs the historical families or genres of masks that we are about to examine is central. Whose history or histories? An emphasis on primary sources in masking certainly does not mean letting 'the facts' speak for themselves. Nothing is ever 'given' to knowledge. What empiricism represents as given is always the product of a definite theoretical or ideological practice. In keeping with the treatment of popular culture, folk theatre, peoples' entertainments and oral and ballad traditions, the meanings of masks have remained largely 'hidden from history'. This is not so much because there has been no documentation available to study them, but because they were at odds with the dominant modes of historical research and pedagogy and often perceived as marginal.

Do we start from general historical conditions and deduce theories about masking or conversely do we first analyse the mask and then link it with the general historical situation? Only by taking account of both aspects can we arrive at a history of the methods and the problems of masks. The methodology of this study is to introduce aspects of mask theory and practice within the idealist and materialist traditions of Western modern drama and then to open out the entire subject to explore trans-national and intercultural flows. This articulation of past masks and masking will attempt to inscribe the mask at the centre of modern theatre practice rather than on the neglected peripheries and will be concerned with the cultural dimensions of theatre and life, art and politics.

The content of a mask tradition and its reception may alter radically through transmission to future generations. The entire content of a tradition may be swept away leaving the masks bereft of their meanings, bobbing up and down in a sea of

contradictions, all outer form but devoid of content. The image of the past that we receive when the mask is torn from its context, separated from the uses and needs for which it was created, rent asunder from its makers, players and audiences, may seem like a hollow shell.

‘To articulate the past historically’ (Ranke as cited by Walter Benjamin)⁶ emphatically does not mean to recognise it ‘the way it really was.’ The work of rediscovery and reconstruction will be necessarily partisan and may well involve rescuing the subject matter from conformism.

Clifford Geertz has described ideologies as: ‘most distinctively, maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience.’⁷ Within these problematic maps with their jumbled categories, stand the various groups or genres of historical families of masks. To what extent are masks illusion or reality, to what extent are they false or true within the set of circumstances and beliefs in which they arise? Which masks cloud judgement and which reveal wisdom? How do we differentiate pseudo-information from the real thing?

The masks that come out of modern drama provide a geography of social and political experience. They form a contact zone or a field of response to that history. In that sense they are always complex symbols, often paradoxical and as invariably creative as that range of experience. Within the broad arena of the theatre, masks are public mediators, conceived in collaboration, always connecting links to the individual self or to the collective identity.

In the great masking traditions we must learn not only to read faces as expressed by individual masks but also to identify social agents such as mask-makers, mask performers and audiences and the historical and political groupings within which they

work. As John McCormick says: 'All masks carry signifiers and when transposed to theatrical performance these signifiers become part of a code that audiences read and relate to other elements of the performance.'⁸ The idea of the mask as a 'sign' is also derived from an earlier medieval concept, the Latin 'signum' meaning mark or token, based on a distinction between 'language' and 'reality'.⁹ If in these traditions we seek mask "types" and in so doing tend to efface the presence of difference in the interests of constructing some ideal "norm", then perhaps it would be better to seek mask "genres" in history with all their attendant heterogeneity and diversity. The theme of change and transformation is just as central to the history of a mask genre as stasis. In ideological terms it is the goal of mask praxis not to identify static types, but rather to evidence how historical groupings and genre relationships facilitate the invention of masks. In each mask genre the link between physiognomy and character, between face and mask, can only function within a series of culture-based conventions. These conventions are perhaps best illustrated from a representative cross-section of examples from different cultures and traditions, bearing in mind that each one of these sub-sections is worthy of book-length treatment in its own right.

Mask Groupings or Historical Families

The taxonomy of ancient Greek masks was derived from the overview established by Aristotle who, as David Wiles says, worked "from the whole to the parts, from genus to species".¹⁰ The initial taxonomic principle is, indeed, that "each mask is not an isolated unit." Theophrastos, the teacher of Menander, also insisted that knowledge cannot exist without some differentiation or without contraries.¹¹ The catalogue of Julius Pollux is not simply a list of forty-four independent masks but a system of fourfold genera

classification: old men, young men, slaves, women. In the hierarchy age precedes youth, free precedes slave, male precedes female. Within these genera are four normative types and the stock characters are counter-posed as opposites or contraries. Each mask has within it a system of signs based on perceptible differences of hair-style, hair colour, forehead, brows, eyes, nose, mouth, lips, facial hair and skin colour or complexion. The archaeological evidence of terracotta miniatures found on the island of Lipari and documented by Luigi Bernabo-Brea seems to exemplify a far wider range of mask types than Pollux's catalogue indicates, including masks of children, asymmetrical types and non-theatrical portrait masks (including those of Menander himself). Brea advances the idea that the masks must have been linked to a philosophical system of thought 'according to which the external features of an individual can reveal, besides his state of mind, the innermost aspects of temperament'.¹²

In working from the whole to the parts Kathy Foley provides an interesting filter through western eyes of the Cirebon *topeng babakan* (or masked acts) which consists of a sequence of four or five fixed stock characters or classes said to derive from the influence of semi-legendary holy man Sunan Kalijaga and his eight associates who converted Java to Islam in the sixteenth century. Professor Foley outlines the characteristics of the key masks: Panji (*lungguh* - very refined-head-peace), Pamindo (*ladak* - semi-refined - left hand, possessiveness), Tumenggung (*punggawa* - official, warrior- right hand, power) and Klana (*angkara murka* - emotionally uncontrolled - gut, passion).¹³ In her view, movement, voice and the idea of each character are to be discovered and embodied by the performer through a cycle of dances around the

periphery of the body with Panji situated ideologically at the top of the head and Klana situated ideologically at the bottom of the body in the upper spine.

Each mask character contains a series of imagery levels related to emotional states, aspects of social class, colour theory, animal counterparts, stage in a life cycle progression linked to mythical and ancestral regeneration and a precise range of bodily energised movement and gestures. All these species characteristics are what we might call the language of the mask. In the play of familiarity and difference between the masks, to the degree that they meet or breach audience expectations, in whole or in part, lies the key to the dialectic of continuity with change, of tradition with invention in *topeng*.

Once again, in a third illustration drawn from the masquerades of the Central Pende people of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), we can see how mask genera are inherently linked to larger anthropological, cultural and historical considerations.¹⁴ The Pende say that you cannot just invent a mask...you need a dance! Indeed it is from the content of a dance, its song, its rhythm, its costume that the sculptor is invited to create.

The masks may also be classified according to provenance in terms of whether they derive from Central or East Pende and exhibit traits that arise from differences of emphasis in their various dances. *Giwoya/Kiwoyo* is the oldest mask, always worn on the head like a hat with the appearance of a corpse in a coffin and performed zigzag-style on the edge of the bush. It represents the spirit of the dead. *Muyombo/Kipoko* contains a male spirit of beauty of beauty or *lulendo* and its dance (sowing, grinding, peeling in semi-circular movements) is based around the way in which women prepare millet-cassava bread or food production. This mask offers a prayer for last year's

harvest and children and gives thanks to the beneficence of the ancestors. *Ginjinga/Pota* is a veined young man, who whirls around and exhibits very fast foot-work and jumps into the air in explosions of energy. This mask drives out the 'chill' of illness and disinterest. *Tundu/Kindombolo* is a clown characterised by outrageous and sometimes malicious behaviour who enters by placing a stick in the ground and goes on to caricature intercourse, masturbation, defecation and invasion by enema. He chases children who taunt him with "You're ugly" and, in turn, he mimics each mask around him. He is obsessed with food, sex and the body. *Pumbu* is an executioner linked to spirit called *ngunza* who draws out human blood (and may be depicted as a warrior, hunter or circumciser). His function is to kill a stranger at the investiture of a new high chief and to thereby acquire the guardian spirit of the stranger for the new chief. He protects the chief's ritual house, wears a blood red costume and twisted raffia skirt and carries a sword. *Gambanda* is the beautiful wife of the chief who is calm, peaceful, obedient and socially outgoing. She wears the latest fashions and adorns herself in finery. *Gatomba* is a comic victim mask who has been struck by a sorcerer (and sometimes claims to be one himself) and is involved in tracing the footprints of a thief back to his own house.

In all of these genera the issue is not simply what the mask is supposed to represent but what it does. The Pende believe that the mask is *hamba*, that is to say, a tool or 'transistor' that facilitates contact between the living and the world of the dead. They are designed to work in performance to elicit emotions ranging from awe and mystery to fear and comedy. They are emphatically not designed to be easily reducible or graspable. The elements of performance – context, audience, intonation, gestures,

movement style, costume, colour, shape, tonal range, links to other masks – mark them off from the quotidian.

In Italian *commedia dell'Arte* it is again possible to discern a mask grouping or historical family with a complex origin, containing a diversity of types and situated at an intersection point for many intercultural exchanges. However, the taxonomy of this extensive field is not attributable to one source or individual, but part of the evolution of a 'higher-order system' refined over generations by many people. Poised at the cusp of the meeting between Western Renaissance thought and the Enlightenment (1545-1750), aligned with the influx of Eastern thought and aesthetics brought by refugees from Byzantium, the meanings within Commedia have a profoundly diverse and intracultural significance. In the sociology of popular culture we should also note the impact of the shift from the countryside to the town, from the streets, fairs and piazzas to the palaces and major theatres through the rise of the professional companies. Dario Fo makes the important point that the 'zanni' masks stem from the conditions faced by a real social class from a precise time, place and culture (Bergamo mountain folk) and that their varied reactions to being forced off the land and into the towns in order to earn a living defined their subsequent behaviour. Stefano Perrocco, the mask-maker, always insists that the colours of the masks must be linked to the material culture, to the pagan earth and the land, in contrast to the beliefs of the Catholic for whom 'God is in the sky.'¹⁵

One recent approach by John Wesley Harris suggests that the characters may be classified within a three-fold genera; the servants and 'zanni' (idle-jacks), the obsessives (merchants, doctors, soldiers) and the lovers (male and female – unmasked).¹⁶ Carlo Mazzone-Clementi has argued persuasively for the use of the expression 'comic prototype' rather than 'stock character'; and his classification

suggests another kind of three-fold generic classification: *caricati* (unmasked lovers and noble parents), *macchietta* (meaning little spot or cameo performance usually by a comic messenger) and *maschere* (signifying the pivotal mask roles of masters and servants).¹⁷ In the Commedia hierarchy age precedes youth, masters precede servants and male precedes female; although the 'scenarios' often turn these hierarchies upside down. The language of the mask is such that we may discern a recognisable outer form and a series of associated 'sensory co-ordinates' based on social class, provenance and dialect, costume, dominant emotional state, animal counterpart, shape, colour, smell, taste and movement style or gestural repertoire.¹⁸

In my fifth example, from the tradition of Japanese Noh theatre, we also encounter a hierarchical classification system of physical organisation, meanings and ideological principles, which bind together a historical family of over two-hundred and fifty masks. Kunio Komparu¹⁹ provides a useful chart for seventy of the mask types, with a clear indication that female characters are transformed into demons in three stages. He also defines three stages of beauty: *hana* (external beauty), *yugen* (invisible beauty) and *rojaku* (old tranquillity). Underpinning this is the *jo-ha-kyu* (preparation-breaking-urgent) development structure of the Noh play, a programme of plays, a special organisation and a rhythm for performance; plus the five-element theory (wood, fire, earth, metal, water) and the five categories of Noh plays (god, men, women, lunatic, demon). Old men, women and warriors may have been the three principal types. The mask-maker or *men-uchi* (maker of the face or surface known as *omote*) has the brief to know all aspects of the tradition (the old masks) and to be able to create an intensified image of the mask type. This historical mask grouping has survived in an unbroken line with an attendant level of documentation over eight hundred years and

while its survival has not been unproblematic it is regarded as a national cultural treasure and its practitioners are held in high regard.

The roots of Noh lie in a mixture of Buddhist scriptures and temple dances, Oriental poetry, myth and legend and traditional folk entertainments and scenes from daily life. Kyogen and Noh both have their roots in the pre-Buddhist Kagura dances (derived from 'kamigakari' meaning divine inspiration or possession) and their integral connection to the ideas and beliefs of Buddhism and Confucianism. Evidence from the 5th to the 13th-century suggests, however, a strong influence from Chinese civilization through the mediation of Korea via Gigaku Buddhist masks thereby reinforcing the idea of ancient intercultural influence in the social and cultural structures of Japan.²⁰ According to Nishikawa (1978) the other hybrid masks of Bugaku imported to the royal courts from China via Korea gave rise to thirty-two mask dances (out of approximately one hundred) with the oldest masks dating back to the eleventh century.²¹ Once again, the tradition has been modified but is both residual and decisively active in modern Japanese theatre.

The Codified Mask Traditions of the East

In Asian and South Asian mask theatre, the aspiring performer is an apprentice in both craft and art; and the theory and practice of working with the mask involves all stages from first impressions through initiation to the flowering and withering of life. The way of the mask involves a displacement and a journey that brings about a shift of perception. Working with masks as tools of transformation requires a preparedness to change and to be changed: an opening up of new possibilities.

In traditional societies, there is nothing given about the idea of the mask holding out a release of acting resources.²² The real issue is that initiation into the codified ways of working with masks in the theatre requires periods of living and working in other societies and cultures while being confronted by values and ideas very different from our own. This 'detour strategy', as Eugenio Barba has called it, throws up all the questions about theatre as barter, exchange, interaction and transformation. Traditional revivals and radical experiments with the 'theatricality' of mask theatre often go hand-in-hand with other non-theatrical intercultural mixings.

Studies of the codified mask actor training traditions in Asia: Balinese Wayang Topeng, Japanese Noh Acting, Indian Kathakali Dance-Drama and Seraikella Chhau, Korean Talch'um and Chinese Peking Opera and Dixi contain certain commonalities. In these traditions the work is passed on in an unbroken line by the performers themselves and the emphasis falls upon common systems of dramatic imagery within a specific cultural history. The multiple streams within each mask tradition have been considered to be not only the equals of actors' theatre but also of the highest cultural value. James Brandon's introduction to the *Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre* (1993) pays tribute to the fusion of song, dance, masks and puppetry while emphasizing that the transformative power of the mask allows 'the performer to wholly transcend self and portray gods, spirits of the dead, demons, mythological figures and animals, as well as ordinary humans.'²³

The codified mask traditions all offer modes of sustainable growth and development in mask work that are rarely found within the modernist experiments. As director and teacher, John Martin, has explained in *The Intercultural Performance Handbook* (2004) the chief exponents of modernism have often made decisive and

recurrent forays into theatre beyond their immediate cultures. The codified mask traditions provide:

- transmission across generations
- strong focus on an apprentice system with clear master-pupil relations
- an emblematic or symbolic performative body language with interpretative rules
- a visual means of performing the most valued stories, myths and legends
- a wider range of physical and vocal expression than the Western actor
- a range of popular and easily recognisable symbolic types
- a means of connection to sacred religious and spiritual beliefs and powers
- a symbiotic relationship with the natural environment
- a communal ethos with social bonds and sense of familial belonging
- linkage between microcosm and macrocosm

These characteristics are underpinned by belief systems that usually place a high value on the content of tradition, established social mores and the connection between past and present. In this regard mask *praxis* is usually an instrument of connectivity.

Theories of the Mask

Cultural theory, or just plain theory as it is often called, takes our line of exploration and analysis of mask *praxis* in modern drama one stage further. Each of the examples cited above could be theorised further to draw out the ideas and beliefs underlying the historical mask families to which they belong. Behind the four mask genera in Menander is the correlation with the four elements (cold and dry, hot and wet, hot and dry and cold and wet) as found in Aristotle. Closely related to the main Cirebon masks

from Java is the rod puppet form *wayang golek cepak* in which the Persian stories of Amir Hamzah and the legends of Muslim saints in Arabia and Java are enacted. Underneath the Pende masquerades and stock types is a history of changing tribal ideas based on a migration from Angola to Zaire and a male fraternity or *mukanda* (of matrilineal descent) structured into generations. Beneath the masks of *commedia* are the key strategic genera of early modern European capitalism with all their contradictions and paradoxes underpinned by ancient Gnosticism and the Judaic *kabbalah*. Behind the Noh are the vestiges of Dengaku and Sarugaku, earlier Shinto shrines and multiple aspects of Zen Buddhist religious thought underpinned by earlier Chinese concepts such as the Four Divine Correspondences (directional orientation). The distinguishing features of the Medieval Cycle masks are part of a complex formal organization of the secular Corpus Christi cycle with the Old Testament prefigured in the New Testament of the Catholic Church.

What then are the main theories about masks in modern drama? Who developed these theories, in whose interests, when and why?

Masks as Universal History

The theory of masks as universal history has been advocated by a group of distinguished scholars across many different disciplines from Josef Gregor's pioneering study *Masks of The World* to Oto-Bihal Merin's book of the same name and Karl-Ferdinand Schaedler's more recent *Masken der Welt*.²⁴ The idea behind the theory is, broadly speaking that the instinct towards masking is universal and found all over the world in almost every culture in some ubiquitous variant or other (i.e. Pluralism or

Interactionalism). This is a questionable assumption that has been espoused by such diverse practitioners as Craig, Yeats, Artaud and Dario Fo.

Masks as Functional Tools

The theory of masks as functional tools has recently been elucidated by Sears A. Eldredge in *Mask Improvisation for Actor Training and Performance*. He has identified five key functions or 'metaphorical designs', which operate simultaneously: frame, mirror, mediator, catalyst and transformer. He draws upon the work of Marjorie Halpin to illustrate how in the act of masking everything around the mask becomes displaced and framed in the opposite of a normal or everyday light. Then in reference to Margaret Mead²⁵ he outlines the complex and reflexive mirroring relationships involving the mask, the wearer and the audience and cites the idea of mime artist, Ron Jenkins, that the mask is 'a two-way mirror.' In the third function he cites the idea of Lévi-Strauss that the mask is a mediator between opposing worlds and the concept of Elizabeth Tonkin that 'masks mediate and direct the flow of power within a system' as 'conductors, exemplars and operators in those innumerable initiation sequences which enact the death of the old self and the birth of a new one.'²⁶ Thereafter, from A. David Napier's *Masks, Transformation and Paradox*, comes the idea of masks used as a catalyst 'in conjunction with categorical change' towards 'paradox characteristic of transitional states.' Last, but not least, is the Jungian idea promulgated by Carl Kerenyi that the principal function of the mask is to 'unite and thereby transform'.²⁷ These examples are, in turn, derived from readings in anthropology, ethnography, classical studies, religion and psychology.

The problem with all these statements of synthesis as metaphors is that their functions are presented to us as if they had their own independent existence. What is the relationship between these functions and the world of material things? A *frame* suggests an outer context, but connected to what kind of reality? A *two-way mirror* suggests that masks reflect an image of something while others observe the act of reflection from a hidden position; and that both these positions are hidden from view. Then we should ask whose image, in whose interests and why are the observers hidden? A *mediator* function is only understandable in a given context. A *catalyst* changes the properties of one substance into another and again requires a given locus and culture. Moreover a *transformer* may be regarded as an energy source and as a physical transformation; but from what to what, in whose interests and why? When we put all these concepts together simultaneously and try to imagine them at work on a single mask turned under the light, as Eldredge suggests, then we have produced a completely reified theory of an abstract mask and lost the relationship to the real world completely.

Masks in Ritual, Animism and Totemism

Theories of ritual, animism and totemism have advocated that the mask is special because it enables the human being to share the power of the sacred person, animal or divinity, probably deriving from shamanic cultures. This is the theory of masks as sacred and 'other'. From Egypt to Greenland such cultures have espoused the belief that a person consisted of a body plus several 'souls.' The mask was an essential attribute of the shaman or spirit guide throughout most hunter-gathering societies and was worn to facilitate disguise, empowerment and protection. The connection between masks and the realm of the dead is also a feature of Austrian 'Perchtmasken' festivities, the

Scandinavian 'Wild Hunt', The Mexican day of The Dead, the Tibetan Priest mask dances and the Balinese trance dance of Barong and Rangda. There are few advocates of trance-dance working in Western theatre with masks, although Keith Johnstone's advocacy of trance possession in *ImproBook* is a notable exception. W. B. Yeats noted the sacred use and application of the ceremonial mask during his involvement with the Rosicrucian Order of the Golden Dawn. The idea of the wearer becoming the mask, shape-shifting, is still adhered to by many connected to occult and Gnostic traditions.

In spite of the evidence cited above, anthropology has yet to produce a convincing theory of the origins of masks in human culture although speculations have been offered as a substitute for theory. Between 1949 and 1957, the German theatre historian, Carl Niessen, compiled an enormous catalogue of ritual practices throughout the world from earliest beginnings to the present day. Yet he was unable to explain how masks came into being in the first place or at what stage in the evolution of human culture they first appeared.²⁸

According to Ernst Fischer, the theory of an organic unity between 'man, animal, plant and stone and source of life and death, collective and individual, is a premise of every magic ceremony.'²⁹ The point here is that the equilibrium between the individual and the outside world becomes more and more disturbed through the transition from feudalism to capitalism. As social differentiation progresses and the family, private property and the state become hallmarks of modern life, all that was previously regarded as solid between the inner and outer world of the individual began to melt.³⁰ The return of the old gods from a previous epoch of collectivism through a Dionysian revolt from below (Nietzsche) has often been depicted as a protest against the violation and fragmentation occasioned by class rule (daemonic mode). On the other

hand, the Apollonian glorification of power and the status quo – of kings, princes and aristocratic families and the social order established by them – has been regarded by Augusto Boal as an establishment ploy to reinforce their ideology as a supposedly universal order (Platonic mode).³¹

The relationship between self and other, as accredited to Thespis, reaffirmed that there were now two key elements in the actor's art: 'the Actor hidden behind the Mask and the Mask itself.'³² Boal calls this act of dividing the personality, of dividing one into two, 'hypocrisy' (after the art of Hypokrites who pretended to be what he was not) and states that this creation of the divided persona has been one of the most captivating themes of theatre and psychology. It can, of course, be argued that far from disempowering the individual, this dichotomy between actor and character provided both a protective shield and a projective mechanism for truth. With the passing of time it would seem that the relationship between the self and other has become increasingly focused on self and other selves. The range, modalities, psychological underpinning and social roles equated with this process all involve secular 'play with the identity of the performer and the performed.'³³

Masks in Greek Theatre

In the praxis of representation about Greek theatre and masks there are many theories of very great interest and significance. Early modern theoretical work in the 1920's by Jane Harris and the Cambridge School was centred on animism. Bieber (1961) made a major contribution to documenting the influence of ancient theatre on modern theatre and to describing the masks used by Eva Sikilianos in the late 1920's.³⁴ While Webster (1967) and Green's (1978) studies of monuments illustrating Greek tragedy, old and

middle comedy broke new ground in compiling data on the pictorial record about mask use.³⁵

The twentieth century has witnessed a remarkable number of performances of Greek plays in masks. Bieber and Wiles have documented the outdoor experiments of Eva Sikilianos at Delphi in 1927-30. Between 1936 and 1974 a profuse repertoire of mask work was accomplished in Basel by mask-makers Charles Bardet, Max Bignens, Hans Gygax, Anouschka Meyer-Riel, Ruedi Schmid and Max Breitschmid.³⁶ Tanya Moisewitsch created a series of full-face silver and gold masks for Tyrone Guthrie's *Oedipus Rex* (1954) in Stratford Ontario.³⁷ Each director (Reinhardt, Jean Louis Barrault, Antoine Vitez, Karoulos Koun, Peter Hall, André Serban, Peter Stein) has sought an individual production technique and a consistent design style. The 1981 National Theatre production of *The Oresteia* directed by Hall had stylised non-character masks by Jocelyn Herbert that received some criticism for their full-blown stylisation. Later productions such as *The Bacchae* at Epidauros (2002) and *Tantalus* (2002) in collaboration with mask-maker Dionysis Fotopoulos and the sinuous Butoh-trained actor, Greg Hicks, produced better results. The problems of acting style and vocal delivery did not disappear, however. Taplin (2001) reports that when Hall's *Oedipus Plays* were in rehearsal (mid-1990's) the masks had been brought in at a late stage and Alan Howard was seen to tear his mask off and hurl it to the ground saying 'I hate this bloody thing.'³⁸ The *Tantalus* production of 2002 fared somewhat better and by general consent the masks appeared to make the audience listen better, de-psychologised the roles for the actors and encouraged the use of the whole body.

A key question worth asking concerns the relationship between the theatre of text and the theatre of mask. All agree that the use of masks in a highly textual theatre,

far from marginalizing the content of the plays, enhanced them to the point that it required special acting skills and commensurate architectural spaces. The latest work by Taplin³⁹, Wiles⁴⁰, Walton⁴¹ and Easterling⁴² works on the premise that 'the Greeks do seem to have had a recognisable cheironomia that stylised emotional response into a series of set gestures, perhaps the same as those used by sculptors and painters.'⁴³ The masks would therefore carry the symbolic weight of delineating for the audience what lines were addressed to whom but also signify essential factors about status, confidence and truthfulness. What and how the audience registered this information in the giant amphitheatres remains a subject for extended research. The theory of the acoustic mask advocated by Thanos Vovolis and also by mask-maker Michael Chase of Glassworks Masks is that wooden sound posts inserted between the tailor-made skull-cap and the mask itself enhance the possibilities of resonance. When combined with specially - designed mouth shapes to bring out the sound of resonating consonants the theory goes that the ritual cries of 'iou', 'oimoi' and 'eleleu' are greatly enhanced. On balance I think it would be wise to accept J. Michael Walton's cautionary advice about the difficulty of speaking the stage poetry – since the issues of precisely how, with what sort of pace, with what kind of amplification are unresolved – when wearing a helmet mask. The resonating chamber is located in the body of the actor and not just in the mask. There is much more work to be done on the nature of oral and visual perception on the part of the wearer and the audience before this issue will be fully understood.⁴⁴

The Theory of Playing The Mask

The French theory of *jouer le masque* is a recurrent motif through all the forms of Western Twentieth Century actor training and devising with masks. From Plato's

concept of letting a child's education take the form of play and Schiller's notion of the aimless expenditure of exuberant energy to Karl Groos's perception that the purpose of childhood was to provide a period of play and Johan Huizinga's genetic theory of the player as 'homo ludens', the idea is reinforced that learning through play is a central activity for human beings. All the early definitions of actors refer to play(ers) and many to masked players.⁴⁵ Theatre historian, Richard Southern, has listed the player's personal resources as voice, gesture, appearance (mask, costume) and instruments (properties, drums); while his external; or secondary resources are 'place' or locale, stage and background (including scenery). For Southern, the rhythmical use of voice and enlarged gestures akin to dance are two steps in the theatre; but in his view, something of the theatrical is still lacking. The third step is 'a complete readjustment beyond the normal' and it takes place when a figure appears 'but with a mask upon his face.'⁴⁶

In all the great mask theatre traditions, the mask wearers or players have a dynamic relationship to a popular audience. The acoustic and visual enhancement of movement is also carried out by wearing a costume uniquely related to the mask. A mask dancer must be able to separate out and to play the key body parts: the head, the shoulders, the arms and the hands, the hips and the feet. In many parts of the world the word 'playing' is synonymous with the word 'dancing.'⁴⁷ In one sense the continual playing of a mask type depends on the way in which it is invented and re-invented by the performer with the active co-operation of the audience. A mask has to outlive its own topicality and be reinvented in new contexts if it is to stand the test of time. Popular cultural forms like Commedia require both performers who know how to manipulate visual language to convey meaning and audiences who can read the range of

individual expression within and across genres. This depends upon a working knowledge of the relationship between masks in the genre. It is precisely the special ability of the mask player to imbue the mask with attributes across a wide range of expressions within a type that make the mask live for the audience. This process is first constituted in rehearsal and then in performance through a dialogue or banter with an audience that creates open-ended texts and innovative new types. The training to use the mask therefore involves body memory, sensory play exercises, mimetic games and physical manipulation of the body of the student by the teacher.

Victor Turner described 'play' as the 'joker in the deck' because it was both creative and untrustworthy; and the derivation of the word 'play' extends from a rapid movement or gesture to playing a musical instrument to taking a risk to the celebrating of festivals and the exhibition of wealth. There is a dual element in playing a mask in performance of flow (losing oneself in the playing) and the reflexivity (an awareness that one is playing). Some playing may be rule-bound where both mask performers and audience accept the conventions of the game; or another kind of playing may be uncertain and dangerous because the gods can change the rules of the game at any moment. Roger Caillois, the French sociologist and play theorist, produced a seminal work on *Masques* (1959) in which he specified three binary categories of mask play: to disguise or to protect; to be an instrument of metamorphosis; and to shock and to fascinate.⁴⁸ This latter form of 'deep play' has been elucidated by Clifford Geertz and involves the whole person in what amounts to a life and death struggle.⁴⁹

Masks and Identity

The concern with personhood or identity is a quintessentially modern pre-occupation. It has two divergent interpretations. One approach posits the existence of the real or authentic self while the other admits every manifestation as revealing the multiplicity of identity. These two approaches have been clearly highlighted by Efrat Tseełon (2001) in *Masquerade and Identities. Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Marginality*.⁵⁰ Tseełon cuts to the quick by asking if there really is a human essence to cover? 'Is a mask a real or an ideal self? Does it hide or liberate the real self?' The literature on the theme of identity is enormous. Since the 1960's with Goffmann's sociological study of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) to R.D.Laing's psychological presentations of *The Divided Self* (1960) and *Self and Others* (1961), the debate about the relationship between the individual and society has been raging across all disciplines. Where does the individual begin and society end? Are all manifestations of a person socialised? When the layers of personality are stripped away is there an essence?

In the theatre we can observe the split persona at work in Andrejev's *Black Maskers* (1907) where the castle is the soul, the hero is the lord of the castle and the black maskers are the powers in his inner nature that are unfathomable. The expressionist play *Methusalem or The Immortals* (1920) by Yvan Goll features a student with personality divisions corresponding to I, Thou and He. These personality divisions fail to function together and leave him frustrated in his pursuit of a young girl. The dualist model of personhood is central to O'Neill's *Great God Brown* (1926) in showing how the mask of the Apollonian businessman is subsumed by the chaotic and vital Dionysian Brown. Shaffer's *Equus* (1973) explores the issue of identity when a deranged youth blinds six horses (masks) with a spike and is confronted by a

psychiatrist. The issue of identity in relation to the nation-state and other identities outwith of that state is also of major significance: Genet, Arrabal and Gatti have all used masks in their plays to examine issues related to marginalised identities and identities of otherness.

Masks as Power

In mask *praxis* one of the central ideas that has led to endless theorising is the issue of power. In equal part this refers both to the power of the mask over the wearer and to the power of the mask over the audience. N. Ross Crumrine in 'The Power of Symbols' (1983) describes masks as 'power-generating, concentrating, transforming and exchanging objects.'⁵¹

In an unpublished article, *Masks as Power*, Karl Toepfer of San José State University in California reminds us that the only animals who use masks are humans. In his view, the mimicry and camouflage exhibited by certain forms of life 'result from unconscious, genetic processes which operate independently of any capacity for self-perception.' He argues that the key element is a brain capable of perceptual logic; an organism that must be able to recognise itself and its own image in reflection; an organism that must be able to perceive itself from points of view other than its own and to acknowledge 'ambiguous formations of identity and anticipate the implications of other interpretations of identity'; an organism that must be able 'to perceive a relation between the power to interpret phenomena and the power to assume another identity'; an organism that must be 'able to derive (from data in appearances) an identity which has never been seen i.e. the organism must be able to perceive its power to transform its

own identity'; and lastly, that an organism must be 'able to perceive some advantage in transforming its identity.'⁵²

Anthropologist Gordon Childe, advocated the theory that all human products are essentially tools for dealing with future needs. He argued that this applies equally to those tools developed for a practical purpose to maintain a condition, or to those tools that express needs such as heightening pleasure or increasing insight through art.⁵³ Vygotsky went further in *Mind in Society* (1978) to specify that the use of tools needs to be taught and to emphasize the importance of using tools as an expression of intentional *praxis*.⁵⁴ What kind of tool then is a mask? If we can agree with Toepfer that 'a mask signifies the interpretive complexity of appearances' then we may identify in the perceptual apparatus of the wearer a basic way of thinking or even the pre-form of a basic need. This logic would then present us with a series of speculative alternatives.⁵⁵ The ideas behind masking may well be connected with the problem of surviving threats in a threatening environment. The expressions codified into masks could have been a way of both defining these threats and coping with them. The wearing of the head and hide of an animal by a hunter after the kill may have been the precursor to other forms of ritual enactment. This enactment, in turn, makes the unfamiliar become familiar; and may lead on to other magico-religious practices and beliefs designed to enhance social control. A tool that gives a clan or tribe the ability to control outside influences was presumably of great value.

In tribal societies the ritual power of the mask would appear to have corresponded to basic human needs: control over hunting and food supplies, initiation rites, fertility ceremonials, ancestor worship and votive offerings, healing practices and protective rituals. In all cases it might be argued that the mask is designed to confer

some power on a human being that they would not normally possess. In European feudal societies the intervention of the Church to suppress and assimilate such practices necessitated a full-scale assault on the very idea of the mask. Under capitalism the development of the theatres within urban centres established a series of sites where the power of human beings to control and change their identities could be objectified. The social anthropologist, Elizabeth Tonkin, in her article *Masks and Powers* (1979), has advocated that: 'A study of Masks suggests that we must see Power in relation to human imagining; Power is not just the unstructured, nor the absence of structure.'⁵⁶ She says that masks 'mediate and direct the flow of power in a system' while at the same time functioning as 'conductors, exemplars and operators in those innumerable initiation sequences which enact the death of the old self and the rebirth of a new one.'⁵⁷ This she argues brings us to the nature of the central relationship between the mask performer and the audience and also to the problem of legitimacy.⁵⁸

What is conveyed to whom, in whose interests, for what reasons, how and why? The social symbolism of the mask provides an interest nexus within an ideological scheme: the mask is thought made concrete. How does the mask behave? What is its relation to compliance, coercion, authority and influence? The sociologist J.G. Merquior has pointed up the importance of cultural dissonance, a sense of ambiguity, where masks and veils are concerned. In dealing with what he calls *mask* or surface ideology he refers to those ideas concocted by wealth, party oligarchies and state bureaucracies as being by definition 'born infiltrators'; whereas being confronted by *veil* or deep ideology in the form of 'unconscious interest-belief' or 'false consciousness structured by the social process rather than by conspiratorial will' involves issues that 'frequently cross class borders.'⁵⁹ This is perhaps why so many mask plays of modern

drama address questions of ideology, power and legitimacy and why so many agencies who use them have adopted collectively held beliefs to highlight real material issues.

The concept of masks as 'social *gestus*' takes us into the arena of making the unreal become real, of making the complex become simple. *Gestus*, in Bertolt Brecht's formulation, does not just mean gesture or physical work of the actor, but also the whole environment in which a production is constructed and all the outward signs of social relations that impinge on the art of playwriting and directing for the theatre. Brecht invented this word to denote two major concepts: *grundgestus* signifies each beat of the theatre production as interpreted by the company; *gesellschaftliche* is the underlying mimetic and gestural arrangement of people in a particular epoch. This latter concept is the doorway through which sociological concerns and historical determinants are allowed to pass. The use of masks in Brecht's work connects form and content through the gestural presentation of the actor with the underlying economic and socio-cultural constructs that constitute identity and interaction.

Lévi-Strauss and Structural Anthropology

In his study *The Way of Masks* (1975) Lévi-Strauss has raised significant questions about meaning, signification and methodology. These issues concern the interpretation of masks as collective symbols and the theoretical contribution made by French structuralism. This structural analysis of the masks of the Northwest Coast indigenous peoples is described in terms of underlying myths. The axis of his thesis is that the 'strange' style and shape of certain masks cannot 'be interpreted in and by themselves as separate objects' and that 'a myth only acquires sense after it is returned to its transformation set.'⁶⁰ For this reason he advocates choosing an individual mask and

reassembling all the data about it: aesthetic characteristics, technique of fabrication, intended use and results expected from it and the underlying myths accounting for its origin, appearance and function. The emphasis is upon collating 'all-inclusive documentation' in order to compare it with other records.

The two original volumes in French have a binary opposition theme with a *Cowichan Swaihwe* abstract bird mask from the Salish tribe on one cover and a *Dzonokwa* representational ogress mask from the Kwakiutl tribe on the other. Set side by side these masks are so different both in style and expression that it is difficult to believe that they have been carved by the same people. Are they just different or is one almost the reverse of the other: bright paint versus dark wood, heavy decoration versus sobriety, white feathers versus red hair and above all protuberance versus hollowness?

Lévi-Strauss connects the *swaihwe* to a vertical heaven-waters axis, to water products, to mythical monsters that have a power over the elements (maelstroms, tempests, earthquakes); while the *dzonokwa*, on the other hand, is linked to a horizontal village-forest axis, to forest products and to the preservation of the descent groups through well-regulated puberty rites and matrimonial exchanges with attendant endowments or dowry. It is his contention that the systematic oppositions in these masks and their visual counterparts in plastic form and origin myths corroborated by extant ritual practices are deliberate and mean that the triumph of culture over nature has been established. He leaves us with a tantalizing image on a *tinneh* copper of a child resting on the forehead of a marine spirit and the theme of the floating child to be found on a monster in both Tlingit and Tsimshian myth. 'When I killed your people, their souls became my children.'⁶¹ He concludes with the cryptic remark that 'the actors of a play for which we do not have a script have left their footprints.'⁶²

Theories: Some Tentative Conclusions

Many years earlier in 1959, on the occasion of the opening of a major tribal mask exhibition at the Musée Guimet in Paris, Lévi-Strauss wrote an article entitled '*The Many Faces of Man.*' The positional meaning that he attributes to the mask in its diversity and types and functions is categorically clear: 'it is the mediator par excellence between society, on the one hand and Nature, usually merged with the Supernatural, on the other.'⁶³ He describes these masks as 'living things' entrusted to the care of priests or other qualified persons which are daily prayed to, cared for and given food. In his words, it 'uses its own special language' to bring 'the god on earth' and 'mingles him with the society of men'⁶⁴; and then inversely by masking himself man 'testifies to his own social existence, manifests it, classifies it with the aid of symbols.' Finally he asserts that masks are no less indispensable to a social group than words and concludes with this cautionary observation: 'A society which believes it has dispensed with masks can only be a society in which masks, more powerful than ever before, the better to deceive men, will themselves be masked.'⁶⁵

Examining the main theories about the mask derived from anthropology, sociology and cultural studies as a backcloth to its uses in modern drama underlines the complexity of masking and the multiplicity of its forms. If we may agree that masks entered the theatre by way of religious ceremonial and ritual need, it is often difficult to draw a clear boundary between what takes place in life and on the stage: only the interaction of masked and unmasked participants seems to be the constant factor. We have also seen that all masks work within some system and that the non-verbal language of signs inherent within a particular mask is only meaningful in so far as its image communicates to a perceiver. For masking behaviour as diverse and complex as

that outlined in the examples provided, the theories behind the forms are similarly multifarious.

Innumerable interrelationships exist at the level of cultural theory with all the attendant issues of borrowings, assimilation, transmission and reception across cultures and generations. In Western theatre the masking concept has been part of most dramatic forms, only retreating temporarily in the face of realism and naturalism. While primitivism may be a motivating force of mask experimentation, in that playing with past affects both present and future, there is also the search for a new humanism and the vision of utopia to take into account. Contemplation of mask theories leads us necessarily to analyse mask practices and to the 'real sensuous human activity' of mask-making and mask performance: to the 'theatricality' of the mask

2. Mask Practices

A Savage God: Characteristics of the PH

The head is turnip-shaped and imprinted with triangular features and perpendicular red moustaches stained with tobacco. He has a small receding brow or egotists' forehead, an enormous carrot-shaped nose and a rapidly receding mouth and lower jaw. The eyes are downward slits emphasizing his lack of assurance reinforced by heavier brows. His mouth displays a despairing grin. He only has three teeth – 'one of stone, one of iron and one of wood.'¹ The overall impression is one of complacent superciliousness and pomposity. The stern fat man with the gross head, surmounted sometimes by a bowler hat and sometimes by a crown, could equally be expected to break into a rage, 'noble sobs and formal entreaties'² He suffers from deficiency of hearing and deficiency of courage.



Plate 1: True Portrait of Ubu by Jarry. Woodcut 1896

His main characteristics are greed, cruelty, gluttony, selfishness, stupidity, cowardice, vulgarity and infidelity – an ugly and iconic primitive. Bakhtin observes that he is ‘the modernist form’ of ‘a new and powerful revival of the grotesque’.³ Innes adds that he is ‘the monstrous puppet image of the bourgeois’.⁴

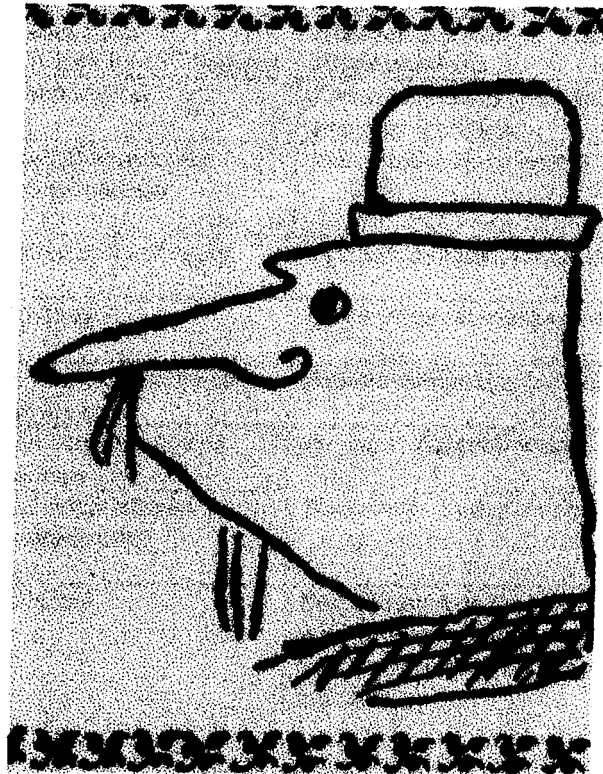


Plate 2: Another Portrait of Ubu by Jarry. Drawing.

The body is grotesquely huge, bloated and round with short legs and arms. The umbilicus spiral is stamped on his belly. Both the head and face of the wearer are encased by a huge shell. ‘After having straight-jacketed him in a body mask and limited him to half-a-dozen simple physical expressions, he commands him to speak his whole part mechanically’.⁵ His ‘special voice’ gives equal weight and emphasis to each syllable reducing the content of his words to nonsense.

Description	Aspects/Movement
<i>Etymology:</i> Père Heb as a species of grotesque deficiency (according to Jarry). A shite-eater. King, cuckold and slave.	<i>Form:</i> turnip-shaped helmet mask in a bowler hat, cane in pocket, a phynance bag and a toilet brush (with buds and leaves at one end).
<i>Signification:</i> A middle-aged bourgeois philistine with grand ideas and insatiable appetites	<i>Dominant Emotion/s:</i> Boring, stupid, vulgar and narcissistic. Pure id with an inflated but empty ego (Freud)
<i>Dimensions:</i> Helmet mask approximately 2ft high by 15" diameter	<i>Associated Elements:</i> Vegetal and base. Non-naturalistic.
<i>Skin Colour:</i> Greenish pink	<i>Front:</i> Umbilicus spiral imprinted on stomach: umbilicus.
<i>Hair:</i> Reddish leaved toupee with tobacco stained perpendicular moustaches	<i>Side:</i> Profile like a walrus
<i>Forehead:</i> Receding brow of egoist.	<i>Up:</i> Self-satisfied, proud and haughty
<i>Brow:</i> Low and jutting	<i>Down:</i> Neurotic and paranoid
<i>Ears:</i> Deficient. One extendable ear kept folded under his hat	<i>Angled:</i> Attempting to think
<i>Eyes:</i> Slits slanted downwards with Christ-like appearance	<i>Forward:</i> Aggressive and threatening
<i>Nose:</i> Pointed and carrot-shaped underscored by asymmetric moustaches	<i>Backwards:</i> Defensive and cowardly
<i>Cheeks:</i> Fat and flaccid	<i>Body:</i> Enormous pear-shaped body with poly-articulated arms and short legs prone to flatulence. Feet joined together.
<i>Lips-Mouth:</i> Slit with a despairing grin. Only 3 teeth.	<i>Voice:</i> 'special' monotone with expletives
<i>Chin:</i> Rapidly receding	<i>Phase:</i> Primitive

Fig 1. Analysis of the Sensory Co-ordinates of Ubu (France)

In the annals of modernism Ubu is, as Schumacher says, 'bourgeois philistinism personified'.⁶ This image is complex and contradictory since it is connected in various degrees with the Romantic tradition and evolved under the influence of symbolism. The inner nature of this archetypal man is chaotic and in his greed, narcissism, cowardice and gluttony he exemplifies the crisis in western humanism. This is a monster incarnate of a-political individualism with all-consuming

base instincts to whom human beings are either usable or expendable. He is a lazy 'little man' goaded by his wife into terrible acts of violence. He wages war in the name of his own ego and sits abreast a 'phynance-charger' wielding a toilet brush. Ubu is a form of State parasite personifying all the base instincts and fears of middle-class society and entirely devoid of imagination.

An Eye-View of a Mask-Maker

Get a trade behind thee lad, it will always stand thee
in good stead. In any case it's worth five quid a week
to see the sunshine and the crows fly over. You don't
want to be stuck down the pit.⁷

What is this making of masks; where does it come from and why is it so special? Perhaps the unanswered questions about agency, provenance, materials and methods in relation to archaic masks could be more easily dealt with if transposed to modern mask practices.

In my own case the transition from the mines and ceramics associated with the North Staffordshire coalfield to a 'makar' of masks was mediated through early involvement with school dramatic societies, amateur operatic groups and university theatre studies. Where I was born you could dig the clay right out of the ground in the backyard. While still in single years I produced a whole menagerie of clay figurines for my animal club (a tightly self-referential system). My parents had a fine collection of Doulton ware and my favourites were always the finely featured Toby Jugs of Robin Hood, Long John Silver, Falstaff and the statuettes of The Windflower and the

Little Boy Going To Bed. I was drawn to the eyes and facial expressions of these miniatures and the delicacy of their colours and the quality of their paintwork. At the age of twelve I made a portrait bust of a miner's head wearing a helmet, which was a facial fusion of two of my favourite uncles who both worked down the mines.

The mask-making proper did not start until the age of seventeen when my sixth form master, Ken Lowe, requested some lightweight card masks for a production of *Dark Side of The Moon*. Later while still a student, aged twenty, at the University of Hull I received my first professional commission from theatre director, Patrick Lao, to make the giant animal masks for his production of André Obey's *Noah* at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford, Surrey.⁸ This task was a quantum leap from the delicate face masks of *Dark Side* and required the creation of harnesses and head stabilisers for the actors to render them workable. They were made using card, gumstrip and chicken wire with sculptural add-ons including various carpet wools and fur fabrics. On seeing them in performance I was struck by the power of these moving objects and immediately converted to their potential as active agents in serious theatre practice. At that time I knew absolutely nothing of Saint-Denis and La Compagnie des Quinze nor anything of the legacy from Copeau to Lecoq. These masks were deemed Douanier Rousseau style and hailed by some critics in the press. This started me thinking about the relationship between the hands and the tools, the idea and its images, the materials and the method.

During the 1970's and 1980's I was commissioned on several occasions to make masks for 7:84 Theatre Company by John McGrath. These were for the productions of *Trembling Giant* (1977), *On The Pigs Back* (1983) and *The Trojan Women* (1991). The masks for *Trembling Giant* were full head masks made of celastic

and latex with hair of thick carpet wool. They were satirical types including a Puritan, Maynard Keynes, Harold Wilson, Margaret Thatcher, Len Murray and a small dwarf who when fed on a diet of beans grew into a giant. This allegorical play about the rise of capitalism was directed by Jim Sheridan in the style of a musical pantomime and played to full houses and some acclaim at the Royal Court Theatre. While Elizabeth MacLennan thought it 'visually, one of the best show's we've done' and that it made a 'difference to people's lives'⁹, McGrath was less than convinced because 'it just didn't look like socialist theatre should look.'¹⁰ In his last work *Naked Thoughts* (2002), published posthumously, he qualified this with the reflection that 'there's something about allegorical plays and working class audiences that doesn't quite fit...they thought it was a bit tittish. If you want to say something about capitalism, say something, don't dress it all up in this paraphernalia.'¹¹ With the gift of hindsight, in my eyes, this verdict seems unduly harsh; but it does encapsulate the problem of balancing practice with theory and the need to avoid reductionism. The 'paraphernalia' of mask-making and its link to popular festive and grotesque forms was something that McGrath was instinctively drawn towards. The playwright and wordsmith in him was dominant to the point that squaring the circle of melding socialist realism with a satirical and visual theatre of types and stock characters was never going to be easy. It was my task to give the audience a perfected vision in which movement and inner character were stamped on the faces of the masks so that they were instantly recognisable. In the making of the working class questions of identity and social class have often been expressed through the relationship between the labourer, the craftsman and the artist. The art of mask-making and the practice of mask theatre is not and has never been inimical to that relationship.

The Art of Mask-Making

He who works with his hands is a labourer.

He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman.

He who works with his hands, head and his heart is an artist.¹²

In the earliest sources of Western civilization mask practices are closely aligned with notions of identity and personhood and community. The Greek word 'prosopon' simultaneously signified a masked face, a character type inscribed with pre-formed desires and an inscribed form or stamp.¹³ The synthesis of head, hands and heart in one person was defined by St. Francis of Assisi as the prerequisite for the formation of an artist. In theory, however, it has long been recognised that this synthesis is not a given. It has no absolute ontology. Indeed it is more likely to be informed by the Solipsism of David Hume: 'Tis certain that there is no question in philosophy more abstruse than that concerning identity and the nature of the uniting principle, which constitutes a person.'¹⁴ Only within Idealism is this synthesis elevated to the status of an authentic self, derived from a fixed vision of human nature. Hume was unable to find 'the uniting principle' that could render identity coherent. Materialism, on the other hand, insists on the multiplicity of our identity and asserts that the 'human essence is no abstraction inherent in each individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations'.¹⁵ In mask-making this ensemble includes the technology, the participants' and audience interaction and the performative event. This latter consideration takes us from theatre into what Turner has called 'communitas' - an alternative and more liberated way of being socially human for others¹⁶ - and the field of ritual and folk culture, carnival and masquerade. Modern mask-makers have

inscribed themselves and their activities across the full spectrum from idealism to materialism. We may now go further to inquire if these mask practices can be regarded as part of a single masking phenomenon, or as the parallel development of practices involving quite separate traditions. In this chapter we move from the individual mask-maker to the social web or ensemble of mask-makers taking in major issues of craft and technique, materials and methods, profiling some of the key players and presenting issues related to fieldwork and contemporary practice.

Craft and Technique: Types of Masks

The practice of the craft of mask-making involves giving form to an idea and imbuing a sculpted object with meaning, movement and gesture. The materials and techniques of mask-making vary also in relation to the precise time, place and culture in which they were developed. The meaning is given in the imagining and in the making. It is not my aim to detail the working methods, sculpting processes and design principles behind the art and craft of mask-making that have been the subject of so many practical manuals: Kniffin (1931), Benda (1944), Cordreaux (1950), Slade (1964), Boekholt (1968), Breitschmid (1970), Terry and Anderson (1971), Baranski (1972), Bruun-Rasmussen (1972), Snook (1972), Laliberté and Mogelon (1973), Angelini (1980), Sartori (1984), Feller (1985), Sivin (1986), Strub (1987), Malaval (1988), Bridgewater (1996), James (1999), Dessi (2004).¹⁷

Mask-making and the trajectory of mask creation, from idea to realization, is a process and processing of material culture. In whose interests, for what reasons, how and why was a particular mask created? In spite of the published works listed above, in the history of performance studies, the perspectives and observations of mask-

makers have oftentimes been overlooked. They are the agencies or artist-craftsmen with their own preferred relationships to the materials, the designs and colours, the sculptural processes and it is their eye-view in its style and historical placement which gives birth to a workshop. The intimate relationship – between the maker, his tools and his workbench – suffuses the working life of the creator of masks. It is characterised by what Sanchez-Vazquez calls the supremacy of the hand. Through the hands the mask-maker overcomes the resistance of materials through delicate and precise movements corresponding to touch and exploration. The mask lives through the hands of the maker and from the hands come all the varied types of masks. These types of mask have been classified according to how they cover the face or body:

The *body mask* covers the whole body and even the body of several people. It has been used by the Ballets Russes, Alwin Nicolai, Mummenschanz and La Claca.

The *giant or high mask* is usually used in carnivals and street processions similar to those of the *gigantes* in Spain and Latin America. It sits on the shoulders of the wearer who usually looks out through the mouth or neck of the mask. It is the kind of mask used by the Futurists and Dadaists, by Jarry for *Ubu* and by Julie Taymor in *Oedipus Rex* and *The Lion King*.

The *head or helmet mask* extends over the top of the head and stops above the nape of the neck and sometimes covers the ears. It is the type of mask used in recreations of Greek tragedy and comedy and in the society masks of W.T.Benda and the theatre masks of Oliver Messel.

The *double-face shadow mask* is mounted on a hat or headband that extends outwards from the head at a forty-five degree angle, front and back. It is primarily a dance and movement mask and was invented by Larry Reed of Shadowlight Theatre.

The *full face mask* covers the face from the top of the forehead to underneath the chin. In this category we may include the neutral masks of Saint-Denis and Lecoq for actor training ('silent' masks for use in mime and improvisation). It is usually attached by means of ties or elastic around the head of the wearer.

The *shallow mask* covers the length of the face from mid-forehead to just above the chin. It is shallow in that it sits on the face. Japanese *Noh* masks and Javanese *Cirebon* masks are of this kind, although the former is tied around the head while the latter is gripped in the teeth by a leather thong.

The *three-quarter mask* extends from the forehead to the beginning of the bottom lip and when seen from the side covers the cheek jowls. The character masks of Saint-Denis, Pantalone from *commedia* and the clowns of Bali.

The *half mask* covers only the upper part of the face from the hairline down to the upper lip. The mouth and jaw are left free so that the wearer can talk. The majority of *commedia* masks fall into this category: Arlechinno, Pulcinella, Brighella, Tartaglia. They were also used by Brecht, Arden, Handke and McGrath.

The *forehead mask* covers the forehead and nose and is attached by ties or elastic around the back of the head. The best known mask of this kind is the Dottore from *commedia*.

The *domino mask* covers the eyes and is a mask of disguise that normally emerges during carnival time as a fashion accessory while the *nose mask* or *minimal mask* is used in actor training as a clown nose, but also features in productions of *Cyrano* (usually a prosthetic of foam or liquid latex).

Craft and Technique: Criteria and Methodology

How does a viewer or an audience distinguish between an accomplished piece with real artistic merit and a flamboyant, but superficial theatre mask? The questions that need to be asked are:

- Has the mask-maker, been trained by an acknowledged master, who is fully aware of his/her design style, production technique and communal role, within a codified tradition; or is the mask-maker self-taught?
- Has the mask-maker mastered the use of traditional tools and materials?
- Is the mask-maker able to contextualize his/her work through an understanding of or participation in traditional mask festivals or specific theatre works?
- Does the work, even though it might be innovative, exhibit an unequivocal understanding of dramatic form and theatrical effectiveness?
- What code has the mask-maker created and manipulated in order to communicate with his/her audience?

In the West the most concise and sophisticated elaboration of the professional mask-maker's methodology is provided by Sartori and Lanata (1984) in *Maschera e Maschere*.¹⁸ In a chapter entitled 'From Idea to Project' (*Dall'idea al progetto*) the writers outline how to think about the process of mask-making (why, how, where and when), even providing a chart of sensory co-ordinates in relation to the use of space so that the mask can be analysed in terms of its resultant form, colour, dimensions, movement and reactions. After compiling a glossary of Western physiognomy (Della Porta, Le Brun, Daumier) Donato Sartori and Jacques Lecoq created their own mask-

makers guide, 'Feelings and Their Contraries' (*Il sentimento e il suo contrario*) in which basic emotions and feelings are characterised respectively by sensory co-ordinates (form, shape, colour, smell, taste, sound, touch) and other components (material, movement, gender, characteristic typology, animal association, age, oppositional personality, parallel states, dominant sensations). The belief that character can be read from the face and from external signs is as ancient as it is widespread. A seventeenth century Jesuit scholar Niquetius identified no less than one hundred and twenty nine great scholars of classical Greece and Rome who had written at length on the subject.¹⁹ This guide is not a set of rigid rules but a rich tapestry of well-defined associations that may assist a mask-maker to map the visual iconography of the mask.

The total configuration of the mask (not merely its anatomical characteristics) is what the mask-maker needs to establish. This derives as much from context as it does from sensory co-ordinates. Each mask-maker discovers his/her *praxis* in the unique fusion of the time, place, culture and material environment into which they are born and enculturated. The Swiss mask-maker Erhard Stiefel, (who was strongly influenced by the Basle Fastnacht, studied with Lecoq and made the masks for Mnouchkine's *Théâtre du Soleil*), makes an interesting comparison: 'A sort of inspiration enters into the making of a mask. The Japanese and the Balinese are in a privileged position when they make their masks: they are artists. In order to play such masks the actors must be in almost the same position. It is a release at a given moment. In the West theatre costume and scene designers who make masks only from time to time have little chance of being successful.'²⁰

Non-Western Mask-Making: *Topeng*

Plate 3: Topeng Tua, Bali.

Topeng or masked dance-theatre is an art form stemming from the islands of western Indonesia, specifically Java and Bali and is part of a tradition of codified performance extending back over one thousand years. Case studies by John Emigh (1979) focussing on I Nyoman Kakul and Ron Jenkins (1978) on his own experiences need not be recapitulated here.²¹ In Indonesia mask-making is a specialised activity and a unique sub-category of woodcarving. In Bali *Topeng* masks are carved from pule or *pulai* (Apocynaceae) a species of creamy or milky pine or cheesewood with a fine grain that can be worked while it is still green and soft. It exudes a white latex when the bark is cut or broken and the tan bark contains bitter alkaloids (sometimes used as skin medicine) that are termite resistant. The pule tree grows at an altitude of one thousand meters.²² Miguel Covarrubias witnessed carving techniques in Bali of the 1930's and these have not changed greatly to the present-day. Roughing-out and

initial definition of the features is done with a small angled hatchet (*timpas*) followed by an even smaller axe (*kapak*). Highly sharpened flat chisels (*pahat*) and rounded gouges (*pengacap*) are used for marking out the grooves, ridges and curves of the brow, nose, cheeks and chin. Large and small straight knives (*pamutik*) enable the mask to be smoothed and finished, while double-edged curved knives (*pangot*) are used to shape the eye sockets, nostrils, lips and to hollow the inside of the mask

Description	Aspects/Movement
<i>Etymology</i> : Topeng Tua	<i>Form</i> : Full-face symmetrical dance mask
<i>Signification</i> : Old Man at the Royal Court (Senior Minister, Wise Elder Statesman, Retired King)	<i>Dominant Emotion/s</i> : Curious and talkative with a dry wit and an eye for the main chance
<i>Dimensions</i> : 23mm high. 13.3mm wide Approx.	<i>Sightlines</i> : Slit openings around bottom rim of eye: limited peripheral vision
<i>Skin Colour</i> : Peach colour	<i>Front</i> : Childlike innocence
<i>Hair</i> : Full mane of white hair as a separate wig; white brows and moustache of goats hair	<i>Side</i> : Smiling
<i>Forehead</i> : 3 wrinkle lines	<i>Up</i> : Proud and dignified. Inner strength
<i>Brow</i> : Raised with goatskin eyebrows. Protruberance in centre of forehead with lines of concern	<i>Down</i> : Contemplation and sadness: gentleness
<i>Ears</i> : None. <i>Nostrils</i> : Open	<i>Angled</i> : Curious and astute; comical and vacillating
<i>Eyes</i> : Wide open with red/black surround. Black iris with concentric circles. Laughter lines at eye corners	<i>Forward</i> : Assertive and very energetic: almost violent
<i>Nose</i> : Long and thin at top, broad and sensuous at bottom	<i>Backwards</i> : Shaky and tentative: trembling and staggering
<i>Cheeks</i> : Flowing wave-like cheekbones (echoing shape of brows); 3 crease lines at sides of cheeks	<i>Body</i> : Small, squat and bent with aged grace. Weak knees and lungs. Jewelled fingers.
<i>Lips-Mouth</i> : Red with black surround. Closed mouth.	
<i>Chin</i> : slightly pointed chin	<i>Phase</i> : Alternate Strong/Weak

Fig 2. Analysis of the Sensory Co-ordinates of Topeng Tua (Bali)

The Balinese mask-maker (*undagi tapel*) is a specialised craftsman who usually inherits his skills from his family and serves an apprenticeship. The carving

process is regarded as sacred and there is a ceremony that asks permission of the tree's spirit to use the living wood involving priest, carver and villagers. According to Slatum (1992) an unconsecrated *Topeng* mask can be created in about twenty-five hours excluding preparation and drying time.²³ If the mask is to be used in any religious ceremony it must be purified to rid it of any uncleanness; and offerings thereafter are part of the continuing care of the mask.

In the preparation of the pule the back of the mask is located towards the harder heartwood so that the facial features can be carved into the softer sapwood. After being sawn to size the pule is held between the feet while the roughing out or wasting is initiated from a cross-legged position using chisels and mallet. The hollowing stage of the mask is designed to reduce the sides of the mask to one quarter of an inch in thickness. The final mask is left to dry for a few days and then sanded. Thereafter a primer of calcified pig bone and fish glue is applied and subsequently between fifteen and twenty coats of thin paint are applied interspersed with fine sanding. Traditional pigments were extracted from shells, insects, fruits, beans and even burnt coconut shell, but contemporary makers use acrylic latex paints similar to those from any DIY shop. Goat and monkey fur (still attached to the hide) are used for moustaches, eyebrows and beards; braided horse mane is used for hair while mother of pearl is often inlaid for the teeth; and gold leaf and jewellery are added for royal characters.²⁴ Among the most famous mask-makers of the present day is Ida Bagus Anom from Mas who made the masks for Peter Brook's *Conference of The Birds* (1973).²⁵

The notion of mask-making in Bali is very different from in the West. In the case of temple masks involving Rangda and Barongs the technology is interlinked

with communal participation and rituals. According to Angela Hobart (2003) these masks (*tapel*) are considered 'literally to manifest the god's "footprint" (*tapakan*). The iconographic features on the head of a Barong Ket are said to be 'permeated by vital energies from the invisible world of darkness and charms are also placed on the back of the neck.' Moreover, a senior and respected nobleman, Satriya Dalem, plays a key role in the creation of the mask (initiating the carving and painting) together with Brahmana and village priests, community leaders, specialised craftsmen and members drawn from all sectors of the community. Mask *praxis* in this context is a performative process linked to temples, sacred ground and cemeteries where 'humans interact with vital forces that become reality.'²⁶

Non-Western Mask-Making: *Noh*

The carving of the *Noh* mask, or rather the 'striking' of the mask, begins with the choice and selection of the wood. Most of the masks are carved from 'hinoki' or Japanese cypress, which is now quite rare and often has to be salvaged when a temple is demolished and rebuilt. 'Hinoki' is an extremely durable hardwood with a light colour, fine grain and while it is often floated down the Kiso river and thereafter well-seasoned it must also not be completely dried out. As with all hardwoods careful choice of the wood will avoid later warping or distortions that may creep into a mask. *Noh* mask carvers often allow for warping when making the delicate female masks in order to enhance the shape of the basic curves. The bark side of the wood is fashioned into the inside of the mask so that any resin that might seep to the surface will not harm the mask. When carved, 'hinoki' wood gives off a fragrance that enhances the carver's inspiration and sense of aesthetics. The wood should be 'struck' with razor

sharp chisels, gouges and knives by hand, with very occasional use of a boxwood Japanese mallet (e.g. when 'roughing-out' and when inserting the angle of the eyes).

The Japanese use the word 'utsu' meaning to carve while at the same time imbuing the wood with one's spirit. The expression 'to make' a mask is never used. The mask-carver must know the principal uses in movement and facial characteristics of each mask and therefore be equally conversant with the content of the repertoire as with the performing skills of the actor. It is said that the master will only need to 'strike' the mask once while the beginner will take aim many times. The experience of carving with the grain of the 'hinoki' can be likened to the sensation of a knife slicing through butter. The carver sits cross-legged at one end of a meter long block of pine wood while the mask is pressed against a wooden block and the wooden matrix is often wrapped in a small towel to prevent it from slipping. The tools are laid out on the floor on a canvas roll or a strip of leather and always kept within arm's reach. The carver also keeps a set of relevant card templates to hand for recurrently checking the progress of the mask shape and volumes.

Many of the tools used are specific to Japanese woodcarving with the blades of chisels, gouges and knives fronted by soft steel and backed by hard-steel, forged at very high temperatures, using the same process applied to the making of samurai swords. These blades are short and specially weighted so that their design fits into a long handle. This brings the action of the carver closer to the wood and facilitates greater control and accuracy over each stage in the carving. Once sharpened, the blades of these edged tools were gently wiped with camellia oil after each use. The wooden blocks were cut by long double-edged saws called 'ryoba' and cross-cut by

'dozuki' blades, both of which cut when pulled backwards on the back stroke (the opposite of Western saws that cut on the down stroke).

The process of carving begins with the 'roughing out' with the larger chisels, progressing then to medium and finer chisels. The block of hinoki is gripped against the baseboard with the sides of the feet. When the finer stage is reached, then the inside of the mask is hollowed out with a special two-sided curved blade. This process can take up to three months. When smoothed and sanded, the mask is studied by the carver who draws in the lines and final detail.

The painting of the mask begins with the preparation of a kind of gesso or primer made by finely crushing oyster shells and mixing the powder with a refined glue made from the bones of a small Japanese deer. The mask is given approximately eight coats of this mixture, which is laid on with a wide brush moved across the surface in one direction only. This must be done with great care and the coats must be applied evenly and thinly, with the mask being left to dry after each coat. After the last layer has been applied the mask may be finely sanded; the after-effect should resemble eggshell porcelain. It is at this stage that hammered out brass eye and teeth covers are made and applied to certain masks that require this kind of detail. The skin colour is then applied with the first three coats being stippled over the surface, followed by a further seven coats applied smoothly. The first application of skin tone is very light and almost white; then a darker tone is applied by blending cream, orange, yellow ochre and blue powder paint with a home-made cotton covered foam rubber ball. A further five to ten coats may be applied in this way, with more paint distributed to the sides of the mask than the front in order to bring out the contours of the face. Final colour and detail painting is then undertaken. In the case of the female

masks the only way to differentiate one type from another is by the accuracy with which the hairline is applied. At this stage a cotton glove is worn on the left hand for holding and handling the mask. The last application of paint involves the use of a thin brownish-black paint (made to a secret recipe), which is applied through a sieve with a coarse brush. After drying this last coat is buffed with a powder to tone the dark colour down into the flesh.



Plate 4: Ko-omote by Echi, Kongoh School

The eyebrows are painted last using a very small brush. Finally, two holes are burned into the mask by an awl, one on each side of the head and a fine silk cord is added for hanging purposes. In these final stages the mask is always hung-up and viewed from a distance to check that its aspects are correct. The mask is then consigned to a fine patterned and padded brocade bag and additionally into a wooden box. This is how the actor takes delivery of the mask.²⁷

Ko-omote

The small face of the young woman smiles benignly and gently. The surface (om-ote) beauty of the mask belies an inner beauty (yūgen), but also exudes an ambivalence in that one side of the face is sad and the other side is happy. The surface, outside or face is impassive, almost like the face of a statue. It is a mask of defined proportions, much smaller than the human face, that according to Komparu (1983) 'must incorporate the highest degree of mystery'.²⁸ It has been compared by some to the mystical, archaic smile of classical Greek sculpture and by others to the puzzling expression of the Mona Lisa. Griffiths accurately records that to make 'a near perfect copy of this mask is the aim of most Japanese Noh carvers'.²⁹

What at first sight might appear as a fixed expression, in fact contains many shifting nuances that are the opposite of an expressionless face. The play of this mask under the influence of movement and light, the effect of changing aspects or angles from the point of view of the perceiver and the relationship of the face to the robes and costume of the actor's body (under robes, upper robes, outer robes and trousers) and the *katsura* (long straight black hair parted in the middle) *naga katsura* (long hair to the knees allowed to hang down over the outside of the costume) or *kasshiki-katsura* (pulled back and high with no wig band) wig or hair-piece all contribute to creating the impression of life. The basic quality of this mask's expression 'should be interpreted not as a passive "neutral" but rather as an active "infinite".'

This female mask, of a sixteen to twenty year-old woman, is designed to be played by a man. The male actor has a codified technique for bringing the mask to life. The mask may be brightened to express joy by tilting it slightly upwards (*omote o terasu*); it can be clouded to express sadness by tilting it down and putting it in

shadow (*omote o kumorasu*); and it can be moved quickly from side to side to show strong emotions such as anger or agitation (*omote o kiru*) or slowly and repeatedly for contemplation or deep feelings (*omote o tsukau*).

Description	Aspects/Movement
<i>Etymology</i> : Ko-omote (small face)	<i>Form</i> : Shallow. Oval and symmetrical
<i>Signification</i> : Face of a gentle young beauty, aged 16-20 years. Classical ideal of beauty.	<i>Dominant Emotion/s</i> : Impassive and enigmatic smile: inner beauty or 'yugen'
<i>Dimensions</i> : 21mm high. 14mm wide <i>Ratio of height to width</i> : 1:1.618 (the golden mean)	<i>Fiver Elements</i> : woman or wig plays
<i>Face</i> : Divided into 3 equal parts: forehead to upper edge of eye sockets; edge of eye sockets to tip of nose; tip of nose to tip of chin	<i>Robes</i> : With colour – red. White tabi socks
<i>Skin</i> : Ivory Colour – antiqued	<i>Side</i> :
<i>Hair</i> : katura: black wig parted in middle, covering ears and pulled back; kashira: <i>Hairline</i> : 3 lines	<i>Up</i> : Joy (<i>omote o terasu</i> : to brighten)
<i>Forehead</i> : Smooth, high forehead	<i>Down</i> : Sadness (<i>omote o kumorasu</i> : to shadow)
<i>Brow</i> : Shaved eyebrows: false eyebrows painted at hairline (Muromachi fashion)	<i>Angled Slow</i> : Deep thought (<i>omote o tsukau</i>) <i>Angled Fast</i> : Anger or strong emotion (<i>omote o kiru</i>)
<i>Eyes</i> : square-cut pupils: almond-shaped. Different cut on right and left. One line indentation for eye-lid	<i>Forward</i> : assertive
<i>Nose</i> : small and rounded with two symmetrically placed nostrils	<i>Backwards</i> : tentative
<i>Cheeks</i> : full and rounded, with dimples at meeting with corners of mouth	<i>Body</i> : stance (<i>kamae</i>) and carriage (<i>hakobi</i>)
<i>Lips/Mouth</i> red pursed lips with mouth slightly open and turned upwards at corners. Six black upper teeth.	<i>Principal Use</i> : <i>Tōboku</i> , <i>Izutsu</i> and many other plays
<i>Chin</i> : Small prominence echoing shape of nose	<i>Phase</i> : Intermediate

Fig 3. Analysis of the Sensory Co-ordinates of The Ko-omote

The fixed expression and economy of movement are not an indication of triviality. Again Komparu defines this as expression through a 'double negative': on

the one hand, putting on the mask removes all facial expression but on the other the new face is assimilated by the actor to the point that the existence of the mask is denied. This is the mask which increased rapidly in number during the time of Zeami when the ideal of 'yugen' came to dominate aesthetic values in Noh.

The notion of mask-making in Japan is also very different from in the west. A typology of structure determines the classic structure of Noh masks. In Noh the masks are strictly categorised according to extant plays and the masks are endowed with intermediate expressions and characterised by eyes with square-cut irises. Four roots of sensory perception are inscribed into the mask – eyes, ears, nose and mouth – but the fifth root of body must be provided by the actor and the sixth, 'the organ of the mind, can only exist once the actor has meditated upon the mask, perceived how it operates and obtained the appropriate spiritual awakening.'³⁰ The mask-maker uses an elaborate system of card templates based on measurements taken from originals in museums and private collections and through 'striking' the wood is expected to inject his/her spirit into each mask to enhance the hidden inner space of the actor. The specificity of the Noh system and its ensemble of social relations have ensured its continuity and transmission over eight hundred years.³¹

Making Western Folk Masks

Until 1970's the traditional folk mask in the Western Europe consisted of an additive sculpture – with an inner frame or infrastructure to which design and decorative features have been added. In his study of an Irish Christmas mumming, *All Silver and No Brass* (1975), Henry Glassie has emphasized that while 'the mummers' goal was gathering money' their purpose 'was grander than a full purse.'³² Entertainment,

fraternity, performance, party and communal celebration were all involved. The Irish Strawboy, Michael Boyle also gives a brief but rare account of how the 'straw hats' were made:

'First, you got a rod, a sally rod and you made a hoop of it, do y'see. And then you got this straw; you took it like a nice wee handful and you platted it round this hoop, do y'see and you brought it up to the top. When you done so many, you tie it with a string, do y'see, at the top'...He binds it above his left fist with a quick twist... 'And it pulled right down over your face, do y'see, but then you could look out between the wee handfuls of straw and see where you were goin. It covered your face'.³³

The importance of found object materials (animal bones and skins, furs, leaves, etc.) drawn from the immediate environment in which the maker works often gives the folk mask its defining character.

Materials and Methods

In the study of how masks are made and from what materials, modern mask-makers have left an abundance of evidence. If Medieval mask-makers used leather, canvas, and plaster-bandage (with papier mâché becoming popular in the early sixteenth century), the same issues of carving, moulding and decorating have continued across the centuries. Modern mask-makers have:

- modelled masks in clay, plaster and card;
- sculpted masks in wood, leather and skin and wickerwork;
- sewn, stitched and embroidered cloth masks with and without a framework;

- modelled masks in light sheet metal, tin plate, brass, galvanised wire armatures and soldered and welded decorative appendages;
- moulded masks in plastic materials or derivatives including polystyrene, cellulose acetate, fibre-glass, silicon, celastic, latex, neoprene, carbon-fibre and vacuum-formed plastics
- constructed masks from sheets of material (card, metal, plastic)
- constructed masks by assemblage using pre-existing objects, polystyrene
- made pliant masks: painted skin using make-up, flour-paste, paint and varnish or advanced prosthetics

In the words of Benda: 'To make a mask is an arduous task. It involves, choosing an impressive subject, visualizing it clearly, planning the manner of its execution and then plunging into laborious and complicated work, bristling with always new problems.'³⁴

In terms of construction each mask-maker tries to suit the medium to the message, the design to the intent, the means to the idea. Benda's social masks for *The Greenwich Village Follies* had a stunningly life-like resemblance with a smooth and soft luminous finish overlying tightly compressed layers of hard unbleached paper reinforced with brass wires. Oliver Messel and Rex Whistler chose to model a wax head and to use small pieces of brown paper, papier-mâché style, dipped in boiling water applied in layers and saturated with flour paste.³⁵ On the other hand, Marcel Janco in 1916 chose cardboard cut-outs painted and glued with paper, horsehair, wire and cloth for his Dadaist masks.³⁶ Picasso made an early study of one of the *Manager's* for *Parade* after the distinctive profile of Pulcinella following a visit to Naples in 1917 utilizing flat, overlapping planes and Cubist-style sandwich board

costumes for the ten foot high figures. Isamo Noguhi's masks for Michio Ito's performance of *At the Hawks Well* by W. B. Yeats in 1926 were made from traditional papier-mâché. Miró used a succession of foam rubber and fabric to create his monsters for the 1978 production of *Mori el Merma*. David Hockney has also taken his painting into theatre and into masked performances of *Ubu Roi* (1966), the bedlam scene in *The Rake's Progress* (1975), the study for masks in *Oedipus Rex* (1981), the masks of Pulcinello for *Parade* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (1981) and designed primitive masks for *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1981) using masks from cardboard and buckram.³⁷

Contemporary mask-makers are as diverse in their choice of styles as in their choice of materials. It would appear that the mainstream of modern mask aesthetics in the West occurred within the framework of phenomenology: the idea that the mask is an intentional act which exists due to the nature of its material basis or raw material and the way it is shaped by a maker. The act of shaping or sculpting a mask by a theatre artist is a specific form of praxis: the production of a new object out of pre-existing elements or materials. These properties are the result of the capacity of the maker to bring forth actual from potential existence. The resultant mask form with its aesthetic possibilities of content, language and style constitutes a sort of theatrical language. On the human level the mask in modern drama is a real subject, a subject that unites theory and practice by encoding appearances, sounds and signs, within an object designed to communicate to an audience.

What then is the relationship between specific individuals working with masks to the social groupings to which they belong? In most cases, the individual mask-maker in the West works to commission and is also a sculptor, painter, illustrator or some kind of visual artist. Until recently common bonds existed in the primary

preoccupation with the mask as a facial and body covering of iconographic status, usually linked to an earlier training in theatre or the performing arts. In the absence of the Medieval Guild structure or the traditional 'clique' of the carnival, mask-makers often work in remote and geographical isolation out of their own individual sculpture studios. In most cases, modern mask-makers are also people engaged in other activities – sculpture, visual art, music, performance, theatre crafts, carnival – which seems to infer that mask-making as an art form is derivative of other technologies and usually reliant on other cultural forms.

In 1996, however, the new technology of the world-wide web enabled the creation of a new organisation, the mask makers web, a research library and online museum. Mask practices and practitioners are now organised into categories (masquerade, collections, sources of materials, educational resources, artists gallery) in a way which renders the common ties and interests across cultures more visible than ever before.³⁸

Dionysis Fotopoulos was born in Kalamata, Greece, in 1943 and received a professional training as a painter, mosaic artist and sculptor before becoming a theatre designer in 1967 for *Oedipus The King* directed by Oswald Deptke. His masks are inspired by an imaginative use of natural materials (straw, wood, leaves) and found objects (metal and rope) and range across full, half and nose masks made to suit the body and movement of the performer as it develops in rehearsals and in relation to the theatre space. 'Collage and texture – those are the words, sensual redolent of communication, energy and feeling, which come to mind when I consider Dionysis Photopoulos' work.'³⁹ He has designed sets and costumes for more than forty major productions and has collaborated with theatre directors Karolos Koun, Luca Ronconi,

Peter Hall, Peter Stein and John Barton. His most outstanding work to date are the tragic full face masks for *Tantalus* (2000) directed by Peter Hall and produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company in partnership with The Denver Centre for Performing Arts.

Ralph Lee was born in 1936 in Middlebury, Vermont. He graduated from Amherst College in 1957 and studied dance and theatre in Europe for two years on a Fulbright Scholarship. He sculpted and made masks for the Living Theatre and the Erick Hawkins Dance Theatre. He also performed as an actor with The Open Theatre. He made his first outdoor production at Bennington College in 1974 and gained fame and success with his giant masks and puppets for the annual Greenwich Village Halloween parade in New York (of which he was director until 1985). He makes Bosch-like masks, loose-limbed skeletons, giant roosters and winged honeybees. 'If it is appropriate I incorporate found objects into my imagery, things we can gather from the woods or the junk yard. These provide the spice, the jolt in texture, that snaps us out of the timeless and into the here and now.'⁴⁰ He is clear about the nature of working with masks:

A mask is an inanimate object. Its power lies in its ability to breathe with life when combined with the flesh and blood of the performer; it provides a clear channel for the actor's energy and helps him galvanise the attention of onlookers and lead them into other realities. Each year we experiment with new ways of structuring words, music and visual elements, conceiving different types of masks and puppets that will best fulfil the dramatic needs of the material.⁴¹

In 1996 Lee was given the Dance Theatre Workshop Bessie Award for 'sustained achievement as a mask-maker and theatre designer without equal'.⁴² Since 1975 he has worked with his wife and chief collaborator, Casey Compton, on the projects of the Mettawee River Theater Company taking inspiration from myths and legends around the world: creation myths, trickster tales, Sufi stories. Their outdoor shows in streets and fields have included annual parades and pageants in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico (since 1984) and Lee also works with the Mayan writers group, Sna Jtz'Ibajom. 'One of the primary results of our theatrical activity is that it has helped people who have been down-trodden for four hundred years to begin to find their own voice.'

Rostislav Doboujinsky (1903-2000) was born in 1903 in St. Petersburg. His father was a stage designer and his mother was a musician. In England he is known for the masks he created for the film of *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, but he has also worked as a mask-maker with Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet, Marcel Archard, Luchino Visconti, Giorgio Strehler and Ezio Frigerio at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan. Doboujinsky's masks for the TSE production of *Heartaches of A Pusycat* (1977), adapted from Balzac by Geneviève Serreau, were based on designs from nineteenth century French illustrator J.J. Grandville. The large animal head masks were made with real animal fur and hair carefully moulded into a form similar to the technique used in wig-making. Jean Louis Perrier described Doboujinsky as 'a great creator of masks'.⁴³

Carol Kropnick is based in New York and has been making masks since 1978. She creates hybrids of birds, fish, reptiles and fuzzy mammals with human qualities

using buckram (a stiff netting used by milliners) and armature wire. These are overlaid with chamois leather, antique textiles, lace, feathers, fur and beads.⁴⁴

Beckie Kravetz is a figurative sculptor and mask-maker who trained at Yale School of Drama, the Centro Maschere e Struttore Gestuali in Padua, the Taller de Madera in Guatemala and the Instituto Allende in San Miguel, Mexico. In 1989 she became the resident mask-maker for the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, where she also works as the assistant wig master and as principal make-up artist. She lives in Sonoita, a small town in the grasslands of southern Arizona, where she has a sculpture studio. She works in a variety of media including bronze, terra cotta, polychrome resin, leather, rice paper, enamel, gold leaf, semiprecious stones and sterling silver. Her work has been exhibited in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York.⁴⁵

Ninian Kinnier-Wilson lives in Liverpool and graduated from Liverpool School of Art in 1976. He was the founder of the *Unfortunati* (1982-87) commedia company and has studied with actor and director Carlo Boso and mask-maker Stefano Perrocco of the Sartori studio. His catalogue of masks includes carnival masks, character half-masks and full-face leather neutral masks for actor-training, *commedia dell'arte* half masks in leather or papier-mâché, the full-face celastic masks of archetypes of myth (commissioned by John Wright in 1988) and related sculptural works. He has also undertaken professional commissions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Theatre Clywd and Mime Touch Theatre Company in Hong Kong. He has commented on the anachronistic position of the creator of masks as follows:

Earning a living as a mask-maker in contemporary Britain is a labour intensive and arduous business. You don't do it for the money. Of course, you can do something else and make masks as a hobby. After all anyone can make a

mask and kids play with them all the time. But making the right mask is difficult. I suppose I do it because its what I'm best at. I'm still waiting for the mask teachers to catch up with me. I'd like to make more spiritual masks and the character half-masks still need to catch on within mainstream actor training. However, because I make them I can't teach them. You need the mask-maker and the mask-user. For my part, I like to give them to someone else to use them.⁴⁶

Perspectives of Mask-Makers

We must now consider the structure of mediations that reveal how a mask-maker, transmutes his or her specific social and cultural values into significant mask images through *praxis*. Any account of mask use in modern drama requires the maker's presence.

The American puppeteer, researcher and historian of the puppet theatre, Paul McPharlin (1903-48) likened the mask-maker to a 'mystic' because of the requirement 'to put living overtones into inanimate pulp, to give your false face an uncanny quality as if it were a thing that breathed'. Moreover, he insisted that the mask-maker must also be 'an adept at Design – not just design with a small "d" – to make more than a likeness of a face'. He qualified this proviso with a further insistence that 'a mask must be an essence and not a substance, a type and not a typification'.⁴⁷ These three criteria of breathing life into the inanimate, of designing something more than an imitative copy and of creating a type while avoiding the excesses of stereotyping lie at the root of defining the activity of a good mask-maker. W.T Benda (1873-1948) was a Polish born immigrant and student of the Cracow Academy of Art who was invited to

come to America by his aunt, Madame Helena Modjeska, in 1899 to paint theatrical settings and work as a magazine illustrator. His seminal work called simply *Masks* was published in 1944. In it he insists that the lines of flow through a mask often pass between the hills (high points) and valleys (low points) of facial contours. Benda insists that 'we must feel the bone construction of the face, the tenseness or relaxation of the facial muscles and the quality of the skin'.⁴⁸ He describes mask-making as a 'specific form of sculpture' where 'one must at the same time consider the esthetic and the practical side of it, the exterior and the interior of the mask, the character it is intended to represent and the fitting to the head of the wearer'.⁴⁹ It is interesting to compare Benda's use of hard, unbleached paper with the making of the Thai Khon dance mask. The Khon mask technique involves covering a dry clay mould with neat layers of papier mâché to produce a full head mask that is cut in half and then sewn together. Layers of thin paint and fine sanding produce a seamless result, which is both lightweight and durable after which gold leaf is often applied to the finial of a headdress.⁵⁰

In sharp contrast to privatised western mask-makers like McPharlin and Benda the living tradition of Yup'ik masks in Alaska relied upon learning through doing and undertaking a traditional apprenticeship. Nick Charles spent many years trying to reclaim the legacy of his people and to train a new generation of carvers: 'I used to see the elders carving all the time. They used to advise us and tell us to carve as much as we could on our own, even though it didn't come out looking perfect. A person doesn't learn by being idle. If a person just watches and hasn't tried the carving, when he goes to carve it, it won't be done the right way.'⁵¹ The style of the mask-maker is, of course, derived from and mediated by the system of beliefs and the conceptual

framework within which he/she lives and works. Another fine indigenous mask-maker, Tim Paul (Nootka /Nuu-Chah-Nulth), has put it in this way: 'We now understand that our history comes from nature...Nature will remind us at times how small we really are.'⁵²

In addition the evidence points towards an on-going dialogue on aesthetics taking place between great mask-makers (sculptors, painters, weavers) of the past and their students or apprentices. This underlying process is designed to bring out the accomplishment of a given mask in relation to an understanding of traditional form and a willingness to support informed innovation. I well remember, on the third day of carving a *ko-omote* female mask, Hisao Suzuki said to me 'Today, we are going to discuss the Japanese sense of beauty.' Behind this deceptively simple statement lay all the profound issues of mask form, meaning and the processes to ensure the quality and authenticity of the work.

The mask-maker invests his/her species-life into the creation of each mask. In this sense every mask is unique and embodies both a craft tradition and an attendant 'aura' (Walter Benjamin). The mask-maker puts his/her creative labour and life into an object, which comes to exist outside of the self. This process of recognition of self in the object created is a far cry from the commodity fetishism of dominant market values. The necessary use-value of the mask in theatre should be contrasted with the soul-selling involved in producing and marketing tourist masks. Aesthetic appreciation of masks should be fundamentally linked to an understanding of their purpose. A sign or set of signs must be found to distinguish this masked agent from other forms of human communication. The American mask-maker Irene Corey was always completely 'practical' in a pragmatic sense:

How then to make the masks? They must go on and off quickly. They must be durable. The thickness of most media does not allow a smooth transition from cheek to face. I decided to try paper sculpture. Although I was not sure it would hold up, I knew it would create sharp, clear planes and would be light to wear.⁵³

The link between sculpture and mask-making is intrinsic and ancient. In Japan most of the Bugaku mask carvers whose names have survived were primarily 'busshi' or sculptors of Buddhist images. In Mexico most of the mask carvers to this day earn their living as 'santeros' or sculptors of saints and religious images in churches. Many mask-makers such as Isamo Noguchi, Oskar Schlemmer, German Cueto, Ralph Dorazio, Donato Sartori, Ralph Lee, Werner Strub, Gustavo Boada were all trained in sculpture before discovering the mask as a theatrical instrument.

Dorazio told the dance critic Walter Sorrell about his experience of working with dancer Erick Hawkins:

I encountered the possibility of sculpture invoking theatrical space and of sculpture moving, not mechanically, not electronically, but with all the grace and fallibility of animal and human movement. Designing and making the face and body masks for Erick Hawkins presented a challenge. The materials to be used had to be light so that the dancers would neither be impeded nor weighted down. I discovered that although there are physical limitations as to what one can do with a piece of balsa wood, there are no limitations as to what one can do aesthetically if one enters into the true spirit of such a theatre of music-dance-sculpture. In doing the masks and then experiencing them from the audience, I think of them as sculpture ceremonies – epiphanies of rain,

epiphanies of clouds, suspending all memories of unfelt rain, unseen clouds, so that the dance may take place.⁵⁴

A succession of modernist dancers and choreographers have returned to the mask as sculptural gesture in space: Mitchio Ito, Margaret Severn, Mary Wigman, Oskar Schlemmer, Kurt Jooss, Martha Graham, Alwin Nikolai. Sigurd Leeder, a pupil of Laban and graduate of the Hamburg School of Arts and Crafts, was extremely proficient in the design and execution of masks for Jooss's projected production of *Dance of Death* (1926) and the actual production of *The Green Table* (1931).⁵⁵

Hector Ubertalli from Argentina describes how 'into any mask I make I pour my own experience and sentiments about the particular character I am trying to represent. It is very important that I be familiar with the feelings behind the face, the symbolism, the motivation, so that the mask can come to life in my hands, regardless of how fantastic the creature might be.'⁵⁶ Another Latin American, Gustavo Boada from Peru (mask-maker with the Yuyachkani theatre group) clarifies the nature of his *praxis*:

And the mask is not, for me at least, only an object, but a process through which actor and matter come together to make an image. That's why there's a big difference between sculpture and masks. Sculptures are always saying very general things, but the mask always says something that invokes a society, a moment a problem.⁵⁷

In the invoking of a society, a moment and a problem there is also a legacy to consider. It is often not easy to recognise the vast chain of efforts made by ones predecessors and grandparents to protect and preserve important skills, knowledge, background and experience. It is also not necessary to re-invent the wheel when others

have been there before. The designer Jocelyn Herbert wrote in 1981 after her experience of making masks for *The Oresteia* directed by Peter Hall:

There's absolutely no tradition of masks in this country and I knew very little myself. I read a lot of Greek plays and everything that Edward Gordon Craig had ever written about masks...A mask allows the text to emerge more fully and gets rid of the very human face contortions which, quite naturally, happen when an actor describes scenes of horror.⁵⁸

The mask work of Craig, Dulac, Messel, 'Percy' Harris to name but a few requires us to qualify this assertion. There may be no codified tradition, but there is a legacy and a series of stage designers who have given considerable thought and endeavour to the matter. The task for the mask-maker, anyway, is a complex one. In the words of Werner Strub:

What form must the face of Hamlet have? I have no idea. Moreover, it is the materials that will guide me. The twins from *The Green Bird*, Barbarina and Renzo must be strange, and strangers in relation to others. With loops of sheepskin I have given them a sort of duvet on the head. It's possible that for *Hamlet* I will use some of the plaster moulds that I have kept from previous productions because they already fit the heads of the actors. I won't create new forms. For Gozzi, however, I must remain within the conventions and ideas of *commedia dell arte*. I must not give Arlecchino the nose of Pantalone.⁵⁹

The 'Way of the Mask'

In a new publication the Italian carnival mask-maker, Professor Agostino Dessi, identifies a major tendency shared by most professional mask-makers: 'The greatest

gift is being willing to learn and being able to do so.’⁶⁰ The design and making of masks is a subject of life-long study and research beyond the attaining of any specific ‘expertise’. Mask practitioners are involved in a prolonged search or investigation into the forms, which reveal the multiplicity of identity. What links the work of all the Western mask makers is their exploration of the mask as an expression of material culture and their idealisation of the elemental in a search for realization of appropriate forms. To flesh out this analysis of mask practices I will now present and evaluate two contemporary case studies that involve the identification of masks in archaic and residual traditions and then apply their findings to rediscover and recreate modern variants: the Sartori family multi-disciplinary mask project and the Masks for Menander Project by the University of Glasgow.

Amleto and Donato Sartori: Investigating Material Culture and the Return of The Leather Mask

The mask work of Amleto and Donato Sartori of Padua represents a high point in creative mask-making, methodological thoroughness and determination to unite theory and practice. The town council of Abano Terme have assigned a seventeenth century Villa Trevisan-Savioli to the Sartori Family and its research and collection activities are now being organised into a European Museum of The Mask.

The initial impetus to explore the renewal of the mask in theatre came from a discussion between Jacques Lecoq, Gianfranco De Bosio and Amleto Sartori at the University of Padua in 1947. Sartori, who was a Professor of Sculpture, had a studio in the Scoula Selvatico where he made his first experiments in sculpted wood followed by paper and card. His first investigations centred on the ancient classical

masks of Greece and Rome and then on the much later development of *commedia dell'arte* up to Goldoni. The theatre practitioners lacked the tool or instrument to bring the scenarios to life: the technology of the mask made in leather. This had died out by 1750. What is critical to note is that the re-invention of the leather mask began with a social imperative provided by the above collaboration and followed by extensive research into the great Commedia tradition. As one writer has said: 'From the mime, Sartori discovered new subtleties of perspective in movement; from the mask-maker, Lecoq received a new tool for the deepening of character'.⁶¹

In one way the role of Amleto Sartori, the sculptor, was the last stop in the reinvention of the mask, which came from the French connection through Copeau, Saint-Denis, Dasté, Chancerel, Dullin, Decroux and Barrault. All these theatre innovators had gone before searching for the *scenarios*, *lazzi*, dances, songs, rhythms and costumes of the Commedia types. It was Lecoq, who had been Barrault's student and had worked in Grenoble with Jean Dasté (who had in turn made masks from paper and glue) who brought the knowledge of all this to Sartori. Lecoq also retained Sartori's first leather mask of Arlecchino on the wall in his office because after attempting to bring it to life, he discovered that it did not work and that the leather was too soft.

Amleto Sartori dedicated more than fifteen years in his capacity as Professor of Sculpture at Padua University to rediscovering the historical roots of the craft of mask-making. His first experiments began in 1937 in 'cartapesta' (card and later gauze with glue). Thereafter he was inspired above all by Japanese Noh masks to carve in wood. In 1946 he sculpted a series of large masks for a recital of black American poetry. Then, in 1947, he began sculpting theatre masks for the School of

Theatre at the University of Padua continuing to work in 'cartapesta', papier-mâché, ceramic and finally leather. His research extended across most historical and technical areas seeking out extant Commedia and arts-related iconography and also led to the creation of his international mask collection which was later displayed in the Living Museum of the Mask.

The Commedia research led Sartori to rediscover the mask in leather. He found that in 1660 there had been a Mask-Makers Guild specialised in the production of masks for civilian life and carnivals. After spending nearly one year in researching the techniques of bookbinding in hide and leather used during the first half of the fifteenth century in Venice, he came to the conclusion that much of his information was both erroneous and ephemeral. His study of extant leather masks from the sixteenth century in France, Italy and Austria failed to reveal a viable way of creating a leather mask.

His museum searches eventually led him to the wonderful mask collection of Renato Simoni in the Museo della Scala of Milan and to some fine leather masks of *zanni*, *Arlecchino* and *Pantalone*. In Paris he discovered a manuscript that referred to moulds in lead used for masks held at the Marciana Library in Venice. This provided the key to the mask-making in leather process.⁶² He started to experiment with Sicilian leather and attained some exceptional results producing tanned leather masks with sharp profiles and natural colours. This extended to making specially tanned white leather masks, which were subsequently painted. It was also Lecoq who brought him to Paris to the Museo dell'Opera where he came across an original leather mask and its corresponding wooden mould from the end of the seventeenth century for a *Zanni* that had been used as the matrix on which to model the leather. He describes this

mould as having 'an imprint more vital and congenial to the vigour of *commedia dell'arte* with a special technical feature, the use of a very thick leather, which seemed to me very similar to the crude Sicilian leather of my own recent experiments – and with which I had made the mask for the famous Arlecchino, Marcello Moretti'.

Description	Aspects/Movement
<i>Etymology:</i> Arlecchino	<i>Form:</i> Small leather half mask, tied around back of head
<i>Signification:</i> Comic servant of peasant stock from Bergamo in a state of continual hunger. Hellequin devil figure. Lazybones and busybody.	<i>Dominant Emotion/s:</i> Curious and talkative with a dry wit and an eye for the main chance
<i>Dimensions:</i> 18mm high x 16.5mm wide approx.	<i>Animal Referents:</i> Marmotte Monkey in the street and at fairs; black cat in the courts & theatres.
<i>Skin Colour:</i> black or brown	<i>Front:</i> Credulous and diffident
<i>Hair:</i> covered with black cloth and his own distinctive hat.	<i>Side:</i> Child-like and playful
<i>Forehead:</i> red or black carbuncle or wart on right side	<i>Up:</i> Obliging and cunning
<i>Brow:</i> Bushy	<i>Down:</i> Obeisant and penitent
<i>Ears:</i> No ears	<i>Angled:</i> Curious and astute
<i>Eyes:</i> Almond-shaped cat or monkey eyes with good sideways vision	<i>Forward:</i> Assertive but naive
<i>Nose:</i> A snub nose with broad nostrils	<i>Backwards:</i> Defensive and athletic (backward flip)
<i>Cheeks:</i> Hollow	<i>Body:</i> Small, squat and strong with Emphasis on lower bodily stratum. Both awkward and graceful.
<i>Lips-Mouth:</i> Originally with whiskers	<i>Voice:</i> Guttural Bergamo dialect
<i>Chin:</i> of the actor	<i>Phase:</i> Strong

Fig 3. Analysis of the Sensory Co-ordinates of Arlecchino

In testing the theory against the practice, Amleto Sartori discovered that the problem of making a leather mask was not one of making each mask in complete accord with the historical iconographic tradition, but rather one of returning to the

original icon and investing it with a modern spirit and sensibility: 'In other words, it would be silly to try to remake the mask of Arlecchino similar to the one used by Dominique or Fiorilli or the Arlecchino of the Flaminio Scala Company: but what is important is to identify the character of an Arlecchino from a particular Comedy and to realize it according to a modern sensibility. The task is to create a mask with the essential characteristics of the traditional Arlecchino that can more adequately represent the character of the role and its essential value'.⁶³

The critic, Ludovico Zorzi wrote of Amleto: 'Sartori found his own perfect measure at the point when he brings together in equal measure his objective passion for his chosen material – wood, leather, colour – together with his enormous psychological understanding of human types'.⁶⁴

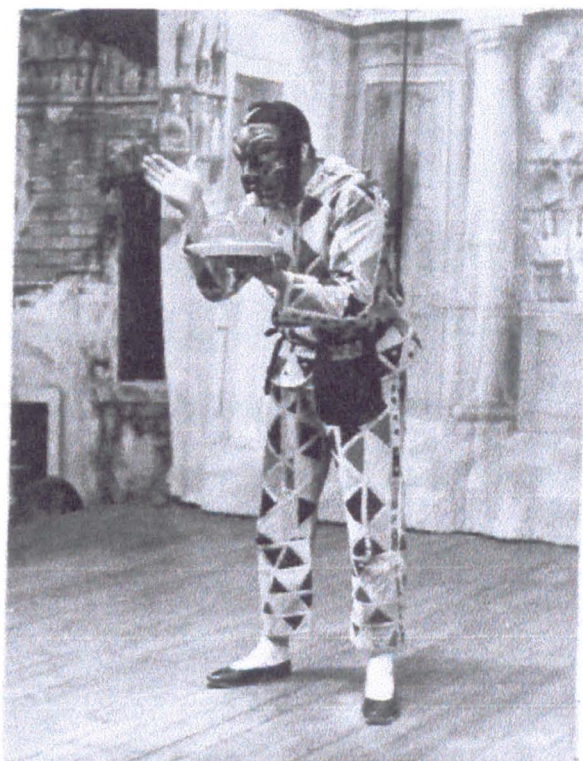


Plate: 5 Marcello Moretti as Arlecchino, Piccolo Teatro, Milan.

There have been several attempts to write about the process of making masks in leather in English (Thurston James 1990; Rudlin 1994) but none of them have documented accurately enough the nature of the actual process. The result has given rise to a series of poorly-made, badly-designed *Commedia* masks with none of the technical mastery, spirit nor aesthetic unity of those made by Sartori Family.⁶⁵ This is reason enough to return to the original process and to translate it in full:

The technological process that I used was to sculpt in the right wood, *cirmolo* or stone pine, what was to become the matrix on which to mould the leather and to form the mask. In this I was careful to consider the thickness of the leather and then not to deform the features that I wanted to put onto it, retaining for example the depth of the wrinkles on the surface of skin by maintaining the high points and low points in the wood. When this matrix was finished and smooth, I began the real work on the mask itself. I chose a piece of fine cow leather in a natural and vegetal state. Then I put it into a bath of clean and barely luke-warm water and left it for thirty or forty minutes. Do not forget to squeeze and stretch it so as to remove its natural rigidity. Then began the long process of applying the leather to the matrix, using brass or copper shoemaker's nails to secure the edges which avoided the ugly marks that are created by iron or metal when it comes into contact with the wet mask. The operation of applying the leather to the matrix took me almost two or three hours before the leather would adhere to the roughness of the wooden surface.

I left the leather to dry for a long time, slowly and naturally, in order to avoid any violent shrinkage. Meanwhile I had on the bench some very sharp

woodcarving chisels, gouges and knives, horn hammers and wooden sticks of various kinds that I had made out of seasoned boxwood.

At the right moment I began to tap the leather with the most important tool: a wooden hammer with a full and smooth horn, pointed at one end and slightly rounded at the other. The tapping process is done rapidly blow by blow on the smooth surface of the leather making it take the shape of the matrix and bringing out the high points and low points very clearly. This work with the horn hammer must take into consideration the impact of reflected light on the surface of the mask otherwise I knew that I could ruin the effect that I wanted to create.

After tapping with the horn hammer for a long time without stopping and being aware that the drying out time of the leather was limited, I carried out the last blow and realized that the mask had acquired all its formal characteristics and aspects in the way I had anticipated. After waiting for it to dry, I began with the chisel the work of thinning the edges of the mask in such a way that I could insert around the edges some thin copper wire to assure a certain rigidity to the mask. Then I varnished the inside with saltpetre or nitro-cellulose varnish. This makes the inside surface of the mask impermeable but also porous enough to let the sweat from the actor's skin escape. The operative phase, of the mask construction is concluded, by cutting the eyes, nostrils and mouth. All that remained was to apply a coat of varnish; and again, after a long period of experimentation, I reached a point where the tone of the mask was lightly opaque. This protected the leather as a material without obscuring it while endowing it with a warm glow. The varnish I used was made of bitumen

from Arabia – which is actually very difficult to find. When the work was finished, it was alive and full of that human emanation that comes from a true thing.⁶⁶

The other salient elements of the process not mentioned here that can ruin the whole process are: choosing leather of the right quality and thickness from the sides of the belly and neck of the cow; choosing the right leather, preferably Italian, (English leather is too fibrous and generally of a poorer quality); the room temperature (which should be at 70 degrees Fahrenheit); not soaking the leather in cold water for too long (Rudlin mistakenly recommends one or two hours); knowing when to beat the leather and when not and not over-beating the skin.

A useful outline of the process online has also been prepared by Bill Blaikie, Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Media at Charles Stuart University in New South Wales, Australia. He hosted Italian mask-maker and architect, Paolo Consiglio for a ten-day workshop between, 11-20 June 1999.⁶⁷

A young professional mask-maker from Scilla in Italy recently taught a course at The Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre.⁶⁸ His mask matrixes were flat and not shaped sufficiently around the bone structure of the face. He advocated pairing the shiny part of the skin from the outer edge of the mask away and folding it over the wire insert and then sticking a piece of reinforcing leather around the inside edge of the mask to hold everything in place. This is a clear example of weakening the mask at the point where it needs to be most strong at its outer edge.

Sartori, by way of contrast, advocates pairing away the thickness of the outer v-shaped pieces from the inside edge. This does not break the fibres of the leather and allows them to be folded over and stuck down firmly without any need for additional

inserts of leather. There are no good short-cuts in this entire process. It takes the time that it takes and should never be rushed. The modern task of reinventing the essential characteristics of each mask type with a new vitality was fraught with difficulties of transmission and interpretation, because to a large degree the tradition on which the icons and types were formed had ceased to exist.

The work of Amleto Sartori was focused on bringing the mask to the fore in the theatre. He dedicated his research and enormous craft skill to revivifying the *arte* at the core of the theatre mask. He made masks for Giorgio Strehler and Gianfranco De Bosio at the Piccolo Teatro, for Jean-Louis Barrault at Theatre Marigny in Paris (1951), the Copenhagen State Theatre (1952), La Scala in Milan (1955-56), The American Mime Theatre of New York (1957), Il Teatro Stabile of Trieste (1958), The National Drama Centre of Strasbourg (1960), the Landesbuhne Theatre of Hanover (1961) and the Institute of Advanced Theatre Studies in New York (1962). His masks are now in the private collections of Eduardo de Filippo, Henry Fonda, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, Margo Fontayne, Léon Chancerel, Carlo Clementi-Mazzone, Giorgio Strehler, Jacques Lecoq and Paolo Grassi.⁶⁹

The early leather mask experiments for anonymous *zanni* (Zudio, Tuogno and Ranco) are stunning in their power and simplicity. Perhaps the most successful early mask after Arlecchino is that of Brighella as interpreted by Jacques Lecoq in the 1950 production of *Servitore*.⁷⁰ Barrault was so impressed by Sartori's masks that he commissioned seventy of them for his 'voodoo' production of *The Oresteia* at the Theatre Marigny in Paris in 1955. Each of the more than one hundred masks were modelled to the measurements of each actor and covered only the upper part of the face, while the hair (beards, moustaches and wigs) was made by Petrus Bride. The

break with commedia style and the investigation into three-quarter leather face masks with a Greek ethos revealed a new range within Sartori's work. Thereafter the familiar geometric lines inspired the downcast face for Celega in *'L'Anconita'* of Ruzzante and the fine female mask of Superiora for *The Angel of Fire* by Prokofiev. Again, in 1957, Amleto was to change style for Orazio Costa's production at The Piccolo Teatro of Pirandello's *The Fable of the Changed Son*. The mask of Vanna Scoma is a semi-cubist work with built-in multiple faces within one head mask.

Sartori also studied Japanese theatre masks in 1955 when the Imperial Theatre of Tokyo came to Venice. He organised a series of study trips to museums in Genoa, (Chiossene), Milan (Alla Scala), Venice (Oriental Art), Paris (Guimet) and Vienna (Volksmuseum) to examine the painted and lacquered Gigaku, Bugaku and Noh masks of Japanese theatre. This preliminary work of investigation by Sartori has inspired a whole series of inventors of masks from Donato Sartori, Stefano Perroco, Erhard Stiefel and Werner Strub. In particular, the premature death of Amleto at the age of forty-seven left a significant and weighty legacy to his son, Donato. Amleto was an innovator and experimenter right up to the end of his life and expected 'interesting results in keeping with the great importance of masks in modern theatre. The enthusiasm generated by my masks in such friends as Barrault, Strehler, Lecoq, Axel, De Bosio, etc., made me clearly understand that the aesthetic re-evaluation of masks may induce the public and theatre workers to discover their fundamental value in the theatre; thus I hope to have made a valid contribution to the continued and vigorous life of the theatre'.⁷¹ The masks of Amleto Sartori are among the most creative works of art in modern drama, a veritable *bottega dell'arte*.

The legacy, however, has not remained static. During the next forty years through an intensive range of international workshops, masterclasses, exhibitions, publications and public art events, Donato was to take his father's work in new directions. He made explicit the link between physiognomy and character in Italian culture by formulating an inspirational chart called *Feelings and Their Contraries*⁷²; he provided new definitions of mask aims and usage; and analysed the sensory co-ordinates to be considered in taking a mask from idea to realization.⁷³

From 1962 to 1975 Donato Sartori undertook additional research into sculpture and the graphic arts and launched a series of travelling exhibitions in the USA, Australia, France, Greece, Turkey and Egypt. He also formed a unique collective with scenographer Paolo Trombetta and architect Paola Piizi in 1975 under the title of *Masks and Gestural Structures* with subsequent site-specific urban events in Pontedera, Nancy, Reggio Emilia, Milan and Padua. The creation of leather masks was extended into leather body structures and environmental sculpture experiments which took the makers outside theatre and onto the streets. The collective viewed their work as a political-cultural initiative designed to forge links across avant-garde theatre groups and alternative art forms and to press for new forms of cultural democracy. In 1977 Donato forged a link with Eugenio Barba and was commissioned to present an exhibition in Bergamo to complement an International Workshop on Gestuality. In the following year further workshops, exhibitions and cultural events were given in Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Tokyo and Poland. Then in 1979 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted Sartori's work in Eastern Europe (Rumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Budapest, Yugoslavia). In November 1979 the collective founded the Centre of Masks and Structural Gestures in Padua.

Let us return to the question concerning legacy raised by André Gide: 'Where is the mask? In the audience, or on the stage? In the theatre or in life? It is here or there, never both at once'.⁷⁴ For the new Centro the contact with the mask theatre of other cultures was a pre-requisite. Their key publications in collaboration with La Casa Usher were to follow shortly afterwards: *Arte della Maschere nella Commedia dell'Arte* (1983), *Maschera e Maschere* (1984) and *Rito e mito della maschera. L'opera dei Sartori* (1987). Their aim from the outset was to set up a multi-disciplinary research group to examine the various ethnological, anthropological and performative elements of the mask as a whole. They deliberately fostered artistic collaborations with craft and scientific people alike bringing together researchers from theatre, the figurative arts, folklore and mass media. Their conscious intent was to break away from the limited view of the mask as a facial covering or disguise to examine its many variants as a social and historical tool in communication. Of necessity this meant attempting to recover and assimilate the meanings and uses of masks in relation to their material culture. If step one was the rediscovery of traditional craft skills, then step two was to examine the resources and tools available to the mask-maker through modern technology. Their chosen line of research was therefore to extend the Commedia half and three-quarter masks to body masks and gestural structures and then to extend into environmental or urban masking.

The most recent Sartori collaboration has been with the Folkteatern of Gävle with masks specially designed and made in a mask workshop, the Maskenverkstaden, at Helsingegården in Sweden. For a production of "The Oresteia", the theatre director, Peter Oskarson, wished to use the inspiration derived from various intercultural connections rooted in Kathakali and Kuttiyattam, African war dances and a close study

of key Greek sites at Delphi, Argos, Mycenae, Epidaurus and the Acropolis. After visiting these sites and a prolonged period of experimentation with various materials, Donato Sartori came to the conclusion that the so-called megaphone mouth mask attributed to the paintings and mosaics had the function not of amplifying the voice (since the acoustics in the ancient theatres were very refined) but of visually specifying the character of the theatrical figure. Sartori designed and modelled one hundred and forty helmet masks in clay and then a staff of builders began making prototypes in a very fine and thin form of polyester or fibre-glass resin. The mask sits on top of the head with four stabilisers attached to the inside of the structure. The detail in the modelling and the finish on the masks, which often have features reminiscent of certain animals, insects and reptiles, is precise and aesthetically refined.⁷⁵

In this latest opera production we can see the traditional Sartori family interest in archaic and residual forms and experimentation with new materials and techniques, extending into intercultural traditions and cross-media art forms. Their mask practices have simultaneously become a point of fusion for several western and non-western traditions.

Hegemòn Therápon: A Tawny Greek Slave

The head is bulbous with popping eyes and a shock of high tawny red hair (according to Aristotle a sign of deficiency⁷⁶). He has a wide squashed snub nose with a full beard and moustache and a trumpet-shaped mouth and jutting chin. The eyes are wide set and look inwards in different directions giving the impression of being cross-eyed. The brow is asymmetric and overhanging and projects forward to a point. There are

usually three wrinkles on the forehead vying for attention. The zigzag trajectory of the eyebrows gives an aspect that is quizzical, but when lowered across to the left side appears to be looking forwards. When angled he appears contemplative, but when angled forwards he becomes a busy-body with a pronounced curiosity. When looking straight ahead his glance appears evasive and shifty. When looking upwards the mouth appears to be smiling and when lowered it expresses consternation and becomes apologetic.

Description	Aspects/Movement
<i>Etymology:</i> Tawny hair as a species of deficiency (according to Aristotle)	<i>Form:</i> Frog-like helmet mask
<i>Signification:</i> A middle-aged comic slave with a preference for taking it easy to working for a living	<i>Dominant Emotion/s:</i> Curious and talkative with a dry wit and an eye for the main chance
<i>Dimensions:</i>	<i>Four Elements:</i> Hot and dry
<i>Skin Colour:</i> Swarthy orange-brown	<i>Front:</i> Evasive and shifty
<i>Hair:</i> Either high or low hair. Reddish.	<i>Side:</i> Sharp and questioning
<i>Forehead:</i> Prominent brow of egoist. 3 wrinkles in different directions.	<i>Up:</i> Smiling and benign with a hint of self-satisfaction
<i>Brow:</i> Asymmetrical. Raised eyebrows.	<i>Down:</i> Obeisant and penitent
<i>Ears:</i> Prominent and sticking out for listening	<i>Angled:</i> Contemplative and astute
<i>Eyes:</i> Bulbous and one squint	<i>Forward:</i> Assertive and intruding
<i>Nose:</i> Wide snub nose: squashed appearance	<i>Backwards:</i> Defensive and tentative
<i>Cheeks:</i> Hollow	<i>Body:</i> Small, squat and strong with Emphasis on lower bodily stratum
<i>Lips-Mouth:</i> Prominent for talking. Trumpet shaped mouth.	
<i>Chin:</i> Jutting – note angle of curve	<i>Phase:</i> Strong

Fig 4. Analysis of the Sensory Co-ordinates of The Principal Slave

The raised brows are cast in an expression of permanent surprise with an air of mischief, but suggest anguish on the downward turn. He has the petulance of a child and the truculence of an opinionated adult. He can be servile to his masters and

despotic to his peers. All in all he is physically dynamic and agile, but mentally slow and somewhat lacking in brainpower: the principal slave (*hegemòn therápon*) of Menander.

In terms of fitting, the eyes and mouth of the mask must line up with the eyes and mouth of the performer. Equally these eyes and mouth should come as far forward in the mask as possible in order to give maximum visibility and vocal resonance. The squint eye makes the lining-up process difficult, as does the shape of the trumpet mouth, which pushes away from the face. The maker must pull back the jowels to fit the sides of the face while maintaining the angle of the pointed chin. The mask is attached to a helmet that sits comfortably on top of the head to which the hair is attached.

Pollux describes this slave as the 'upper slave' who wears a 'crown of red hair, elevates the eyebrows, contracts the forehead and among slaves is like an aged governor among freedmen.'⁷⁷ Brea highlights the variability of his character – sometimes happy, sometimes irate – and stresses the extreme adaptability of this slave and his capacity to arrange everything conveniently under any circumstances.⁷⁸

The expressions in the mask must be carried through into the body. He is all lower bodily stratum, triangulated in shape, with feet firmly planted on the ground. His arms may swing from side to side in enervation, or they may be folded or crossed. The fingers may also flicker in agitation, indicating a surplus of energy and a quick temper. The weight of the body is distributed from one side to the other in a heel-to-toe manner without the feet necessarily leaving the ground. When this slave wears a garland of vine leaves and reclines beneath a statue or mosaic of the Virgin Mary,

eating some grapes, Bakhtin's festive spirit of bacchanalia is incarnated. To the layman this is the iconic face of Greek comedy.

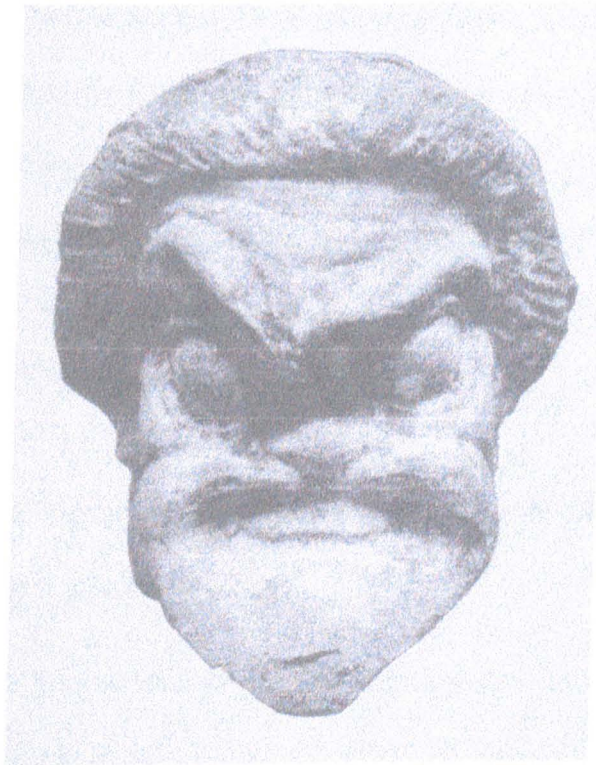


Plate 6: Hegemòn Therápon (Principal Slave)

If the sensory co-ordinates of the mask are its given signs, then the material culture of the mask is the specific territory which the mask-maker must inhabit. This material culture is always a work of mediation with the past. With this mask the fragments have been left behind and pieced together. There are, however, a series of unanswered questions. Who made this maskette? Is the miniature from which it has been taken a visualization of a masked performer from the theatre? From what materials would a life-size mask have been made? To the first question we have only a very partial answer. The mask-maker or 'skeuopoios' was referred to as 'a maker of kit',⁷⁹ but we have no clue as to the identity of this maker or the exact source of his

imagery. To the second we have archaeological evidence that locates the provenance of the miniature in a precise tomb that had been ransacked by the Romans on the island of Lipari. Then to the last, since no actual theatre masks have survived, we can only conjecture that the maker probably had access to moulded linen, (soaked and stiffened with animal glue), olive wood, cork and gilded leather. Piecing together fragments, performative models of a tawny slave – the ground was set for an investigation.

Mask Fieldwork: From Terracotta Miniatures to Masks of Menander - 3D Imaging and Digital Archiving

During 2001-2004 I have been involved as mask-maker and mask consultant on an interdisciplinary research project based at Glasgow University and supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) of Great Britain called *Masks for Menander: New Comedy Mask and Performance Research Archive*. The aim of the project has been to image in three-dimensions the extant miniature masks as funerary relics relating to New Comedy and to conduct performance research with full-size reconstructions of the masks. Under the directorship of Professor Elizabeth Moignard of the Department of Classical Archaeology and Project Officer, Dr. Richard Williams, a group of specialists in theatre, classics and computing science have been brought together. The project breaks new ground in the study of ancient drama through implementing a theatrically informed interpretation of the terracotta miniatures, situating the mask-maker in the service of the artefacts and in the professional expertise of the attendant performance work.⁸⁰

Masks for Menander has two interrelated aims. First to image and analyse the dramatic properties of the ancient mask miniatures, in various museum collections. Second, to explore these qualities through practical experimentation with full-size accurate reconstructions. Using the latest 3D scanning technologies Dr. Williams has been able to capture the special co-ordinates of the artefacts with sub-millimetre accuracy and to reproduce them in three-dimensional form, either in a virtual environment or as physical replicas, using advanced rapid prototyping technologies available within the University of Strathclyde.⁸¹ Due to the high accuracy of the data collected from the non-contact scanning process, scaling to life-size dimensions of three to four times the original size is realizable while retaining the original proportions. From these virtual or physical models the qualities and aspects of the masks can be described and analysed. The project has been collecting data from masks in important British collections, including the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford) and the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow). The latter contains a hitherto un-exhibited collection of some thirty mask miniatures from the island of Lipari acquired in the 1870's. In 2003 this work was extended to other European collections so as to assemble and disseminate on the internet a virtual collection of representative masks and scenes from New Comedy, viewable in three-dimensions and accompanied by dramatic analysis.

This project contains significant problems of historiography (i.e. the construction of historical knowledge). Since actual theatre masks from the period of have not survived, we are condemned to interpret their visual typology from paintings, mosaics and terracotta miniatures. Artistic interpretations of these non-theatre artefacts or funerary relics mean that the scientific data (measurements and

proportions) may be inaccurate from the beginning. The scaling-up of the artefact using a computerised mesh frame requires many adjustments and in-fills and is a lengthy and time-consuming process, which may magnify rather than eradicate inconsistencies in the data taken from the original. However, after initial scepticism I have found the resultant shells, in most cases, to be remarkable in retaining their basic dimensions, proportions and aspects (with eyeholes and nose and mouth positions in the correct place). The ratios of key features such as ear-to-ear, brow-to-chin and eye-to-eye were so exactly reproduced that the life-size mask can be fitted to an average face with one centimetre clearance. This would lend weight to the hypothesis that the small terracotta miniatures may have been used as prototypes to transmit the mask forms around the Mediterranean region.

Nevertheless, certain details around the hollows of the eyes often reproduced poorly and occasionally structural fault lines were reproduced because the mesh lines were not joined up (operator-error). We adopted several approaches to this problem. The first Comic Slave replica based on a terracotta miniature from the Petrie Museum in Cambridge had a flat aspect that was never going to fit a human head. The solution was to re-sculpt the mask in its entirety using the artefact and various illustrations from Webster and Brea.

The general process we used was to repair the resultant shell with an epoxy substance, packing the rear of the shell with clay, covering the front of the shell with mould release (vaseline) and casting in a high-density stone-cast plaster (crystacast). From the resultant plaster negative we were able to mould a positive from celastic (a fibre-cloth used in shoe-making) soluble in acetone. The hair-piece and helmet covering were then modelled in clay and the celastic mask was bonded to them using

more celastic. After careful sanding and several coats of acrylic gesso as a primer, a smooth finish was achieved and the masks were painted in acrylics. The first set of ten masks included an intelligent slave, a stupid slave, a Plautine slave, a young woman, an old woman, an old man and four young men.

With the second set of eight masks we decided to make some of them into masks by using the actual gypsum-based shell coated with resin itself and fusing it to a resin-cloth headpiece. The aesthetic end product was fine, but the shell created acoustic problems in performance when the voice reverberated back off the plastic.

At the beginning my pre-conception was to be biased against any process that might involve the production of slavish copies. However, my training in Japanese Noh mask-making with Suzuki had taught me the importance of learning how to copy well before having the temerity to create. Prior to this project, all previous reconstructions of Greek masks have been more or less in the subjective hands of different mask-makers. The experience of working from mathematical data of sub-millimetre accuracy derived directly from the artefact may be directly paralleled with the care given to non-digital data collection of all measurements from the ancient masks within the Noh tradition. This is how Noh masks have survived almost eight hundred years of transmission and reception with minimal alteration. The cardboard templates of the Noh mask-maker find their exact correlative in the computer-generated mesh as applied through 3D imaging.

The process is a salutary experience in teaching both hands and brain to internalise the key aspects and proportions of New Comedy facial iconography. The gain is in the production of a visually objective and full-size theatre mask derived

from an actual miniature where the volumes, planes, aspects and proportions follow strictly classical lines.

The other developmental aspect of the work has been to link up the masks made at The Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre with Venezia InScene, an Italian actor-studio directed by Adriano Iurissevich (a *commedia dell'arte* performer and theatre director) to test the masks in practice. On three occasions in Venice in April 2002, in Pisa in July 2002 and again in Venice in September 2002 a group of professional actors and students have been convened to work with the masks to discover their properties and potentials in relation to certain scenes extracted from Menander and Plautus.⁸² This work was recorded by Dr. Williams and Cassandra Mc Grogan, a professional film maker with Karpus Projects from Glasgow.

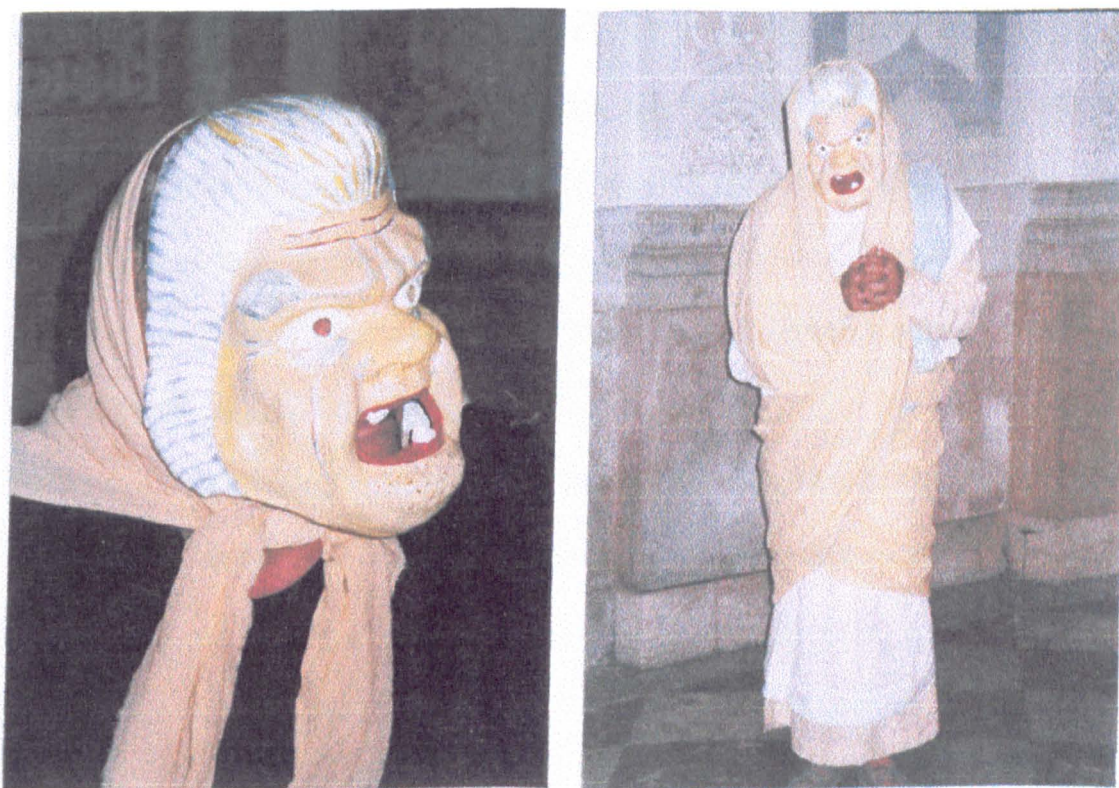


Plate: 7 *The Old Woman*, Masks for Menander Project, University of Glasgow 2003

In November of 2002 we visited the Museo Archeologico Regionale Eoliano on the castle rock of the Island of Lipari to view the terracotta miniatures, the statuettes, amphorae and stone tombs and associated funerary relics.⁸³ The general view is that the terracotta miniatures were used as small, easily transportable models as a means of preserving the 'correct' features of each character type as well as votive objects to be buried with the dead.⁸⁴ The extant evidence has been scientifically excavated and collated in a series of detailed archaeological treatises by the late Luigi Bernabo Brea, assisted by Madeleine Cavalier.

In August 2003 the masks were taken to Venice and Adriano Iurissevich directed an acclaimed performance of Menander's *Arbitration* in the ancient theatres of Lecce and Syracuse, during which further filming was undertaken. Thus the videos of trained actors performing will be paired with the virtual archive on the website. In early 2004 the *Custodiev* project in the University of Glasgow enabled us to commence with 3D motion capture of actors, Angelo Crotti and Adriano Iurissevich, using the 3D-Matic lab to record the co-ordinates of the entire body and head in real time. This should facilitate analysis at the micro level of what occurs in the body when the mask is worn (e.g. breathing, energy, dilation) and also retain a precise description of the rhythm and tempo of each movement.

We intend to image and make more masks from terracotta miniatures and apply yak and horses hair to the heads of the existing mask reconstructions. We are working on a classification system for individual mask images and the development of a detailed chart called 'Greek and Roman Comedy: Schemas and Types' outlining the system of associations in use for the character types and range of features and feelings associated with these types.



*Plate 8: Two Servants in The Dyskolos by Menander
Venezia InScena, 2003*

The fieldwork on this project has been being carried out in a spirit of scientific inquiry rather than as an extension of late eighteenth and nineteenth century Hellenism (part of the complex phenomenon of Romanticism). The uncritical assumption that a direct relationship with the Greeks could somehow be derived from an historical contemplation and reconstruction of the terracotta mask miniatures, associated statuettes and play fragments is clearly illusory. These artefacts need to be rescued from the cult of Hellenism and examined as ideological and iconographic creations in relation to the role of agency and history in the material culture of the Liparesi. Equally we have so far found no evidence to support the idea that the masks of New Comedy might have needed a megaphone-like device installed in their mouths as a means of amplification. These masks are a far cry from the masks used in ancient

Eleusian mysteries that some believe may have been voice-activated sound boxes whose resonance triggered a state of ecstasy in both actor and audience.⁸⁵

The preliminary findings seem to confirm that the terracotta mask miniatures were sculpted by makers with a refined knowledge of both human anatomy and the character types of New Comedy. After the visit to Lipari and because of seeing the surface quality of the paintwork on several miniatures, I have decided to renounce the use of acrylics in favour of oils. This will involve layering and stippling as many as eight coats of gesso followed by five coats of foundation colour in order to produce a much more realistic effect closer to make-up (as in the Noh mask).



Plate 9: Young Man Mask. Venezia InScena 2003.

The findings also suggest that the application of 3D imaging technologies (non-contact three-dimensional scanning combined with rapid prototyping) together with practice-based research in mask reconstruction and performance experimentation with live actors can bring new information to light about the lost tradition of New Comedy. By focussing interest and attention on the theatrical qualities of the masks derived from archaeological and extant visual criteria combined with our knowledge of New Comedy mask groupings and historical families, we can more objectively and accurately reconstruct the 'sculptural gestures' of each mask than ever before. A closer study of the lines of flow, balance, asymmetries and dominant emotional states in each mask can greatly aid the actor and audience in interpreting and recreating the specifics of a character. In short, as Dr. Richard Williams says: 'Unlike previous attempts to reconstruct ancient masks, the forms achieved are thus wholly objective and not dependent on the mediating eye of the modern sculptor.'⁸⁶

The Praxis of Mask-Making

The dominant requirement for masks in modern Western drama has been for the mask-maker to render images to the idea of the playwright. The archaic forms from Greece and Rome together with the early modern forms of *commedia* are residual but very much capable of yielding up new information and ideas through the combination of new technology and traditional skills. The emergent forms such as *gestural structures*, *urban masking*, celebratory events, cultural animations and object theatre demand mask practices that are more versatile. Indeed, these developments seem to condemn the mask-maker to absolute freedom. In reality, constraints of material, time and money temper that spark of freedom and its pre-social, spiritual and communal

'roots'. In her *Introduction to the Mask* (1975) Nina Vidrovitch said: 'In any case, the mask is like any work of art, the vehicle of an idea, material shaped by method and technique.' Practical material activity that transcends alienation or estrangement demands an intentional creative *praxis*, which moves beyond merely interpreting the world to actively changing it. In this process making a mask and wearing a mask can make, as Goll said, non-reality become a fact.

It has been the central argument of this chapter that the mask-maker as creator lives within his/her work through values and *praxis*. In this regard I have analysed the sensory coordinates of several key masks from different traditions – Ubu, Topeng Tua, Ko-omote, Arlecchino and the Principal Slave – to discover the nature of its value. Within each mask we can discover the structure of an entire masking system, the flow through its sensory coordinates and raise questions about its relationship to other masks and the society for which it was produced. From a further consideration of technology and design style and materials and methods I have attempted to reflect upon my own theory and practice and to document some of the biographies and work of exceptional quality created by a selection of contemporary mask-makers. Last, but not least, the point of the two case studies is to illustrate the content of the experience of specific mask practices (familiarity with the range of expression within the genre) and the changing role of the mask-maker as a social agent in relation to tradition and new technology. The crisis in humanism in the west is more than a simple crisis of identity. It is also a crisis of cultural values and a commodification of identity that produces fractured realities in which border crossings between cultures and traditions are becoming more and more frequent.

3. Actor Training under the Mask: From Copeau to Lecoq

The relationship between the mask and the actor has long been a subject of fascination in the history of the theatre. Does the actor become the mask or does the mask take over the actor? How does one explain the kind of transformation brought about by playing the mask? What does this do to the energy points in the actor and how are these externalised for the audience? Does the mask 'live' simply because somebody puts it on, or does it require an actor with a special background and training? Is the mask simply a temporary tool for training or the basis for a masked theatre form? In these questions we can recognise a familiar debate about the virtues of working from inside via an essentialist intuition (nature) or from outside example within a codified tradition (nurture).

Earlier, I argued that the reason early proponents of modernism gravitated towards theatre masks, across a spectrum from primitivism to new humanism, was the search for a unified field of expression and meaning. Coincident with this development in Europe and North America came an intensified interest in and formalisation of actor training. Alison Hodge (2000) has drawn attention to the emergence of actor training as 'arguably the most unique phenomenon of twentieth-century theatre making'¹ and Ian Watson (2001) has examined how actors are increasingly trained across cultures.² When re-examining the role and scope of actor training the diverse uses of the mask prepare the performer to cross over a multitude of boundaries. According to Simon Murray (2003) the cause and the consequence for this increased emphasis on actor training for

the theatre arises from 'industrialising societies' need for a partially educated workforce' and the spread of mass education. In his view, the sociological theory that best explains this development is a conflict model in which 'training and education are not gifted to benign authorities, but are both fought for by different constituencies at particular times and are the necessary corollary of industrialisation and market forces.'³ The struggles to establish schools, academies and laboratories based on different curricula, models of training and innovatory praxis are not reducible to the simple inculcation of 'technical skills'. In whose interests, for what reasons, how and why do such agencies and institutions attempt to shift and redefine what constitutes performer training and the art of the theatre?

In *Acting Re-Considered* teacher and director, Philip Zarrilli, provides a response to these questions that seems to offer a coherent synthesis:

Every time an actor performs, he or she implicitly enacts a 'theory' of acting- a set of assumptions about the conventions and style, which guide his or her performance, the structure of actions which he or she performs, the shape that these actions take...and the relationship to the audience. Informing these assumptions are culture specific assumptions about the body-mind relationship, the nature of the self, the emotions/feelings and performance context.⁴

For Zarrilli the presence of the mask is part of an on-going mind-body exploration of roots, identity, role-play and transcendence. The skills of masking prepare the way for 'the acceptance of what empirically is not' and they are basic to our apprehension of paradox and change. In echoes of his Kathakali training in Kerala he regards it as an instrument through which 'the body becomes all eyes'.⁵

Chancerel states that the rediscovery of the mask was due to the influence of the first schools and theatre laboratories represented by *Théâtre Art et Action* of Autant Lara, the experiments of the remarkable designer Fauconnet in *Le Jeu des Dits du Monde*, the *École du Vieux-Colombier* and then by *L'Atelier* of Charles Dullin.⁶ All the primary contributors in the twentieth century Western approach to mask actor training, namely Copeau, Dullin, Decroux, Saint-Denis, Chancerel, Devine, Johnstone and Lecoq approach the mask as a 'tool' and not as an 'end' in itself. Their work forms a modernist French connection which if not the equivalent of a tradition is certainly a field or historical grouping of some significance.

Copeau, however, was the first Western practitioner to introduce a systematic investigation into the effects of the mask upon the performer and to devise a teaching approach into which it was fully integrated. At the root of his approach was his belief in the mask as a psychophysical training device and the idea that physical and vocal transformation could be uniquely enhanced by the introduction of the mask. Copeau explains this 'uniqueness' as a product of the way in which certain feelings can be incorporated into a character only when accompanied by certain movements, certain gestures and certain muscular contractions:

The actor who performs under a mask, receives from this papier-mâché object the reality of his part. He is controlled by it and has to obey it unreservedly. Hardly has he put it on when he feels a new being flowing into himself, a being the existence of which he had before never even suspected. It is not only his face that has changed, it is all his personality, it is the very nature of his reactions, so that he experiences emotions he could neither have felt nor feigned without its aid. If he is a dancer, the whole style of his dance, if he is an actor, the very

tones of his voice, will be dictated by this mask - the Latin 'persona' - a being, without life till he adopts it, which comes from without to seize upon him and proceeds to substitute itself for him.⁷

This claim that the mask does something for the actor that cannot be done unaided is of central importance. The person (subject) becomes the mask (object) by experiencing a fundamental transformation from without. How are we to understand the substitution of the mask for the face? For some it is an act of demonic possession and for others it is a psycho-social act created by a human being to achieve certain ends. A spiritual phenomenon or a material phenomenon - or an interaction of both? These questions are, of course, intrinsically linked with the sets of ideas and beliefs within the time, place and culture to which specific masks belong. In a philosophical sense these specific masks become filters for particular ways of seeing within defined historical and theatrical families or groupings.

In the modern period these ways of seeing may be regarded as being at the intersection of idealist (Hegelian) and materialist (Marxist) philosophy. As far as approaches to modern acting go, they indicate that the relation between the actor and his character is not fixed. The idealist approach works from inner drives towards a sense of externals and, at its most extreme, bypasses the use of the mask as a physical object entirely (Stanislavsky). The materialist approach begins with the external determinants in which the mask is present as a physical object and works to understand, change and transform inner impulses by imposing a social classification (Brecht).

The substitution of the mask for the face has been thought by some to be a demoniac substitution involving trance and spirit possession. For others it has been regarded as a facial covering that literally brought a new psychological face for role-

play and social interaction. The uses of the mask from craft object to scenic image to metaphorical concept usually exist in a dynamic continuum of interlocking meanings. In modern drama the mediators of this process are makers, performers, directors and playwrights. In each case, the spiritual and material transformation brought about by the mask provides the actor-player with a new challenge. In 1913, when Jacques Copeau wrote his manifesto entitled 'An Attempt at Dramatic Renovation', these issues and the question of formal actor training using masks was 'virtually unknown in France, or indeed anywhere else in Europe'.⁸

Jacques Copeau: From the Mask as Teaching Tool to Autonomous Theatrical Form?

In the modern Western tradition, the series of empirical experiments in actor training and masked performance begun by Jacques Copeau in France between 1924 and 1929 continue to be of pervasive influence. The fact that his approach combined the theory and practice of mask training with the theory and practice of forming troupes dedicated to the masked theatre form was his distinctive contribution. For Copeau mask *praxis* required both a preparation and training but the results were intended to go beyond any school or laboratory into the wider world.

In September 1913 Copeau published his own manifesto entitled 'An Essay of Dramatic Renovation The Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier' in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. At this time Suzanne Bing, Valentine Tessier and Charles Dullin joined Copeau in his endeavour to reform the French stage. Copeau wrote:

We shall always have in view the development of individual talents and their subordination to the ensemble. We shall fight against the encroachment of commercialism, against all professional deformations, against the stringency of

specialisation. In short we shall do our best to normalise these men and women whose vocation is to simulate all human emotions and gestures. So far as is possible for us, we will take them outside the theatre into contact with nature and life.⁹

The Vieux-Colombier troupe trained and rehearsed with Copeau in the French countryside at Limon using improvisation games, sight-reading techniques and eurhythmics. The Acting School was founded in November 1915 after Copeau had returned from travels involving meetings with Craig, Appia, Dalcroze and Pitoeff. The visit to Craig's School at the Arena Goldoni in Florence during September and October 1915 had provided no ready solutions, particularly given the absence of students and the presence of many masks on the walls. 'He has some Egyptian masks that are among the most beautiful that I have ever seen. Yes... maybe he is on the right road'.¹⁰

Twelve students all under the age of twenty were enrolled in the first Vieux-Colombier Training School and the taught subjects included dance, rhythm, singing and acting. In Limon in 1916, Copeau wrote these words about mask theatre:

It is an art that I do not know and I am going to investigate its history. But I see, I feel, I understand that this art must be restored, reborn and revised: that it alone will give birth to a living theatre - the plays of players. Leave literature. Create a fraternity of players living, working, playing together, inventing together their games, drawing them from themselves and others. What little I have done leads me there. Our goal is to create a new theatre of improvisation, with the types and subjects of our times.¹¹

From this seed of improvised play and the concept of ensemble Copeau was to rediscover some of the principles behind Italy's *commedia dell'arte* and to formulate the

idea of the modern 'farceur'. Another letter to Jouvett describes the importance of the stock character:

Inventing of a dozen modern, synthetic characters of great extension, representing personalities, faults, passions, moral, social and personal absurdities of today. Invent their silhouettes, invent their costumes, which would always be identical or modified only in accordance with the circumstance by means of a kind of prop... Those ten characters of an autonomous comedy which comprises all the genres, from pantomime through drama turn them over to ten actors. Each actor has his character, which is his property. It becomes part of him and he nourishes it within himself with his feelings, with his observations, with his experience, with his readings, with his inventions. There is the great discovery (so simple), the great revolution - or rather, the great and majestic return to the old tradition. A brotherhood of jokers always acting together (improvising together, authors and actors, singers, musicians, acrobats... only the clowns of our day are a survival of that). Those ten characters put themselves into all possible combinations. It's the rebirth of satire and gaiety. There you are! It's no more difficult than that (no scenery), you always have the same accessories with the same immutable physiognomy (just like that of the actors)... I already see three of these characters the Intellectual (doctor, philosopher, etc); the Agent or Representative (deputy, minister, electoral agent, grocery merchant, etc); the Adolescent (child in his family, the schoolboy, the suitor, the artist, the soldier, in short the 'idealist', Pierrot's grandson with a powder-white face, etc).¹²

These plans of Copeau's were not to reach fruition, however, for many years. The re-opening in 1919 of the Vieux-Colombier Theatre in Paris with its apron stage and other

architectural innovations, was followed by the opening in the autumn of 1920 of a formal training school for actors. In his 'Notes on The Actor', Copeau stated his aims and aspirations for the student actor:

What is needed is to make normally developed bodies capable of adjusting themselves, giving themselves over to any action they may undertake. What is needed is that within them every movement be accompanied by an internal state of awareness unique to the movement being carried out...No affectation of any kind whatsoever, whether of the body, the mind, or the voice. What we are seeking is headlong harmony.¹³

Here Copeau is expressing the idea that every physical movement has a corresponding emotional effect and that every emotional feeling has a corresponding physical manifestation. The starting point from which the actor must begin is described as 'the state of repose, calm, relaxation, détente, silence or simplicity.'¹⁴ The discovery of how to create this 'neutral state' in the actor was to be the subject of the silent improvisation training in the neutral or inexpressive mask. In ideological terms it was the equivalent of seeking the still calm centre inside the person to deal with all the social and psychological disruption of the humanist crisis within capitalism. The laboratory and the studio were seen as a theatrical means to create this alternative space.

The École Jacques Copeau was directed by Jules Romain and its secretary was Marie-Hélène (Copeau's daughter), among the teaching staff were Louis Jouvet, Suzanne Bing and the famous clowns, the Fratellini Brothers. The brochure about the School states the objective as the training of actors, dramatists and technicians. The professional training section would enrol twelve students per year between the ages of fourteen and twenty. Ten others students were to be admitted on a commuting basis,

since the professional team were expected to live and board at the school. Thereafter for two days a week an additional training schedule was established for thirty children between the ages of eight and twelve. The classes were to include singing, dancing, costume and various games and improvisations.

The School had no pre-set theory. Michel Saint-Denis described the working principles in these terms:

In reality, though it was the master who apprehended new dramatic worlds to be discovered, their discovery became the common task of master and students.

There were no doctrines or pre-determined methods: experience would furnish these in time, but to begin with all was invention, discovery and consequently liberty with its close corollary discipline.¹⁵

Jean Dorcy, the mime artist, who also studied with Copeau, describes briefly how the mask came to be included in the improvisation exercises:

By a stroke of intuitive genius, Copeau, who sensed that we were still not far removed from the games of childhood, encouraged our inclination to make-believe and allowed us to invent and develop our own dramas. In the depths of that laboratory the mask was born.¹⁶

The process was clearly one of trial and error. Dorcy also describes the search for an 'inexpressive mask':

We had to discover or invent this instrument, the mask. In the beginning we felt our way. First we covered our faces with a handkerchief. Then we tried cardboard, raffia, anything flexible. Finally, with the help of Albert Marque, our sculpture instructor, we selected a durable material and introduced certain changes in the design of this new instrument. Without Albert Marque, we would

have continued to make masks 'small and pretty'. A good mask must be neutral; its expression depends on your movements.¹⁷

According to Marie-Hélène Dasté, Albert Marque came to teach the students once a week. He taught them how to prepare and mount the clay on a sculpting stand or pivot, how to work the clay itself and all the technical aspects of sculpting and moulding. They were paired up to make the other person's portrait but 'reproduced, more or less, in a neutral way'. After making a negative plaster cast of the clay sculpture, in the form of a hollow mould, they 'reproduced in relief and in cardboard, with gauze, glued paper, etc., (the sculpted face), that we then coated with white glue. Each person thus had an approximate mask of his own face and could use it for his exercises'. This was intended to 'make the face disappear' and 'to give all the expression to the body'; 'hence the term "corporeal technique."¹⁸

Most of the initial exercises in masks were limited to performing simple gestures in harmony with the mask. In this regard, the actor was expected to take time to put on the mask, study it carefully and free his thoughts from distractions. According to Etienne Decroux, who also studied with Copeau, all the students were expected to wear tights or shorts so that the body was freed of any possible encumbrance. The effect of the mask on its wearer can then be 'released':

What happens to the actor who puts on a mask? He is cut off from the outer world. The darkness he enters quite deliberately allows him first to reject everything that hampered him. Then, through a concentrated effort, to reach a void, a state of non-being. From this moment forward, he will be able to come back to life and behave in a new and truly dramatic way.¹⁹

The achievement of this 'void' or 'state of non-being' was, according to Jean Dorcy, aided by the adoption of certain rituals. The process of putting on and adjusting the mask was to be likened to the fitting of a second skin. In fact, at the Vieux-Colombier School, the expression 'to shoe the mask' was invented. Other students of Copeau, particularly Jan Doat and Léon Chancerel, have described the process. There are, however, some interesting differences in their accounts. They claim that the mask was held in the left hand, while the right hand held the elastic in the shoeing process. They both prefer the actor to stand instead of sit during this initiation.

The subjects for these early silent improvisations with masks at the Vieux-Colombier have been recorded in the Notes of the Dasté Collection at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris. They read as follows:

- (a) The waking of creatures after winter.
- (b) Workshop.
- (c) Ceres.
- (d) Witches.
- (e) The worship of Demons.
- (f) Play of the Goldoni doll.²⁰

Unfortunately no indications are given about the precise content of these exercises, nevertheless, it seems that they were part of a definite overall structure. The working process was based on the idea of moving from silence to sound and, at the same time, moving from individual to group work. Waldo Frank, who observed these exercises, has left some indications of this overall structure:

But even before the body may express the simplest emotion or idea, it must learn

to express forms. The pupils of Copeau are taught to articulate what might be called the Platonic essence of a tree, an animal, an ocean. This must come before they are deemed worthy aspirants for the creating of a man. Similarly, their voices must learn to do without words, in the establishing of pictures or of passion, or even of complex human situations. The props of story, set, verisimilitude of facial gesture and spoken word are taken from them: so that in their elevation to the high plane of literary drama they may be energetically freed to establish in the word the distinctions and elaborations which are the essence of true poetics.²¹

Then it would seem that brief scenarios of three minutes duration were created by groups of students after this kind of individual work on natural elements and phenomena. Other observations by Frank that are worth noting in this context concern the way in which the mask was used in group improvisations:

A group of students come to the front of the stage. They must produce, despite their masked faces, a vision of a peninsula with fisher-folk peering out upon a stormy sea. Their bodies do not create their own emotion, but rather a subtle fugue working together which gives the impression of the heave of the water. A rowing boat arrives. It is created by two actors in a rhythmic unison of propulsion. They leave their boat and mount the stairs to the stage. They have news of the drowning of a friend: the news transfigures the group... (No word is spoken, no face is seen. There is, of course, no 'business' on the bare stage, nor has there been a word of explanation prior to the event).²² Other exercises were based on improvisations with sound. Meaning was conveyed by the use of sound

and noise patterns, evoking those of animals in nature and domesticity in village life. The mouth, hands and feet were all used to create the appropriate sounds.

The next stage in the process was the development of character masks and the improvisation of scenarios and impromptu dialogue. The curriculum of the First Year Course at the School was regularly changed between 1920 and 1923. In an interview with Thomas Leabhart, published in *The Mime Journal*, Etienne Decroux outlined the enlarged scope of the courses:

Well, the students were taught in a way that tended to develop, or at least enlarge, their humanity. They were taught Greek philosophy and religion so that they would better understand the Greek plays. And from there, they went on to study the theatre of the Middle Ages and then the Commedia dell'Arte, Italian Comedy and the theatre of the Seventeenth Century and so on. It was a great survey of the theatre, without forgetting, of course, the Orient. They taught a course on the Japanese Noh that was quite well done. There was also a course in costuming taught by a specialist who showed how costumes had been made through the ages. There was a course in sculpture taught by a sculptor, so that each student would also be able to make their own mask. To a certain extent, the students became sculptors themselves, they made masks and costumes. They were taught the history of music and so many other things as well! There were as many teachers as there were students.²³

In the summer of 1923, Copeau planned a new training project within the School concerned with the exploration of Japanese Noh and Madame Bing recorded the first session on a new play in their journal on the 23rd November. It greatly interested Copeau because it implied a complete education with attendant music, dramatic and

movement studies within a strong traditional framework. The chosen play was *Kantan*, based on a translation by Arthur Waley. Similar to W.B. Yeats neither Copeau nor Bing had seen a Japanese Noh play and were working exclusively from literary sources (i.e. the writings of Noel Peri), although Copeau was corresponding about the music with Paul Claudel. 'They looked to Japan for the authority to establish in the West what they found lacking in the theatre of their time'.²⁴ Owing to the fact that the leading actor, Armand Maistre, broke his knee during the gymnastic exercises, the public performance was cancelled, but not before Copeau had approvingly seen the work at a preview on May 13th 1924. Harley Granville-Barker, the British theatre director, was in the audience and enjoyed the piece while the French writer André Gide, found it disappointing. Copeau thought of it as 'one of the crown jewels, one of the secret riches of the productions of the Vieux-Colombier' and 'the only time in my life when I felt the art of Diction'.²⁵

Two days later, when Copeau closed the School before leaving for Burgundy, the students presented a farewell mask performance based on their own scenarios. Decroux was in the audience and describes the event thus:

The development of the actions was sufficiently skilled so that it seemed that several hours and several places were condensed into just a few seconds. One had simultaneously before one's eyes the battlefield, civilian life, the sea and the city. The characters moved from one to the other location in complete verisimilitude. The action was emotionally moving, fully understandable, sculptural and musical.²⁶

The closure of the School of the Vieux-Colombier in 1924 was not the end of Copeau's use of the mask as an actor-training device. Between 1924 and 1929 he lived

in the village of Pernand-Vergelesse in Burgundy. Here the idea of forming a modern equivalent to a *commedia dell'arte* troupe was to be put to the test. Copeau and his group formed a touring company which often performed in village halls and market squares and was nicknamed by the local postman as 'Les Copiaus'. The group included Suzanne Bing, Jean Dasté, Léon Chancerel, Etienne Decroux, Michel Saint-Denis and Marie-Hélène Copeau (later Dasté). The move to Pernand-Vergelesse was described by Copeau as a means 'to found a school, a place for study and renewal...an organism for decentralisation and propaganda which would escape the destructive influence of Paris, having its centre in a province and thus being able to create, if circumstances permit, a new dramatic centre, outside Paris, built on original lines, replacing exploitation by religious solemnity, a sort of French Bayreuth'.²⁷

Only with the publication of *Le Journal des Copiaus* (1974), did the precise nature of the actor training procedures they adopted and the role of masks in their repertoire become clear. It seems likely that Suzanne Bing and Léon Chancerel made most of the entries in the diary and there are a number of photographs depicting the mask-making process and also some masked characters arising from their improvisations. The work was based on ten masked stock characters or types, who were representative of the basic aspects of human behaviour:

Students learned to make masks, which captured the essence of these types and, wearing them, to eliminate all actions, gestures and motivation foreign to them.

In this way, they were able to purge the extraneous elements from a characterisation and to rely entirely on the most essential and expressive means.²⁸

Each actor had the task of developing a mask. Auguste Bovario created a modern variant of Pulcinella called Lord Quick, 'a thoughtless fat, old man who delighted in recalling his entire past life, both literary and worldly'. Jean Villard's character was a type of Pierrot based on the creation of an eighteenth century actor, Gilles. Suzanne Bing became identified with an ugly witch or sorceress called Celestine, with a mask and costume created by Marie-Hélène Dasté. Michel Saint-Denis was Knie, a young man with an aura of pompous timidity; 'a violent character who made great demands on him and became a parasite on his own personality'. Jean Dasté created Mr César 'an old "quacker" with a keen nose for business' described by Saint-Denis as 'a kind of dry fish, a sort of Don Quixote'. Léon Chancerel was preparing the role of the Doctor for *Arlequin Magicien* as well as a new character, Sebastien Congre 'archivist, timid paleographer, molly-coddled and ridiculous', when he left the group. Copeau invented the mask of the Magician for himself for the forthcoming play called *L'Illusion*.²⁹ If the extant photographs from the Dasté Collection give only a limited idea of how the masks may have worked in performance, they are nevertheless very impressive. These personal character masks mark a change not only towards a masked drama form, but also towards conscious representations of fictional character types. The Burgundy experiment also used a number of different kinds of mask. They ranged from inexpressive neutral masks through fantasy and grotesque masks, to abstract masks and character masks. Chancerel details the ways in which the character masks were realised by performing daily activities like eating, sleeping, washing and drinking.

The most famous production of Les Copiaus was the fantasy play *L'Illusion*, which had been adapted by Copeau from Fernando de Rojas and Pierre Corneille. The masks allowed the company to play many different roles. The play uses the character

masks of Celestine, Knie and Mr. César together with an old peasant, a princess, a witch, ghosts, assassins and demons. (Copeau sometimes played the masked witch.) Prior to this, however, the repertoire of Les Copiaus had included plays by Molière, an adaptation of Goldoni's comedy called *La Locandiera* (re-titled *Mirandoline*) and a masked show called *Harlequin The Magician*. The collective work process also led to the creation of songs, mimes, sketches and plays about rural life. These included *Spring*, *The Dance of Town and Fields* and *Celebration of Wine and Vineyard*. These latter performances brought together mime, choral work, masks and the characters from their new commedia.

In 1929 Copeau decided to abandon the troupe. An offer to renovate the Comédie Française and act as its director undoubtedly influenced his decision to leave. His retirement has also been attributed to his conversion to Catholicism which took place at this time. Whatever the reasons, there is no doubt that there were serious disagreements within the group over the nature of future projects. The collective work process now came to supersede the influence of the founder and director of the company.

The mask work of Jacques Copeau and Les Copiaus was rooted in practical experimentation. In the beginning it was largely empirical and pragmatic. Copeau did not philosophise about the mask, nor describe it in mystical terms like Edward Gordon Craig. His starting point for the use of masks and non-human disguises came from a single incident concerning the veil, that has been described by Irving Wardle:

This took place when he was rehearsing a Vieux-Colombier actress who was obsessed by her appearance. She worried about the audience; her movements became wooden and her playing lacked concentration. In desperation, Copeau

made her repeat the scene with a handkerchief over her face. She at once relaxed and her body became expressive, demonstrating the fact that by erasing his personality an actor may succeed in surpassing his normal limits. Subsequently a mystique grew up around the use of the mask, so it is important to remember that Copeau adopted it for practical reasons, as an aid to finished performance, to be discarded before the arrival of the public.³⁰

The value of the neutral mask as a practical training device was to stand the test of time and has since been used in actor training schools throughout Europe and North America. The basis for the neutral mask had, nevertheless, a philosophical foundation. Waldo Frank describes it in this way:

The modern disease of the theatre is our endemic one of a disestablished unity. Human impulse, human form, actor and play are separated and apart and strive desperately to come together. All the remedies that I know are analytic: they are doomed, since analysis merely stresses separation. Copeau's is synthetic. He starts with a dynamic germ, in which all the future ingredients of the play from the idea to the actor and the public are unitarily present. He proposes to allow this germ to grow into an organism in its own inscrutable way.³¹

The student actor is, from this perspective, a molecular or germinal organism. Body, voice, mind and expression are contained within the 'dynamic germ' of each actor. In stripping the actor down to this organism or essence, Copeau's approach is rooted in a Hegelian view of human nature. The mask seizes the actor and expects him to obey, but at the same time it releases him. A spiritual force and a material energy are tapped simultaneously. The actor 'feels a new being flowing into himself' and 'experiences emotions he could never have felt or feigned without its aid'.³² In this sense the mask is

a metaphysical experience to which the actor submits. He has the status of absolute subject in a Hegelian sense. The mask experience of control and release, though open to description, is not so easily amenable to analysis. The vitalist conception is dominant. Waldo Frank is quite accurate, therefore, when he says that 'Copeau is a Bergsonian in aesthetics'.

This seed of Bergsonian vitalism was taken over by Copeau's disciples and followers and eventually elevated into a mystique. The mystique finds expression in the work of certain contemporary mask teachers who profess an absolute belief in the efficacy of the mask while disclaiming knowledge of how it works. After initial involvement with Copeau and attendance at his training sessions in Limon, Dullin followed an independent line of mask development at his Atelier school and theatre from 1921 onwards. Although very different in temperament and outlook from Copeau and often far more intuitive, his mask sessions made a vital and enduring vitalist impact on Artaud and Barrault. He was clear that seeking refuge in past traditions was not the solution for bringing the mask into modern drama:

The mask has a life of its own. It is not, moreover, always confined to the life with which the sculptor has endowed it. Often there are things which escape the creator. Take a successful mask: study it in all its aspects, live with it; make it a companion, become its confidant. Nothing irritates me more than seeing a student leaping around in a mask and using it as if it were made of calico like a carnival mask. This is because the mask really has a sacred character. It calls for a public composed of initiates. Most of the time the crowd only use it as a subject of mockery. Our school experiences are often ill-considered we have not looked far enough. Instead we have tried to go back and to resuscitate forms that

have disappeared. This is a mistake. The aim of the mask in modern theatre is not to rediscover, but to entirely create out of nothing. This requires a dramaturgy that has not yet found a poet. Neither the dialogue, nor the tone, nor the rhythm of our tragedy even comes close to achieving this genre.³³

In his book *Souvenirs et notes de travail d'un acteur* (1946) Dullin describes his idea that the use of the mask involves an obligatory depersonalisation and displacement:

In mask work the student-listener must be able to draw himself towards all the precious indications and clues that he can see; the degree of inclination within the mask, the direction in which it is looking, the importance of taking the first impression into even the slightest gesture. He will easily recognise this particular mechanism since it occurs where the centres of activity are suddenly displaced.³⁴

Artaud also attached great importance to the work of Dullin in relating gesture and movement to the mask. He says that the actors of the Atelier became 'perfectly disciplined', using improvisation to compel 'the actor to think his actions through the soul' in a 'perfect harmony of theory and practice'.³⁵ The Atelier as a teaching environment was tellingly full of stimuli and activities: 'Brightly painted masks with black hair are hung on the walls and some of them are in black leather or imitation wood'.³⁶

The actor mime, Etienne Decroux, also trained at the Vieux-Columbier with Copeau (1923) and at the Atelier with Dullin (1925-33). Unlike Artaud and Barrault, however, Decroux had reservations about using masks as the starting point from which to develop an expressive body:

That means that masks have magic powers. One can be incapable, not know his head from a hole in the ground, not know which end is up, but still work with masks. So we're relying on masks to fix things up, are we? But it's just the contrary! Masks make things worse, if you don't know how to move! ³⁷

In his view, therefore, a preliminary training period is necessary before mask work is undertaken. The student must first learn to tune his body and to understand it as well as the musician his instrument. In contrast to his colleagues, Decroux had a more pragmatic view of the mask. For him, it is useful as a device in the later stages of training an actor and it is exceptionally useful in mime performance. In this latter area, the mask permits role changes and allows a small cast to enact many characters. It also levels out age and sex differences so that, for example, an older actor may play a young lover or a young boy may play the part of a woman. Decroux also used neutral and character masks in these areas and went on to develop his own specialised versions. These included the veiled face (similar to the neutral mask but more soft and fluid in effect) and the faceted mask (covered with prism-like surfaces that reflect even the smallest movement under the light). He also mentions a rounded mask with accentuated features, much rounder than a real face. Half-masks and false noses are applicable in some cases, although he states that their use usually presumes that the actor is going to speak. From 1963 until his death in 1999, Decroux had been exploring these masks with his students in his school of mime at Boulogne-Billancourt near Paris.

The mask work of Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971) also began under the direction of his uncle, Jacques Copeau at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. He also participated in the silent improvisations using neutral and character masks at the École. In 1923, as the skills of the students increased, the work moved towards the creation of

complete scenarios with themes such as 'peace, war, exodus, dreams and reality' and 'animal and supernatural beings filed past in a world from which human impediment and the law of gravity seemed to be absent'.³⁸

After his work with the personal mask and stock characters with Les Copiaus and directorial experience in the early 1930's with La Compagnie des Quinze, Saint-Denis decided to found the London Theatre Studio (1935-39). This later gave rise to the Old Vic Theatre School and the Juilliard Schools in Strasbourg and New York. The latter part of his life was focussed on actor-training, although his main conviction remained that the mask was best used as a temporary but essential training tool in the development of the actor.³⁹ His view of the mask was that it was a training tool to warm the feelings and to cool the head. The closest he came, to the vitalist beliefs of Copeau was in the following statement: 'The mask absorbs the actor's personality from which it feeds'. For the most part, however, he emphasises the usefulness of the mask as 'a concrete object' that 'the personality of the actor will bring to life'.⁴⁰

At the London Theatre Studio Saint-Denis was to introduce his own innovation to the neutral mask - the tragic mask series. In 1936 Margaret 'Percy' Harris of the Motley Company was commissioned to make eight neutral masks with a smooth finish in the Japanese style. These are: 'full-face masks of normal human size, simple and harmonious masks representing the four ages of man; the adolescent, the adult, mature middle age and old age'.⁴¹ Each mask is specific in terms of age and emotion, smoothly sculpted and has large eye-openings for clarity of vision. It also has a classical Greek nose and brow and the built-in expression varies according to the angle of the eyes and naso-labial folds. Age is determined by the number of lines around the eyes and the mouth. As a group they have something of the ambivalence of Japanese Noh masks in

spite of the predominance in each mask of a particular expression (i.e. serenity, anger, callousness, sorrow).

These 'Four ages of Man' masks have been the subject of some misunderstanding and Sears Eldredge in his recent book *Mask Improvisation For Actor Training and Performance: The Compelling Image* (1996), incorrectly claims that they have been 'misidentified as Neutral masks. They are wonderfully evocative masks but they are not neutral. The better term for them would be archetypal, as they are used to explore heightened moments of awareness by larger-than-life figures that appear in myths, legends, or fairy tales.'⁴²

On the contrary, their effective use depends not upon establishing an archetypal state, but a neutral state of being. Archetypal masks admit emotional range. These neutral masks are geared precisely for exploration of tragic scenarios and are not at all in the character mask mould for myths, legends and fairy tales. The scenarios suggested by Saint-Denis include a mourner crushed by a statue, an old woman and an old man playing cat and bird ending in murder, a sleepwalker who is tormented by a ghost. They are a vehicle for exploring tragic scenarios in the modern world; an ideal existential medium for exploration of the death of tragedy; and a significant development beyond the metaphysics of the neutral mask.

Unlike Saint-Denis, who was drawn towards the tragic mask, Léon Chancerel took from his time with Les Copiaus a strong interest in the character mask and in touring theatre with young people. His *Journal de Bord des Copiaus* (1924-1929)⁴³ was the result of collaboration with Suzanne Bing. This document clearly shows his interest evolving from basic actor-training and improvisation games to the development of improvised masked theatre scenarios using a wide range of character and fantasy

masks. This was the foundation for his *Comédiens Routiers* and *Le Theatre de l'Oncle Sébastien* that undertook a sustained programme of small-scale touring in the French provinces during 1930-39.

The Comédiens Routier masks were designed and made by Henri Cordreaux from papier-mâché. Cordreaux had made masks for the École du Vieux-Colombier with Marie-Hélène Dasté (Copeau) under the direction of Albert Marque. Cordreaux also went on to make masks for Saint-Denis' Compagnie des Quinze and while detained in a German prisoner of war camp in 1941 wrote one of the best works on papier-mâché mask-making, *Fabrication du masque*. Chancerel contributed the preface to this work.⁴⁴

Chancerel also believed that the mask demanded a particular training and background and that it was insufficient to simply put on and wear the mask.

It all goes without saying that a masked character is all of one piece. It inhabits a world completely different from the naturalistic world of photographic reality, where contemporary theatre has remained for such a long time.⁴⁵

The stylisation of the mask and its accompanying anti-naturalistic appearance require from an actor a great mastery of the body. All the parts of the body must 'jouer' or play in relationship with the mask. A mask is expressive, alive or 'turned on' according to the angles or aspects built into its fabrication and also through the way in which the human body moves it through light and shadow, this requires an intense muscular effort, particularly in the neck and shoulders and the gestures must be followed through once started.

I repeat. It's a matter, by exploration and stumblings, of discovering how the mask looks, hears, cries, laughs, meditates, desires, waits, becomes impatient, suffers, exalts - how it passes from one state to another, not emotionally, but

physically, bodily, muscularly. One must ensure that this work is extremely precise, urged on and correctly and completely carried out. It is impossible to explain this in writing. In this domain, more than any other, it is direct teaching which asserts itself and it is important that this teaching be given by an experienced master. All that can be said is that the work is very tiring for the beginner who is not yet trained and that it demands of him a great intellectual and physical sincerity. The mask rejects without pity everything that is not a sincere expression of an intensely perceived emotion.⁴⁶

Chancereel believed that every theatre student should serve an apprenticeship with the 'jeu masqué'. He saw the mask as an indispensable tool. In turn, he hoped that the quest of these masked actors would produce poets and authors who would create a new masked dramaturgy for modern times. He achieved a measured success in popularising the vitalist approach stemming from Copeau and he espoused the romantic populist beliefs of Rolland, Pottecher and Gémier that a bridge could be built between the aesthetic theatre of pure dramatic poetry and a popular theatre of broad social appeal.

In the post-war British theatre the main person to continue the Copeau legacy as transmitted by Saint-Denis was George Devine (1910-66). He first worked with masks in 1935 when he played the Bear in Saint-Denis' production of *Noah*. Thereafter he became the manager of the London Theatre Studio and taught the course in comic masks and clowning. After the War, he continued these classes at the Old Vic Theatre School with a former student of the London Theatre Studio, Pierre Lefèvre. These experiments with both tragic and comic masks were carried over into the Royal Court Writers' Group and the Actors Studio (1963-66).

The Royal Court character or comic half-masks were made by 'the young woman 'who had designed them for the Young Vic Theatre Company in 1958; although 'the half masks were crushed up and thrown away at the Royal Court – some were rescued from the garbage and sent to me in a totally battered condition. Not everyone respects Masks I'm afraid'.⁴⁷ After this, more comic half-masks were made 'by Harriet Devine, George's daughter who made many good i.e. effective masks'.⁴⁸ Keith Johnstone also writes that 'George's Masks were stylised faces with an air of sadness about them'.⁴⁹ According to him, the tragic full-face masks were made by one of Jocelyn Herbert's daughters, Sandra or Jenny, under the close supervision of George Devine: 'they are the ones I mention in the book and which were stolen'.⁵⁰

The tragic masks of Devine were used to evoke a silent world of poetic archetypes and to teach the actor how to use stillness to maximum dramatic effect. The text of their effectiveness was in the practice: 'If the exercise was successful, the mask would now appear to be suffering'.⁵¹

Their influence was duly transmitted to a new generation of practitioners including playwrights John Arden and David Cregan and theatre directors Keith Johnstone and Bill Gaskill. Between 1963 and 1966 over two hundred and fifty actors participated in the various courses at the Royal Court Studio.

After this initial experience in 1958, Gaskill borrowed the masks and 'developed the theory that the actor shock himself with the Mask's reflection'.⁵² Gaskill saw Devine demonstrate how to choose a half-mask, study it, put it on and look in a mirror to produce a sudden transformation into 'a toad god'. Johnstone likens the process to emptying the mind in order to receive the influence from the imaged reflection of the mask and from the moment of shock when you see something other or strange, the

mirror is left behind and the performer moves as a new character. Simple props and costumes, hats, sticks and scarves are then used to heighten the new character's sense of touch. It is interesting to note the anti-mirror stance of Copeau and Lecoq in terms of this reflection theory.

Gaskill chose to use the comic improvisation and mask work to direct plays such as John Arden's *The Happy Haven* in 1960, Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1962 and the non-text based *An Optimistic Thrust* by Joint Stock in 1979. Gaskill believes that the mask represents an actor's theatre and symbolises the actor's independence from the disciplines of the writer:

Masks have their own rules, stricter than those of everyday acting. A masked actor can never speak as himself, only in the character he has created - or been endowed with - according to how you interpret the process of transformation; he can't read from a script or discuss his motivation.⁵³

His conclusion in 1988 was, that after forty years of teaching and directing in the theatre, he had still not resolved the question of how to use the intense theatricality of masks in a finished piece of work. Cregan also recalled the effect of George Devine's mask classes and described them to me in the following terms:

We used them in Studio work at the Court by putting them on (comic half-masks and newspaper photographs) and peering at a mirror. We then maintained what we had seen for as long as we could - the thing switches off quickly and one learns slowly how to sustain what it tells you to be, or what it releases in you. Sometimes they work more quickly than others. It is - was - for me like getting into a great painting and being (on successful occasions) subsumed by it. There is one Japanese looking half- mask among the Royal Court ones which was very

vicious and always had to be controlled- someone had to be about to say 'take it off' - because it really required you to hit or kill.⁵⁴

According to Johnstone, Devine regarded this particular mask course as a failure because when the masks were worn by the students none of them had been 'inhabited' or 'possessed'. The strains of vitalism stretching back to Copeau seem to re-emerge in this terminology. Johnstone, indeed goes on to develop them much further in his later work and his writing is scattered with references to trance, 'controlled trance' and spirit possession in tribal societies.

Both Johnstone and Gaskill went on to explore the idea of the actor absorbing the impulse from the mask to induce a trance state. In particular Johnstone describes Devine's distaste at the idea of mixing the character masks with the tragic masks. The major difference with Devine's approach appears to have occurred over the question of the purpose of mask work. Devine thought that the character mask was primarily an aid in developing 'characters that could be used without the Mask when the actor was cast in plays'. For Johnstone they were, on the contrary, 'astounding performers offering a new form of theatre'.⁵⁵ Devine would allow his students to speak in their own voices while wearing masks whereas Johnstone came to regard this as 'very casual' and against the creation of what he calls the 'Mask state'. The differences remained unresolved. One of the last comments Devine made to Johnstone was: 'I still don't think that Mask work was right!' ⁵⁶

Johnstone went on to found Theatre Machine and to become director of the Loose Moose Theatre Company in Calgary. In his *Impro-Book* he explains that one reason for the crisis in humanism in the West is that primacy is given to reason and intellect. Johnstone argues that the actor has to be taught how to 'let go' and how to

unlearn unnecessary rigidities. For him, personality is a 'public relations department for the real mind, which remains unknown'.⁵⁷ Accordingly, the mask uncovers the 'real mind' by shifting the centre of the body to produce a kind of emotional 'abreaction'. Johnstone chooses this psychoanalytic terminology with some care. An 'abreaction' denotes the removal of emotional inhibitions associated with forgotten and repressed events.

Johnstone goes on to link this psychological approach to modern social anthropological theories. In his view, the forgotten event that has been banished from the Western mind is none other than trance or spirit possession which in turn depends upon the resurgence of the unconscious with an almost spontaneous and childlike irrationality: 'The reason why one automatically talks and writes of Masks with a capital M is that one really feels that the genuine Mask actor is inhabited by a spirit'.⁵⁸ This spirit is none other than self-induced and controlled possession. The actor must give himself up to the mask. The aim is to create a situation where the feeling is created that the mask is about to take over. His conviction is that the mask 'dies' when it is entirely subjected to the will of the performer: 'The manipulated Mask is hardly worth having and is easy to drive out of the theatre'.⁵⁹ He goes on to say: 'the essential thing is to identify two sensations: (1) the student working the Mask, which we don't want; (2) the Mask working the student, a state which the student learns to sustain'.⁶⁰ His wife Ingrid Johnstone qualifies this latter 'state' as the wearer of her adopted mask of the Waif:

It was a tremendous release - like a marvellous kind of therapy, because the feeling of release would still be with me after I'd taken off the Mask. However, I could still never have done all those things without the Mask on.⁶¹

The most interesting thing about this account is the way in which the mask allows the wearer to create an alter ego while simultaneously strengthening the ego. It allows something to take place that could not take place unaided. The discovery of the character also stimulates a growth process from relative innocence to maturity. The reader is left to ponder whether, lacking the traditional ritual framework, what is described is akin to trance or spirit possession?

Johnstone's methodology is analogical. For the most part his ideas and theories are merely cited, but remain untried and untested. It is unclear, for example, if the application of trance and possession necessarily implies a modern mythology which describes the gods as acting in a childlike way. Masked actors who experience memory lapses and certain uncontrolled responses are hardly evidence that we live in a repressed trance culture! The psycho-physical effects on an actor wearing a mask may also be the product of other considerations. In an age of crises of belief it may be an anachronism for a mask specialist to try to resurrect the idea of spirit possession; an idealist *cul-de-sac*.

William Gaskill takes a less extreme view in that, while he acknowledges having seen some strange and violent revelations by actors in improvisation work, he sees these things 'more as a release of unconscious urges which are triggered by the concealment of the face rather than the possession by an alien spirit'.⁶² For Gaskill the mask is clearly a way of using the mask's creative intelligence to the utmost. In effect, the mask is the equivalent of the part or role the actor has to play and it is in his intuitive relation to the mask that the character is forged. This is a parallel process to the conventional stages in building a character that often ends in the assumption of costume, wig and make-up in a dress rehearsal. He also makes the interesting observation that the same

mask will produce different characters on different actors, although it will never completely change.

Thomas Leabhart has also propounded the notion that the mask was used as a 'shamanic tool' by Copeau. He bases this proposal on extant descriptions by Dasté of being 'possessed'; by the mime Dorcy in 'trance'; by Dullin in 'an altered state of consciousness'; and on Decroux's statement that the actor should be 'inhabited by a god'. While the emptying out or relaxation process prior to donning the mask may be said to be characteristic of Western actor training, it is a huge leap from this point to the idea of the 'hunganistic return'⁶³ based upon 'search, rounding and possession' as a metaphor for Copeau's personal development and initiating trainees by means of 'a rite or cult'. The mask may well be a tool for 'altered consciousness' in the actor, but as such it would seem to be more appropriate to link it with Bergsonian vitalism and the search for a new language of the body through 'corporeal mime'.⁶⁴

It remains to evaluate that part of Copeau's legacy that has had a sustained and lasting impact upon British theatre training and the development of a historical grouping that has been designated 'physical theatre'. In the work of the French teacher and mime artist, Jacques Lecoq, the mask was adopted as the central point of reference. His early interest in athletics, movement awareness and theatre came to fruition in the mask. Jean Dasté, the son-in-law of Copeau and former member of Les Copiaus, was responsible for the early theatre training of Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999) in Grenoble between 1945 and 1947. In 1948, at the beginning of his eight-year residence in Italy, Lecoq founded the Teatro del'Universita di Padova and began mask work with Amleto Sartori, the celebrated creator of leather masks. By 1951 Lecoq was in Milan, where he took part in founding the actor training school of the Piccolo Teatro. Lecoq and Gianfranco de Bosio

provided the impetus for Sartori to research and explore the mask. After their first discussions in 1948, Sartori went on to make masks for Lecoq's productions of *Don Perlimplin* by Lorca, *Le cento notti* (a Japanese Noh drama) and two masked pantomimes *Le macchine* and *Porto di mare*. Later, in 1954, Sartori made a series of leather masks for Lecoq's mime collection in Paris.

The first brochure advertising the school read as follows:

L'École Jacques Lecoq, founded in December 1956, is an international professional school. In the beginning, it was offered as a school of original mime, based on acting, on the mask and on the chorus. Developing from these basic elements, it led to spoken language, sound, movement and literature.

The School frees mime from rigid formalism, permitting it to act as the foundation of a complete dramatic training based on the body. The training confronts the student with his own self in a state of permanent discovery. It spurs students to personal creativity, alone or in a group. It helps them acquire new, expressive dramatic forms. While maintaining the necessary ties with the very foundations of life, it suggests, in different directions, some levels of theatrical action that can culminate in only a sign.

Where everything moves, gestures, sounds and words are children of the same silence. The cry searches for its sign.⁶⁵

The teaching style of the École has become famous for its methodology of the mask and the slogan 'Don't do what I do. Do what you do.'⁶⁶ In the first year of the practical programme the student is introduced to the idea of the neutral mask. This is followed by an introduction to the following mask types: expressive, larval, grotesque and utilitarian. In the second year this work is extended to include *commedia dell'arte* masks and

various types of clown noses. These mask elements are only part of a more comprehensive course structure that also includes mime, movement, juggling, acrobatics, physical combat and tragedy and comedy.

The 'jeu masqué' precedes vocal improvisations or character exercises. Lecoq was not so much concerned to teach a set of codes and conventions associated with traditional mime as to encourage individual research and exploration. For this reason only students who were over twenty years of age and had some previous experience of theatre, mime, or dance are admitted to the professional course. These criteria tend to encourage students who have attained a certain degree of maturity and capacity for reflection and analysis.⁶⁷

The basic starting point for Lecoq's mask work was the concept of the *vide* or self-loss or forgetting which then allows the self to emerge through tactile exploration, observation and discovery through the use of the neutral mask. As John Wright has demonstrated 'neutral' does not mean 'neuter' nor 'universal' (Bari Rolfe) nor 'bland' but rather 'occupying a middle position between two extremes.'⁶⁸ After experimenting unsuccessfully with the neutral mask with teenagers in the USA ((in American 'neutral' means 'nothing'), Italian Carlo Mazzone-Clementi, designed a metaphysical mask with one round eye and one triangular eye with a curved nose and oval form in 1961. Amleto Sartori made two of them in leather for him with the aim of achieving 'the same thing' as the neutral mask but with no built-in male or female gender distinction.⁶⁹

Lecoq described *the neutral mask (le masque neutre)* in these key phrases::

If the neutral mask looks at the sea, it becomes the sea.

It makes the actor a blank sheet of paper, a 'tabula rasa'.

It is a face with no past, but still dramatic.

It is neither literary nor psychodramatic.

It creates a fulcrum point; it tends towards this fulcrum point, which does not exist.

It is like the young woman in the Noh drama.⁷⁰

It attempts to erase the individuality; to get at the essence; to get at Man rather than this man.⁷¹

Sometimes he has referred to the neutral state as the position of the parts in a gear mechanism through which no power is being transmitted. The attributes of individual personality are not allowed to impose upon the state of silence or repose which the actor creates. If the actor cannot be neutral in any absolute sense, he or she can strive towards the performance of a neutral action.

Neutral activity withholds nothing; it is an energised condition, like the moment of inspiration before speech. The neutrality that the mask seeks is an economy of mind and body, evidenced at rest, in motion and in the relationship between them'.⁷²

The neutral mask favoured by Lecoq was designed in both male and female versions, in leather by Donato Sartori in 1968. The neutral mask is a key tool in simplifying the obstacles that confront the actor. It becomes almost an instrument by which the student can explore his or her own ideas and movements. Lecoq does not instruct or tell the student what to do, but he does advise on what not to do or the 'via negativa'. Thereafter it is the responsibility of the individual student to transcend any personal idiosyncrasies or clichéd responses.

At the École neutral masks are used every day for three months. The process is initiated with a talk on the design and significance of the mask this is followed by group

discussion. The neutral mask is then presented to the students and they are encouraged to examine and look at it closely, this continues for eight days and only then may the mask be tried on. It is handled with care and respect and never picked up by the eyes or nose. Lecoq banishes the use of the mirror at this stage in the process 'because there should be no concern with the play of light on the surface of the mask'⁷³ which he sees as the preserve of self-conscious masked drama. Students are also not allowed to wear masks of the opposite sex, since the relative weight and size of the male and female neutral masks is necessarily, quite different.

The first exercises in the neutral mask begin with the act of sleeping, then standing, walking, sitting and picking up an object are attempted. The procedure is very much one of trial and error and the student learns by making mistakes. Gratuitous movement, erratic gesture imprecise posture and imposing attitudes on the mask are all characteristic faults; and because there is no conflict built into this mask the student must remove any conflicting thoughts and gestures while improvising. At this stage Lecoq will usually remind the students of the need to remove facial acrobatics or facial pantomimes behind the mask and of the need to maintain stillness and a straight face. When each student has discovered how to forge an alignment with the neutral state and the simple tasks above have been satisfactorily completed then the level of work is intensified.

Lecoq presented more extended exercises in which wearers of the neutral mask are asked to identify themselves with objects and elements: trees, wood, sea, fire. These exercises include:

- 1) The figure wakes and moves towards the light.
- 2) The figure wakes in the desert and walks into the city.

- 3) The figure wakes in the desert; goes to a river and enters it, perceiving its flow its source; finds a tree, from which a bird flies.
- 4) The figure encounters another figure of the opposite sex.
- 5) The figure wakes and stands in a fog; explores the fog; finds himself at the edge of the sea, as the fog clears; throws a stone out to the sea.
- 6) The figure walks along a beach; goes to the end of a pier; sees a boat moving across the water and waves to a person in the boat.
- 7) The figure walks to the end of the pier and pulls in a sailboat; punts the boat away from the shore, raises sail and rests at the tiller; lowers sail and throws out the anchor; casts a net and pulls it in full of fish; lifts the anchor, raises sail and rests at the tiller.⁷⁴

These exercises are designed to concentrate the mind and body of the student on finding basic external gestures that correspond to a series of given conditions. The temptation to impose personal associations has been removed by emphasising the relationship of the figure (always in the third person) to primary objects and essential states of being. Everything is stripped down to the elementary. After these exercises are completed, the evaluation that does take place is not aimed at determining which students will be good actors and which won't.

The criteria for evaluation of student achievement take another form entirely and are outlined in *Actor Training in The Neutral Mask* by Sears A. Eldredge and Hollis W. Huston:

The teacher looks for simplicity and clarity in the actor's imagery. Lecoq has said that 'If the neutral mask looks at the sea, it becomes the sea'. Does the actor accept the environment, or does he establish a dramatic conflict with it? Does he

show us the sea, or his own impression of the sea? Are the imaginary objects established in their weight and texture as well as in their shape? Is each experience - touching the earth, entering the river, casting the net - finished before another is begun? Does the actor show an awareness of another person, or is he only compelled in a social way to look at him? Does he show an awareness of objects and elements, or is he only compelled in an intellectual way to touch them? Is his breathing quiet and regular, or jagged and dramatic? Does the stone continue its flight after it leaves the actor's hand? 'How can I discover without curiosity', protests the student and in asking the question, he defines the assignment.⁷⁵

The student is thus expected to resolve such questions through mime and gesture, without cutting corners or omitting dramatic logic. The wearing of the mask provides the distance or the screen, which can filter these experiences. Behind the mask the actor is expected to continuously research ideas and concepts, discovering new ways of seeing and enlarging his sense of externals while simultaneously dissecting and criticising his own performance. This is why Lecoq advocated the mask as 'a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing'.⁷⁶ For him the neutral mask was a training tool, not a new form of masked drama.

By way of contrast, Lecoq used *the expressive or character masks (les masques expressifs)* to represent individual man with all his personal traits, character mannerisms and different physical attributes. It is a face in conflict. His description takes the following form:

At a certain moment, passions grow: the personalities strengthen and the characters are born. The human figure as such, must be newly identified. Its

present definition is no longer sufficient. It must measure itself and make itself up; the mask, the artifice. Beginning with this adornment of the expressive mask, improvisation passes to the plan of creation where the rules of the game begin to define themselves.⁷⁷

In this situation, the task of the actor is to discover how to align himself to an already defined character. The lines and contours of the mask suggest a past experience and particular kinds of conditioning. They are usually asymmetrical in shape and possess more definite indications of gender, age, emotional state and character traits. Again as John Wright correctly says it may be the face of a fool, an old man, a disgusted person or a beautiful woman. The expressive mask should express an emotional state 'with a suggestion of character'.⁷⁸ The Juilliard School of Drama in New York offers a four-year professional training course for actors with modules in tragic and comic mask work. Pierre Lefèvre teaches these courses. Lecoq has assessed them in this way: 'The Juilliard masks are too fixed, too typical, too typed, not freely suggestive enough, do not allow enough range, too old-fashioned, too Japanese'.⁷⁹

The work with expressive masks begins in the same way as the neutral mask. Lecoq likens the expressive mask to waves and the neutral mask to the bottom of the sea. The neutral state of being often described as silent attentiveness is still the prerequisite for effective work. The student is confronted with a range of personality types, which express very definite emotions. Beyond this, interpretation is his responsibility; although each actor wearing the same mask should attempt to discover its central core. To aid this process, each character mask also contains the seeds of an inherent conflict, they are made in leather and tanned in different shades of brown and usually commissioned from the Sartori workshop in Padua. They are full face and

intended only for silent improvisation. No mirror is used during the initiation process to avoid the temptation of imposing a stereotype on the mask too soon. They are used every day for one month. Exercises include everyday activities such as waking up, getting dressed, preparing food and going to work. These exercises are then extended to include meetings in public places with other character masks. The emphasis of the work is still on the process of self-discovery and discovering a consistency of characterisation. After this induction period with expressive masks Lecoq has been encouraging his students since 1975 to make their own character masks.

An additional refinement in the work with expressive masks is the concept of *the counter mask (le contremasque)*. Lecoq defines this as playing against the same expressive mask by refusing the characterisation suggested within it e.g. playing the idiot character as an intellectual or playing the old man as a young man. At a certain moment the body should change or contradict the personality revealed by the mask. The countermask is the opposite of the expressive mask and is thus a subtle way of exploring the complexities of characterisation. In effect, the student must draw out two opposite aspects from one mask.

Another type of mask developed by Lecoq at the École is *the larval mask (les larvaires)*. They are large full-face masks made out of plastic or fibre-glass coated with acrylic resin, 'devoid of human features so that no specific characterisation is suggested by it'.⁸⁰ The larval mask is an unpainted Swiss carnival mask from Basel with a simple white form about to be born. The original Latin word *larvae* meant ghost or spirit. These masks suggest the primal shapes of animals, birds and human embryos. Beaks, snouts and other extended features are characteristic of this semi-abstract type with its aura of perpetual astonishment. The highly experimental beginnings of this mask have

now given way to some standard working patterns. The training period with these masks is also every day for a period of one month. Lecoq uses them:

To escape realism; to make the students use their imaginations more. In these masks they can invent a whole society: the laws, the whole life, culture, etc., to invent an imaginary world.⁸¹

Larval masks should be designed to encourage the student to explore non-human existences. While they may have features, they may not be recognisably human. Small eyes and large noses are characteristic. The line of vision will be dictated by this kind of mask and this will condition any environmental responses. The student will need to determine body positions - weight, space, timing and flow - and to adjust bodily to the distortions imposed by the mask. In the first instance, this movement awareness takes time to establish through discovery of appropriate tempo and undulation and demands flexibility of the body of the wearer. The student needs to identify what kind of creature is involved. Is it curled up, stretched out, stiff or soft? Larval masks may be worn as full head masks or even worn on top of the head (the latter results in poor, if not blind, vision which demands extra perceptive abilities from the wearers. 'Larval masks are simplified forms of the human figure: round, pointed, hooked, where the nose has a great importance and directs the face; these are partially formed faces that encourage large, simple and elementary playing'.⁸²

Lecoq allows the use of full-length mirrors in the work with larval masks. The reason for this exception is to keep the amorphous image sharply in focus within the mind of the student. Once the mask is donned and comfortably in position, Lecoq asks the student to explore the kinds of movement, space, rhythm, speed and direction, which correspond to their masks. A former student, Laurence Wylie, comments as follows:

'As soon as the student has put on his mask and started to move, the others immediately know if he has succeeded or not in giving life to this strange shape'.⁸³

The influence of these experimental workshops has already spread beyond the École into professional mime and masked drama. The Swiss company, Mummenschanz, work entirely with masks and mime. Floriana Frassetto, Andres Bossard and Bernie Schurch were the founders of the company and all were directly influenced by their training period with Lecoq. Their first masked performance in 1973 was a fantasy journey through the stages of evolution from larval origins to alienated modern man. Without sound or music, the show contained many larval and blob-like creatures. In addition, in the Britain, The Moving Picture Mime Show performed an extremely popular sketch called *The Examination* from 1979 onwards, which featured three contrasting larval masks (and became the inspiration for Trestle Theatre Company). Mime artist, Justin Case, used them in a BBC Television programme, *Chopsti*, saying 'I've had to learn how to change my gestures and the way of walking to suit each of the masks I wear'.⁸⁴ The work of Théâtre de Complicité has used masks in training workshops but Lecoq-trained actors Simon McBurney and Marcello Magni have refused to date to use them as a masked theatre form.⁸⁵

The mask work at the École has also developed other innovations such as the *grotesque* and *utilitarian* masks. The former include animal, bird, fish and insect characteristics derived from the human face, while the latter involve sporting, protective and military masks (for instance American ice hockey masks, welder's masks, gas masks, space helmets).⁸⁶ The grotesque mask had its precursors in the work of Jarry and Benda earlier in the twentieth century.

In the second year of the training course at the École the student is introduced to the three-quarter and half masks of the *commedia dell'arte*. At this point, Lecoq encourages and allows vocal improvisations integrated with the physical work: 'There is a right voice for each *commedia* character, but the student must find his own way to it with negative criticism'.⁸⁷ In other words, the student needs to strip away the false leads and to hone in on the voice appropriate to each character using a combination of self-critical awareness and historical research. The actor needs to criticise his performance through a process of trial and error and to discard those voices that do not fit the character under inspection.

Lecoq was ideally placed to evaluate the origins and style of the lost *commedia dell'arte* tradition. His early work at the Piccolo Teatro Mime School and collaborations with the Sartori and Mazzone-Clementi (later to become the founder of the Dell'Arte School in California), have done much to revitalise interest and research into this great school of Western theatre. Discovery of the traditional voices, gestures and movement patterns appropriate to each mask or stock character is basic to the art of the *commedia* performer. Sartori and Lecoq also evolved masks with a clear animal motif corresponding to *commedia* type: the cat or monkey Arlecchino, the bull mastiff Doctor, the lion or chicken Pantalone, the cockerel Captain and the hen-like Pulcinello. The specificity of each mask demands the formal discipline of improvising within the type. Lecoq viewed *commedia dell'arte* as one of the key 'boundary lines of theatre', together with Greek Tragedy, Classical Japanese Theatre and Pantomime Blanche, because as highly stylised and developed forms they challenge the student 'to gain an understanding of acting which would employ his entire being':

Thus *commedia dell'arte*, where the play is action and Greek Tragedy, where the word is flesh, are the forms of theatre where the actor is entirely engaged; pelvis, solar plexus and head.⁸⁸

The final use of the mask at the École is *the false nose or minimal mask* which is often called 'discovering one's own clown' (*découverte de son propre clown*). This is a bright red clown's nose made of bulbous rubber or plastic in various sizes that is held on with elastic ties. This course is designed to enable the student to locate and focus upon his own primary weakness. By recognising and exhibiting this fault, Lecoq believes that the student will arouse laughter in his onlookers. Each student is normally expected to discover a costume that corresponds to his or her nose. A circle is formed and each person is asked to make the others laugh by coming into the centre of the circle and performing an action. An over-conscious effort usually produced nothing: 'The secret as it turns out, is to do nothing. To face the group, lonely and ridiculous, without playing the role or trying to disguise one's *'bide'* (*central flaw*) is to encounter *'Le Flop'*'.⁸⁹ Other mask teachers such as Phillipe Gaulier call this flaw 'the void' while Pierre Byland calls it 'the fiasco'.⁹⁰ When this realisation has been made, the work progresses to the discovery of appropriate walks and emotional states, each student is encouraged to find a name and an object for his clown. In many ways, this work is the most difficult and demanding area of the whole course because it asks the actor to find and maintain a miniature neutral mask of the red-faced circus clown.

From this brief overview of the mask work at the within the École Jacques Lecoq and the various commentaries upon it, a number of key points emerge. The progression of masks is no accident. It is part of a highly structured programme designed to strip the art of acting down to bare essentials and to encourage the

formation of an original and thoughtful performer. The full-face neutral masks strip away acquired accretions and traditional mannerisms. Of all the mask forms, this process is given the most time and attention because it is the foundation on which all the other structures will be laid: the full-face expressive, counter-mask, larval, grotesque and utilitarian forms. It is important to note that behind this series of full-face masks the student is fully protected. By completely covering the face the impulse to communicate must be channelled into the body and that is why one year is given over to the process. On the basis of the experience and confidence acquired the student is then ready for Lecoq to present the disciplined framework of the *commedia dell'arte*. The intellectual and physical resources of the student will be fully stretched by the stock characters (Arlecchino, Brighella, Pulcinella, Pantalone, Dottore, Capitano and the various zanni). These three-quarter and half masks reveal more of the face and the student is called upon to integrate voice and gesture in a new way. At year end, the student sees this work culminate in the clown nose as more and more of the face is revealed and the mask is minimised. This leads, of course, to the eventual disappearance of the mask. One former student has described the experience in the following terms: 'Jacques Lecoq strips you completely naked and gives you your true identity...you go through an entire process of discovery while he reveals you to yourself'.⁹¹

To sum up, the vitalist tradition of modern mask training receives its most articulate and structured expression in the work of the École Jacques Lecoq. According to Lawrence Wylie (d.1996), a Harvard professor who spent a sabbatical year with him, Lecoq is 'an intuitive being in the tradition of Bergson and Bachelard, but his method, unlike theirs, is fundamentally Cartesian'.⁹² The *negative way* (*via negativa*) places the emphasis on individual self-discovery. *The masked game* (*le jeu masqué*) becomes the

fulcrum point in the training of an actor. If its terminology is firmly cast in an Idealist mould, the material effect of the training is to enhance the individual's control over his or her own physical and expressive potential. The actor becomes absolute subject. Its great merit is the emphasis placed on the freedom of the actor to invent from a performative base.⁹³ Lecoq did not construct a theoretical system to justify the work.⁹⁴ He preferred to reveal the potential of the mask in praxis as a major imaginative tool for actor training and often likened it to a plant growing.

There are three masks:
the one we think we are,
the one we really are,
and the one we hold in common.⁹⁵

From a detailed examination of the work of practitioners, from Copeau to Lecoq, I have attempted to draw together the main correspondences and principles behind their work. I have done this by considering how they taught at their schools and what their main approaches to mask work were. When compared with the long established and codified mask traditions of the East there is a sense of a certain lack of social grounding, a trend towards metaphysics and a degree of mystification. Mask training and mask prototypes in this context, although not an end in themselves, are often arbitrarily codified according to the subjective preferences of their makers and inventors. This historical grouping was also very Euro-centric and often ignored or marginalised non-Western mask forms.⁹⁶

If we compare our chart of the primary characteristics of Eastern codified traditions outlined earlier with the expressive and non-codified nature of the training

and experiments under the mask in the West from Copeau to Lecoq, we can identify certain key components:

- transmission between individuals
- strong focus on a pedagogic system based on shared collaboration
- a metaphysical series of training exercises from neutral to expressive
- a laboratory or workshop context exploring the practical and the poetic
- an essentialist or Vitalist philosophy rooted in types and archetypes
- the emergence of mime and a theatre of gesture from romanticism to realism
- linkage between the stage and everyday life

Many of these issues are based on dualisms and investigating the creative tensions and paradoxes of the modern period in the West. In a philosophical sense what began as a non-codified experiment with Copeau in the 1920's became an increasingly codified metaphysical system in the 1950's with Lecoq. Specific masks have become filters for stories and particular expressive means within defined theatrical families or groupings (neutral, character, larval, grotesque, commedia, minimal, choral, body masks). In the varied uses of the mask, as John Emigh reaffirms, is enshrined the encounter with the self and others. Although these approaches to Western actor-training with masks follow an open system, the masks have been to some degree prescribed by their makers and advocates. Their different uses and applications cannot be isolated from their context. A mask schema may also deliberately fragment or distance us from reality. The masks are, to cite Simon Murray, 'les permanences with movement' or the masked game. When a mask stands between your real body and your psychology – and influences both with equal power – then a transformation is demanded to bring your new self into harmony with the other that you must now represent. The elusive question of harmony is related

to its opposite in dissonance. When a mask stands between your social being and your art – and influences both with equal power – then issues of harmony and discord, unity and fragmentation may be explored. A graduate from the Lecoq school will not emerge from the training with a definition of self transmitted through a pre-modern codified tradition such as Japanese Noh theatre. A graduate of Lecoq has acquired through the legacy of Copeau a modern metaphysical outlook transmitted within an idealist framework and the knowledge that masks are storied objects overlying the multiplicity of self. Those seeking to overcome the disestablished unity of identity in the present through the search for a unified field can learn from Copeau and Lecoq about metaphysics through the skin. An organicist approach to fractured identities is as tempting now as it was then but the real foundations of social change, of ‘comunitas’, require new masks, new types and new social organisations.

What do we then ‘hold in common’? In reality both codified traditions of the East and non-codified forms of the West, while using widely different kinds of masks, reveal similar underlying concerns with subject and object, mind and body, art and action, ideal schema and material culture. In the East there is no actor-training with masks that is not performative and which is not designed to serve a popular audience. In the West there are masks that are exclusively designed as actor-training tools to extend and deepen performative ability. Perhaps Artaud was right that what we hold in common is the sky over our heads (which may still fall), an outdoor performing space, a masked actor and the search for a popular audience. It may be that the experiment of Les Copiaus in the 1920’s prefigured the work of the Odin Teatret in the 1980’s and that, in actor training, the main sociological task is to link the studio experiments to the fields, the village squares, market places, the streets and the outdoor arenas. Lecoq’s

work through the larval mask and later with LEM (Laboratory for The Study of Movement)⁹⁷ laid the ground for the play of object heads, body costumes and portable structures by Mummenschanz in the 1970's and prefigured the work of Donato Sartori with 'gestural structures' in the 1980's.

In *Through the Body. A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre* Dymphna Gallery notes that the key pedagogical advantages of mask work are:

- 'it clarifies and refines the actor's movements
- it channels expression through the body
- it liberates the actor'⁹⁸

Her rejection of theory in favour of 'essential principles' from the chalk face by practitioners is far too rigid; rather the work of the actor as creator is rooted in training systems permeated by historical theories and assumptions.

In Chapters Four and Five I consider the divergent meanings and forms within Western masked performance from 1945 to 2004 that illustrate a slide into 'dissonance' and a search for new meanings. The vitalism of the French actor training tradition, with its practical exercises based around innocence and experience, is superseded by the fragmentation of structuralism and a dominant concern with using masks to explore the ambiguities of ideology, power and legitimacy in society.

4. Idealist Masks of Modern Drama: From Primitivism to New Humanism

Modernism as a European movement exhibits two distinct strands. The first is Idealistic Modernism, which derives its ideology from aesthetics filtered through the late Romanticism of Nietzsche, Pater, T.E.Hume and Worringer to Jarry, Craig, Yeats, Kandinsky and early German Expressionists, O'Neill, Pirandello and Artaud. It moves towards rendering history aesthetic and places a heavy emphasis on apocalypse and nihilism. The second is Materialist Modernism derived from historical and social theory through Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and most clearly articulated through the works of the Russian Constructivists, the Bauhaus, Piscator and Brecht and the Workers Theatre Movements. It pushes towards the politicisation of history and places its focus on the desirability of social change and revolution. The meanings and forms of modern drama straddle both these trends and can help to explain and determine its relationship with both practitioners and movements and also resolve some of the seeming contradictions in the struggle to unite theory and practice (*praxis*).

In the domain of masks, what Christopher Innes labelled 'the politics of primitivism', was used to denote 'a utopian alternative to the status quo' or a search for a unified field. The theorists and practitioners of the historical avant-garde were not so much characterised by overtly modern qualities – Jarry's 'savage God' Ubu, Depero's mechanical figures, Picasso's costumed managers, Schlemmer's geometric dancers – but by a tendency towards primitivism. The demand to return to earlier essentialist roots and original forms of a holistic nature may be seen as a reaction against the fragmentation of modern life, 'the death of god' and the atomisation of privatised

individuals up against the nation-state, militarism and unprecedented technological change.

In mask theatre this is expressed in the context of specific tasks, domains and fields such as: the grotesque satire of Jarry; the elemental demands of Craig for an *übermarionnette*; by the mythical Celtic archetypes of W.B. Yeats and the Jungian archetypes of Eugene O'Neill; through the self-deprecators and pretenders of Pirandello's nihilistic relativism; by the multiple masks, mannequins and doubles signalling through the face of Artaud. These are in turn punctuated by the romantic reconstruction of Greek archaic and Hellenic mask themes; by a pre-occupation with images from the lost tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*; and by a renewed interest in non-Western theatre forms.

The search for new theatrical forms required evaluation of past traditions and styles of performance. In terms of the art of the actor it was the notion of the differentiation between the 'actor' and the 'role' stemming from the treatise of Descartes on *The Passions of The Soul* (1649) and Denis Diderot in *The Paradox of Acting* (1830) emphasising the dual nature of the stage character, which led towards the mask. Constant Coquelin went further in his *The Art of The Actor* (1880) and imagined a way to make the body completely malleable like a soft mass of putty that could take any form required of itself to fulfil the part. He likened the actor to a perfectly tuned instrument with the keys to the musical spectrum. The mask is an instrument for distancing the body of the performer from the mode of performance.

Masks as used in theatre are both icons (a variety of sign that bears a resemblance to its object) and indexes (a variety of sign that refers to and is affected by its object) of identity.¹ In this chapter I am focusing attention not just on the general

questions of what masks 'do' (i.e. their forms and functions in relation to the already mentioned spheres of tasks, domains and fields), but considering more precisely how masks perform or 'work' to achieve these functions.

It was Romanticism that renewed the irrational root of the mask. Heinrich von Kleist's six page essay 'On The Marionette Theatre' (1810) underlies much subsequent Western philosophical engagement with the mask in the idealist vein. The reason for this is, not because he regarded the puppet as a mechanical actor with its own centre of gravity, but rather because Kleist analysed the values of the marionette in relation to the human dancer and in relation to God. By way of implication the marionette and its mask is unconscious of its life; although lacking in human qualities, it could retain a degree of divine harmony and beauty. This makes it the antithesis of God who possesses full, absolute consciousness in a Hegelian sense. At the end of the essay Kleist receives the answer to his question about whether a return to a state of innocence (primitivism) would require eating once more from the tree of knowledge: 'Certainly, for it's the final chapter in the history of the world.' What links this to the use of the mask is an idealisation of the elemental and a desire to find ritual in earlier traditions: a tendency, which we will observe in both the aesthetic, (idealist) and political (materialist) uses of the modern mask.

In general, until 1896, mask *praxis* had been visible not in the theatre but in other areas of popular culture in the form of seasonal festivals, mummings and carnival. The soft mass of putty that produced the iconic image of Ubu is the starting point for our investigation into the alternative universe of the mask where anything becomes possible. The appropriation of popular festive forms may not have begun with Jarry, but he set himself the task of reinserting the characteristic trait of laughter and the grotesque

image of the body inherited from the festive tradition and from the art of caricature into modern drama. Moreover he considered that theatre art as a field of human creativity had no obligation to imitate life.

A sherbet which was like ground glass: Alfred Jarry and the mask of Ubu

And if characters are presented to us through their masks,
let us not forget that 'character' means simply 'mask' and
that the "false face" is the true one, since it is the only
personal one.²

This extract is taken from the final paragraph of an article by Jarry entitled 'Concerning Inverse Mimicry in the Characters of Henri de Regnier'. It offers a key to the many difficulties inherent in Jarry's treatment of the mask as a concept and a practical object in the theatre. The phenomenon at the root of this treatment is mimicry; or the way in which certain animals and people hide themselves from their enemies in order to survive. The butterfly imitates a dead leaf, the chameleon changes its colour and men 'congeal their surrounding into their own image and erect palaces of space around themselves'.³ In this sense the mask is not only a protective device, but a subjective transformation. It is Jarry's contention that characters who adopt this mechanism think and speak 'each with his own set of rules', from within the aura or corona they create. In short they construct 'a symbol of the limitation of our powers' or a mask. 'In another kind of vibration, they would be portraits, spinning the gilt of their frames to their own measurements as they sit.'⁴

In the description of Monsieur de Hangsdorff, the collector of antique glass, Jarry embellishes the process of putting gilt onto the frame of character. The short tubby body with a bald champagne cork head is captivated by Venice. Venice, 'the town of motionless water - and what is glass if not motionless water', with its beautiful crystal glassware is captured in Hangsdorff's faultless collection. He has chosen to surround himself with things that are in harmony with himself. He accumulates a collection in order to extend and consolidate his private ownership of the work of others. 'Like ripples spreading from a pebble thrown into water, the things influenced by the individual become more and more numerous.'⁵ This process in turn strengthens and reaffirms the need of the bourgeois individual to create a representation of itself which is subjective. It produces an image of man concordant with his own ideology. It thereby creates a cocoon of harmony and security rooted in the economics of continuous accumulation and legitimised by the ideology of consensus. The epithets that depict the mask of Hangsdorff and gilt the frame of his character are self-interest, art for art's sake and private property. In this instance Jarry is content to leave us with the image of Hangsdorff.

The whole point of Jarry's interpretation of the power of the mask is nevertheless to transcend a partial perspective. The mask of character is not merely a personal ideal but a complicated ideological response to the social character of human relations. In the Ubu plays Jarry is refusing to allow the bourgeoisie a representation of itself which is subjective. To use Sartre's phrase the mask is 'totally object' and it does not reflect only the self. It raises basic questions about appearance and reality and the ways in which men have assimilated the social, historical and natural world to their human images and purposes. The farcical plots of the Ubu plays and their caricatured

Guignol style rest upon a coherent and recognisable ideological bedrock. It is too easy to read only the surface features of these plays and to dismiss Jarry as the high priest of anarchism. 'Nowhere is everywhere, but most of all it is the country we happen to be in at the moment.'⁶ The deceptive surface of the Ubu world of chaos, confusion and disorder is created by the incisive logic and cool rationality of Jarry's 'exaggerating mirror'.⁷ This 'exaggerating mirror' is the sum of his doubts about the benevolence of bourgeois social order and it produces an 'homogenous array of sombre masks'.⁸ In this mirror he discovered not consensus but coercion. Ubu represents the animal a-politicism of individualism taken to its logical extreme. By exaggerating the bourgeois attributes of Hangsdorff and translating them into a new context Jarry arrived at the mask of Ubu. Thus by making explicit the consequences and contradictions inherent in bourgeois value structure and social order he produced an image of man discordant with his own ideology. An image which contested his existence. On the evening of the 10th December 1896 it culminated in the public riot in the auditorium of the Theatre de l'Oeuvre:

I intended that when the curtain went up the scene should confront the public like the exaggerating mirror in the stories of Madame Leprince de Beaumont, in which the depraved saw themselves with dragons' bodies, or bulls' horns, or whatever correspond to their particular vice. It is not surprising that the public should have been aghast at the sight of its ignoble other self, which it had never before shown completely.⁹

The 'other self' that Jarry wished to introduce through the mask of Ubu has been described by Roger Shattuck as 'a man turned inside out with his basest appetites hung

on the outside'.¹⁰ In whom 'we confront a reversal of values in which the baseness and incongruity of life must be understood as a source not of disgust but of joy'.¹¹ It would seem, however, that the mask of Ubu functions not on a simple reversal of values principle nor only on the idea of human nature inverted. Jarry did not accept the values of society as given any more than he believed in the image of man concordant with itself. 'This other self', as Monsieur Catulle Mendes said, is composed 'of eternal human imbecility, eternal lust, eternal gluttony, the vileness of instinct magnified into tyranny; of the sense of decency, the virtues, the patriotism and the ideals peculiar to those who have just eaten their fill.'¹² The implicit premise upon which Jarry bases this perspective is the recognition of the unity between dominant values and the dominant social group. The mask of Ubu symbolises this objective unity as an individualised force. Ubu, in developing himself, changes the system of intellectual and moral relations and every act is conceived as useful or harmful, as virtuous or wicked, only in so far as it has Ubu itself as a point of reference. Ubu takes the place, in the imagination of Jarry, of the divinity or the categorical imperative:

Père Ubu exists.

Compounded of Pulcinella and Polchinelle, of Punch and Judy...of Monsieur Thiers and the Catholic Torquemada and the Jew Deutz, of a Surete policeman and the anarchist Vaillant and enormous parody of Macbeth and Napoleon, a flunky become king, he nevertheless exists unforgettably...He will become a popular legend of base instincts, rapacious and violent; and Monsieur Jarry, who I hope is destined for a more worthy celebrity, will have created an infamous mask.¹³

These comments written in *Le Journal* on 11 December 1896 by Catulle Mendès are interesting for the wider perspective they cast on the origin of the Ubu Mask. It is well-known that in the first instance Ubu's personality was modelled on Monsieur Hébert the teacher of physics at the Rennes school attended by Jarry. His collaboration, at the age of fifteen, with the Morin brothers on a cycle of 'Père Heb' plays undoubtedly produced 'a schoolboy's caricature of one of his teachers who represented for him everything in the world that is grotesque. The refinement of the Ubu mask was to continue between 1896 and 1906 and if, by Jarry's own admittance, the critical accolade attributed the Ubu Roi revealed more satirical symbols than had occurred to him when the work was in the making, it is not inconceivable that it also influenced *Ubu cocu*, *Ubu enchaîné* and *Ubu's almanac*.

The meaning of the Ubu mask for the society in which it was produced requires investigation here. While there is an evident danger of reducing Ubu to a plain puppet operating in an anarchic void, it is perhaps equally difficult to associate it directly with concrete historical and social prototypes. Nevertheless, the internal logic and meaning of the Ubu mask suggest that Jarry's creation was not value-free and that he intended it to be understood in the context of the plays as a whole. The plays reveal relatively structured social relationships and the contradictory forces from which they arise. Equally we should note Jarry's rejection of Romanticism and symbolist principles through the crudeness of his dialogue and presentation and his send-up of the various scenes from Shakespearean drama. In *Ubu enchaîné* this even extends to a nihilist attack on the French Revolution and its utopian ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.¹⁴

The bare bones of *Ubu roi* amount to 'a burlesque in which the tyrannical anti-hero, Ubu, carries off a revolution, indulges his gross appetites to the full and is ultimately defeated but not killed.'¹⁵ The social structure in this imaginary society is rigidly hierarchical from the king and the royal family down through the nobility to the standing army and the peasants. Ubu emerges as 'a mister nobody from nowhere'¹⁶ situating him precisely somewhere between the seigniorial privileges of the medieval lords and the centralised state machinery of capitalist control.

The mask is instantly recognisable. With a head like a pear and a belly like a balloon Ubu is decked in a 'casual grey suit, a cane always stuffed in his right-hand pocket, bowler hat'.¹⁷ Initially content with his lot, his first violent gesture is to assert his position as head of the family 'Merdre/Pschitt'. Violent, greedy and stupid he emerges from within the ranks of the old order as captain of the Dragoons, aide de camp to King Wenceslas, decorated with the order of the Red Eagle of Poland and ex-king of Aragon. Jarry has produced an ideological mask image of the state parasite. 'The governmental power with its standing army, its all-directing bureaucracy, its stultifying clergy and its servile tribunal hierarchy had grown so independent of society itself that a grotesquely mediocre adventurer with a hungry band of desperadoes behind him sufficed to wield it.'¹⁸ It is interesting to counterpoise this description of the rise of a parasitic excrescence upon civil society written by Marx in his first draft of 'The Civil War in France' (1871) with the theatrical ideology of the rise of Ubu. This correspondence between a force in actual class history and imagined class practice is not coincidence. The explanation is contained in the theatrical ideologies of French society during and after the period of the Second Empire.

In a letter to Lugné-Poe dated 8 January 1896 Jarry specified a 'Mask for the principal character, Ubu; I could get this for you, if necessary' and 'A cardboard horse's head which he would hang round his neck as they did on the medieval English stage, for the only two equestrian scenes.'

Jarry's knowledge and understanding of the specificity of the mask as a stage object is one of the first expressions of mask *praxis* in modern drama. His essay on 'Of The Futility of the "Theatrical" in The Theatre' centres on 'le jeu masqué' and is a concise attempt to explain the rapports between masks and movement, light, form and material more usually found in the codified traditions of the East. The first section is devoted to the use and function of the mask as a means by which the actor can 'indicate the nature of the character; the Miser, the Waverer, the Covetous Man accumulating crimes.'¹⁹ According to Jarry, these universal 'type' characters are a means by which 'we can learn from the kaleidoscope and particularly the gyroscope, a simple means of illuminating one by one or several at a time, the critical moments.'²⁰ In short, the ancient function of the mask is to illuminate the critical moments. The use of masked stock characters or social stereotypes, 'a homogenous array of sombre masks', in the theatre very often implies a critical social consciousness directed towards the society in which they are produced.

Jarry also theorises about the use and function of the mask as a new and total scenic image. The process of enveloping the whole head in a mask and replacing it with the 'effigy of the character' requires a particular adaptation of the actor's body, voice, intellect and technical knowledge to the effect desired. In the theatre of the late nineteenth century this adaptation had to include a carefully calculated understanding of the effect of footlights upon the expression of a mask and the way in which an audience

perceived this effect. The unnatural freezing of a major human characteristic in a mask does not necessarily imply inflexibility, rigidity and lack of subtlety. 'By slow nodding and lateral movements of the head the actor can displace the shadows over the whole surface of his mask.'²¹ In so doing the mask acquires a range of expressions, aspects, or 'accidentals' which Jarry claimed were 'both calculable and precise. Experience has shown that the six main positions (and the same number in profile, though these are less clear) suffice for every expression.'²² Although he does not give concrete examples of these six positions, he qualifies this statement by emphasising that they will 'vary according to the nature of the mask.' Jarry's terminology for these simple expressions is 'universal gesture.' He illustrates this 'universality' by giving the example of a marionette displaying its bewilderment by starting back violently and hitting its head against a flat. The section of the article concludes with the need for a mask to have a special voice appropriate to the part.

The language used by Jarry to discuss the specificity of the mask as a stage object bares strong traces of idealist and romantic theory; this can be seen in such phrases as 'the eternal nature of the character', 'the essential expression' and 'universal gesture.' In theory they infer a strangely static conception of societal and cultural norms and their effect upon the individual. In practice, however, they were applied to particular conceptions and to specific theatrical images, thereby avoiding the worst excesses of such theory. Jarry approached each mask in terms of what it was designed to do rather than what it inherently expressed. Thus the rare performance considerations outlined above, although cursory and brief, reflect a theatrical understanding of the use of the mask and its relationship to the aspects of the *mise-en-scene* not to be found in the work

of most of Jarry's contemporaries and which anticipates the discoveries of Craig, Copeau and Dullin.

No assessment of Jarry's use of the mask as a stage object would be complete without an examination of the visual ideology contained in Jarry's paintings, engraving and designs of *Ubu Roi*. The visual prototype for the mask can be located in a school painting of S. Hebert depicting the pear-shaped body of the school teacher clothed in an overcoat and surmounted by a bowler hat. He walks with one hand in his pocket and is rendered significant by the triangular features and perpendicular moustaches imprinted in the oval-shaped face.²³ In later visual renditions these features are imaginatively restructured to produce two major mask designs. Michel Arrivé in his book *Peintures, Gravures et Dessins de Alfred Jarry* refers to these two types as the Other Ubu and the true portrait of Ubu.²⁴

Yet another design from *Ouverture d'Ubu Roi, pour piano a 4 mains* in 1898, emphasises the vegetal aspect of Ubu. He has a leaved toupet, poly-articulated arms and carries a nameless brush, which has both buds and leaves at one end. The burlesque and frenetic atmosphere generated by these precise illustrations are a source of vital importance in circumscribing the form and attributes of the Ubu mask. They spin the gilt of the Ubu frame in caricature and make specific the image that the actor must animate.

The functions of the masks in *Ubu Roi* are closely related to the purpose of the play and critical opinion varies from describing it as 'a violent dream play' or 'an anti-realistic theatre of irrational suggestion'²⁵ to an iconoclastic farce. From this, it follows that consideration of the plot and the specificity of its masks as concepts and stage objects will only provide a necessary but partial view of the meaning of the play. On

this functional level, however, masks are used in two major ways as stage objects: in the first place, to signify the central symbolic stage characters in the second place, to represent stage crowds.

The Ubu mask is not simply devised to cover the face, but to replace it entirely. Explanations of what it symbolises abound and extend from the psychological ('the triumph of impulse and desire over the restraints of civilisation'²⁶) and moral ('comic embodiment of evil') to the political and social ('a marvellous debunking of established power').

Jarry also used the mask to solve certain basic staging problems such as how to represent stage crowds without employing a cast of thousands! Thus just 'a single soldier in the army parade scene and just one in the scuffle' when Ubu says 'What a slaughter, what a mob, etc....' will suffice. This consideration leaves certain technical questions unanswered. What is the dimension and scale of the scenic image that Ubu embodies in relation to the setting and other characters? How does the actor playing Ubu balance his excess bulk and weight with the demands of the text for occasional violent gesture and speed of movement? At what pace should the play progress through its episodic structure? What are the vital scene changes and how are they best carried out? How would Jarry's theories about the specificity of the mask as a stage object be implemented or tested in a stage production? What should be the composition and colours of the masks and settings? The original creation of *Ubu Roi* was the result of a fusion of *Les Polonais* by Henri and Charles Morin and Jarry's *Onesime* that took the form of a 'Drama in five acts in prose.' The date of its first production was 10 December 1896 at the Theatre de l'Oeuvre in Paris. Lugné-Poe accepted Jarry's proposition to direct the new play and employed him as a 'secretary, scene-shifter and

small-part actor.' However, the first performance did not use the mask as originally intended. Gémier, the leading actor, felt threatened by the obliteration of his personality in favour of the mask. In addition to this, Jarry explains 'As the play has been put on in some haste and in a spirit of friendly improvisation, Ubu has not had the time to obtain his own real mask, which would have been very awkward to wear in any case and his confederates, too will be decked out only in appropriate disguise.'²⁷

During the ensuing century there were, nevertheless, many masked versions of *Ubu Roi*. The clarion call by Jarry to revive both mask and puppet theatre did not go unheeded and there was both a significant and consistent revival of masked theatre in France and a range of dedicated avant-garde followers who adopted him.²⁸ Jarry's attack upon everything bourgeois (snobbery, salons, rent collection, academic pedantry) and upon many of the principles of western civilization has maintained its appeal, although its original expressive violence has been subsequently easily assimilated. It may have depicted the destruction of realism as thoroughly as 'a sherbet, which was like ground glass', but the fractured particles of the Ubu mask have continued to be reconstructed as a savage comedy of total warfare and nihilism. While Innes emphasizes the appeal of the mask to 'the irrational' and 'the pre-social level of the mind', we may do well to remind ourselves that it was a schoolboy prank which provided the basis for Surrealism, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and the founding of the 'College of Pataphysics'.

Edward Gordon Craig: *The Mask* Periodical and Mask Theory

It was, however, in the idealist writings of Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) that the rediscovery of the power and possibilities of the mask were most strongly advocated

and fetishized. As an actor, theatre director, graphic artist, stage designer, theorist, publisher and collector Craig tirelessly advocated the use of the mask as both concept and object. The Rondel Collection at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris contains many of the original writings and research materials for his publications of *The Mask* and *The Marionette* together with his books, opuscles, engravings, puppets and masks.²⁹ The puppet collection comprises one hundred and twenty figures, many Javanese wayang kulit and some headless marionettes made to Craig's design in Florence. The mask collection contains thirty fine ethnographic pieces including masks from Java, Egypt, Africa and Japan and some of Craig's own masks that used to hang on the wall at his home in Venice.

Craig's investigation into masks and puppets was not a passing fad but a life-long pursuit. After seeing a mask performance in Berlin where performers, mask-makers and theatre directors had failed to understand how to make the masks speak, he wrote the following plea in *The Mask* asking them to refrain from 'experimenting before an audience' because:

Twenty years is not long enough time in which to study the question of masks before showing results...unless you are a genius and a genius takes longer.

Therefore be warned, you who think it is an easy matter to make and wear masks on the stage.³⁰

The often dogmatic and bombastic tone hides seriously held and deep-rooted beliefs. Craig sought to enable the actor to have total physical and mental control over his work and to transcend all personal vanity. The solution that Craig rediscovered from his studies of the great theatre traditions of Greece, Italy and Asia was to depersonalise the actor and to portray generalised symbolic states and archetypal states through the mask.

It is perhaps worth noting that these same views were espoused by Jarry at least ten years earlier. In the mask he found a medium that contained every element necessary to a creative and a fine art. His real aim was to create a Western equivalent of the highly trained actors within the above traditions, while avoiding sham-Greek, sham-Commedia or sham-Noh approximations. In an article entitled *A Note on Masks*, he went on to say:

the Mask must return to the Stage to restore expression....the visible expression of the mind...to announce the existence of a vitality which already begins to reveal itself in a beautiful and definite form based upon an ancient and noble tradition.³¹

Between 1908 and 1929, Craig published his journal *The Mask* utilising some sixty-five pseudonyms. His School for The Art of Theatre opened at the Arena Goldoni in 1913 was to focus on the masks of the past and the theatre of the future and would integrate mask improvisation experiments with *commedia dell'arte* training techniques.

Craig knew that through specific inanimate objects such as masks and puppets a living spirit could flow, but that this apparent contradiction or paradox required a special preparation and training. In this he returned to the primitivist idea that masks had a sacred or magic nature. The return of the use of the mask in future theatre was perceived by Craig as almost inevitable and as he said: 'there is no very great obstacle in the way although there is some slight danger attached to a misconception of its revival'.³²

Craig's concept of the *Übermarionette* or the ideal actor, encompasses the idea that the puppet is the mask withdrawn from the human body and transferred to the inanimate figure. In fact, his description of the *Übermarionette* is cast firmly into a Romantic mould derived originally from the philosophy of Subjective Idealism but

filtered through Nietzsche and its strings or wires are made of a divine quality that emanates through the Poet directly to God. Craig condemns his puppets to absolute freedom in a world of pure artifice. Although he commissioned a California painter, Michael Carmichael Carr, to make some prototypes of unpainted papier-mâché marionettes (geometric design with traces of Asian influence) for him for the School he hoped to open in 1914, they were never used by Craig to take the idea forward.³³ It is now clear from the unpublished *Über-Marions* notebooks of 1905 and 1906 (amended by Craig in 1912, 1921 and 1924) that he did plan for an *Über-marionnette* International Theatre in Dresden and for the creation of 'a palpable instrument for movement.'³⁴

Craig's move to live in Italy and in France was to coincide with an enormous upsurge of mask activity in continental European theatre, which between 1910 and 1930 stood in sharp contrast to the paucity of mask work in the British theatre (with the exception of W.B. Yeats, the Sitwells and the Cochran reviews).

The mask-related content of the fifteen volumes that comprise *The Mask* situates Craig in the forefront of the modernist movement. The problem with analysing this material is that the *Journal* ranges across the whole history of the theatre arguing for the creation of an abstract and ritualistic theatre of equivalent spiritual significance to that of Greek tragedy, Japanese Noh or Italian commedia. A more rigorous analysis of its mask-related content has already been undertaken by Olga Taxidou (1998) in five areas: Craig's mask theory of the *Übermarionette*; Craigian masks of the *commedia dell'arte*; writings on the mask and the Orient and Orientalism; the marionette as the ultimate art form; and the mask personae or pseudonyms as an authorial mask in the publication of his periodical.³⁵

From his background and experience as a painter and engraver in the Arts and Crafts movement (in particular, the Society of Twelve, 1903), Craig believed that art only comes from design and that in theatre design the visual element must be primary. From the woodcut came his interest in what Arnold Rood has described as 'a device for cutting light into a black background'.³⁶ It is but a short journey from this point to identifying the play of light over the shadows and highlights of a theatre mask. In *On The Art of Theatre* (1905) he advocated the creation of a new kind of actor, the *Übermarionette*, 'the actor plus fire minus egoism'. It was indeed through the influence of Kleist's concept of 'the path of the dancers soul' at the puppet's centre of gravity³⁷ and Nietzsche's idea of 'ecstasy' elevated to *Übermensch* controlled by one single artistic will that Craig came to believe that Movement must be translated through the medium of inanimate forms.

In Volume One Number One of *The Mask* in March 1908 he formulated the dictum 'After the practise the theory' because he wished to subject the art of the theatre to a comprehensive theatrical reform that would give primacy to the artist. Olga Taxidou has emphasized that Craig wanted a whole new theatre 'not just the theory for one, to spring out of the pages of *The Mask*, though he lacked the luck, the backers, the colleagues and the theoretical framework to allow him to carry this through'.³⁸ The unity of theory and practice (praxis) sought by Craig was centred on the symbolic uses of the mask and the marionette (the mask withdrawn) in relation to action, scene and voice. For Craig these performing objects are the safeguard against realism:

Masks carry conviction when he who creates them is an artist, for the artist limits the statements, which he places upon these masks. The face of the actor carries no such conviction: it is over-full of fleeting expression... frail, restless;

disturbed and disturbing and as Craig says elsewhere, on this account not *material* with which to make a work of art.³⁹

The point for Craig was that an actor stripped of all egoism and in full control becomes a de-personalised instrument and malleable material in the hands of the stage director. The problem is that he elevates the masked *Ubermarionette* to an idealist Romantic theory of performance without, as Taxidou has convincingly argued, the metalanguage to make it work. The mask is fetishized by Craig as the ultimate theatre-for-theatre's-sake object of future ritual significance. He is clear that the mask will return to the theatre, but totally vague about what form this will take. He does not ask what creative processes the masked actor will be formed by or what creative techniques might be required. He asserts, however, that it will not be the Greek mask or the Sham-Greek mask but the 'English mask which is going to be created'. He falls back upon universal history (a-historicism) and the idea that 'the inspiration which led men to use the mask in past ages is the same now as it ever was and will never die.'

Picasso: The Mask Refracted

The inspiration that led Picasso to experiment with the dance-theatre mask came from the confluence of modernist painting (impressionism and symbolism), popular carnivals and fairgrounds, non-western theatre forms, early silent cinema and the *Ballets Russes*. He was drawn towards primitivism through the African mask, as refracted through the specific glass of Cubism. Then in 1917 on a trip to Naples he encountered the popular stock characters of Italian *commedia dell'arte*, particularly Pulcinella and the character of Arlecchino (with whom he was to identify so closely). In the same year he was confronted with Italian Futurism in the designs of the body masks of the *Balli plastici*

by Depero, who went on to collaborate with him. The landscape of New York with its high-rise buildings, sandwich-board sellers and the 'stars' of early cinema also exercised their influence on his imagination. In early modernism the problem for the practitioner was how to carry over the images and the skills required to the live theatre and to animate them when there had been no continuous tradition in the West for several centuries.

The collaboration between Cocteau (writer), Satie (music), Massine (choreography) and Picasso (design) under the auspices of Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* has been dismissed by some as lightweight in content and sensationalist in form. Cocteau's description of the plot was published in the September 1917 edition of *Vanity Fair* magazine and was, indeed, innocuous enough:

The plot of *Parade* is supposed to take place on the streets of Paris, on a Sunday. Certain music-hall artists show themselves in the street, outside of a music-hall, in order to draw a crowd. This is always called a "parade," among the travelling circuses in France. The headliners are a Chinese magician, a little American girl and two acrobats. The managers in their atrocious language, try awkwardly to attract the crowd, but are unable to convince the people sufficiently to draw them into the theatre. The Chinaman, the American girl and the two acrobats come out into the street from the empty theatre and seeing the failure of the Managers, they try the power of all their charms; but all their efforts are to no avail. In short the story of *Parade* is the tragedy of an unsuccessful theatrical venture.⁴⁰

However, the realities underlying this production and the meaning and effect of the giant body masks or 'over-life sized puppets' were very much more complex.

The ballet of *Parade* that opened on the 17 May 1917 at the Théâtre du Châtelet was a modern melting-pot of ideas, traditions, forms and cultural values. Within the framework of a play-within-a-play the ballet form was invaded by popular 'theatre of marvels' imagery mirrored from the Parisian variety theatre, music hall, circus and American cinema. According to Cocteau, the company rehearsed the piece in a cellar in Rome, which is also where Picasso designed the back-drop, the masks, the costumes and the scenery. The only masked characters were the three stage managers. Picasso was undoubtedly already familiar with the work of Depero and the Italian Futurists with whom he had fraternised in Rome but equally there was the legacy of Jarry's *Ubu*. The kinetic, spacial and movements qualities of these characters were choreographed with some difficulty by Massine. In accord with the Cubist idea of showing visually how phenomena were interrelated, Picasso made the masks from composite cubist elements. His first drawings were based around sandwich-board men who walked their employer's advertisements through the streets of Paris. In 1917 he built all three structures as giant body masks that were nearly ten feet tall and rested on the dancers' shoulders and strapped to their bodies. They were made from cardboard, canvas, metal and string and other bits and pieces left lying around in the Théâtre du Châtelet. In depicting these sideshow barkers or managers as satirical figures from the world of marketing and as bourgeois authority figures, Picasso is echoing Jarry's *Ubu*. They are all body masks or animated environmental sculptures. They enclose the identity of the performer and replace it with a composite symbol or effigy from modern urban life.

The realised form of the Manager of Paris is interesting in its constituent parts. On his back he wears a billboard and trees from the boulevard. The extant photographs depict an upper body with rectangle superimposed upon rectangle suggestive of a

waistcoat and the overall outline of the profile is of a simplified 'L-shape'. The mask itself is divided into two black and white planes with a matching upturned moustache.⁴¹ This character carries a long white pipe in his shortened arm and left hand and an elegant cane in his elongated right arm and hand reminiscent of a compère or master of ceremonies. The image is painted in blue, white, green and red.

Similarly, in the case of the Manager of New York, Picasso backs him with a billboard and trees from the boulevard. This time, however, the figure 'sports cowboy chaps, a cowcatcher and an over-sized bullet holster vest, as well as a skyscraper complete with a smoking chimney. Nautical flags of the time found on passenger boats run down his left side, he holds a megaphone in his left hand and a placard reading "PA/RA/DE" in his right.

The third Manager is a pantomime horse or 'cheval dupon' with echoes of the music hall and Cirque Medrano formed by two people inside the front and hind quarters of the costume-mask. The head of this horse is a composite mask reminiscent of African Baule helmet masks, white Fang society masks from the Cameroons and ape masks from the Senufo people in Sudan. It was just such a mask from the Congo in 1907 at the Trocadero Museum in Paris that Picasso appropriated in finding his way to Cubism.⁴² The Gabon Mahongwe mask with its square eyes and elongated flat nose has great similarities with Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907); although his appropriation is based upon taking so-called images of 'savagery' and violence and transferring them into the cultural sphere.⁴³ The art critic Max Raphael has marked this as the decisive point 'when he passed from that of descriptive to that of creative artist.'⁴⁴

The Chinese magician, the little American girl (somewhere in a continuum between Mary Pickford and Pearl White) and the two acrobats, each accompanied by Satie's mood music, fail to win any customers into their tents. The audience sees these artistes dwarfed by their managers and is not impressed by the sideshow. The real audience interpreted this spectacle as a mockery of a 'real ballet' and reacted with rage crying out 'Sales Bosches!'⁴⁵ They were pacified by Apollinaire, wearing an army uniform with the Croix de Guerre and a bandage around his head, who plead for tolerance and said that the ballet was proof that the 'modern' movement as 'super-realism' or 'surrealism' could survive the war. As John Berger has rightly said we should be clear about the significance of this moment and the recurring problem that it raised about the relevance and justification for being involved with art at a time of social and political cataclysm.⁴⁶ Berger presents a case for interpreting 'Parade' as a form of retreat from social reality, although I think it has considerably more substance than he states. 'Parade' has often been lightly skipped –over by critics and theorists and dismissed as an unrelated series of 'turns' and incidents punctuated by mime and strident music. The interpretation of these giant body masks dwarfing the artistes in their side show stalls and their failure to win over the public is of more significance than is usually acknowledged. These Managers were performed with ferocity and vulgarity as emblems of urban life and inhuman mechanisation.⁴⁷

There is little doubt that what was happening off the stage in May 1917 was, however, of 'infinitely more serious' significance than what was happening on the stage. The paradox revealed by the masks of this ballet is that they refracted reality onto a level where 'the objective social function which *Parade* performed was to console the bourgeoisie whom it shocked.'⁴⁸ Berger goes further to state that it could perhaps be

dismissed as 'frivolous not because it ignored the war, but because it pretended to be realistic.' With the gift of hindsight it is only possible to partially agree with this position because the giant Managers are still with us and the side-show stalls have become internet-ready booths within world-wide web sites. Under Capitalism modern artists are always caught between their other intentions and serving the bourgeoisie; and the threat of assimilation is always just around the corner. There is nothing 'frivolous' about this. Berger is, however, quite correct in stating that 'the ballet *Parade* is one of the first examples in which we can see the difficulties facing art in the present situation.'⁴⁹

Picasso's collaboration with Diaghilev's company continued in productions of Manuel de Falla's *El sombrero de tres picos*, Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* and Milhaud's *The Blue Train*. In the case of the *Pulcinella* ballet of 1920 Picasso had travelled with Diaghilev, Cocteau and Massine to Naples three years earlier. Massine and Picasso went walking through the streets and came across a *Pulcinella* street performance in which the player wore a real leather mask, happy on one side of the face and sad on the other. Massine asked if he could buy the mask and was astonished to be presented with it as a gift. After that, he was fond of saying that he always danced in this mask. The traditional construction of this leather mask indeed pre-dates the work of the Sartori family; but the mode of construction was very different from that of the wooden moulds of the north. In the south mask moulds were made in lead (not wood) and cast from plaster negatives.

Apollinaire: The Mask as Grey Zone between Actor and Object

In Apollinaire's *The Breasts of Tiresias* (1917), subtitled a 'surrealist drama', we encounter another artist seeking to liberate contemporary theatre from naturalistic constraints.⁵⁰ The performance of the piece took place five months after *Parade* in a little room in the Conservatoire Renée-Maubel in Montmartre. Albert-Birot had asked Apollinaire to return to his original idea of 1903 and to develop it for performance; and the ideas in the Prologue correspond exactly to those of Birot.⁵¹ In addition to the Newspaper Kiosk (body mask) and the Fortune-Teller (Therese in disguise wearing a luminous mask which should be 'lit up by electricity'), Presto and Lacouf wore large head masks but were dressed as clowns. The plays contains all the elements of theatre of performing objects, not through a collage of Cubist volumes as in *Parade*, but in its fantasy, jokes, rhyming couplets and seizure of aspects of carnival or masquerade. Apollinaire wrote the following instructions to Serge Férat who designed and executed the characters:

As for the rest, accessories and costumes... your artistic fancy is expected to

produce costumes, masks and accessories; don't forget the kiosk and the cradles.

The horse will do as he is and the rest in masks, half-masks, just as you like, or

make-up, or hats like the gendarme's.

Stop acting like one possessed and do it all quickly.

The gendarme is ready except for the make-up.

Hurry up with the others. We need:

1. *Theresa – Tiresias- Fortune Teller*, three appearances and don't forget the beard moustache wig – Birot tells me the beard is ready and is marvellous.
2. *The husband*, man's dress, woman's dress and indoor dress for the second act, mask or make-up, hat and amusing bouquet of flowers.
3. *Lacouf*, hat, mask, sketch the costume.
4. *Presto*, funny hat, mask, sketch the costume.
5. *Parisian journalist from America*, savage's dress with newspapers, mask and hat.
6. *Journalist's son*, one of the big masks would do very well, it would simply have to be finished and detailed.
7. *The Kiosk*.
8. Accessories still needed, including a half-mask for the Lecturer.⁵²

The meaning of the masks used here is not to separate off protagonists from other characters or power figures. Even the Kiosk is non-threatening although it is an object that has been anthropomorphised and is based on the picture of a newspaper woman with a movable arm. It is situated stage right and 'waves its arms in disbelief or protest at appropriate moments, while always faithfully reflecting reality, thanks to a mirror fixed to its side, facing downstage.'⁵³ The two bourgeois head masks of Lacouf and Presto entered in the heart of the auditorium and started a quarrel about whether they were in Paris or in Zanzibar. The audience soon joined in and started to shout invectives. The other masks were inscribed onto the bodies and faces of the actors by heavy make-up or masks to determine clearly their roles. Didier Plassard has observed

that this play contains a more systematic and accentuated 'puppetisation' with its heterogeneous accumulation of masks and eccentric costumes.⁵⁴

Apollinaire always insisted that the spirit of caricature had an important part to play in the development of modern art; and while Therese of Zanzibar refuses to be a breeder of children and lets go of her breasts, her husband decides to have children without her and gives birth to 40,049 children in one day. The play's central role reversal and gender exchange also sends up the traditional form of the 'realistic' problem play while solving the under-over population question. The critical reviews of the play, while interesting in their range of views, concentrate on the level of shock and surprise that the production aroused. The props, sets and costumes that moved were radical in appearance and behaviour and the performer whether 'wearing a huge mask or painting his face, walking within a box, or padding himself beyond recognition... often moved in the grey zone between actor and object.'⁵⁵

Cocteau: Bringing Objects and Emotions out from under Their Veils and Mists

By 1920, as we have seen in *Parade*, Cocteau had already begun the process of processing and deconstructing theatrical language into surreal images using masks. With the farce *Le Boeuf sur Le Toit* (*The Ox on The Roof or The Nothing Doing Bar*) he decided to use eclectic choices to produce another hybrid form. The hallmark of this production was that it was performed without words. This time he co-opted the Fratellini brothers, the famous clowns at the Medrano circus, to be the main performers. He used their physicality combined with slow heavy choreographed movements by himself to contrast with Milhaud's music appropriated from the Rio Carnival in Brazil. The head masks in this production were conceived for satirical purposes and were designed by

Guy-Pierre Fauconney (who died while working on the project) and made out of cardboard by the painter Raoul Dufy.

Le Boeuf sur le Toit is a pantomime farce set in an American bar. The scenario is a social satire of the stock types who frequent the bar during the period of Prohibition. The characters include a barman, a black boxer, a little black boy (played by a dwarf), the lady in the low-cut gown, the red-haired lady, the bookmaker, the man in evening dress and a policeman. The structure of the action in the opening scene moves from the flaccid barman on his own to the black boxer who orders a cocktail and smokes a big cigar while the little black boy playing billiards is clearly visible in the ante-room. The other characters enter and a series of mimed interactions takes place.⁵⁶ The woman in the low-cut gown carries the little black boy over her shoulder into the billiard room. The red-haired woman flirts with the boxer while the bookmaker gets jealous and subjects him to a racist attack. A police raid takes place in which the barman puts up a placard stating 'We only drink milk here'. The policeman enters and after a brief inspection and a dance, the barman pulls a lever and decapitates him. Cocteau makes the policeman stagger around looking for his head and gets him to put it on backwards before he falls over dead. This particular scene could only be achieved with a mask. The mask is then served up on a platter by the barman to the red-haired lady who dances like Salome and also walks around the head while standing on her hands. The lady in the low cut gown and the gentleman in evening dress pay their bill and exit. The boxer also leaves followed by the little black boy who refuses to pay the barman. The barman picks up the policeman's corpse and puts it on the table filling it with a bottle of gin. He then picks up the head mask and sticks it back on the corpse, which with some tickling and hypnotism revives the policeman. The barman presents him with a huge long bill.

Large head masks in the style of carnival masks were used for all the characters in this play. They were also all of a similar size. Picasso, who was in the audience at the Théâtre Comédie de Champs-Élysées on the first night, thought the masks insufficiently varied in size and design. Nevertheless, the composer Darius Milhaud thought that 'the huge masks lent peculiar distinction to all the gestures and made the hands and feet unperceivable.'⁵⁷ Cocteau was very clear about his intentions in using these masks:

Here I was bold with carnivalesque liberty and thanks to Fauconnet and Dufy, I treated myself to rejuvenating the antique mask, to the immobility of an exaggerated face, which gives a mysterious nobility to even the slightest gestures. A face is not very clear on stage, unless it supplements the arms and the legs, which then become awkward. If the face is hidden, the actor's body becomes a whole face, expressing at a distance what the real face expresses close-up.⁵⁸

For this reason Cocteau chose gesturally and physically trained actors with a good sense of musicality. He also chose clowns to play the female characters and used the masks to hide their gender. Similarly the dwarf who played the little boy was not recognisable under the mask as a dwarf. In addition to this he had the barman wear a mask of Antinous, the deified male favourite of the emperor Hadrian. Cocteau's knowledge of masks was extensive and in an autobiographical article entitled 'My Grandfather's House' he refers to his grandfather's collection of masks of Antinous of which he was in awe:

Behind their glass, the Antinous masks with their enamel eyes, pale terracotta cheeks and necklaces of beard, were arranged in tiers on red velvet, like an opera box by Manet.⁵⁹

Cocteau knew how to unashamedly borrow from other genres and to create a new surreal hybrid. He was very familiar with the work of the Futurists and the idea that the props in this play should move and turn into performing objects was a conscious adaptation. His initial idea for *Le Boeuf sur Le Toit* came not from literature or poetry, however, but from listening to Milhaud's musical fantasia inspired by various Brazilian and Portuguese melodies. His concept of using the music as an overture combining the talents of Milhaud, Auric, Poulenc and Satie brought him to the idea of combining slow gestures with rapid music. In order to capture the torpor of the bar and its night-life he claimed also to need 'the best mechanical puppets in the world, in other words, clowns.'⁶⁰ In other words this production about an American bar was performed in Paris to Brazilian and Portuguese rhythms based on assimilated images from Futurism and Cubism on the one hand and enhanced by notions and skills drawn from silent cinema, variety and circus on the other!

In *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (*The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*) in 1921, also performed at the Théâtre Comédie de Champs-Élysées, Cocteau returned to the idea of integrating the visual effects with the written word and carried out his first collaboration with Rolf de Marés *Les Ballets Suédois* (founded in 1920). The performers mimed to the directions of figures with bodies like the cabinets of phonograph machines and horns for mouths (situated downstage right and left in the wings). The piece follows a wedding that takes place on the first platform of the Eiffel Tower. The use of masks in this production was designed to depict bourgeois stock types and their reactions when exposed to the camera. Jean Hugo designed full-face silent pantomime masks for the wedding party like grotesque dolls. On the one hand the masks serve to dehumanise and objectify the characters with all their pomp and ceremony, while on the other they

magnify all their faults and idiosyncrasies for the camera. Since the French word 'cliché' means both photographic negative and mundane stereotype, Cocteau is clearly making a visual and verbal pun.

It is worth noting, however, that the variety of masks used in *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* is more diverse than one might think. The Young Boy has a giant head mask with a green paper crown on his head and he clutches prize books and a basket. Cocteau's idea was to depict a child who is bigger than the other characters: 'Look at that kid ! He really gets in the way.' While the five telegrams resemble dolls in their white masks and produce ready pirouettes, the wedding party are all delineated by full face character masks. In addition there is a large lion mask worn like a pantomime horse but with a huge face the same size as the General. Hugo says that most of the masks were designed at the first attempt, but the Manager of the Eiffel Tower was the most problematic to realise. The image changed from initial concept as a hotel porter with a heavy moustache and bowler hat into an admiral with a fan-shaped beard before turning into a stout civil servant in an alpaca jacket chewing the end of his cigar. Hugo says that he 'took the masks and the pasteboards to the theatre, together with the costumes, padded or stretched on wire frames...With Valentine's help I distempered them, matching them up perfectly with the decor and treating them sufficiently carefully that they could be viewed from close quarters.'⁶¹ The critic, Cyril W. Beaumont, makes the point that the wearing of these special masks and costumes not only involved many difficulties for Cocteau as choreographer, but also for the dancers who 'could neither hear the music nor the voice of the announcer. All the movement, therefore, had to be worked out with mathematical precision.'⁶²

For all the surface playfulness and lightness of touch displayed by Cocteau in his use of masks, masked dance, music and satire, his 1922 Preface to *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* is very serious in intent. He says that 'the poet ought to bring objects and emotions out of their veiling mists, to display them suddenly, so naked and so quickly that they are hardly recognisable.'⁶³ The poet in Cocteau was seeking for commonplace elementals within culture and across cultures – from the familiar to the strange, from the commonplace to the unusual – and in this he was exploring integrative ritual hybrids in the theatre and cinema long before the terminology was invented.

Autant and Lara: Masks from Le Laboratoire Art et Action 1919-1933

This company was founded by Edouard Autant an architect and Louise Lara an actress, from the *Comédie Française*. Their experimental laboratory, *Le Laboratoire Art et Action*, was a small auditorium in Montmartre dedicated to permanent research but imbued with a strong sense of ideological and social commitment. The use of puppets, masks and performing objects was the hallmark of their enormous repertoire of plays by such writers as Apollinaire, Marinetti, Ghelderode, Claudel, Rolland, Wyspianski, Flaubert, Goethe, Gide, Dante and Defoe. The historian of the company, Michel Corvin, described them as artists who were trying to change the art of theatre through using expressive means derived from the past and from other cultures. He makes an interesting comment about their appropriation of such elements: 'Since in addition, they were of their time and wished to be resolutely modern, they amalgamated in their treatment of puppets elements of other origins, such as Dadaist and Futurist cardboard figures and Cubist crossbreeds.'⁶⁴

During its fifteen years of existence Art et Action used a tiny stage from which to explore the most varied theatrical genres: tragedy, comedy, simultaneous poetry, futurist syntheses, improvisation, cabaret. In almost all of this work the actor was rarely left alone to deliver the text to the public backed only by the scenery. Dolls, mannequins, string puppets, shadow puppets and marionettes occupied the same space as the actor and challenged the audience for its attention. Giant masks, head masks, face masks, rigid costumes and moving shadows were all combined in their multi-media productions. They were, however, not seeking to supplant the actor with puppets, masks and performing objects: but to augment the work of the actor with special skills and to introduce 'an opacity in the rapport between the actor and his character.'⁶⁵

According to Corvin, Edouard Autant identified three main types of masking: masks of deformation (caricature e.g. masks by Akakia Viala for *Gargantua*); masks of interpretation (symbolic and non-anthropomorphic e.g. masks by Fauconnet for *Le Dit des jeux du monde*); masks of conformation (spirituality e.g. masks of Akakia-Viala for *The Madness of Clytemnestra*).⁶⁶ He was also profoundly interested in the masks of commedia dell'arte and archaic masks from Greece and Rome as well as 'primitive' masks. Autant often regarded costume as nothing more than an extension of the mask over the body of the actor. Autant regarded the mask as an intersection point between symbolic content and sculptural transposition.

Eugene O'Neill: Changes and Conflicts in Idealised Masks

Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953) wrote a unique corpus of plays using masks over a thirteen-year period from 1920 to 1933. During this time he experimented across a great variety of different theatrical forms and styles (from imitation to abstraction) within the

field of idealist modernism. His search for a unified field was rooted in Jungian psychology and the notion of the defence mechanism and using the mask to reveal the layers of hidden human motives. In 1917 he wrote a letter to a friend, Terry Carlin saying:

if I could only find a way to let people's thoughts be known on the stage - if I could use masks - if I could take off the mask to let the inner thoughts be known to the audience and put on the mask to show the outer thoughts - I'm planning to write a play using masks.⁶⁷

O'Neill's interest in masks has sometimes been attributed to his period as a working assistant of stage designer Robert Edmond Jones and writer Kenneth McGowan. He actually included masks in the drafting stages and published versions of six plays: *The Fountain*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, *Marco Millions*, *The Great God Brown*, *Lazarus Laughed* and *Days Without End*. In addition, *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape* became mask plays when they went into production. Moreover, O'Neill uses masks not only as stage objects, but also as concepts in his stage directions, dialogues and personal philosophy.

There are three main ways in which O'Neill uses masks in his plays. In the first place he uses them to depict stage crowds. Secondly, he uses them as stage objects of symbolic significance. Thirdly and most importantly, masks are both carried and worn by individuals suffering from split persona and major character conflicts.

The Emperor Jones (1920) is the first play in which O'Neill employs the mask as a stage object. It is worn by the medicine man as an integral of his stage costume and he wore an actual African mask to ensure ethnic authenticity. The image is strictly emblematic, however, with no real development and in its tendency towards primitivism O'Neill is raising the question of the possibility of religious experience in a world that has lost faith.

The Hairy Ape (1921) seems to run the whole gamut from extreme naturalism through to extreme expressionism. The play is the story of Yank, a brutish ship's stoker who goes in search of Mildred in New York. The group of churchgoers in the Park Avenue scene were masked and are described as 'a procession of gaudy marionettes'. While O'Neill seems to have had no plan to use masks at the writing stage and there are no references to their use in the stage directions, costume designer Blanche Hays is attributed with the innovation: 'the costume part of this was simple...but the faces stumped me. I suggested using masks and Gene was thrilled'.⁶⁸ Hays made the masks from two layers of cheesecloth rendered rigid with several layers of collodion glue. They were lightweight and the surface was well suited to painting. The masks were distorted parodies of the social refinement of Fifth Avenue passers-by on their way to church. Oval masks with squared-off chins were used for men and slightly-pointed chins were used for women. They were variously described as 'dummies in masks, acting and talking like dream folk'⁶⁹ and 'a march of wooden Christians'.⁷⁰ Yank stands by and harangues them. The scene was described by critic Stark Young, as a 'freak scene' with 'ridiculous masks'.⁷¹ The masks combined with the automated movements of evidently rich and prosperous capitalists were described by many as a searching form of satire. Here masks were used to create a unity of group identity and to highlight the

mechanical lack of awareness of the rich passing obliviously by scenes of real human tragedy.

The Fountain (1922) consists of eleven scenes and it is only at the end of this play that a woman's veiled face or mask equivalent is revealed. This is the first play in which O'Neill chose to mask his ghosts. It is a contemporary equivalent of Yeats's *At The Hawk's Well* in which Juan Ponce de León seeks the well of immortality. He encounters a series of masked visions of which Death is the first followed by his lost love Beatriz disguised as an ugly old woman. The masks are used to effect archetypal shifts between death and life and are symbols or projections of the hero's search.

In *The Ancient Mariner* (1923) O'Neill used the mask again as a crowd device, but this time on a chorus of six sailors. They represent the unthinking mass of mankind in contrast to the individuation of the mariner, who has an aura of vitality and spiritual vision, but is unmasked throughout. Only in this instance, O'Neill decided to experiment with changing their masks. According to the stage directions, at first the sailors wear the tragic masks of drowned men and later the exalted 'masks of holy spirits with halos above their heads'. O'Neill also creates a potent mask to be worn by his Death character, 'a black skeleton - the mask of a black skull on a robe of verdigris and rust'. The full-face masks were made by James Light.⁷² Those who liked the masks seemed to appreciate their use as a specific visual device and also their effect in highlighting the sense of alienation of both the mariner and the crew. They did not, however, seem to create a spiritual atmosphere, nor to possess a life of their own. 'The masks made by Mr. Light and worn by some of the characters inspired a curious interest, but add no illusion'.⁷³

In Act Two of *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (1923) O'Neill places an African Congo mask centre stage. The plot hinges of the relationship between a black boy, Jim and a white girl, Ella as they progress from childhood friendship to love and marriage. As they exit from the church, at the end of the play, they walk between two empty tenement buildings (one side of which is white, the other is black) as a silent and hostile crowd looks on. O'Neill introduces the mask in this description:

In the left corner, where a window lights it effectively is a Negro primitive mask from the Congo...a grotesque face, inspiring obscure, dim connotations in one's mind, but beautifully done, conceived in a true religious spirit. In this room however the mask acquires an arbitrary accentuation. It dominates by a diabolical quality that contrast imposes upon it'.⁷⁴

The mask is a powerful scenic image, a spirit of the wall, a resonance from another place and another culture. At the same time Macgowan and Rosse published their book called *Masks and Demons* (1923) containing the following observation:

Out of the Congo... the finest masks in the world. An Archipenko in the ashes of voodoo, an Epstein in ebony. The jungle artists have carved in their false faces a beauty they could not find in their own. It is never a natural beauty...[the jungle artist] is not trying to imitate man. He is trying to imitate God. He reproduces emotions instead of people. He is the creative artist, not the fecund animal.⁷⁵

The words of Hattie and Ella seem to be a direct echo of this text:

'HATTIE : It's a mask that used to be worn in religious ceremonies by my people in Africa. But aside from that, it's beautifully made, a work of Art by a real artist - as real in his way as your Michael Angelo. (*forces Ella to take it*) Here. Just notice the workmanship.

ELLA: (*defiantly*) I'm not scared of it if you're not. (*looking at it with disgust*)

Beautiful?

Well, some people certainly have queer notions! It looks ugly to me and stupid - like a kid's game - making faces! (*She slaps it contemptuously.*) Pooh! You needn't look hard at me. I'll give you the laugh. (*She goes to put it back on the stand.*)⁷⁶

The mask becomes a projection of everything that Ella cannot approve of in her husband and in her situation and as she grows more distracted she begins to talk to it directly: 'What have you got against me? I married you, didn't I? Why don't you let Jim alone?' As Jim goes on to take his exams to become a barrister, Ella retreats into illness to ensure his failure by her helplessness. She pins the mask to the floor with a knife. For her it has taken on the persona of an evil spirit. She thinks that with this action she has killed it, purged its blackness and with it the tensions in her mixed marriage. On a broader level, this action could also be seen as a purging of the blacks on a symbolic and universal level of race relations. O'Neill's implication is certainly that the mask stands for an entire culture and its spiritual ethos is clearly shown. The mask becomes an emblem or scenic image. It can be walked up to, walked around, talked to and touched. While not worn, it is nevertheless used as a dramatic element in and of itself.

The Congo mask⁷⁷ represented O'Neill's most complex and powerful use of the mask to this point and it brought a wide and varied range of critical reaction. While one critic described it as 'a living black face...leering at her'⁷⁸, another describes it as 'the jungle persisting in the Negro's blood...that helps drive the white wife mad'.⁷⁹ Still another critic thought that the stage mask did not live up to the written text, that the

physical object 'lacked the hypnotic lure that it has in the printed version'.⁸⁰ This view was not shared by Stark Young, who said that 'the use of the Congo mask as symbolising for the woman the Negro race, the horror, the hate; is fine theatrical imagination'.⁸¹ Another prominent theatre critic, Louis Kantor, went further in defending the play:

The key to O'Neill is found in his belief that the theatre should be used for the presentation of the struggle for existence - man's elations, conquests, sorrows, defeats, joys, doubts - and that his job as a dramatist is to express his vision of the struggle without compromise to any prejudice using all the means at his disposal in the theatre'.⁸²

O'Neill uses the Congo mask to explore the profound hidden conflicts of the mind of the white woman who projects upon it her own multiple personality. In this regard, the play broke new ground and explored the basis in a mixed marriage of the tensions between black masks and white faces in a segregated world.

Marco Millions (1923-25) has thirteen scenes and was not produced until 1928. It tells the story of Marco Polo's travels in China. The name and idea for Princess Kukachin was again derived from Macgowan and Rosse's *Masks and Demons*. Masks are used at the end of the play in the funeral scene when a chorus of men and women mourn the death of the Princess. O'Neill wished to explore the confrontation between East and West and he was convinced that Western actors could only convey Asian characters effectively if they were masked.

The Great God Brown (1925) is the major play of O'Neill in which he attempts to seamlessly integrate the mask into character development, plot and theme. Unlike the other works, it depends on the use of masks for its entire realisation. It is also his most

complex and most confusing use of masks. The characters are constantly masking and unmasking in front of the audience. They do this both to protect themselves from other people and also to make contact with others. They are split personalities and the mask is the device, which seems to separate the private or inner self from the public or external persona. In addition he uses the mask to transfer one person's personality to another.

The sources for the play have been variously attributed to O'Neill's reading of Freud and Nietzsche, to his friend Edward Keefe's failure as an artist and withdrawal into architecture and to a dream by his wife Agnes Bolton that he had come home a changed person whom she could no longer recognise. On finishing the play, O'Neill wrote in his diary that he was 'in tears! Couldn't control myself'.⁸³

O'Neill's background notes to the play clearly state his aim to return theatre 'to the spirit of its Greek grandeur' through 'the plane beyond ourselves' and 'the unknown within and behind ourselves'.⁸⁴ In these same notes he asserts that 'the theatre should stand as apart from existence as the church did in the days when it was a church. It should give us what the church no longer gives us - a meaning'. The major changes between these early pencil manuscripts and the published version, were that Billy Brown's mother and father and a group of office workers were all masked in the first draft, but the masks were then deleted in the published play.

Robert Edmond Jones and Kenneth McGowan designed the full-face character masks and William Stahl was the mask-maker for the original production at the Greenwich Village Theatre of January 23rd 1926.⁸⁵ Plaster of Paris moulds were made of the faces of the leading actors from which plaster life-masks were then cast. In the resultant negative moulds layers of papier-mâché were built up and adapted to fit the face of the wearer. The fittings ensured that each actor could make jaw movements

without disturbing the eye and mouth positions. William Stahl when interviewed in a local newspaper article emphasised that the masks had to generate:

suitable changes to indicate the dramatic progress in the character and yet in all these it was necessary to retain the portrait of the face under the mask and in two or three cases reproduce a recognisable likeness to a familiar figure like Pan or Mephisto. Obviously this was a complicated problem'.⁸⁶

The masks were well-executed and comfortable to wear, with a smooth and flesh-like texture, very close in resemblance to their wearers. In this way they were able to represent dual or multiple personalities. All of the four main characters assume and remove facial masks during the course of the play. However, many critics complained of the muffled effect they had on the voices of the performers.

The masks also brought with them the imperative of evolving a new style of acting. One of the key performers, actress Leona Hogarth made these comments:

Masks...make subtle gestures broad. The ordinary gesture now has to be somewhat modified in order to appear exaggerated. This applies not only to Body gestures but especially to the movement of the head, which, unaccompanied by the expression of the naked face adding to its meaning, is over-emphasised by the fixity of the mask. The job of the actor is to over-emphasise the voice and at the same time modify the accompanying gesture. And yet with the wearing of the mask I feel nearer to my audience than with it off. In not seeing them I am constantly straining to reach them and in my effort I feel closer than if I were not screened by the mask'.⁸⁷

The masks seem to fulfil a number of functions. On the simplest level they represent persona, role assumption and role change, by reinforcing the plot and the theme. On a

deeper level they are a thematic paradigm for the problem of identity: self-protective devices in which to hide private weaknesses while simultaneously creating a strong personal identity. Moreover each mask portrays four characters, which perform a symbolic function transforming through the course of the play to visually reveal character conflict and development. The critic, Edward Shaughnessy, drew the following conclusion: '*The Great God Brown* is the story of modern man – posing, accepting counterfeit representations of himself and finally confused by what he is.'⁸⁸

Lazarus Laughed (1925-1926) has eight scenes and was originally titled 'A Play for the Imaginative Theatre'. Lazarus remains unmasked because he has overcome his fear of death, but half masks are used here for the chorus, each member of whom is depicted in seven stages from childhood to old age. Each mask also has a dominant characteristic ranging from 'simple and ignorant, happy and eager, self-tortured and introspective, proud and self reliant, servile and hypocritical, revengeful and cruel and sorrowful and resigned'.⁸⁹ O'Neill also used different sizes of masks to follow a simplified Jungian scheme. According to Travis Bogard, the play requires three crowds of forty-nine people each, a chorus of seven people, eight Roman soldiers, a Centurion, Miriam, a Messenger and Lazarus himself totalling one hundred and sixty six actors!

O'Neill's contribution to the performance masks of idealist modernism has been extensive. The problem of etymological reduction, of trying to seize the essence of drama through masks and rituals derived from ancient Greece, Rome or Africa (of trying to belong to another spiritual reality), would confront O'Neill and his audiences with a series of paradoxes that would push both form and content to their limits. The practice did not always measure up to the theory, but his fascination with masks was logged in his *Memoranda on Masks*:

The use of masks will be discovered eventually to be the freest solution of the Modern dramatist's problem as to how – with the greatest possible dramatic clarity and economy of means – he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us.⁹⁰

W.B. Yeats: Metaphysical Maskings

I thought the hero found hanging upon some oak of Dodona
an ancient mask, where perhaps there lingered something of
Egypt and that he changed it to his fancy, touching it a little
here and there, gilding the eyebrows or putting a gilt line where
the cheekbone comes; that when at last he looked out of its eyes
he knew another's breath came and went within his breath upon
the carven lips and that his eyes were upon the instant fixed upon
a visionary world: how else could the god have come to us in the
forest? (*Per Amica Silentia Lunae*).⁹¹

An analysis of this passage touches upon most of the major aesthetic concerns developed by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) on the theory and practice of the mask. The image recalls the sacred grove of Frazer where the king of the wood plucked the Golden Bough, after donning a mask and ceremonial attire before journeying to the underworld. The scene is set in an ancient and heroic age. The central figure is an aristocratic hero. This hero changes and gilds the mask in the manner of an initiate chosen to belong to a secret society or designated to carry out a divine mission. The mask does not merely conceal. It possesses. The breath is that of another. The human becomes possessed by the inhuman, the mortal by the divine. Behind the mask is the

wholly other, the god, the idea of the holy, the numinous.⁹² And behind this is a visionary world and a supernatural reality. Thus the mask becomes the medium through which man may aspire to a higher truth and a purer state of being.

Yeats' personal ideology was rooted in a magico-religious tradition, which found expression through his artistic and political ideals. The complexity of this process and the contradictions inherent within it are a source of continuing fascination and controversy in Yeatsian studies. Three major trends of critical orthodoxy are discernible. In the first place, supporters and adherents of the poet invoke the human reality and philosophical seriousness, which characterise his investigation into the world of the spirit, art and the imagination. According to this perspective, Yeats' search for a mythology to unite Irish culture, through the creation of an extensive body of poems, plays and essays produces a unique series of images and symbols that pose anew the question of the relationship of fantasy to reality, of art to social life.⁹³ In the second place, critics and dissenters have variously accused the poet of static aestheticism, mystical determinism, romantic idealism, intellectual elitism and fascism. According to this perspective, the art of Yeats cannot be separated from the ideas and historical conditions that produced it.⁹⁴ Both of these critical trends have resulted in a certain degree of reductionism. The former minimises social content and elevates aestheticism, while the latter maximises social content and reduces the role of artistic creation. The latest trend is an appraisal based upon multiple personality and gender theory as developed from Yeats' concept of the poet and anti-self locked in combat to his later ideas bringing together the male poet and the female daimon.⁹⁵

The mask almost holds the status of an icon within Yeats' belief system or personal ideology. It is the symbol through which he struggled to come to terms with

male and female, appearance and reality, theory and practice and art and life. The nature of this struggle and the creative processes and products through which it was channelled cannot be accommodated within a reductionist framework. The specific development and organisation of Yeats's mask plays cannot be explained nor understood if they are simply labelled as the work of an aesthete or a reactionary.⁹⁶

Yeats wrote over thirty plays between 1885 and 1939. Eleven of these plays were specifically designed for performance with masks. The theatrical mode of production through which Yeats realised the performance of his plays was contradictorily inserted into bourgeois hegemonic ideology. When he first began to write plays all that was left of Ireland's heroic age in conceptual terms was the mask of tragedy. Gaelic hegemony with its legends of gods and fighting men had once possessed an organic unity founded upon principles of aristocratic virtue and druidic shamanism. It was in order to fill the ideological vacuum created by the collapse of this ancient cultural unity and the disappearance of organicist images that Yeats decided to advocate the creation of a people's theatre. Theatre became for Yeats a major means through which to express his romantic and organicist view of a simplified past but also a powerful tool through which to stir the modern Irish imagination. In a sense, without reference to the real historical and social conditions that accounted for the birth, ascendancy and decline of Celtic society, Yeats went in search of a potently affective mythology. Armed with the translations and dialect discoveries of Lady Gregory⁹⁷, he hoped to create a truly popular art by making the folklore of the people the object of his theatrical experimentation. In the early works he seemed to think it enough to colour the artistic means of expression with a 'popular' hue by telling and interpreting Celtic myths and legends in lyrical verse.

The Mask as Philosophic Tool: Yeats' Theory of the Mask

‘I see always this one thing, that in practical life the mask
is more than the face’. (Note from Yeats's Diary, 1911).⁹⁸

The concept of the mask was a symbol for the problem of identity, a personal ideal, an occult symbol and a philosophic tool for W.B. Yeats. Yeatsian commentary is extensive in all these areas and several books have been written about the authorial significance of Yeats' belief in the mask as a personal ideal.⁹⁹ With the possible exception of James W. Flannery's chapter on ‘The Dialectic of The Mask’ in *W.B. Yeats and The Idea of A Theatre*¹⁰⁰, little has been done to evaluate the progression of ideas within Yeats' philosophy.

For Yeats the problem of identity was not to be located in doubts about the existence of the self or soul. This was an apriori assumption. Beneath the fall into division, it was possible to discover authentic unity of being. The problem of identity arises only at the level of daily experience where the fall into division is to be felt at its most acute.

Yeats realised that the pressure of external circumstances could reduce the identity of an individual to nothing more than a creature of habit. The social atomisation of modern life could result in complete individual breakdown or social atomisation. However, far from adopting a deterministic idea of identity, Yeats emphasised the ways in which character could actively adjust itself to environment. He believed that everybody adopts a multiplicity of selves, ‘poses’ or ‘masks’ to suit each situation. Equally he saw that role-playing could become a means and an end in itself; that it was possible to live and to die without knowing why one had lived, sustained only by

fleeting individual experience. There was no solution to this problem within orthodox subjective Romanticism. For him, the problem of identity was the key question: 'How are we to know when we are truly ourselves?'¹⁰¹ Yeats experienced the conflict in his everyday life between his own shy introverted personality and the demands of playing the role of the man of letters.

Yeats took from Nietzsche's philosophy a concept of the mask that considerably strengthened his previous outlook. The 'pose' need no longer be a simple affectation or a protective screen. Instead, it could become a way of actively and creatively going beyond learned reactions or traditional defence mechanisms. The idea of consciousness, caught up in the act of making, was, itself seized upon by Yeats: 'Myself I must remake'. There is also little doubt that Yeats found Nietzsche's emphasis on the potential in man for increased self-realisation and the subsequent appearance of 'the higher man' appealing to his own sense of elitism. In this act of self-realisation Yeats also decided to adopt Nietzsche's idea of tragedy with man defeated but ennobled by new self-knowledge and 'tragic joy'.

In the end, however, the psychological monism of Nietzsche, though attractive in its claim to absolute authority, was incompatible with the metaphysical beliefs of Yeats. While for Nietzsche the idea of the death of god accompanied the loss of every moral landmark and aesthetic principle thereby stripping the mask of any divine or metaphysical associations, for Yeats the mask was an occult symbol of profound significance that could transcend the immanent world.

It should be noted, however, that although Yeats saw the mask as an occult symbol, nowhere does he define the nature of the daemonic force behind it. He simply

reaffirms the idea of the universal philosophy of the spirit, world soul and Anima Mundi. The mask is, therefore, 'a priori' a way of transcendence.

Yeats did not end where he began, although he has been convicted by some of a rigidly deterministic and static aestheticism.¹⁰² The final retrospective position characterised by self-mockery and lost illusions restores the idea of process to the mask and transcends dogma. The dialectic between the self and the anti-self, thesis and antithesis, is brought together by a new self. This is best described as the cracked and scornful mask of an ageing man whose struggle with the relation between appearance and reality, art and life, individual and society – the dualities of personhood - remained unresolved.

The Plays of W.B. Yeats: The Mask as Dramatic Device – The Theatre's Anti-Self

In the light of the previous analysis, the practical use made of masks by Yeats in his plays and on stage reflects strikingly different concerns and effects depending on the period in which he utilised them. The significance of these plays is often viewed disparagingly today, but it is perhaps worth remembering Eliot's view of Yeats as 'the only considerable verse playwright in English for several hundred years'.¹⁰³ Gabrielle Rowe also reaffirms that he produced 'a singular body of lyric drama like nothing else written in English during this period'.¹⁰⁴

Yeats pursued his quest for a potently affective mythology based on romantic populism in a series of masked folk plays between 1901 and 1914. It might be thought that his view of masks would be somewhat jaundiced after his comments on seeing the first performance of *Ubu Roi* in Paris in 1896 ('After this, the savage God!'). Edward Gordon Craig provided him, however, with the first practical means of actually bringing

very different masks to the stage than the grotesque caricatures of Jarry. On 21 October 1910 he wrote to Lady Gregory about a production of *The Hour Glass* (1903-1914), to be designed by Craig and stated that he was 'much excited by the thought of putting the Fool into a mask...It would give a wildness and extravagance that would be fine. I should like the Abbey to be the first modern theatre in the world to use the mask.'¹⁰⁵ Craig's design and engraving for the half-mask of this particular Fool was published in his journal *The Mask*.¹⁰⁶ Yeats was drawn to the idea of his characters being the fine invention of a sculptor and to replacing the faces of the common players at the Abbey Theatre with masks. At this point Yeats's interest in working self-consciously with the fictional self in his lyric poetry coincided with Craig's aim to diffuse and generate multiple masks for his readers and audiences. Both artists were exploring the notion of creating a flexible network of selves.

When writing about *On Baile's Strand* (1901-1906) Yeats wrote in 1922: 'The Blind Man and The Fool should, I think, wear grotesque masks and that designed for a Fool's mask by Mr. Gordon Craig in *Plays for An Irish Theatre* (1911) was intended for this play as well as for *The Hour Glass*. I have a fine unpublished design for a Blind Man's mask by Mr. Gordon Craig. The Fool in both plays is perhaps the fat fool of Folklore, who is "as wide and wild as a hill" and not the thin fool of modern romance' In a commentary on the play written some thirty years after it was written he says 'I had made the Fool and the Blind Man, Cuchulain and Conchubar, whose shadows they are, all images'.¹⁰⁷

The Player Queen (1908-1914) was not performed until 1919 and was written originally as a tragedy but became a satiric farce. Yeats described it as 'a poetical play where every character became an example of the finding or not finding of what I have

called the Antithetical Self'.¹⁰⁸ Only two actual masks are used in this play and they are for the characters of Noah wife and his sister in the play-within-a-play sequence performed before the queen. Here, in the part of Decima, the leading actress in the troupe of Septimus is psychologically and physically masked. In fact, Decima refuses to play in the mask of Noah's wife and elects to wear the mask of a queen instead. Eventually she is obliged to wear a 'foolish, smiling face' of Noah's sister. John Rees Moore says of this situation: 'It is possible to exchange one mask for another; it is not possible to go without one'.¹⁰⁹

At The Hawks Well (1915) was first titled *The Well of Immortality* and it was, of course, consciously modelled on and appropriated from a Japanese Noh play. The first contact of Yeats with Noh came not directly from seeing a performance but was a result of the influence of his secretary, the poet Ezra Pound, who had been appointed as the executor of the Oriental literary papers of Ernest Fenellosa (1853-1908). Edmund Dulac the illustrator issued an invitation to an exhibition of his work, including the masks, which he made for the London performance of *At The Hawks Well*. This was held in New York in November 1916 at the Gallery of Messrs. Scott and Fowles. Mr. Martin Birnbaum, a partner in the firm, arranged to have the play given at the Greenwich Village Theatre and he played the Chorus while the Guardian of the well was played by Michio Ito. Alvin Langdon Coburn's photographs of the Dulac masks illustrate the range of types and Yeats himself is impressive as a fox. Yeats specifies that each of the six characters in this play should be masked or have their faces made up to resemble masks. The mask of the Old Man has long flowing hair, flared nostrils and hollow cheeks and has two dominant aspects; greed and fear. The mask of the Young Man is topped by a helmet with the horn of a unicorn. Yeats said that he wanted 'to give

temporary mobility and presence to simulacra which have their own permanent or transient existence i.e., identification with and sublimation within masks which do not merely represent but are what they appear to be'.¹¹⁰

The Only Jealousy of Emer (Fighting The Waves) was written between 1916 and 1918. This play was directed in Amsterdam by Albert Van Dalsum in 1922: he viewed the play before all else as an experiment in the use of the mask and the style of acting that it imposed. Three major characters wear masks: The Ghost of Cuchulain, The Figure of Cuchulain and The Woman of The Sidhe plus the two mortal women who love Cuchulain. Both the Figure and the Ghost wear identical heroic masks. As Emer draws a curtain across the bier of her husband to mourn his death, the Figure rises up from behind in a mask of Bricriu, a god of discord and suffering from among the Sidhe.

The performers moved with slow, grave, extended gestures and movements. The dancer, Lili Green assisted with choreographing the piece while the sculptor, Hildo Krop, designed and made the masks. Krop had close connections with the Arts and Crafts Movement of the day and made the masks of papier-mâché in plaster moulds taken from original clay sculptures. He decorated them with woollen hair and painted them an ivory colour highlighted by deep shadows. Later five bronze masks were cast from these same plaster moulds and D. J. Gordon observes that 'the dark metal confers on the bold definitions that sombre human, non-human austerity, which the stage mask isolated from the life of the performance can hardly show'. Yeats, on seeing the 1926 production photographs, decided to rewrite the play as *Fighting the Waves* and produced it at the Abbey Theatre (and the Lyric, Hammersmith) in 1929 using Krop's masks with costumes by Ms. Travers Smith and choreography by Ninette de Valois. The latter's dance as Fand made a deep impression on Yeats: 'I am deeply grateful for a

mask with the silver glitter of a fish, for a dance with an eddy like that of the water, for music that suggested. Not the vagueness, but the rhythms of the sea'.¹¹¹ The masks are now in the Collection of the Netherlands Theatre Institut.

In his Preface to *Four Plays for Dancers*, published in 1921, Yeats was still thinking about mask use and says 'and if I write and organise performances on any scale and with any system, I shall hope for a small number of typical masks, each capable of use in several plays'. He is clearly working towards identifying a grouping or historical family of stage masks: 'Perhaps in the end one would write plays for certain masks'. He also refers in *A Note on At The Hawks Well* to the challenge involved in getting a poet and an artist to work together 'to create once more heroic and grotesque types, that keeping always an appropriate distance from life, would seem images of those profound emotions that exist only in solitude and silence'. In July 1920 Yeats even goes as far as to state that none of the *Four Plays* 'could have existed if Mr. Edmund Dulac had not taught me the value and beauty of the mask and rediscovered how to design and make it'.¹¹²

In echoes of Gozzi's reply to Goldoni's attack on the mask as a fixed face that always interferes with the actor's performance, Yeats asserts that nobody has told him after a performance that 'they have missed a changing facial expression' because 'the mask seems to change with the light that falls upon it and besides in poetical and tragic art, as every "producer" knows, expression is mainly in those movements that are of the entire body'.¹¹³

Yeats also used masks in two of his later plays *A Full Moon in March* (1934-1935) and *The King of The Great Clock Tower* (1935). In the former a Queen dances with the severed head of a swineherd who has come to eulogise about her beauty and

will be killed for his temerity. The Swineherd wears a half-savage mask covering the upper part of his face and a beard. The severed head is the disembodied mask head and the play culminates with her dancing and finally embracing and kissing the head. In the latter play, it is the King who beheads a Stroller wearing a wild half-savage mask for prophesying that the Queen would kiss his mouth. Instead she dances with his severed head on her shoulder and it begins to sing. When the great clock tower bell rings at midnight she presses her lips to the lips of the severed head. The image of a severed head and grotesque folk mask is not intended to suggest concealment or disguise, but rather an elemental transformation. The mask seems to have displaced all sense of reality.

It is important to note the role of women in Yeats' mask plays. A recent study by Janice Tedesco Haswell has presented a logical and well-structured argument for 'a gendered theory of the mask' in Yeats on the grounds that he 'believed that female daimons inhabit men, male daimons inhabit women'.¹¹⁴ Tedesco advances the case that Yeats spiritualises the mask in a cross-gendered version of his notion of the daimon and that his 'bisexuality gives him the authority to write as a woman, a radical notion that transcends literary theory itself and spills over into fundamental issues of philosophy, metaphysics, psychology and sociology'.¹¹⁵ In his poems, plays and literary works Yeats uses the concept and the physical object of the mask to highlight a self-conscious sense of the fictional self, 'generating multiple masks that create for readers a flexible network of selves' and 'what is distinctive is that he not only expresses his multiple selves but also develops a theory in order to explain his attempts to do so.'¹¹⁶

In the mask plays of Yeats we are confronted by 'lyrical-narrative hybrids'¹¹⁷ that fuse dance, music and drama in 'the theatre's anti-self' to 'appease all within us that becomes uneasy as the curtain falls and the house breaks into applause'.¹¹⁸

Pirandello: Mask Relativism and Theatre of the Mirror

The concept of the mask as a thematic paradigm for human identity rather than the object used on the stage as a theatrical device was the preoccupation of Luigi Pirandello (1862-1936). For Pirandello, the mask was the embodiment of the human face covering the imagination beneath the skin reflected back from the mirror of life. He often depicts a central character under threat from the interpretations, labels and agendas of others. The critic, Eric Bentley has described this typical structure as 'a centre of suffering within a periphery of busybodies – the pattern of the Sicilian village'. In a conceptual sense the mask is therefore conceived as either a form of social adaptation or as an illusion of self. By stripping away what he saw as self-constructed deceptions he sought to reveal the nakedness of human beings engulfed in a world of constant change. In philosophical terms his end point is a variant on nihilistic relativism.

The written corpus of his work comprises some forty-four plays (some of which have not been translated); and only three plays in which masks are used as material coverings for the faces of the actors and as stage instruments – *Six Characters in Search Of An Author* (1925 version), *The Fable of The Changed Son* (1934) and *The Mountain Giants* (1936 incomplete). (The last two plays were fused into one in 1936.)

Most of Pirandello's philosophical theory was embedded in his essay on *Humour* (*L'Umorismo*), written in 1908 and then revised and enlarged for publication in 1920. Here he expresses the view that 'reality is a continuously illusory

construction'.¹¹⁹ The sources of his thinking were Kant and Hegel. Pirandello stresses the need for man to develop the 'sentimento del contrario' or the feeling for oppositeness in all aspects of life (Kant called these 'antinomies'). He combined this notion with the Hegelian idea of thesis versus synthesis, a conflict of opposing states; and went on to advocate a form of compromise or synthesis. In an early poem *Mal Giocondo (A Happy Mischance)* from 1889 he refers to 'the cold, black eternity of nothingness' and describes life as 'a fleeting dream, a lie'. A few months before his death in an interview he quotes Nietzsche to the effect that the Greeks set up white statues against the black abyss in order to hide it. However, unlike another playwright, Ibsen, he believed in uncompromising confrontation with the abyss and could accept no 'saving lie' to temper the harsh realities of life. For Pirandello, it was necessary to 'costruirsi' or build oneself image up anew and to create a complex structure of self-deceptions and defence mechanisms called 'masks'.¹²⁰ Within this intellectual 'costruzione' is the buried self with its repressed passions and guilt, which comprises the 'life-lie with which to mask the complex and shifting reality of the face'.¹²¹

For Pirandello, the person with a partial view of life continually seeks to mask his or her true nature, by assuming a projected image of what he or she would like to seem to others. These images may be viewed as external masks that may be constructed to fit each of the roles he or she feels compelled to play.

In addition to these external masks, however, Pirandello believed that most people do not dare to think of themselves as they really are and are incapable of living with their true selves. For this reason they will produce an inner mask which is a romanticised and idealised version of what they would like themselves to be.

Finally, beneath this inner mask is yet another more fundamental mask which conceals, both from the individual and from society, his or her awareness of the meaninglessness and purposelessness of life. All these levels of masking taken together symbolise a divided self rather than an integrated self.

In *Teatro dello specchio* he goes on to describe how both the consciously assumed and unconsciously chosen masks need to be presented with a view of the self reflected in the mirror of the theatre:

When a man lives, he lives and does not see himself. Well, put a mirror before him and make him see himself in the act of living, under the sway of his emotions: either he remains astonished and dumbfounded at his own appearance, or else he turns away his eyes so as not to see himself, or else in disgust he spits at his image, or again clenches his fist to break the mirror; and if he has been weeping, he can weep no more; if he has been laughing, he can laugh no more and so on. In a word there is a crisis and that crisis is my theatre.¹²²

This process then is designed to reveal both defence mechanisms and most of the 'opposites' that you are consciously or unconsciously using them to conceal. If you are not too far sunk into illusion to make the transition without damage and if you do not lack the necessary courage to face up to reality, then you may be freed to some degree. These people Pirandello calls 'eirones' or self-deprecators. There is also a grave danger of over-intellectualising the situation and using logical deduction, to a degree that masks your own nature, often causing a revelry in the masks and roles thereby assumed. These people Pirandello calls 'aladzones' or pretenders, impostors and buffoons and they are usually drawn from a disillusioned and hallucinated bourgeoisie.

The use of the mask in *Six Characters in Search of An Author* (1921) crystallises many of the concerns about illusion and reality, theatre and life and the nature of a play on the stage. In this original version Pirandello described the entrance of the six characters as follows:

A tenuous light surrounds them, almost as if irradiated by them – the faint breath of their fantastic reality. This light will disappear when they come forward towards the actors. They preserve, however, something of the dream lightness in which they seem almost suspended; but this does not distract from the essential reality of their forms and expressions.¹²³

At this juncture, in the 1921 version, the only hint of a mask-like appearance is the 'wax-like face of the Mother'. The production toured for four years to wide critical acclaim before Pirandello decided to substantially re-write three sections of the play in order to highlight the difference between the dramatic appearance of the characters and the real lives of the actors. These three sections were the opening scene, the entrance of the characters (now in face masks) and the closing scene (now in mime). Pirandello instructs the key six characters to wear masks to make absolutely clear the 'fundamental distinction between the six characters and the actors of the company'. He insists in the stage directions that these masks should be special; that they should be made of solid enough material not to be made limp by sweating; light enough so that they may be worn comfortably; and 'designed so that the eyes, nostrils and mouth are left free'. The six characters – Father (Remorse), Stepdaughter (Revenge), Son (Contempt), Mother (Sorrow), Boy (Shy), Little Girl (Innocence) are cast as fixed types or 'sentimento fondamentale' within a work of art that has never been written. They are, however,

intended by Pirandello to be more than mere ghosts or phantasms (relegated to the realm of the spirit). He reaffirms that they must 'appear as figures of created reality, immutable constructs of the imagination, more real and more consistent because of this, than the natural and volatile actors'. The pattern and coherence of the play depend upon this distinction.

The Characters should not be played naturalistically. They interrupt the rehearsal on stage to seek release from the stasis in their own imagined situations. The use of the stylised mask in *Six Characters* is a way of approaching reality through non-realism. lives. The first act allows them to tell their individual stories, while the second act shows them acting out two scenes and the third act is set in a garden for a tragic denouement. The Father is an intellectual who has come to believe that a man is more than simply the sum of his past actions. The Stepdaughter regards his philosophic ramblings as a way of avoiding responsibility and accepting the full emotional consequences of his deeds. The Mother suffers from a kind of resignation or mental deafness. Meanwhile the Son rejects his mother, while the Daughter becomes a prostitute in Madame Pace's dress-shop and has an almost incestuous encounter with the Father. The two children die in the garden. All these characters have a different view of a shifting reality and none of them accepts the authority of the Director and his view of their reality as a series of rehearsals.

Each Character is also given an age, gender and precise series of attributes to assist the performer with the necessary performative information and the mask-maker with the relevant sculptural detail. The masks of the Characters are intended to 'assist in giving the impression of figures constructed by art, each one fixed immutably in the expression of that sentiment which is fundamental to it'. However, unlike in traditional

Commedia iconography, the Characters seem not to be associated with animal types. Also Pirandello does not specify the type of mask to be used; half-mask, three-quarter, or helmet style.

The Father is approximately fifty years old, balding slightly and with receding hair at the temples. 'A thick curly moustache fringes his youthful lips, which tend to part in a meaningless uncertain kind of smile. He has a wide forehead, outstandingly pale in a pallid face; oval blue eyes, very bright and piercing; light trousers and a dark jacket; his voice is sometimes mellifluous, sometimes jerky and harsh'.

The Mother requires 'fixed wax tears in the dark hollows of her eyes and down her cheeks, like those seen on ecclesiastical images of the Mater Dolorosa' and wears a simple black dress of unusual material with stiff folds. She also wears a heavy crepe veil, which reveals 'a face more like wax than ailing flesh' and 'keeps her eyes permanently downcast'. The portrait is gilded with 'the impression of someone appalled and oppressed by an intolerable burden of shame and humiliation'.

The Stepdaughter is eighteen, arrogant and brash to the point of insolence. She is very beautiful, but is also dressed in mourning clothes, but carries it with a decided air of showy elegance. She must be able to show tenderness for her four-year old sister and contempt for her fourteen-year old brother.

The Son is a tall young man of twenty-two. He has a stiff bearing and gait owing to the contempt he feels for his father and the sullen indifference he bears towards his mother. He wears a purple overcoat and a long green scarf around his neck.

The play mediates the differing realities of each Character, contrasted with the superficiality of the Actors and the demands of the Director. Susan Basnett McGuire has described the achievement of the play as 'a study of the relativity of form enclosed

within a formal framework'; the interpretation of the play is clearly left to the relative understanding of the audience. This is a process which has often been likened to the Chinese box principle, or Russian matrioshka doll, 'where the answering of one question merely opens the lid to another'. Elaine Aston and George Savona have noted that this amounts to 'a theatricalised and self-referential debate on the subject of theatrical representation' and that *Six Characters* 'is a "radical" text in that it draws attention to its textuality by means of a consistent focus on the mechanisms of dramatic and theatrical significance'.¹²⁴ The use of masks is centrally inscribed into this process.

This revised version of *Six Characters* was not Pirandello's only use of physical masking in his plays. Both *La Favola del figlio cambiato* (*The Fable of The Changed Son*) of 1934 and *I giganti della montagna* (*The Mountain Giants*) of 1936 require face masks for the actors. Between 1947 and 1966 Giorgio Strehler staged four productions of *The Mountain Giants* including two in Milan (Piccolo Teatro 1947, Teatro Lirico 1966) and two abroad (Zurich 1949 and Dusseldorf 1958). Pirandello built *The Fable of the Changed Son* written two years earlier into this play and although it remained unfinished at his death he had done enough to outline the structure and to place the play –within– the play. This is his magnum opus about the relationship between art and life. Pirandello described it thus: 'The mountain giants are the triumph of fantasy, the triumph of poetry, but at the same time also the tragedy of poetry in this brutal, modern world'.¹²⁵

The play is set within the dilapidated villa Scalogna where a group of people have withdrawn into their own dream world. The leader of the group is Cotrone, a wizard and illusionist, who, believes in the spirits and the forces of the unconscious being allowed to break through. The action of the play focuses on the arrival of a

touring theatre company led by an ageing actress, Ilse, who has been a 'star'. They are trying to popularise a play called *The Fable of The Changed Son* that was written by Ilse's former lover and who has killed himself because of her. Coltrane suggests that the play be performed at the wedding festivities of the mountain giants (whose name derives from the large industrial works which they are engaged upon). The missing fourth section of the play was to centre on the performance of the play (on a makeshift stage with a curtain wrapped around a tree) for the servants of the giants, who are symbols of greed and materialism. The servants do not appreciate the poetic play and demand a song and a dance instead. The leading actor Cromo tries to persuade the company to acquiesce to public demand, but Ilse refuses and attacks the audience for their ignorance. There is a riot in which several of the actors are killed and Ilse is consequently torn to pieces behind the shredded curtain of her own stage.¹²⁶

The meanings of the masks, both metaphorical and literal, in *The Mountain Giants* are extremely complex. These actors are trying to enter the world through the practical activity of putting on a play, but the author is a dead poet whose work is described by Cromo 'as a cancer that has eaten us down to the bone'. Coltrane and his group at Scalognati have withdrawn from the world and the deadening effects of reason and logic. Ilse and company are obsessed with making the play work for the public even if the public do not want it and the leading actor is prepared to compromise and betray the project if it brings some commercial gain. At the end there is the image of a broken-down cart bearing away the body of Ilse. In the 1966 production Strehler brought a black iron safety curtain crashing down on the scene.¹²⁷

The use of masks in this production is confined to the actors creating their characters for *The Fable of The Changed Son*. The critic Andrea Bisicchia, describes

how 'we find ourselves present at one of the most magical and fascinating moments of the theatrical process, the moment of masking, when the actors can be seen preparing themselves for sacrifice to the giants, using grease-paint, costumes, powder, unguents, all leading up to the moment when Isle mounts the stage as sacrificial victim'.¹²⁸ The masks for the 1957 production of *The Fable* at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, directed by Orazio Costa, were made by Amleto Sartori and are asymmetric creations in painted leather (lilac, yellow, blue-grey, orange in colour). The play requires a theatre company with a minimum of fourteen actors with the ability to play twenty-three roles and a highly developed physical and gestural style of delivery.

The Mountain Giants is usually interpreted, even in its incomplete form, as Pirandello's final pronouncement on the role and function of art in modern society. Susan Basnett-McGuire stresses that it 'is a play that offers no answers to the problems it raises and the lack of answers reflects the impossibility of reconciling an ideal of art with a repressive ideological system'.¹²⁹ The play, however, demonstrates Pirandello's concern about the viability of the survival of theatre in the passage from an agrarian to an industrial society. The theatre in the town near to Cotrone's villa has been abandoned and the people of the town are thinking of replacing it with a cinema or a sports stadium. The town is controlled by the capitalist big-wigs or 'giants' and when they are offered a performance of the play they are too busy to attend and their employees replace them instead. (Pirandello's own theatre company, had been recently disbanded owing to lack of financial support). Pirandello's implication is that the Contessa's theatre company is out of touch with the industrialised world and that failure to deal with contemporary issues will simply condemn the actors to obscurity.

The use of the mask is key as an expressive tool in the *Fable of The Changed Son* because it symbolises an imaginary dream world of reverie that is out of touch with reality. The son's mask has developed a demonic quality while the mask of the mother yearns always to be believed. The ambiguous mystic embrace of mother and son at the end of the play seems to echo contemporary Fascist propaganda of the period. In this sense, the play can be viewed as profoundly pessimistic since it seems to suggest that resignation and acquiescence, rather than struggle, in the face of adverse circumstances is the best way. The giants of industry have scaled mountains that dwarf the masked actors in the valleys seeking to communicate in towns and villages.

Artaud: Mask, Mannequin and Double - The Face Signalling Through The Flames

In Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) the search for the unified field took a new direction for he was among the first of the avant-garde to seek out 'uncivilized' non-European theatrical forms where the use of the mask was central. In his theatre of physical signs or 'hieroglyphs' the mask is adopted as an instrument for infusing metaphysics through the skin. He was to advocate a theatre of collective suggestion, which would take 'the struggle of the soul as the prey to the phantoms and spectres of the Other World to be the basis for its civic conflicts'.¹³⁰ The actor was to become 'an athlete of the heart'. A significant section in *The Theatre and Its Double* is also dedicated to 'objects-masks-props' and outlines the use of giant puppets, huge masks and objects of strange proportions.

Innes has cautioned against reading Artaud subjectively and reducing his enormous body of work to a series of psychological states or reflections.¹³¹ 'So Artaud's name elicits a formula: Primitivism – Ritual – Cruelty – Spectacle.' During the years in

which he was actively involved in theatre between 1921 and 1935, he increasingly aspired to produce work of detailed precision and strong visualisation. A closer examination of his three full length productions and four one-act plays in terms of masks, mannequins and doubles yields more than has usually been understood.

Artaud became a student of Dullin, at the Atelier in 1921 on the recommendation of the musician-poet Max Jacob and the actor Firmin Gémier. It was through Dullin and the improvisations at the Atelier that Artaud first became aware of the power of the mask 'His ideal is the Japanese actor who acts without props. Brightly painted masks with black hair are hung on the walls and some of them are in black leather of imitation wood.'¹³² Many years later, Dullin was to recall that Artaud went even further than him in his enthusiasm for Eastern theatre, when he attended a rehearsal of a Pirandello play called 'The Pleasures of Honesty' to play the part of a businessman: 'He arrived on stage with make-up inspired by the small masks used as models by Chinese actors; a symbolic make-up that was slightly out of place in modern comedy.'¹³³

At a metaphorical level Artaud often used the concept of the mask to draw attention to the fact that the hypocrisy in the theatre had to be unmasked so that it would cease to be used to mask life. At this time he joined Georges and Ludmilla Pitoeff at the Comédie des Champs Elysées where he encountered performances of George Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and The Lion* and Pirandello's *Six Characters* (the former used a lion mask and the latter mask-like make-up effects). In founding and operating the Théâtre Alfred-Jarry between 1926 and 1929 Artaud chose to use all kinds of masks and mannequins. In his first play *The Spurt of Blood*, written in 1925 he had already used masks and a whole series of other performing objects (a succession of masks, limbs,

feet, hands, scalps, colonnades, porticoes, temples, scorpions, frogs and a scarab) to represent the disintegration of all civilised values. The image of the giant hand of God that is bitten by a young woman and spurts blood across the stage had few precedents in the theatre of its time.¹³⁴ *The Mysteries of Love* (1927) by Roger Vitrac opens with the elements of a surrealist mask painted onto the wall of a house. This play is based on a rapid succession of role changes, with sixteen actors playing more than thirty characters, augmented by a series of mimed dismemberments of maquettes and dummies (made by Jean de Bosschère). There is no actual use of the face mask.¹³⁵ The other play on the same bill was *Acid Stomach or The Mad Mother* by Artaud. While the text has been lost, a reconstruction has been made based on the memories of participating actors and the research of Max Jacob and Robert Macguire. This piece did use masks as stage objects and was recorded by Alain Virmaux in *Artaud et le théâtre* (1970). This is the resumé of the action. A character enters dressed in a large black robe and gloves his long hair masks his face that appears stiff and dripping with moisture. He dances a sort of Charleston in almost complete darkness, moving a chair forward and then back while uttering mysterious phrases. There is a burst of lightening and he falls down. At this moment the Mystery of Hollywood enters, dressed in a long red robe, one eye distended towards her mouth by a mask with a ray of light emanating from its centre. She takes the long hair of the black-robed figure between her fingers and examines it in the ray of violet light like a chemist with a phial. A confrontation ensues between the Mystery of Hollywood and a new character called the Horn of Plenty. This is followed by a death, burial and processional scene. Artaud claimed that this play was about the clash between theatre and cinema for fans of 'Grand Guignol'.

Artaud's next four productions did not use the mask as a stage object but continued to work with performing objects. His attack upon the third act of Claudel's *Break of Noon* (1928) involved stripping away most of the text and accusing the author of being 'an infamous traitor'; in Strindberg's *Dream Play* (1928) the characters were like ghosts from beyond or fleeting shadows; *Victor or the Children take Power* (1928-29) by Vitrac returned to the notion of archetypal or stock characters. Victor is a nine year old boy who is seven feet tall and as intelligent as a grown-up and it is his reality that is contrasted with the stupidity, inanity and hypocrisy of the bourgeois family; the unperformed production plan for Strindberg's *Ghost Sonata* (1930) outlines how the characters should 'morally fade away, leaving the noises and the music dominant' only to be replaced by 'inert doubles.' Artaud wanted the old woman in the house, 'who has taken on the form of a mummy in a cupboard' to shrivel up the old man and to turn him into a 'brainless automaton.'¹³⁶

In *The Philosopher's Stone: A Mime Play and Stage Synopsis* (1931) Artaud confronts the masked character of Harlequin in a way which gives the impression of a twisted version of Grand Guignol. The first scene depicts Dr. Pale practicing the removal of Harlequin's arms and legs in front of his terrified wife, Isabelle. He is in the middle of a 'veritable massacre of dummies'. Harlequin arrives saying that he has come 'to have the philosopher's stone taken out' of himself.¹³⁷ He enters with a double of himself. The double is maimed, however and one side of his body is 'a bandy-legged monster, a hunchback, a squinting one-eyed trembling cripple', while the other is 'a fine lad who straightens up from time to time and throws out his chest when Dr. Pale is not looking.' The Doctor attacks Harlequin with an axe and finally falls asleep in a state of exhaustion. Harlequin, still masked, is now in pieces and seeks out his dismembered

head, arms and legs only to bring them all back together again. After Dr. Pale has left the room, Isabelle and Harlequin become involved in an erotic embrace and produce a child who is an exact but scaled-down version or miniature dummy of Dr. Pale. As the Doctor enters they produce the dummy from underneath her dress and the husband recognises his paternity. The married couple end in a final embrace with harlequin hiding behind the skirts of Isabelle. The play confronts the audience with a series of paradoxes with the aim of revealing Dr. Pale as the double or counterpart to Harlequin. The doctor and his wife have a sado-masochistic relationship. In order to escape this relationship Dr. Pale, in search of wholeness within himself, dismembers Harlequin in order to remove the philosopher's stone, but all that this paradoxically achieves is a transformation and a rebirth because Harlequin always comes back together again. Dr. Pale cannot escape the split in himself and the protean Harlequin never removes his mask and can go on fathering dummies of Dr. Pale.

Another unperformed play written by Artaud entitled *There is No More Firmament* (1931) has an apocalyptic scenario with the sky collapsing back into the earth which can be said to anticipate much environmental and live art performance from the 1960's onwards. The play utilises crowd movement, violent sounds and rhythms, complex lighting effects, disconnected language, newspaper captions, announcements over a loud speaker and screams to create an image of cataclysm. Observations by the crowd are kept to cryptic asides:

Wheat's going up, gold's going down

Dust over everything.¹³⁸

While the Government urges us to keep calm, Artaud describes faces 'that grow larger and larger and more menacing, marked by stigmata, every vice and sickness

symbolically characterised in the gross artificial features.¹³⁹ With the onset of plague and its attendant distortions came the requirement for use of masks, puppets and performing objects as bodies move forward with 'huge arms and wrists like rams.' The piece is written like an oratorio in four movements and at one point 'a revolutionary song begins' and we 'seem to hear the *Internationale*.' As the processional comes to the front of the scene, a giant figure with a huge body mask is 'carried in by a dozen strong men armed with hooks' accompanied by a choral chant from 'yellow, green cadaverous, over large or over-long faces':

His nose is enormous and he leans it on his right fist, appearing to rise above it.

Suddenly he stands alone and we notice he is on stilts. He speaks in a nasal, rising, very high-pitched voice.¹⁴⁰

The giant mask is called 'La Grand Fleureur', which has been variously translated at The Great Sniffer or The Pointer.¹⁴¹ The figure is surrounded by revolutionary imagery, pinpointed by banners and torch lights and the noise of aeroplane motors. His slogan is 'Bread in Christian bellies.' In using masked actor-mannequins and giant masks Artaud is following on in the wake of Malevich's *Victory Over The Sun* (1914) and the giant carnival figures used during the Russian Revolution and acting as a fore-runner to developments by The Bread and Puppet Theatre, Welfare State, La Claca, Els Comedients etc. at the end of the twentieth century.¹⁴² In fact, the piece is unfinished. 'It was designed to be an opera for which Edgar Varèse was to write the music. Only four of the six movements were finished.'¹⁴³

On 1 August 1931 Artaud went to the Colonial Exhibition in the Bois de Vincennes, Paris, where he saw a performance at the Netherlands Indies pavilion of Balinese dance theatre. This intercultural experience marked a turning point in his

conception of theatre. His questions about how to arrive at a theatre of 'collective suggestion' were suddenly answered and however divergent from a real understanding of *Topeng*, the effect upon him was enormous. In his article 'On The Balinese Theatre' in the November 1931 issue of *Nouvelle Revue Française* he describes the effect of 'animated puppets dancing' according to a 'new bodily language no longer based on words but on signs which emerges through the maze of gestures, postures, airborne cries, through their gyrations and turns, leaving not even the smallest area of stage unused.'¹⁴⁴ As John Emigh has explained Artaud was basically looking through a neo-Platonic Western lens that led him to assume that all theatre in Bali was non-verbal and over-estimated the abstract qualities of the masks. In addition to not understanding the signs within the social types represented by the masks he also did not recognize the signals between dancer and drummer and 'the dynamic play between the mundane and the metaphysical.'¹⁴⁵

In the metaphysical system of Artaud, the mask is not only the symbol of his violent refusal of mimeticism, it is also seen as the primary means by which the traditional barriers between the actor and the audience and between the theatre and non-theatre can be overthrown. In the essays within *The Theatre and its Double* (1931-1937) he goes on to develop the argument for the use of huge masks and puppets many feet high, moving lights playing on objects and continually shifting masks in the context of a theatre of cruelty. The writer Alain Virmaux has written about Artaud's propensity to undertake theatre experiments, which are 'a constant game on "le décalage" between the mannequin and the living actor, between the mask and the facial flesh.'¹⁴⁶ The mask becomes the symbol for a violent and anarchistic revolution that will destroy the existing structure of society.

In a conceptual and metaphysical sense Artaud's theory of the 'double,' leads behind the conceptual mask. Roger Blin was quite clear that this was not a simple question of adopting the external characteristics of a masks or any other outward devices: 'One cannot take Artaud as a guide unless one conducts a similar struggle against the idea of the soul, against God, against the abominable fate nature has reserved for man.'¹⁴⁷ In this the genuine sickness of Artaud played a palpable role. He complained again and again that language was not even coincident with thought. This failure of language to mediate between self and the world could therefore only lead to the disintegration of personal identity: and the disjuncture behind the youthful face of Artaud and the aged mask of the 'momo' (madman) was what he described as the gutted corpse of language, a 'venous massacre' of words in which 'a focal collapse of the soul, a kind of essential and fugitive erosion in thought' was piling up.¹⁴⁸

While Artaud was prepared in his youth to use masks in the theatre, in later life he chose to reject any Cartesian split between mask and face, or mind and body. Indeed, he came to reaffirm that 'the mind and life interconnect at all levels.'¹⁴⁹ He retained the belief that 'theatre used in the highest and most difficult sense has the power to affect the appearance and the structure of things.'¹⁵⁰ In *The Theatre and Its Double* Artaud started to formulate his views of the actor as an 'animated hieroglyph', an 'athlete of the heart' and to present his interpretation of performance as a 'psychophysical' act.¹⁵¹ He observed that a strong feeling produces 'an idea of emptiness within us' that requires 'an image, an allegory, a form disguising what it means to reveal.'¹⁵² The use of the mask is precisely this revelatory form of disguising. The composite form of the hieroglyph as the key unit of ancient languages (Babylonian, Egyptian and Aztec civilizations) should not be overlooked in this regard. Both Artaud's essays, *An*

Affective Athleticism and *Seraphim's Theatre*, are based on one article of faith: that the 'soul is a physiological maze of vibrations' that can physically affect another soul. Thus for him 'every emotion has an organic basis and an actor charges his emotional voltage by developing his emotions within him.'¹⁵³ More than this, he concluded that the actor must know the 'points of localisation in the body' that can be activated 'by using breathing's hieroglyphics' because 'we can be sure that every mental movement, every feeling, every leap in human affectivity has an appropriate breath.'¹⁵⁴ It is perhaps worth noting, that these ideas about the anatomy of the performer and the unity of mind-body action and its effect on an audience, although normally equated with Eastern traditions, are also referenced by Artaud to Western Gnostic traditions via the Kabbalah.¹⁵⁵

His journeys to Ireland and Mexico (Tarahumaran rituals) heightened his opposition to eurocentric modern capitalist society and the experience of being a rebel poet interred in the Rodez mental asylum subjected to electroshock therapy (and the removal of his 'inner memory') meant that all the protective masks (defence mechanisms) of Artaud were gradually worn down by a war of attrition. He died prematurely at the age of fifty-four, but his face and his masks, mannequins and doubles were the product of 'a physiologically affected soul' that still signal to us through the flames.

The lineament of Artaud's mental activity and the struggle that culminated in the banned radio broadcast of *To End God's Judgement* (1948) can be symbolically traced by comparing the mask-like appearance of his face in youth and old age. When he arrived in Paris in 1920 he 'was twenty-four years old, intense, handsome, slim, with a straight nose, fine lips and piercing eyes.'¹⁵⁶ André Gide noted the impact of his physical appearance:

I had approached him occasionally yet the look in his eyes is still vivid in my own. And the Nervalian grace of his presence, rendering all the more poignant the tragic assurance of his powers of revelation, remains with me like a private effusion.¹⁵⁷

Twenty-six years later after a lifetime of theatrical experimentation and recurrent mental illness and electro-shock therapy he was suffering from malnutrition and cancer. His face was emaciated, he had lost his teeth and his hair had thinned. 'He looked like a shrunken old man whose haunted eyes stared out of a deeply furrowed sallow face.'¹⁵⁸ Two years later he died at the age of fifty-two years in circumstances described vividly by Danièle André-Carraz :

The skeleton of Antonin Artaud had a toothless mouth open in the form of a cry. His emaciated, gnarled hand was held open clutching a shoe. His flesh was like dead wood where the virtual fire no longer circulated and where the blood had congealed. It was this half-strangled, parchment-like body that was found, on the morning of the 4th March 1948, sitting prostrate at the foot of his bed in the clinic at Ivry.¹⁵⁹

The mask-like transformation of Artaud from youth to age unlevels thought. It cuts a subversive path through all kinds of sentiments, prejudices and taboos that have come to form the interior of Western culture. He struggled to break down the boundaries between thought and word, theory and practice and theatre and non-theatre. His mind worked with images, visions, metaphors, masks and doubles like 'animated hieroglyphs'. In this sense, Grotowski was absolutely correct that 'He was not entirely himself.'

Jean Genet: Mask-Begetting Masquerades

In the work of Jean Genet (1910-1986) concern with both the theatrical and metaphorical uses of the mask is intrinsically linked to crises of appearance and reality in Western humanism. In his depiction of social reality as being 'all appearances' and his idea that social reality does not exist, we enter a new arena far beyond the socially determined masks of Ionesco in *Jacques or Obedience*. Three of Genet's five plays are mask plays and weave 'a profound web of active symbols' to undermine 'a tired world' and to challenge complacency in all its forms. In *A Note on Theatre*, written in 1954, Genet makes the case for 'a clandestine theatre, to which one would go in secret, at night and masked, a theatre in the catacombs.'¹⁶⁰ These masked catacombs were none other than *The Balcony* (1957) *The Blacks* (1959) and *The Screens* (1961).

Many critics have noted that Genet's plays use a brilliant interplay of different levels of illusion, which highlight the inter-relatedness and potential betrayal of all social roles.¹⁶¹ For this reason he seems to rediscover Yvan Goll's idea of 'non-reality becomes a fact' in linking theatricality and power relationships. In his plays everything is in a state of flux and behind the great icons of power Genet sees only veils and screens of appearances. Every role opens an escape-valve through which vital energy can escape while simultaneously congealing into an image that creates a death mask that encloses the real feelings of the wearer.

In *The Balcony*, Genet is intent upon exposing the Establishment behind the world order or rather the 'Nomenclature' of the brothel-universe with its 'storehouse of mummery.' As Benjamin Nelson has observed, underneath the masks of all the dramatic representations of fictional scenarios is nothing more than a series of sado-masochistic compulsions. The play is saturated with allusions to real historical events

and people: the Festival of the Boy Bishop in the Middle Ages, Joan of Arc in the Hundred Years War, the phases of the French Revolution, the tragedy of Robespierre, the follies of Napoleon and General Franco's valley of the slain. For Genet the dominant classes remain confidently in control of the 'storehouse of mummery.' Since this 'storehouse' extends to the definition of all things, Genet's play raises the question of how oppositional elements can do anything other than play into establishment hands. The characters in this play feel more real when they are wearing masks than they do when they are themselves; the social roles of the 'clients' (bank clerk, plumber, fireman) are of equal status to their chosen fantasies (Bishop, General Judge). In *The Balcony* the mask has become more real than the face because it is through the mask that society recognises the role. The robe of office is the only role and so the world of playacting and image-making triumphs. The accoutrements of power – crowns and rings, mitres and copes, uniforms and medals – are the symbols of office. When the defeated leader of the revolution, playing the role of the Chief of Police, castrates himself he also castrates the image. This play was first staged at a private club in London. It is set in a brothel of noble dimensions, a palace of illusions, in which men can indulge their secret fantasies; outside the brothel, the country is embroiled in a revolution that is coming ever closer. The balcony is the interface between the two zones. The false roles become confused with the real roles of 'bishop', 'judge' and 'general' to a point where everything becomes uncertain.

In *The Blacks* (1959) Genet depicts the white masked actors as a group of white supremacists including a queen and her servant, a missionary bishop and a colonial governor-general. Crown, church and military force now symbolize not only power but also colour: white supremacy means that the dominant values are white. This play deals

with the so-called 'race problem' and also with the outsider or those who inhabit the zone of rejection or the borderlands (repressed minorities, outcasts, criminals, prisoners, drug addicts). The play-within-the play is treated as a ceremony: the black man's interruption and report on the progress of the secret trial happening off-stage means that the performers have to step out of role as 'actors' and the members of the group playing the white court have to remove their masks. Finally we are informed as an audience that the ritual rape and massacre on stage has taken place only to divert our attention from the real drama taking place off stage: the trial and execution of a black traitor and the investiture of a new leader, 'presumably in a serious revolution against the whites.' In the theatre at least only the white mask falls. The victory of the blacks will be a total reversal of values.

The use of masks in *The Blacks* is multi-layered. Each black actor playing a member of the court wears a white three-quarter or half mask. Each mask is framed by a visible black band and on occasion by the actor's hair. Once again the self is defined only by external appearances or roles. Each of the black characters in the play replays the ritual murder of a white woman whose catafalque lies centre stage. Each is judged by the court of white masks. Underneath the catafalque draped with a sheet are two chairs, but no body and no sign of a mask. A reported real-life revolution off-stage by the black revolutionaries is also unmasked as an illusion. The master of ceremonies finally tells the audience that the only reality is 'the theatre'. This masquerade sets up a series of confrontations between black and white, between the actors and the audience and between appearance and reality. Then as the masks of appearance are removed and the Court are unmasked as 'the blacks', the strains of the opening minuet from *Don*

Giovanni are played as Village and Virtue play out their idealistic love story against a nihilistic landscape.

Once again in *The Screens* (1961) all the characters are caricatures of social types - the whore, the lieutenant, the academic, the Arabs. The Lieutenant and Warda the Whore –and this time they are ceremonially created on the stage in the costumes that become their profession under the watchful eyes of the audience. The masks are used for two main purposes: to mock the false show of power with its illusions of grandeur and to emphasize the sacrifice or martyrdom of those who submit to their masks and the heroism of Said ‘who refuses to be fixed in a legend.’ The ‘mask-begetting ceremony’ or ‘self-murder’ is necessary for rebirth. Why should the death of the Prostitute be a form of transcendence while that of the General is only a hollow sham? Said refuses to become martyred in a traitor’s mask but becomes increasingly demeaned and isolated from the other maskers around him. He is left no alternative but ‘nothingness’; caught in the trap of his own ever-moving negativity, nothing to immobilise his role, not even an empty mask. Does Genet place too great a burden on the mask as an iconographic tool? How easy is it for the audience to accept that satirical and grotesque masks that are normally objects of ridicule should be metamorphosed into metaphors for inverted martyrdom? Genet, strips bare the decolonisation process, but the play is not really about the Algerian war (the Arab versus the French on stage) but Genet’s view of a pre-determined poetic universe; the impossibility of reducing consciousness to any role at all. The beauty of Genet’s language sounds like eighteenth century prose. People are victims of society. The director of the first production, Roger Blin, speaks of it being too dangerous to be staged ‘Why we would all be bombed!’

The Screens is an ambivalent play in which Genet offers no revolutionary political solutions. The territory in which it operates is again that of masquerade and the masks require interchanges of identity, parades, dances and ritualised movements. The masks are used to set up a self-destructive circle in which all transformations are unmasked as lacking in real substance. In the end for Genet the masks are metaphors for nothing but themselves: the satire of power figures is always savage but the vestiges of power are located in the masks and their accoutrements not in the figures themselves. The mutable nature of Genet's masks is always rooted in a morbid and omnipresent concern with death.

The Search for A Unified Field: Idealist Primitivism

The masks of idealist primitivism flourished during the period 1900-1945. At a macro level the break-up of old nationalisms coincided with the collapse of empires and traditional values and ideas. The establishment of a worker's state in Russia in 1917 was followed by a wave of strikes, mutinies and insurrections across Europe and new tendencies within social democratic parties and syndicalist organisations began to emerge. 'In a period when mass struggles were taking place throughout Europe, each country was intimately affected by events in every other.'¹⁶² The founding of the Third Communist International in March 1919 created a wave of optimism about the possibilities of workers' power. In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, however, the death toll on the battlefields had been so horrific that there was an equivalent wave of despair, cynicism and pessimism. This was only further accentuated by the betrayal of the Russian and German revolutions and these two aspects, the crest

of optimism and the surge of pessimism, defined a period of heightened social change characterised by a rejection of political isolationism.

The use of masks in the drama of the period also oscillated between optimism and despair. As advocated in Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* it was considered desirable to strip away the illusions of one's adversaries – and with them one's own – in a kind of radical unmasking.¹⁶³ On the one hand, the trend towards mechanization in the ballets of the Futurists and geometric rendering of the human form in the dance experiments of the *Ballets russes* and the Bauhaus pointed towards a man-mask-machine depersonalisation. On the other, the Dadaistic fury of self-defiance in the face of nihilism and the effects of the permanent war arms economy on the psyche of those who had returned from 'the Bosses War' led George Grosz to stroll down the Kurfurstendamm in 1918 wearing the skeletal mask of Dada-Death; and to Lothar Schreyer's staging of *The Crucifixion* with expressionist masks as a strident cry against social injustice.

The shifting point between optimism and despair created a crisis of identity at local, regional and national levels. The two world wars and their aftermath were prefigured by the iconic mask of Jarry's Ubu with his phynance bag, bowler hat and toilet brush. Craig fetishized his ideal actor and his idea of the return of the mask to the point that they became his way of transcendence i.e. art for art's sake. Picasso, Apollinaire and Cocteau created masks at the confluence of all the avant-garde art forms in the name of super-realism at a moment of social and political cataclysm. Eugene O'Neill used masks to depict stage crowds, primitive icons and to explore the question of the Jungian split persona and changing social identity. W.B. Yeats developed a range of mask archetypes within a lyrical-narrative-hybrid approach to Celtic myth and an

attendant personal ideology extending from artistic pose to poetic anti-self. In the plays of Pirandello the search for an integrated identity is always illusory, with the unresolved masks of self-deceptions and defence mechanisms to the fore; and art always at odds with society. Artaud advocated a cataclysmic social upheaval and the power of the mob using masks and giant puppets against bourgeois society in *There is No More Firmament*.

Fractured Realities: The Slide into Dissonance.

The work of Artaud and Genet mark a decisive new step in the post-war slide into dissonance and the coming crisis of Western identity. Genet's political radicalism and nihilism combine in a black mass that is the counterpart to Artaud's theatre of cruelty. Since social reality and its masks are illusory, then all that is left are appearances (a position not far removed from the *schein* of Nietzsche). Whether through plague or death, all that remains are masks 'giving shape to a void or reflected images in a receding perspective of mirrors'.¹⁶⁴ The author and critic, Walter Sorell, in his book on the history of the mask in the arts called *The Other Face*, aptly summarizes this first wave of idealist modernism: 'The mask returned, reflecting and revealing the savage instinct of man let loose again, the old demonic spirits in new clothing, the spirits man feared and tried to escape while falling prey to them.'¹⁶⁵

5. Materialist Masks of Modern Drama: From Satire to Social Change

We have forgotten entirely that the primary symbol of the theatre is the mask... In the mask lies a law and this is the law of the drama. Non-reality becomes fact.¹

In the interrogation of how this 'primary symbol' and its inherent 'law' is transmuted into 'fact', modernist materialists have explored changing appearances by using stories, parodies, satire, role-play, myth and the grotesque. Bakhtin said that the theme of the mask was among the most complex in the study of folk culture and tied to the 'joy of change and reincarnation'.² In the study of modern drama 'the interpretative complexity of appearances' through masks is tied to sensuous human activities centred on change and the need for transformation. The facts of their creation do not speak for themselves. Masks have often been excluded from the ranks of high-culture in an urban society based on realism, rationalism and capitalism. The artists of the historical avant-garde radically re-evaluated the traditionally low-culture manifestations of masks, puppets and performing objects. The residual and dynamic masks of European carnival came in from the streets and filtered into cabarets, worker's clubs, political meetings and events, schools, village halls, studio theatres and even into the playwright's study.³ Discrepancies between mask object and mask-maker, between mask and wearer were commonplace and they were often the starting point from which practitioners explored the development of new performance identities. In the crisis of humanism the possibility of depersonalising the performer acquired a new significance.

The Masked Cabarets

The first developments took place in the small cafés cabarets and salons of France followed swiftly by the experiments of new theatres such as the Théâtre d'Art, the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre (1894-1900) and the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in Paris (1913-24), the Kamerniy Teatr (Chamber Theatre) of Moscow (1914-1949). The cabarets in particular became small laboratories that were testing grounds for young artists and were also places where work and ideas were exchanged. The lines between music, song, dance, strolling players, comedians, satirists, improvisers, poets and food and drink were never clearly drawn. It is therefore difficult to generalise about the subject matter and content of such diverse events and also to precisely pinpoint where masks were actually used in performance. The first beginnings in 1871 occurred when Rodolphe Salis, Baron de la Tour de Naintre, son of a rich brewer, a painter, self-proclaimed publicist with a sound grasp of business, opened a coffee room and bar in Montmartre. It became known as *Le Chat Noir*. Guests and patrons were welcomed with mocking bows and salutations of 'Your excellency' and 'Your esteemed Electoral Highnesses'. The move to new premises in 1885 on rue Victor-Massé allowed more room for shadow theatre performances, punctuated by stories, poems, songs, disguisings and impersonations.

From Paris and Berlin to Barcelona and Moscow and St Petersburg the cabaret revues spread. Many artists who went on to work on productions using masks met in these establishments: Erik Satie, Claude Debussy, Aristide Bruant, Max Reinhardt, Alfred Jarry. The Basle and Munich Faschings or Carnivals in February were events where the cabarets spilled out onto the streets utilising ingenious masquerades, pranks, satires and grotesquely colourful floats. Music, mime and street theatre were presided

over by the masked clown, who anarchically mocks himself and all the follies of the world. The façade of the Eleven Executioners Cabaret in Munich (later to become a theatre museum) was decorated with grotesque masks in 1901. On the opening night of the cabaret the eleven perpetrators were dressed in blood-red gowns and slit-eyed hoods carrying executioners hatchets for their opening theme song. Frank Wedekind joined the group as a political singer with brittle and monotone voice, after spending six months behind bars for writing a satire of the Kaiser's visit to the Holy Land. His play *Spring Awakening* was one of the first classic plays to use masks in twentieth century theatre. The *Nachlicht* Cabaret was opened in Vienna in 1906 (later to become the *Fledermaus*) and became a haunt of the young Oskar Kokoschka, whose later work with masks produced *Murderer. A Woman's Hope*. The Montmartre Cabaret in Prague was regularly frequented by Jaroslav Hasek, the author of the play *The Good Soldier Schweik*. The *Fledermaus* Cabaret in Moscow brought together writers, singers, composers, painters and actors from the Moscow Arts Theatre.

The designer Léon Bakst, who later worked for Diaghilev's Ballet Russes and invented many masks, was the *Fledermaus* designer. The Little Green Balloon Cabaret in Cracow of 1905, founded by Kisielewski, piloted a satirical *szopka* (Christmas play) using mask and puppet characters (including the local mayor dressed as Herod). The Stray Dog Café in St Petersburg became the meeting point in 1913 for a group of avant-garde artists; Khlebnikov, Andreyevna, Burlyuk and Mayakovsky (whose later plays used masks extensively). The Sound and Smoke (*Schall und Rauch*) Cabaret in Berlin opened in 1919 next to the *Grosse Schauspielhaus* directed by Max Reinhardt and presented parodies of his works including a masked *Oresteia*. The first Futurist *Serate* or evenings in 1909 were modelled upon the cabarets, as were the Swiss Dadaist

evenings at the Cabaret Voltaire from 1916-20 (the Romanian artist, Marcel Janco, made masks for these events).

Russia: The Cradle of Modern Mask Drama

The cradle of the mask usage in Russian art can be traced from the old carnival theatre tradition into the Russian Symbolists, the World of Art movement, Russian Futurism and Constructivism into the theatre of the Revolution and beyond. From the beginning the mask was situated within a series of cross art-form developments that were intrinsically connected to painting, sculpture, theatre, dance and street art.

The indigenous forms that existed were very much linked to the popular theatre, carnivals and fetes of pre-Revolutionary Tsarist Russia.⁴ Prior to these developments we may trace the use of the mask in other visual art forms such as the *lubok* or folk iconography popularised by the *skomorokhi* or semi-professional entertainers derived from a pagan, animistic and oral base.⁵ These itinerant players were officially proscribed by Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovitch in 1648 and apparently died out as a profession in the late eighteenth century. However, the theatre of social recreation persisted, consisting of seasonal plays at fairs (*gulyaniya*) with animal-human transformations, games, feasts, revels and processions; birth and puberty rites with mimetic dances (*igrovye*); and performed weddings with civil scenes and interludes including mock battles, clowning and round dances (*khorovody*). Non ritual folk plays, such as *The Ship (Lodka)* and *Tsar Maksimilian*, were performed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Later in the eighteenth century these were also performed in temporary wooden structures called *balagany* (from the Persian for 'balakhan' meaning upper chamber or balcony) during Shrovetide and Easter week. In

addition during 1730-60 visiting Italian artists introduced *commedia dell'arte* into the Russian interludes accompanying the *vertep* puppet plays.

In Russia there was a strong reaction against Tsarism and the imported painting styles of Impressionism and early Cubism, accompanied by a paradoxical acceptance of the attack on the old art forms initiated by Italian Futurism. Vsevolod Meyerhold used a whole series of productions with characters from the *commedia dell'arte* that demanded extensive use of masks. Nicolai Evreinov, director of the *Starinnyi Teatr* (Ancient Theatre) in St Petersburg for two seasons during 1907-8 and 1911-12 advocated presenting theatre in the style of *commedia dell'arte* or medieval Mystery plays.

Alexei Krucheykh's opera *Victory Over The Sun* was performed in St. Petersburg's Luna Park Theatre on October 1913 and used a series of remarkable Futuristic head-mask creations and geometric costumes by Kasimir Malevich. The masks were made of papier-mâché, larger than life-size and were performed on a narrow strip of stage using puppet-like gestures. Mikhail Matyushin, the composer of the music for the piece described it as the 'first performance on stage of the disintegration of concepts and words, of old staging and musical harmony'.⁶ The police were massed in large numbers outside the theatre in anticipation of crowd disorder.

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three backcloth and twelve costume designs for this production fused earlier interest in Cubism and Futurism into a new art form designated by Malevich as 'Suprematism' or Constructivism.

This production was twinned with *Tragedy*. *Vladimir Mayakovsky* and is the only extant Constructivist play. The key characters are giant masks or body puppets made of papier-mâché, some five to six metres high, depicting the Dumb Friend, the Old Millennial, the One-Eyed Somnambulist, the Man who has Lost an Ear, Man without a Head, Man with the Scarred Face, the Ordinary Young Man, the Woman of the Little Tear, The Tearful Woman, the Woman of the Big Tear. This work anticipates the enormous masks and mannequins of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and the latter-day sculptures of Peter Schumann. The opening scene depicts a carnival in which the poor are pitted against the oppressors and where the mannequin objects rebel against Man (played by Mayakovsky) in a sinister parade of infirmity. Each of the giant masks was dressed in a white tunic, each carrying in front of him a kind of shield painted in the style of a coat of arms (symbolic of an infirmity). The characters were meant to evoke the martyrdom of oppressed crowds and the hopelessness of the Pariahs. This allegorical display of hideous masks with their rectilinear movements evoked conflicting emotions in the audience:

Leaving from the corridors, the characters filed out slowly, one after the other: living puppets, cardboard puppets. The public tried to laugh but the laughter broke down. Why? Well, because it was not at all funny, it was terrifying. Few of the people among the audience in the room could understand or explain this. After the laughter from the first moments effaced itself, one felt an apprehension in the place, a disagreeable apprehension.⁸

Meyerhold: Precursor of Social and Expressive Masks

Vsevolod Meyerhold had begun his search for new forms as early as 1902 by rejecting naturalism and researching the Oriental theatre. His production of Blok's *Fairground Booth* (30 December 1906) marked his first major excursion into the *commedia dell'arte* and its masks and conventions. This was the beginning of a life-long interest in *commedia* and when he established his studio in 1914 the *commedia* stock characters became a central part of his training programme. His writings on his 1910 production of Moliere's *Don Juan* specify his interest in the mask:

If you examine the dog-eared pages of old scenarios such as Flaminio Scala's Anthology of 1611, you will discover the magical power of the mask. Arlecchino, a native of Bergamo and the servant of the miserly Doctor, is forced to wear a coat with multicoloured patches because of his master's meanness. Arlecchino is a foolish buffoon, a roguish servant who seems always to wear a cheerful grin. But look closer! What is hidden behind the mask? Arlecchino, the all-powerful wizard, the enchanter, the magician; Arlecchino, the emissary of the infernal powers. The mask may conceal more than just two aspects of a character. The two aspects of Arlecchino represent two opposite poles. Between them lies an infinite range of shades and variations. How does one reveal this extreme diversity of character to the spectator. With the aid of the mask. The actor who has mastered the art of gesture and movement (herein lies the power!) manipulates his masks in such a way that the spectator is never in any doubt as to the character he is watching: whether he is the foolish buffoon from Bergamo or the Devil. This chameleonic power, concealed beneath the expressionless

visage of the actor, invests the theatre with all the enchantment of *chiarscuro*. Is it not the mask which helps the spectator fly away to the land of make-believe?

The mask enables the spectator to see not only the actual Arlecchino before him but all the Arlecchino's who live in his memory. Through the mask the spectator sees every person who bears the merest resemblance to the character.⁹

Meyerhold never used the traditional leather half-mask of the *commedia dell'arte* in his productions; but relied upon the style of acting that the mask signifies in its emotional detachment and physical dexterity. He described the internalised principle of the mask as the ability to move between multi-faceted faces by the actor:

For Molière, Don Juan is no more than a wearer of masks. At one moment we see on his face a mask which embodies all the dissoluteness, unbelief, cynicism and pretensions of a gallant of the court of Le Roi-Soleil; then we see the mask of the author-accuser; then the nightmarish mask which stifled the author himself, the agonising mask he was forced to wear at court performances and in front of his perfidious wife. Not until the very end does he hand his puppet the mask of El Burlador de Sevilla, which he borrowed from the touring Italians.¹⁰

Also in 1910 Meyerhold danced the part of Pierrot in Mikhail Fokine's production of the ballet *Carnival* (the part of Florestan was played by Nijinsky) and his 'gestures lagged behind the music' at first, but by the third rehearsal 'our new mime had matured and in the performance gave a marvellous image of the melancholy dreamer, Pierrot'.

In 1913 this interest was further extended when Meyerhold appointed Vladimir Solovyev (who had written *Harlequin, The Marriage Broker*) to teach the history and

technique of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The lectures on origins, development and influences were combined with traditional *lazzi* (comic tricks of the trade and set pieces). The course was entitled 'Methods of Staging *Commedia dell'Arte* Performances.' The aim here was to use *Commedia* as a means to study the purposes of theatre and associated techniques. Students were asked to study the gestures and movements of the stock characters and then to determine 'the geometry of the scenes involving a group of masks.' This was done by researching and experimenting with traditional scenarios such as 'the harem' and the 'duel' and then by improvising physically and vocally. Scenes from *The Love of Three Oranges* by Gozzi, *Harlequin Polished by Love* by Marivaux and *The Cave of the Salamander* by Cervantes were also used as reference points. All this was, however, only designed to be a lead-in to Meyerhold's pantomime studies linked to biomechanics.

The productions of Meyerhold that used actual masks as facial coverings can be listed but no formal theory and practice of mask use in stage performance is discernible. In the tavern scene *The Unknown Woman* (1906) the men wore false red noses. The masked ball scene in Lermontov's *Masquerade* (1917) reveals a design by Golovin for the character of Nina, which incorporates a black domino eye mask with fringed tassels. In the same play, the actor Illarion Petsov was cast as The Stranger in full-face white *bauta* mask and costume. The entrance of this character is described in the following way:

Finally the mysterious figure of the Stranger appears, clad in a black domino cloak and a weirdly terrifying white Italian mask. He enters through the door in the proscenium arch to the left of the audience and moves silently in an arc around the very edge of the forestage towards the opposite door. Behind him, as

though in a current drawn by his hypnotic power, there floods in stage a long, broad ribbon of masked figures, suddenly he turns to face them, halts and stares fixedly at them through his strange mask; they all freeze as one, riveted by his gaze.¹¹

The *bauta* mask is the mask of the informer from Venice. This is not a mask from the theatre, but a real social mask used by official informers of the city state to report on misdemeanours by members of the public. The same character is depicted in Pietro Longhi's painting *Cavadenti*. The interplay of social masks and their function of 'making strange' that is used in Meyerhold's production of *The Forest* by Ostrovsky (1924) prefigures the concept of 'alienation effect' (*Verfremdungseffekt*) later developed by Brecht. John Willett attributes the origin of this notion to Meyerhold, Shklovsky and Tretyakov from a meeting between them and Brecht at the Central Art Workers Club after a performance of Mei Lan-fang in April 1935. While he remained convinced of the need to discover a mask 'within oneself' (or a number of masks through which we can construct our lives) Meyerhold did not advocate wearing of the physical object itself. In an observation reminiscent of Brecht's accident in the street, Meyerhold asks the question: 'Where did Chaplin find the mask of *Charlie*? He found it in the street.' This also brings us back to the question raised by Gide about where lies the stage – in the theatre or in life.

When we examine the sixteen biomechanical studies of Meyerhold from 1914 and the later reconstructions delivered by Inkidjinov, Korenev and Kustov plus the priming function of the *dactyl*, the mask as a physical object is completely absent in his process of actor training.¹² These exercises are designed to be taken up by 'a ready-made character who can enact its various aspects in various plastic positions.' In this

sense it has been observed that 'the biomechanic system is a-psychological' in that 'it shuts off the inner world of man as material for the actor's creative work' in a Stanislavskian sense. The actor works from the outside to the inside with any emotion communicated through physical movement.

Pitches (2003) says that Meyerhold had a 'fluid and expressive approach to building character'. The approach was based on seeking out 'the contradictions, the contrasts, the conflicts in your character' and then 'illustrate these differences in physical terms.'¹³

Ironically it was his concept of the 'actor-tribune' lifting the mask of character to reveal his true nature for which he was to be indicted. In a curious study entitled *The Theatre of the Social Mask* by Boris Alpers from 1934 Meyerhold is eulogised for experimenting across genres and theatre traditions for more than thirty years, but convicted of training the kind of actor who could bring on stage a ready-made, externally complete, character mask. At a conceptual level the acting style derived from pre-acting and biomechanics leads towards the creation of a typological mask series. This, in turn, for Alpers expresses 'the sclerosis of the social type; the loss of individual living figures' 'which stands always in opposition to character.'¹⁴ The advantages of a rigorous system of assigned roles that have a minutely worked out specification in the pre-revolutionary period is contrasted with the hardened and disfigured human face attached to static and sculptured poses with 'a sinister colouring of tragic spectres' in the 1930's.

Leonid Andreyev's 'The Black Maskers'

There were, however, other Russian theatre workers apart from Meyerhold who also became fascinated with masks and *commedia dell'arte* as a non-illusionist device in the struggle away from realism. Leonid Andreyev's play *The Black Maskers* was produced in St Petersburg in 1907 and directed by Meyerhold. The plot of the play is as follows: a masked ball is held in Lorenzo's castle that brings him into conflict with a series of masked figures (lust, hate, death) and a shadowy masked 'thing' (his own thoughts). Then, he is confronted by his own image, a Second Lorenzo, who demands that he remove his mask and a violent struggle ensues in which he kills this image. The guests at the ball mistake Lorenzo for an impostor and ask him to remove his mask. His face freezes with fear and becomes a mask. This drives him mad and he begins to treat his own wife and servants as guests who must also be made to unmask. The Fool sets fire to the castle when the Black Maskers return and try to enter the Castle and Lorenzo surrenders his fate to God and is saved from hell.

Konstantin Miklashevsky (Constant Mic): The Search for Commedia dell 'Arte

Nicolas Evreinoff's book on *The Theatre in Life* (1927)¹⁵ and his earlier collaboration with Konstantin Miklashevsky (Constant Mic) exploring what effect the mask had on the actor and vice versa was published as *The Commedia dell'Arte* in Petrograd in 1914 (translated and published into French in 1927). In a section entitled *Le port du masque* (Wearing the mask), Miklashevsky states that the actor under the mask no longer bases his acting on the mobility of his physiognomy but rather upon the movement of his whole body:

But the mask has not only an educative value: the spectator who sees a masked actor on stage fixes his attention on the body of this actor and grasps with much greater intensity the mimicry of the body. The mimicry of the body is essentially theatrical; it is perceived throughout the theatre and thanks to its sculptural character, it remains expressive from whatever point of view one contemplates it, whereas the mimicry of the face is un-theatrical, is only accessible from the closest and most expensive seats and exists only by depending on a single particularly advantageous point of view.¹⁶

Miklashevsky referred to the original meaning of the Italian word 'arte' as skill, métier or know-how, or body of work. For him the mask intensified the natural expressive power of the actor's body. He also emphasized the importance of the imagination of the audience in removing the 'fixity' of the mask once animated by the performer. In the final resort he made a plea for *commedia* masks to be seen in their context. It was no coincidence that Pantalone, the Venetian merchant, was born at a time when Venetian power was falling into decadence; that the Captain, the Spanish captain, was a symbol of the decadence of the chivalric ideal and the cowardly braggart; and that the Doctor encapsulated the heavy domination of the pedanticism and scholasticism of Renaissance humanism and the parodying of medical and theological doctors.

Oskar Schlemmer's Masks in Space: The Bauhaus

The Bauhaus also made a unique contribution to analysing and exploring the role and function of the mask in modern drama. The masks of Oskar Schlemmer (1888 - 1943) and the experiments of the Bauhaus stage class constituted a sophisticated poetics and practice. The questions raised by this poetics and practice still represent a challenge to

the modern theatre practitioner. They endure because they remain unresolved. What is the relationship of theatre to life? What can constitute an objective and scientific approach to theatre? How can new technology transform the traditional forms? What is the significance of the actor in space and the space between the actor and the audience? What forms can this space take and what effect do these have on ways of seeing and understanding. These questions were the foundation of Schlemmer's approach to 'Man and the Art Figure' and his communal model for a new society. They were also produced by the ethical and ideological tensions within the Bauhaus as an educational institution and its specific and contradictory relationship to the political exigencies of the Weimar Republic.

The ways in which Schlemmer applied his poetics of the mask to stage production have been fully documented by means of designs, photographs, models and both first and second-hand accounts. He became head of the Bauhaus theatre School in 1923, after working for the previous two years as head of the Sculpture Workshop. *The Triadic Ballet* had been in preparation since 1912 when Schlemmer and his brother Carl had collaborated with two dancers Albert Burger and Elsa Hotel in Stuttgart. The first performance of parts of the ballet occurred in 1915 and the première of the complete work in September 1922 at the Stuttgart Landstheater. This was repeated in 1923 during the Bauhaus week at the Nationaltheater, Weimar and at the Annual Exhibition of German Crafts in Dresden.

Schlemmer wished to ground the image of man historically in the sciences, the natural sciences, philosophy and psychology. He wished to synthesise two mutually exclusive phenomena: Romanticism and the Enlightenment. He retained his self-admitted 'mystical bent' in seeing man as a 'cosmic being' and developed a

romanticised communal model of the relationship between theatre and society. He pursued this ideal with strict rationale and formal technical precision, bringing the skills of the humanist polymath to bear on every aspect of theatrical performance. The human figure or 'Man' became the heuristic device through which to achieve this synthesis and to construct various ideal types.

In fact, the ideas and practice of Schlemmer were by no means unique. They belonged to that area of philosophical idealism designated *The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels. Schlemmer's 'mystical bent' is none other than the Hegelian mystification that real history is no more than the history of the spirit. He first came into contact with the ideas of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel together with those of other neo-kantian predecessors (Dilthey, Windelband and Rickert) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart between 1906-19 through the teaching of Adolf Holzelt. Holzelt, who was a theoretician as well as a practising painter, believed that: 'The spirit of a work of art lies in a spiritualised use of the means.'¹⁷ That is to say, practical activity in a work of art is rendered as the determination of the idea. Consciousness is thereby made the axis of all knowledge and morality. It is Schlemmer's achievement to apply this Idea of Spirit and consciousness to Man and the theatre. For Schlemmer 'Man' is the absolute concept that thinks of itself and returns to itself in self-consciousness. Theatre is a unique kind of artistic activity through which to approach and reveal the truth of the Idea or Man. The main defect with this form of philosophical idealism is that it attributes both to man and the theatre a semblance of independence. Both Man and theatre are seen as 'things in themselves'. Schlemmer therefore set himself the task of returning to basic types of Man and basic definitions of theatre in conditions that he

possible freedom.' This semblance of independence is in a real sense the greatest possible limitation.

Schlemmer's tabulated charts on philosophy and psychology confirm this orientation towards the history of the Spirit at the expense of real historical relations. By means of a methodological individualism akin to that of Weber, Schlemmer constructs a set of ideal types of Man. In this way the absolute theory behind philosophical idealism is dematerialised into a set of masked actors on the Bauhaus stage. Schlemmer's ideal types exist in conditions of the greatest possible freedom. They are part of an organic scheme that is based in the presupposition that man can become conscious of his own liberty without first becoming conscious of his alienation. The ideal freedom of the stage can thereby coexist with the most concrete forms of oppression and exploitation in society. Following this logic theatrical freedom has nothing to do with societal freedom. Schlemmer's perpetuation of Hegelian idealism permeated the whole structure of his study of the science of ideas and the arts of sculpture, painting and theatre and the whole organisational structure of the Bauhaus. Formalism - was only possible if art was seen as separate from society and Man was seen as separate from men.

In the concrete historical conditions of Weimar Germany the guise of a-political formalism may have been the best possible strategy for an educational institution committed to creating 'a new cultural equilibrium out of visual environment'.¹⁸ It may have been the best possible strategy in 1919 but by 1929 it was completely untenable because of the lack of equilibrium throughout society.

In order to reconstruct a metaphysic of word, gesture and expression on the stage Schlemmer was faced with a precise choice. To transcend the traditional scenic elements of naturalism he could choose between an abstract mechanical theatre where

the human actor is replaced by the puppet and kinetics, or the creation of a new theatre that does not renounce the human component but transforms it. He chose the second alternative because of his commitment to the physical presence of the human performer. His essay on 'Man and Art Figure' therefore begins with these words: 'The history of the theatre is the history of the transfiguration of the human form.'¹⁹ A detailed examination of the laws governing the human organism and space were, however, not enough in themselves to transform the human figure in a three-dimensional way on the stage. Only the mask could completely fulfil this requirement: 'Costume and mask emphasise the body's identity or they change it; they express its nature or they are purposely misleading about it' they stress its conformity to organic or mechanical laws or they invalidate this conformity.'²⁰

Masks were used by Schlemmer to accomplish two complementary procedures. In the first place they enabled him to reduce natural forms to geometrical figures and in this the work of predecessors like Leonardo and Dürer on artistic anatomy was as important as that of Cézanne and the Cubists and Purists. Schlemmer was also aware of the Futurist mechanical ballets and the mask work of the Russian and Swedish ballets. In the second place the mask enabled him to create a set of eternal types of archetypes of human character. He saw the mask as an abstract emblem through which form yields meaning. With the exception of primitive ritual masks, he believed that the number of genuine stage masks had remained very small (i.e. the *commedia dell'arte*). Therefore he was committed to developing a new typology appropriate to the theatre of a modern technological society.

In Schlemmer's notes for his Bauhaus course on *Man* we can see the frameworks and processes by which he reduced natural human attributes to the cube, the cylinder and the sphere. A diary entry of October 1915 contains the following outline:

the square of the chest,
the circle of the stomach,
cylinders of the arms and lower part of the legs
spheres of the joints at elbow, knee,
triangle of the nose.²¹

Only after he had mastered the techniques of figure drawing in a representational way and only after a thorough study of the classical works on measurement and proportion did he begin to experiment with these ideas. The diagram called the 'Simplest construction of the head from the front' breaks down the composition of the head into circles, squares, rectangles and triangles over which, eyes, mouth, nose, ears and brow are superimposed. The head is then treated to the same procedure in profile. This is then extended, by dividing the head into approximately three equal parts:

the tranquil part, the skull
the complicated part, the face
the supporting part, the neck.²²

These three equal parts may be represented by flowing representational lines or broken down into circle, cube and rectangle while retaining the same shape. Features of the face may also be exaggerated or distorted following the same principle. The craft of the mask-maker requires an imaginative base in the science of measurement and proportion and figural representation as Schlemmer clearly demonstrates.

Schlemmer's drawings of linear figures (match-stick men) set within different frameworks and contours are the equivalent of a kind of dance notation. The simplification of the human figure in this way demonstrates his ability to think in terms of movement. This was also a prerequisite if the mask was to transcend the status of art object and to become animate on the stage.

These two-dimensional working drawings derived from the circle, square, rectangle and ellipse were necessary prototypes for the body masks Schlemmer was later to put on the stage. He even went as far as building a 'box man' out of cubes, following the example of Dürer and the Italian Mannerists, 'as a way of working out the spacial solidity of the figure'.²³ A general plan also exists of another figure called 'plastic man' with this description: ' (plaster of Paris, laminated), reduced to the elementary forms by systematic simplification of the structure and the limbs in oval of round enclosing glass or celluloid tube.' ²⁴

In order to transform the human body on stage into a geometric archetype Schlemmer devised four visual types: the automatic architecture, the articulated puppet or marionette, the technical organism and the metaphysical forms of expression. These transformable architectonic structures together with Schlemmer's explanation of them are contained within his essay 'Man and Art Figure'. Each body mask had a different development of a certain set of movements. Two of them, the technical organism and the metaphysical forms of expression, were used in sequences ten and twelve respectively of *The Triadic Ballet* and the photographs of them reveal how well Schlemmer was able to materialise his brother's designs.

The Theatre of the Bauhaus also contains a set of twelve drawings by Schlemmer for a class in stage theory called 'Variations on a mask'. Unlike the

formalised diagrams of facial expression by Humbert de Superville outlined in Duval's *Artistic Anatomy* of 1884 (which they resemble on a superficial level) there is no intent in these drawings to indicate what expression results from the mechanism of a particular muscle. Horizontal lines and upward and downward lines divide the Schlemmer masks arbitrarily and the shading on the face produces a range of expressions explicable only in terms of their creator's private flight of fantasy. Only the fact of geometric abstraction holds a clue to their meaning.

The Triadic Ballet was divided into three sections containing twelve different dances and requiring eighteen different masks. They were danced alternately by two men and one woman. In *The Theater of The Bauhaus* there is a first section, consisting of five dances, that was to create a burlesque atmosphere and was performed against lemon-yellow drop curtains. The masks include a classical ballerina, a diver and a series of indefinable articulated bodies. The second section, consisting of three dances was to be ceremonious and solemn and to be performed on a rose-coloured stage. The masks include a ballerina with a tutu extended backwards in space by a series of wire hoops a comic clown and an oriental court guard. The final section, comprising four dances, was to be a mystical fantasy set on a black stage. Following an opening sequence with a ballerina in a hooped costume, two masked disc characters dance a duet. Then two clowns constructed from large golden globes dance with a ballerina attired in vertical wire hoops. The final mask is the 'metaphysical forms of expression' previously described. The masks of this dance were made from papier-mâché and covered with metallic paint. They were intended to change and transform the dancer's movements. For many years after the production they were to be seen on the wall in Schlemmer's office together with many other examples of mask prototypes for future projects.

The Figural Cabinet was the other major production developed by Schlemmer and technically realised by his brother Carl at the Bauhaus. It was performed for the first time in the spring of 1922 and again during the Bauhaus Week in 1923. The number of masked human figures in this production were considerably reduced and the setting was composed of various two-dimensional cut-outs in a heterogeneous array of mechanical movement, colours, sounds and fireworks. The scenario for this event is also published in *The Theater of the Bauhaus*. The major masked figures were two identical cut-outs which appear to diminish the importance of the masked figure. The demonic ballerina of *Figural Cabinet II* also seems to have been the only human figure in this sequence, but is the dominant stage character. The surprise effects, decapitations and sudden life attributed to previously inanimate objects anticipate the work of the Theatre Alfred Jarry and other surrealist performance.

Destination or The Pantomime of Places received its first performance in Weimar in 1924. It is evidence of Schlemmer's constant desire to experiment and to increase the range of the Bauhaus Theatre that he should also work with masks and improvisation. This sequence of events was based on a precise ordering of movements attributed to each actor who in turn inhabits a distinct space. Each actor-space was defined by a label: 'Entrance', 'Exit', 'Pause', 'Tension', 'Culmination Point I, II, III', 'Sadness', 'Conflict', etc. The abstract body masks of *The Triadic Ballet* and *The Figural Cabinet* are here replaced by recognisable theatrical costumes and a combination of make-up or full-face masks. In accordance with idea, style and technology Schlemmer was clearly prepared to experiment with a wider range of masks than his often quoted remarks from 'Man and Art Figure' would imply.

Thus Schlemmer used at least two basic kinds of mask in his productions at the Bauhaus Theatre: the abstract mask, which reduced natural forms to geometrical shapes and was confined to his experiments with dance; the realistic mask with heightened expression for use in pantomime improvisations. In spite of the pronounced tendency towards abstraction Schlemmer wished to see the creation of recognisable new archetypes appropriate to modern life. He listed some of these possibilities in the following way:

the Abstract - Formal and Colour

the Static, Dynamic and Tectonic

the Mechanical, Automatic and Electric

the Gymnastic, Acrobatic and Electric

the Gymnastic, Acrobatic and Equilibristic

the comic, Grotesque and Burlesque

the Serious, Sublime and Monumental

the Political, Philosophical and Metaphysical. ²⁵

In all these areas Schlemmer was committed to stressing the importance of a designer's theatre freed from dependence on the writer. His working methods were based in the workshop of the painter and sculptor and directed towards the creation of a theatre of visual display. For this reason the design of costume and masks came first and considerations of size shape and weight were primary. Only when these questions had been resolved and the laws of movement of each figure had been fully explored would he consider music and the other aspects of theatrical production.

A lecture-demonstration with the simple title of 'Theatre' was given by Schlemmer at the Bauhaus to a circle of friends on 16 March 1927. It is his most complete statement. He begins with a defined empty space. A human figure or actor enters naked or in white tights. Two paths are possible if the figure is to be transformed. Either that of psychic expression, heightened emotion and pantomime; or that of mathematics in motion, the mechanics of joints and swivels and exactitude's of rhythmic gymnastics.' ²⁶ Both paths have value and they may be kept apart or fused into a single act of theatre. Both may use different kinds of mask. Schlemmer chooses 'mathematics in motion' because of its relatively unexplored possibilities:

'We shall dress one...two...three actors in stylised padded tights and papier-mâché masks. The effect of the tights and the masks together is to regroup the various and diffuse parts of the human body into a simple, unified form. The three actors will be dressed in primary colours: red, yellow, blue. If we now assign to each of these actors a different way of walking-a slow, a normal and a tripping gait - and if we let them measure out their space, so to speak in time to a kettle-drum, a snare drum and wooden blocks, the result will be the "space dance".' ²⁷

The abstract mask for Schlemmer was derived not from the closed solipsism of art for arts's sake, but on the contrary from the reconstruction of an essential law and harmony out of the chaos of daily existence. It was the kind of abstraction that meant reduction to the essential, the elementary and the primary by opposing a unity to a multiplicity of things.

Through the application of semantic phenomenology Schlemmer stripped away the cultural and theatrical accretions of the stage to return to the mask. In this his

method of working was totally in harmony with the social aims of the Bauhaus to synthesise art and modern technology. Walter Gropius paid tribute to Schlemmer's search for modern symbols to express new ideas when he said that he had discovered: 'The mask of disguise, forgotten on the stage of realism since the theatre of the Greeks and used today only in the Noh theatre of Japan.' ²⁸

In fact, the mask 'became a stage tool of great importance in Schlemmer's hands'. At the level of a simple reform of theatrical technique the results were very impressive. This can perhaps best be illustrated by the eye-witness account of one of Schlemmer's pupils, T. Lux, Feininger:

At an early age I had occupied myself intensely with the making of masks in various materials. I hardly could say why, yet sensing dimly in this form of creation that a meaning lay hidden for me. On the Bauhaus stage, these intuitions seemed to acquire body and life. I had beheld the 'Dance of Gestures and the 'Dance of Forms executed by dancers in metallic masks and costumed in padded, sculptural suits. The stage, with jet-black backdrop and wings, contained magically spotlighted, geometric furniture: a cube a white sphere, steps; the actors paced, strode, trotted dashed, stopped short turned slowly and majestically; arms with coloured gloves were extended in a beckoning gesture; the copper and gold and silver heads were laid together, flew apart; the silence was broken by a whirring sound, ending in a small thump; a crescendo of bussing noises culminated in a crash followed by portentous and dismayed silence. Another phase of the dance had all the formal and contained violence of a chorus of cats, down to the meowing and base-growls, which were marvellously accentuated by the resonant head masks. Pace and gesture, figure

and prop, colour and sound, all had the quality of elementary form, demonstrating anew the problem of the theatre of Schlemmer's concept: man in space. What we had seen had the significance of expounding the stage elements. These stage elements were assembled, re-grouped, amplified and gradually grew into something like a 'play'. We never found out whether comedy or tragedy. The interesting feature about it was that, with a set of formal elements agreed upon and on this common basis, added to fairly freely by members of the class, 'play' with meaningful form was expected eventually to yield meaning, sense or message, that gestures and sounds would become speech and plot. Who knows? This was essentially a dancer's theatre.²⁹

Schlemmer did not view the simple reform of a technique as enough to establish 'a new synthesis of art and modern technology'. It was a prerequisite, but not sufficient in itself. Hence the poetics and practice of the mask were in need of a new communal foundation. The visionary-game of masks was a mediator by which Schlemmer hoped to reconstitute the lost unity of the human being, a stage tool through which he wished to transcend the dualistic structures of the subjective and objective, the rational and the irrational, the conscious and the unconscious, the organic and the artificial. The triadic scheme of *The Triadic Ballet* was thus an attempt to fuse opposites into a new unity of nature and culture by means of the stage. It was Schlemmer's personal metaphysical solution to the problem of history that had reduced man to a split persona. Thus beneath his rejection of Romanticism and the introduction of a new objectivity in the aesthetic sphere, was a deeply Romantic view of the human being. The presumption at the basis of his thought was the lost unity of the human being. An idealistic and utopian concept deeply rooted in Romanticism. After the solitary and suicidal desperation of

Expressionism and the massacre of the First World War, Schlemmer wished to return to the great German tradition of rational thought: to view 'man' with a new objectivity. The Romanticism that had allied itself to the authoritarianism, nationalism and mysticism of the era of King William II was not for him. A more realistic view of 'man' as the artisan and not the artist was required in the new Weimar Republic.

The abstract masks of Schlemmer were created in the theatre laboratory of the Bauhaus in Weimar Germany. The new experimental art school was founded as 'a cathedral of socialism' in April 1919 and erected over the ashes of a failed revolution. What this amounted to was a great illusion. The idea that the machine and mechanisation could produce a 'beneficial' destiny if they were controlled and dominated by a responsible culture. In correspondence to the explosion of industrial civilisation men of culture were called upon to make a commitment to vigilant co-operation with the new system of production. The teachers of the Bauhaus made a radical and decisive attack on old conceptions of art and thereby on the world of conservative academia and bourgeois opinion within the fine arts. The recuperation of the idea of the artisan was to have enormous significance for all the artists of the epoch: architects, sculpture, painters, musicians, writers and theatre workers. This rising tide of humanitarianism was to be harnessed by a new integration between art and industry in a 'utopia' of industry and mechanisation. Schlemmer's mysticism and masks in space were to represent one side of this atmosphere of optimism.

The mask poetics and practice of Schlemmer are therefore the complex focal point of a man caught within the contradictory space of his time. We can divide the space in which he stood in the middle and then into bisecting axes and diagonals. Just like his figure placed within taut wires which divide this space in a 'spacial-linear web'

³⁰ Schlemmer was moving within decisive influences. He taught others to become aware of this same space and to transform the human figure with a mask. But number measure and law confined to aesthetic form, in a space determined by other decisive influences, could achieve only the 'excellence' of form. Schlemmer remained within the confines of the 'spacial-linear web' bisected by the vertical line of classical German rationale and the horizontal line of Romanticism. His own space was confined by their point of intersection. In order to enlarge that space he took refuge in a metaphysic and imagined an ideal or utopian communal model offering what seemed to him to be the greatest possible freedom. His use of masks in the theatre reflects this aspiration and its limitations.

Mask Use in Theatres of The Left

Once again, outside the mainstream, but of lasting significance were the social masks of the theatres of the left and propaganda theatre (WTM) between 1880 and 1935. The concept of a contemporary theatre of social masks was derived from Foregger. The Blue Blouse depicted them as framework or skeletal types in the Commedia tradition of stock characters: the Conformist, the Fascist, the Home-Distiller Woman, the Specialist, the Prime Minister, the Kulak etc. The actors had to be trained to sing, dance, play the accordion, do gymnastic feats (handsprings, somersaults and balancing feats), act and change costumes on stage in full view of the audience, all with great rapidity and panache. In a play called *Brotherhood* performed at a Paisley Sunday School the characters included more stock types or social masks: 'a bankrupt Private Trader, a Working Man and his Wife, an Ideal Philanthropist, a Minister, a School Teacher, a Bottom Dog and a Socialist Student'.³¹ Early Weimar German agit-prop

variants on these types from the 1920's included as negative types the Bourgeois, the General, the Priest, the Capitalist, the Boss, the Policeman and as positive the Worker, the Red Guard, the Soldier from the Red Front and the Pioneer.

The Spieltruppe Sudwest (Performance Troupe South-West) presented a mask play called *Wie sieben die Fronten* (*Where are The Frontlines?*) by Friedrich Wolf in 1932. In 1933 they presented *Von New York Shanghai* (*From New York to Shanghai*), also by Wolf, before an audience of 1200 workers surrounded by a heavy Hitler police presence. When the police began to advance on the stage the actor wearing The Functionary or Bureaucrat mask stepped forward and said: 'Comrades, maintain your calm, remain tranquil, because our story does not come from Germany, a country with a strong sense of law and order, but from a million miles away in China, from Shanghai'. All the Chinese characters then stepped forward to drop their masks revealing themselves as German proletarians. Each time this play was performed, this moment was stunning. Asja Lacis reaffirms that the use of the mask, was an essential scenic tool that protected the players from police repression, while at the same time revealing the things in common between the situation in the Orient and the inhabitants in Germany.

Ewan MacColl writes about the Red Megaphones and Theatre of Action in terms of a search for a new theatre language, for a philosophy of theatre and the quest to change the nature of the audience. In Britain, however, the predominant use was of the unmasked face in the early 1930's. The Glasgow Workers Theatre Group (1937-1941) and Glasgow Unity Theatre (1941-1949) had a strong interest in Brecht and his use of masks but were uncertain how to use them. The idea of discovering the causal complexes of society, unmasking the prevailing view of things as the view of those who rule it, was of great appeal but was not developed in style or methodology.

In France the Groupe Octobre (1932-36) were more imaginative in their use of huge masks accompanied by mime sequences in the mass rallies of 1935.³² In England mass pageants were also held by the Popular Front in which giant masks were used.

An interesting entry in the amateur theatre during this period were the animal mask designs by Neil Grant for a Scottish production called *The Last War* by W.N.L. Richardson from 1936. An article in *The Scottish Amateur Theatre and Playwright's Journal* highlights the importance of advance preparation in the construction of the masks for a play where the masked actors had to sustain the action. The masks for this production were stylised half and three-quarter face masks made of buckram cut, damped and pressed into shape around shop dummies and then sewn to a series of old felt hats.

The Group Theatre of London in the 1930's

One of the most influential and experimental of all mask plays in the 1930's was *The Dog Beneath The Skin or Where is Francis?* By W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. This play was first performed in January 1936 at the Westminster Theatre by the Group Theatre, under the direction of Rupert Doone, (Ernest Reginald Woodfield). Young Francis Crewe returns home to the sleepy village of Pressan Amber disguised as a dog to be confronted by the local inhabitants as animals in various states of depravity (the General is a bull, the Vicar is a goat, the General's Wife is a turkey and Iris is a cat). They are revealed in tableau in this form at the end of the play, together with all the villagers who are also masked. The cacophony of animal noises and military band music is reminiscent of the chaos in Orwell's *Animal Farm*; but

whereas for the latter 'all men are equal, but some men are more equal than others', for Auden and Isherwood 'To each his need: from each his power'.³³

Gestus and The Social and Personal Masks of Bertolt Brecht

On my wall hangs a Japanese carving,
The mask of an evil demon, decorated with gold lacquer.
Sympathetically I observe
The swollen veins of the forehead, indicating
What a strain it is to be evil.³⁴

Brecht's work cuts across the three main areas of this study: actor-training, mask theatre performance and mask-making; but also leads us to examine the connections between theatre and everyday life, cultural insularity and global connectedness. In *Theaterarbeit*³⁵ Brecht criticised the lack of attention paid to the mask as a tool: 'The interest which the actor takes in the mask has waned: the creator of masks often meets with an actual aversion. Generally speaking, the actor is convinced that his face alone is sufficient for the part, which, naturally, is hardly ever the case.'³⁶ As a Marxist, Brecht places particular emphasis on the economic conditions that make it necessary to wear a mask in order to survive and thus his approach gives emphasis to social role adaptation.

Since the publication of the production books of The Berliner Ensemble and the post-War documentation (evidencing the joint work between playwright, producer, designers and mask-makers) it is clear that the staging of Brecht's work was a matter of paying the greatest heed to details.

The critic Joachim Tenschert cites the *Short Organum for the Theatre* (paragraph 70) by Brecht as his theoretical base for the use of masks:

The theatre's main task is to express the 'fable' and communicate it with a certain estrangement. Everything must not depend uniquely on the actor, even though nothing must be done which does not relate to him. The 'fable' must be presented, set forth and developed by all who collaborate in the production: actors, designers, creators of masks, costume designers, musicians and choreographers, all unite their several arts in common effort without, in so doing, losing their individuality.³⁷

Tenschert, in his article on 'The Mask at The Berliner Ensemble', is quite clear that the meaning of Brecht's use of masks is to 'reveal aspects which invite the spectator to judge what he sees and to help, by visual means, to pinpoint the characters in society, by establishing their way of thought and behaviour.'³⁸

In 1926 Brecht had attended Reinhardt's rehearsals in Berlin for the production of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of An Author*. After this he wrote *A Man's A Man*. The metamorphosis of Galy Gay, fish-packer, into Jeremiah Jip, professional soldier is indicated in the text by a series of maskings. Under pressure from his wife Galy is tricked into selling a bogus elephant and subsequently arrested. He argues that he is Jip in order to protect himself and assume the cloak of a protective identity. Widow Begbick cuts off his moustache in order to remove the last traces of his previous identity. The soldiers stage a mock execution of Galy to trap him in the role of Jip. In the final part of the play he loses his old identity completely determined to adopt the identity that others find 'useful' and 'agreeable'. He is forced to conclude that identity relies upon solely upon external recognition. This is taken to a further extreme when he commits a murder to supplant the leader of the soldier's and becomes the complete fighting-machine. Brecht was very clear about the emergence of this new soldier:

This Galy Gay is by no means a weakling; on the contrary he is the strongest of all. That is to say he becomes the strongest once he has ceased to be a private person; he only becomes strong in the mask... No doubt you will go on to say that it's a pity that a man should be tricked like this and simply forced to surrender his precious ego, all he possesses (as it were); but it isn't. It's a jolly business. For this Galy Gay comes to no harm; he wins.³⁹

The result is complete and total metamorphosis and assimilation; and the masker loses all human dignity. Again, Brecht's notes on working with the lead actor, Peter Lorre, are revealing:

The character's development has been very carefully divided into four phases, for which four masks are employed – the packer's face up to the trial; the 'natural face, up to his awakening after being shot; the 'blank page', up to his re-assembly after the funeral speech; finally, the soldier's face.⁴⁰

Lorre had to choose which face should be 'whitened' and finally opted for the 'blank page' because in his mind it bore the weight of the biggest decision and the biggest strain.

Brecht's earlier existential definition of the inadequacy of the human face gives way to a more behaviourist model based on the idea that a man is what he does. He shows how little by little masks imposed by others can lead to the creation of a strong and viable identity, even if the result is a kind of anti-self. Gay turns into the most extreme kind of conformist.

In January 1928 Piscator produced his famous production of *The Good Soldier Schweik* adapted by Gasbarra, Leo Lania and Brecht at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm. The masks, puppets and cartoons were designed by George Grosz:

Although most of the figures were either cartoons or dummies, those who were directly involved in the action were represented by actors in grotesque masks that accentuated the characteristics peculiar to their social function. Bretschneider's mask, for example, was reduced to a single huge eye and monstrous ear thus effectively removing any personal idiosyncrasies and defining his figure simply as a police spy.⁴¹

It seems very likely that this experiment armed Brecht and his collaborators for further experiments with mask use.

In his next production, *The Measures Taken* (1930), the protagonists are communists delivering Marxist literature to Chinese people living of the Chinese border. They don masks to efface their personalities and personal feelings in order to demonstrate their unshakeable and uniform political beliefs. One tears off his mask to show his real feelings to the peasants and is eliminated for his anti-collective behaviour. Brecht uses the mask to render anonymous the wearers in a military situation and also to make the point that the struggle for the common good requires collective discipline, self-abnegation and reason. This 'Lehrstucke' play shows how the naked face that is open, human and guileless can put all the other comrades in jeopardy. The Young Comrade fails to sustain his own mask and fails to act out the role that the group has given to him. Brecht is seeking critical distance to allow the audience to see that the distance conferred by the mask is essential to Party discipline.

Brecht's use of the mask and the theory of 'verfremdung' (alienation effect) was properly established in *The Roundheads and The Pointedheads* (1931-1936). He wished to expose the Nazi ploy of blaming the Jews thereby dividing the allegiance of the poor and generating a racial war. Thus he depicted the Roundheads as being of pure race, aristocratic and unselfish, while the Pointedheads are selfish, greedy outsiders who must be eliminated. For this production he chose to use large head masks. In this play the masks are used to maintain false social distinctions to the advantage of one group over the other and to blur the differences between rich and poor. He used it to distance both the actor and the audience by focussing on a characteristic in a specific dramatic style that imposed a certain analytical distance. In his notes to the first production at the Riddersalen Theatre in Copenhagen (1936) Brecht specified masks that were about twenty centimetres high with drastic distortions of noses, ears, chins and hair.⁴²

In the interim on a visit to Moscow in 1935 Brecht was able to see the performance of Mei Lei Fang of the Chinese Peking Opera and to observe what he perceived as certain 'alienation effects.' The distinguishing function of the heavy make-up or pliable masks of this genre of masking plus the heightened self-observation of the performer as he combined mime and gesture prevented the spectator, in Brecht's view, from losing himself in the character.

Master Puntila and His Servant Matti was created and refined over a ten-year period (1940-1950). The masks were designed by Caspar Neher. Puntila went from being played by an unmasked actor in make-up to a fully masked face with bald pate and twisted and distorted features. The attaché, the priest and his wife, the lawyer and the judge were all briefed to move in a foolish and royal manner akin to 'certain

physiological malformations to be found in parasites.’⁴³ The response of the critics to the production elicited the following response from Brecht:

‘Puntila, the attaché, the provost, the provost’s wife, the lawyer and the judge all wore more or less grotesque “masks” and their gestures were haughty and absurd. Matti, the wives of Kurgela, the domestic staff of the farm and the farm workers wore no “masks” and behaved normally. Eva, the farmer’s daughter, was an exception to the rule: she had no “mask” either. No symbol is intended. There is no ulterior motive. The theatre simply adopts a position and accentuates the essential features of reality, in this case, the physical disfigurements met with in those who exploit others.’⁴⁴

In *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1943) only one character is masked. Shen-Tei wears a protective mask of a ruthless man in order to protect the tobacco shop that she has bought with money given her by the gods. She hides her real self – the generous prostitute – behind the mask of her moral and sexual opposite, the ruthless businessman Shui Ta. It is this mask that lifts her out of prostitution. Brecht restricts the use of the mask to highlight Shen Teh’s dilemma and leaves the irony of her position unresolved caught between the public mask and the private face. This also keeps the audience at an intellectual distance from her predicament. The pseudo-self has to stay in place to protect her vital interests and to suppress the vulnerability and sensibility of her true self. In this instance Brecht uses the mask for reasons of disguise and as a protective mechanism. The mask and face are no longer defined as exclusive opposites, as in *The Measures Taken*; the problem now is to decide which of these should become the ‘true self’. Shen Tei asks ‘How can I be good if everything is so expensive?’ In the end she is

forced to concede that she will have to conceal her real identity if her son is not to live in poverty and that she will have to exploit other children if her own child is to survive. Kenneth Tynan's Review of the London production stated that Shui-ta, played by Peggy Ashcroft, had her face 'flattened by a tight half-mask which helps her to produce a grinding nasal voice... She is superb.'⁴⁵

While the adaptation of Holderlin's *Antigone* (1948) did not use actual masks as facial objects it did feature a striking set by Caspar Neher bounded by four posts 'from which horses' skulls hand suspended.' and a left-foreground props table with 'bacchic masks on sticks.'⁴⁶ The actors make-up 'for which far more grease paint than usual was used, also had to convey something: for the old men, for instance, the ravages that the habit of domination imprints on the features, etc.'⁴⁷ The requirement here was for heavy mask-like make-up.

In *Galileo* (1938) Brecht used masks primarily to suggest the presence of hypocrisy and deceit. He even made changes in the maskings in order to strengthen the ironic content of scene seven. In the original typescript Cardinal Bellarmine was masked as a fox and Cardinal Barbarini as a donkey. However in the later versions of 1944 and 1953 Bellarmine is masked as a lamb and Barberini as a dove. The contrast between their false masks and playing with religious symbols exposes their hypocrisy.

Masks are required for two key scenes: a wild popular carnival sequence and for a masked court ball. The masked ball in scene ten provides Brecht with an opportunity to reflect and parody a folk tradition by allowing the carnival maskers to mock the Grand Duke and the cardinals but they also mock Galileo for his challenge to the establishment. Brecht's notes on the development of these scenes in terms of colour use, is very precise. 'Galileo's social ascent could be followed by means of colour. The

silver and pearl-grey of the fourth (court) scene led into the nocturne in brown and black (where Galileo is jeered at by the monks of the Collegium Romanum), then on to the eighth, the cardinal's ball with delicate and fantastic individual masks (ladies and gentlemen) moving among the cardinal's crimson figures.' ⁴⁸

Reactions to the masks of the 1967 Lincoln Center production, created by Ralph Lee, ranged from enthusiasm for the 'masked ball fantasies with griffon's heads for faces' to and 'flashiest of all the outpourings, a parade of carnival revellers in...eye-filling costumes.' The critic Alan N. Bunce reviewed the production in the *Christian Science Monitor* in the following terms:

All through this handsome production, pageant and ritual give form to the society whose boat Galileo is rocking... Patterns on stage suggest the formal structure of traditional philosophy. The raucous revelry of a folk festival is caught in one of the brilliantly costumed parades of which the Vivian Beaumont seems so fond. Even though it appears to be put on partly for its own sake, the giant figures are striking and the overall effect is to illustrate – vividly – the impact of Galileo's thought on his untutored fellows... There can be no doubt that he has started something. ⁴⁹

Brecht liked to mask political types, which had the advantage of distancing the actor from his character while at the same time provoking a shock of recognition in the audience. He said that 'in the theatre reality can be represented in a factual or in a fantastic form' and that if the actors appear to be too 'natural' then the whole thing can appear to be false. On the other hand if they wear grotesque masks they can more easily 'represent truth.' ⁵⁰

Brecht chose to use grotesque masks in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* to show the distortion effects created by brutal passion, which is why the soldiers wore masks with protruding eyeballs. He gave them brutal three-quarter face masks and the farmers simple half masks. Kurt Palm, the scene designer, stated that they eventually cut down the already finished masks to different sizes in such a way that each would appear different in its rigidity:

We are aware that the play has 150 characters and we only have 50 actors available. Some means therefore had to be found so that our 50 actors could embody 150 parts. This was how we arrived at the mask...But we soon discovered that not all the characters could wear masks.

I do not know whether you have noticed that we are also using rigid masks for the oppressed people. In the first act, some of the domestics have transfixed faces. Great care must be taken not to fall suddenly into symbolism, above all not to seek a system. The press reviewers have made a mistake there in establishing a hard and fast system: rich people – masks, poor people – no masks.

A mask was tried for Helene Weigel (the Governor's Wife). A complete mask was at first suggested. It was beautiful but the impression given was too Chinese. Moreover during her conversation with the adjutant, the effect of the smile was lost. Brecht would like to retain it. It was agreed that a comparatively small mask over eyes and nose should be used.

It will be necessary for the actors to make-up neck and probably the ears too, in the same colour as the mask. Otherwise the wearing of a mask seems horribly artificial and is linked to formalism. The difference between the man himself and the mask he wears on his face must not be stressed. In the past, the principle was to emphasize this effect. We do not want that here, we want a totality. The whole head must be a creation made of the same material.

The use of masks – and this we noticed with the first masks made and used during rehearsals – demands a style, which differs from that advocated up to now. Many gestures and attitudes must be changed. In fact, this was clear to us in advance, but just as Weigel gives to Courage or Carrar a particular walk when she rehearses in an appropriate skirt, shod in a proper manner and only does so in these conditions and just as it is not enough merely to sketch the set but one must see it finished and painted and brought to life by the actors in their completed costumes in order to gain a true impression and to judge the effect, so in the same way, the completed masks condition a particular style of acting. Moreover, it must be added that our actors are unaccustomed to masks. One cannot therefore expect them to be guided by previous examples in the very special acting required by a masked play. Great simplification of all gestures, a restraining of too broad gestures or, on the contrary, a single sweeping movement embracing even smaller ones, all that must be examined and established for each case in point. These new possibilities are not only a matter of rehearsals for the cast, they also demand that the producer should acquire a new set of experiences.’⁵¹

Kenneth Tynan reviewed the Berliner Ensemble production at the Palace Theatre London on the 30th August 1956 in the following terms:

The small parts are all generalised. They wear masks down to their lips, fashioned like faces in Bosch or Brueghel and so exaggerated that we know at a glance what kind of people they are meant to be – drunken, prying, lecherous, miserly, what have you. We can thus concentrate on the principals, who wear no masks or make-up and play with absolute realism...The whole production is superb: a legend for today told in Flemish and Oriental terms.⁵²

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui was written in 1941, but not produced until 1958 after Brecht's death. It was performed in masks reminiscent of clown make-ups in order to highlight the mockery and violence of a life reduced to a circus. 'Use should be made of the masks, vocal characteristics and gestures of the originals (Chicago gangsters); pure parody however must be avoided and the comic element must not preclude horror.'⁵³

One of Brecht's unfinished projects was a proposed production of *The Death of Basel or Basel Carnival in the Salzburg Dance of Death*. In February 1949 he had gone to the Basel Fasnacht with Ruth Berlau and he asked her to photograph the large papier-mâché heads and masks with a view to using them in the production.

The young Brecht of *Baal* had something in common with the Vitalism of Bergson (who rejected all masks just as Baal rejects all social roles). Then *In The Jungle of the Cities* sees him confront the idea of despair because language distorts and masks all realities leaving nothing solid on which to build a stable sense of identity. In *A Man's A Man* he struggles to go beyond the Nietzschean equation that identity equals social role and use the mask to protect and defend the limitations of self. This then shifts

in *The Measures Taken* to identifying the mask completely with a political party; but the mask when defined in these terms violates identity by imposing a rigid form. For this reason in *The Good Woman of Setzuan* the mask is presented as an involuntary but socially necessary form of adaptation. The fluid human face under the mask finds a way to survive. This creates a kind of situational ethic that makes it impossible to accept any institution that claims to know what is required. Finally Brecht comes to believe that morality and truth can only be defined in the context of real human needs.

In all these productions we may observe that Brecht was less concerned with an acting method involving the use of masks than he was with the interpretative basis of the actor's work. Brecht's view of individual identity in the 1920's was that the continuity of ego was a myth: 'A man is an atom that perpetually breaks up and forms anew.'⁵⁴ Many critics misunderstood his intentions with the use of masks and thought that the 'negative wicked characters are masked.' Indeed, Brecht was mask-conscious to such an extent that he had a life mask taken of his own face in 1931 which he distributed to various lovers such as Elizabeth Hauptmann and Helene Weigel. The 'alienation affect' was dependent upon forming an actor who could cease wearing the fictitious mask of a theatrical character in order to step forward and present the mask of a commentator or what Walter Sorrell has called 'the persona of a character.'⁵⁵

From this overview of Brecht's applications of masks as scenic objects throughout almost the entire corpus of his work, it is possible to determine a certain development. The earliest manifestations of his mask interest may well have developed from studying the cabaret-performance work of the famous clown, Karl Valentin. We know that for many years he also kept a life-size image of the Semitic-Phoenician deity, Baal, on the wall over his bed to celebrate the primary raw forces of life, fertility and

vitality. We see his interest go from the masked Schweik to the four-stage development in transforming Galy Gay to the satirical roundheads to the female protective mask of Shen Tei, the corrupt clerics and carnival revellers in *Galileo*, the masked soldiers and farmers in the Chalk circle to the clown mask of Arturo Ui. (We should remember that he first saw Hitler 'perform' literally in a circus tent). All this punctuated by certain alienating and symbolic effects of Chinese acting and a Japanese mask as a talisman reminding him what a strain it is to be evil! He states quite clearly that 'the classical and medieval theatre alienated its characters by making them wear human or animal masks' as a barrier to empathy.⁵⁶

For Brecht the social aims of the masks used in classical and medieval theatre were quite different from our own. In his view the integration of all elements of the production in a need to be brought together to set out the 'story' with actors, stage designers, mask-makers, costumiers, composers and choreographers uniting their various arts for the sake of the joint operation. Brecht's phases of a production were honed and refined with the period with the Berliner Ensemble. His approach involved seeing the groupings as a whole followed by the emergence of individual characters and thereafter masks and costumes were discussed and work on them began. The use of the mask was however, much more than an appendage to make-up and costume in Brecht's dramaturgy. It was a pivotal iconographic tool through which to place issues of identity, status, class, culture and legitimation; and it was also central to his strategy 'to bring about a change in the whole relationship between the actor and the audience.'⁵⁷ Strategic interruption unmasks causality. Brecht's achievement with various kinds and different levels of masking is to renegotiate with his audience the relationship between appearance and reality. The mask mediates the 'gestus' (arrangements and blocking) of

the actor with the 'grundgestus' (the production staff's interpretation of each textual beat and gestural rhythm) with the 'gesellschaftliche' ('the mimetic and gestural expression of the social relationships in which the people of a particular epoch stand to each other')⁵⁸ For the critic John Rouse this 'gestus' of the mask is a sociological phenomenon whereas for Mitter it is 'a compound term which intrinsically harnesses both content and opinion.'⁵⁹ Meg Mumford has more recently improved these definitions of 'gestus' to connect 'the aesthetic gestural presentation of the economic and socio-ideological construction of human identity and interaction' to its 'ultimate expression in the corporeal and intellectual work of the performer.'⁶⁰ If the word 'gestus' is the key concept in Brechtian actor training, then the presence or absence of the mask as a mediation tool between the presentation of identity and interaction and the physical and bodily work of the performer dealing with 'distanciation' is equally of central concern. The point being that 'gestus' is, in the words of Frederic Jameson, 'the operator of an estrangement effect in its own right.'⁶¹

Moreover, the formation of Brecht's developing ideas about masks were strongly influenced by his travels and intercultural contacts in France, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Russia, Britain and his period as an émigré in the U.S.A. In turn his use of masks strongly influenced Giorgio Strehler, Roger Planchon, William Gaskill and John Arden and a whole future generation of theatre workers. The masks and meanings of Brecht will continue to have reverberations precisely because their strategic use unmasks our causality and hides our vulnerability.

The Political Theatre of Arden and D'Arcy

The Happy Haven by John Arden (1930-) is one of the outstanding British satirical mask plays of the twentieth century and requires 'formalised presentation' on an open stage. The play is structured into three acts and set within an old people's home. The five old people wear highly individualised three-quarter masks that, according to Arden, are 'of the *commedia dell'arte* type'.⁶² However, not all the characters are masked. The Doctor, Copperthwaite, does not wear a mask at all until the very end when he is revealed in one that covers his whole face, which depicts him as a child. The Nurses and the Orderlies have their noses and mouths covered by hospital antiseptic masks in specifically clinical scenes, but are otherwise bare-faced. The Distinguished Visitors also wear masks but less individualised than the Old People. This is a blend of social concern and technical innovation that produces a special result.

The Happy Haven raises the question of ageism and the relation of the aged individual to the State through a structure that espouses the firm conviction that 'the institution is greater than the man'.⁶³ The crisis in humanism expressed in this play extends to the level that one of the old folk had his savings stolen by the Labour Government in 1947. Arden's intention is to reverse the roles and for the powerful to become impotent. The world has been turned upside down by the Old People. If people in institutions become depersonalised and reduced to stereotypes, by placing young people in old masks, Arden underlines the way in which they adopt behaviour characteristic of their restrictions.

The first production in Bristol was performed on an open stage with a minimalist set but with a more wordy script. For the London performance at the Royal Court, on a more convention proscenium stage, Arden re-wrote most of the play: 'Also we felt that

some of the earlier part of the play had not worked very well in Bristol – there had been a certain stodginess in the first act, which I had to re-write'. He describes how he cut about 'half the images because I found that an actor with a mask does not need elaborate language – the mask is so powerful in itself that it needs a more naked expression of emotion'.⁶⁴

The use of the masks caused a critical furore and occasioned mixed reviews. The critic, Frederick Lumley, complained that Arden has not used masks to stir our souls. Jeremy Brooks in the *New Statesman* complained that the Doctor's transformation was not satisfactory compared with a denouement involving a 'struggle'.⁶⁵ A. Alvarez, again in the *New Statesman*, thought the use of the masks was appropriate to the grotesques who were being satirised and praised the deliberate externality of the play. Peter Roberts in *Plays and Players* wrote that 'all this is managed so adroitly it is taken quite naturally and there is never a hint of self-consciousness in the stylisation'.⁶⁶ He thought that the masks and the bare hospital set 'enable Mr. Arden to treat a singularly tragic subject – old age – in a gay and light-hearted manner'.⁶⁷ Irving Wardle stated categorically that the masks were most appropriate to define the character's humours and their hardening personalities and that the formalized action, extended ballad form and simplified language were entirely appropriate. Moreover he went on to say that Arden had brought the plot to a logical conclusion by 'allotting to each character a mask representing such fixed attitudes as greed, frustrated motherhood, bonhomie and arrested youth'.⁶⁸ He concludes as follows: 'Arden's masked ancients are able to reveal themselves with a simple expressiveness which attempted in any naturalistic idiom, would appear maudlin'.⁶⁹

The director of the original production at the Royal Court Theatre on the 14 September 1960 was Bill Gaskill. He describes the actor's classes of the Writer's Group which met every Wednesday at the Royal Court and the inspiration provided by the mask workshops of George Devine as the bedrock for Arden's play. Arden had been the Resident Fellow in Playwriting at the Drama Department of Bristol University where his major commitment had been to write a play to be performed in the Drama Studio in April 1960. 'The rehearsal process began with improvisations but not in the characters of the play, to develop basic methods of working. Gradually we fed in the masks that the designer had created in further improvisation'.⁷⁰ The process involved the designer, Michael Ackland, in trying to create from the writer's text 'characters that would provide the intuitive stimulus to the actor to create that part'.⁷¹ Gaskill was not satisfied with the process believing that while the 'masks were good but couldn't be guaranteed to provide either exactly what the author had imagined or what would precisely stimulate the individual actor'.

The rehearsal period was spread over four weeks in order to bring together mask and text. 'I decided to split each rehearsal day in two. Half the day the actors should block the moves and go over the text without the masks and without any attempt to characterise. The other half they would improvise in masks but *not* on the text of the play'.⁷²

Gaskill started with a first reading followed by free-form improvisation in the masks to break the ice with the company. These took the form of solo, wordless improvisations followed by duo and trio scenarios. He observes that 'we also saw that no two actors would create the same character in the same mask, proving that the mask

does not have an absolute identity which swamps the actor, but rather reveals hitherto unknown aspects of the actor's personality.

The Comic masks of the Old People were character half and three-quarter masks fitted closely to the face with large eye apertures with mouth and chin completely exposed. They were made from sculpted card. The eyes were brought forward in the mask to enhance visibility and peripheral vision. Each character was a carefully observed cameo of competing egotisms. Gaskill discovered, however, that the earlier free-form rehearsals without text had produced a vibrancy that later rehearsals could not recapture:

I gave the actors the masks of the characters in the play
and – nothing happened. The masks would not produce the same
simple bold performances. The actors knew the characters too well
from the text they had been rehearsing the other half of the day and
had preconceived them. Their response could no longer be intuitive'.⁷³

Gaskill, faced with this impasse, decided to go on rehearsing the play without the masks. When they were completely in command of the text the masks were given back in the late stages of rehearsal. Although this did not and could not recreate 'the Commedia of before' it was 'sufficient to raise the performance into a different style'. This, for the director, was a vindication of the experiment because 'the cast did achieve a breadth of style and a boldness of characterisation they could never have achieved in make-up, however grotesque'.⁷⁴

After *The Island of The Mighty* (1972) and their break with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Arden and D'Arcy decided to write another play with a multilinear structure with both popular mask and ethnic content. *The Non-Stop Connolly*

Show was presented on Easter weekend, Saturday-Sunday, 29-30 March 1975 at Liberty Hall (headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union) in Dublin.

‘Capitalism in our plays is represented by a “demon king” figure called Grabitall, who wears the same mask throughout the cycle, but goes under several different names, according to his role in each part of the story. In Part Three, for instance, he is the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; in Part Four he is Pierpoint Morgan; in Parts Five and Six he is William Martin Murphy. He has three Similarly stock-masked henchmen, known as the Employers, who change their nationality and their names in the same way. Military ecclesiastical, bourgeois-political, judicial figures are dealt with by means of the same convention. Members of the working-class and national liberation movements, whether for or against Connolly, do not wear masks, but are only given that degree of individuality consistent with the particular needs of their role in the story’.⁷⁵

This production was made up of six plays⁷⁶ and lasted twenty-six hours and was separated by short breaks for light refreshments for both cast and audience. It included films and songs and a one-hour spot for Red Ladder Theatre Company from Leeds. The cast was twenty-five people strong but made up of amateurs – friends, family and university students – with a small core of six professionals. Jim Sheridan, (who directed John McGrath’s *Trembling Giant* in 1977) was a member of the cast and one of the co-ordinators of the production. After twelve weeks of rehearsals, an enormous amount of re-writing and a number of casualties who left before the process was complete, the

show was performed to an audience of five hundred people. Boris and Maggie Howarth of Welfare State International made the masks, life-size puppets, costumes and props. Whereas Ariane Mnouchkine spent two years planning the first draft of *L'Age d'Or* (*The Golden Age*), the Arden's tried to do it all within six months with an amateur cast: that according to Paddy Marsh meant that 'in practice, the lack of rehearsal, the make-shift arrangements and lack of organisation combined with the unalleviated verbal emphasis to make the plays positively difficult to understand'.⁷⁷ The production was heavily criticised in *The Guardian* by the critic Harriet Cooke and the Ardens' discovered the difficulties of making an historical epic under strained conditions with inadequate preparation and resources. In theory they were eulogising the life and times of a socialist hero, while in practice, according to Marsh, it would appear that they had adopted an authoritarian approach. John Arden's own account highlights the fact that the Tory aristocrats 'had grotesque masks like birds of prey' and that the intention was to aim for 'emblematic truth' that was exploratory and educational.⁷⁸

Experiments in Post-War British Mask Theatre

One of the most interesting mask theatre experiments of the 1970's was that of Hana-No Company from London. It was founded by Hovhanness.I.Pilikian, a young Armenian director of classical drama, who had worked in America and Yugoslavia. Two of the world's most distinguished set designers Josef Svoboda and Ralph Koltai have designed for him. Pilikian gained a BA in Drama and graduated from the director's course at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in 1967. His productions of Euripides *Electra* at the Greenwich Theatre, in which Derek Jacobi starred and *Oedipus* at the Chichester Festival Theatre were very well received.

He founded Hana-No Company in June 1970. 'I think that without a recovery and revival of Masks in the theatre, no new theatrical language can be discovered. They are the theatrical magic of the genius in primitive cultures'. However, he goes on to qualify the nature of this recovery: 'I am not advocating the emergence of an exact replica of ancient forms, but a contemporary transliteration of the rules (through a rediscovery) of the time-old mask game'.⁷⁹ Pilikian criticised those who regarded masks as 'vehicles of stylisation' arguing that they must be 'powerfully expressive by their essential nature' but 'must also be anatomically, physiologically naturalistic'. He cautioned against becoming blinded by 'strange seeming, stylised looking, masks of exotic cultures' asserting that 'one must remember that African, Mexican and Japanese masks are naturalistic within the context of their own racial anatomy – they seem stylised only outside their own culture and physiognomy, in our own "white" terms'.⁸⁰

His major productions with Hana-No were *The Death of Kikoss* (July 1970) by Gail Rademacher and based on a classical legend; *The Proposal* by Anton Chekhov at the Canterbury Theatre and also in a double-bill with *The Bear* at the Northcott Theatre in Exeter and the Arts Lab in London (December 1970); *Of Masks and Men* (February 1971), again by Gail Rademacher, at the Cockpit Theatre; the *Quem Quaeritis* trope (March 1971);

Critics of the time were surprised at the versatility of the masks used in these productions and also by Pilikian's assertion that all Western plays could be performed in masks.⁸¹ Daphne Warrington-Ince also noted his comments about the versatility of masks in being able to change expression and become totally different on different actors 'provided they are good ones'. In *Of Masks and Men* the actors 'switched masks' with 'remarkable effect' and the use of masks 'also heightened the dramatic effect,

intensifying the emotions which impelled the action and to a spine-chilling extent – perhaps because the players, in their larger-than-life masks, assumed also a larger-than-life character’.⁸² Similarly *The Death of Kikoss* was about a family coming to terms with grief and loss based on the idea that the youngest sisters cannot marry before the eldest. The elder sister poses as a bereaved mother, to allow the younger sisters a way through, but they each copy the elder sister, mourning the loss of an imaginary son. The Father arrives and sends his wife and daughters off to a funeral wake. This show was accompanied by sombre music composed by George Michel. ‘The masks designed with great artistry by Jennifer Heap, enhanced the eloquence of the speakers exaggerating their humanity, rather than distorting it’.⁸³ The production of *The Bear* and *The Proposal* by Chekhov in Sheffield also elicited a similar response from another reviewer who described the six characters as ‘much more than lay figures. They are bursting with vital energy and their unsinkable, irreconcilable individuality (the very core of the drama) is heightened, not obscured, by the unblinking fixity of Jennifer Heap’s grotesque – but subtle – masks’.⁸⁴ The large head masks were made from cardboard, hessian and assorted fibres. In the annals of theatre Hana-No was in existence for a very short time (1970-72) as a dedicated mask company with a strong interest in classical theatre and modern plays. Its precise relation to London and British culture was never made explicit and in retrospect a materialist evaluation might situate it as a noble post-1968 experiment that failed to achieve any longevity. This was to become the task of a very different dedicated group of mask practitioners, the Trestle Theatre Company.

Trestle emerged out of a mask class taught by John Wright, a lecturer in acting and theatre making at Middlesex Polytechnic (and now director of *Told By An Idiot*

theatre company) in 1981.⁸⁵ Together with Toby Wilsher, Alan Riley and Sally Cook they decided to found a popular mask company based on the principal that each new show would be a devised work using full head masks and non-verbal communication. Their intention was to examine the British class system and its social types from a whimsical and gently satirical position. They were inspired directly by Johnstone's Moving Picture Mime Show production of 'The Examination' that used naïve or Basel masks and many of their core performers have come from the mime school of Philip Gaulier and Monica Pagneaux in Paris. According to Wilsher the company decided to use full face and head masks 'because they work by suspending disbelief and with the wig the actors can turn their backs to the audience without breaking the fantasy'.⁸⁶

In *Top Storey* (1987) the crisis in humanism was expressed in the shattering of an old man's peaceful retirement by the return of his brother to the family home after an absence of forty years. Through more recent shows such as *Little Victories*, *Plastered*, *Wind Up Your Tail*, *Hanging Around*, *Passionfish*, *Blue Horizon*, *A Slight Hitch*, *Beggars Belief* and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* they have taken topical issues of unemployment, high-rise living, family breakdown and various social crises of urban modern life and made us laugh. In *Beggars Belief* (1998), set in the Middle Ages, they told the story of the blinding of two itinerant puppeteers by the powerful mayor who wrecked their lives. In collaboration with the Kherson Company from the Ukraine they entered new territory using folk tale, *commedia* and puppet theatre.

During their first fourteen years of touring Trestle were based in an old mental hospital in north London. In 2004 they have achieved their new Lottery-funded building at the Birch Centre in St. Albans and are now starting to explore more text-based work. With the retirement of Wilsher as artistic director the company has to develop new work

and forge a new identity steering a path between mainstream venue and touring company obligations. Improvement in material terms often fractures identity and the Lottery have their price: 'a thorough audit of who we are, what we do and who it is for.'⁸⁷ Trestle had a unique identity based on pioneering mask work of innovative and popular appeal, but that identity was always a struggle and now the demand is for change.

During this same period British theatre also had a series of encounters with *commedia dell'arte* and its masks. The search for a popular theatre between 1970 and 2004 has given rise to many initiatives including the formation of troupes – Intenti (1984), Unfortunati (1982-87), Beryl and the Perils (1978-86), I Gelati (1984-86), The Fortunati (1987-88), Ophaboom.(1991-to present) and The Adrenalinis (1997).⁸⁸ All have tried to 'recapture its popular appeal' and believed that 'as a physical form' it 'should be understood in any language.'⁸⁹ Katritzky (1998) has identified that many fundamental questions remain unanswered about both pre-modern variants and contemporary derivatives and revivals:

Not least, that if the vital plurality of languages in contemporary *commedia dell'arte* studies is to survive, the difficulties in efficient cross-language information exchange and academic collaboration must be effectively addressed.⁹⁰

The powerful impact of *commedia* on modern drama in its masked and unmasked forms continues to challenge audiences and actors with the impression that 'something is being made out of nothing'.⁹¹ The studies of Green and Swan (1986) and Fisher (1992) have extracted the range of *commedia* influence over the modern imagination as an aesthetic archetype (a collection of images with many meanings) and as a specific form of improvisatory political satire.⁹² The most explosive and modern materialist to adopt

the masks and their *grammelots* and to reduce the audience to laughter across geographical, linguistic and chronological boundaries has been Dario Fo.

Dario Fo : Meanings within Maskings

The work of Dario Fo, with its strong interest in *commedia dell'arte*, carnival, circus, puppet theatre, cabaret, variety theatre and popular song is counter-pointed by his use of masks as tools of transformation and paradox. Any starting point for the work of the actor with a mask is for Fo an ideological moment: to have an understanding of why a particular mask demands a particular gestural or movement pattern. Everything done or said should be preceded by a particular impulse and every intention should have a clean-cut corresponding movement. The issue for Fo is what lies behind this style of gesture, why choose one mask rather than another, what kind of breathing is beneath the mask, how do we give it voice and tone (high, low abdominal). The discovery of the *technica* of the mask character, its typical 'look' or 'gaze', the stance, the walk, the position of the feet are of central importance in differentiating one masked type from another. Behind all of this, of course, is the larger question of appropriating ('to make one's own what was initially alien' in Ricoeur's sense) the mask and differentiating between the downright reactionary and revolutionary in content. This is to do with your choice of cultural direction and political line. Will you opt for Goldoni or Ruzzante (*ruzzare* in Paduan dialect means 'to unite oneself with animals')? In the words of Walter Benjamin, the mask performer must learn how 'to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger'.⁹³

The satirical work of Fo in the context of mask *praxis* has an integral connection with the idea of removing the masks of bourgeois hypocrisy. Time and again, from the

earliest rehearsals of *Mistero Buffo*, Fo makes the point that history never existed in the form they always taught us. He reminds us, in the words of Gramsci, that we are all products of the vast chain of efforts made by working people to better their lot across generations; and that not to acknowledge these former struggles, efforts and roots is a form of betrayal.⁹⁴

The catalogue of performances, in which Fo has used all kinds of masks for as many different purposes, stretches back over forty years. From the ghost and clown masks in *Comic Finale* (1958), the hunting-dog mask in *Archangels Don't Play Pinball* (1959), the masks of the executioners and the nun in *Isabella, Three Sailing Ships and a Con Man* (1963), the mask of the devil-dwarf in *Always Blame The Devil* (1965), the bird mask and costume of *The Boss's Funeral* (1969), the giant puppets and masks of political oppression in *Grand Pantomime with Flags and Small and Middle-Sized Puppets* (1971), the black eye-patch minimal mask of the anarchist in *Accidental Death of An Anarchist* (1970), Fo wearing the mask of Communist Party leader, Palmiro Togliatti in *Death and Resurrection of A Puppet* (1971), the masks used by the Popular front for The Liberation of Palestine in *Fedayin* (1972), the masked kidnapper and fascist skeletal puppet of *Fanfani Kidnapped* (1975), the leather strapping mask of the disfigured and kidnapped Gianni Agnelli in *Trumpets and Raspberries* (1981), the Sartori mask of the cat Arlecchino and the dog masks of Razzullo and Scaraco in *Harlequin (Hellequin, Harlekin, Arlecchino)* (1985), the kidnappers wearing masks of prominent Italian politicians in *Kidnapping Francesca* (1986) to the ventriloquists dummy of Leonardo Marino operated by the Judge character played by Fo in *Marino At Large* (1998). Masks have a powerful presence in the corpus of Fo's work and have offered special opportunities for grotesque and satirical caricature.

In terms of Fo's understanding and use of the mask as a stage instrument his words offer some significant insights. The combined influence of Jacques Lecoq together with that of his wife, Franca Rame's, family legacy from the southern 'political' *commedia* and puppet theatre tradition plus Giorgio Strehler's experiments at the Piccolo Teatro moved him to research the mask. His emphasis on mime, improvisation and direct audience address were developed from the 1960's onwards. In his book *The Actor's Mini-Manual* (1987), later re-titled and translated into English as *The Tricks of The Trade* (1991), a significant part of the chapter entitled 'First Day' is given over to analysing the mask.

In a rapid survey, which stretches from the masked sorcerer in the Dordogne to the anonymous Sardinian *mammuttones* (black-masked horned figures wearing the skin of goats or sheep) to Dionysus and the Greeks, Fo emphasises the importance of the mask, ritual and survival as 'the three constants of every primitive religion'.⁹⁵ These observations and his comments on intercultural masking lack precision. However, it is with the zoomorphic origins of *commedia* masks that his erudition becomes apparent. For the actor it is imperative to know that 'they are taken from courtyard, domestic or tamed animals' and that 'Arlecchino is a mixture of cat and monkey, the Capitano is the result of a cross between a bloodhound and a mastiff, while Pantalone is born from the turkey and the cockerel and so on down to Brighella, who is half dog and half cat and the Dottore who is pure pig'.⁹⁶

In presenting this view of *commedia* Fo sought to depart from a simple radical re-working of the classics of Italian theatre in the image of Strehler or Grassi, whilst he could not but admire the professionalism and cleanliness of their results. Some of his early folk songs were nevertheless co-written with Strehler. It is, however, in the actor-

centred nature of Fo's observations on masks that clues to their real usage are to be found: 'All masks are constructed in such a way that every form contributes, on the inside (by means of cavities which on the outside appear to be bumps), to the production of special, varied sound vibrations'.⁹⁷ This point concerning the mask as a megaphone has been hotly disputed by theatre scholars of both ancient and modern drama. He cites the following example:

I could show you a Zanni mask in which the megaphone is created by a mechanism, which holds the lip in a raised position. If I put it on, thanks to the special opening which holds the frame a good three inches away from the mouth, the volume of my vocal output is increased twofold, especially in the deeper tones, because, to establish his personality, this character requires low, sinister tones.⁹⁸

The Greek mask-maker Thanos Vovolis has recently undertaken extensive research, which does much to substantiate this assertion. It would seem that Fo is quite right when he refers to every mask as 'a musical instrument with its own particular echo chamber'. Each of the Commedia masks has its own vocal pitch and range fused with an original dialect. When two academics, Ferruccio Marotti and Franco Quadri, invited him to undertake a Laboratory Workshop on *Arlecchino* and to perform a show at the Venice Biennale in 1985 he decided to research the area and to make an unqualified acceptance. *Harlequin* (*Hellequin*, *Harlekin*, *Arlecchino*) was the result of researches into *lazzi* compiled by Ferruccio Marotti and Delia Gambelli based on the lives of Tristano Martinelli and Dominique Biancolelli. The workshop took place over a six-week period at Sta Cristina, near Gubbio. The entire proceedings were documented and filmed, including Fo's mask improvisations and the notes and photographs made by

Cielo Pessione and Patrizia Fulcinetti from Rome were gathered together in book form under the title *Io Fo Arlecchino*.⁹⁹

Tricks of The Trade was written in the period of the gestation and planning of this Laboratory Workshop. Fo makes some telling observations about the meanings of the mask for the actor. He examines Moretti's resistance to donning the mask at all and attributes it to two main reasons: in the first place, the mask can induce a sense of anxiety by restricting the 'visual field and the acoustic-vocal range'; and secondly, the reaction on removing the mask, after wearing it for two or three hours, that 'your face has remained stuck to it, or the fear that the face has gone with the mask'.¹⁰⁰ He also takes a strong line against touching the mask while on the face otherwise it 'vanishes or appears contaminated or nauseating'.¹⁰¹

The importance of Fo's work with masks and puppets is that he emphasizes the need to co-ordinate gesture to object: 'The real problem concerns the matching of gesture to the mask. What is the purpose of the mask? To magnify and simultaneously give the essence of the character. It obliges you to widen and develop your gestures, which must not be arbitrary if you want the audience, your immediate mirror, to follow you and to grasp the flow of the piece, especially when dealing with a gag, a routine or a comic situation'.¹⁰² He is categorical that the decisive factor is the way the audience is persuaded by an actor to focus on one detail of the action of the totality of the action, using a series of close-up and long lenses unknowingly stored in their brains. To watch Fo performing the 'lazzi' of the fly while masked as Arlecchino is to experience a master-class in the use of gestural space and comic timing: 'The frame is now bounded by the nose with converging eyes, staring at the fly. Here the spectator is compelled to restrict his own range of vision right down to a micro-frame, centred on the fly whose

wings and legs are being pulled off. The progression, which is obviously calculated, must be executed with the utmost precision, must possess a precise rhythm and must give the illusion of space which, if opened out or narrowed too much, would produce fatigue and a loss of attention'.¹⁰³ He advises maintaining authority in the centre of the stomach, flexibility in the upper body – particularly the shoulders and the neck – and wearing only a comfortable mask which lets you breathe: 'The mask is like a shoe – if it is not comfortable on you, you won't walk'.¹⁰⁴

Fo has occupied a shifting but central point for the last forty years in the struggle to produce a new culture and his enthusiasm and partisanship has created a series of satirical masks caught up in cultural and political osmosis. He has also worked closely with the Sartori family in their rediscovery of the process of mask-making in leather. In some ways his mask performances have been predicated upon the retrieval and reformulation of the radical roots of *commedia*, which is on-going even to the present moment. Theatrical animation projects using masks are currently being developed by Venezia InScene, Teatro Proskenion, Teatro Gioco Vita and many other new performance companies.¹⁰⁵

Mask Aesthetics and Politics

The search for a unified field has also been the project of many Marxists and neo-Marxists. The aesthetic conflict between 'Realism' and 'Modernism' in the Bloch-Lukács debate from 1938 onwards contained many contradictory currents, not the least of which has been Brecht's attack on the idealism and formalism of Lukács. The use of the mask to make non-reality become fact is perhaps, as Jameson (1977) says, 'far less a matter of knowledge and epistemology, than it is of sheer experiment and of practical,

well nigh manual activity.’¹⁰⁶ In reaffirming the supremacy of the power of the hand to design and make masks and through exploring performative identities in theatre and in life we have a unique means of annulling the separation between mental and physical activity in the division of labour. This in turn unites an ideal of mask *praxis* with a conception of performance and theatrical production. As a result the world, as it is known or imagined, is changed - sometimes in a small and other times in a much larger way.

The uses of the masks of materialist modernism across Europe and North America originated in a society that still had a dynamic and residual folk culture near to the surface of everyday life. The rural and the urban still existed side-by-side in flux linking past, present and future, while the cultural observations of Gramsci still enhance and resonate through the study of all types of theatre (folk, popular, elite, national and national-popular). In his definitions of ‘civil society’ and ‘hegemony’, Gramsci raised the question of the purpose of culture in unmasking distortions or ripping away false masks: ‘Education, culture, the widespread organisation of knowledge and experience is the independence of the masses from the intellectuals’.¹⁰⁷ He was interested in sustaining a process that could ‘destroy spiritual hierarchies, prejudices, idols, rigid traditions’.¹⁰⁸ The divide between ‘national’ and ‘popular’ in Italy is still of enduring significance and many of the artistic intellectuals whose mask work has been discussed here (Fo, Sartori) would not wish to be regarded as the ‘clerks’ of the dominant group nor circumscribed by the idea of ‘national tradition’. Indeed, here the mask has been used as a seismograph of the consciousness that each of these artistic intellectuals had of ‘self’ and ‘other,’ individual and society, agency and history. Their various works

represent differing levels of aesthetic concern and moral enthusiasm for a society already extant and towards the struggle for a new culture.

6: Intercultural Masking and Transnational Flows

By means of a confrontation with what appears to be foreign, one educates one's way of seeing and renders it both participatory and detached.¹

A transnational analysis of the mask provides a series of insights regarding the traditional and innovatory in terms of 'flows', the anatomy of the art of the performer, the art and craft of the mask maker and the transnational exchanges, workshops and productions which have contributed to what has been described as the cultural dynamics of 'deterritorialization'.² This investigation shifts the focus to ways in which individuals, artistic groups, production companies and cultural organisations have increasingly operated in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities. When we examine the links between space, stability and cultural transmission and reproduction we need also to confront changing traditions of perception and perspective. These considerations highlight the importance of the ambiguities of appearance, the categorical links with both tradition and social change, in training and professional life in the contemporary theatre of masks, puppets and performing objects.

The spaces and places occupied by masks, puppets and performing objects subjected to 'deterritorialization' correspond to the processes through which the fixity of 'ourselves' and 'others' have been destabilised. Masks transferred between cultures can all too easily become free-floating monads. In a real sense they become hybrid creations in-between cultures. Homi K. Bhaba has pointed out that an interstitial zone of displacement or deterritorialization stemming from the contradictions within which

people survive and are politically active and change is important in ridding us of imperialist, colonialist and nationalist notions of purity and other utopian dreams.³ On this basis it may be important not to recommend a transcultural flow of masks, puppets and performing objects from margins to mainstream, but to speak from a borderland point whereby contradiction, antagonism, the hybridities of cultural forms and national boundaries are not subsumed into other fields of study.

In Asian mask theatre, the aspiring performer is an apprentice in both craft and art; and the philosophy of working with the mask involves all stages from first impressions through initiation to the flowering and withering of life and social skills. The way of the mask, to again invoke Levi-Strauss, involves a displacement and a journey that brings about a shift of perception. Working with masks as tools of transformation requires a preparedness to change and to be changed: an opening up of new possibilities.

It is necessary in this regard to consider three major areas in order to fully understand the way of the mask in a specific culture. One must first establish the basis for its philosophical foundation; second, examine how it developed as an art form; and finally, understand how the art of the mask has been passed on from generation to generation.

In the theatre of the East, there is nothing commensurate with the Western notion of the mask holding out a new release of acting resources (as if by simply putting on a mask and undertaking some free-fall improvisations the wearer transcends previous limitations). In traditional Asian theatre, each performer is what he or she is by virtue of the time, place and culture into which they are born. The way of the mask is both a life-long devotion to craft and the cultivation of the 'seeker' in performance terms. The

Buddhist concept of the mutability of the self on the road to enlightenment is in stark contrast to the notion of the fixed persona: one of the primary sources of human despair. Mark Olsen, in *The Golden Buddha Changing Masks*, perceptively sums up such a view:

The personality was perceived by the Buddha as a conglomerate invocation of masks. If that is so, then who is wearing the masks? According to Buddhism, it is the Buddha – we are all Buddhas, temporarily hypnotized by the magnetism of our masks. Like fighting fire with fire, the actor whose essential self recognizes the dilemma can fight masks with masks. He can consciously invoke his masks, going deeper and deeper into the process until he has no fixed persona. En route, one must find the inner master, the one who is conscious of the changing masks. The source of truth and the strength to face life without a mask comes from this master within.⁴

The contrast between this approach and that of the Western drama school or college or university theatre course, that produces an actor after two or three formative years, could not be more striking. An unrooted actor-training will not produce lasting flowers; the soil and the bedrock must be carefully nurtured. To propose a much longer and more exacting period of actor- training as the solution to this gap, as some writers have done, is an inadequate response.⁵ The real issue is that initiation into the ways of working with masks in the theatre requires periods of living and working in other societies and cultures while becoming attuned to values and ideas very different from our own. This 'detour strategy', as Eugenio Barba has called it, throws up all the questions about theatre as barter, exchange, interaction and transformation. The student of masks has little choice but to make a quantum leap into a new philosophical and

sociological area to stave off the short-termism, crude market economics, typecasting and commodity fetishism that have come to dominate Western theatre.

In the field of Western mask training, in spite of the previous work of Copeau, Chancerel, Saint-Denis, Lecoq, Mazzone-Clementi and John Wright relatively little is written down. The major works can be counted on the fingers of one hand and they are all produced by actor trainers working within higher education: *Behind the Mask* by Bari Rolfe (1977), *Mask Characterisation: An Acting Process* by Libby Appel (1981), *Mask Improvisation for Actor-Training and Performance ; The Compelling Image* by Sears A.Eldredge (1996) and *Mask: A Release of Acting Resources* by David Griffiths (1998). The emphasis in all these works falls upon creative exercises for individuals and groups and on the idea of developing an exemplary teaching approach. Indeed, as we have already seen Copeau, Saint-Denis and Decroux viewed the mask as an essential but temporary training device in the formation of the actor.

The following section examines in some detail the form and content of some of the transnational masks used in modern performance, training, research and demonstration. In these fields, the work is passed on by the performers themselves and the emphasis usually arises within common systems of dramatic imagery developed through a specific cultural history being transmitted across national boundaries. The twentieth century has witnessed an explosion of opportunities for performers, playwrights, directors, designers and students to explore modern drama using masks. There are a plethora of mask types and mask genres from the most experimental avant-garde forms to rediscovery and reinterpretation of the codified great traditions to draw upon. Increasingly the embodied mask – the performed mask – is being recognised as its own field of study with its own domain of knowledge and experience.

The Fluidity of the Self and the Other.

As we have already seen the abstruse issue, of the nature of 'identity' and the question, of whether there really is any uniting principle that can be said to constitute an individual person, was first raised by Hume in 1739. Since that time the dialectic relationship between the individual and society has been continuously under discussion in terms of essence and appearance, consciousness and social being, subject and object, base and superstructure, human and inhuman and abstraction and empathy. These bipolar opposites are the product of Western philosophy in a world of secularisation processes. Durkheim's struggle to establish the reality of an object of faith with its associated symbolic guises has never been resolved.

If the findings of modern philosophy and semiotics regarding linguistic fragmentation, discursive communication practices and the end of meta-narratives are to be truly integrated into performance studies, then the need for understanding visual symbolism and ritual enactment through the use of masks as signs becomes apparent. The philosopher, Edward Sullivan, comments that:

Masks are part of the category of signs. The whole purpose of a sign is to make known something other than itself, thus a sign is something more than itself for it enables something else to be present in it. A direction arrow has little importance in itself; it is in this place to enable the traveller to get to some other place. That other place to which the sign directs us is somehow present in the sign...It is the very nature of the sign to bear some kind of presupposed relationship with the thing signified.⁶

Throughout modern drama we can see the diverse range, modalities and psychological underpinnings of the concept of identity being put to the test across

diverse genres in masked plays, ceremonials and street events. In the ontological juggling between the self and other the mask is the symbol par excellence of 'non-reality become a fact'. It simultaneously hides and reveals, disconnects and connects, discharges and charges up. In performative terms, practice - the creation and use of the mask, is the sole means available by which we can validate not only our initial act of faith in wearing this new face but also the theories we formulate to relate the purposes embodied in that faith to an objective reality. It is in practice that we sort out the genuine problems from the mere survivals of the past. Georg Lukacs expressed the fluid relationship between self and other, being and consciousness in terms of a process of passing 'beyond the merely theoretical to the problem of practice. For only here, where the core of being is revealed as a social process, can being appear as the product, previously unconscious, of human activity and this activity in its turn as the decisive element in the transformation of "being"'.⁷ In this sense, what we see as 'human nature' or 'identity' is no more than the past limits of human activity mediated and superseded by the changing masks of our consciousness. Some postmodernist denials of meta-narratives would claim that to make this last formulation equate to an 'objective reality' is an impossibility.⁸

The fluidity of identity becomes even more acute though intercultural exchange and transnational cultural flows of people, work, products and ideas across national boundaries. But this is also an ancient phenomenon. The shifting point between the grand meta-narratives and the way of transcendence outside history focuses the philosophical choice between Materialism and Idealism. In my mind there remains only the history made by men in particular conditions, which they also create (but not of their own choosing); 'men make history and history makes men'.⁹

In a remarkable study (1943) of the fluidity of self and other in the life of the poet William Blake, J. Bronowski, contrasts the prophetic mask of the poet and engraver with the man without a mask inscribed within a precise historical time, which gave birth to the modern world which we know.¹⁰ The two revolutions that shook the world – the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution – were present in his life and in his writings. His thought rested roundly on the world in which he lived and it was an age of considerable violence and barbarism. Blake had a real sense of ‘communitas’ and a strong sense of contraries (‘without which there is no progression’) and was a radical in a Tory society. In spite of his view of ‘The Human Abstract’, Blake did not suffer from the same kind of disenchantment of many of his contemporaries. While he was not able to achieve a full synthesis of antinomian and rationalist, his vision was of the liberation of unrealised potential, of an alternative nature within man, ‘a nature masked by circumstance’, repressed by Moral Law, concealed by Mystery and self-defeated by the other nature of “self-love”. The cast of mind that searches and dissents will always be drawn towards changing masks, gathering voices and popular culture whether in the heartlands or the borderlands. That is why E. P. Thompson states resoundingly that when it comes to changing masks ‘Never, on any page of Blake, is there the least complicity with the kingdom of the Beast’.¹¹

The Japanese actor, Yoshi Oida, who lives in Paris and has collaborated extensively with Peter Brook on many of his transnational performances, advocates the use of the mask and the metaphor of the mask in order to render the actor invisible and the performance translucent. He emphasizes that the personal history of the individual is heavily influenced by the social class, culture, group, genetics and country of origin and that this shapes physicality. He argues that it is necessary to drop the personal body in

order to discover and incarnate the character's body. In this sense, for an actor, the mask needs to be understood with the body and inner self, not the brain. He is very clear about the relationship between Western and Eastern approaches to acting and where they meet:

As actors, we usually start our work from the mind or emotions and then assume that this inner life will travel outwards and appear through our bodies.

But the opposite method also works: starting from the outside and then moving inwards.¹²

He describes a very interesting effect of transnational flow in the work of the late masked Japanese Noh actor, Hideo Kanze. Oida saw a performance in Japan which concentrated heavily on storyline and dramatic situation and resembled 'a melodrama on television'. He came away somewhat disappointed. But on seeing the same performance again in Paris, where Kanze concentrated on each gesture, sound and movement detail: 'It was absolutely wonderful'. The experience of being in a non-Japanese culture had forced the old actor 'away from the conventional kind of storytelling' to discover 'a more universal level of communication'.¹³

For Oida the Japanese concepts of 'tai' (fundamental structure – inside) and 'yu' (phenomenon – outside) are fundamental. He cites Zeami on studying the 'tai' and letting the 'yu' emerge. The Noh mask flows across both concepts. Strict imitation of the teacher's external expression brings forth the inner life of the character, while detailed knowledge of the particular mask provides a fundamental structure and catalyst. The carving and finishing of these masks is a craft requiring great skill and many years training and in the West it was not until the visit of Nohzin Suzuki to the Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre in 1994 that an extended Noh mask-making residency was held

outside of Japan. Noh consciously renounces the language of facial expressions by the use of the mask so that the fluidity of 'self' and 'other' is accomplished by bringing the 'men' or 'omote', meaning facial surface, into contact with the 'noh', meaning skill or accomplishment of the maker and the performer.

The Mask as a Contact Tool in a Contact Zone

Where there are mask-makers there is theatre and dance and 'symbolic action in human society'¹⁴ As we have seen in Strother's study of the Pende, the mask-maker is very often not the first link in the chain (social arena-ceremony-dance-costume-mask) but the last. At a transnational level we should now identify some examples of how the location of power can shift not only during the performance between performer and spectator but also between sculptor and performer. On the basis of previous investigations, however, we should be prepared to discover performance contexts that are susceptible of many meanings ('multivocal' actions as Turner has called them). The direction of a transnational flow may, on the surface, seem to arise from a certain cultural anchoring (time, place, culture), but on deeper probing, reveal other complex currents of an intercultural nature.

The Mexican mask-maker, Pedro Amador Reyes Juarez, is an example of an artist-craftsman who performs nearly all the processes of production with his own hands. For him a good mask is made of a suitable material, with proper adaptation to use, carefully chosen materials and exudes a genuine expression of 'life' or 'spirit'. Although he is an extraordinary mask-maker, he is also a representative of a certain type of folk artist who has both a mandate from his community but also receives commissions as a 'santero' (maker of saints) from churches in both Latin America and Spain. He has accommodated his craft to new market demands and reinterpreted the age

old mask making tradition in new ways. Pedro Reyes' work is situated in a contact zone, 'in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict' as well as synthesis.¹⁵

The mask-maker learned his craft from his father (Carlos Reyes Acoltzi) and lives in Tlatempan, Tlaxcala, in rural central Mexico. His Spanish forename (Carlos) is counterbalanced by his indigenous name (Amador) in syncretic union, which acknowledges his dual ancestry. When he is not working as a mask-maker for local festivals he is also a 'santero' (or maker of saints for the Church). The skin tone of his masks is deliberately Caucasian with the teeth often painted gold. These full-face dance masks, carved in a local hardwood called 'ayacahuite' (our equivalent of stone pine), are instantly recognisable by their blue glass eyes (hand-made in Tlaxcala) and moving eyelids, which are operated by pulling a string attached to a hidden spring. In performance when the string is pulled it appears to wink at the spectator. These masks also have eyelashes of real hair (which are usually applied by Reyes' wife). Nearly all the masks have one or more decorative beauty spots added to their surfaces. The old technique of painting them involved applying fine oil pigments over a layer of Spanish white or gesso; then while the paint was still wet it was polished with a chicken's crop to make it look smooth like human skin. For the last twenty years synthetic oil colours and even car body paints have been in regular use. The oldest of these masks dating back to the 1920's were made from a softwood called 'tsompantle' or 'colorin' (coral tree).¹⁶

Pedro Reyes makes three major types of mask: the simple mask with smiling face and small moustache used in the Santa Cruz Tlaxcala and San Bernardino Contla

festivals; the mask with lots of hair and sideburns used in the Amaxcac de Guerrero and San Francisco Ocotelulco festivals; and the full bearded mask based on Che Guevara for the Panotla, San Juan Totalac and Santa Justina Ecadepec festivals.

The Reyes Workshop is attached to his house and his son and wife work with him in close familial co-operation (like he did with his father before him). The wood blocks are 'roughed-out' with a macheté and then carved with professional gouges and chisels bought in Mexico City. During my last visit, in 1995, I introduced Pedro to the 'ko-omote' and made a gift of a set of chisels, knives and gouges from Japan (donated by my master, Nohzin Suzuki) as a symbolic gesture of intercultural exchange. On a practical level, the design and structure of the Japanese tools were a revelation to Signor Reyes because of their lightness and the closeness of the cutting edge to the handle. He immediately saw the advantage of using smaller and finer tools to achieve precision cuts and lines in both mask-making and the carving of Saints.¹⁷

For the most part the masks made by the Reyes Workshop represent city people who wear fine attire, black top hats, dress shirts, black trousers, black frockcoats, white gloves and carry umbrellas. They are thought to be send-ups of French imperialists from the Second Empire and are known as 'catrin' (dandy).¹⁸ 'Camadas' or 'cuadrillas' is the name of the dance that is performed with these masks and they are used during Carnival time in various towns in the state. Groups of eighteen to twenty men and women make up a dance, but only the men are masked. They are used on Carnival Tuesday in San Bernardino Contla and also for the Patronal carnival and Sarape Fair on the 20th May; on the first Sunday of Lent in San Francisco Tepeyanco; and on Carnival Sunday in San Juan Totalac. The masks are also thought to have ancient rain-making significance: 'This interpretation is further reinforced at the end of the dance, when dancers wearing

plumed hats carry pairs of whips made of ixtle, which they place on the ground in an arrangement that suggests serpents'.¹⁹

A history and development of mask use exists since 1800 in Tlaxcala with Carnival masks being made in leather (pounded over a stone or wooden mould), then in naïve style in carved wood and later in the recognisable 'realist' Tlaxcala style. Tlaxcala is also famous for another festival that celebrates in dance or 'morisma' the sixteenth century expulsion of the Moors from Spain; another startling piece of religious acculturation. This area has been noted not only for the closeness with which local people experience life and art because folk culture is near to the surface, but also for its 'extensive complex of basically pagan supernatural, beliefs and practices' that still prevail even though the tradition is in the process of fundamental change.²⁰ The interplay between the indigenous foundation and the materials of the imported religion were a product of syncretism rather than the conversion of one faith to another. In this sense 'reality' is one and many and corresponds to the pantheism of prehispanic culture rather than to the monotheism of the Catholicism brought by Cortes. 'Confronted by the cross of Cortes, Montezuma responded with the mask: different metaphors for different views of reality, each wonderfully expressive of a way of relating human life to the mystery of the eternal'.²¹

The colonial expansionism of Spain and Second Empire France in this part of Mexico has produced a unique intercultural fusion that, on the surface, is syncretic (i.e. an attempt to sink differences and effect a union between cultures). The adapting culture, Mexico, saw direct counterparts in its thought and ritual based in masks, codices and what Artaud termed 'animated hieroglyphs'. The assimilation process was every bit as complex and difficult as the confrontation between paganism and

Christianity in feudal Europe. It brought with it the reality of conquest and the submergence of mythic views and other ancient rituals. Today in Mexico masks are made of famous people according to the politics of the moment so that there have been masks of Jorge Negrete, a well-known popular singer and Cantinflas, a great comedian. Since 1975 the bearded masks of Che Guevara have come to the fore. Pedro Reyes is respected for his skill and wisdom. He knows the storyline of every local dance and which facial features to give each character. He has often taken part in the masked dances and sometimes performed or directed rehearsals. He is also expected to repair and occasionally repaint masks brought to him by dancers before a 'fiesta'. The threat of 'the Great Society', as Eric Wolf termed the capitalist order over thirty years ago, is omnipresent because 'the modern world is engaged in severing once and for all the ties which bind people into local unity' and 'this is a one-way street along which there is no return'.²² However, the changing nature of the Mesoamerican festival and the resourcefulness and imagination of local dancers and mask-makers, may not mark the end of a tradition at all, but herald changes and innovations so that each mask produced corresponds to its epoch. The protean nature of the mask as a physical tool and as a metaphor that contains an oppositional relationship between matter and spirit, will probably continue to be used to express the inner realities and external concerns of human beings to whom the dance and the 'fiesta' are never far from the surface.

Peter Schumann: Masks of Myth and Appropriation

The meanings of the masks of Peter Schumann (1934-) and his Bread and Puppet Theatre are perhaps best understood in terms of an emergent counter-culture within the USA and latterly as part of the anti-capitalist movement. Although formed in 1961, the

company has not ceased to work with radical ideas and creative practices to challenge the American establishment. Stefan Brecht has situated Schumann's masks within the tradition of masked dance and drama (not the puppet theatre of folk and children's entertainment) 'by way of ecclesiastic sculpture in wood or stone of the German Middle Ages and 20th century expressionist German graphics and sculpture'.²³ As Brecht says, his German Idealist philosophy seems also to have been strongly influenced by Holderlin's *Hyperion*; although he developed his own artistic and political views in the pursuit of ideals involving the spiritual regeneration of mankind. Schumann's early experience of puppet shows and workshops with Max Jacob and the Hohnsteiner Puppenspiele also provided him with a lasting conception of himself as a travelling folk artist in the popular tradition: 'Years ago I travelled with horse and wagon through Austria and Bavaria doing fiddling and mask dancing by the side of the road'.²⁴ His early dance influences included Mary Wigman, Kurt Joos and Merce Cunningham and he had a workshop in the same building as Jim Henson. He made his first masks for an art class project in 1957; and then a set of six carefully sculpted, waxed and painted masks made with Japanese rice paper (of which three were dance masks) in Munich in 1959-60.²⁵

In the summer of 1961 Peter and Elke arrived in New York to be confronted by abstract expressionism at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim and by the movement of 'happenings' (Allan Kaprow, Red Grooms, Robert Whitman, Jim Dine and Claes Oldenburg). One of his first mask pieces was the dance-theatre production of *Totentanz* (Deathdance) of 1961 in Munich, which was remounted by the Uranian Alchemy Players in May-November 1962.

Schumann's masks are entirely distinctive in their sculptural form with many having a sad countenance, even when grotesquely distorted. The volume of work over a forty-year period has been extraordinary and enough to furnish and establish the Bread and Puppet Museum in a huge converted barn at Cate Farm in Vermont. His first experiments were in papier-mâché and then from the mid-sixties in celastic (for larger outdoor demonstration pieces) and then back to papier-mâché after celastic was banned for health and safety reasons in the early 1980's. The faces and forms are usually sculpted in clay and covered with layers of heavy paper and glue. Schumann has used all manner of masks to illustrate the fall of the conceptual mask of American liberalism since the days of the Bay of Pigs and the Vietnam War. The Workshop has always been a crucible for Schumann in preparing the masks that would go down into the streets and punctuate the anti-war protests. In seeking to return to real humanitarian needs and concerns, while advocating that art is not separate from life, Schumann aimed to make his theatre as basic as bread (dark bread from hand-ground flour). Françoise Kourilsky noted the importance of forming a sort of family or 'ideological commune' to support the endeavour.²⁶ The broader context for the mask work of Schumann has already been very astutely and carefully documented by John Bell in its links to the emergent field of performing objects and social change, counter-cultural goals and 'the nature of its presence in the special economy of Vermont and the United States.'²⁷ A key and late former collaborator and friend, George Dennison, has stressed the primary importance of visual iconography and music in the work of the Bread and Puppet Theatre because it 'dispenses almost entirely with language'.²⁸

The mask is indeed a primary iconographic tool in Schumann's work. His newsletters, storyboards and designs all work with metaphors, symbols and mythologies

dedicated to 'The Art of Impermanence'.²⁹ Outstanding processional images in the iconography include the Godface (1970) which was also used as the centre figure for beginning the Pageant in *Our Domestic Resurrection Circus*; the Red Demon head (early 1980's) with large ears and horns with miniature faces of minor demons inset on the face and snakes curling around the head; Uncle Fatso (mid-1960's) with his pug nose, twisted mouth, baggy eyes and top hat covered with stars and stripes; and the giant Pointer (1971) that was designed to pose in front of monuments, statues, banks 'and points an enormous, questioning finger and thumb at these public places in a way that makes you reconsider their functions'.³⁰

Some of Schumann's most important shows reflect his interest in myths and Biblical stories such as the early *Christmas Story* (1963), *Easter Story* (1965), *The Cry of The People for Meat* (1969), *Jesu Meine Freude* (1969) and *The Stations of The Cross* (1980). Other stories are taken from myths and legends such as *The Birdcatcher in Hell* (1970-74) with its gigantic dragon's head with paintings of the Pilgrim Father's on their way to America and the German fascist figure wearing a war helmet (suitable for performance in a field). One of the most stunning productions, performed in Florence, was *Masaccio* (1976-77) dedicated to the life and struggles of the Renaissance artist of the same name.³¹ As Theodore Shank has observed Schumann 'has an unusual ability to find striking images – visual, sound and movement – which are very simple yet seem to have complex non-verbal meanings'.³² Many of the masks and banners, once made, are considered as tools to be used again.

One of the interesting transnational facets of the Bread and Puppet Theatre is that they have played in Munich, Paris, Nancy, London, Glasgow, Rome, Warsaw, Leningrad and around the world with Schumann's haunting and ubiquitous masks. In

this connection I first met Italian puppeteer Massimo Schuster in Milan in 1977 after he had returned from directing a production of *Fire* (a survey of life in Vietnam during the course of a week).³³ This show used masks, life-size puppets, traces of music android-like movement, patterns of silence with exacting precision. Schuster asked me to assist him with making figures for a miniature version of *That Simple Light May Rise Out of Complicated Darkness* and we spent a delightful afternoon with sleeves rolled-up modelling Schumann's elongated and gaunt figures.³⁴ This anecdote is more than incidental in that it illustrates how a liminal mask experience in one culture may be exported to another. Traffickers in masks, like puppeteers, are carriers of images types and archetypes. Several years later in 1987, strongly influenced by the enthusiasm and sculptural inspiration provided by the Bread and Puppet Theatre I designed and directed *Black Mask: White Puppets. The Struggle for Namibia* at The People's Palace in Glasgow. The production centre-piece was a thirty foot high character called Black Mask who carried a red rose. Similarly it was Schumann's silent suffering choral figures of Vietnamese women from the 1966 Parade on Fifth Avenue in New York that influenced the design of my chorus of miner's wives at the pit heads in the *Miners Show* (1974) produced by The Fellow Travellers. There will also be few people who will forget the performance of *Columbus New World Order* by the Bread and Puppet Theatre at The Tramway in Glasgow (March 1992) for its use of large-scale imagery, puppets, masks, choral chant and the involvement of more than sixty local Scottish volunteers.

The transnational flows occasioned by The Bread and Puppet Theatre may be traced in many other directions. Susan Green's study of *Bread and Puppet. Stories of Struggle and Faith from Central America* (1985) reconnects the world of art with the natural world. Gide's question about 'Where is the mask? In the audience or on the

stage?’ receives an answer from Schumann. Masks are better indicators of contemporary social reality than the faces of actors. As Stefan Brecht has said: ‘Gide does not presume that mask makers are more truthful than other people, only that masks can achieve theatrical effectiveness without aping the contemporary facial misrepresentations of social reality’.³⁵ Greg Guma goes further in stating that ‘just as the theology of liberation “evangelizes” both the poor and the clergy so Bread and Puppet’s theatre of liberation affects both audiences and performers’ in stimulating the realization that they must act for social change.³⁶ In a parallel sense we should perhaps note that all historical religions have a strong mythic component and that the twentieth century German Protestant theologians have been trying to make the Christian Gospel meaningful in a world where it largely seems to have lost its relevance.

Schumann’s masks use the past boldly and in their visual iconography evoke ‘African, pre-Columbian and Asiatic masks, Easter Island heads, Chinese temple sculpture, Lehmbruck, Grosz’³⁷ The result is a synthetic appropriation combining death masks, skull masks, faces of sleepers, grey-white-silver moon-like faces, masks of the oppressed in yellow-pink-purple suffering dumbly, passive-aggressive faces of worry and anxiety, hero and heroine masks, strange creatures and monsters, evil demons, serene faces and overt political caricatures. These are Schumann’s masks and they may well make him, in the words of Stefan Brecht, ‘one of the great plastic artists of our age’.³⁸

Lineages of Masking: Miro – Body Masks and Foam Fantasies

Joan Miro (1893-1983) is an outstanding example of a painter who crossed over into theatre at strategic points in his career and at the end of his life made a unique

collaboration with the Catalan Company La Claca on *The Death of A Tyrant* (*Mori El Merma*) in 1978. The show was in preparation for more than two years, premiered at the Principal Theatre in Majorca on the 7 March 1978 and went on to be performed at the Barcelona Opera House, the Pompidou Centre in Paris and The Riverside Studios in London (21 November-3 December 1978). In other words, the production became an intercultural phenomenon that was enabled to flow from the villages and streets of Cataluna to the major opera houses and theatres of Europe.

In Miro we again encounter a kind of 'peasant syncretism' that contains 'a mixture of devout Christianity (Catholicism), animism or pantheism in regard to nature and an identification as well to cosmic forces and asceticism, which, like that of the Spanish mystic poets was achieved through a battle with his sensual, instinctive impulses'.³⁹

In many ways this play was the culmination of nearly seven decades of Miro's work as a painter, sculptor, poet, costume and stage designer, ceramicist, muralist and tapestry weaver. His period in Paris working with Max Ernst on the Ballets Russes version of *Romeo and Juliet* (1926) and with the Monte Carlo Ballet on Bizet's *Childrens Games* (1932) and time spent painting, drinking and arguing with Picasso, Braque, Dubuffet, Matisse, Breton had a formative influence upon his ideas. Miro's struggle to transform his private realities, personal contradictions and political views into compelling transnational and universal images reaches its apotheosis in *The Death of A Tyrant*. His life in exile during the Second World War followed by the return to a fascist Spain was to turn his imagination inwards towards masks and mask images. The connection to the popular 'fiestas' and the 'gigantes' of the Carnival tradition (particularly during the six weeks of Lent, when the actors' theatres were closed⁴⁰) and

to the dramatic lineage of mask work undertaken by Benavente, Vallé Inclán, Grau, Lorca, Marquina and Rives in Spain all influenced this seminal work. In Catalonia, the 'gigantes' are always accompanied by dwarfs who are present to give scale to their masters, but also to mock them.

For me, one of the most successful mask performances of the past thirty years has been this fusion work of mime, mask, puppetry, dance, music painting and sculpture using popular imagery celebrating the death of the fascist regime under General Franco. It is the product of many remarkable crosscurrents. The action of the play revolves around the rise and fall of a grotesque Ubu-like monster called Merma with a snout, a dome-shaped head and gigantic toes. The first scene is revealed, after the drawing open of a large black drape, as a scaffolding structure with a central platform. A male figure cleans and works on a wooden log while a woman sits separately and sews. A group of servant-like characters enter and blow whistles. An enormous female figure enters downstage wearing pearls. She has the appearance of a lawyer-insect, but with bludgeoning iron fists and a great club-foot. She is joined by her husband, the monster Merma. Our focus switches to the scaffolding where ordinary people live in boxes and in semi-darkness and behave like urban-dwelling monkeys (cubist heads with luminous eyes and skeletal bodies); some seem willing to comply while others are in revolt. The leader of this group, who are terrifying the servant-like characters, is caught, interrogated, tortured and decapitated by Merma who is always at war with others. He then devours the spindly, egg-eyed creatures that cross his path and copulates feverishly with a bare-legged whore who has the head of a red beetle. Merma produces huge excretions that are devoured by an immaculately dressed servant who follows him everywhere. In the middle of a session at court Merma suddenly falls ill and dies of a

heart attack. He is laid to rest with solemn processional ritual and the funeral mourning commences. A blind bourgeois character emerges from within his body and raises up the revered catafalque. One tyrannised subject takes off her mask and with derision spits a ping-pong ball out of her mouth at the body.

The Spanish text compiled with the collaboration of puppeteer, Joan Baixas and his company, foreshadowed a transforming resonance within later developments of British physical theatre (*Complicité*, *Forkbeard Fantasy*, *Horse & Bamboo*). The head masks of the chattering monkey-dwellers, the huge foam body masks of Merma and his wife, staged amidst a huge bare scaffolding set in the Riverside Studios, London, with stunning designs and backcloth by Miro created a surreal world that was a contact zone with all of us experiencing the right-wing Heath-Thatcher Conservative Government. Although performed in Spanish, the gestural language and visual imagery of this play transcended any language barriers because of the way it had been conceived and directed. There were many transformational images in the production including a Chinese lion with a detachable rear-end, a creature with elongated rubber arms and a boxing glove under its snout and the garlanded potentate whose crown is removed and rolled out like a spare tyre. The French critic, Christian Armengaud described it as follows:

It presents the world as bloody and erotic, grotesque and misleading, bringing indecency to the point of scatology, capering before our eyes. In addition to surrealism, which I mentioned before, the spirit of Dada blooms (Miro illustrated Tzara's writings) and the meaning of some of the symbols eludes the unprepared observer. In the corner a young woman sits silently, without mask or make-up, in a wooden cage, the only character who is entirely human.

Sometimes she makes a rare, commonplace gesture. Is it a question of presenting an image of the feminine condition. Is it a sleeping beauty whose dreams are to be materialised? 'When the brain sleeps, phantoms are born.' In fact we are quite close to Goya of whom, surprisingly, we thought in many of the scenes, forgetting Miro'.⁴¹

La Claca was started by Joan Baixas and Teresa Calafell in 1968 to explore the intersection of the visual art form mask and puppet theatre with sculpture, painting and music. Nearly all the company members were under the age of twenty-five years. In their first collaboration with Miro, who was then in his eighties, the painter designed masks for one of the Ubu plays. However, he changed his mind and attention was shifted to *Death of a Tyrant*. Baixas commented about Miro's motivation as follows:

The aim of Miro was to bear witness to the nature of human relationships with the power of the State under Franco. Starting from this point and taking inspiration from Miro's designs we made puppets which he himself painted. Next we tried to discover their voices, their movements and their relationships.... in short, we discovered their world and their possibilities. In this way a series of separate scenes came into being. They were the source of the final literary and dramatic effects.⁴²

The drama is a modern anti-fascist fable that uses experimental giant foam rubber masks and puppets, dehumanised Cubist head masks and the process of their creation has been described by Francesc Catala-Roca as 'a procession of Mironian monsters and curtains, paint applied by hand, or by bucketful, or by a Japanese siphon spraying under pressure, or by broom'. The result was 'action, destruction, creation, revolt, provocation'.⁴³

Peter Brook: Hybrid-Spectacles and Mask Phobia

In consideration of how masks embedded in one culture's performance traditions can be adapted and recast or recontextualised to fit a new cultural context, the work of Peter Brook (1925-) is often cited as exemplary. The phenomenon of transnational and transcultural performance is an ancient one. Recent studies by Napier tracing the links between Greece and the East particularly to India and by Wiles on mask performance traditions of the East-West with reference to Greek New Comedy, Japanese Noh and Italian Commedia are cases in point.⁴⁴ However, certain works that have been developed transculturally, when actually transferred between cultures in a reverse flow of energy, sometimes meet with resistance.

John Emigh has singled out Peter Brook's and Jean Claude Carrière's production of *Mahabharata* (1985) to highlight this problem of reception.⁴⁵ Emigh rightly connects Brook's establishment of the International Centre for Theatre Research in Paris (1970) with the intercultural perspectives raised by Grotowski's Theatre of Sources workshops in California and Italy and also with Eugenio Barba's investigations at the Institute for the Study of Theatre Anthropology in Denmark. The controversy aroused by the marketing campaign accompanying the Brook and Carrière production that this was 'the first time' that anyone had put the whole *Mahabharata* on stage, muddled the waters considerably. The history of performances of the epic by Indian puppet companies, Kathakali dance companies (in 'chutti') and Indonesian mask and puppet companies is too voluminous to elaborate. The equally serious charge by Indian critics of reductionism and appropriation of cultural authority by a Eurocentric and ethnocentric approach has highlighted the sensitivity of the problem. In retrospect perhaps the distinctiveness of the text, the non-linear nature of the epic and its

multiplicity of meanings were not sufficiently taken into account by Brook and Carrière. It is interesting to note that in the entire eight hour production only one mask was used; the elephant mask of 'Ganesha' worn by Bruce Myers.

Many of Brook's hybrid-spectacles from the early days of *U.S. to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Ik*, *The Conference of The Birds*, *Ubu*, *The Mahabharata*, *Carmen* have been undertaken since 1970 with a series of multi-lingual and multi-ethnic casts. In these productions he has amalgamated many diverse influences, usually directing shows of stunning theatricality.

Brook has categorically stated that he is both searching back into the origins of theatre but that he 'loathes masks in the theatre'.⁴⁶ A statement that clearly amounts to mask phobia. On the one hand, Brook acknowledges that the use of masks is about 'entering another world' and is 'lifegiving', but on the other, he castigates 'something really sordid, nauseating (and very common to Western theatre art)'.⁴⁷ In his view, the latter phenomenon is usually undertaken by a scene designer working from 'subjective fantasy'; and this is equivalent to 'lying through the external image of someone else's lie'.⁴⁸ Brook compares the 'horrible' modern mask of the Western scene designer ('putting subjectivity on top of subjectivity') with the traditional masks of Bali backed by thousands of years of tradition and made as 'highly developed instruments of technique. Then he says 'I think I can put it more simply: the naturalistic mask expresses essential human types and the non-naturalistic mask embodies forces'.⁴⁹

Brook concludes that when a Western actor takes up a Balinese mask, he is 'unable to enter a Balinese tradition and technique that he knows nothing about'.⁵⁰ This, however, is not the case as has been admirably demonstrated by Leonard Pitt, Ron Jenkins and Julie Taymor. Topeng master, I Nyoman Wenten, has dedicated the last

thirty years of his teaching career to opening up the background, skills, knowledge and experience of Topeng masks to Western artists. The student needs to interiorise breathing techniques, gestures, sounds, rhythms, language and cultural background attached to the process. This is not achieved quickly and the choreography is painstaking, extremely precise and demands great energy. Brook seems at some point on the edge of 'entering another world', but he sees it as irrevocably 'other' and beyond the Western actor.⁵¹ Then he retreats back into the cliché that since we do everything with the actor's face it must be better. Indeed he asks 'What better instrument do you have?'⁵² Brook's brief encounter with Balinese mask culture, without doubt catalysed by the incidental location of the International Centre for Theatre Research in Paris, ably demonstrates the limits of tolerance and imagination within the mainstream British theatre tradition from which Brook emerged. His resistance to masking underlines the contradiction within his claim to his work's universality.

Ariane Mnouchkine, *Le Théâtre du Soleil* and the Plane of Similitude

Ariane Mnouchkine (1939 -) is the French theatre director who founded The Théâtre du Soleil collective ensemble in 1963. In nearly all of her productions masks have been used to avoid lapsing into realism and psychologism. She says that 'working with masks is very difficult' and that it is politically dangerous to falsify a situation 'by a wrong fact being attributed to a character'.⁵³ The work of Mnouchkine has been dedicated to making oppositional interventions into popular theatre. In *The Clowns* (1969-70) each member of the company devised a particular clown, mask or routine that they had researched. It was set in a box set reminiscent of a fairground booth with an extended ramp leading right into the audience. After the experience of *1789* and *1793* (1970-73),

based on the French Revolution, staged at in the Cartoucherie at Vincennes and the extensive use of masked carnival figures and giant puppets, Mnouchkine decided to search back for the origin of things in the *commedia dell'arte*. The result was an unfinished but fascinating mask production called *L'Age d'Or* (*The Golden Age*).

The story of the death of a migrant worker was told within the context of the French Presidency of Giscard D'Estaing (1974-1981) by means of masks and comic figures. In answer to a question from the critic Bernard Dort about why use masks and why portray the contemporary world Mnouchkine said:

Why the masks? Because we soon found them necessary. If actors have to portray their own world and they find no way of distancing themselves, they quickly lapse into parody, into trivial gesture. In masks we found a basic discipline and they soon became necessary to help us emerge from non-theatre.⁵⁴

Similar reasons were to arouse the actors of The Odin Teatret to mask, although they initially made their own masks. The mask-maker for *L'Age D'Or* was the Swiss sculptor, Erhard Stieffel, who after completing a fine art degree studied with Jacques Lecoq (where he met Mnouchkine) and then with Donato Sartori. For Stieffel 'the birth of a mask is also a revelation of the philosophical, the political life ethics of whoever creates it'.⁵⁵ The *Commedia* half masks for *L'Age D'Or* were very accomplished and perfectly suited to their purpose in revitalising the *Commedia* types. Mnouchkine has chosen to develop her work through a plane of similitude based in Asia with a view to uniting all cultures in productions such as *Sihanouk* (1985) and *Indiade* (1988). In the West she had previously worked through classical tragedy and *commedia dell'arte*. She

is one of those artists who thoroughly amalgamates and metabolises her source materials to produce masked hybrids.

Eugenio Barba, Odin Teatret and Floating Masks

Richard Schechner has described the work of Italian born theatre director and theorist Eugenio Barba (1936-) in terms of 'horizontal interculturalism'.⁵⁶ Barba founded the Odin Teatret in 1964 in Oslo and started to explore ways of receiving and exploiting the patrimony of the past, without compromising the work and the audience. In the 1970's the Odin touring productions shifted into residencies and into periods of more prolonged and disciplined training techniques and explorations. Barba wished to transcend the normal 'vertical interculturalism' that divided the history of Western and Asian theatre and to remove the European ethnocentric colonialism that led to the destruction of cultures and the elimination of what was different. In trying to devise new transnational flows he had first to develop new concepts such as: 'journey, barter, reservation, ghetto, pueblo, floating islands, emigration'.⁵⁷

The use of the mask by the Odin Teatret was a given from the early days of the new Theatre Laboratory. In 1974 the company travelled to the South of Italy. The actor-skill training was still at a stage where the 'actor is protected by the mask and hides behind it but must still always be present. It is the actor's personal vulnerability that brings the mask alive, but the actor must be stronger than the mask and be able to break it open'.⁵⁸

Iben Nagel Rasmussen played the part of the woman *Vestita di Bianco* (*Dressed in White*) in the 1974 film of the Odin by Torgeir Wethal. The story of the film is of a woman from the world of nature who comes to a little town and beats a drum of

awakening. She is like a child-fool who relates best to children and she cannot talk. Her white mask has tears on the cheeks. She finds peace in a graveyard and then returns to the town centre to find a bride's veil trapped in a car door. She dances in the veil at the wedding celebration, but becomes self-conscious and flees the place, throwing away her drum and running into the sea. She throws her mask and flute away and appears to be blinded, but takes a small fishing boat out into the water using an oar. Without her mask she is completely vulnerable and hides her face as she goes out into the sea, watched by a man on the beach. Rasmussen discovered this character before leaving for Italy and she had discussed the role of Katrin from Brecht's *Mother Courage* with Barba. The character stayed with her thereafter. It was used in other Odin productions such as *The Book of Dances* (1974-80), *Anabasis* (1977-84) and *Marriage With God* (1984-90)

Other mask work was developed for *Brecht's Ashes* (1982) with Torgeir Wethal playing Brecht and his mask. His first major mask was created for *the Book of Dances* and was a clown-like half mask that could only frighten people rather than making them laugh. Wethal made it from plaster and paper and it fitted his dances. When Odin were performing in Padua they stayed with Donato Sartori and he made a leather copy of this clown mask. According to Wethal the first attempt was too fine; but the second carried the same built-in ambiguity of the original and was in *Anabasis* and for many years after. Wethal went on to develop a Dwarf mask and a Priest mask (who dances the samba): 'For me the dwarf only exists with the mask. When I put the mask on, it's not me any more and at that moment I can allow myself to do a lot of things I couldn't otherwise do. It still works the same way, when, every once in a while, I take it out of the closet'.⁵⁹

The Odin Teatret used masks to effect a quantum leap in an actor's energy and physical presence while developing symbolic and archetypal characters. The performer's intensity or flow is changed by the wearing of the mask. Barba makes the point that their travels to foreign lands and cultures not accustomed to theatre (such as the Yananami tribe in Brazil) were undertaken to 'learn that the foreignness in oneself was a creative empty space'.⁶⁰ Just as with Les Copiaus the actors invented their own masks: and the masked characters are used to explore cultural blending and fragmentation. In the production of *Talabot* (1988-91) the idea of a journey connecting the living to the dead binds the scenes together and there was a marvellous mask of a Trickster or Angel of History played by Rasmussen. The masks of the Odin Teatret are floating masks because they travel in space and time and across cultures; and for this reason, they are also liminoid objects that often recur in different productions. They are floating masks with a high-energy charge and a strong performance technique without which the company could not have functioned in the way that it did. The masks allowed for doubling up of roles, for psychological transfers of emotion, for metaphorical shifts in power and energy between performer and audience. These floating masks were chosen conditions of life and work for these itinerant performers.⁶¹ At the end of *The Paper Canoe* Barba advises us to discover our face, the face which is hidden behind the mask of the dance and not to forget the role of theatre as journey, barter, potlatch, reservation, ghetto, pueblo and emigration.

Mummenschanz: Mute Mask Metamorphoses

In the development of an impersonal or object theatre, the Swiss mime-mask theatre Mummenschanz has for over thirty years continued an intergeneric performance

research. Murray (2003) has noted the impact of their shows on 'redrafting of the boundaries between masked performance and puppetry'.⁶²

Mummen means a card or dice game played for money while *schanz* signifies chance. Fused the two terms refer to the name of mask worn by Swiss mercenaries in the Medieval period when they played card games for money. The mask was a protective device to hide the inner thoughts of the players and conceal their expressions. Company founders Andreas Bossard, Bernie Schurch and Floriana Frassetto have always taken risks. Bossard and Schurch saw a mime-mask demonstration of Jacques Lecoq in Zurich in 1967 and thereafter decided to enrol in his Paris *École*; and they met Frassetto later at the Roy Bosier School in Rome where she was attending classes and performing in *La Compagnia I Gesti di Roma* after which she joined their company in 1972.

The aim of Mummenschanz was to find a 'universal' language beneath words by reducing gesture and form to essential conditions and situations. To achieve this they decided to blend head masks and full-body costumes depicting anthropomorphic creatures and abstract objects. Bühner (1984) provides a valuable description of their early mask themes:

These masks that tear themselves and make up, these forms that were looking for some reason to exist, that told of being rather than doing, expressed deep sentiments and emotions. The themes were eternal: who-loses-wins, I-love-you-neither, envy, love, jealousy, tenderness. The difficulty to communicate.⁶³

In their desire to bring together the performative qualities of materials and properties derived from everyday objects the company have often taken long periods of exploration. The gathering phase has often been focussed on products acquired from

markets, waste skips, department stores and industrial suppliers. Their chosen materials often stemmed from industrial recycling operations: stretch lycra, foam rubber, styrofoam, plastic tubes, putty and bread dough. The first show from 1973 included many constructions that masked the face, head and shoulders including unnamed bureaucrats with half-faces, a human head made up of moving blocks that were interchangeable, a yellow male mask and a pink female mask framed with toilet rolls, notepaper masks that tear strips of each other, two women eating each others faces, a reversible mask that turns into itself in endless spirals and an ugly man and a beautiful man who sculpt their own faces in an artists studio. From this brief description we should note the constantly shifting notions of identity and the multiple forms that identity can take. The performers, in their wordless play with objects and materials meticulously choreographed each eight-minute sequence underscored with sound effects and music, but never revealed themselves to the audience until the final curtain call.

The mask *praxis* of Mummenschanz, while it may have roots in the earlier work of Klee, the Futurists, Dada, Surrealism, the Bauhaus, the Swiss carnival tradition and Lecoq's larval masks and scenographic structures, rests on creating a playful synthesis of bringing together gestures and materials. In their second programme from 1984 everything got bigger and the giant masks and body silhouettes seemed to devour any recognisable human form; and, as in the case of the sketch, *Little hand teaches big hand*, the mask was abandoned completely. This change necessitated a change in workshop space. From 1982 they rented a huge studio-workshop at the 'Rote Fabrik' in Zurich of six hundred square meters with five meters height. The company not only created all the ideas for their acts but also designed and made their own costumes and masks and their associated production techniques. They had to constantly test their

materials against their ideas. Each of their sketches was an equation between a primary idea and a costume. In the transition from face to body mask the skills of the mime performer were pushed to the limits: there was no pre-set idea about 'neutral' or 'character' or 'larval'. The abstract total body mask had its own specificity. 'It required many changes-on and off the stage- which broke the rhythm of the show' and the strange materials had to be tamed.⁶⁴ Each new idea brought a new problem. Their creations now involved a foam rubber man who turned into an octopus, a battle of the giants with large black balloon heads, the magnet mask couple, object heads telling stories like animated cartoons and the nose (a giant flexible body-bag). Much of this work is indeed located in the 'high modernist tradition of the visual avant-garde.'⁶⁵ In their mistrust of language and insistence on the creation of popular forms that are easily recognisable across language barriers and which arouse laughter and stimulate quicksilver critiques, the diverse masks of Mummenschanz still spark the imagination.

Mummenschanz raise questions about the viability of using masks to create a kind of universal communication across national boundaries or immediate cultural borders: the search for a fundamental language of theatre and play that can be understood anywhere. It should be noted that this kind of universalism purposefully sheds cultural elements in order to strive for abstraction (unlike the approach to universal history by Peter Brook founded on the idea that human cultures are essentially identical). In this sense their work is far-reaching and represents a physical realization of many issues and concerns that have been raised much earlier in related disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and cultural studies. Their research into mute masks and forms has created a new field of connectivity: Mummenschanz. Their work is not just a series of theatrical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion but a new language of

performative exploration with new and unique powers of expression. As McLuhan says: 'Connected sequential discourse, which is thought of as rational, is really visual'.⁶⁶ Their use of materials and technology is an extension of themselves and also a strategy for survival. Their *communication* is an act of *making*. All their object heads, anthropomorphic creatures and abstract monsters are profoundly human and intrinsically visual. We may read into this visual connectivity, with the gift of hindsight, the realization that their masks create a relatively autonomous form of performing object situated in the continuum between the body of the performer and the plasticity of the puppet.

Geese Theatre Company: Mask Fragments and Fragment Masks

In the summer of 1987 I was invited to the U.S.A. by John Bergman, the founder and artistic director of Geese Theatre Company at the Stonewall Arts Project, New Hampshire to train his actors in mask work. Geese Theatre of Corrections was formed in 1980 as a national touring theatre of state penitentiaries dedicated to the idea of using theatre in corrections as a valuable teaching, learning and therapeutic tool. The mask work of Geese stemmed from Bergman's theory that criminal offenders benefit from a period of re-education and re-adjustment before re-entering society. The company was named after the Irish convicts shipped to Australia in the nineteenth century who were known as 'wild geese'.

In *King Con* (1986) Bergman created a giant mask that rose on metal pulleys to a height of twenty feet. The idea was that this giant figure was cool, slick and macho (as many con-men are assumed to be) but that his ego and criminal personality get out of control. The higher he rose the more his 'inner gods' were released in the form of giant

gruesome head masks representing greed, criminal pride and fear. When he reached his full height, two words could be read through his clear plastic head: "You're dead."

Lifting The Weight (1985) divides a game board stage into five areas: Survival, Family, Work, Authority and Free Time. One actor representing the ex-offender tries to work his way through continually more complex situations with half-masked actors portraying different kinds of people from the 'outside world'. The aim of this game is to leave the game. The play also uses a representation of Temptation or 'the potential to re-offend' in the form of a masked character called 'Deathbird' who signifies re-arrest and ultimately death. Underlying this piece was Bergman's idea that a vital key to re-entry is the altering or transformation of the inmates perception of the middle class or 'straight world' so that he may finally resist the more negative aspects of the 'street world'. He wanted to counter the repeated imprisonment experience that creates a 'failure' syndrome that can only be diminished but not eradicated. Moreover, since re-entry into society is akin to re-birth, it demands exceptional aid and support from the 'free world'.

In order to achieve this fundamental shift in attitude Bergman came up with the concept of representing a dramatic conflict and then asking the actor to 'Lift your mask'. This understanding is predicated upon the idea that a person needs to wear a mask to survive that Bergman attributes to an inmate at Joliet State Prison, Illinois, in 1982:

During a discussion about the problems inmates face when they are on a visit with their wife or girlfriend, one inmate broke through the discussion and explained, "She's got to bring you money so you wear a mask to keep her coming back. The mask gets you what you need."⁶⁷

The technique involves the actor in placing the mask or character on top of the head in order to use direct address with the audience. It signifies that the character is trying to be 'real' and to transcend lies and manipulation to reach some deeper truth:

When we lift the mask, we highlight the hidden vulnerability, the concealed thoughts and feelings of the characters. Time and again, this metaphor has been an effective way to directly address the most important – often life or death – issues facing our audience, as it allows us to hold up an interactive mirror to their internal as well as their external world.⁶⁸

The concept of mask as social role (masks for who we are at work, masks for when we are in public, masks for meeting people at social functions) is not new; but the two strategies that Geese have devised to take this forward with offenders make that leap between life and the stage referred to by Gide and make an original and valuable contribution to modern mask use and behavioural analysis. 'Lifting the mask' is a strategy designed to go beneath the social role to identify the inner processes that support these social roles. The audience is also invited to consider the nature of the mask itself and the purpose it serves, through discussions and role plays utilising a set of coping or behavioural masks.

The company have devised a specific set of eight masks called 'Fragment Masks' because 'each symbolises a prominent strategy – or fragment of behaviour – used in threatening or stressful situations, or just to "con" others'.⁶⁹ These are all self-protective or coping masks that are mono-dimensional and extend over three-quarters of the face. *The Fist* is an angry mask with a clenched fist grafted onto the forehead signifying the pushing away of a threat by force and denial of any vulnerability. Mr *Cool* wears slicked-back hair and dark sunglasses with a supercilious expression that

denies that there are any problems to be faced. *The Brick Wall* is an evasive and stony-faced mask with a literal brick wall inscribed across the forehead. *The Good Guy* has an innocuous, almost smiling expression, with a pair of miniature angel wings wrapped across the top of his forehead. He asserts that he is only protecting his family and plays the victim role. *The Mouth* is prone to irrelevant digressions and excessive talking and the top of his forehead merges into a huge disembodied mouth and lips with an enormous set of teeth. *The Joker* has a permanent eerie grin, exerts lots of charm and wears the Fool's cap and bells. *Poor Me* is a victim mask, who is misunderstood and feels that the system is against him. He has a huge eye grafted onto his head surrounded by concentric circles and the lines in the mask slope downwards. *The Rescuer* has an emergency life-buoy on top of his head rising just above eye-line and seems to be justifying the criminal act with some kind of self-righteousness.

The interesting thing about all these masks is that they are meant to typify certain behavioural compulsions. Without exception they are all male. The social referents that give them meaning depend on the improvised context in which they are used. Although Geese acknowledge a debt in performance style to Commedia, the masks do not have the varied built-in levels and associations regarded as essential to commedia masks: a definite class provenance, an associated animal, a specific dialect. They do however, possess a dominant emotional state and a prescribed colour with an unmistakeable visual symbol attached to the forehead or head.

Two of the Geese masks are more symbolically developed. These are the Deathbird who lives in a prison cage and represents the impulse to re-offend and The Fool who is an amoral trickster/chameleon/teacher/master of ceremonies' who

symbolises 'the "game" of offending, the abusive part of the self and the random events of life that can trip us up'.⁷⁰

Geese Theatre has successfully established a series of transnational workshops and performances between the U.K and America. The American company founded by John Bergman in 1980 was imported to Birmingham, U.K. in 1987 by Clark Baim who together with Simon Ruding, Saul Hewish and Sally Brookes became directors of the new offshoot. Sally Brookes, as Artistic Programme Director, has designed and made the masks that are the group work tool and basis for the Company's approach to performance. She is a highly skilled and creative mask-maker who formerly worked freelance as a mask-maker with the Unfortunati commedia company and also with Ninian Kinnier-Wilson on mask-making residencies. After a fire at their headquarters in 1988 Geese USA has not had a performance company, although John Bergman has continued to conduct residencies and workshops.

The correctional ideas of Geese Theatre use masks to achieve something that cannot be done unaided. If the masks represent self-protective devices, then 'lifting the mask' allows for examination of the discarded or suspended roles. This invites offenders to reconsider their position, to increase their understanding and repertoire of roles and also to choose to play a single role more fully. The relationship between this use of masking and rates of recidivism has not been calculated, but the simulation games and role-playing associated with this process have the power to change fundamental attitudes within offenders and towards people at risk. 'It's not about truth, but more about what's being withheld – highlighting hidden vulnerabilities and concealed thoughts and feelings' says Sally Brookes. 'To negotiate the game successfully, the characters in the play need to look honestly at their often dangerous

behaviour and its consequences, for both themselves and others – and begin to identify alternative solutions’.⁷¹

Julie Taymor and Transposed Masks

The contribution of Julie Taymor (b.1952) to contemporary mask drama has been enormous in its cross-cultural resonances. Her assimilation of stories and performance pieces borrowed from a wide-range of cultural sources has been effective because of her director and designer-eye for detail and for the consistency with which she has chosen to explore certain ‘planes of similitude’. Taymor was born in Boston, USA and attended the Boston Children’s Theatre as a child, but when still in Newton High School, Massachusetts, her exposure to other cultures began with the Experiment in International Living that organised summer trips to India and Sri Lanka. After a year at Julie Portman’s Theater Workshop she left for Paris at the age of sixteen to spend a year studying mime at the École Jacques Lecoq. In a recent interview with Richard Schechner she says ‘I wasn’t interested in being a mime – but I was very intrigued with the use of masks and how the body became a mask’.⁷² She experienced the use of neutral, character and abstract masks at a very young age and became practised in getting rid of what she normally was: ‘You should be able to transform your body. That part of Lecoq’s work was amazing to me’. At the same time she received her first exposure to puppet and object theatre from Madame Renée Citron who was also a teacher at the Ecole. Her self-assessment of all this is revealing: ‘I learned about limitation. I learned how you begin to see the form and how you begin to fill the form’.⁷³

The mask imagery within the work of Julie Taymor has led at led one critic, Nancy Staub (2000), to situate her theatrical experiments within the realm of Jungian archetypes.⁷⁴ The idea that her work can be reduced to a Jungian theory of 'individuation' based on Taymor's 'personal vision and dreams' is perhaps too simplistic. All her work has been highly social, collective and characterised by cross-cultural collaborations and intercultural borrowings. Both Taymor and her composer-partner, Elliot Goldenthal, have amalgamated and used ideas from many cultures because they are 'attracted to hybrids'.⁷⁵

Julie Taymor's training and influences have been fully and carefully documented by Eileen Blumenthal in *Playing with Fire* (1995, 1999)⁷⁶ and by Richard Schechner in his interview *Julie Taymor: From Jacques Lecoq to The Lion King* (1999, 2001).⁷⁷ From her first contact with the training masks of Lecoq in 1968 to her first exposure inside a fully developed and ancient mask theatre form in Bali in 1974, Taymor was already at a point of convergence between cultures. Actors, dancers, musicians and puppeteers from Indonesia, Europe and America were on hand to assist with the fusion of traditional Asian theatre forms and contemporary concepts.

The themes of cultural change and madness were explored through a production with W.S.Rendra (Javanese poet, director and playwright) in Bali called *Way of Snow* (1974-75). The central characters of this production were an Indonesian farmer and an ox played by masked actors. The slogan 'Hidup Baru' ('new life') was written across the bus that killed the ox and during a performance at the arts academy in Bali, Taymor was arrested and interrogated by the police for using a dissident slogan.

Her next production, *Tirai* (Curtain) with the newly-formed Teatr Loh was centred on an Indonesian family of mask performers who were going to a cremation and

meet some Western travellers – a Dutch geologist and a young American ex-marine. The tension between the family and the travellers occurs because they attempt to move beyond their own cultures into those of each other. Taymor stated that Topeng masks were used in this production because ‘here the theatre is so alive and vital that it functions not only as entertainer, but as educator, philosopher and spiritual source. Our challenge is to match the impact of this great theatre tradition nourished over countless centuries, while expanding its scope through the diversity of our cultural backgrounds’.⁷⁸ The opening image was of the white full-face masks of the family that moved in a slow and laden choral procession. The white masks were to depict ‘a state of being’ and were slowly removed to reveal the faces of the actors as individuals. The character masks were used later in the play when the family perform their mask-dance drama depicting kings, demons and clowns with comic and colourful half masks. These divisions approximated to the neutral, character and clown masks in the Lecoq methodology.

After her return from Indonesia, Julie Taymor went on to design set, costumes, masks and puppets for *The Haggadah* directed by Elizabeth Swados at the New York Shakespeare Festival between 1980-1982. The masks for this production were extremely stylised and angular and the Hebrew slaves were masked dancers carrying miniature pyramids on their backs. In the same period she designed a set of expressive full face masks for the vision dancers in *Black Elk Lives* (1981), followed by the celastic half masks of *The King Stag* (1984) with evident Indonesian stylistic influences. Then came the imaginative and large-scale epic production of *Liberty's Taken* (1985) based on a tragic-comic romance about the American Revolution. This was a landmark in her development as it was conceived as a book and a music-theatre score between Taymor,

Goldenthal and David Suesdorf and gave her the freedom and control as initiator and director to develop an original project involving substantial political satire and caricature. It is conceived for fifteen actors and eight to ten musicians and has a whole series of full head and half masks. It examines those 'complementary strains of the American spirit Individualism ("Don't Tread On Me" and "Every Man for Himself") and Altruism ("Seek the Welfare of the City and You Shall Find Your Own").⁷⁹

Transposed Heads (1984), *The Tempest* (1985), *The Taming of The Shrew* (1988), *Juan Darien: A Carnival Mass* (1988 and 1996-97), *Fools Fire* (1992), *Oedipus Rex* (1992) for the Saito Kinen Festival in Japan, *The Magic Flute* (1994) at Maggio Musicale in Florence, *Titus Andronicus* (1994), *The Flying Dutchman* (1998). *The Green Bird* (1996) and *The Lion King* (1998) have all experimented with and used different kinds of masks. Taymor is clear that masks are 'ideographs' meaning that they are 'emblems either of character, state of mind or emotion'.⁸⁰ In visual terms she has always seen the structure of masks in terms of shapes, volumes and proportions, to the extent that the 'ideograph for *The Lion King* was the circle. The circle of Life'.⁸¹ Wheels and circles then became the design motifs and the mechanics for achieving the special effects for this elaborate stage musical. As Fisler (2002) clearly shows this is a major work of intercultural performance that draws upon Bunraku puppetry, Indonesian *Wayang Purwa*, Igbo masks and Kuba cloths.⁸² With the assistance of maker, Michael Curry, Taymor constructed masks of lightweight carbon graphite and motorised computer controls inside the costumes to effect movements up and down and from side to side from a hand controller. In this way they worked with emblematic or iconic masks and avoided encasing the performers in animal suits or full body costumes.

Julie Taymor is a fine director, designer and mask-maker whose masks are made for specific productions, but which may be used again and again in revivals of successful shows or transposed to film and television. These transposed masks are the product of enormous time, dedication and energy:

It's very exhausting... I can't design a mask and say to someone else "Just do it."

It's partly because I'm a better sculptor than I am a drawer. Considering the amount of time it would take me to draw exactly what I want, I might as well sculpt it. I paint most of it too. It's incredibly time consuming so I end up turning down a lot of jobs I want to do.⁸³

For better or worse, it is increasingly Taymor's visionary interpretation of African and Asian mask cultures that is becoming increasingly dominant in both the West and in their countries of origin.⁸⁴

Masks, Puppets and Performing Objects: New Forms in an Old Field

Throughout the Twentieth Century the use of the mask has been extensively in evidence in the related field of puppet theatre and performing objects. Sergei Obraztsov, the eminent Russian founder of the Central State Academic Puppet Theatre of Moscow described the puppet as 'the plastic generalization of a living being'.⁸⁵ The puppet is the mask withdrawn from the human body, displaced from the centre of the face and animated within an autonomous form. The mask, on the other hand, usually covers the human body and is 'usually intended to be worn over the face, normally with breathing and peep holes'.⁸⁶ The continuum between these two instruments is what is important. They often inhabit the same theatrical and symbolic space and serve complimentary ends. It is through the connection to the mask that the puppet avoids marginalization as

a popular folk art suited for children; while it is through the connection to the puppet that the mask retains the land of childhood, dreams and symbols avoiding cooption into mainstream actor's theatre.

In Cracow, the Groteska Puppet and Mask Theatre was founded in 1945 by Zofia and Wladyslaw Jarema (closely linked with Józef Jarema's pre-War Cricot Theatre). This theatre with its permanent staff and state subsidised team of artists, painters, sculptors, musicians and writers produces to this day work of a high artistic standard for children and adults as an expression of official popular culture. The surrealist artist, Kazimierz Mikulski joined forces with the Jaremas and with two leading stage designers, Lidia Minticz and Jerzy Skarzynski. They have consistently produced an important series of plays by Mrożek, Galczyński, Brecht, Różewicz and Bursa.

Since 1990 the theatre has been under the managing directorship of stage designer and painter, Jan Polewka who has divided their programme into three major categories. The Fables are usually closely allied to traditional puppet forms and are targeted on the youngest audiences. The Legends are dedicated to masked theatre, including the area of major literary works and experimental theatre. Myth, or the theatre in search of new techniques and forms operates with all kinds of performing objects and is designed for an adult audience. The most important productions in their repertoire of 1990-1993 have been *King Stag* by Gozzi, *The Legend of the Emperor's Court* by Hans Christian Andersen, *The Sun Sets* by Michel de Ghelderode, *The Little Witch* by Preusler, *The Travels of Pinocchio* adapted from Carlo Collodi and *Mirómagic* by Poleweka.

Jan Polewka describes their approach as surreal, exotic and always tailored to a specific production idea. He also says of their mask work that: 'In the fifty years of its existence, the most visible distinctive mark, of its plastic formula, have been the masks. The masks of each stage designer bear the distinctive imprint of the given artist'.⁸⁷ The theatre has a conscious aim to transcend national boundaries and particularly to engage non-European foreign cultures.

The experiments with *Wayang Listrik* (Electric Wayang) by San Francisco puppeteer Larry Reed and his Shadowlight Theatre have also been carried out over thirty years.⁸⁸ In 1993 he invented a double face shadow mask for *In Xanadu* using a cinema size projection screen and powerful halogen lights. The performers wore the masks, mounted on hats or headbands with the shadow frames extending out from the head on two sides at forty-five degree angles. As Reed says: 'the masks permit the actor to watch the screen and see the mask in profile. The actor can then compose his/her shadow in relation to the rest of the action. It also allows us to cut from an actor in close-up to the same character as a puppet in the landscape.'⁸⁹

The experimental works of Michael Meschke in Sweden at Marionetteatern, Jane Phillips working with Graeme Galvin at Caricature Theatre in Wales, Margareta Niculescu with Tandarica Theatre in Rumania, Albrecht Roser in Stuttgart, Allami Babszinhaz in Budapest, Sergei Obraztsov in Moscow, Josef Krofta in Prague, Henk Boerwinkel in Amsterdam and the Compagnie Phillippe Genty in Paris have all used masks in a continuum with puppets and performing objects. Many of these artists and companies would remain isolated and unknown outside their countries of origin were it not for the valuable interventions of UNIMA (Union International de la Marionnette), which has allowed for international exchange of ideas and techniques through its

festivals, publications and meetings. Such an organisation does not exist for 'pure' mask artists, but the affinity of masks and puppets has facilitated greater exchange through the active role of UNIMA.

Masks, Meanings and Postmodernism

At the beginning of this study a series of questions were raised about the relationship between ideas and practice in masking in modern drama. The uses of various masks adapted to different ends, the creative acts of masking, the masks themselves and their makers and agencies have been examined.

In philosophical terms we have examined some of the variants of modern conceptual schemes within which masks are situated and the interpretative complexity of their appearances: the tendencies towards psychological transference, archetypal shifts in consciousness, depersonalisation, changing social roles.

Then through the search back into origins and sources we have identified the mask as a liminoid instrument from which to mediate and direct the flow of power in a system. The great traditions of masking have developed genres and historical groupings with their own symbol systems that overlap into other socio-cultural zones.

It is in the field of cultural theory, during the modern and postmodern period of categorical change, however, that a resurgence of interest in masking has become most apparent. In the international discussion about actor-training skills and dramaturgical methodologies by Grotowski and Barba the ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) has transcended national boundaries in its choice of performers and participants. Acts of masked drama based on reinterpretations of myths and legends have proliferated in the work of Cocteau, Yeats, O'Neill, MacLeish, Schumann and

Taymor. Gender transitions in the feminine masks of W.B. Yeats and Benjamin Britten have also been noted, while there have been several generations of Western female mask-makers of great skill and achievement (Natalia Goncharova, Margaret Harris, Marie-Hélène Dasté, Jennifer Heap, Jocelyn Herbert, Julie Taymor, Sally Brookes) and female mask performers (Louise Lara, Mary Wigman, Martha Graham).

In the last thirty years, since the 1970's, the growth of intercultural mask exchanges and mask workshops has been pronounced. On one level this is certainly an expression of 'the drive to find some supportive, compatible and non-competitive framework in which individuals can explore and extend the range of their theatre skills or means of expression'.⁹⁰ Beyond this consideration, however, there has been an internationalisation of performance training beyond national boundaries coincident with the increase in global communications through new technology. Important landmarks in this process in Britain have been the international workshops organised by Richard Gough at the Cardiff Theatre Laboratory in the 1980's (particularly the 1985 Commedia Workshop with Carlo Boso and Stefano Perrocco and the Odin in Wales Residency); the Pan Projects Intercultural Arts Workshop 'Making Faces. World Mask Performance Styles' of 1987 organised by John Martin at Goldsmith's College in London that brought together Topeng, Dixi, Noh, Seraikella Chau and Nyau Society masters; and the 1994 Japanese Noh Exhibition and Mask-Making Residency of Nohzin Suzuki from the Nohzin-kai in Kobe at the Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre in Glasgow. In America the Bread and Puppet Theatre Summer Schools in Vermont and the Dell'Arte Workshops in California and the Geese Theatre Workshops have regularly attracted a wide range of participants.

Masks have also been used extensively to depict cultural and political osmosis. The socialist masks of John Arden and Margareta D'Arcy's *Non-Stop Connolly Show* and John McGrath in *Trembling Giant* and *Border Warfare* were also counter-pointed by the mask use of The Fellow Travellers Theatre Group and The Gorbals Diehards (Glasgow), Red Ladder Theatre Company (Leeds) and Telford Community Arts (Telford New Town) in Shropshire during the seventies and eighties. The ethnic and intercultural masks of Hana-No and Tara Arts and the dance mask work of Vaiyu Nadu should also be commended. There is as well the collective-creation mask work dedicated to exploring social change in the work of The San Francisco Mime Troupe and The Bread and Puppet Theatre from the United States; Welfare State International, IOU, Forkbeard Fantasy, Horse and Bamboo from England; Dogtroep and Tender from Holland; Ilotopie, Urban Sax, CirqueArchaos from France; Teatro Nucleo and Teatro Proskenion from Italy; Els Comediens, la Fura del Baus and La Claca from Spain. The mime-mask work of Theatre Machine, Moving Picture Mime Show, Théâtre de Complicité, Trestle Mask Company should also be noted. There was and is no uniformity in the phenomenon of mask use amongst all these companies – only a return on a regular basis to the mask as a special 'trick' of the trade and a persistent concern with allegorical and metaphorical change.

How important then are the masks that people adopt on stage for understanding their actions in society? Each mask used on the stage sets up a transaction between mask-maker, mask performer and audience. The actions depicted on the stage by the mask put in 'style' and 'metaphor' the dramatic concerns of theatre workers. These images need to be identified, interpreted and understood in collective terms by an audience in order for them to be effective. The psychophysical experience of working in

masks, that is increasingly becoming a mandatory part of actor training, changes and enhances the toolkit of the individual performer. The mask maker has the fundamental task of creating and restructuring an image from schema to project and this can only be done if a clear understanding of what a mask is expected to do and how it will act is acquired. All these understandings are necessary in using the theatrical convention of the mask, which is by no means confined to the stage, but may be taken into any public space (either indoor or outdoor). The question really resolves itself into how important all this is in bringing theatre into life and life into theatre and the proof of that pudding is definitely in the eating. We should perhaps recall the salutatory experience of Julie Taymor in Bali when she was arrested after a masked performance of *Way of Snow* in 1975 as a dissident; or the arrest and placing into solitary confinement of the Fellow Travellers Theatre Group in Glasgow in 1974 after a masked performance of *The Miners Show*, on the eve of a General Election, for 'displaying writings, signs and effigies, playing musical instruments and singing in a threatening and abusive manner'.⁹¹

How does the metaphorical power and perceptual ambiguity of the mask correlate with the intentions of its maker and performer? Our perception is guided by the maker's understanding of the structure of the mask, which in turn allows the performer to generate and test the various aspects of the mask. We may feel as onlookers, from our own projection (as Gombrich said) that we know what is behind this masked appearance. The audience, however, may not be aware that ambiguities and paradoxes, undefined elements leading to incompatible interpretations, may also be present in either the design or the performance of the mask. The design style and production technique of any mask are determined by the dramatic idea behind a given

performance. This dramatic idea will in turn be modified by the conditions of rehearsal, performance and audience reception. The mask is situated at the interface of performer and public and, as such, is the instrument that mediates and directs the flow of power in a chosen symbol system.⁹²

What is the relationship between the mask and face of the actor and what does the mask do that cannot be done unaided? It is difficult not to be reminded of Michael Redgrave's book of the same title, *Mask or Face. Reflections in an Actor's Mirror*, by this question.⁹³ Redgrave's study of the acting technique of Edith Evans led him to assert that mask and face cannot be separated where the art of acting is concerned. Her comment about the actor's search for identity is worth restating: 'I envy some of you young people who seem to start off your careers at the very outset with a personality of your own. It took me years to find mine, peeling off layer after layer of myself like an onion until I found the essence'.⁹⁴ He describes the actress's face as her 'emotional experience and residuum of life's philosophy' and the actress's mask as her appearance, voice, technique and mannerisms; and then qualifies the division with a profound insight that 'without the perfect discipline of the latter, the former would not be visible to us'.⁹⁵

The modern mask either as a concept or as a physical covering requires a discipline and a training, backed by a residuum of intercultural life experience. This study has examined various approaches to actor training in Europe and North America, but the question of what can the mask do that cannot be done unaided has no simple answer. As a distillation of what has been discussed in this study we may venture to suggest certain general propositions.

Masks are used:

- To literally metamorphose or transform into an 'other': an agent for others
- To create a character by taking away completely the person we know
- To derive from the character a type, archetype or stereotype
- To invent new iconic dimensions: creatures, objects, clowns, gods, demons
- To search back for the origin of things: to move forwards to future things
- To play more than one part in rapid succession without being recognised
- To hide gender, race and age thereby crossing 'normal' boundaries
- To encourage advanced powers of externalisation and energy flow
- To seek new relationships with ourselves, others and society

What are the main approaches to actor training that have used masks and how are these training systems connected to wider belief systems? As we have seen in the evaluation of Copeau the main traditions of training in France have been rooted in Bergsonian Vitalism; but in Italy the great school of Western theatre has been and continues to be *Commedia dell'Arte* with its roots in the Renaissance humanism and the Kabbalah. Meyerhold, Grotowski, Barba, Brook, Mnouchkine and Taymor have searched for Asian models, however, with roots in Buddhism and Confucianism. Only the two latter directors have been specifically interested in dedicated mask theatre forms and their amalgamation into new masked performances. The study of Topeng, (Indonesia), Serakaila Chau (India), Tal'chum (Korea), Dixi (China), Noh and Kyogen (Japan) is also a research into other ways of seeing and being. In this regard masked actors are, as Mark Olsen (formerly of the Mummenschanz Mime Troupe) has said, 'a category of people in society who seem to cross over a multitude of boundaries'.⁹⁶

What is the meaning of the process that the mask-maker uses to pass from his or her ideal or schema to its material realisation? This is an area for further study and

documentation that is beyond the scope of the current investigation. The methodologies of traditional and new mask-makers are an important area for future research because they rest upon the evolving role of tradition and innovation in other cultures. The legacy of mask-making is also an international one. While individual sculptors have their own hallmarks and tricks of the trade these are, in most cases, no longer circumscribed by national boundaries or conventional taboos.

What do we learn from the act of masking about self-perception and social being? From the foregoing analyses I have tried to show that just as the mask and the face cannot be separated so too the individual and society. At what point does an individual end and society begin, or vice versa? Those societies that use masks have a highly developed sense of identity and consciousness of social roles. Mask use in modern drama is characterised by lack of uniformity and often reflects a crisis in individual and social identity during a period of heightened and categorical change. The background, special skills and understanding required to work with masks need to be acquired over a period of time together with the disciplines of relaxation and concentration.

What are the principal philosophical considerations, which this gives rise to? In the spectrum of work analysed in this study there is little room for complacency. Every mask within each art movement contains some profound lesson. The liminoid nature of the mask is such that a new threshold needs to be crossed each time a new mask is worn. We have examined the philosophical relativism of Pirandello, the esoteric daemons of Yeats, the social masks of Brecht and some of the intercultural maskings of Mnouchkine and Taymor. The multiple layers of mask use from ritual techniques to new performance paradigms across cultures will continue to increase as the border

crossings between performers become more frequent. The sheer diversity of possible cultural systems, each tailored to a unique series of events, natural and geographical features and history, makes the diversity of possible responses to a given mask immense.

How then can we distinguish between modern and postmodern masks in the drama of the twentieth century? Is there a decisive break point when the modern masks have been assimilated and a new era has begun? If this were so, we would surely expect to find the evidence during the period of the late seventies and eighties. In fact, we discern an ongoing and overt concern with masks and meanings in the experience of live performance. The presence of conflicting models used in contemporary theory serves only to offer more roles for interpretation, more metaphors to explore and more unmaskings to dramatise. The likelihood is that audiences will continue to remain fascinated by the crossover between the mask and the face, the character and the actor, the illusion and the reality. In Western culture, as Christopher Innes has demonstrated, much avant-garde theatre has been assimilated or incorporated into the mainstream, but the theatre of the mask remains in a liminal position pursuing 'otherness' in the interests of investigation of the self and society.⁹⁷

The Globalization of the Economy versus the Transnationalism of Masks

In the West, we are trained to view other societies in terms of their usefulness or 'threat' to us and to regard 'cultural' differences as more important than the political and economic forces by which we judge ourselves.⁹⁸

In his book *New Rulers of The World* the journalist John Pilger reminds us that we live with the threat and illusion of 'endless war' in order to justify increased state control

and state repression while 'great power pursues its goal of global supremacy'. He unravels the idea that the 'global economy' is a transnational media exercise central to the growth of a 'single-ideology state' and the ruthless pursuit of its business interests; and he reveals the face of global poverty where more than ninety business companies have been obliged to take part in 'structural adjustment' programmes since the 1980s. Behind the masks of the 'information society' and the development of information technology is the permanent war arms economy and groups of 'nation builders' who promote the incessant repetition of politically 'safe' and acceptable information.

In the face of this landscape what is it 'safe' to assume about the use of masks and meanings in modern drama and their ancient history of transnational exchange? Is Ian Watson right about 'the globalisation of performer training' that 'all but ignores national boundaries' in the interests of stimulating new approaches to training and subsequent dramaturgical methodologies?⁹⁹

It has been my contention that there is a polyvalence of meanings attached to different kinds of mask making and mask use. There is also a danger; there is a tendency to describe mask theatre as being inherently multi-disciplinary or as a logical place for art forms to cross-over. Diverse historical genres of masking and the intercultural and transnational flows associated with them cannot be viewed independently from the time, place and culture in which they are invented. This specificity of the mask through *praxis* is what distinguishes it from realistic theatre and allows us to explore it in its own right. A mask can only germinate in a vessel of experience, warmed with the spirit of innovation, encouraged by faithful enthusiasm, dedication and commitment.

In all of the transcultural examples referred to here the exchange across cultures involves redefinition of meanings and categories, the invention of new masks and agencies, a re-routing of energy and 'vivifying forces'. Thus we must constantly ask whether the art of the mask 'is self-sufficient and autonomous like some "art for art's sake" activity; or whether it is learned and acquired and dependent on an economic infrastructure for its "relative autonomy" and future development'.¹⁰⁰ Serious engagement with the fantasy of the mask in its movements, circulation and flow might allow us to release something more than mere acting resources. In the *leitmotif* of Gide let us ask yet again 'Where is the mask In the audience, or on the stage? In the theatre or in life?' Intercultural and transnational examples of modern masking need to be interrogated as interconnected, but not homogenous, to bring out their distinctive cultural commitments so that 'hypocrisy ceases to mask life.'¹⁰¹

Conclusion

So now I believe I know why the masks speak, how they tell the story of a life that appears from nowhere. It's the nervous system speaking to us. Acting opens a door to a profound recess of our being.¹

The playwright Howard Brenton's response to reading about *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1994) by Julian Jaynes takes Jung's theory of the collective unconscious a stage further.² One of the key effects of a mask when worn is a change in energy flow inside the body of the performer and a simultaneous channelling of energy into the spectator. The millions of intelligent cells that transmit such energies through the nervous system were described in Vedic literature as a form of music.

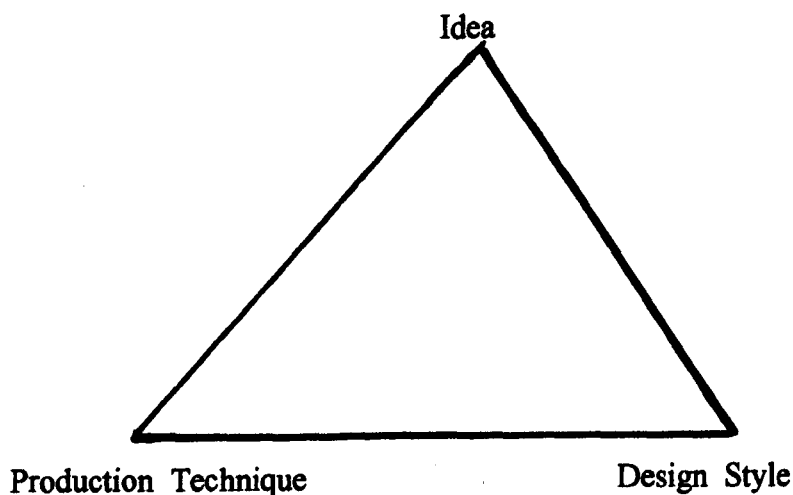
A spectre haunts the history of the theatre: the spectre of a masked shaman. The anonymous spirit-guide with leather mask, drum and pouch of herbs was responsible for the health and well being of the community. The calling to wear the mask was not dependent on wealth or power, but on the capability for vision and the ability to see and hear. The relationship between this masked figure, animals and natural phenomena of all kinds was deep and profound. The spiritual act of taking possession of, or rather, assimilating the spirit depicted by the mask - to the point of becoming possessed by it - was apparently the goal of such a spectre. The healer, the medicine man, the seer and the priest were all one - undifferentiated. From the hands of tribal mediators and shamans into European and Asiatic temples and even Christian churches the mask

image has survived and flourished. It has also followed secular itinerant performers through fairs, carnivals and street performances into palaces and regular theatres.

At the beginning of this study certain key questions were raised in the hypothesis and introduction. In the interests of mask praxis (the unity of theory and practice) some tentative answers have now be given, although in many cases these answers lead to still further questions revealing the limitations of the material here and the need for further new work and research in the field:

- What do we learn from the act of masking about self-perception and social being and what are the principal philosophical considerations which this gives rise to? It is part of our culture (in the anthropological and sociological senses) that no human being can escape the precariousness of personal identity nor the fragility of the political and social circumstances that encapsulate the individual. Masks have been used throughout much of modern drama to explore our crises of legitimacy and identity. Those theatre makers who have used masks as cognitive strategies for purposes of radical unmasking have done so during a period of disintegration of Western religious authority and metaphysics. Legitimacy corresponds to value-orientation in the symbolism of masking. The use of masks equates in turn to highly condensed forms of behaviour for direct expression that facilitate a release and an exchange of energy with and through an audience. In the act of self-perception and social being we pursue otherness in order to investigate ourselves. The theatre maker is also a worker (not a pure thinker) and as such his/her masks need to be continually checked by practice and theory until the right unity of theory and practice (praxis) is forged.

- Has the mask lost its importance as a theatrical convention within modernism and post-modernism? In this study, a volume of material has been considered by theatre companies, playwrights, designers, painters, sculptors, puppeteers and performance artists. It is clearly a mistake to assume that the mask will have no place in the theatre of the future. At the turn of the twentieth century the search back into earlier conventions that were not confined by a narrow realism or illusory naturalism clearly initiated a landslide. As a result, modern drama as a whole has been changed and its character has been categorically lifted from purely realistic language and concepts into what Joseph Gregor has called 'creative symbolization'.³
- What is the significance of making masks in the art of masking? What kind of paradigm could be applied to provide a real sense of how masks are used in the theatre? What is the nature of the relationship between theory and practice in mask-making? The following ternary diagram expresses the key elements for me which need to inform the mask-maker's eye-view:



It is possible to speak of creative mask praxis as occurring on a number of levels within the above ternary. The idea incorporates the basic concept and uses to which the mask will be put, how it is to be worn and any special features. The chosen design style and production technique infer an attendant understanding of form and content, volume and expression, spontaneity and reflection, agency and history. In producing a new object out of pre-existing elements or realities the mask may change its nature. The ideal form of the original idea must undergo changes between the activity of consciousness and its realization through sculptural techniques in mask form; and what mediates this transition is none other than the indeterminate or unforeseeable nature of both the process and its result. In the making process the chosen material must have its resistance overcome by the mask-maker who shapes and moulds it to a form. *Praxis* was described by Marx as something at 'the end of every labour process' by which 'we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement'; and as a reflexive process because 'acting on the external world and changing it', he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway.⁴

Reiterative or imitative mask praxis occurs, by way of contrast, when the maker is confined to an ideal model; and the real mask can only be said to exist when it replicates the ideal. The task here is to narrow down the range of unforeseeable possibilities to an *a priori* law of reproduction keeping the mask within the boundaries of known and tried practice. Inside the great codified theatrical traditions the ability of the mask-maker to copy or reproduce has often been highly rated. The maintenance of the traditional masks and their images is the pre-requisite for any new innovations. This process also has a positive aspect insofar as it extends what has already been created.

The theatre mask cannot be simply explained away as a passive and mechanical response to determinate external conditions. The mask-maker needs to be aware of the complex dialectic between material and method, form and meaning, design and content.

- Are there no continuous performing traditions that use the mask in modern Western drama? In fact, there have been numerous different Western theatrical groupings and associated innovations since 1896 and clear evidence of continuous performing conventions associated with art movements and new cultural trends. There are continuing performance traditions of folk masking in the German and Alpine countries. The Flemish visual traditions of Bosch and Brueghel have found modern outlets in the paintings of James Ensor, the plays of Michel de Ghelderode and the masked performances of Surrealism. *Commedia dell'arte* has a rich and evolving tradition of iconography reflecting a delicate balance between freedom and restraint, liberty and confinement, equality and inequality that continues to inspire the formation of new theatre companies and training schools. Some companies have even generated their own continuous mask performance traditions for nearly half a century (and given rise to many followers and imitators) such as The Bread and Puppet Theatre. Peter Schumann has produced a huge amount of performances, circuses, festivals, exhibitions and communal workshops in order to remove the barriers between art and daily life, the actor and the audience and the professional and the amateur.
- Is it valid to assume a bi-polar model that equates Asian forms with traditions and European forms with innovation? On the basis of the evidence evaluated this is clearly not a sustainable position, since what was new in tradition within the older

grandiose unitary schemes of both East and West, has given way to a new globalisation of myths, stories, legends, sagas and ballads through exchange, trade, journeys, workshops and residencies.

In presenting a history of Western masks in modern drama the definition of the phenomenon, because of differentiation and lack of uniformity, is more than a little uncertain. The mask, interpreted as an animated image of gods, people or other living beings, was not the only tool equipped for motion (i.e. the puppet and the performing object). Stephen Kaplin has described it as the point where 'the performing object reaches the limits of human anatomy' but also where 'the character's centre of gravity remains united firmly to the performer's'.⁵ In other words, the mask is unique in being the only simulacrum directly worn over the human body as an expressive extension of the human face and still articulated from within the wearer's own impulses. The mask is a primary iconographic tool that releases the body enabling it to find the movement, voice and idea of a character or a state of being. Yet even here there is a shifting point where the actor in a large head-mask and the puppeteer in a full-body suit overlap.

During the period of modern drama the forms taken by the theatre mask have been extremely extensive and varied, since mask performers have used them in every genre of the performing arts: theatre, circus, puppet theatre, cabaret, happenings, folk drama, community theatre, people's theatre, political theatre, actor-training, theatre-in-education, theatre for children and young people, dance, music, opera. At the same time the mask has challenged artists to consider what they could achieve with it that could not be achieved unaided.

It might therefore be tempting to assume that the history of modern masks and their meanings has followed that of the actor's theatre. This is not completely accurate,

however, because the unofficial history of much popular theatre and the intercultural and transnational nature of recent mask work has often been overlooked by theatre historians. The relationships between the margins and mainstream, between popular mask theatre and theatre buildings are also constantly shifting.

In an ironic manner we may thank the Church authorities of the Medieval period, which fought against all kinds of human simulacra 'larvae' and masking, for enforcing belief in the magic nature of the mask. Subsequent folk superstition made sorcerers and witches of mask wearers and incubi and succubi of their masks. The false face could not be true because it was itself a fiction false!

At the turn of the twentieth century the theory of Craig that the mask was an 'autonomous actor' or an 'uber-marionette' did not have much time to manifest its qualities because the experimentation by the avant-garde paid little respect to existing theatre genres or their associated conventions. The modern aspiration towards a total theatre led the users of masks towards a theatre of mixed means during a period of unprecedented and categorical changes.

The meanings of the masks have changed as they have undergone these changes. The early fusion of expressionist techniques with 'primitivism' in the work of O'Neill almost deprived the mask of any movement. It became again a tribal symbol and a profane idol. In the shifting perspective between private faces and public masks that came after, however, in the work of Pirandello, Yeats, Brecht, Ionesco, Genet, Arden and others it has become a revitalised tool or object in the hands of diverse makers of theatre.

The 'craftmanship' approach is of central importance in identifying the difference between good and bad mask work. Behind every artisan is a tradition and

associated ways of working. A mask does not 'live' simply because someone puts it on; and a mask will not 'live' at all if the skill, knowledge, experience and spirit of the maker have not been imparted to the object. Equally an untrained body, dead from the neck downwards with an ever-moving mouth and sounds issuing forth, is unlikely to be able to unlock the secrets of the mask. To be a player of the mask is to be more than an average actor: one must become an actor with special skills. In the development of a mask tradition there are many roles and many players; an historical family or genre is not born overnight. The profusion of meanings and uses to which modern masks have been (and still are being) put, should make us wary of any attempt at closure.

In the words of the Swedish mask theatre director and professional puppeteer Michael Meschke: 'Everybody needs orientation and therefore is apt to classify, catalogue and pigeonhole his existence. This is called putting things in order. In art this procedure is always tricky as it might lead to confinement of creativity the essence of which is permanent change'.⁶

Whether we are exploring radical forms of interiority or fundamental paradoxes of social life, the questions raised by the presence of the mask will continue. The wearer may be absent in the presence of the mask, but the gaps between theory and practice are likely to be very visible. The active and on-going exploration of mind and body underscores the *jeu du masque*. Basic to our apprehension of change is the ability to deal with metaphysics, the differences between the real and the apparent, the empirical and the hypothetical, the material and the ideal. The mask challenges us to accept what empirically is non-real or as Goll puts it 'Non-reality becomes fact'. It is in the ambiguities between these binary concepts that we change and struggle to understand

and transform our lives and those of others. The power of communal action to effect political change arises also from this creative condition of our social being.

It is a salutary thought that the crisis of humanism is one of identity: nothing exists in splendid isolation as a thing in itself; a self, a nation, any kind of identity. In *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Giddens specifies three major dynamics of modern life: 'separation of time and space', 'disembedding of social institutions' and 'intrinsic reflexivity.'⁷ Under pre-modern conditions the seasonal rhythms in agriculture in the local rural community determined the mask *praxis* within mummings and carnivals; global trade, transport and communications have created a universal temporal scheme to overcome what were once insurmountable physical and natural barriers. Now theatre as a social institution has been lifted out of, or disembedded from, its local context and masks have become symbolic tokens of international cultural exchange. The specificity of mask *praxis* still requires expert systems, but the skills and technical knowledge are often regarded as having a validity, independent of the practitioners and clients who commission them. It is however in the mask *praxis* of modern theatre practitioners that the notion of 'intrinsic reflexivity' comes into its own: the modern constantly reflects upon itself and these reflections play back into the modern, keeping it in perpetual transformation. Radical doubt produces fractured identities and the need to learn how to live with uncertainty. Since mask *praxis* is about the actual crafting of social identity we should perhaps not be surprised to encounter a proliferation of masks in modern drama commensurate with the more radicalised and universalised consequences of modernity. By the twenty-first century, even if some mask-makers and some mask performers carry out their *praxis* in a manner not so very different from their twentieth century antecedents, mask theatre as an art form has become intercultural and internationalised.

The spectre of the masked shaman has given way to the cultural relativism of disembodied masks. If identity is defined as ‘people’s source of meaning and experience’ (Castells, 1997)⁸ and power is increasingly inscribed in cultural codes then we may expect creative mask *praxis* to become increasingly apparent, both in the theatre and in life, because the limits between theatre and non-theatre are shifting. After all, there is nothing that cannot be changed.

PAGE

NUMBERING

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APPENDIX A

A Note on Mask Etymology

In discussing the meaning of masks in relation to sources and origins there is also much to be learned from a brief overview of the etymological field. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* offers :-

‘n. Covering, usually of velvet or silk, for concealing the face at balls etc., or of wire, gauze, etc., for protection; hollow figure of a human head worn by ancient Greek and Roman actors; clay or wax likeness of a person’s face, esp (also death) one made by taking a mould from the face;(fig.) disguise, as throw off the -; masked person; face, head, of fox.’¹

This is a useful starting point with some glaring omissions. There seems little doubt that the mask is a covering of some kind, but the type of material used and the area to be covered can vary enormously. The range may extend from the red clown nose to the full head carnival creation to the giant masks of street theatre. For the purposes of this study the mask is a three-dimensional covering or material object, artificially produced, and normally intended to be worn over the face and head but sometimes extending over the whole body.

The morphological elements of many masks are derived from natural forms whether anthropomorphic or zoomorphic. But there are also some masks which fit neither category, among which may be included the abstract masks of the Futurists and Surrealists.

The tribal references to masks and masking are similarly diverse. In non-Western contexts there is often no separable word or single element that stands for 'mask'. In many parts of Central Africa, there is only a generic term such as *makishi* or *nkisi* representing both the range of masks and the performance of which the masking is part. In other words the terminology involves not simply a facial covering but an entire range of cultural referents and background within which the masked spectacle takes place. In Sri Lanka, the word *Kolam* depicts not only a type of mask, but a complete masked spectacle or mythic drama dedicated to the god of good fortune, *Vesamuni* (with *vesa* meaning disguise and *muhuna* meaning face) in which the characters performing are masked.

E.K.Chambers outlines the etymology of the word mask in *The Medieval Stage* and asserts that Skeat thought it came from the East through the French *masque* and *masquer*, the Italian *mascherata* and the Spanish 'mascara' and *mascarada*. He suggests it is derived from the Arabic *maskharat* meaning a buffoon or clown (stemming from the root word *sakhira*, meaning to be ridiculed). The other Arabic word *maskhara* or *mashara* meant 'to falsify' or to 'transform' into an animal or a monster. In the Middle Kingdom, Egyptians used the word *msk* to refer to 'leather' or 'second skin'. This word probably entered the Arabic language as *msr*, which for the Muslims meant 'to be Egyptianised', or to wear a mask as did the ancient Egyptians. Chambers also notes that *maske* first appears in 1514 (Collier, 1.79 'locorum larvatorum, vocat. Maskes, Revelles and Disguysings) and that *masque* is not known in English until the seventeenth century.²

Other linguists have rejected this Eastern derivation from *maskharat* in favour of a European root. Paul Robert in the 1973 edition of *Dictionnaire alphabetique et*

analogique de la langue française asserts that the French *masquer* is drawn from the Italian *maschera*, with its Latin antecedents *ascus* and *masca* deriving from a pre-Latin root in the word *mask*.

An equivalent word for *mask* or *masca* in 643 AD (according to the famous edition of The Rotary) was *striga* or *strega*, meaning witch or sorcerer. The word *masca* was also used by the poet Adelm in England during the same period with the same connotation. In Lombardy too, *masca* signified not only an ignoble spirit associated with witchcraft and known for devouring people alive, but also one of the undead returned from the grave. *Mascus* or *masca*, in this sense, referred specifically to the thread or net wrapped around the skeleton to prevent its return to earth. The other word for *masca*, used throughout the Medieval period, was *larva* or *spirito malefico*. Other names for mask which signify spirits of the dead are: *deikelon*, meaning spirit, apparition, or phantom from the Ancient Greek; 'larva' meaning spirit of the dead in Latin; *Walapauz* in Lombardian in 643 AD meaning spirit of a dead soldier slain on the field of battle; and *scema*, in ancient High German, meaning apparition or shadow image.³

The idea that masks represent demons has received most eloquent exposition in the work of Professor Kari Meuli of the University of Basle in Switzerland. For him the origins of masking and masquerade have their origin in a popular feast or ceremony marking the return of the ancestors from their graves. His work focuses on the general diffusion of this idea among early European peoples. In the *Lexicon Latinatis* by Forcellini (Padua, 1940) the word *larva* is described like this; 'genius malus ac nocivus defunctorum' In other words, evil spirit and harmful influence derived from the dead. The medieval dictionary of Du Cange also refers to the double sense of mask as

meaning both mask and demon 'larvatus, larva indutus, e daemone possesus'. *Larvatus* in this context means someone who is covered by a mask, and someone who is possessed by a demon. Even today in the village of Denice near Alessandria in Piedmont the local inhabitants still have the dialect word, *masce* in regular use to denote both witches and spirits of the dead.

The French 'masque' always means face mask and never the performance (by contrast, the English Court Masque is a performance genre that became extremely popular with the English aristocracy during the early seventeenth century). The French *masque* also had several variants; *se masquier*, *masquillier*, and *maschurer* are twelfth to thirteenth century words for 'blacken' or 'dirty'. In German, however, *maskel* means 'stain'; while *maskeler* and *maskeling* signify the performance and the performer. Some scholars have also noted the blackened face of Arlecchino or Harlequin from Italy and associated him with an Anglo-Norman king 'hariloking', who was reputedly the master of the army of the dead.

In Ancient Greece the face covering or mask was called *prosopon* meaning a composite of person, the dramatic character or part, the mask covering, and the face. The expression derives from the Greek *pros* meaning 'toward', 'to' or 'at', and *ōpa* meaning 'the eye' or 'the face.' The implication behind this word being that the wearer's identity is not just hidden but becomes merged with and subservient to the character he is representing. A further level of ambiguity of meaning was that *prosopon* represented not only a particular character or figure, but also the paradigmatic events and the whole context in which the character took part. Henry Pernet has gone further by stating that 'the mask is thus closely related to the founding events of the society and its institutions as well as its values. It is, therefore, easy to understand why among

many peoples the mask is linked to conservative forces and plays an important role in social control, assuming even a quasi-police function.’⁴

Later the Romans used the word *persona* from ‘per sonare’ meaning to sound through. Similarly, this word referred not only to a mask used by a performer, but could also mean one who played a part or a role or a stock character depicted within a play (as in the grammarian, Pollux’s *Onomasticon* from the second century A.D.). *Persona* comes from an even older root word, the Etruscan ‘phersu’ meaning ‘masked dancer’.

In China, the Chinese dictionary *Shuowen* (compiled 100 a.d.) equates the word ‘qi’ with ‘mask’; in particular, a mask used in exorcism ceremonies. The same term, ‘qitou’, was also used to describe death masks. This latter term contains the idea that since the soul and energy of the body float away at death, a ‘qitou’ should be made to cover the body of the corpse. In this way the soul or life force may be held down by masking the orifices through which escape would otherwise be possible. The mask holds the presence in.⁵

FEELING & THEIR CONTRARIES BY DONATO SARTORI FROM MASCHERA & MASCHERE. PP.24-25. LA CASA USHER.FEB.1984. TRANSLATED BY MALCOLM KNIGHT JANUARY 1986. GLASGOW																		
FEELING	SENSATION		COMPONENTS		PHASE	PARALLEL STATES	CONTRARY PERSONALITY	CHARACTERISTIC TYPOLOGY	AGE	ANIMAL	FORM SHAPE	COLOUR	SMELL	TASTE	SOUND	TACTILE SENSATION	MATERIAL	MOVEMENT
	+	-	M	F														
GOODNESS	*			*	MEDIUM	KINDNESS	EVIL MALICIOUS		20/30	ST. BERNARD DOG	ROUND	ROSE	SWEET	SWEET	MELODIC	WARM SOFT	SATIN	SLOW SURE
INTELLIGENCE	*		0	0	STRONG	ACUMEN	STUPIDITY	SCIENTIST		CHIMPANZEE	SHARP	BRIGHT	PUNGENT	DRY	SILVERY	COLD	STEEL	CONSTANT
HUMILITY	*			*	WEAK	OBEDIENT	PRIDE	MATHEMATICIAN	30	DOG	ACUTE	METAL				SMOOTH		LINEAR
WISDOM	*		*		STRONG	SURRENDER		PRIEST	50		CHANGE	GREY	FINE	TASTE	REPETITIVE	SLIPPERY	ROUGH	STRENGTH
MAGNANIMITY	*					OBEDIENT	PRIDE				ABLE			LESS				DESCENDING
JUSTICE	*		*		STRONG	VIRTUE	FOOLISHNESS	OLD MAN	70	OWL	SHARP	BROWN	STRONG	FIRM	FULL	ROUGH	LEATHER	HAUGHTY
COURAGE	*		*		STRONG	AUSTERE					ACUTE					BARK		PROUD
LOVE	*			*	STRONG	LIBERAL	RANCOUR	BOSS/ CHIEF HEAD	50	WALRUS	SOLID	OCHRE	TOBACCO	FULL	VIBRANT	WARM	BRONZE	CALM
						PRODIGAL	VOLUBILITY							BOOED		COPPER		
						IMPASSIVE	FEAR	CAPTAIN	50	RHINOCEROUS	SQUARE	RED	PUNGENT	SOUR	RESOLUTE	COARSE	IRON	UPRIGHT
						DECISIVE										RUST		STRAIGHT
						SYMPATHETIC	HATE	YOUNG PEER	30	BROODING HEN	SHERICAL	YELLOW	GLYCERINE	SWEET	MELODIOUS	WARM	SKIN	SINUOUS
						INCLINATION		MASTER/TEACHER				RED	MAGNOLIA			TASSEL		
						AFFECTION		MOTHER				VIOLET						
						PASSION		LOVER										
TRANQUILITY	*			*	MEDIUM	RESIGNED	EXCITABILITY	FISHERMAN	40	KOALA BEAR	ROUND	RED	HAY	ALMOST	RUSTLING	WARMTH	VELVET	FLUID
						CALM						GREEN		SWEET				
CHEERFULNESS	*			*	STRONG	VIVACIOUS	SADNESS	YOUNG GIRL	14	HUMMING BIRD	SMALL	BRIGHT	FLOWERY	SPARKLING	SILVERY	IMPALPABLE	RUNNING	DARTING
																WATER		
MALICE/EVIL		*		*	WEAK	MALICE	GOODNESS	SPINSTER	40	SERPENT	SINUOUS	PURPLE	UNPLESANT	ACID	STRIDENT	SHARP	PAPER	CRAWLING
					MEDIUM	MALIGNANCE	GENTLENESS	OLD MAID										
					STRONG	WICKEDNESS												
FEAR/	*			*	WEAK	WORRIED	COURAGE			RABBIT	ENTANGLED	BLUE	PUNGENT	DRY	PENETRATING	COLD	GAUZE	WINDING
COWARDICE					MEDIUM	FRIGHT						BLACK						MEANDERING
					STRONG	PANICK						PURPLE						
					V.STRONG	TERROR												
STUPIDITY	*		0	0	WEAK	DULL	CLEVERNESS	BOXER		STUPID FISH	ROUNDED OFF	GREY	MOULDY	INSIPID	CRACKED	CRUMBLY	MUD	OSCILLATING
SADNESS	*		0	0	MELANCHOLY	CHEER	PIERROT				SPIRAL	SKY	INCENSE	TART	SENTIMENTAL	SOFT	SKIN	SLOW
TIMIDITY					BLOCKED	AGGRESSION						BLUE						FALLING
					HESITANT	EASE												
LAZINESS	*		0	0	WEAK	NEGLIGENCE	ACTIVITY	PUBLIC	40	HIPPOPOTAMUS	CORPULENT	BEIGE	SICKLY	DOUGHY	HEAVY	SMOOTH	GUMMED	STILL
APATHY						IGNORANCE	ENERGY	EMPLOYEE						PASTY			FEATHERS	
ENVY	*		*		STRONG	AVIDITY	ADMIRATION	A BANRUPT		MOUSE	WINDING	VIOLET	RANCID	BITTER	STRIDENT	GLIDING	PLASTIC	ZIG ZAG
(JEALOUSY)						JEALOUSY					BENDY							
						AVARICIOUS												
						RANCOUR												
GREEDINESS	*		*		STRONG	LIBIDO	CHASTITY	OLD PIMP/	60	PIG	WEAK	YELLOW	SWEET	DULL	GURGLING	SLACK	WET PAPER	OFF BALANCE
LUST						LUST	PURITY	PROCURER			SPINELESS							
						LEWDNESS	SIMPLICITY											
						LICENTIOUSNESS	RECTITUDE											
						DISSOLUTION												
WRATH	*		*		STRONG	RAPACIOUSNESS	TRANQUILITY	OFFICE	50	PEKINESE DOG	TRIANGULAR	BLACK	PUNGENT	ACID	CHATTERING	ROUGH	GLASS	SPRING UP
						ANNOYANCE	SETTLED	BOSS				RED						
						ANGER												
						HATE												

APPENDIX B

Feelings & Their Contraries: A Chart for the Western Mask-Maker (Donato Sartori and Jacques Lecoq).

Published in Sartori, Donato and Lanata, Bruno *Maschera e Maschere. Storia, morfologia, technical.* Centro Maschere e Struttore Gestuali. Firenze: La Casa Usher, 1984, pp. 24-25. Translated by Malcolm Knight.

Notes

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Notes to pages 1- 4

- ¹ Smith, Susan Harris. *Masks in Modern Drama*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984, pp.185-198.
- ² The real foundations of an historical approach to masks and meanings through an understanding of social change is too important to be allowed to sink into the quagmire of Chaos Theory or Poststructural 'difference' (what Derrida called 'the obliterated origin of absence and presence' in *Grammatology*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976, p.143). I cannot but think of each mask as being what it is by reason of the particular place and time at which it was invented, and has its day. Of course, everything embodies elements of earlier existences, whether received genetically or through social evolution and its associated traditions. In the words of David Craig: 'this reinforces the prime truth that to be alive is to be embroiled in an unending continuum of cause and effect whose special pressure on the artist is to situate him in the life of his species and so to reduce greatly the extent to which he can create at his own sweet will.' (*The Real Foundations: Literature and Social Change*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1973, p.1.)
- ³ Emigh, John. *Masked Performance. The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Drama*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, is centred on traditional masked performances found elsewhere in the world, while A. David Napier's *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, is focussed upon investigation of archaic forms in pre-classical Greece ,India and Bali.
- ⁴ Proschan, Frank' .The Semiotic Study of Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects' in *Semiotica*, 47, 1- 4, 1983. pp.3-46. The term 'performing object' is used by Proschan to refer to 'material images of humans, animals, or spirits that are created, displayed or manipulated in narrative or dramatic performance' (p.4). He also points up their strong connection to folk culture, popular theatre and religion.
- ⁵ Caillois, Roger. *Masques*. Paris: Oliver Perrin, 1965, p.6.
- ⁶ Gregor, Josef. *Masks of The World*. London: B.T.Batsford, 1936, p5.
- ⁷ Geertz, Clifford 'Ideology as a Cultural System' in David Apter's (Ed.) *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964, p.47.
- ⁸ Barba, Eugenio and Savarese, Nicola. *The Secret Art of The Performer.A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*. London and New York; Routledge, 1991.
- ⁹ Emigh. *Masked Performance*.1996.
- ¹⁰ Proschan, *Semiotica*. 1983 p.4.
- ¹¹ Bell, John. *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects*. New York University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001. (First published in *The Drama Review*, Vol.43, Number 3, New York, Fall 1999).
- ¹² Jurkowski, Henryk. *Aspects of Puppet Theatre*. London: Puppet Centre Trust, 1988; *Ecrivains et Marionnettes*, Charleville-Mézières: Institut International de la

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Marionnette, 1991 *A History of European Puppetry* Vols. 1 and 2, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998; *Métamorphoses. La Marionnette au XX Siècle*, Charleville-Mézières: Institut International de la Marionnette, 2000; see also 'The Language of Metaphors' and 'The End of Specificity' in *Puppetry into Performance* by Anthony Dean. London: Central School of Speech and Drama, 2000; and 'Specificity in New Make-Up (Aesthetics of Puppets at the Beginning of the Century)' in *The Puppetry Yearbook*. Vol.5 by James Fisher (Ed). Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press 2002.

- 13 Tillis, Steve. *Towards an Aesthetics of The Puppet*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992; also 'The Art of Puppetry in The Age of Media Production' in *Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects* by John Bell (ed), Boston: MIT, 2001, 172-185.
- 14 Kaplin, Stephen. 'A Puppet Tree. A Model for the Field of Puppet Theatre' in *Puppets, Mask and Performing Objects*. Ibid. pp. 18-25.
- 15 Richmond, Arthur (Ed.). *Remo Bufano's Book of Puppetry*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950; Obratzsov, Sergei. *My Profession*. Moscow: Raduga, 1985; Meschke, Michael. *In Search of Aesthetics for the Puppet Theatre* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1992; Brecht, Stefan. *Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre*. 2 Vols. New York: Routledge 1988.
- 16 Proschan. *Semiotica*. 1983, p.4.
- 17 Arnott, Peter D. *Plays Without People: Puppetry and Serious Drama*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964, p.77.
- 18 Baird, Bill. *The Art of The Puppet*. New York: Macmillan, 1965, p.30.
- 19 Tillis. *Toward An Aesthetics of The Puppet*. 1992, p.78.
- 20 Ibid, p.80.
- 21 See 'Mask' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at the following web page address:
<http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/6/0,5716,108406+11,00.html>
- 22 Ferris, Lesley K'. 'The Mask in Western Theater: Transformation and Doubling' in *Masks: Faces of Culture*. (Eds.) John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty. The Saint Louis Art Museum. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2000, p.246.
- 23 Napier. *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox*, p.XXIII.
- 24 The term 'transnational cultural flows' is from Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p.49 and p.64. He uses it to Depict the ways in which urban and cosmopolitan cultural forms thrive, compete and feed off one another in the contemporary world 'without logically or chronologically presupposing either the authority of the Western experience or the models derived from that experience.'

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- ²⁵ Fuchs, Elinor. *The Death of Character: perspectives on theater after modernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1996.
Notes to pages 12-
- ²⁶ Laing, R.D. *The Divided Self*. London: Tavistock Publications, Penguin Books, 1965.
- ²⁷ Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p.31.
- ²⁸ Sanchez-Vazquez, Adolpho. *The Philosophy of Praxis*. London: Merlin Press, 1977, p.6. As Vazquez says: 'Ordinary consciousness thinks practical acts, but it does not see praxis, the act of transforming society, as its prime object.' Under what conditions can we go from ordinary consciousness to a theory of praxis involving social transformation on the stage and in life?
- ²⁹ Baynes, Ken. *Masks. A Welsh Arts Council Touring Exhibition*. Cardiff, 1976.
- ³⁰ Hall, Peter. *The Necessary Theatre*. London: Nick Hern Books, 1999, p.16.
- ³¹ Napier. *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox.*, p.1.
- ³² See Lesley Wade Soul. 'Performing Identities (Empowering Performers and Spectators)' in Christopher McCulloch's (Ed.) *Theatre Praxis. Teaching Drama Through Practice*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998, pp.38-61. She says 'A mask is obviously a performer action which evokes a spectator reaction, and it is Significant that one way of distinguishing types of masks is between those which are Assumed (or performer chosen) and those which are imposed (or spectator chosen)' and she makes the important point that 'the location of power can shift during performance between performer and spectator.'(p.55). Mask performances are not frozen or fixed but are the co-creation of all those involved.

CHAPTER 1. MASK THEORIES

- ¹ Napier, A. David. *Masks, Transformation, and Parado.* p.xxiii.
- ² Wiles, David. *The Masks of Menander*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.114.
- ³ Twycross, Meg and Carpenter, Sarah. *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002, p.328. Chapter 13 is given over to 'Terminology' pp.327-344. The authors deftly show how tracing the semantics of a word can also become the history of the object or activity it describes and how 'the language itself draws together and preserves the whole intertwined history of medieval masking – popular and courtly, theoretical and dramatic.'(p.344).
- ⁴ Cited in E.T.Kirby 'The Mask: Abstract Theatre, Primitive and Modern' in *The DramaReview*. T55. Vol 16. Number 3. September 1972, p.5. Also in Yvan Goll translated by Walter H. Sokel, 'Preface to The Immortals' 1918 in *An Anthology Of German Expressionist Drama*, New York: Doubleday-Anchor Books, 1963, p.10.

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- 5 Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*. New York: Vintage Editions, 1941 (Republished 1957), p.8.
 - 6 Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. London: Fontana, 1973, p.257.
 - 7 Geertz, Clifford. 'Ideology as a Cultural System' in David Apter's (Ed) *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964, p.64.
 - 8 McCormick, John. 'Mask and Masking' in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Theatre & Performance*. Vol. 2. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
 - 9 Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Ibid. p.23.
 - 10 Wiles. *The Masks of Menander*, p.73.
 - 11 Theophrastus. *Characters, Mimes, Cercidas and the Choliambic Poets*. Translated by Jeffrey Rusten, I.C.Cunningham, and A.D.Knox. New York: Harvard Books, Loeb Classical, 1993.
 - 12 Ibid. p.85.
 - 13 Foley, Kathy. 'My Bodies: The Performer in West Java' in *Acting Re-Considered* by Phillip B. Zarrilli (Ed), London and New York: Routledge, 1995.p.168.
 - 14 Strother, Z.S. *Inventing Masks. Agency and History in the Art of Central Pende*. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.
 - 15 Stefano Perrocco worked as (leather) mask-maker with the actor Carlo Boso on teaching the International Workshop on Commedia dell'Arte at Cardiff Laboratory Theatre, Wales during 16-28 September 1985.
 - 16 Harris, John Wesley. *A Description of Commedia dell'Arte*. Glasgow: Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre, 2001.
 - 17 Mazzone-Clementi, Carlo. 'Commedia and The Actor' in *The Drama Review*, T61, Vol.18, No.1. March 1974.
 - 18 The idea of 'sensory co-ordinates' is derived from Donato Sartori whose analysis of these qualities in the chart 'Feelings and Their Contraries' (developed with Jacques Lecoq) is a major contribution to the art of the Western mask-maker. See in *Maschera e Maschere*. Florence: La Casa Usher, 1984, pp.21-25. This has been translated by the author and are included in Appendix B at the end of this study.
 - 19 Komparu, Kunio. *The Noh Theater. Principles and Perspectives*. New York, Tokyo, Kyoto: Weatherhill/Tankosha, 1983. See the section of the Nohmen pp.224-239.
 - 20 Ortolani, Benito. *The Japanese Theatre. From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990. See pp.10-11 on 'indigenous' versus 'imported.'

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- 21 Nishikawa, Kyōtarō. *Bugaku Masks*. Translated and adapted by Monica Bethe. Tokyo-New York-San Francisco: Kodansha International Ltd, 1978, p.29.
- 22 David Griffiths. *Mask: A Release of Acting Resources*. Vol 1. Acting Through Mask. Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998. p.29.
- 23 Brandon, James. *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.6
- 24 Gregor, Josef. *Masks of The World*. London: B.T.Batsford, 1936-37.
Bihal-Merin, Oto. *Masks of The World*. Thames and Hudson, 1971.
Schaedler, Karl-Ferdinand. *Masken der Welt*. Munich: Heyne Verlag, 1999.
- 25 Mead, Margaret. 'Masks and Men' in *Natural History* 55, June 1946, p.283. i.e. 'The wearer of the mask reflects the terror or delight, the wonder or awe or panic in the eyes of those who were, until a few moments ago, his neighbours – perhaps his wife and children. His audience responding not to him but to the mask he wears, gives him new clues, and he in turn becomes in feeling temporarily transformed into the creature whose image has been fashioned of wood or straw, of bark cloth or leather.'
- 26 Tonkin, Elizabeth. 'Masks and Powers' in *Man* 14, No.2, June 1979, p.242.
- 27 Kerenyi, Carl. 'Man and Mask' in *Spiritual Disciplines* Vol.4 of *Papers from The Eranos Yearbooks*. New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Press 30, 1960, p.153.
- 28 Niessen, Carl. *Handbuch der Theaterwissenschaft*. 2 vols. 4 parts. Emsdetten: Lechte, 1949-1957.
- 29 Fischer, Ernst. *The Necessity of Art*. London: Penguin, 1963, p.39.
- 30 Berman, Marshall. *All That is Solid Melts into Air*. London and New York: Verso, 1983.
- 31 Boal, Augusto. *The Theatre of The Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press, 1979, 2000.
- 32 Ibid.p.15.
- 33 Emigh. *Masked Performance*. p.18.
- 34 Bieber, Margarete. *The History of The Greek and Roman Theater*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- 35 Webster, T. B.L. *Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play*. London:BICS Suppl.20, 1967; and Green, J.L. *Monuments Illustrating Old and Middle Comedy* 3rd Edition..(Revised & enlarged), London:BICS Suppl 39, 1978.
- 36 Kachler, Karl Gotthilf. *Maskenspiele aus Basler Tradition 1936-1974*. Basel: Christian Merian Verlag. 1986. Large masks in expressive & abstract style.

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- ³⁷ Freund, Philip. *The Birth of Theatre*. London and Chester Springs: Peter Owen, 2003, pp. 377-379 for the critic's evaluation from *The New York Times*.
- ³⁸ Taplin, Oliver. *Masks in Greek Tragedy and in Tantalus* in *Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama*, Oxford: University of Oxford, 2003 pp.1-4.
- ³⁹ Taplin, Oliver. See *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: the dramatic use of entrances and exits in Greek Tragedy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; *Comic Angels and Other Approaches to Greek Drama Through Vase Painting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993;
- ⁴⁰ Wiles, David. *Greek Theatre Performance. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- ⁴¹ Walton, J. Michael. *Greek Theatre Practice*. London: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- ⁴² Easterling, P.E. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- ⁴³ Walton, J. Michael. 'Playing in the Dark: Masks and Euripides' *Rhesus*' in *Helios*, Texas Tech University Press, Fall 2000. v27 i2, p.137.
- ⁴⁴ See the report on the Greek Theatre Conference Proceedings at Royal Holloway College, University of London, May 2002 by Margaret Coldiron, 'Masks in The Ancient and Modern Theatre.' *New Theatre Quarterly* (72), Vol. XVIII. November 2002. pp.393-394.
- ⁴⁵ See the published work of Allardyce Nicoll, George Thomson, and Peter Arnott.
- ⁴⁶ Southern, Richard. *The Seven Ages of The Theatre*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1961, p.29 Although dated in many ways, Southern's comments on the mask are still perceptive and valuable.
- ⁴⁷ See the Etruscan 'phersu', most of the African tribes, the Kwakiutl et al. in their games, pantomimes, popular dances and funerary rites.
- ⁴⁸ Caillois, Roger. *Masques*. Paris: Oliver Perrin, 1959, p.3.
- ⁴⁹ Geertz, Clifford. 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight' in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. London: Fontana, 1973. Republished in *Performance Analysis* by Colin Counsell and Laurie Wolf. London: Routledge, 2001, pp.222-228.
- ⁴⁸ Tseñlon, Efrat. (Ed). *Masquerade and Identities. Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Marginality*. London and New York: Routledge. 2001. pp.4-8.
- ⁴⁹ Crumrine, N.Ross. 'Masks, Participants and Audience' in *The Power of Symbols*, edited by N.Ross Crumrine and Marjorie Halprin, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983, pp.2-3.
- ⁵⁰ Toepfer, Karl. 'Masks and Power.' Unpublished article. 1995, pp.1-21. All references and quotes are from pp.7-8. He goes on to say that 'a mask signifies the interpretive

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complexity of appearances'; and that advanced physical and motor skills and a highly developed capacity for language (for symbolization) would be pre-requisites for making and performing in even the simplest mask

- 51 The work of V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957) in the Neolithic and Bronze Age of Europe and the Near East is no longer fashionable and has been dismissed as crude Structural Functionalism and has had to be revised because of the findings of radiocarbon dating. However, his idea of the gradual spread of agriculture from the Near East across Europe holds and his focus on the primacy of tools in *What Happened in History* (London: Book Club Associates, 1942) and *Man Makes Himself* (London: Moonraker Press: Pitman Publishing, 1981) and are worthy of serious attention.
- 52 Vygotsky, L.S. *Mind in Society. The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Ed. by Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner & Ellen Souberman. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978. See Ch. 1. 'Tool and Symbol in Child Development' pp.19-30.
- 53 I am indebted to the teaching of John W. Harris in his Seminar Series in Masked Theatre at The Gulbenkian Centre, University of Hull in 1972-73 for these ideas about masking as a fulfilment of a basic human need in the face of external threats and the function of ritual in tribal societies. Indeed, he went further to adduce in the mask a basic way of thinking that conveys a power upon an individual and a group that it would otherwise not possess. The ritual mask is usually danced in costume and its meaning is situated within a ritual enactment of an entire mask genre.
- 54 Tonkin, Elizabeth. 'Masks and Powers' in *Man* 14, No.2, June 1979, p.247.
- 55 Ibid. pp.237-248.
- 56 See Victor Turner's *Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1969 for actual examples of these ritual mask uses.
- 57 Merquior, J.G. *The Veil and The Mask: Essays on Culture and Ideology*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p.25.
- 58 Lévi - Strauss, Claude. *The Way of the Masks*. Translated from the French by Sylvia Modelski, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982 (1988,1999), p.12.
- 59 Lévi - Strauss. *The Way of Masks*. p.228.
- 60 Ibid.p.228
- 61 Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 'The Many Faces of Man' in *World Theatre Magazine*. Vol X, No.1, Spring 1961, p.18.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 'The Many Faces of Man'. p.23.

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- ¹ Schumacher, Claude. *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire*. Hampshire & London: Macmillan, 1984, p.40
 - ² Schumacher, *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire*. pp.38-39.
 - ³ Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge: The M.I.T.Press, 1968, p.46.
 - ⁴ Innes, Christopher. *Avant-Garde Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p.23.
 - ⁵ Schumacher. *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire*. p.104.
 - ⁶ Schumacher. *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire*. p.41.
 - ⁷ Bennett, Arnold. *Clayhanger*. Middlesex: Penguin, 1975. p.168.
 - ⁸ *Noah* by André Obey (translated by Arthur Wilmurt) was performed at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford, Surrey, 3rd-14th April 1973. Charles Lewson reviewed the production in *The Times* on Wednesday 4th April: 'Mr. Cruikshank is riveting when he describes the drowning of the last creatures and the men's insistent will to live. He is touching when he exhorts the animals to greet God with a sweet sound. At this moment the actors in Malcolm Knight's angular masks raise their heads towards a russet light like creatures in a Douanier Rousseau.'
 - ⁹ MacLennan, Elizabeth. *The Moon Belongs to Everyone. Making Theatre with 7:84*. London: Methuen, 1990, p.84.
 - ¹⁰ Personal recollection by the author from 1977.
 - ¹¹ McGrath, John. *Naked Thoughts That Roam About. Reflections on Theatre*. Edited by Nadine Houldsworth. London: Nick Hern Books Ltd, 2002, p.106.
 - ¹² St. Francis of Assisi. Cited from Sassaman, Jane A. *The Quilted Garden*. California: C&T Publishing Inc. 2000.p.5.
 - ¹³ Monaghan, Paul. 'The Plautine Persona' in *Greek and Roman Drama: Translation and Performance* by John Barsby (Ed), Stuttgart, Weimar: Verlag-J.B.Metzler, p.120.
 - ¹⁴ Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge. 3 Volumes. Oxford. 1888. p.189.
 - ¹⁵ Marx, Karl. 'Theses on Feuerbach'. 6th Thesis in *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. By Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W.Norton & Company. 1972, p.109.
 - ¹⁶ Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre. The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1982.pp.47-51.
 - ¹⁷ Of those listed only Benda, Kniffin, Cordreaux, Breitschmidt, Strub, James and Dessi were practising mask-makers for modern drama.

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- ¹⁸ Sartori, Donato and Lanata, Bruno. *Maschera e Maschere: Storia, Morfologia, Technica*. Florence: La Casa Usher, 1984.
- ¹⁹ Liggett, John. *The Human Face*. London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1974. p.181. See Chapter 10 'Guides to character?' Liggett argues persuasively that the old physiognomists who tried to deduce character from individual anatomical features got it wrong and often produced sterile stereotypes. He advocates taking into account the total configuration of the face based on 'an entirely new technology of facial description and analysis which matches in power and precision the science of personality.' p.279.
- ²⁰ Stiefel, Erhard. 'Le créateur de masques et sa participation au spectacle' in *Le Masque du rite au theatre* by Odette Aslan and Denis Bablet. Paris: Éditions du Centres National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985. p.241.
- ²¹ Emigh, John. *Masked Performance. The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre*. 1996. An earlier version of the chapter on Bali 'Playing with The Past' was published in *The Drama Review* 23, 2 (T82), 1979; reprinted also in *Popular Theatre: A Sourcebook* by Joel Schechter. London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp.107-126. See also Jenkins, Ronald on 'Topeng: Balinese Dance Drama' in *The Performing Arts Journal* Vol.3, No.2, Fall 1978, pp.39-52. Judy Slattum's *Masks of Bali. Spirits of An Ancient Drama*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992, is the seminal work in English on the masks. Luc La Porte and Concha de la Casa's *Las Mascaras de Bali*, Bilbao: Departamento Cultural, 1989, is also good.
- ²² Eiseman, Fred and Margaret. *Woodcarvings of Bali*. Berkeley-Singapore: Periplus Editions, 1988, pp.59-60.
- ²³ Slattum, *Masks of Bali*. p.126.
- ²⁴ See the web site of Ronald Naversen, Scenic Designer, at <http://www.siu.edu/~mcleod> for a full and more detailed description of the making of a Topeng mask.
- ²⁵ Ida Bagus Anom was born in Mas, Bali in 1953 in the same compound in which he and his family live today. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather lived in the same place with an ancestral heritage going back over seven hundred years. He inherited his skills from his father, Ida Bagus Ketut Gelodog who taught him carving, dancing and puppetry. He has been making masks since the age of eleven. In addition to the traditional *topeng* masks he has created many original designs (the yawning mask, the happy/sad mask, and the white-faced mask). Web site contact: <http://www.art-export.com/theater>
- ²⁶ Hobart, Angela. *Healing Performances of Bali*. New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003. See pp.131-149 on 'The Art of Mask-Making.'
- ²⁷ I am deeply indebted to my master, Nohzin Suzuki for sharing with me his love, knowledge and enthusiasm for the Noh mask and these details of its creation during an international workshop held at the Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre between 6-19 April 1992.
- ²⁸ Komparu. *The Noh Theater. Principles and Perspectives*, p.228.

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- 29 Griffiths, David. *Mask: A Release of Acting Resources. Vol.2. The Training of Noh Actors and The Dove*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1998, p.21.
- 30 Wiles. *The Masks of Menander. Sign and Meaning in Greek and Roman Performance*. p.111.
- 31 See Donald Keene's seminal study on *Nô. The Classical Theatre of Japan*. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd, 1966 with excellent information on the masks pp. 60-65
- 32 Grassie, Henry. *All Silver and No Brass. An Irish Christmas Mumming*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975, p.125.
- 33 Ibid.p.39.
- 34 Benda, W.T. *Masks*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications Inc., 1944, p.21.
- 35 Castle, Charles. *Oliver Messel. A Biography*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1986, p.39
- 36 Melzer, Annabel. *Dada and Surrealist Performance*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976 (1980,1994), p.32.
- 37 Friedman, Martin. *Hockney Paints the Stage*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1983. pp. 149-183. See production photographs for these productions and their designs.
- 38 This web site: www.maskmakersweb.org has the following sub-categories: mask links, mask gallery, mask books, mask forum, mask-makers, mask articles, mask festivals, teaching-workshops, mask ensembles and performers, and mask museums.
- 39 Fotopoulos, Dionysis. *Masks Theatre*. Athens: Kastaniotis, 1980. Comments of Charles Spencer translated by Angeliki Varakis for her forthcoming PhD on 'The Masks of Dionysis Fotopoulos for the Art Theatre of Greece', Royal Holloway College, University of London.
- 40 Lee, Ralph. *Masks, Festive Figures & Theatre Designs*. Exhibition Catalogue for the New York Public Library for The Performing Arts 6 February-2 May 1998, p.3.
- 41 Ibid.p.3.
- 42 See Mettawee River Theatre Company web site: www.mettawee.org
- 43 J-L. Perrier. 'Rostislav Doboujinsky' *Le Monde* 28 June 2000.
- 44 Kropnick, Carol. 'Style Makers' in *The New York Times*, Sunday 28 October 1990. Ms. Kropnick was born in 1952 in Fort Lauderdale and has a BFA from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. She has taken part in a series of solo and group exhibitions, designed and constructed masks for Macy's holiday windows, restored theatre masks from the 1940's for the Theatre of the Open Eye Jean Erdmann Retrospective.

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- ⁴⁵ Beckie Kravetz works from The Mask Studio in Arizona and has produced theatre masks for Santa Fe Opera, New York's Classic Stage Company, Pan Asian Repertory Theatre and Lincoln Center Institute, Ziggurat Theatre in Los Angeles and Yale University Theatre. She has twenty years of professional experience and has her own web site: www.themaskstudio.com
- ⁴⁶ Wilson, Ninian-Kinnier. Interviewed by Malcolm Knight in *Masks*. An Exhibition Catalogue. Glasgow: Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre, 16 February-20 March 1996. p.3.
- ⁴⁷ McPharlin, Paul. 'To Make A Mask' in *Theatre Arts Monthly* September 1925 Vol. IX, No.9, p.593.
- ⁴⁸ Benda, W.T. 'Modern Masks and Their Uses' *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1946, 15:15.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Chandavij, Natthapatra and Pramualratana, Promporn. *Thai Puppets and Khon Masks* London: Thames and Hudson, 1998. pp.114-15.
- ⁵¹ Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks. Agayuliyararput Our Way of Making Prayer*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press in association with Anchorage Museum of History and Art, 1996, p.151.
- ⁵² Paul, Tim. *Tim Paul. Humwitsa: Stories and Teachings*. An Exhibition Catalogue of Major Works. Victoria: Alcheringa Gallery, 1997, p.5.
- ⁵³ C.Ray Smith. *The Theatre Crafts Book of Make-Up, Masks and Wigs*. London: White Lion Publishers, 1974, p.181.
- ⁵⁴ Sorrell, Walter. *The Mask in The Arts*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1973, p.156.
- ⁵⁵ Walther, Suzanne K.(Ed). *The Dance Theatre of Kurt Jooss. Choreography and Dance Journal*. Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993. See also A.V.Coton's *The New Ballet. Kurt Jooss and His Work*. London: Denis Dobson Ltd, 1946 and Anna Markard *Kurt Jooss The Green Table. The Labanotation Score, Text, 1947 Photographs, and Music* London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Also see Sorrell *The Mask in the Arts*. Chapter 4 'The Dancing Mask.'
- ⁵⁶ Interview with Mirta T. Mulhare 'Hector Ubertaini: A Maker of Masks' *American Artist* 25 October 1961, p.62.
- ⁵⁷ Interview by John Bell 'Rediscovering Mask Performance in Peru' in *Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects*. New York: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001, p.170.
- ⁵⁸ Herbert, Jocelyn. *A Theatre Workbook*. Edited by Cathy Courtney. Arts Books International. London. 1993. p.120.

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- ⁵⁹ Aslan, Odette. *Le Masque du rite au theatre*. Paris: editions dun CNRS, 1985, p.222
Werner Strub was born in Basel in 1935. He first saw the masks of Amleto Sartori in a gallery in Geneva in 1955 and began his first experiments in leather. He is renowned for his work with Benno Besson, Giorgio Strehler and Roger Planchon. See his *Masken für ein imaginäres theatre*. Lausanne: Panorama Verlag, 1987 and *Masques Werner Strub et le théâtre*. Geneva: La Comedie de Genève, 1987.
- ⁶⁰ Dessì, Agostino. *The Masks of Prof. Agostino Dessì*. Farnham: Dutton Publishing Limited, 2004. p.32.
- ⁶¹ Leone, Vivi. *The Sartori Theatrical Masks*. Exhibition Catalogue. New York: Istituto Italiano di Cultura. No date.
- ⁶² Amleto Sartori also uncovered the Neapolitan leather mask-making process in the South of Italy. The leather mask worn by Massine for Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (1920) for the Ballets Russes was given to him by a street performer. Sartori reports that the mask was made in a lead mould using the traditional Sicilian technique; and that the wooden matrix is the northern style. See *Maschere di Amleto Sartori*, Centro Culturale Canavesano, Ivrea, 1957.
- ⁶³ Sartori, Amleto. 'Brevi note sullo studio della realizzazione delle maschere' in *Arte della maschera nella Commedia dell'Arte* edited by Donato Sartori and Bruno Lanata, Centro Maschere e Strutture Gestuali, Florence: La Casa Usher, 1983, p.168.
- ⁶⁴ *Maschere di Amleto Sartori*, 1957.p.6.
- ⁶⁵ I have made two seminal visits to the Centro Maschere e Strutture Gestuali and first stayed with Donato and Paola in 1977 and again in 1987 after which the initial generosity of spirit led to a fertile exchange of information with the Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre. Their Centre is a primary resource for mask researchers and students alike and they have trained many excellent mask makers from other countries: among whom are Stefano Perrocco from Italy, Torbjorn Alström from Sweden, Mike Chase from England and Becky Kravetz from the USA.
- ⁶⁶ *La Commedia dell'arte nelle maschere dei Sartori*. Piccolo Teatro di Pontedera, Centro di Firenze, 1976. Catalogo 69. pp.32-33.
- ⁶⁷ See Bill Blaikie's web site at: www.csu.edu.au/faculty/arts/commun/cycle and that of Paolo Consiglio at: www.webitaly.com/personae/progetto.htm
- ⁶⁸ November 1999. Cultural exchange with Teatro Proskenion from Scilla through Linea Transversale co-ordinated with Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre by Benno Plassman.
- ⁶⁹ The playwright and actor-manager Eduardo de Filippo (1900-85) was presented with several Pulcinello masks by Sartori for the role that he made famous in 1958 in *Pulcinella in cerca di fortuna per Napoli* and these have now been inherited by his son Luigi de Filippo (See photo in *Arte della maschere nella Commedia dell'Arte* by Donato Sartori and Bruno Lanata. Florence: La Casa Usher. 1984 p.136. fig.122. The millionaire publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (d.1972) purchased some commedia leather masks from Amleto, as did the film actor Henry Fonda and dancer Margot Fontayne and theatre historian Leon Chancerel. Many of the masks were kept as

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working tools by those who collaborated with him on specific theatre projects: Gianfranco De Bosio kept the painted 'cartapesta' masks from his 1949 production of *Six Characters in Search of An Author* in Padua University (see photos in Sartori and Lanata, *ibid.*, pp.159-160). Jacques Lecoq commissioned many masks for his École in Paris including the leather (male and female) neutral masks, several sets of commedia characters, and the full-face Jesuit mask with twisted features (*ibid.* pp.163-166). Giorgio Strehler also retained most of the Sartori masks used in his productions at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan between 1948-1999, and the Piccolo School has an Archive with extensive photographic materials and press clippings. Not since the 1920's when W.T.Benda's masks became collectables of the rich and famous has a mask-maker's work become so desirable in iconographic and theatrical terms.

- ⁷⁰ See photos of Lecoq as Brighella in *Commedia dell'Arte og Sartoris masker* by Alberto Marcia and Donato Sartori, Husets Teater og Udstillinger, Magstroede, Denmark. 1977. p.27. figs.68-70. Also published in *La Commedia dell'arte nelle maschere dei Sartori*. *Ibid.* 1976.p.38.
- ⁷¹ Sartori, Amleto cited in Leone, Vivi *The Sartori Theatrical Masks* catalogue and cited by Lindley Powers Spencer in *Masks in Theatre*. Unpublished PhD thesis for the University of Wisconsin, 1968, p.396.
- ⁷² Sartori, Donato and Lanata, Bruno. *Maschera e Maschere. Storia, morfologia, tecnica*. Centro Maschere e Struttore Gestuali. Florence: La Casa Usher. 1984. pp.24-25. Feelings and Their Contraries. This chart is translated in Appendix B.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.* p.13 and p.22.
- ⁷⁴ Gidé, Andre. *My Theatre*. p.268. cited by E.T.Kirby in 'The Mask: Abstract Theatre, Primitive and Modern', *The Drama Review* T55, Vol 16, No.3, September 1972, p.7.
- ⁷⁵ These masks were exhibited at the Mask Conference at Royal Holloway College in May 2002 where Donato Sartori also described the processes behind the production and Dr.Paola Piizzi disseminated a paper on 'Half A Century of Sartori Masks.'
- ⁷⁶ Aristotle *Generations of Animals* V.v.785a. p.19 cited in *The Masks of Menander* by David Wiles, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.166.
- ⁷⁷ Pollux, Julius. 'Comic Masks' from 'Onomastikon' translated in A.M.Nagler's *A Source Book in Theatrical History*. New York: Dover Publications, 1952, p.14.
- ⁷⁸ Brea, Luigi Bernabó. *Maschere e personaggi del teatro Greco nelle terracotta liparesi*. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 2001, p.222.
- ⁷⁹ Vervain, C. and Wiles D. 'The Masks of Greek Tragedy as Point of Departure for Modern Performance' in *New Theatre Quarterly*. No.67. Vol.XVII. Part 3. August 2001, pp.254-272.

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- ⁸⁰ The project began in 2000-2001 in co-operation with mask maker, Chris Vervain, and gestural language tutor, Ian Caddy, based at Royal Holloway College at the University of London. Vervain is writing a PhD on 'The Tragic Mask', and directed and made masks for a scene from *Antigone* by Sophocles at the Greek Theatre Mask Conference referred to earlier. See the article by Vervain, C. and Williams R.G. entitled 'Masks for Menander: imaging and imagining New Comedy' in *Digital Creativity* Number 10, 1999, pp.180-182. Also the published article by Williams, R.G. 'Performance and Dramatic Discourse in New Comedy' in *Greek and Roman Drama: Translation and Performance* by John Barsby (ed), pp. 125-45.
- ⁸¹ Williams, Richard. *Reverse Engineering The Greek Mask: 3D Imaging and Performance Research*. Glasgow: Institute for Art History Research Paper, 2003. Capture (Eyetroneics *Shapenatcher*) and data modelling are fully described.
- ⁸² See front page press clipping from *Citta Venezia*, Giovedi, 19 Settembre 2002 by Barbara Pianca entitled 'Ricostruite le maschere della Grecia di Menandro.'
- ⁸³ For more detailed archaeological information on sources and origins of the Lipari Collection see: Brea, Luigi Bernabo. *Menandro e il teatro Greco nelle terracotta liparesi*. Genova: Sagep Editrice, 1981. This book was reissued in 2001 in collaboration with Madeleine Cavalier in Rome: L'Erma Di Bretschneider with a rear section in English entitled 'The Theatrical Terracottas of Lipari', pp.271-302. Researchers should note that this second edition is minus many of the statuettes, figurines and votive objects in the first edition. Brea applies the system of Pollux in classifying the terracotta miniatures. Another major Exhibition was opened in Lipari in 2003 with the cooperation of the Museum 'Paolo Orsi' of Siracuse, and this has resulted in another key publication: Brea, Luigi Bernabo & Cavalier, Madeleine. *Terracotte teatrali e buffonseche della sicilia orientale e centrale*. Palermo: Mario Grispo Editore, 2002, p.204. This publication contains an outstanding terracotta miniature of a Principal Slave with asymmetric brow (p.143), and a useful re-publication in Italian of Pollux. For more detailed information on the contribution of Brea see: Simon, Erika. 'Studien zur antiken Theatermaske and Gigante'; Marcello. 'Luigi Bernabo Brea: archeologia e filologia' in *In Memoria di Luigi Bernabo Brea*, edited by Cavalier, M. and Brea, M. Bernabo. Palermo: Museo Archeologico Regionale Eoliano, 2002, pp.159-192.
- ⁸⁴ Prosperi, Mario. 'The Masks of Lipari' in *The Drama Review*. Number 26, New York, 1982, pp.25-37.
- ⁸⁵ Between 1990-95 Thanos Vovolis researched the Greek tragic mask and its ritual cries. His theory is that this type of mask demanded a 'body/mind (knenossia) state of panic free emptiness'. See David Wiles *Greek Theatre Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp.151-153.
- ⁸⁶ Williams, Richard *Reverse Engineering The Greek Mask* p.4. See also *Digital Resources for Practice-based Research: The New Comedy Masks Project* published in *Literary and Linguistic Computing* Vol.19, No.3, 2004, pp.415- 425 with photographs and analysis of mask reconstructions and performances. See also the web site of the University of Glasgow: www.iah.arts.gla.ac.uk/masks.

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- ¹ Hodge, Alison. (Ed), *Twentieth Century Actor-Training*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p.1.
- ² Watson, Ian.(Ed) *Performer Training. Developments across Cultures*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2001.
- ³ Murray, Simon. *Jacques Lecoq*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003, p.26.
- ⁴ Zarrilli, Phillip. (Ed) *Acting (Re) Considered*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.4.
- ⁵ Zarrilli, Phillip. Quotes from a Seminar held at the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, University of Glasgow, 29 October 2001.
- ⁶ Chancerel, Leon. *Le Theatre et la jeunesse*. 4th Edition. Paris: Editions Bourrelrier, 1953. p.127. (See also the content of the whole of Chapter 5 entitled 'Le Masque', pp. 127-139).
- ⁷ Burton, P. and Lane, J. *New Directions: Ways of Advance for The Amateur Theatre* London: Methuen, 1972, p. 284. This was written in 1929 and is from Copeau's preface to Diderot's *Paradoxe* on the art of acting.
- ⁸ Rudlin, John and Paul, Norman H. *Copeau Texts On Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p.3.
- ⁹ Copeau, J. 'An Essay in Dramatic Renovation: The Theatre of The Vieux-Colombier'. Translated by Richard Hiatt. *Educational Theatre Journal XIX*, Number 4 (Dec.1967), p. 452.
- ¹⁰ Rudlin, John and Paul, Norman H. Ibid. p.14.
- ¹¹ Kirkland, Christopher D. 'The Golden Age.First Draft of *The Drama Review*, T66, Vol.19. Number 2 (June 1975), p. 58.
- ¹² Katz, Albert M. 'The Genesis of The Vieux-Colombier: The Aesthetic Background of Jacques Copeau' in *Educational Theatre Journal XIX*, Number 4 (Dec.1967), p.446.
- ¹³ Copeau, Jacques. 'Notes on The Actor'. Translated by J.Salemson in *Actors on Acting*. Ed. by Toby Cole and Helen Crich Chinoy. New York: Crown Publishers,1970.p.219.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 220.
- ¹⁵ Saint-Denis, Michel. 'A School of Dramatic Art', *World Theatre IV*, Number 3, (Winter 1954), pp. 38-39.
- ¹⁶ Dorcy, Jean. 'J'aime la mime', *The Mime*. Translated by Robert Speller Junior and Pierre de Fontnouvelle. (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1961), p. 12.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. p. 13.

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- ¹⁸ Mingalon, Jean-Louis. 'An Interview with Marie-Hélène Dasté', *Mime Journal*, Claremont: Pomona College, California, 1998/1999, pp.20-21
- ¹⁹ Ibid. pp.12-13.
- ²⁰ Dasté Collection. Notes by A.T. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris. See also *Registres I-IV*, edited by Marie-Hélène Dasté and Suzanne Maistre Saint-Denis. Paris: Gallimard.1974, 1976,1979 and 1984.
- ²¹ Frank, Waldo. 'Copeau Begins Again'. *Theatre Arts Magazine IX*, September 1925, p. 588.
- ²² Ibid. .
- ²³ Leabhart, Thomas. 'An Interview with Decroux'. *Mime Journal*. Number 1.1974. p. 29.
- ²⁴ Leabhart, Thomas. 'The Mask as Shamanic Tool in the Theatre Training of Jacques Copeau'. In *Mime Journal*, Claremont: Pomona College, California, 1995. p.104.
- ²⁵ Kusler, Barbara. *Jacques Copeau's Theatre School. L'Ecole du Vieux-Colombier*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Wisconsin. 1974. p.150.
- ²⁶ Decroux, Etienne. *Paroles sur le mime*. Paris: Gallimard, 1963, p. 18.
- ²⁷ Quoted and translated by the author from Gontard, Denis. *La décentralisation théâtrale en France 1895-1952*. Paris: Sedes, 1973, p. 65.
- ²⁸ Brockett, Oscar and Findlay, Robert R. *Century of Innovation*. New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall Inc. 1973, p.365.
- ²⁹ Rudlin, John. *Jacques Copeau*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986. See Chapter 7 entitled 'The New Commedia', pp.95-110
- ³⁰ Wardle, Irving. *The Theatres of George Devine*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1978, p. 60.
- ³¹ Frank, Waldo. 'Copeau Begins Again', p. 590.
- ³² Burton, P. and Lane, J. *New Directions: Ways of Advance for the Amateur Theatre*. p. 284.
- ³³ Dullin, Charles. *Souvenirs et notes du travail d'un acteur*. Paris: Odette Lieutier, 1946, pp.122-23.
- ³⁴ Ibid,p.125.
- ³⁵ Artaud, Antonin. 'The Atelier of Charles Dullin' in *Tulane Drama Review*. T33. Winter 1963, p.35.
- ³⁶ Artaud, Antonin. 'Letter to Mme.Yvonne Gilles,1921'.*Collected Works Vol 3*. Translated by Victor Corti. London: Calder & Boyars, 1972, p. 95.
- ³⁷ Leabhart, Thomas. 'Etienne Decroux on Masks' in *Mime Journal*, No.2, 1975, p.56.

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- 38 Saint-Denis. 'A School of Dramatic Art'. p. 40.
- 39 The mask exercises of Michel Saint-Denis with the tragic series of the four ages of man and are detailed by Irving Wardle in *The Theatres of George Devine*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1978, p.62.
- 40 Saint-Denis, Michel. *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*. London: Heinemann, 1960, p.103.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Eldredge, Sears A. *Mask Improvisation For Actor Training and Performance: The Compelling Image*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996, p. 200.
- 43 Gontard, Denis (Editor). *Le Journal de bord des Copiaus, 1924-1929*, by Suzanne Bing, Copeau and Léon Chancerel. Paris: Seghers, 1974.
- 44 Cordreaux, Henri. *Fabrication du masque*. Paris: Editions Bourrellier, 1950, pp. 3-4.
- 45 Chancerel, Léon. *Le Théâtre et la jeunesse*. p. 131.
- 46 Chancerel. *Le Théâtre et la jeunesse*. p.125.
- 47 Personal letter from Keith Johnstone to the author. 28 May 1979.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Wardle. *Theatres of George Devine*, p.62.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Gaskill, William. *A Sense of Direction. Life at The Royal Court*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 1988,p.44.
- 54 Cregan, David. Personal Correspondence with the author. 27 February 1975.
- 55 Johnstone, *Impro*, p. 144.
- 56 Ibid. p. 145.
- 57 Johnstone. *Impro*, p.153.
- 58 Johnstone. *Impro*, p.143.
- 59 Ibid. p.149.

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- 60 Ibid. p.172.
- 61 Johnstone. *Impro*, p.175-76.
- 62 Gaskill. *A Sense of Direction*. London: Faber & Faber, 1988. p.45.
- 63 Cole, David. *The Theatrical Event*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1975. Leabhart relies heavily upon Cole's paradigm for the shamanic journey, the return Stage of which he designates as the 'hunganistic return' (after aspects of Haitian rituals), meaning return of the shaman to our world possessed by the image of his journey but still in control of himself.
- 64 Leabhart, Thomas. 'The Mask as Shamanic Tool in the Theatre Training of Jacques p.p. 82-113.
- 65 Rolfe, Bari. 'The Mime of Jacques Lecoq' in *The Drama Review*. T53, Vol. 16. No.1. March 1972.p.35.
- 66 Wright, John. 'The Masks of Jacques Lecoq' in Chamberlain, Franc and Yarrow, Ralph (Eds.) *Jacques Lecoq and The British Theatre*, London and New York, Routledge-Harwood, 2002, p.71.
- 67 Murray, Simon. 'Tout Bouge' Jacques Lecoq, Modern Mime and the Zero Body' in Chamberlain and Yarrow *Jacques Lecoq and The British Theatre* identifies the October-June curriculum comprising 5 half-days per week taught by 5-6 teachers with fees of £1800 per annum in 1987 increasing by 10% each year thereafter.
- 68 Wright, John. 'The Masks of Jacques Lecoq' p.75. See also Bari Rolfe's *Behind The Mask*. Oakland, California: Persona Books, 1977.
- 69 Eldredge, Sears. *Masks: Their Use and Effectiveness in Actor-Training Programs*, pp. 394-402.
- 70 Lecoq's likening the state within the neutral mask to the young woman, Ko-omote, in the Noh Drama, is not accurate and far too Western in perspective. The state of being for the wearer behind the mask is not at all the same when viewed across time, space and culture. While the neutral or noble mask empties out energy, the ko-omote fills up with energy. 'The basic quality of the Noh mask's expression should be interpreted not as passive "neutral" but rather as an active "infinite." See Komparu, Kunio. *The Noh Theater Principles and Perspectives*. New York, Tokyo, Kyoto: Weatherhill -Tankosha, 1983, p.229.
- 71 Eldredge, Sears A. *Masks: Their Use and Effectiveness*. Appendix D. p. 390.
- 72 Eldredge, Sears A and Huston, Hollis. 'Actor Training in The Neutral Mask'. *The Drama Review* T80. Vol.22.Number 4. December 1978. p.21. Zarrilli, *Acting (Re)Considered*. (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.121-28.
- 73 Eldredge. *Masks: Their Use and Effectiveness*, p. 391.

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- ⁷⁴ Eldredge and Huston. 'Actor Training in The Neutral Mask'. *The Drama Review*. p.26, and in Zarrilli *Acting (Re)Considered*, p.126.
- ⁷⁵ Eldredge, Sears A. and Huston, Hollis. 'Actor Training in The Neutral Mask'. *The Drama Review*. Ibid. p.26 and in Zarrilli *Acting (Re)Considered*, Ibid. pp.126-27.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷⁷ Lecoq, Jacques. 'From Mime to Theatre'. n.p.
- ⁷⁸ Eldredge. *Mask: Their Use and Effectiveness*, p.390.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ Rolfe, Bari. 'The Mime of Jacques Lecoq', p.38.
- ⁸¹ Eldredge. *Mask: Their Use and Effectiveness*, p.391.
- ⁸² Lecoq, Jacques. 'L'explosion du mime: la pédagogie du mouvement: entretien avec Jacques Lecoq' in *Le Théâtre du geste: mimes et acteurs*. Paris: Bordas, 1987. p 115.
- ⁸³ Ibid. p.260.
- ⁸⁴ Case, Justin. *The Observer Magazine*. 9 March 1980.
- ⁸⁵ See John Wright 'The Masks of Jacques Lecoq' for a discussion of Complicité productions: *A Minute Too Late* (1988), *The Street of Crocodiles* (1993) and *The Three Lives of Lucy Cabrol* (1994) p.81; and chapter 3 of Simon Murray's *Jacques Lecoq* also on *The Street of Crocodiles* for mask-based influences.
- ⁸⁶ The 'grotesque' mask may well be derived from the European folk and carnival 'grotesque' masking traditions. It was also taken up and developed by W.T. Benda in the USA in the 1920's. See information about Benda in Chapter 2.
- ⁸⁷ Eldredge. *Masks. Mask: Their Use and Effectiveness*, p.391.
- ⁸⁸ Lecoq, Jacques. 'Mime-Mouvement-Théâtre', p.119.
- ⁸⁹ Eldredge. *Masks: Mask: Their Use and Effectiveness*, p.271.
- ⁹⁰ Wright, John 'The Masks of Jacques Lecoq', p.81.
- ⁹¹ Ibid. p.27.
- ⁹² Leabhart, Thomas. *Modern and Post-Modern Mime*. London: Macmillan, 1989, p.91.
- ⁹³ Chamberlain, Franc and Yarrow, Ralph. (Eds.). *Jacques Lecoq and The British Theatre*. On p.11 of his introduction Chamberlain draws attention to the challenge posed by Lecoq to the Cartesian mind-set and cites his phrase 'A man thinks with his whole body'. Lecoq was seeking a new relation between theory and practice in actor-training.

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- ⁹⁴ Lecoq's refusal to propound a method or a system creates an open legacy as Simon Murray has wisely enunciated in *Jacques Lecoq*, p.159.
- ⁹⁵ See École Jacques Lecoq website: <http://www.lecoq.com>
- ⁹⁶ In the U.S.A. these lessons have been assimilated and transmitted by a number of excellent teachers working inside major training institutions such as Peter Frisch, Bari Rolfe, Jeremy Geidt, Libby Appel, Rolland Meinholt, Joy Spanabel and Carlo Mazzone-Clementi. In Britain there have been only a few pioneers, among whom have been John W. Harris at the University of Hull, John Wright at the University of Middlesex and John Rudlin at the University of Exeter. For David Griffiths 'the somewhat brief, ad hoc facility available for the training of actors in Britain needs an additional programme of skills-based discipline to consolidate and develop its present philosophy if it is to produce actors whose performance skills are as immediately recognisable as those of musicians and dancers.' The release of acting resources based on 'mask-based training philosophy' has an extensive and long legacy in Continental Europe and countries of the East, but the Drama Schools and Universities of Britain have been slow to adapt their core curricula and training programmes.
- ⁹⁷ Lecoq, Jacques. *The Moving Body. Teaching Creative Theatre*. Translated by David Bradby. London: Methuen, 2000. See pp. 165-67 on The Laboratory for The Study of Movement (L.E.M) and working with structures to depict human passions.
- ⁹⁸ Gallery, Dymphna. *Through the Body. A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2001, p.52. See section 2 on '(Un)masking the Actor' for a basic introduction to the issues behind using masks and the need to develop respect and understanding for masks as a necessary adjunct to working with them.

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- ¹ Pollock, Donald. 'Masks and The Semiotics of Identity' in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, September 1995, v1 n3 pp.581-98.
- ² Shattuck, R. and Taylor, S.W. *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*. Jonathan Cape, London, 1969, p.93.
- ³ Shattuck and Taylor. *Selected Works*, p.91.
- ⁴ Shattuck and Taylor. *Selected Works*, p.92.
- ⁵ Ibid. p.92.
- ⁶ Shattuck and Taylor. *Selected Works*, p.79. Taken from the programme of the first night performance of *Ubu Roi*.
- ⁷ Shattuck and Taylor. *Selected Works*, p.83. Cited from an essay entitled 'Theatre Questions.'
- ⁸ Shattuck, R. and Taylor. *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1969, p.72.

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- ⁹ Shattuck, R. and Taylor. *Selected Works*. p.83.
- ¹⁰ Shattuck, R. *The Banquet Years*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1969, p.250.
- ¹¹ Shattuck, R. *The Banquet Years*, p.34.
- ¹² Shattuck, R. and Taylor. *Selected Work*, p.83.
- ¹³ Shattuck, R. *The Banquet Year*,. p.210.
- ¹⁴ Innes. *Avant-Garde Theatre*, p.24.
- ¹⁵ Sutcliffe, T. An undated article from *The Guardian Newspaper* called 'Master of Convention. Tom Sutcliffe considers Peter Brook's version of *Ubu*.'
- ¹⁶ Ibid. p.34.
- ¹⁷ Benedikt, Michael and Wellwarth, George. *Modern French Theatre. An Anthology of Plays*. New York: E.P.Dutton & Co.,1966, This quote derives from a note by Jarry on 'Characters and Costumes' by Jarry and is taken from a manuscript translated and published by the College de'Pataphysique in 1951.
- ¹⁸ Marx, Karl. *The First International and After*. Penguin: London, 1974, pp.247-48. Cited from 'The Civil War in France.'
- ¹⁹ Shattuck. *Selected Works*, p.80.
- ²⁰ Ibid p.72
- ²¹ Ibid. p.73.
- ²² Ibid. p.73.
- ²³ This photograph is reproduced in the portfolio of illustrations to the *Selected Works*. The original is in the Collection Jean Loise, Paris.
- ²⁴ Arrivé, Michel. *Peintures, Gravures, et Dessins de Alfred Jarry*. College de Pataphysique et Cercle Français du Livre. Paris : L'Ardennais, 1968. See Plates 50 and 51. The Other Ubu has a mask distinguished by its relief in profile; an enormous carrot-shaped nose, small receding brow with egotist's forehead and rapidly receding mouth and lower jaw. This profile is also characterised by a bowler hat, short moustaches and a number of oblique hatchings around the neck. There are two drawings of this one profile which vary only slightly. The other major illustration is a woodcut of Pa Ubu at the head of the Polish army, awaiting the Russian enemy in the Ukraine. Ubu is shown in profile on horseback and engaged in his self-fortification. The visual ideology of the scene is rooted in discord. A series of black triangular-shaped heads and spears lurk in the background. Ubu is shown jumping the cavern while two faces at the foot of the design are plunging into it and a crown has clearly fallen from the head of one of the victims. The sun smiles ambivalently from behind Ubu's head. This iconography depicts the bowler hat triumphing over the crown or the middle class vanquishing the nobility.

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The true portrait of Ubu, which predominates throughout the remainder of the designs and engravings, is a front view of a more abstract design; the true portrait of Ubu, is turnip-shaped and pointed. The two small triangles at the base of the face are the stylisation of herbétiques moustache and two perpendicular features surmount two double lines under the eyes of Ubu above the eyebrows. A huge stomach bares the imprint of an ombilic spiral (as in the above drawing of the Other Ubu in the Ukraine) and a cane is pushed into his pocket. See discussion on its specificity in Chapter 2.

- 25 Spingler, M.K. 'From Actor to Ubu : Jarry's Theatre of the Double' in *Modern Drama* Vol.XVI. No date. No.1.p.1.
- 26 Ibid.p.89.
- 27 Jarry, Alfred. 'Preliminary Address at the First performance of *Ubu Roi*, 10 December 1896 in *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*. Ibid. p.77.
- 28 See the genealogy outlined by Christopher Innes in *Avant-Garde Theatre 1892-1992* with particular reference to Ambroise Vollard, Bonnard, Rouault in the visual arts and Artaud and the 'College of Pataphysics' founded in 1948 that included Eugène Ionesco, Boris Vian and René Clair. Claude Schumacher's *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire* also contains photographs of the following productions directed by: Sylvie Itkine (1937), Jean Vilar (1958), Royal Court (1966) and Peter Brook (1977). Photographs of the production by Michael Meschke of Marionnetern, Stockholm (1964) with scenography by Francisca Themerson are in *Metamorphoses. La Marionnette au XX Siecle* by Henryk Jurkowski. Charleville-Mézières: Institut International de la Marionnette, 2000, p.102 and in *Are but Tugs on Strings. The Marionette Theatre over 40 Years* by Margareta Sorenson (Ed), Stockholm: Stockholmia Forlag, 1998, pp.76-85.
- 29 The Collection at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal is situated on the Fourth Arrondissement of the Hotel de la Ville at 1 rue de Sully, 75004 Paris, The story of The Collection is outlined by Edward Craig in *Gordon Craig: The Story of His Life*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.,1968, pp.355-357. Fourteen boxes of material were bought by M. Julien Cain, the Chief Administrator of the Bibliothèque National for £13,000 in July 1957 from Gordon Craig and placed within the curatorship of André Veinstein.
- 30 Craig, Edward Gordon. 'Masks in Berlin' in *The Mask* Vol.3. No.7-9, January 1911.
- 31 Craig. (John Balance). 'A Note on Masks in *The Mask* Vol.1, No.1, March 1908, p.11.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Bell, John. See *Strings, Hands, Shadows. A Modern Puppet History*. Detroit, Michigan, Detroit Institute of the Arts, 2000, pp.55-56.
- 34 Eynat-Confino, Irene. *Beyond the Mask: Gordon Craig, Movement and The Actor*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987, p.71. See also Nancy Lohman Staub 'Craig's Vision Realised: Julie Taymor's *The Lion King*' in *The Puppetry Yearbook* Vol. 5, Edited by James Fisher, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter:

The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, pp.139-146.

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- 35 Taxidou, Olga. *The Mask. A Periodical Performance by Edward Gordon Craig* Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998.
- 36 Rood, Arnold. Memorial Lecture on Craig. Venice. 12th September 1970 in *Gordon Craig in Movement and Dance*. London: Dance Books, 1977.
- 37 Kleist, Heinrich von. 'On The Marionette Theatre' re-published in a new translation by Roman Paska in *Fragments For A History of The Human Body Part One*. Editor: Michel Feher. New York: Zone Books, 1989. pp.415-420.
- 38 Taxidou. *The Mask: A Periodical Performance*, p.12.
- 39 Craig, Edward Gordon (aka John Balance) 'A Note on Masks' in *The Mask*, p.10.
- 40 Rothschild, Deborah Menaker. *Picasso's "Parade" From Street to Stage*. London: Wilson Publishers Limited for Sotheby's Publications in association with The Drawing Center, New York, 1991. p.33. Picasso did more than 40 sketches and drawings for 'Parade' showing the costumes, masks and decors in various stages of development.
- 41 Ibid. Rothschild has associated this design, not with the Futurism of Depero, but with the Cubism of Picasso's earlier work, specifically his 1915 painting of 'Harlequin' and the naive popular prints, known as 'images d'Epinal', portraying merchants carrying their wares on their backs. She points out that the idea of constructing peddlers of labourers from the tools of their trade as also popular in another form of art called 'architectures vivantes' purveyed by itinerant merchants. p.167.
- 42 Sorell, Walter. *The Other Face: The Mask in The Arts*. See footnote on p.167 citing Picasso : 'At that time, for most people a Negro mask was an ethnographic object...Men had made those masks and other objects for a sacred purpose, a kind of mediation between themselves and the unknown hostile forces that surrounded them, in order to overcome their fear and horror by giving it a form and an image. At that moment I realised that this was what painting was all about... When I came to that realisation, I knew I had found my way.'
- 43 Hughes, Robert. *The Shock of The New. Art and The Century of Change*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1980 and 1991, p.21.
- 44 Raphael, Max. *Proudhon, Marx, Picasso*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1980, p.125.
- 45 Segel, Harold B. *Pinocchio's Progeny*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995. pp.94-95. 'The combination of Massine's vigorous choreography, Picasso's Cubist costumes for the Managers and the unabashed incorporation of variety theatre and circus routines into the ballet stunned the audience, outraged the defenders of the traditional ballet and provoked the protests and scandals that made *Parade* the legendary sensation that it became.'
- 46 Berger, John. *Success and Failure of Picasso*. Penguin, 1965, p.87.
- 47 Plassard, Didier. *L'Acteur en effigie*. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, Institut International de la Marionnette, 1992, pp.114 -118.

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- 48 Ibid. pp.88-90. Berger uses the word 'objective' to distinguish the true effect of the ballet from what its creators may subjectively have hoped it would achieve.
- 49 Ibid. p.90.
- 50 Benedikt and Wellwarth. *Modern French Theatre*. Full text of the play is on pp.55-91.
- 51 Albert-Birot, Pierre. 'A propos d'un théâtre nunique' published in *SIC*, No 8-9-10. Paris. August- September-October 1916, p.64.
- 52 Adema, Marcel. *Apollinaire*. London: William Heinemann, 1964, p.243.
- 53 Schumacher, Claude. *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire*, Macmillan, 1984, p.153.
- 54 Plassard. *L'Acteur en effigie*, p.121.
- 55 Melzer, Annabelle Henkin. 'The Premiere of Apollinaire's "The Breasts of Tiresias" in Paris.' *Theatre Quarterly* Vol II No.27, 1977, p.13.
- 56 Cocteau, Jean. 'Le Bœuf sur le Toit', translated by Nancy E. Nes, in *The Drama Review T55*, Vol 16, No.3, New York : New York University School of the Arts, September 1972.pp.33-35.
- 57 Milhaud, Darius. 'From Notes without Music: An Autobiography'. Also translated by Nancy E. Nes and published in TDR. pp. 28-29. Ibid.
- 58 Cocteau, Jean. 'An Avant-Garde Play.' Translated by Nancy E. Nes and published in TDR.p.31.Ibid.
- 59 Cocteau, Jean. *Professional Secrets*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York : Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1970, p.10.
- 60 Cocteau. 'An Avant-Garde Play', p.31.
- 61 Hager, Bengt. *Ballets Suedois*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1990, p.150. Cited from Jean Hugo *Le Regard de la Memoire*, Paris 1984.
- 62 Ibid. p.151.
- 63 Cocteau, Jean. Preface to *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* in *Modern French Theatre* by Benedikt and Wellwarth, p.95.
- 64 Corvin, Michel. 'Marionettes et Masques au Laboratoire Art et Action' in *PUCK*, Institut International de la Marionette, Charleville-Mézières, No.1, 1988, p.30.
- 65 Plassard. *L'Acteur en effigie*, p.186.
- 66 Corvin. Michel. *Le Theatre de recherche entre les deux guerres*. Le Laboratoire Art

et Action, Lausanne : La Cite/L'Age d'Homme. No date.pp.280-282.

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- ⁶⁷ Cited by A.Gelb and B.Gelb in *O'Neill*. New York: Harper and Rowe, 1973, p.354
- ⁶⁸ Ibid. p.495.
- ⁶⁹ Broun, Heywood on *The Hairy Ape* in *New York World*, 2nd April 1922.
- ⁷⁰ Fairbank, Janet A. 'Brute Force is Hero of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*' in *Chicago Evening Post*, 24th April 1922.
- ⁷¹ Young, Stark. 'Eugene O'Neill's Latest, Boldest and Most Original Play Will Be Tried On Broadway Audiences', *Atlanta Georgia Journal*, April 1922; republished in *The Provincetown Players Scrapbook, 1922 Season, Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library at The Lincoln Center*.
- ⁷² Light was also the co-director of the first and only production of this play. I am indebted to Dr. Donald Gallup, Curator of the Collection of American Literature in The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University for providing the author with a photocopy of the original programme, along with the fifth page on which Light's article on 'The Mask' is concluded.
- ⁷³ Metcalfe, J.S. 'Playing Theatre', *Wall Street Journal*, 8th April 1924.
- ⁷⁴ O'Neill, Eugene 'All God's Chillun Got Wings' in *O'Neill Complete Plays 1920-1931*, The Library of America, Penguin Books USA Inc., 1995, p.297.
- ⁷⁵ Macgowan, Kenneth and Rosse, Herman. *Masks and Demons*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1923, p.43.
- ⁷⁶ O'Neill. *O'Neill Complete Plays 1920-1931*, p.303.
- ⁷⁷ Professor Travis Bogard in his book *Contour in Time* mentions that an important influence on O'Neill's thinking about masks was a privately published book of photographs with no date by Charles Sheeler entitled *African Negro Sculpture*.
- ⁷⁸ Hornblow, Arthur. 'Mr Hornblow Goes To The Play' in *Theatre* 40, July 1924.p.15.
- ⁷⁹ Holt, Roland 'The Living Stage' in *Cleveland Topics*, 31st May 1924.
- ⁸⁰ Hammond, Percy. 'The Mayor Interferes a Little Bit With *All God's Chillun Got Wings*', *New York Herald Tribune*, 16th May 1924.p.10, col.1.
- ⁸¹ Young, Stark. 'The Prompt Book' in *New York Times*, 24th August 1924. This clipping is in the Provincetown Players Scrapbook for their 1923-1924 season.
- ⁸² Kantor, Louis. 'O'Neill Defends His Play of Negro' in *New York Times*, 11th May 1924.Section 1X, p.5, col.2.
- ⁸³ Sheaffer, Louis. *O'Neill. Son and Artist*. London: Paul Elek Books, 1973, p.167.
- ⁸⁴ O'Neill. 'Notes: *The Great God Brown* in MS Notes with revisions for *The*

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Great God Brown, O'Neill Film 2. O'Neill Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

85 Three of the original masks are in the Harvard Theatre Collection. The masks designed by Robert Edmond Jones are now in a fragile state. I am indebted to Jeanne T. Newlin, Curator (1975) for a copy of a colour transparency of these masks. The Theatre Collection also has a negative available of the woodcut of two of the masks which illustrated the programme.

86 William Stahl. 'Masks in New O'Neill Play Made From Face-Molds of The Actors', *New York Post*, 30th January 1926.

87 Leona Hogarth as cited in 'Difficult to Act Behind Stage Masks'. Clipping of 31st January 1926. Theatre Collection, New York Public Library at the Lincoln Center.

88 Shaughnessy, Edward 'Masks in the Dramaturgy of Yeats and O'Neill' in *Irish University Review*, University College Dublin, 1984.

89 Smith. *Masks in Modern Drama*, p.68.

90 Ibid. p.1.

91 Yeats, W. B. *Mythologies*. London: Macmillan, 1959. Poem written in 1917.

92 The Numinous or the idea of the wholly other as developed by Rudolf Otto in *The Idea of The Holy*. London: Oxford University Press, 1923. (Republished 1958).

93 Critics situated within this category include Katharine Worth, William H. Pritchard, and Helen Vendler.

94 Here I include the work of I.A. Richards, W.H. Auden, Frank Kermode, L.C. Knights, T.S. Eliot, Conor Cruise O'Brien and Richard Ellmann.

95 Critics falling within this category include Carolyn G. Heilbrun, Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, Derek Owens, Elizabeth Cullingford and Janice Tedesco Haswell.

96 Richard Ellman, James Flannery, Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds have done much to restore the view of Yeats as a 'man of the theatre' and to remind us of his great and enduring contribution in the form of the founding of the Abbey Theatre

in Dublin. They have emphasized the 'theatricality' of his plays, their anti-realist thrust, and their deep understanding of practical theatre conventions.

97 In *Cuchulain of Muirthenne* and other works Lady Gregory provided the fuel and the resources by which a previously anglicised Irish theatre could be transcended.

98 Note from Yeats' Diary 1911 in *Memoirs*, Macmillan, 1972.

99 Ellmann, Richard. *Yeats: The Man and The Masks*. Macmillan, 1948.

100 Flannery, James W. *W.B. Yeats and The Idea of A Theatre*. New York: Yale

University Press, 1976.

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- 101 Church, Richard. *Yeats and The Creative Mask*. Quoted in *Calendar of Modern Letters*. January 1927.p.316.
- 102 Savage, D. 'The Aestheticism of W.B.Yeats' in W. H. Pritchard *W.B.Yeats*. Middlesex: Penguin Critical Anthology, 1972, pp.193-216.
- 103 Cited in Clark, David R. *W.B.Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, p.3.
- 104 Rowe, Gabrielle. *Structural and Thematic Functions of the Face Mask in The Development of Modern Drama*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Michigan. 1974.p.65.
- 105 Yeats, W.B. *Letters*. 1954, p.554.
- 106 Craig.. *The Mask*. Vol. 3. Nos.10-12, 1911, p.147.
- 107 Yeats, W.B. *Explorations*. London: Macmillan, 1962, p.393.
- 108 Yeats, W.B. *Plays in Prose or Verse*. London: Macmillan, 1922, p.428.
- 109 Moore, John Rees. *Masks of Love and Death: Yeats as A Dramatist*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971, p.177.
- 110 Yeats. *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*. Churchtown, Dundrum: The Cuala Press, 1916, p.XV.
- 111 Yeats, W.B. *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B.Yeats*. Edited by Russell K. Alsopach. New York: Macmillan, 1966, p.571.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Haswell, Janice Tedesco. *Pressed Against Divinity. W.B.Yeats's Feminine Masks* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997, p.7.
- 115 Ibid. p.141.
- 116 Ibid. pp.13-14.
- 117 Rowe. *Structural and Thematic Functions of The Face Mask*, p.96.
- 118 Ibid.p.97.
- 119 Pirandello, Luigi. 'On Humour.' Translated by Teresa Novel. *Tulane Drama Review*. Vol. X, No. 3, Spring 1966, p.48.
- 120 For further information on Pirandello's concept of 'costruirsi' see: McLintock, Lander. *The Age of Pirandello*.

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- ¹²¹ Rowe, Gabrielle. *Structural and Thematic Functions of The Face Mask*, p.110.
- ¹²² Paltriniero, Marisa. *Pirandello*. (I Giganti della Letteratura). Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1973, p.27.
- ¹²³ Pirandello, Luigi. *Naked Masks*. 'Six Characters.' Translated by Edward Storer. Edited by Eric Bentley. New York: E.P.Dutton and Company, 1952.p.214.
- ¹²⁴ Aston, Elaine and Savona, George. *Theatre As Sign-System. A Semiotics of Text and Performance*. London: Routledge, 1991, pp.138-139.
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- ¹²⁶ For a more detailed synopsis and production history of this play see *Luigi Pirandello in The Theatre; A Documentary Record* by Susan Bassnet and Jennifer Lorch. London: Gordon and Breach, 2001, pp.226. A collection of much previously unpublished archive material.
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- ¹³⁰ Artaud, Antonin. *Collected Works Vol. 4*. Translated by Victor Corti. London: Calder & Boyars, 1974,pp. 38-39
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- 138 Ibid. p.80.
- 139 Ibid. p.88.
- 140 Ibid. p.88.
- 141 The Pointer is also the name chosen by Peter Schumann of The Bread and Puppet Theatre for his giant pointing figure of 24th May 1971 who poses in front of monuments, statues and banks and points an enormous questioning finger and thumb at these public places 'in a way that makes you reconsider their functions'. See caption and illustration in Schevill, James. *Break Out In Search of New Theatrical Environments*. Chicago : Swallow Press Inc. 1973.pp.112-113, fig.24. Translator, Victor Corti *Collected Works II*. Ibid. p.232 says that in the manuscript by Artaud on the reverse side of p.17 are a set of notes for *Suggested Act in The Street* (1931-32) and that Artaud probably contemplated acting 'No More Firmament in the street.' C/f Brecht's concept of accident in the street.
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- ¹⁵⁶ Gidé andre cited in 'Towards A Reassessment of Artaud' by Trevor Vibert. *New Theatre Magazine*, Vol. 6. No.2, p.13.
- ¹⁵⁷ Knapp. *Antonin Artaud: Man of Vision*, p.196.
- ¹⁵⁸ André-Carraz, Danièle. *L'expérience interieure d'Antonin Artaud*. Paris: Librarie Saint-Germain des Prés, 1973, p.102.
- ¹⁵⁹ Genet, Jean. 'A Note on Theatre', translated by Bernard Frechtman, in *Tulane Drama Review* Vol.7, No.3, Spring 1963, pp.37-41.
- ¹⁶⁰ See David Bradby in *The Cambridge Guide to World Theatre* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.385. Also : Richard C. Webb *Jean Genet and His Critics :An Annotated Bibliography 1943-1980*, New York: Scarecrow Press,1982 ; Una Chaudhuri *No Man's Stage : A Semiotic Study of Jean Genet's Major Plays*, 1986 ; S.D.Henning. *Genet's Ritual Play*, 1981; Laura Oswald. *Jean Genet and the Semiotics of Performance* 1989.
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- ¹⁶³ Innes, Christopher. *Avant-Garde Theatre*, p.108.
- ¹⁶⁴ Sorell. *The Other Face*, p.15.

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and Samuel Glotz, Michel Revelard and Guergana Kostadinova from the Museum of

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- ⁵ Sytova, Alla. *The Lubok. Russian Folk Pictures 17th to 19th Century*. Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1984.
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- ¹² See 'Meyerhold's Biomechanics' by Mel Gordon in Zarrilli's *Acting (Re)-Considered* pp.85-107.
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- ¹⁴ Alpers, Boris. *The Theatre of The Social Mask*. Transl. By Mark Schmidt. New York: Group Theatre Inc., 1934.
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- 21 Schlemmer. *Man*, p.80.
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- ⁹⁸ Ibid. p.25.
- ⁹⁹ Fo, Dario. *Harlequin (Helequin, Harlequin, Arlecchino)* is a two act play, based on 'lazzi' compiled by Ferruccio Marotti and Delia Gambelli, first produced at the Palazzo del Cinema, Venice on the 19 October 1985.

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- 101 Fo. *Tricks of The Trade*, p.27.
- 102 Fo. *Tricks of The Trade*, pp.35-36.
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- 104 Fo. *Tricks of The Trade*, p.66.
- 105 To be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 dealing with transnational flows and intercultural border crossings.
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- 107 Pozzolini, Alberto. *Antonio Gramsci .An Introduction to His Thought*. Translated by Anna F. Showstack. London: Pluto Press, 1970.p.109.
- 108 Ibid.p.111.

CHAPTER 6: INTERCULTURAL MASKINGS AND TRANSCULTURAL FLOWS

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- 2 Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity At Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996 and 2000, p.49.
- 3 Bhabha, Homi K. 'Location, Intervention, Incommensurability: a Conversation with Homi K.Bhabha' in *Emergencies* 1:1, 1989, pp.63-88. Cited in 'Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity and The Politics of Difference' by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, *The Anthropology of Globalization. A Reader*. Edited by Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosario, London: Blackwell Publishers, 2002, pp.65-80.
- 4 Olsen, Mark. *The Golden Buddha Changing Masks. Essays on the Spiritual Dimension of Acting*. Nevada, California: Gateways/IDHHB Publishing, 1989, pp.150-151.
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- 8 See the work of Michel Foucault *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972 and Jacques Derrida *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973. For Derrida the self becomes an endless play of differences or 'différance' in a realm 'outside text' and beyond history. Foucault, following on from Nietzsche, did not believe that every human agent had a 'self' but argues that everybody's life could become a work of art or 'other'.
- 9 Sanchez-Vazquez. *The Philosophy of Praxis*, p.302.
- 10 Bronowski, J. *A Man Without A Mask. William Blake 1757-1827*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1943. 'This at last is to understand Blake: when we see as one, the vision of indignation in the prophetic mask and Pity the Human Face of the *Songs of Innocence*. Nearly thirty years after Blake's death, the painter Samuel Palmer recalled him, "his aim single, his path straightforwards and his wants few; so he was free, noble, happy." He put the memory of Blake into one phrase, "He was a man without a mask." I can add nothing to this epitaph', p.145.
- 11 Thompson, E.P. *Witness Against The Beast. William Blake and The Moral Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.229.
- 12 Oida, Yoshi and Marshall, Lorna. *The Invisible Actor*. London: Methuen, 1997, p.59.
- 13 Oida and Marshall. *The Invisible Actor*, pp.66-67.
- 14 Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- 15 Clifford Geertz. *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 115.
- 16 Esser, Janet Brody. *Behind The Mask in Mexico*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1988-90, pp.153-54. The Museo Nacional de Artes e Industrias Populares in Mexico City houses some masks of 'colorin' dating from circa 1920 that were carved from 'ayachahuite' wood in Tepeyanco, Tlaxcala.
- 17 There are other workshops run by the Mendez Family in Cholula, Puebla. Sr. Carlos Reyes was born in Cholula where an old tradition of woodcarving still thrives.
- 18 Lechuga, Ruth D. and Sayer, Chloe. *Mask Arts of Mexico*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994, p.p.24-25.
- 19 Cordry, Donald, Bush. *Mexican Masks*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1980, pp. 68-71. Cordry says the serpents are symbolic of rain and water and whips are often used as a substitute for them. Cordry's study, while full of wonderful illustrations, fails to distinguish between those masks designed for tourists and collectors and those used in performances and festivals by dancers. This is not an easy task, since the traditional masks are becoming increasingly commercialised. Cordry was a collector and researcher who dedicated life-long energy and enthusiasm to documenting the field and began his professional career as a visual artist and puppeteer under the auspices of Tony Sarg. Some of Cordry's puppets are housed in the Museo del Titeres in Huamantla.

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- ²⁰ Nutini, Hugo C. 'An Outline of Tlaxcaltean Culture, History, Ethnology and Demography' in M.H.Crawford, ed. *The Tlaxcalteans: Prehistory, Demography, Morphology and Genetics* Kansas: University of Kansas Publications in Anthology No.7. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1976. p.34.
- ²¹ Markman, Roberta H. and Markman, Peter T. *Masks of The Spirit. Image and Metaphosis in Mesoamerica*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p.155. See the chapter on Syncretism for the argument that the areas where indigenous customs most strongly remain are those where Indian mask dancers and mask makers perform in Indian villages. The symbolic composite masks of pre Hispanic culture stand in sharp contrast to the sixteenth century Spanish 'Moriscas, Pastorelas and Diablos' and later realistic masks.
- ²² Wolf, Eric R. *Sons of The Shaking Earth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959, pp. 67-68.
- ²³ Brecht, Stefan. *The Bread and Puppet Theatre*, Vol. 1, London: Methuen, 1988, p.318.
- ²⁴ Schumann, Peter. 'Bread and Rosebuds', April 1970 cited in Brecht, Vol. 1, 1988, p.27.
- ²⁵ Ibid, pp.48-49.
- ²⁶ Kourilsky, Françoise. *Le Bread and Puppet Theatre*. Paris: La Cité, 1971, p.23.
- ²⁷ Bell, John. 'The End of Our Domestic Resurrection Circus.' *Bread and Puppet Theatre and Counterculture Performance in the 1990's* in *Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects*, also edited by Bell. New York: TDR Book New York University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001, pp.52-70. See also 'Bread and Puppet Theatre and the Rediscovery of Performing Objects' by John Bell in *Bread and Puppet Museum*. Vermont: Bread and Puppet, 1989, pp.12-15.
- ²⁸ Dennison, George. *An Existing Better World. Notes on the Bread and Puppet Theatre*. (Edited by Geoffrey Gardner and Taylor Stoehr). New York: Autonomedia, 1966 (1970 and 2000), p.29.
- ²⁹ Schumann, Peter. 'Subversive Museum' in *Bread & Puppet Museum*, Vermont: Bread and Puppet Theatre, 1983, p.3.
- ³⁰ Schevill, James. *Break Out! In Search of New Theatrical Environments*. Chicago: Swallow Press Incorporated, 1973, pp.12-13. Photographic insert and caption 24.
- ³¹ Schumann, Peter; Leber, Barbara; Trompetter, Amy. *Bread & Puppet Masaccio*. Florence: Comune di Firenze and Centro studi teatrali di Firenze, April 1977.
- ³² Shank, Theodore. 'The Bread and Puppet's Anti-Bicentennial: A Monument for Ishi' in *Theatre Quarterly* TQ 20, 1976, p.88.

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- ³³ Dennison describes *Fire* as 'the most powerful of all the anti-war art at that time'. 2000, p.34.
- ³⁴ Dupavillon, Christian. *Bread and Puppet Theatre. Spectacles en noir et blanc*. Paris: Les Loges-Alain Bouret, 1978. See pp.21-29 for the scenario of *That Simple Light That May Rise Out of Complicated Darkness* plus photos by Etienne George.
- ³⁵ Brecht, Stefan. *The Bread and Puppet Theatre*. Vol.1.1988, p.311.
- ³⁶ Green, Susan. *Bread and Puppet. Stories of Struggle & Faith from Central America*. Burlington, Vermont: Green Valley Film and Art Inc., 1985, p.22.
- ³⁷ Brecht. *The Bread and Puppet Theatre*. Vol.1, p.318. A quote from Hoagland from 1983. See footnote 9.
- ³⁸ Ibid.p.319.
- ³⁹ Rowell, Margit. *Joan Miro. Selected Writings and Interviews*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1987, p.3.
- ⁴⁰ McCormick, John and Pratasik, Bennie. *Popular Puppet Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 41. Also the most intense period of mask activity in the year.
- ⁴¹ Armengaud, Christian. 'Mori el Merma. Miro – Claca, une première a Barcelone.' *UNIMA France*. No. 61. 1978, p.15.
- ⁴² Moya, Carmen Garcia. 'La Claca, con munecos de Joan Miro en el Olimpia' in *Titere*, Madrid, April 1980 (unnumbered pages). Cited and translated by Henryk Jurkowski in *A History of European Puppetry Vol. 2 The Twentieth Century*. Lewiston: New York. The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd, 1998, p.367.
- ⁴³ Catala-Roca, Francesc. *Miro. Ninety Years*. Text by Luis Permanyer. London: Macdonald & Co., 1986, p.149.
- ⁴⁴ See both Napier. *Masks, Transformation and Paradox*; and Wiles. *The Masks of Menander*.
- ⁴⁵ Emigh. *Masked Performance*, pp.281-283.
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- ⁴⁸ Brook. *The Shifting Point*, p.218.
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- ⁵⁰ Brook. *The Shifting Point*, p.221.
- ⁵¹ For a more detailed discussion of the contradictory nature of Brook's response see

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- ⁵³ Williams, David. *Collaborative Theatre. The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1999, p.53.
- ⁵⁴ Campos, Christophe. 'L' Age D'Or the Long Journey from 1793 to 1975' in *Theatre Quarterly* No.18, 1975, p.6.
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- ⁶¹ Taviani, Ferdinando. *Il libro dell'Odin. Il teatro-laboratorio di Eugenio Barba*. Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1975. See this work for a fuller description of individual productions.
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- ⁶⁵ McLuhan, Marshall. 'Even Hercules had to clean the augean stables but once' in *McLuhan Hot and Cool*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, p.305.
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- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
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- ⁷⁰ Hilpern, Kate. 'Facing Facts. A Dramatic Approach to Helping Young Offenders Stay Out of Custody' in *The Guardian (Society Section)*, Wednesday 11 April 2001, p.5.
- ⁷¹ Schnechner, Richard. 'Julie Taymor. From Jacques Lecoq to "The Lion King". An Interview' in *Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects* edited by John Bell. p.26.
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- ⁷⁹ Taymor, Julie in 'Working with Puppets, Interviews by C.Lee Jenner' in *Performing Arts Journal*, No.19, 1983. Cited in *Bread and Puppet Museum*. Vermont: Bread and Puppet, 1989, p.23.
- ⁸⁰ Bell, *Puppets Masks and Performing Objects*. p.32. In this regard see also Julie Taymor's *The Lion King. Pride Rock on Broadway*. New York: Disney Enterprises Inc., 1997. The section on Act II Development pp.47-127 is full of wonderful illustrations documenting the principal costume, mask and puppet designs.
- ⁸¹ Fisler, Ben. 'Exposing Intercultural Gestation: A Study of The Engineering on Nonwestern Puppet, Mask and Costume Traditions in Disney Theatrical's *The Lion King*' in *The Puppetry Yearbook* Vol.5, edited by James Fisher, Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, pp.33-61.
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- ⁸⁵ Dall, William Healey, *On Masks, Labrets and Certain Aboriginal Customs*. New York, 1893, p.93.
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- ⁹⁰ Knight, Malcolm Yates 'Theatre and the Regime. State Support for the Arts without State Control?' in *Platform, New Perspectives on Theatre Today*. London: North Star Press, Summer 1980, p.21.
- ⁹¹ See the study by W.Anthony Sheppard *Revealing Masks. Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theatre*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2001 for drawing connections in the margins.
- ⁹² Redgrave, Michael. *Mask or Face. Reflections in an Actor's Mirror*. London: Heinemann, 1958.
- ⁹³ Ibid.p.27.
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- ⁹⁶ Innes. *Avant-Garde Theatre*, p.233.
- ⁹⁷ Pilger, John. *The New Rulers of The World*. London and New York: Verso, 2002, p.3. All phrases cited in the following paragraph are from the Introduction pp.1-14,
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- ⁹⁹ Knight, Malcolm Yates (ed.) 'Introduction' to *Proceedings of the Soviet/British Puppetry Conference, Glasgow, November 1989* in *Contemporary Theatre Review* Vol.1 Part 1, London: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1992, p.9.

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MASKS VIEWED AT:

The Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, London
The British Museum, London
The Hornimann Museum, London
Harlequin House, London
Banbury Museum & Art Gallery
Ninian Wilson Workshop, Liverpool
Paisley Museum & Art Gallery, Glasgow
The Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow
National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh
The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford
The Petrie Museum, Cambridge
The Louvre, Paris
Musee du Masque et Carnival, Binches.
Netherlands Theatre Instituut, Amsterdam
Museum Rietberg, Zurich
Swiss Theatre Collection, Bern
Museo Teatrale Alla Scala
Museo Aeoliano Lipari
Centro di Maschere e Struttore Gestuali, Padua
Alice Atelier, Florence
A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatrical Museum, Moscow
New York Public Library at the Lincoln Center
The Harvard Theatre Collection
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

Museum of The American Indian, New York City
Seattle Art Museum, Washington State
Alcheringa Gallery, Victoria, Canada
Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria
British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver
Pedro Reyes Workshop, Tlaxcala, Mexico
Museo Rafael Coronel, Mexico
Museo del Titeres, Huamantla, Mexico



PUPPET ON A SHOESTRING

Malcolm Knight has a dream: it is that one day, before too long, he will be able to set up the first Scottish National Mask and Puppet Centre on a scale that at least approaches those in operation in Europe, Japan and the USA. It is a dream that has been gradually taking shape over more than a decade of work and training, research and discovery which began in his student years in the drama department of Hull University.

the giant animal masks made by Malcolm Knight for a production at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford, starring Andrew Cruickshank, came to the notice of the late Professor James Arnott of Glasgow University in 1970.

At Arnott's invitation Malcolm Knight came north to Glasgow as a researcher in the fields of masks and puppetry, during which time he was able to travel widely in Europe, collecting material and meeting all kinds of specialists and students of the subject.

'I really began to realise how much more there was to it than meets the eye, or

than most people understand. I went to Italy several times – and puppetry, you know, has been part of Italian culture all along: masks were an important part of the Commedia dell'Arte – and I saw a great deal of interesting experimental work.

'I began to re-evaluate everything I had been thinking about the puppet as a dehumanised figure and about puppetry as an area marginal to theatre. In fact, it is a far more challenging skill and discipline than any other that I know. It draws on all the others – storytelling, dance, drama, music, art – and so it is far more diverse.'

CRAFT

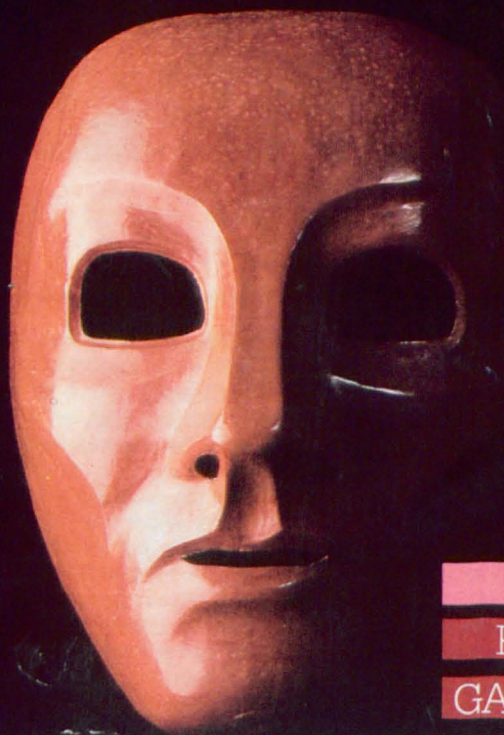
Scotland's Craft Magazine

work

No 16 Summer 1987 £1.25



MASK AND PUPPET MAKING



JAPAN - ENIGMA OF THE ORIENT

FURNITURE MAKING - A NEED FOR CHANGE

GALLERY SPACE - A COMMERCIAL PROPOSITION

Opposite. Malcolm Knight makes masks in many materials. The puppets here are a glove puppet (left) and a marionette. **Right.** A marionette, a rod puppet and 'Jimmy' – a glove puppet. **Below.** Leather Commedia dell'Arte mask.

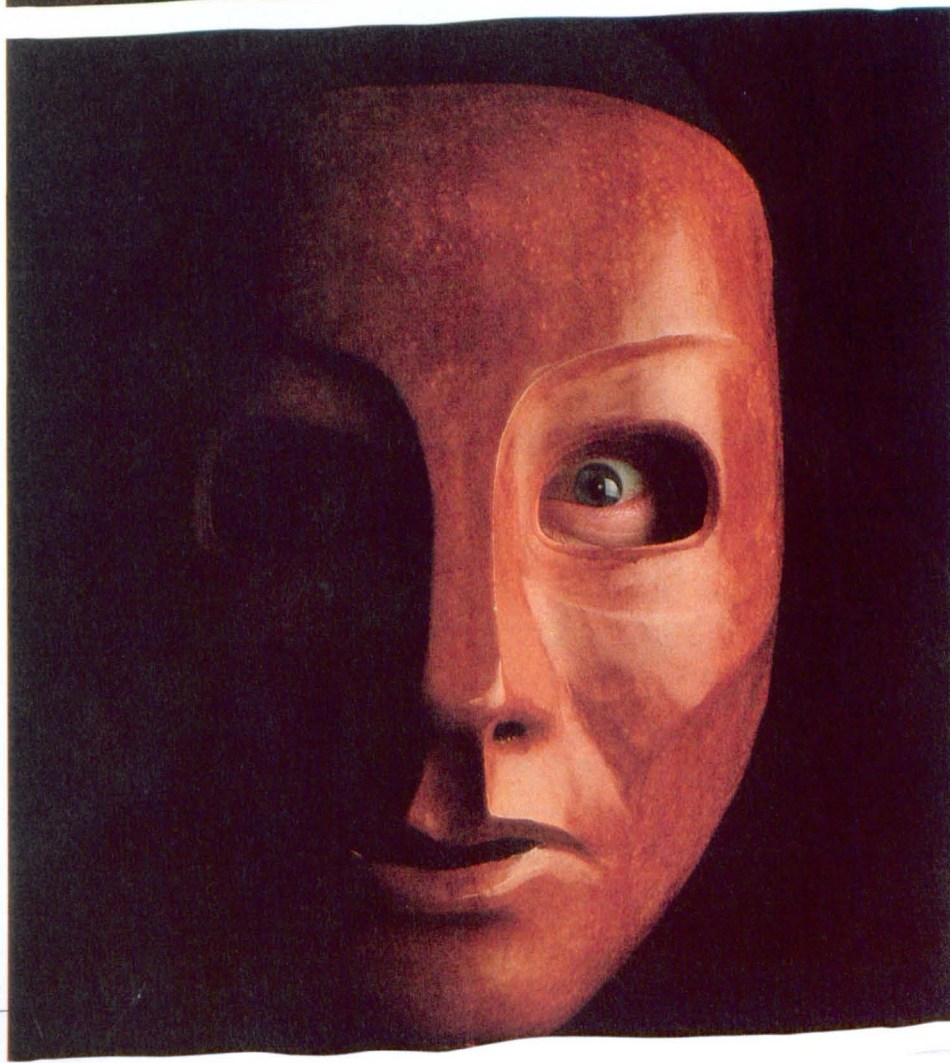
Since that initial sojourn in Glasgow, Knight has worked as lecturer in drama and design (at Trent Polytechnic) and spent valuable working time with Playboard Puppet Theatre in London, learning the whole business from making to manipulating the puppets and, above all, mastering the traditional wood-carving technique from an expert craftsman, John Thirtle. Within a month of joining Playboard as a trainee he was out on the road with them, doing shows in schools, theatres and television studios. For about a year, he 'had the dubious pleasure of playing Mr Spoon in the Button Moon series for Thames Television, never saying a word but only moving that little bottle around. I did find it a fascinating discipline, though, because suddenly I realised that you couldn't use your own ego or your personality to compensate for lack of skill, imagination or sensitivity. And that was a wonderful antidote to a lot of what I'd encountered in theatre and which I'd become awfully tired of.'

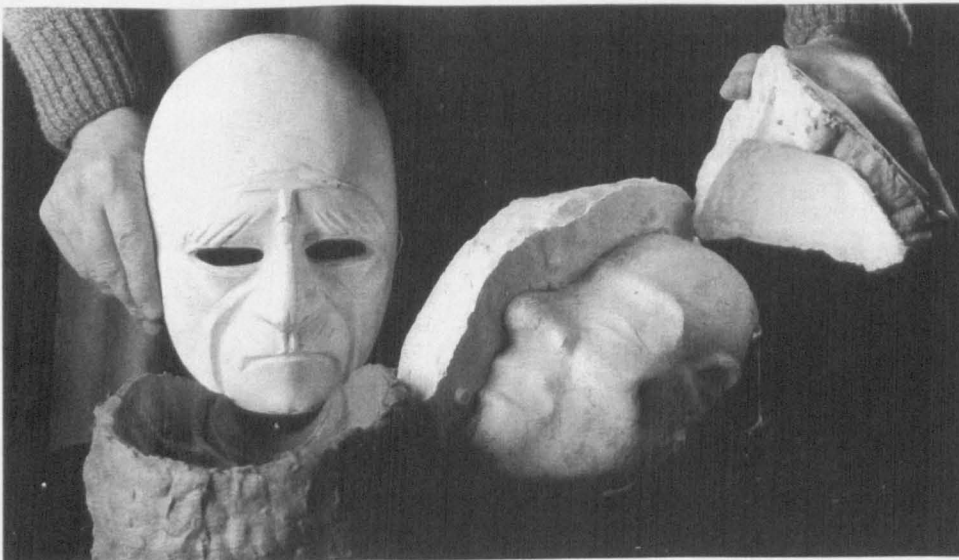
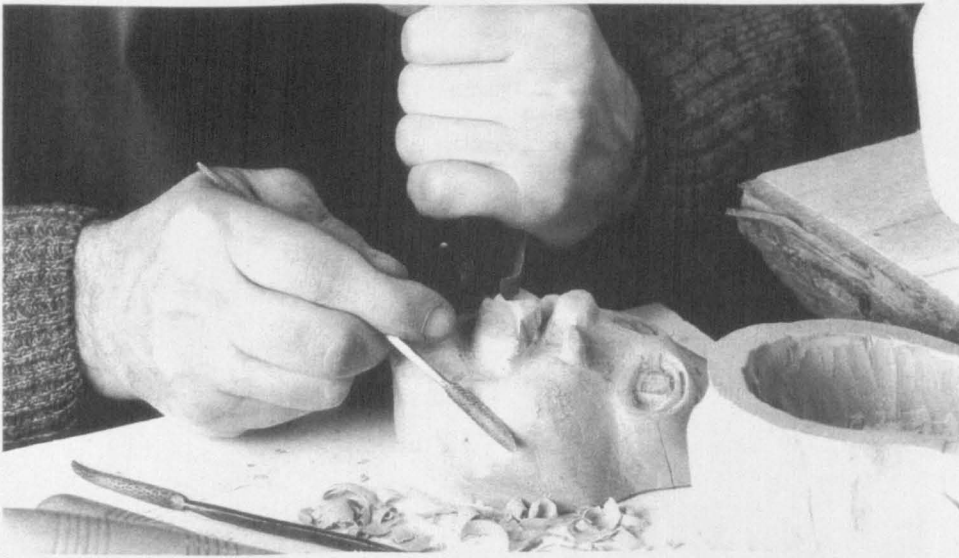
To provide stimulation, entertainment and enlightenment for youngsters in the schools is one of his aims – and already he and his colleagues are doing just that at the Centre with Saturday classes and performances on tour, though on a far more restricted scale than he would like. Since the little Centre was opened by Malcolm (on his own savings, be it said) in 1981, in the somewhat ramshackle building in Otago Street near the River Kelvin, the operation has grown to be almost out of hand, not so much moving forward in an orderly development as ramifying to bursting point simply because, as he himself is all too well aware, there is so much leeway to make up.

'Scotland is extremely backward in the field of masks and puppetry. There is no children's theatre, as such, and I want to see a professional puppet theatre with a proper repertoire operating right round the year. I want a base in the centre of Glasgow – for here is where my roots are now – which will also give me space to hold workshops and classes, keep a library and our growing archive, plus a mask and puppet shop selling high quality examples from abroad – including south-east Asia – as well as from our own design studios.' In brief, what he wants is to expand his present, cramped operation to become a recognised training, information and research centre, in Scotland, for everything, practical, historical, philosophical, to do with masks and puppetry.

His sights, and those of his Trustees (a Board well weighted with academics and practical theatre men), are set firmly on one building, The Athenaeum in Exchange Square, once the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama moves to new premises nearby. The trouble is that other institutions also have an eye on this covetable, central space with its own little basement theatre. Certainly more space is needed immediately for every aspect of the operation, not only for the workshop activity and for the creation of masks and puppets in the way of business, but also for the archive which now includes video tapes of performances from all over the world (the Carnegie Trust is helping with that side of things) and above all for the splendid collection of puppets and masks which is about to go on public view in April.

Masks come in all materials and are created at Otago Street by people at all levels





of skill and artistry, from the children with painted, decorated plastic bottles and face masks of painted, folded paper, to exquisite 'neutral' masks traditionally fashioned of leather, as in the Commedia dell'Arte; softened in warm water, skilfully shaped over sculpted wooden moulds and left to dry and harden – a technique Malcolm Knight learned in Italy from master craftsman Satori.

Glove puppets are the easiest to construct since they consist of a cloth figure (which can be very simple) with a firm hollow head, attached to a sleeve for the puppeteer's arm. Heads can be modelled in plasticine covered with plastic wood and, when hollowed out to a thickness of around $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, are light enough to be easily manipulated by the middle fingers of a human hand while the thumb and little finger move the puppet's arms. A paper template is used for body and clothes but it

Top. Pressing the wet leather into the contours of a Commedia dell'Arte mask mould.

Centre. Carving and hollowing a head for a rod puppet.

Bottom. Fibreglass mask is removed from a rubber mould made from a plaster copy of the original clay sculpture.

should be remembered that a spread human hand is asymmetrical and allowance made accordingly. A more indestructible material for the head is Celastic, a resin-impregnated fabric which, when dipped in acetone to make it malleable, will assume any form it is wrapped around. It is however both flammable and highly toxic, so plenty of ventilation is necessary plus a barrier cream to protect the hands.

Classical rod and string puppets (marionettes) are made of wood: limewood for the visible head and hands since it resists

splitting and cracking; plywood for the shoulder plates, and hip plates if any. The heads which, above all, express the character of the puppets, depend on the skill of the wood-carver, who marks out the essential geometry of head and features on the wooden block which is held in a clamp, and gradually, by sawing, routing and filing, brings the features into life.

Loose, multi-directional joints like wrists may be fixed with a hook and eye, but for firmer joints like elbows which move in one direction only, a strip of leather is fixed in slits made in the fore and upper arm. The stringing of marionettes is crucial and really, Malcolm Knight insists, requires some technical understanding. 'Essentially you string from the head downwards, using black button thread rubbed with beeswax: though fishing line is sometimes used, professionals prefer button thread because it doesn't catch the light on stage.'

The control of marionettes is from above, by crossed strips of wood to which the strings are attached. Horizontal control allows for broader movements but vertical control is used for greater subtlety. One German puppeteer is said to have taken ten years to perfect the lifelike movements of his puppet stock, using vertical control with hundreds of strings. Marionettes, it seems, need to be very carefully balanced, able to 'stand' on their feet and so take much of their own weight.

As devotees of the Muppets and Spitting Image must be aware, new techniques and new materials have entered the field, and these too, whether it is fibreglass, celastic or latex foam injection, may be learned at Otago Street. Like myself, however, Malcolm Knight believes that, whereas the Muppet creatures and the Spitting Image caricatures are somehow less than 'real', traditional puppets and marionettes can take on a strange life of their own that excites, stimulates and is recognised as such by children.

Some people, it seems, even without long training, have an aptitude for creating puppets. As part of a recent vocational training course for the unemployed, funded jointly by Strathclyde Region and the European Council, one man with no previous experience, made a classical marionette, carved in wood and with the proper jointing which, so Malcolm says, is beautiful and simple and moves perfectly. Unfortunately on the day I was there he had taken it home.

One which I did see – a favourite with photographers, I am told – is Jimmy, a character straight from the Glasgow music hall; a typical comic layabout in rough tweed jacket and cap, with fag between the knobbly fingers (talcum powder 'smoke' is puffed up and out through a hidden plastic tube) and with a familiar line of patter – 'Hey darlin' wid ye mind, eh? Could ye spare a penny for a cup a' tea, eh?'

Jimmy will be among the exhibits, masks and puppets of every kind from the most exotic to the homeliest and the most bizarre, which will be put on permanent show when the Garret Mask and Puppet Centre opens to the public in April, every afternoon from Monday to Friday – not least to school parties and community organisations. A tremendous attraction is bound to be the collection of more than two hundred items including some antique and rare oriental puppets, donated, before his death in Nairobi last year, by the owner, Miles Lee, who, at Belgrave Mews, Edinburgh, established the first permanent puppet theatre in Britain.

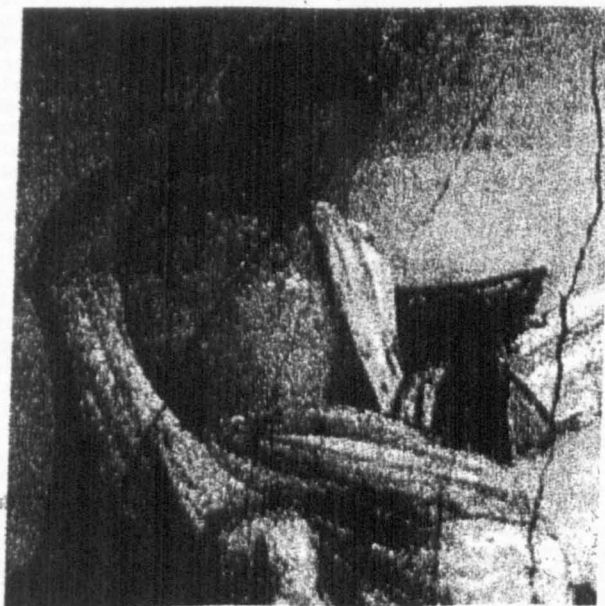
Cordelia Oliver

INIZIATIVE - *La scuola attoriale Venezia Inscena sta studiando una serie di statuette votive rappresentanti attori in scena in collaborazione con gli specialisti dell'Università di Glasgow*

Ricostruite le maschere della Grecia di Menandro

Prendi delle statuette votive rappresentanti attori in maschera della Commedia Nuova greca trovate nella necropoli greca di Lipari e falle vedere a Richard Williams, ricercatore dell'Università di Glasgow. Poi fa incontrare Williams con uno tra i registi teatrali veneziani tra i più instancabili e sorprendenti, Adriano Lurissevich. Lasciali insieme per un po' e usciranno con una proposta improbabile ed estremamente interessante.

E' successo così: dopo la lunga fatica della scuola estiva, Venezia Inscena non va ancora in vacanza, e si reinventa con una collaborazione con l'Università di Glasgow. In realtà questa collaborazione era partita già da aprile dell'anno scorso, quando regista, ricercatore e altri sognatori sono stati alcuni giorni nella Domus Soccorso, Fondamenta del Soccorso 2591, chini sulle statuette votive, che risultano datate tra il IV e il III secolo, per sceglierne le più interessanti e meglio conservate. A luglio si è aggiunta a San Milato un'altra figura affascinante, quella di un mascheraiolo inglese con il cognome che vuol dire "cavaliere", Malcolm Knight. Il Cavaliere dalle armi tecnologiche (macchine speciali in grado di "scannerizzare" in tre dimensioni e riprodurre oggetti di varie grandezze e materiali) ha ricostruito un certo numero di maschere utilizzate dagli attori greci che mettevano in scena le commedie di Menandro e



Un ritratto di Menandro conservato a Pompei

quasi sicuramente recuperate dai commediografi latini poco posteriori.

A questo punto la Scuola Biennale di Formazione Attoriale e l'U-

niversità di Glasgow si stanno dedicando alla parte più affascinante del percorso di ricerca stabilito in collaborazione: le maschere vengono osserva-

te, esplorate, indagate perché da ogni loro forma, linea, accento, proporzione, colore, ritmo interno possa prendere magicamente forma il "corpo della maschera e la natura del personaggio

che la indossa".

Dal modo che la maschera ha di cogliere la luce, dalle visioni che provoca, dagli elementi della natura cui fa riferimento, dai suoi "richiami zoomorfici e dalle suggestioni fisiognomiche" gli originali esploratori italo-iglesi traggono dimensioni, posture, dinamiche, pesi, equilibri. Persino la mentalità e la voce e le reazioni tipiche del personaggio raffigurato dovranno essere dedotte dall'osservazione di statuette immobili. Figure vascolari e affreschi e cronache dell'epoca aiuteranno in qualità di supporti esterni la ricerca scientifica e di immaginazione.

Dal 9 al 21 settembre i teatranti Enrico Bonovera, Renato Gatto, Luca Altavilla, Andrea Brugnara, Roman Suarz e Angelo Crotti testeranno i risultati dell'affascinante lavoro, utilizzando i personaggi così come l'indagine li ha definiti per la messa in scena di "Il misantropo" e "L'arbitrato" di Menandro e testi di Plauto e Terenzio come "Il mercante" e "La suocera".

Ecco cosa dichiara il regista Lurissevich: "Si sa del filo di continuità che lega Menandro, Plauto, Terenzio con la commedia dell'Arte, Moliere, Shakespeare, ma ma non mi risulta nessuno, tra gli studiosi o i grandi mascherai che conosco, che abbia seriamente indagato la continuità nel segno della maschera. E' affascinante lavorare con questa drammaturgia delle origini... e avere l'impressione costante di come avesse già inventato tutto!" Per chi è rimasto incuriosito, c'è la possibilità di assistere alle prove degli attori, telefonando al numero 041 2413631.

Barbara Pianca



MASKS AND MEANING in Education and Therapy

Malcolm Knight

The first in a forthcoming series of Spotlight features dedicated to that fascinating borderline subject of masks and masking. Malcolm Knight will shortly be helping to run workshops in maskmaking and mask performance at the Puppet Centre in June.

How important are the masks that people adopt in the theatre for understanding their actions in society? For some, masks have a history of their own and develop quite independently of the activities of real people. For others, masks are no more than a gloss, a practical appendage, which can provide style or decoration in particular theatrical productions. The central concern of this article is the relevance of the mask to modern theatre in education and therapy both as a physical object and as a concept.

The mask is an enigmatic tool. A strange object. Petrified in the gallery of a museum it takes on the status of a work of art and becomes the object of our contemplation. Animated on the stage of a theatre it takes on the life of another and sometimes 'holy otherness' of a spirit or demon, and becomes the subject of our involvement.

In order to understand the meaning of a mask we must first locate the precise time, place and culture in which it came into being. Moreover since it is both a material shaped by method and technique as well as the vehicle of an idea or symbol, we must discover the purpose to which it will be put. To decode this purpose is rarely simple. The game of the mask or *jeu masqué* through movement and light acts on our emotions, while its sculptural form works on the images and symbols within our consciousness. A mask does not 'live' simply because someone puts it on. It is a challenge to learn how to animate it with movement. It comes before speech. For the actor in our society it calls for an initiation and a training... which, once started, is never complete.

The Greeks called it *prosopon* or character. For the actors of the *Commedia dell'Arte* it was a social stereotype. In the *Noh* theatre of Japan it is said to contain the presence of a god. In the European carnival and folk tradition a *mascha* or larva denoted a witch or evil spirit. The Roman word '*persona*', from '*per sonare*' meant to sound through. What then is a mask?

The temptation to answer this question by adopting some seductively unifying psychological theory is great. Concealments of real drives within the personality or revelations of universal features? Clearly, the mask takes away the person we know and invests the wearer with something new. Further to this, it does something which cannot be done unaided. It places a material object or covering, artificially produced, over the face (but often extending over the head and sometimes the 'whole body') converting it into an animated and composite symbol. The act of masking is therefore concerned with expressing distinction between appearance and reality. Things are not as they seem. In the words of Oscar Wilde, "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell the truth."

Reassuring aphorisms aside, the problem is that all aspects of the spectrum of human thought and ways of seeing may be shown by masks — whether they range from realism to surrealism or appear as abstractions. Detaching masks from the people who devise them includes the mistake of attributing a particular group of masks to the whole of society. To do this is not merely to conceal the immense divergencies always present within society, the continuity of heresy and objection, but also to align oneself with the group that formulates that belief system. Therefore, if the recurrent masking of the human face may lie in a basic way of thinking or seeing, we have to ask if any such way can be 'basic' across history, across cultures, and across ideologies.

The history of the mask does not rise uninterruptedly in accordance with some linear idea of progress from the primitive to the modern. Its development is often broken and twisted in accordance with the onset of social change in rising and declining civilizations. Even in societies based on traditional tribal orthodoxies where masks are designed to represent a social and cultural unanimity or consensus (i.e. to bring rain, worship ancestors, improve crops, facilitate an initiation, mark a funeral) we can observe their role in legitimizing the rule of the dominant tribal group. Often they are ideal images of such groups. But equally, they can be the product of the revolts which punctuate the rule of orthodoxy (*Perchtenmasken* of Austria, Carnival masks of the Middle Ages, satirical masks from Korea, face-coverings of the I.R.A. and the Sandinistas). In other words, the masks is about beliefs in society. It can be used equally to uphold or subvert a convention. And it is about particular beliefs and particular social groups. The mask is neither practical reality nor pure ideology. Rather it should be regarded as a unity of theory and practice where concerns of culture, legitimization and ideology are worked out.

The teacher and educator will discover great value in learning about and teaching through masks. On a theoretical plane, the mask raises the question of the rediscovery of old traditions and cross-cultural inquiry. (From tribalism to capitalism). On a practical level, it poses the challenge of research of a plastic and spacial kind, of actor-training with masks, and of improvisation and movement with groups of students. Still further, it raises considerations for student craftsmen about techniques and materials of mask construction. This traditional and contemporary craft has suffered centuries of neglect with the increasingly sharp division of labour drawing the mind and the hand further apart, separating the project and the execution, the goal and its realisation. The conscious activity and creative labour involved in mask-making is of great pedagogic value. The mask is a logical means of correlating many of the most important forms of art — drawing, painting, design and composition, construction and handicrafts, colour



Andrew Cruikshank and masks from 'Noah' by Andre Obey, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford.

theories, cartooning, modelling or sculpture, costume design, theatre arts, and the study of historic and modern art. Whether in the classroom of a school, college or university or in a community centre or the streets the mask may be used as a tool for enquiry, a learning medium, and as a process for encouraging self-development and social growth.

The therapist will discover much that is rewarding in the skills of the mask-maker and the beliefs behind the mask where occupational therapy, psychiatry and psycho-therapy are concerned. In mental illness, where there is often a fundamental dislocation between a patient's sense of appearance and reality, the mask can play a healing role. It can, in specialised hands, be used to spot the positive creative patterns in an individual or the negative self-defeating ones in order to shift the sense of identity. It can also be used to 'socialise' very aggressive or shy individuals, and as a means to explore social roles through simulation games. In these days of high technology it is a sobering thought that no tribal shaman could function without his mask. Even today in Sri Lanka, mask rituals and ceremonies dedicated to the healing of specific diseases are carried out. Sceptics of sympathetic magic and alternative medicines may scoff, but the mask has more to offer in the area of psychopathy and pictorial expression than the tests of Szondi or Bannister. Similarly, mask, work with the

the physically disabled can produce positive results: a sense of creative satisfaction, a liberation of a temporary nature from physical constraint by becoming someone else, active mutual collaboration within a group project and so on.

The mask is not an isolated self-conscious phenomenon explicable as a simple resurgence of anti-naturalism (which was the view held by so many theatre workers at the beginning of this century). The historical continuum with pre-theatre, tribal ceremonial, and the great popular traditions of Greece and Rome, Oriental and Asian theatre, *Commedia dell'Arte* and European Folk Carnival has been important to most modern theatre reformers and innovators. Today, masks can all too readily be reduced to the magic of objects washed up on the beach: Often they have been removed from their original context by processes of collection and natural ageing. European museums are bursting with tribal booty from Colonial expeditions of the last century. The growth of popular Romanticism in cinema and theatre confined masks often to exotic and sensational spheres; a legacy kept alive by the party and magic shop. Even serious theatre criticism has tended to treat the meaning of masks as some kind of illusion or flight of fancy reducing them to disguises or escapes from social personality. But a greater awareness of popular history and folk culture has accompanied advances in

Spotlight Continued

social anthropology. Together with the absence of meaningful ritual and transcendent knowledge associated with religious belief, industrialisation and urbanisation have led to an apparent marginalization of the mask in theatre.

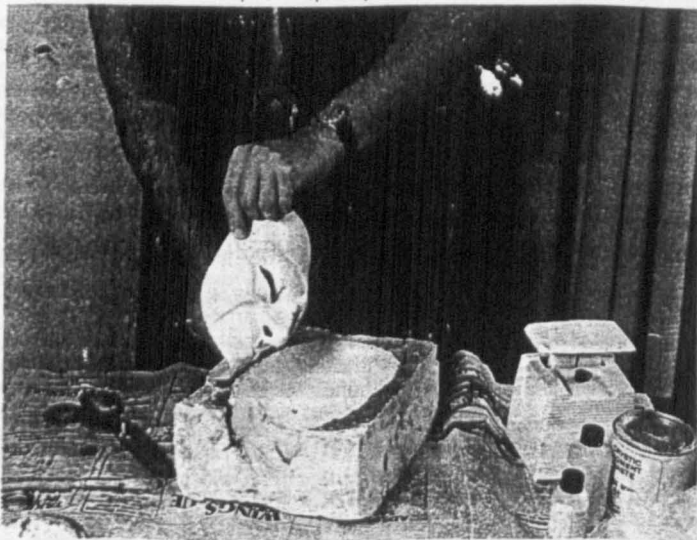
In the words of Ken Baynes from **Masks: A Welsh Arts Council Touring Exhibition (1976)**, the fact that we have so many ethnic masks from other countries in Britain at all "provides evidence of the worlds we have destroyed and of the contradictory nature of the enlightenment from which scientific enquiry has developed. If we

Selected recommended reading:

- Lommel, A. **Masks: Their Meaning and Function**, P. Elek Books, 1972.
 Bihajli-Merin, O. **Masks of the World**, Thames & Hudson, 1971.
 Sorrell, W. **The Other Face: The Mask in The Arts**, Thames & Hudson 1973
 Giotz, S. **Le Masque dans la Tradition Europeenne**, Belgium, 1975
 Sartori D. & Marcia A. **Commedia dell'Arte og Sartoris masker Centro Maschere & Struttura Gestuali**, 1984
 Baranski, M. **Mask-Making: Creative Methods and Techniques**, Ward Lock, 1972
 Angelini, D. **Maschere, Marionette e Burattini**, Edizioni Ottaviano, 1979.



The Prophet in 'The Old Wives Tale' Anon. Nov 1973, Glasgow University Department of Drama.



Casting in fibre-glass.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

"To make a mask is an arduous task. It involves choosing an impressive subject, visualising it clearly, planning the manner of its execution, and then plunging into laborious and complicated work, bristling always with new problems. Mask-making is a peculiar kind of sculpture where one must at the same time consider the aesthetic and the practical side of it, the exterior and the interior of the mask, the character it is intended to represent, and the fitting to the head of the wearer. One must also remember to make the mask as thin as possible, and yet strong and durable."

(W.T. Benda, **Masks**, Watson-Guption Publications, 1944, p.21)

a. Observation and Comparison of Human Faces.

attempt a feat of the imagination and try to recapture the original spirit that resided in these masks, we can ask ourselves an important question: What have we lost, what have we gained?"

Or another way of raising the same question: if the majority of past societies used masks as a way of entering reality then why can't we? The work of such theatrical innovators as Jarry, Craig, W.B. Yeats, Meyerhold, Pirandello, O'Neill, Copeau, Brecht, Genet, Lecoq, Sartori, Barba and Fo has provided an established body of work and a mainstream tradition from which to begin.

facial stereotypes = physiognomy: muscles and anatomy, sex, age, and race, norms of beauty, historical and cultural context.

b. A Single Characteristic Feature.

prominent nose, receding chin, domed forehead, close-set eyes, rhythm and coordination of whole face.

— **lines in a mask must be followed through in support and balance through all parts of the face in order to achieve harmonious ensemble and semblance of life.**

c. Typical Facial Expressions

various moods and emotions within facial expressions, exaggerated muscular or anatomical characteristics, e.g. rage, sorrow, laughter, astonishment, pain, etc.

(See *Anatomy for Artists* by Duval)

d. Animal, Bird, and Fish Characteristics

a vast source of suggestions for mask themes derived from an ancient tradition of fusing animal and human characteristics — animal, bird, fish anatomy — tribal art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas — research of G.B. Della Porta in *Celestial Physiognomy* 1627 exploring similarity between man and animals.

e. Abstract Ideas: Allegorical and Symbolic Masks.

an area of fantasy with unlimited fields for exploration — **tribal examples:** asymmetrical Eskimo masks/masks for curing sickness from Sri Lanka. — **great traditions of theatre:** Greek and Roman/Noh/Commedia dell'Arte are based upon abstract archetypes — **folk masks from European traditions:** the Mari Lwyd from Wales, the kouker mask from Bulgaria, the Strawboy mask from Ireland, the Botarga mask from Spain — **mime-movement masks from Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris:** the Neutral mask, the Larval mask, the Naive mask, the Basle masks.

f. Social and Political Caricature Masks.

satire of recognisable public figures. Often based on exaggerating a single characteristic feature of the face (eg. the nose of Margaret Thatcher, the teeth of Princess Anne, the grin of Jimmy Carter, the goggling eyes of Tony Benn).

2. VARIETIES OF MASK

There are certain varieties or classifications of mask derived from ways of fitting the wearer. After choosing an appropriate theme and visualising it clearly the mask maker needs to choose the kind of mask best suited to his purpose:

a. **Full-face mask** — extends from top of forehead to underneath the chin, eg the neutral masks of Jacques Lecoq and Michel Saint-Denis. These are usually 'silent' masks for use in mime, dance and improvisation.

b. **Three-Quarter Mask** — extends from top of forehead to bottom lip and covers jaws, eg Character-masks of Michel Saint-Denis.

c. **Head Mask** — extends over the top of the head and covers the ears. They clip over the back of the head and afford a more complete disguise. Easy to fit e.g. the masks of W.T. Benda.

d. **Half-mask** — covers only the upper part of the face, from hairline down to the upper lip. The mouth and jaw are left free so that the wearer can talk e.g. Commedia dell'Arte masks.

e. **Shallow mask** — covers the entire face from ear to ear and from hairline down to just above the chin eg Japanese Noh masks.

f. **Giant or High masks** — sit on the shoulders of the wearer who usually looks out through the mouth or neck of the mask e.g. Carnival heads.

3. TECHNICAL NOTES ON MASK-MAKING

a. **DECIDE the form = volume, the colour/material.**

i. **Form**, related to an artistic style, realism, abstraction, symbolism, constructivism.

ii. **Colour-material:** shiny, smooth, dull, rough.

Must be apportioned with precision, must not be contrary to the volume.

b. **CALCULATE** the aspects of the mask with **LIGHT**. The mask is an inert object + light = shadows in hollows, raised planes in light, feeling evoked.

c. **CALCULATE** the aspects of the mask with **MOVEMENT**. Mask + movement = expression.

Puppetry and Creative Dramatics in storytelling.

by Connie Champlin. (Nancy Renfro Studios, 1980)

A Book Review by Beverley Costa

Although, at first glance, Connie Champlin's 'Puppetry and Creative Dramatics in storytelling' appears to contain a great deal less information than its 122 A4 pages would suggest, with use, it does in fact reveal a wealth of practical ideas. I picked up this book again recently when I was looking for ideas for character development and dialogue building games that I could use with children for whom puppetry was their first experience of drama. I found it well researched, clear and extremely practical.

The book is divided into 14 chapters, each related to a particular story. The techniques and exercises are graded so that Chapter 1 has ideas for use with the very young or inexperienced children, whereas Chapter 14 contains suggested activities for older children with more experience of creative dramatics. The stories around which the chapters are based, are optional and all the ideas can, with a little imagination, be adapted for use with other themes. The chapters are listed in the table of contents under the title of the story or book with which they are associated. However, it is probably more useful to follow the sub-headings (in italics) as they give a clearer idea of techniques and areas of work which are covered, for example: Using voice to express conflict, Developing character through dialogue, etc.

Apart from supplying a store of ideas, the author is careful to explain reasons for and suitability of particular exercises. Step by step instructions on how to conduct the workshop, together with excellent follow-up ideas are given. (Many of the related stories suggested are, however, unobtainable in England).

The book is generally stronger on creative dramatics than on puppetry. Instructions for puppets the children can make themselves are included in some chapters. These tend to be quickly assembled junk puppets which might be used for a 15 minute activity and then abandoned. They were imaginatively devised but I was already familiar with them as they have appeared in several other Nancy Renfro Publications.

Although, as I have mentioned, the book was more heavily weighted towards drama, I would recommend it to anyone who is searching for ways to develop performance skills and ideas for what to do with the second part of a puppet workshop — after the children have made the puppets.

MASK-MAKING: CRAFT EDUCATION AND TRADITION

Malcolm Knight

Malcolm Knight led a mask-making course at the Puppet Centre on June 1/2nd and is based at the Garret Mask & Puppet Centre in Glasgow.

Masks can be made from a bewildering variety of materials and techniques ranging from the most traditional to the most modern. These may include such approaches as the use of balloons, paper bags, tin foil, card, corrugated cardboard, clay and plasticine forms, chicken wire, plaster bandages, garden wire and copydex glue covered with hessian, papier mache, polystyrene blocks, wickerwork and cloth materials (gauze, scrim, muslin), fibre-glass, liquid latex, metal, resin cloth (celastic), celutex, foam rubber and leather. The contemporary mask-maker is confronted with all these options and with the challenge of uniting intention, technology and meaning with the greatest accuracy. This process demands, in turn, a knowledge of past tradition and working methods associated to the various craft materials.

Mask-making has suffered from centuries of neglect in the Western world. This is particularly the case in the British Isles. With the exception of the folk masks of South Wales, Shetland and parts of Ireland associated with mumming plays contemporary mask-makers are thin on the ground. In the professional theatre most mask-makers gravitate towards London and earn a living through theatre design and performance, and the craft tends to become appended to stage costume or incorporated into mainstream puppetry. Mask-making in education tends to be only a minor part of an art school training, and for the most part professional drama schools remain largely unaware of the potential of the mask in actor-training programmes. In the usual manner mask-making is relegated to a borderline subject in schools, colleges and universities forming only a minor component in a much larger curriculum. In short, mask-making has become something of an anachronism. People don't model now. They don't have the skills. The decline in the skill of the hand has been a gradual process brought on by a sharpening division of labour and the introduction of new machinery. After all, if it is possible to buy latex and plastic party masks which are mass produced at a cheap price, why bother making a mask of your own in the first place?

There are many possible justifications for the do-it-yourself approach. Mask-making is a very specific kind of self-activity. It is labour intensive and very laborious, requiring considerable manual dexterity, a good eye and a wide knowledge of the pros and cons of different sculpture materials. The challenge of mask-making is that you create a discipline for yourself which commences with sculpture and ends in theatrical gesture and movement. In order to create a discipline, you have to have an ideology. It is especially important in mask-making to know what end each mask is supposed to serve.

This is perhaps best illustrated by the craft of the Japanese Noh and Commedia dell'Arte mask makers. Noh masks are made of Hinoki (Japanese cypress), a wood easily worked yet durable. The bark side of the wood is fashioned into the inside of the mask; in this way any resin which might seep to the surface will not harm the mask. Ideally the Hinoki should come from trees felled in the valley of Kiso, floated down the Kiso river to Tokyo, and kept there for 5 or 6 years in mingled fresh and sea water before being cut into blocks used by the mask carver. The very word 'Noh' means accomplishment or artistry, a reflection not only of the actor's consummate skill in portraying the subtle nuances of meaning, but also the Noh mask-carver or men-uchi. Since there are over one hundred different masks in the Noh tradition, the way of seeing which depicts divinities, animals, monsters, old or young men or women, tragic or comic stereotypes, is essentially important, the weight of the masks, the form of the Noh play and its staging traditions. The mask-maker has to understand both the sculpture and the performance in order to combine the different traits of character to be animated by the actor. Masks of the good characters are worn aristocratically and with restraint, with the exception of the devil mask of Shi-Kana. The wood of a Noh mask is extremely thin and fragile and is painted in tempera over a coating of gesso. Only the two small holes at the ears may be held after the surface has been polished. The actor's face is padded with wadded cotton wrapped in soft paper so that the mask will fit snugly and securely. It is attached to his head by ribbons passed through the ear-holes. A major exhibition of Noh masks is planned in the UK in 1986 with samples of the great work of Hideo Suzuki, for those readers who wish to examine the real thing.

The masks of Commedia dell'Arte are still very misunderstood in this country. It has been portrayed as pure art and skill by some critics who insist that satire in any guise or form was lacking in the commedia. The social reality which gave birth to the masks stands in direct contradiction to this view. Each mask was designed to serve an end. The character of Zanni (a variant of Giovanni or John) was directly linked to a social class: the peasants of the Po valley. The primitive Zanni were foolish

countrymen who had to leave their land, go down into the cities and take up any job they could find in order to avoid starvation. A Zanni is someone who is continually hungry and who lives in a state of famine, indignance and servitude but who survives by virtue of his opportunism, greed and droll wit. Beneath the stereotype lies the fact of expropriation produced by the emergence of modern capitalism in Italy in 1500. Goods from the Orient flooded into Venice and the north at a price which forced local peasants off the land and into the towns. The Commedia summarised the response of the Zanni to this reality. The first Zanni were clever (Brighella, Scapino, Flautino, Pedrolino) while the second were foolish (Arlecchino, Trivellino, Truffaldino). It is often forgotten that the traditional costume of Arlecchino was rags and tatters, and not the familiar red and yellow diamond pattern. The brown mask of Pantalone, the Venetian merchant was quite specific. The satirical black mask of Il Dottore covering only the forehead and nose, with flaccid cheeks, a huge red wart and a prominent black moustache equally so. The long-nosed, round-eyed flesh coloured mask of Il Capitano came into being as a cowardly braggart at a time when the City States were torn by civil strife and largely occupied by Spain. There are in existence a limited number of ancient Commedia masks and a few extant writings on the leather process from which they are made (e.g. the collection of Renato Simoni in the Museo della Scala, Milan). The process of making such masks was, in fact, lost almost completely until the pioneering work of a Professor of Sculpture at the University of Padua, Amleto Sartori, was undertaken in the 1950's.

The seminal works on craft education and tradition related to mask-making are W.T. Benda's *Masks* (1944), H.R. Kniffin's *Masks* (1931) H. Cordreaux's *Fabrication du Masque* (1974) and D. Sartori's *La Commedia dell'Arte nelle maschere dei Sartori* (1976). All of these are unusual in that they are not books about mask-making, but works by mask-makers themselves. In this way they represent an unusual balance between theory and practice, with a whole host of hints and professional tips.



Papierage. Technique used by Henri Cordreaux. Mask by Evelyn Langland. Photo: Eric Pollock.

Wladyslaw Theodore Benda emigrated from Poland to the U.S.A. in 1899 after studying at Krakow Academy of Art. He became a well-known book illustrator for Century Magazine and Schribner's Cosmopolitan before developing an intricate system of paper mask construction inlaid with gold leaf with stunningly life-like resemblance. His masks were usually full-face or head masks for use in silent pantomime and dance. He made masks for John Jay Chapman's *Miracle Play* in 1920, and also for the famous dancer Margaret Severn in John Murray Anderson's production of the Greenwich Village Follies. The masks were also featured in Vogue Magazine, photographed by Edward Steichen, and were later to become collector's items. Each mask was exquisitely and painstakingly made using layers of paper, lacquer and paint to catch a satirical likeness.

Henri Cordreaux served his apprenticeship in the theatre with the l'Ecole Vieux-Colombier under Jacques Copeau, followed by la

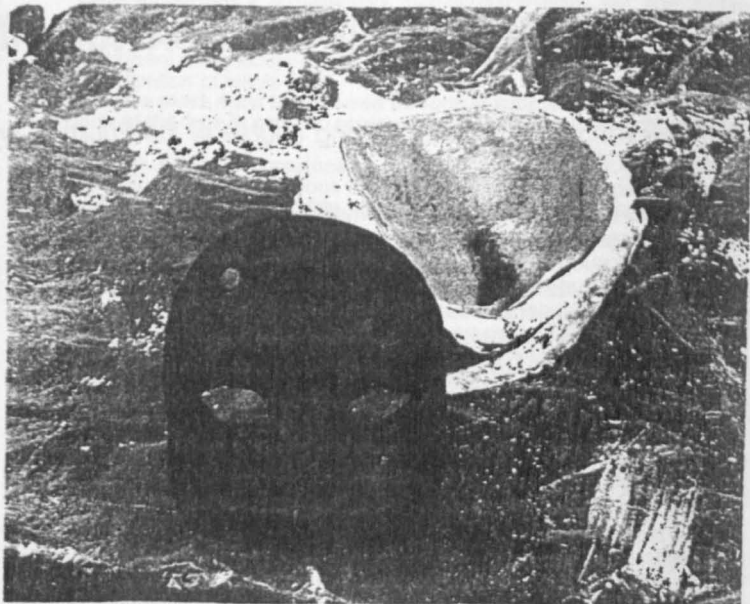
Spotlight continued

Compagnie des Quinze, and la Compagnie des Comediens Routiers in the 1920's and 1930's. His book *Fabrication du Masque* was written in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. He outlines several approaches to mask-making, and provides a step by step account to modelling, sculpture materials, and plaster casting. In a real sense this tradition has been continued into the Ecole des Masques of Cyrille Dives now teaching a new generation in the old craft.

Donato Sartori is the prime exponent of making masks for Commedia dell'Arte in leather. From his Centre for Masks and Structural Gesture



Papietage: finishing the application of the mixture. Photo: Eric Pollock



Papietage: the completed mask of Arlecchino by Evelyn Langland. Photo: Eric Pollock

in Padua, Sartori has exhibited in museums and festivals across the world, and retains a high commitment to teaching and open laboratory work with the public. He has inherited his father's wooden moulds and designs, together with a unique collection of theatrical and ethnographical masks. The Centre houses a giant sculpture studio and leather mask-making workshop. His work is unique in using mask-making and masked theatre to break down the barriers between art and the public. A future article in this series will examine his work more closely.

TECHNICAL NOTES ON MASKMAKING (continued from last issue)

STRUCTURE OF MASKS

1. **Shape** — facial size
 - eyebrow-tip of chin (men 6ins, women 5.2ins)
 - top of occiput-chin (men 10ins, women 9ins)
 - width through temples (men 6ins, women 5ins)
 - width of jaws (men 5ins, women 4ins)
2. **Openings** eyes
 - no openings
 - transparent mask
3. **Material**
 - 'precious'
 - 'poor'
 - smooth (Noh)
 - granular
 - worked-transformed
 - skin painting (make-up, tattoos)
4. **Style**
 - realist
 - expressionist (carnivals)
 - abstract
 - symbolist-surrealist (eskimo)
5. **Worn**
 - on the face (attached behind the nape of neck)
 - held by the mouth (Bali)
 - resting on the shoulders
 - mask body/costume
 - mask helmet
 - mask with two faces

positive cast may be taken from a clay model or life model.

Materials: plaster of paris or dental plaster; plaster mixing bucket; linseed oil or vaseline; optional string or wire reinforcements

Processes: sift plaster into water; avoid air bubble and let it stand without stirring until it begins to thicken; consistency of double cream; allow to dry and remove negative cast positive mould; release from negative: chisel/hammer; sandpaper; painting; finishing

(c) Card technique known as 'papietage' (Henri Cordreaux)

Materials: liquid paraffin; glue powder; muslin; newspaper or sugar paper; wood powder + ochre dust; sandpaper.

Process: soak paper bits in glue; add wood powder + ochre to mixture; cast mixture in plaster negative; remove from mould when dry; soak muslin in glue; stretch muslin over paper mask.

(d) Card technique with card and gumstrip (John Harris)

Materials: basic mask form by J.W. Harris (University of Hull); pencil/compass/ruler/scissors; thin pliable card; gumstrip brown paper; Cannons anti-fungi glue

Process: draw around basic form; pierce all holes and mark where liner; 'cut' edge; make cuts as indicated; score and bend all lines; make up mask form with gumstrip; cover inside/outside form with layers of gumstrip; then cover with news-paper soaked in Size; and a final layer of toilet

paper soaked in Size; allow to dry; sandpaper; paint; finish.

SCULPTED MASKS

2(a) Wood.

(b) **Leather or Skin** (sheepskin) Method akin to Italian Commedia dell'Arte, rediscovered by Amleto and Donato Sartori.

Materials: wood mould; obeki, cypress, pine; wood chisels and mallet and gouges; sandpaper; callipers; 1 piece of natural cowhide cured in tannin between 1.5mm and 3mm thick; leather working tools; skivers, scissors, bone hand tools, horn-headed hammer, shoemakers brass nails, awls, stitchmarker, lacing needle, edge beveller, edge creaser; Saddle soap; neatsfoot oil; beeswax; dyes.

Process: sculpt a wood form from a clay model or a positive plaster cast; bathe leather skin in lukewarm water for 30-40 minutes; squeeze and twist out leather in all directions; place over wooden mould so that it adheres and follows all lines; two nails in eye to ensure adhesion and four other nails tapped into extremities; always using hands press leather around mould, smoothing it into shape; where necessary hit with head of a round-pointed hammer; this can take up to 2-3 hours before the leather will stick well; leather overlapping should be cut into V-shapes and nailed around the wooden mould; leave to dry out for a long time; 1/2 day; beat the mask with horn-headed hammer to ensure that it adheres

and to create stippled — skin-like effect under light; remove nails and extract from mould; with aid of chisel or cutter cut around rim of mask, insert bone or wire strip around rim, and bend + stick down all V-shaped edges; mask can then be dyed or left its natural colour; eyes should be cut out last using cut-out shapes of card and tracing around the mask; varnish inside with saltpetre or nitre; finish exterior with neatsfoot oil.

3. MASKS CONSTRUCTED FROM OBJECTS OR PRE-EXISTING MATERIALS

Materials: pre-existing masks; polystyrene blocks; cylindrical or spherical shapes etc.

4. MASKS MADE FROM HARD UNBLEACHED PAPER (W.T. Benda)

Materials: hard unbleached paper; animal glue; strips of stiff brass wire; varnish; oil paints; sandpaper; gold leaf.

Processes: Benda used 4 schemes for making a paper mask:

- (i) by the direct method without using a mould. Numerous strips of paper are built up in layers beginning with the forehead and profile outline; then cheeks, chin, sides of nose are gradually built up; framing of eyes and nostrils, then lips; 25 layers of paper; 1/16" thick. Features are then corrected by cutting, filing and patching. Top and sides of head are then added. Temporary painting in tempera; 1/16" diameter brass wire is inserted around edges by 250 small strips of glued paper. 2/3 coats of varnish inside and out. 3 layers of oil paint. Smoothing and polishing. Inside gilded with gold-leaf by oil gilding.

(continued next issue)

Edited by Honor Palmer

MASKS AND THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

Malcolm Knight.

Malcolm Knight of the Glasgow Mask & Puppet Workshop will run a Commedia Mask-Making Workshop at the Puppet Centre on January 18/19. See 'What's On' for details.

'Arte' in Italian means not only art, but also tact, know-how, trade, and a professional group of people acting together. The term 'Commedia dell'Arte' indicates the professional nature of this kind of theatre and distinguishes it from other forms of Renaissance Italian theatre, which were dominated by a certain dilettantism. Using only a scenario the actors improvised their words from cues derived from each other based upon split-second timing. Acrobatics, songs, dances, running-jokes and comic routines known as 'lazzi' were fused with a rapid pace and asides to the audience. The core stories of the scenarios or 'canovacci' seemed to revolve around good and evil, life and death, power and money, love and hate including a significant component of contemporary political and social comment. Between 1500 and 1750 Commedia was the great school of western theatre. The actor **Carlo Boso** sums it up in this way: "In Commedia you have everything, and the fact that it lasted for three centuries means that nearly every writer touched on it; Shakespeare, Molière, Goldoni, Gozzi, the lot."

Over and beyond all this, however, the challenge of Commedia today is to study, reconstruct and rediscover the nature of a tradition which has been lost for nearly two hundred years. Post-War Europe since 1945 has witnessed a great revival of interest and knowledge about the specialist techniques of the Commedia and the various cultural transformations to which it was subjected. A wealth of documentation has survived in the form of engravings, written scenarios, paintings and drawings, memoirs, and records of tours and business transactions. But how the Commedia was acted, what it looked like in production, in whose interests and for what reasons it was performed are questions fraught with difficulty. Broadly speaking, we may discern two present-day trends: one is the reiterative approach based on recreating the Commedia in art-for-arts sake, museum-like, conditions typified by balletic revivals with sentimental Harlequins and sad-eyed Pierrots. Implicit within this approach is the assumption that Commedia masks were comic types without "any social political objective" (**A K Dshiwelegow**). Parody which tended to uphold existing structures of society rather than satire which questioned established standards is taken to be the hallmark of Commedia. After 1682 the original masks of parody or farce which were non-partisan and played to all social classes, became increasingly devitalised into partisan forms of satire as authors came to dominate the actors. This view corresponds to the 'great tradition' of upper class intellectuals and is most eloquently presented by **Robert Erenstein** from the University of Amsterdam, Holland in his article on

"Satire and the Commedia dell'Arte".

Second is the creative approach based on rediscovering and reinterpreting the Commedia for the historical and social conditions of today, typified by the work of Meyerhold, Copeau, Chanceler, Sartori, Strehler, Lecoq, and Boso. The class dimension of the social masks has been emphasised by **Dario Fo**, who points to the fact that Commedia came into being at the birth of modern Capitalism. According to this view, satire was the life-blood of Commedia and established standards relating to money, power, servitude, sex roles, and class values were constantly questioned. The demise of Commedia was not because of a so-called genre change from farce to satire, but rather because the popular roots became rarefied in the courts of Europe and censored by governmental controls over public playing spaces. This view corresponds to the 'little tradition' of the peasants and artisans in which the Commedia is seen as a changing dialectic between art and the actor's condition, between the elaboration of a well-codified language of the actor and its destruction. Implicit within this approach is the view that Commedia dell'Arte was a deeply political phenomenon presenting a series of complex visions of the world in transformation.

The origins of the Commedia are largely speculative, in spite of the pioneering research of Duchartre, Nicoll and Lea. Masks are the determining feature of the theory and practice of the style, and ancient precedents may perhaps be traceable to the strolling players of Susarion in Icaria and the mountebanks of Athens and Sparta. Most of the masks were half or three-quarter style, leaving the mouth and chin free for speaking. It seems likely that the masks were closely linked to the idea of the 'Stock character' whose motivation and behaviour were patterned and predictable. If the line of descent is difficult to trace exactly from the Roman Atellan farces there are strong resemblances in character types and physical traits. The heritage of the medieval jongleurs and minstrels which immediately preceded the emergence of the Commedia was also a strong influence. These categories of buffoons, clowns, acrobats and strolling players often took their characters and dialects from the area in which they originated. Medieval Italy yielded stories, parodies, popular farces and political satires which also influenced the Commedia.

The set forms of the mask did not remain unchanged throughout the period of the Commedia from 1500 to 1750. Changes in the status of the players from jongleurs to highly professional acting troupes changed the nature of the masks. The transition from street to court was not direct in its development. The primitive 'Zanni' or foolish countrymen were directly linked to the category of the people



or peasant who lived in the mountains extending down from the Po Valley. They were based on a real social class and its hardships on being uprooted from the land and driven into the towns. So a Zanni was not only the colloquial equivalent of John, Johnny or Jimmy but a generic term depicting someone who was continually hungry, and who lived in a state of famine, indigence and servitude. The Zanni servants were famous for their droll wit, naivety, opportunism and greed.



Archaic Zanni from Sartori's 'Commedia dell'Arte', an excellent work of reference.

These first Zanni can be seen in the drawings of the 'Recueil Fossard' of 1577 and in the Callot engravings of 1623. Although comparatively late, these illustrations reveal servants dressed in rags and tatters, loincloths, and black half-masks with angular and violent bird-like movements.

The second Zanni was **Brighella** from Bergamo. He represented the cunning servant or the intriguing slave. He wore a cynical leather half-mask, tinted olive green with slit eyes and a crooked nose. His long raven locks of hair, moustache and peaked beard were covered with scented ointment to make them shine. The early Zanni costume of loose shirt, baggy trousers and cap of white cloth was elaborated into a green and white uniform in the sixteenth century. "The green and white uniform that I wear means: white, because I have carte blanche to do or undo whatever I like; green, because I can always keep the desires of my clients green with the many tricks of my devising." As Carlo Boso says, this mask is extremely humble when faced with a ruler or power figure, and extremely fascist when in the company of the proletariat. His quips are made in a coarse and shameless Bergamesque dialect and are usually penetrating and quick-witted.

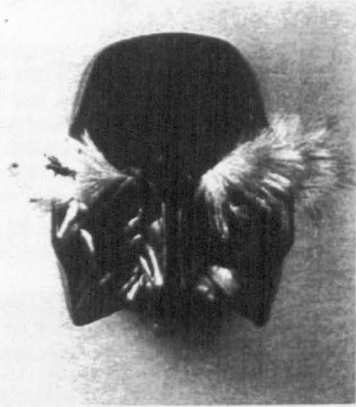
The third Zanni was **Alecchino**, also from Bergamo. He had a demoniacal black leather half-mask with bushy eyebrows and moustaches, usually with a red or black carbuncle or protuberance on the right of the forehead. The mask was small with a snub nose, hollow

cheeks, and two little holes for the eyes. Craftiness, sensuality and astonishment were perhaps its primary characteristics. It is sometimes associated with a black cat, marmotte, monkey, negro or damned devil. At first the mask personified the physically quick but mentally slow, hungry, servant. When the first Zanni disappeared for reasons of political repression and the onset of social democracy however, he became more complicated. Alecchino was at once credulous and diffident, a lazybones but also a busybody, a mixture of cunning and naivety, of awkwardness and grace. The irregular patches of the costume were later replaced by the more familiar red and yellow diamond pattern.



Piccolo Teatro di Milano 'Servant of Two Masters' by Goldoni. Directed by G. Strehler. In the photo: Marcello Mavetti (Alecchino) and Gianfranco Mauri (Brighella). Courtesy of Piccolo Teatro Archiva, Milan.

Pantalone, the Venetian merchant and banker had a reddish brown half-mask with white or straw-coloured beard and eyebrows. His face was bony and he had a large hooked nose, with hair sometimes flowing down over his shoulders. The costume was predominantly red: woollen cap, close-fitting jacket, and long tight breeches. His robe was black with a red lining. His shoes were yellow in the Turkish style. This first old man of the Commedia was the prototype of our western imperialist. His attributes arose from the contradictions of senility: he was avaricious yet also a lover of pomp and ceremony; he could be meek and ingratiating or slanderous and quarrelsome, being subject to violent explosions of anger and invective; and he had the desire but not the capacity when it came to young women. The mask represented a merchant, sometimes a bankrupt (Pantalon dei Bisognosi), and sometimes a counsellor of the Doge



Sartori's Griffon Pantaloone from 'Arllecchino servitore di due padroni'. 1950. Piccolo Teatro di Milano.

or of a king (Il Magnifico). In moments of fury he was capable of feats of astonishing agility (e.g. heavy back-falls) followed always by asthmatic breathing.

The **Doctor** from Bologna was the second old man of Commedia. He was generally depicted as a lawyer, and wore the traditional black costume from Bologna University complete with broad white collar, white cuffs, and a white handkerchief hanging from his leather belt. The mask was black and satirical covering only the forehead and nose complemented with flaccid cheeks. It had a huge red wart and a prominent black moustache and was accompanied by a black skull-cap, black felt hat, long cape and buckled shoes. He was an explicit send-up of erudition, pedantry and pomposity associated with the teaching profession of the Renaissance. Thus he swayed as he walked and minced with tiny steps; with a grave and clumsy manner he often carried a very thick book in one hand and gesticulated professorially with his index finger. He was a member of all the Academies and had an opinion about everything. His speeches were usually obscure, tautological and self-congratulatory. Every university still has one!

The **Captain** was a cowardly representative of an army of occupation (usually Spanish) and carried a huge sheathed sword with a broken scabbard at the end. When unopposed he was a braggart, when confronted he became a quivering jelly. His mask was flesh-coloured with a great menacing phallic nose surmounted by a prominent wart. Moreover, he had the costume of the current dress for a mercenary soldier. He thought of himself as a great lover but was despised by women, often being accused of dirty underwear.

Pulcinella was originally hunchbacked with a phallic nose and long moustache and peaked beard. Later in the seventeenth century he wore a black or brown half mask furrowed with wrinkles and a large wart on his forehead. His nose was beaked and he wore a large sugar-loaf hat together with a white baggy costume and very long sleeves. Originally from Acerra in Campania, Pulcinella Cetrulo (*citruullo* meaning stupid) spoke in a strong Neapolitan dialect. He sometimes carried a food horn containing spaghetti and was an excellent tight-rope walker, often



Ferruccio Soleri wearing the Doctor Balanzone mask created by Sartori.

rope walker, often playing a cook, comic servant or cuckolded husband with a shrewish wife.

The Commedia has left vital and important legacies to contemporary theatre in the form of the pantomime Harlequin and Punch and Judy. For many innovators like Meyerhold, Copeau and Reinhard it has continued to raise major questions about the style and content of popular theatre. In the 1960s it became the cornerstone of the SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPS'S experiments in the parks and streets of California under the direction of Ronnie Davis. In 1975 it provided the medium for 'L'Age D'Or' by the THEATRE DU SOLEIL in Paris, with masks made in leather by Erhard Stieffel. The production of Giorgio Strehler at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan made the masks of Amleto Sartori famous in the sixties. More recently the work of Donato Sartori at the Centre for Masks and Structural Gesture in Padua has revived the lost tradition of mask-making in leather. Between September 6-28, the COMMEDIA WORKSHOP of Carlo Boso and Stefano Perroco was based at the Cardiff Theatre Laboratory where some forty-five students worked simultaneously on improvisation, acrobatics, creating a character and making masks in leather which culminated in two days of street performance. The UNFORTUNATI Company provided a wonderful stage of cloth, frame and trestle variant and a new generation of theatre workers were enthused with the challenge of ensemble playing and precision acting. The potential of rethinking and relocating stock characters using masks in a fast-paced, highly mobile form of touring theatre is once again on the agenda. The dream eluded Copeau in the 1920's, but has returned forcefully again in the 1980's to raise the question of an actor's theatre in touch with the daily reality of the streets and workplaces. Whether the rigours of creating a new set of stereotypes and a new set of masks will succumb to historicism or rise to take on the society in which we live remains to be seen. Just as in the past the Commedia companies changed their nature according to changed circumstances, so theatre workers of today must again take on the challenge of Commedia but not in circumstances of their own choosing. In the words of Stefano Perroco, the rules may be broken but only after they have been learned. The Commedia was a highly political

medium. Actors and actresses were often persecuted for what was taken to be their partisanship with popular causes. Just as all theatre in the broadest sense is political, so it is also partisan and committed. Perhaps the realization outlined by Dario Fo best illustrates this point:

"The important thing is to train yourself in a given direction, and to create a discipline for yourself. But in order to create a discipline, you have to have an ideology. In my opinion it is extremely dangerous to practice in the theatrical arts without knowing what end this practice is supposed to serve".

(Red Notes, London 1983, back page)



Pulcinella 1951 by Sartori. Commedia dell'arte. Theatre Marigny, Paris.



Arllecchino in L'Age D'Or by the Théâtre du Soleil, Paris 1975. Photo by Martin Franck & Jean Claude Bourbault.

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The Commedia dell'Arte and the Masks of Amleto & Donato Sartori: la Casa Usher

Some of the books, including the last named, from which several photos have been used to illustrate this article, can be consulted in the Puppet Centre.

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THE AUTHOR: M.Y. KNIGHT



Photograph by David Corio

MASKS

by Ninian Kinnier-Wilson

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

16th February - 20th March 1996





Photograph by David Corio

MASKS

OF NINIAN KINNIER-WILSON

The masks of Ninian Kinnier-Wilson represent a singular level of skill and artistry in Britain with links to much older issues and concerns. In a recent interview he described the mask as a magical and spiritual tool that is specific to the job that it does (every bit as much as a spade, a gun, or a violin). "It takes us to a place other than reality, drawing upon the right side of the brain."

Over a fifteen year period Ninian has developed a personal philosophy of the mask which underpins the craftwork. He explains that masks are powerful things, and that it is necessary to be conscious of your motives in making them work. There is also a further parallel with magic, in that just as magic is neither good nor evil, so masks don't exist on their own but work within their own traditions. And because masks show lies and untruths very clearly it is impossible to hide behind them. For this reason you must be true to yourself before you start the making process.

"Primarily I'm interested in Western traditions because I'm inside this tradition. Consequently, theatre or carnival is the Western tradition that I started from. In this regard, I began with Commedia dell'Arte and after working on the leather process with Carlo Boso and Stefano Perroco, I began to seek out the archetypes of myth. Through this search I came to see that Commedia is an old tradition (1500-1750) based on an even older tradition. And in between commedia and the archetypes of myth was the making of the full-face neutral mask. The making of the male and female neutral masks taught me precision, and each wooden mould took three months to carve."

"Earning a living as a mask-maker in contemporary Britain is a labour intensive and arduous business. You don't do it for the money. Of course, you can do something else and make masks as a hobby. After all anyone can make a mask, and kids play with them all the time. But making the right mask is difficult. I suppose I do it because it's what I'm best at. I'm still waiting for the mask teachers to catch up with me. I'd like to make more spiritual masks, and the character half-masks still need to catch on within mainstream actor-training. However, because I make them, I can't teach them. You need the mask-maker and the mask-user. For my part, I like to give them to someone else to use them."

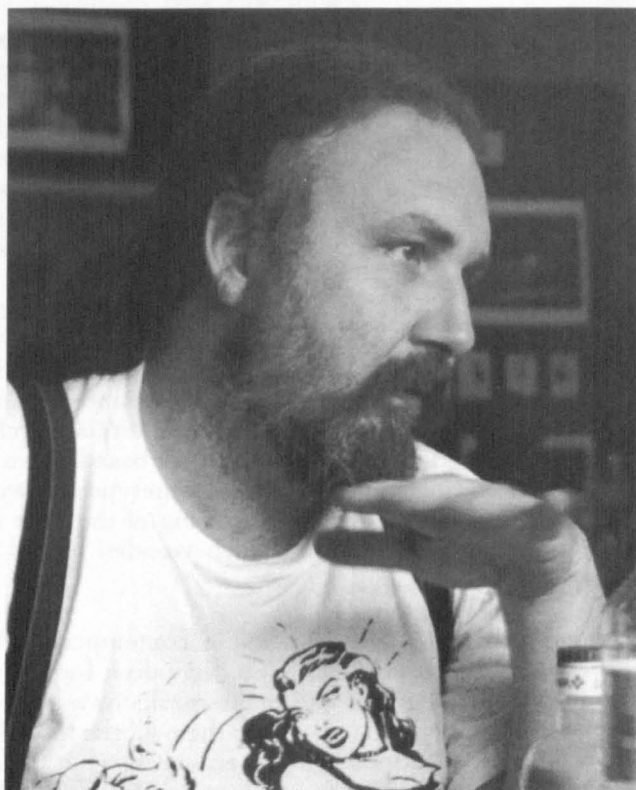


This exhibition consists of eighty-three masks categorised across the following areas; carnival, character half-masks, leather half-masks, commedia dell'arte, archetypes of myth, and miscellaneous fantasy creations. The masks are made from leather, celastic, and papier-mâché and have been created over a fifteen year period.

MALCOLM YATES KNIGHT

Honorary Secretary, Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre

President, International Federation of Centres for Puppetry Arts



Ninian Kinnier-Wilson



CARNIVAL MASKS

The Bauta mask from the Venice Carnival is not merely decorative, but was worn by secret informers who monitored the activities of the people against the City State. Similarly, the nose of the Plague Doctor was designed to carry medicines and herbs as a protection against the plague.

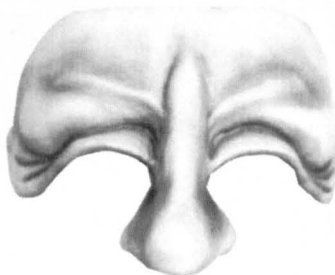
1. **Bauta - Antique (CA.2)**
2. **The Plague Doctor (CA.9)**
3. **Bauta - Black (CA.1)**
4. **Bauta - Gold (CA.4)**



CHARACTER HALF-MASKS

The Character Half-Mask series is deliberately unidentified to encourage the wearer to find the character through movement and voice. This kind of mask was first used by Michel Saint-Denis for actor training purposes at the London Theatre School in 1936, and later at the Juillard Schools in New York and Strasbourg. George Devine and Keith Johnstone also used character masks at the Royal Court in the 1960's, and this work has since been continued by Edward Argent at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

1. **(C.13)**
2. **(C.17)**
3. **(C.20)**
4. **(C.10)**
5. **(C.11)**



6. (C.1)
7. (C.6)
8. (C.9)
9. (C.14)
10. (C.18)
11. (C.21)
12. (C.4)
13. (C.3)
14. (C.16)
15. (C.22)
16. (C.2)
17. (C.15)
18. (C.25)
19. (C.23)
20. (C.19)
21. (C.2)
22. (C.26)
23. (C.7)
24. (C.12)
25. (C.5)
26. (C.8)



LEATHER HALF-MASKS

The traditional leather half-mask from Commedia dell'Arte disappeared in 1750 with the mask guilds that created it. The technique of working in leather was rediscovered by Amleto Sartori, a professor of sculpture at Padua University in 1948; and popularised by his son Donato who founded the Centre for Masks and Structural Gesture. One of his students, Stefano Perroco, a Venetian mask-maker, introduced Ninian to these techniques. The leather mask is the most comfortable and durable of all the masks; literally a skin that fits over the skin. This is a highly skilled and volatile process which requires appropriate materials and conditions, and enormous knowledge of leather-working, dyeing, and finishing.

1. **Brighella (L.27)**
2. **Pimpinella (L.25)**
3. **Pulcinella (L.29)**
4. **Pantalone (L.11)**
5. **Capitano (L.32)**
6. **Trovatella (L.26)**
7. **Petrovitch (L.2)**
8. **Capitano (L.6)**
9. **Arlechino (L.22)**
10. **Il Dottore (L.8)**
11. **Zanni (L.33)**
12. **Mr. Punch (L.23)**



13. Colin (L.3)
14. Capitano Catso (L.31)
15. Tartaglia (L.4)
16. Giangurgolo (L.28)
17. Zanni (L.30)
18. Pantalone Magnifico (L.10)

COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

This series of commedia masks is made in celastic, and extends across a wide range of types. Celastic is a cloth soaked in acetone which is torn into strips and shaped either into or around a mould. The process demands good ventilation and protective mask and gloves. The result is a sturdy and light-weight mask which can be worked to quite a high finish.

1. Scaramouche (CDA.21)
2. Strega (CDA.23)
3. Harlequin (CDA.17)
4. Doctor (CDA.13)
5. Zanni (CDA.22)
6. Pulcinella (Neapolitan) (CDA.9)
7. Pedrolino (CDA.11)
8. Harlequin (CDA.7)
9. Mezzetino (CDA.29)



10. Casandro (CDA.10)
11. Pantalone (CDA.25)
12. Pulcinella (Venetian) (CDA.5)
13. Giangurgolo (Zanni/Old Man/Captain) (CDA.14)
14. Brighella (CDA.28)

THE ARCHETYPES OF MYTH

After the successful creation of the full-face Universal or Neutral Mask in leather (which needed to be sufficiently distinct from the Sartori originals made for the Jacques Lecoq School in Paris), Ninian became fascinated with the archetypes of myth. These emerged from a commission request by John Wright of Trestle Theatre in 1988. It was a labour-intensive and difficult project since the archetypes had not been mapped out or visually codified before. Once again, these masks are eminently suited to silent pantomime improvisations in an actor-training context.

1. The Huntress (A.10)
2. The King (A.6)
3. The Crone (A.11)
4. The Stepmother (A.5)
5. The Trickster (A.12)
6. The Mother (A.16)
7. The Devil (A.4)
8. The Hero (A.7)



9. The Ogre (A.14)
10. The Child (A.15)
11. The Victim (A.13)
12. The Virgin (A.1)
13. The Blind Man (A.3)
14. The Father (A.2)
15. The Spirit (A.9)
16. The Fool (A.8)

MISCELLANEOUS CREATIONS

During the past three years Ninian has moved away from the mask aimed at actor-training to include the creation of large-scale wall coverings and carnival sculptures. This exploration of popular Medieval imagery reveals a strong craft base and the masks are growing larger now that they are not confined to being worn on the face.

1. Satyr (MSC.2)
2. Jester (MSC.7)
3. Lunar Monk (MSC.6)
4. Vampire (MSC.4)
5. The Sun (MSC.5)





A Brief Biography

Ninian Kinnier-Wilson graduated from Liverpool School of Art with a BA Hons in Fine Art. He has studied Commedia dell'Arte with Carlo Boso and mask-making with Stefano Perroco in Paris, London, Cardiff and Avignon.

Performance:

- 1981 Co-founded UNFORTUNATI Commedia company.
- 1981-86 Performed with and made masks for UNFORTUNATI on tours of Britain and Europe.

Commissions:

- 1981 Arts Educational School
- 1981 John Wright, Middlesex Polytechnic (6 leather archetypes)
- 1982 Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama
- 1983 Trestle Theatre Company
- 1983 I Gelati Theatre Company
- 1984 The Gobbi Players Theatre Company
- 1985 Scaramouche Theatre Company
- 1987 Call of the Wild Theatre Company
- 1988 Fortunati Theatre Company
- 1988 John Wright, Mask Tutor (set of 13 archetypes of myth)
- 1988 Revels of Sienna, Royal Festival Hall (commedia masks)
- 1990 Festival of the Image, St.Etienne, France (6 masks of Gaston Le Gaffe)
- 1990 Tottering Biped Theatre Company
- 1991 Festival of the Image, St.Etienne, France (2 portrait masks)
- 1992 Original Mixture Theatre Company at the ICA London
- 1992 Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
- 1993 Theatre Clwyd
- 1993 Motley Books
- 1993 John Wright, Mask Tutor (4 new archetypes)
- 1993 Roehampton Institute
- 1993 Mime Touch Theatre Company, Hong Kong
- 1993 Central TV
- 1993 York Museum
- 1994 Central TV
- 1994 Mime Touch Theatre Company, Hong Kong
- 1994 Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford
- 1994 Central TV
- 1994 Out of Joint Theatre Company
- 1994 Cambridge Greek Play, Faculty of Classics



Residencies:

- 1987-91 Harlequin Art - International theatre project at Bayreuth, Germany and Metz, France. Made masks for five international theatre companies at each annual workshop.
- 1987 The inauguration of Sam Wannamaker Globe Theatre

Exhibitions:*One Man Shows:*

- 1983 Nottingham Arts Centre
 1986 Battersea Arts Centre
 1987 Islington Libraries
 1987 Battersea Arts Centre
 1988 Old Bull Arts Centre, Barnet
 1988 Islington Libraries
 1989 Bibliotech, Metz, France
 1991 Maison Rabelais, Metz, France.

Mixed Shows:

- 1990 Salisbury Arts Centre
 1990 Touring Exhibition "The Other Face"
 1991 Nottingham Museum
 1992 Luton Central Library
 1993 Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama

Teaching:*Mask-Making:*

- 1983 Old Bull Arts Centre, Barnet
 1986 Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre, Glasgow
 1988 Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre, Glasgow
 1988 London International Workshop Festival (Master class)
 1989 Haymarket Theatre, Leicester
 1990 Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre, Glasgow
 1991 Haymarket Theatre, Leicester
 1993 Palace Theatre, Watford
 1994 The Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
 1994 Trestle Theatre Company



Commedia:

1984	Middlesex Polytechnic
1985	Battersea Arts Centre
1986	Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
1989	Haymarket Theatre, Leicester
1990	Liverpool Festival of Comedy
1990-91	Haymarket Youth Theatre, Leicester (directed two commedia shows)
1991	T.I.E. Company, Liverpool
1991	Haymarket Theatre, Leicester
1992	Melton Mowbray College, Leicester
1994	Broadgreen School, Liverpool

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to Dave O'Connor for his invaluable support and practical work in mask-making/painting and in mounting this exhibition.

Ninian Kinnier-Wilson would like to express his thanks and indebtedness for all the help and inspiration provided by Carlo Boso, Stefano Perroco, and John Wright over the years.

Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre has been financially assisted in realising this project by Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Regional Council - without whose generous support it would not have been possible. The screens and display cabinets were donated by Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries.



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MASKS

NINIAN KINNIER - WILSON

Mask - Maker

Mask Workshop
32 Moscow Drive
Liverpool
L13 7DH

Telephone:
(0151) 259 5422



The Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre

8-10 Balcarres Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow G12 0QF.

Tel: 0141-339 6185 Fax: 0141-357 4484

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THE AUTHOR: M.Y. KNIGHT

NOH MASKS



Greetings

About six hundred years have already passed since Noh attained its maturity in the Muromachi period, and today it still attracts many Japanese, as well as those abroad. Noh is a rare example of a theatrical art which has survived over a long period of time. The secret of its durability can be found in the fact that the art of Noh expresses the essence of Japanese beauty ; beauty in its extreme simplicity.

In creating the art of Noh, masks along with costumes play as important a role as the dancing and acting. In Noh plays only the *shite*, or the main characters, wear masks. Various types of masks have been developed in order to express the characters' roles. Today there are more than two hundred and fifty different types of Noh masks.

Today in Japan there are many professional and amateur sculptors engaged in carving masks. The Nohzin-kai is a group of such sculptors. Twice in the past we have exhibited our work in London and once in Birmingham. The success of these exhibitions was due in no small part to the support and encouragement of Mr. John Blundall of the Cannonhill Puppet Theatre.

On this occasion, however, we would like to thank Mr. Malcolm Knight of The Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre for his tireless efforts on our behalf to bring forty Noh masks to Glasgow. In addition we are greatly looking forward to our period of residency between 6-19 April 1992 in teaching twelve students how to carve the *ko-omote* or mask used for the youngest female roles. We sincerely hope that this project will contribute to the understanding of Japanese culture by the Scottish people. Our thanks also go to all those who have supported this project with their generous funds and time within Glasgow District Council, Strathclyde Regional Council and The Scottish Arts Council.

NOHZIN SUZUKI
President of the Nohzin-kai

The Nohzin-kai Office : c/o Nohzin Suzuki, 16-4 Ikedahiro-machi, Nagata-ku,
Kobe 653, Japan. Tel: 078-641 6500

The Art of Noh

The word "Noh" means accomplishment or artistry - a reflection not only of the skills of a theatrical performer in portraying the subtle nuances of meaning, but also of the Noh mask-carver or *men-uchi*.

Noh draws its forms and materials from religious roots - Buddhist scriptures and temple dances; from Oriental poetry, myth and legend; and from folk entertainment.

It eventually developed into a precise and spiritually intense lyric drama. The first printed texts are dated about 1600 AD, and there are some 250 texts in existence. The earliest known exponents, who steered its development to the more formalised form of drama now typical of the genre, were Kanami (1333-84) and his son Zeami (1363-1443).

The Noh play is divided into six pieces, each of about one hour's duration. The performance usually begins in the morning or early afternoon. One piece is chosen from each of the following categories - the god piece, the battle piece, the wig piece and woman's dance, the mad piece, the historical piece, and the finale or demon piece.

Each category has special masks and costumes in specified styles and colours, and the action is performed on a bare stage with a single painted pine tree, signifying strength, on the back wall. The chorus and musicians occupy traditional places, while music and words are inseparable. They are performed by a dancer, and the audience sits on two sides of an eighteen foot square stage. The musicians who sit at the rear of the stage play the flute and drums of three kinds.

The leading performer is known as the *shite*, and the supporting role is that of the *waki*. The major parts played by the *shite* are those of the young man or woman, the old man or woman, a warlord or a god. There are more than 250 varieties of masks which are delicately carved in Japanese cypress (*Hinoki*) wood. These are categorised as divinities, animals, monsters, old or young women or men, tragic or noble characters.

Hinoki wood is durable but easily worked. The bark side of the wood is fashioned into the inside of the mask so that any resin which might seep to the surface will not harm the mask. The process of carving the mask is often termed "striking the mask", and is undertaken with specially made carving chisels, gouges and knives. All the tools supplied for this residency were donated by a master tool and chisel maker, Miki Shiyo Hamono HonPo, to whom

we express our great thanks and admiration.

Before the performer places the mask on his face he stares at it intently, holding it at the two small holes next to the ears. These are the only part of the polished surface which should be touched. The performer's face is padded with wadded cotton wrapped in soft paper so that the mask will fit securely. Finally the mask is attached to the head by ribbons passed through the ear-holes.

The directors and staff of the Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre are honoured to welcome this residency and exhibition by Mr. Nohzin Suzuki and his staff, and hope that some of the deep philosophy and practice of the art of mask-making for Noh theatre will influence contemporary practice in Scotland.

MALCOLM YATES KNIGHT

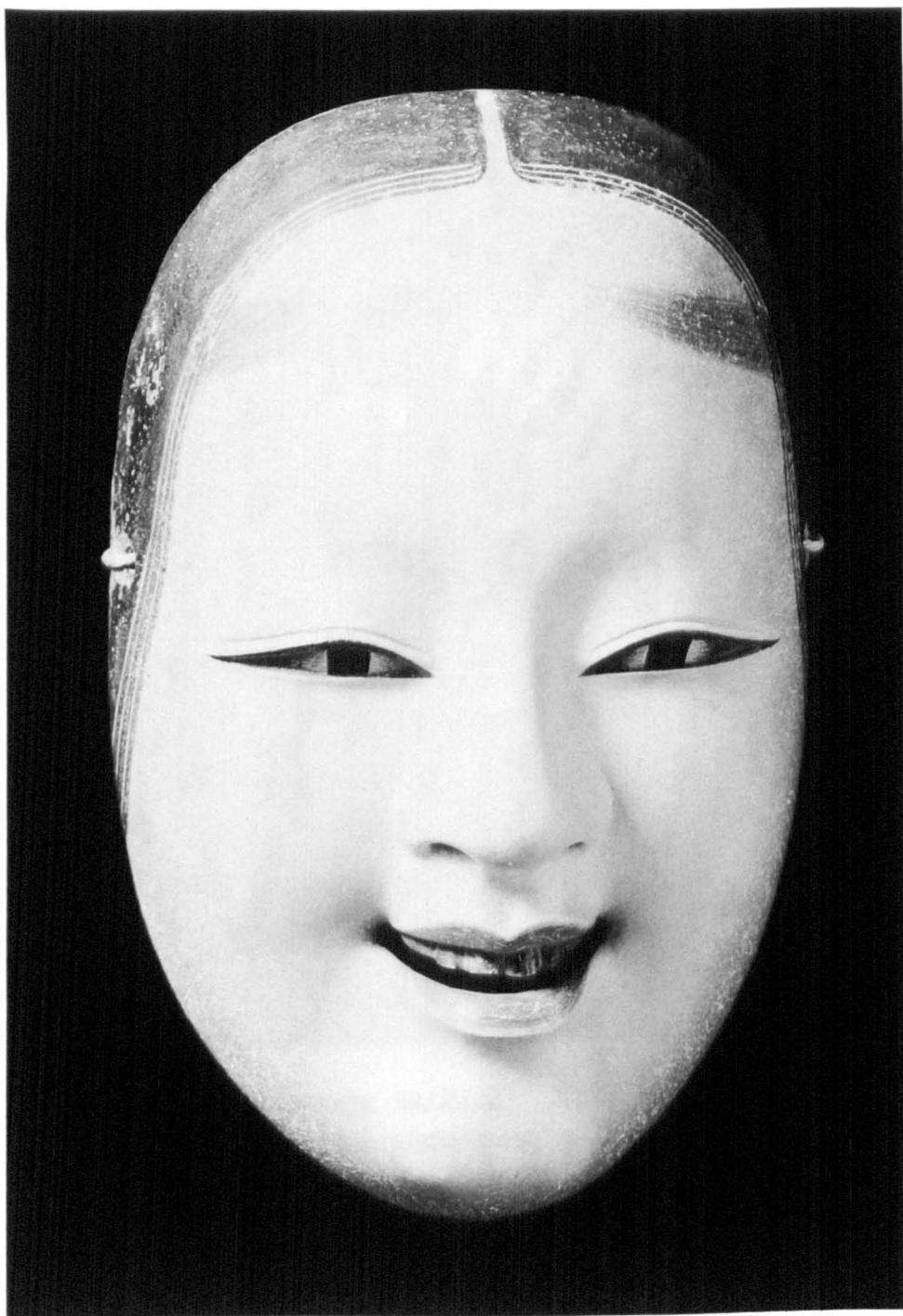
Hon. Secretary Scottish Mask & Puppet Centre
President, International Federation of Centres for Puppetry Arts

Exhibits

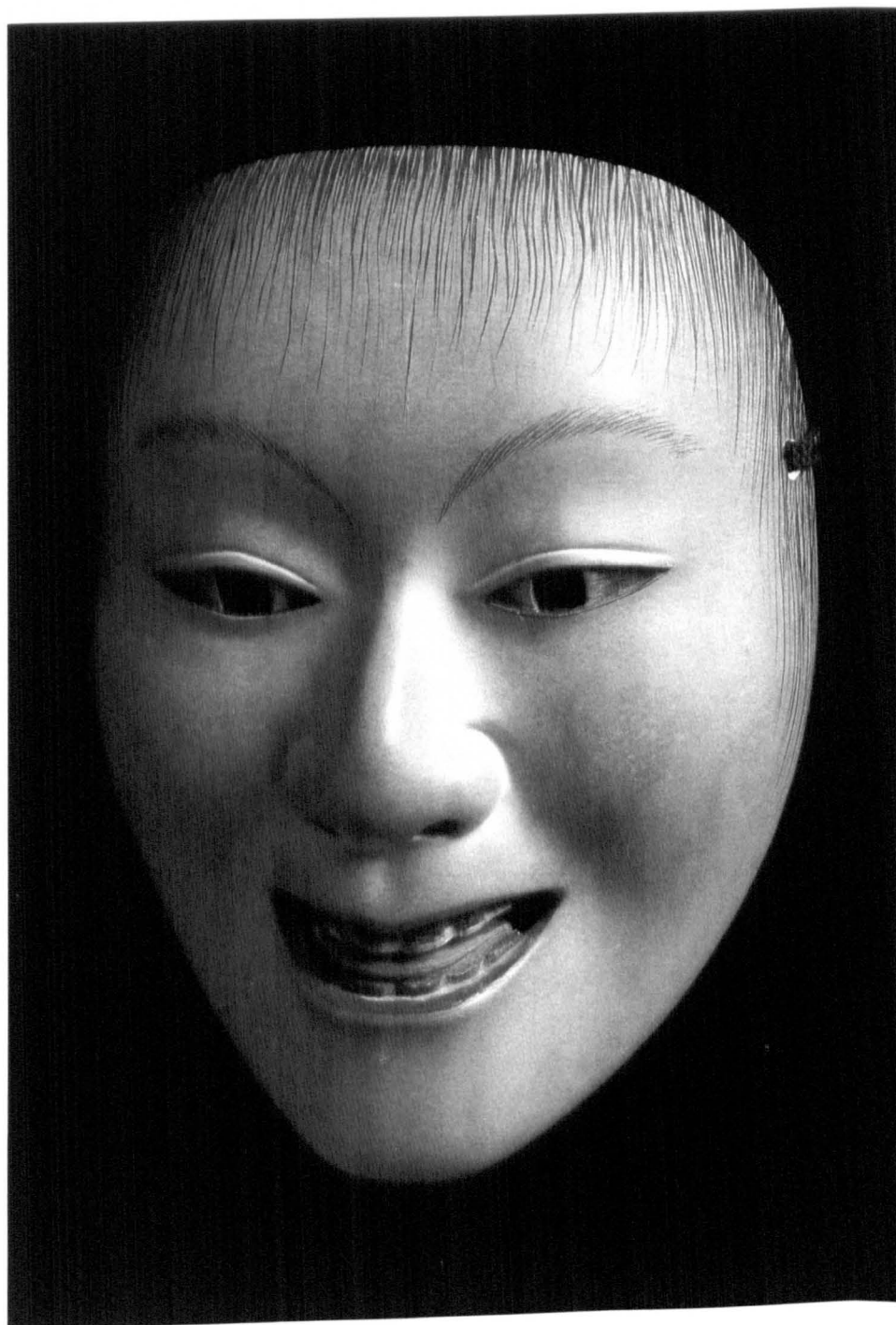
1. OKINA
翁(白色尉)
(田中 能信)
(The Okina mask with its benign smiling expression (Hakushiki - jyo) is a symbol of longevity and prosperity. Old man with a split jaw and ornate eyebrows)
Nohshin TANAKA
2. OKINA
翁(白色尉)
(楠本 能白)
(Ibid)
(Hakushiki - jyo) Nohhaku KUSUMOTO
3. SANBASO
三番叟(黑色尉)
(楠本 能白)
(The celebratory mask of a god who prays for peace (kokushiki - jyo) and tranquility over the earth, and for the fertility of the world's harvest)
Nohhaku KUSUMOTO
4. ASAKURA-JYO
朝倉尉
(鈴木 能仁)
(This mask depicts a typical, friendly old man)
Nohzin SUZUKI
5. ASAKURA-JYO
朝倉尉
(鈴木 能仁)
(Ibid)
Nohzin SUZUKI
6. MYOGA-AKUJYO
茗荷悪尉
(鈴木 能仁)
(The terrifying mask of an old man whose eyes are created in the shape of Japanese "Myoga" leaves)
Nohzin SUZUKI
7. O-TOBIDE
大飛出
(鈴木 能仁)
(Larger protruding eyes)
Nohzin SUZUKI
8. SHIKAMI
蟬
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a malicious brutal devil)
Nohzin SUZUKI
9. SHISHIGUCHI
獅子口
(楠本 能白)
(The mask of the lion which is the spiritual animal serving the gods, and the king of beasts)
Nohhaku KUSUMOTO
10. KO-BESHIMI
小癒見
(鈴木 能仁)
("Beshimi" means to clamp one's lips tightly together in order to cover one's teeth)
Nohzin SUZUKI
11. KUMASAKA
熊
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a phantom thief called "Kumasaka")
Nohzin SUZUKI
12. YASE-OTOKO
瘦男
(森本 能春)
(This is the face of a man who is not living in this world but has descended into hell and become a ghost)
Nohshun MORIOTO



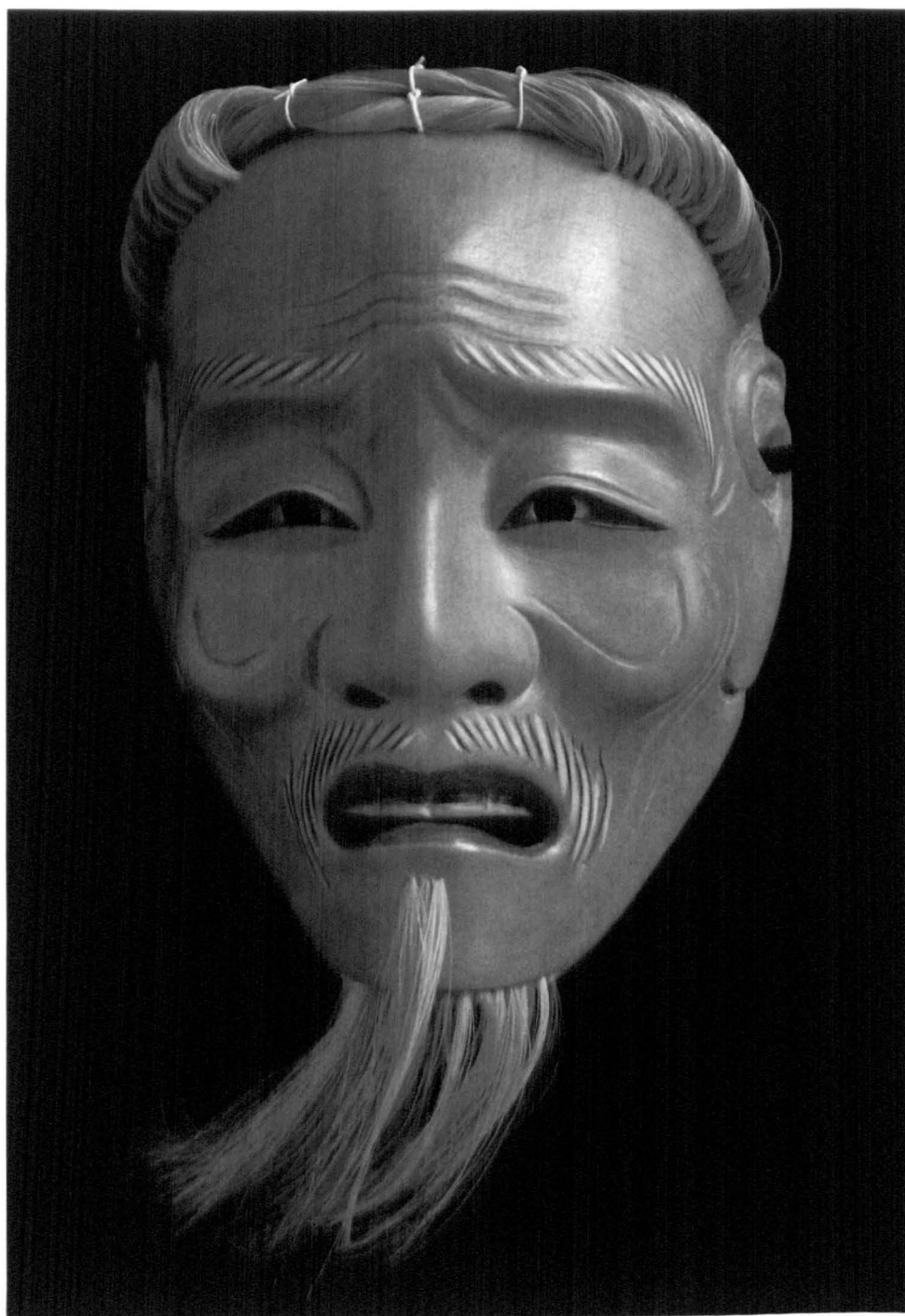
HANNYA



KO-OMOTE



CHUJO



KO-JO

13. SHUNKAN
俊寛
(繁森 能康)
(This mask shows sorrow and grief, because he was exiled to an isolated island alone)
Nohko SHIGEMORI
14. KO-TAKA
小鷹
(鈴木 能仁)
(A mask which conjures up images of the violence of a hawk, with its triangular-shaped slanted eyes)
Nohzin SUZUKI
15. YORIMASA
頼政
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a Samurai warrior, with its expression of hatred and malice after having been defeated in battle)
Nohzin SUZUKI
16. SHINTAI
神体
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a youthful god)
Nohzin SUZUKI
17. CHUJYO
中將
(楠本 能白)
(The teeth of this mask are dyed black, and the eyebrows are pencilled in. This kind of make-up was common in the Heian period 8th-12th century A.D.)
Nohhaku KUSUMOTO
18. IMAWAKA
今若
(鈴木 能仁)
(This mask shows the sorrowful expression of a young nobleman)
Nohzin SUZUKI
19. KATSUSHIKI
喝食
(鈴木 能仁)
(A teen-aged boy between the age of 12-16 years who serves the dishes at Zen temples)
Nohzin SUZUKI
20. WAKA-ONNA
若女
(尾形 能遊)
(The mask of an intelligent young woman)
Nohyu OGATA
21. KO-OMOTE
小面
(鈴木 能仁)
(Young female mask or maiden aged 16-17)
Nohzin SUZUKI
22. KO-OMOTE
小面
(鈴木 能仁)
(Ibid)
Nohzin SUZUKI
23. MAGOJIRO
孫次郎
(□ 真弓能)
A man who lost his wife early in her life, carved her image into a mask)
Mayuminoh SAKAGUCHI
24. ZO-ONNA
増女
(鈴木 能仁)
(An innocent, beautiful , nymph or goddess)
Nohzin SUZUKI

25. SHAKUMI
曲見
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a middle-aged woman of low birth)
Nohzin SUZUKI
26. FUKAI
深井
(鈴木 能仁)
(Middle-aged woman, 40 years, used to portray a woman in deep grief over the death of her child)
Nohzin SUZUKI
27. FUSHIKI-ZO
節木増
(鈴木 能仁)
(A mask for a young woman)
Nohzin SUZUKI
28. DEIGAN
泥眼
(鈴木 能仁)
(A mask which gets its name from its gold painted eyes, representing a woman being tormented in hell)
Nohzin SUZUKI
29. YASE-ONNA
瘦女
(鈴木 能仁)
(A mask of an emaciated woman)
Nohzin SUZUKI
30. YASE-ONNA
瘦女
(鈴木 能仁)
(Ibid)
Nohzin SUZUKI
31. YAMA-UBA
山姥
(鈴木 能仁)
(An old woman but also a kind of she-devil living deep in the mountain)
Nohzin SUZUKI
32. YAMA-UBA
山姥
(鈴木 能仁)
(Ibid)
Nohzin SUZUKI
33. HASHI-HIME
橋姫
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a woman who threw herself into the river because of her jealousy)
Nohzin SUZUKI
34. REIJO
霊女
(口 真弓能)
(The mask of a vengeful ghost)
Mayuminoh SAKAGUCHI
35. NAMANARI
生成
(鈴木 能仁)
(The mask of a female ghost who is disturbed because of her jealousy)
Nohzin SUZUKI
36. OTO
(鈴木 能仁)
(Kyogen Masks)
(A comic mask of an ugly woman with a flat nose and extremely full and round cheeks)
Nohzin SUZUKI

37. OTO
(楠本 能白) *(Ibid)*
Nohhaku KUSUMOTO
38. FUKURE
ふくれ
(田中 能信) *(This mask is used to depict the grace and dignity of a nun in old age)*
Nohshin TANAKA
39. KITSUNE
狐
(楠本 能白) *(The mask of a fox)*
Nohhaku KUSUMOTO
40. HAKUZOSU
白藏師
(楠本 能白) *(A mask for KYOGEN. It is a face of a fox which appears in human shape)*
Nohhaku KUSUMOTO

Credits

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coordinated by Malcolm Y. KNIGHT
promoted by THE SCOTTISH MASK & PUPPET CENTRE
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The Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre

8-12 Balcarres Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow G12 0QF Tel: 339 6185 Fax 357 4484

