MASKS: THEIR USE AND EFFECTIVENESS IN ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

MASKS: THEIR USE AND EFFECTIVENESS IN ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

By

Sears Atwood Eldredge

The use of masks in actor training programs is not a new idea, but it is not widely known or practiced. It originated in the early part of this century as an actor training method developed by Jacques Copeau at his École du Vieux-Colombier in Paris. Copeau discovered that masks could be used as training devices to release his apprentice actors psychophysically as well as teach them in a concrete fashion to transform themselves physically and vocally into the being that the masks represented. Copeau continued to explore the uses of the masks in actor training with his students, and since then others, primarily his students or students of his students, have elaborated on the core of teaching that Copeau established.

It should be understood at the outset that this use of the mask in actor training is <u>not</u> as a preparation for masked theatre forms, although the implications are certainly there for that sort of application of the techniques. Rather, this was a method developed to train apprentice actors for non-masked theatre.

There has never been a systematic investigation of this unique teaching procedure in print, as the training method was handed down by oral transmission and classroom experience from teacher to student. This study will attempt to provide that thorough investigation by examining the philosophical theory on which the training is based, by describing in detail how the mask is used in the actor training programs, and then by evaluating what the beneficial effects of this training are for the actor's future development as a performing artist.

The research methods necessary to complete this study have involved extensive interviews with many of the faculty who teach actor training with masks as well as observation of classes in which the techniques of this method were employed. The transcriptions of the interviews appear in the Appendices. Library research into primary and secondary source materials was conducted as well. Thirty-five photographs of masks and their use in the training procedure accompany the text.

The study is divided into ten chapters. Chapter I is concerned with the statement of the focus of the study, the research methodologies involved, definitions, and what non-theatrical sources indicate is the nature of the effect of the mask on the wearer and viewer. Then in Chapter II there is a look at the historical milieu in which the rebirth of the mask in the modern world occurred, with particular attention to the responses of those that were affected by their experiences of the mask. This is followed (Chapter III) by an examination of the life and thought of Jacques

Copeau; his discovery of the mask as a training device, and the application of this discovery in his theatre schools. Chapter IV surveys the current actor training programs that presently employ this method, and is followed by a brief description of the different types, construction materials, and design principles involved with these training masks (Chapter V). The next four chapters are a detailed examination of the theories and techniques employed with the various kinds of training masks: the Universal Masks (Chapter VI), the Character Masks (Chapter VII), the Miscellaneous Training Masks (Chapter VIII), and the Commedia dell'arte Masks (Chapter IX). In Chapter X the implications and conclusions concerning the value and effectiveness of this training method for the student actor are presented.

MASKS: THEIR USE AND EFFECTIVENESS IN ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

By

Sears Atwood Eldredge

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DEDICATED TO

Patricia Reid Eldredge--without whose encouragement, patience, and sacrifice, this work would never have been completed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Whatever primitive man did learn through his use of symbol masks remains an integral part of human culture. . . . The residue remains in a state of availability in the subterranean reserves of the imagination and the passions. They serve their purpose in ways that bear the marks of the old nocturnal state, defying our logical analysis to a great extent. Now, they serve as background for discovery, for invention, and what concerns us here, for artistic creation. As we can discern in our modern masks, the insights of the past still live in the blood and in the bones, almost reluctant to serve a daylight master.
>
> Edward Sullivan, C.S.B.
> Persona Grata

There is a constant need to re-examine the nature of acting, to look at and discover different ways to help the actor prepare himself as an expressive individual. No theory of acting or set of training techniques is final, yet all make their important contribution to our understanding of the art.

The idea of using masks as an instrument to stimulate the actor psychophysically is not a new one. It was discovered as a teaching method in the early part of this century by Jacques Copeau, one of the most influential acting teachers and directors in the modern French theater. After his initial discovery, Copeau continued to develop the method with his acting students. Since then others, primarily his students or students of his students, have taken up

the study, exploring further the ramifications of this actor training method.

It should be understood at the outset that this use of the mask in training actors is not as a preparation for masked theatre forms, although the implications are certainly there for that sort of application of the techniques. Rather, this was a method primarily developed to train young actors for non-masked theater.

The notion that masks produce a powerful effect upon the wearer is also not a new idea. Historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and others outside the performing arts testify to this fact from their own research and experience. But this dissertation is not to be an investigation into the history of the mask, nor the significance of the manifestations of the mask in all cultures and climes, nor the implications of the mask and the masking complex for the illumination of the self and society. However, the insights gained by these investigators in their various fields are not to be ignored. Their comments will be examined in this introductory chapter to help us define what the nature of the mask is, and to note what effects a mask has on the mask wearer. Their views on this matter will then relate directly to the main concern of this study, which is to investigate how the mask is used as a training device to teach acting, and to explore what the beneficial effects of this training are for the actor's future development as a performing artist.

There has never been a thorough examination of this unique training procedure. The closest that we come to a systematic statement

of this method is in two books by Léon Chancerel, one of Jacques Copeau's students. These books are Le Masque[1] and Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse.[2] But these are only outline sketches of the method. Other partial statements of the technique are also found in Jan Doat's L'Expression Corporelle du Comédien[3] and Charles Dullin's Souvenirs et notes de travail d'un Acteur.[4] Copeau, himself, never published any notes or outline of this method. None of the books mentioned above, other than Dullin's, are widely known or easily available in this country. And none have been translated into English, except for portions of Dullin's book (but not the section on masks) found in Cole and Chinoy's Actors on Acting.[5]

Also, there has not been any attempt to research the responses of those various theatre artists who have either been involved with or have observed the process of creating and wearing masks, such as playwrights, actors, mimes, dancers, directors, mask designers/makers, acting teachers, theatre critics and theorists. This study will attempt to bring this information together in order to analyze and evaluate what we can know about the effects of the mask on the wearer and the value of the mask in actor training programs.

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[1] "La Collection Prospero 10," Vol. I; Paris: Publication du Centre Dramatique, 1944; "La Collection Prospero 11," Vol. II; Paris: Publication de Centre Dramatique, 1947.

[2] (4th ed.; Paris: Editions Bourrelier, 1953).

[3] (Bordas: Editions Français Nouvelle, 1944).

[4] (Paris: Odette Lieutier, 1946).

[5] (New York: Crown Publishers, 1970).

Since the techniques of the mask training have been primarily handed down from teacher to student through oral transmission and classroom experience, most of the resources for research are at those schools currently engaged in using this method. The schools in this country are: The School of Drama, Yale University; The Juilliard School, Drama Division; The Goodman School of Drama; The University of Washington School of Drama (Professional Actor Training Program); The School of Drama at the University of Montana; and the proposed training program of the Contemporary Theatre Collective at Harvardhouse.

Those schools abroad teaching acting with masks are: The National Theatre School of Canada (Montreal, Quebec); The École Superieure d'Art Dramatique (Strasbourg, France); The École Jacques Lecoq (Paris, France); and the school of the Piccolo Teatro di Milano (Milan, Italy).

It is from Jacques Copeau and his students that all of these present programs have descended.

Therefore, the research methods necessary to complete this study have involved extensive interviews with many of the faculty who teach actor training with masks and observation of classes in which the techniques of the method were employed. The transcriptions of these interviews appear in the Appendices. These were the primary sources of information. Library research into primary and secondary source materials was conducted as well.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define what we are talking about when we use the word, "mask." If we look at

a set of definitions of the mask from a variety of sources, then we can combine them into a more inclusive definition.

> Mask: a cover or partial cover for the face used as a disguise.[6]
>
> Masks, coverings for the face, taking various forms, used either as a protective screen or as a disguise.[7]
>
> . . . a mask is an artificial covering generally limited to the face or head, which usually represents a human, animal, or grotesque demon face.[8]
>
> Our primary definition of the mask, then must be the face--and head--mask: i.e., a new form of face and head, artificially produced, meant to be worn and to alter the appearance and effect of the wearer in a deliberate and definite manner.[9]
>
> It is first of all a material object, a thing. Before being placed on the face of a man, it is a reality in itself, hence it has an autonomous function.[10] (A.T.)
>
> A mask is a concrete object.[11]

By taking bits and pieces from all these definitions, we can create our own working definition of a mask: A mask is a concrete object designed to cover the face in order to disguise it. If we

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[6] Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1967), p. 519.

[7] S. Culin, "Masks," Encyclopedia Britannica, XV (1946), p. 11.

[8] Lindley Powers Spencer, "Masks in Theater" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968), p. xiv.

[9] Joseph Gregor, Masks of the World (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1937), p. 7.

[10] Alessandro Pizzorno, "Le Masque," Cahiers Renaud-Barrault (November, 1960), p. 144. [The symbol "A.T." will be used in this study to indicate "author's translation" of original material not found in English.]

[11] Michel Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1969), p. 103.

look at the three parts of this composite definition separately, we can gain a greater dimension to our understanding of the nature of the mask.

A mask is a concrete object. We are not talking here in this study about the use of makeup which covers the face with a layer of pigment, but leaves the facial muscles free play, even though that makeup may seemingly erase the contours of the face, creating a mask-like effect, as it does in some traditional Asian theatre forms such as the Peking Opera and the Japanese Kabuki theater. What we are talking about is a physical object placed in front of the face. It is important to make such a distinction because of the way that concrete objects function as affective images on the observer.

> How we look, what we see, how we react to the same object is intensely varied and personal. Factual, objective information such as length, height, width, names, dates is accepted without query, but our response to the subjective element in ideas or colour, in shape or texture is personal and individual and is influenced by our associations and previous experiences. This personal response is inherent in visual awareness. It has to be recognized and carefully nurtured for it contains the germ of original creative thought and expression.[12]

Jurgen Ruesch and Weldon Kees in their book, Nonverbal Communication,[13] have investigated more thoroughly the effect that objects exert upon us.

> The effects that objects achieve in terms of their communicative value are dependent not only upon arrangement but

---

[12]Renée Marcousé, Using Objects (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1974), p. 7.

[13](Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956).

> also upon variations of material, shape, and surface. Any material evokes tactile and thermal images--of smoothness, roughness, hardness, softness, coldness, and warmth . . . all set up 'chords' of tactile images that often produce sharp and immediate physical and emotional reactions. . . .[14]

But in what way do concrete objects produce "physical and emotional reactions"? Dr. Werner Muensterberger gives a partial answer when he writes that the concrete object of the mask "creates a visual image of a more or less subjective element rooted in the depths of the human mind."[15]

The psychologist, Charlotte Wolff, provides a further explanation in stating how the visual image and the emotional world of the viewer are interrelated.

> The communication between imagination and emotion is a two-way road. Images can revive and even produce emotions and corresponding emotional expressions. . . . These emotional images have a direct influence on the organism.[16]

The direct influence of the image/object on the organism is its effect on body movement.

> Objects can control movements of the body. In appraising the suitability of an object for personal use, an observer usually combines his perceptual impression of the object with considerations of his body image. He projects himself in action and subsequently in an actual test, compares his achievement with his expectations.[17]

It is also possible for objects to take on symbolic significance for the sensitive observer.

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[14]Ibid., p. 93.

[15]"Man's Need to Change," Persona Grata (Houston: University of St. Thomas, 1960), n.p.

[16]The Psychology of Gesture, trans. Anne Tennant (2nd ed.; London: Methuen & Co., 1948), p. 65.

[17]Ruesch and Kees, p. 126.

> To the eye of the person with strong emotional preoccupations, the exterior world undergoes a metamorphosis. Objects and situations can become charged with a hidden meaning which is purely subjective. By projecting his inner state on exterior reality, the outside world assumes an imminence and a power at once attractive and frightening which keeps man in continual suspence and expectation.[18]

Reusch and Kees in their study of objects agree that the symbolic nature of the objects is imposed from the outside by the viewer.[19] If the mask is a concrete object that will powerfully affect the emotional and physical aspects of the viewer/wearer, then the shaping or design of that object becomes extremely important.

> Through selective design, then, the mask becomes an iconographic instrument of expression--an object simplified to its essence in order more efficiently to convey its message to the human brain's primary ideographic functions. The illusions the mask can produce are many and varied, and they are at least partly due to the design of each mask itself and to the symbolic function it provides the dramatic structure.[20]

We must finally understand the mask as a concrete object that "is not so much pictorial as participatory in its sensory appeal."[21]

Alessandro Pizzorno, an Italian sociologist, understands the mask in just this way: as an instrument of participation.

> The mask is an instrument of participation and achievement. In the movement which conditions it, it is a fixity. In the succession of gestures, the sign of the mask remains immobile, identical to itself in one instant or the other, the same at the end as it was at the beginning. In this dance, it is an

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[18]Wolff, p. 66.

[19]p. 191.

[20]Spencer, p. 425.

[21]Marshall McLuhan and Harley Parker, Through The Vanishing Point, Vol. XXXVII of World Perspectives, ed. by Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Row, Inc., 1969), p. 185.

> utterance immobile and eternal. . . . A unique appearance and a unique reality, it restores on an abolished face the identity of a being.[22] (A.T.)

The mask is a concrete object designed to cover the face. "From the beginning of recorded history, men have been guided in their judgments by the observation of facial expression."[23] Why the face? What is there about the human face that predestines it as the locale for the placement of the covering mask, the substitute face?

Charlotte Wolff acknowledges the importance of the face over the rest of the body when she writes, "Four of the five senses are concentrated in the face--seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting--which makes the head the region par excellence of emotional expression."[24] Ms. Wolff sees the single human face as containing within it two seemingly disparate elements.

> The face can be considered as the mirror of the two poles of the inner life: primary emotion and lucid intelligence.[25]

We can look at our own face in a mirror and sometimes be disturbed by it.

> . . . the face is obscene. More naked than the naked body because the expression and the eyes betray the soul. Man is caught in the trap of his own face, but at the same time he wears it like a mask of the image that he thinks he is. One can be ashamed of one's face more than of one's body because one is responsible for it; it has meaning. . . .[26]

---

[22]p. 153.

[23]Ruesch and Kees, p. 39.

[24]p. 77.

[25]Ibid., p. 60.

[26]Robert Brechon, Michaud, as quoted in Eugenio Barba, "Theatre Laboratory 13 Rzedow," Tulane Drama Review (T27), Vol. 9, No. 3 (Spring, 1965), p. 162n.

And thus we look at the face of another to garner the "meaning" of him found there.

> It is by his face that we know a person--it is his face that can reveal to us much of what we want to learn about his character, his moods, and his attitudes toward us, as well as towards the world. We are accustomed thus to judge others by their countenances and let our feelings toward them be swayed accordingly.[27]

But what effect does the confrontation with that other face have on us? The French philosopher, Max Picard, in his study, The Human Face,[28] answers this question about the impact one face has on another.

> He who looks upon a human face is moved to the very core of his being; his emotions, his understanding, his will are affected, and even to the very depths of him, where his emotions, intelligence and will coexist in that dark formlessness which we call presentiment or foreboding, he feels the face which he looks upon. His whole being is plowed up.[29]

Picard, examining the planes and angles of the human physiognomy more closely, draws the following conclusions:

> The face of man, seen from the front, is static, passive, at rest; the profile, however, is dynamic, active.[30]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The static of the front and the dynamic of the profile are interrelated: they control each other. The front face and the profile exert themselves to show that they belong to the same face, the front more by its repose, the profile more by its activity, but both the repose and the activity are the same face.[31]

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[27]W. T. Benda, Masks (Watson-Guptill Publications, Inc., 1944), p. 2.

[28]trans. Guy Endore (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1930).

[29]Ibid., p. 3.

[30]Ibid., p. 37.

[31]Ibid., p. 40.

Interestingly enough, this interplay of the discord between the static and the dynamic aspects of the human face is, according to Picard, most observable in the face of an actor.

> The actor's face shows an exceptionally great discord between front and profile. But here this discord ceases to be a defect. On the contrary, only because of this discord is the actor an actor. It provides his means of existence.
>
> On the actor's face the profile and front face are so much strangers to each other that they seem not to belong to the same face. It is as if the actor had put his face together out of the profile of one face and the front of another. And now the actor hunts for these people, he hunts for the faces that will complete him, he changes himself into a thousand characters, and searches their faces for the features that belong to him. He stands before his thousand characters and seeks the features that would help him establish concord with himself.[32]

The actor's search for the features that would bring him into harmony with himself could perhaps be acknowledged as a search for the proper mask because, "In the face of a mask, we are in the presence of a being who is at last faithful to itself, which realizes unity with itself."[33] (A.T.)

Pizzorno further expounds upon this idea by writing,

> In asserting itself as a face of natural, objective reality, over the face of personal expression, the mask eliminates the separation between consciousness and behavior. Consciousness is then totally realized in gestures and manners.[34] (A.T.)

For Pizzorno, it is gestures and manners which create a metaphorical mask by which others know us.

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[32] Ibid., p. 46.

[33] Pizzorno, p. 149.

[34] Ibid., p. 152.

> In effect, one is, or one has, a character only for others; one displays it, one represents it. This will be a sort of mask, but it will also be what we are.[35] (A.T.)

We note that in this present discussion the distinction between the mask and the face is beginning to blur with other connotations for the word, "mask," than were conveyed by our original definition of the mask as a concrete object designed to cover the face in order to disguise it. While not denying the pertinence of these new implications, we must leave them to be explored later in this study. It is the investigation of the nature of the mask and the human need to impose a physical object over the human face as well as the effects of that imposition that concern us here.

Jean-Louis Barrault, the well-known French actor, in his book, The Theater of Jean-Louis Barrault,[36] writes about man's need to assume the face of another, which is best exemplified by donning a mask.

> The human face reflects the human soul and the mysterious links which might connect a human being with a supernatural world. From his earliest childhood man likes to impersonate parts, and to impersonate somebody is to change face; it is to adopt somebody else's face. The attempt to wear another man's face aims at trying to get out of oneself, and in that line of thought, the action of placing on one's face the mask of another face is something far more striking and stimulating than the act of making up to play a given part. A mask confers upon a given expression the maximum of intensity together with an impression of absence. A mask expresses at the same time the maximum of life and the maximum of death; it partakes of the visible and of the invisible, of the apparent and absolute.[37]

---

[35] Ibid., p. 165.

[36] trans. Joseph Chiari (New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1961).

[37] Ibid., p. 77.

We can see from this, that it is not only the human face that contains a duality of expression. The mask does also. Both the human face and the mask hold within themselves two opposing forces in tension: the dynamic and the static; life and death.

What happens to those opposing forces when the human face assumes the substitute face of the mask?

> The wearer of the mask is seized by the sublimity and dignity of those who are no more. He is himself and yet someone else. Madness has touched him--something of the mystery of the mad god, something of the spirit of the dual being [italics added] who lives in the mask and whose most recent descendant is the actor.[38]

The mask is a concrete object designed to cover the face in order to disguise it. From whom do we disguise ourselves? The obvious answer is, of course, from others, from the external world. But is there any sense in which we also are disguising ourselves from ourselves?

The first thing that happens when one puts on a mask is that one conceals the human features. Pizzorno writes concerning this act of concealment.

> There exists a notion purely psychological and negative, of the mask, behind which the face of a man hides itself: the mask is that which appears to others. Behind, concealed and screened, the authentic being remains conscious of its diversity. We put on a mask in order to appear different from what we are. The mask is the appearance; the face, conscious of the inner life, is the reality.[39] (A.T.)

One reason for this need to appear other than what we are is for self protection. One has only to think of gas masks, operating

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[38]Walter F. Otto, Dionysus: Myth and Cult, trans. Robert B. Palmer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 210.

[39]p. 143.

room masks, and welders' head shields to recognize this fact. But this sense of protection from the external world that the mask provides can also be used conversely to facilitate an inner concentration, as is realized by shammans in Siberia.[40] In Masks: Their Meaning and Function, Andreas Lommel[41] concludes that the protective uses of the mask are only its secondary functions.[42]

The real function of the mask is not to conceal but to reveal. In fact, one act is inherent in the act of the other. "The act of being hidden is the consecration of the act of being seen--and the act of being concealed, that of revelation."[43] (A.T.)

Walter Sorell in his book, The Other Face: The Mask in the Arts,[44] expresses this same paradoxical idea in a less cryptic fashion.

> Early man's desire for transformation, for losing the identity of face and shape, emerged from his seemingly contradictory need for self-repulsion as well as for total possession of his self.[45]

The act of concealing one's face by a mask accomplishes a loss of identity, a depersonalization, of the wearer. Paradoxically, only if the depersonalization occurs can the mask come alive. The

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[40]Ibid., p. 155.

[41]trans. Nadia Fowler (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972).

[42]Ibid., p. 213.

[43]Pizzorno, p. 158.

[44](Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1973).

[45]Ibid., p. 7.

mask wearer is disguising himself from himself. Pizzorno claims, "the mask begins where the person is abolished."[46] (A.T.) But if the mask abolishes, it also re-identifies. As Pizzorno has also stated, the mask "restores on an abolished face the identity of a being."[47] (A.T.)

Therefore, the mask, at the same time it depersonalizes the wearer, creates a new identity for him also. And what is the nature of this new identity?

> When wearing a mask, the person disguised is impelled to move as he feels the mask-spirit must move. If he wears an animal head, he must imitate the characteristic movements of the animal. More often than not these movements fall into a stylized pattern. For instance, the goat wags its head and leaps, the bull menaces with its horns and charges. These movements, repeated over and over to be perfectly clear, become rhythmic. They are, indeed, dances. If the masker wears a demon face, he must invent bodily movements to suit it. These too may be repetitive and rhythmic and become a dance. The action prompted by the mask is so often patterned, whether mimic or not, that dancing and masking are concomitant.[48]

We have already noted how an object creates a sense of movement in the observer. Now that idea has been reinforced by the additional insight expressed here that there is a definite relationship between the type of sculptured subject matter of the object-mask and the type of movement required by the wearer to complete it.

For Jean-Louis Barrault, the reason man disguised himself with a mask was "to get out of oneself."[49] For the anthropologist,

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[46]Pizzorno, p. 149.

[47]Ibid., p. 153.

[48]Paul McPharlin, Masks: Occult and Utilitarian (Detroit: Cranbrook Institute of Science, 1940), p. 7.

[49]Barrault, The Theatre of Jean-Louis Barrault, p. 77.

Claude Levi-Strauss, there are other reasons. Levi-Strauss finds Picard's realization of a dynamic discord within the human face itself to be operating also between the face and the rest of the body.

> . . . man's face is at varience with man's body; in the same way that the state of society is at varience with the state of Nature. The natural functions belong to the body: breathing, circulation, assimilation, generation, and over these we have little control. The face on the other hand, is the seat of the 'socialised' functions, or should I put it 'socialising': First language, articulated by the mouth; then that other system of signs which constitutes the expression of feelings, of natural origin, no doubt, but which each culture has remodelled in a special range and style. It is by reason of the face and by the face that man communicates with man. It is by disguising or transforming his face that he interrupts that communication, or diverts it to other ends.[50]

Levi-Strauss goes on to observe that when a mask is worn,

> . . . the individual identifiable as a person becomes an anonymous being; he escapes from classification in the group, he is no longer a parent, a master or a servant; he is set free to make contact with other powers, other worlds, those of love and death.[51]

Or, in the more succinct words of Everett Lesley, Jr., "Change the face and the ego is changed; alter the ego, and the human becomes what he would be, not what he is."[52]

In 1954, a controlled experiment was carried out by a clinical psychologist and a speech pathologist in a Mount Vernon, New York, public school special education class of stuttering children. Masks were used as an adjunct to role-playing to see if they

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[50]"The Many Faces of Man," World Theatre, X, Number 1 (Spring, 1961), pp. 11-12.

[51]Ibid., p. 12.

[52]Alter Ego. Masks: Their Art and Use (New York: The Cooper Union Museum For The Arts of Decoration, 1951), p. 4.

would have any beneficial effects on the children's stuttering problems. The rationale given for their use was as follows:

> While puppets, projective playing with dolls, socio-drama, and so on give valuable information as to personality structure and provide therapeutic opportunities for projecting and 'acting-out' personality problems, it seems to us that the use of masks adds an additional dimension. Through their use the child can more clearly identify with the role he wishes to play, and he can, through identification, more clearly establish the fact that it is possible to change roles. For the child who has a negative self-image, the opportunity to test out different roles offers tempting possibilities. Hidden behind a false face somehow gives the wearer an illusion that he himself is covered and, therefore, that his ego is not responsible for the antics of the new character.[53]

The results of this experiment were remarkable. "Even a child with an extraordinarily severe stuttering handicap assumed the role with complete freedom from blockage."[54] Also noted was the fact that the children expressed themselves through more effective bodily movements than had hitherto been the case.[55] In summarizing their conclusions, these two researchers claimed, "We feel that the use of masks as an adjunct to role-playing is invaluable and that its significance in the development of new self-images may be considerable."[56]

Man's need to change is linked with the effect that that change will have on himself and on others. One of those effects is a strong sense of release.

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[53]Penelope Pearl Pollaczek and Harold D. Homefield, "Use of masks as an adjunct to role-playing," Mental Hygiene, XXXVIII (April, 1954), p. 299.

[54]Ibid., p. 301.

[55]Ibid., p. 302.

[56]Ibid., p. 304.

> When a man puts on a mask he experiences a kind of release from his inhibited and bashful and circumscribed soul. He can say and do strange and terrible things, and he likes it.[57]

Roger Caillois, the French philosopher, also expounds on this concept of the mask as an agent of release for the wearer.

> One keeps returning to the general problem posed by the wearing of masks. It is also associated with the experience of possession and of communion with ancestors, spirits, and gods. The wearer is temporarily exalted and made to believe that he is undergoing some decisive transformation. In any case, the unleashing of instinct and of overwhelmingly fearful and invincible forces is encouraged. No doubt the wearer of the mask is not deceived by the beginning, but he rapidly yields to the intoxication that seizes him. His mind enthralled, he becomes completely abandoned to the disorder excited in him by his own mimicry.[58]

Caillois is also implying that while the mask acts as an agent of release for the wearer, it simultaneously acts as an agent of control. The wearer is released into the behavior patterns dictated by his subjective response to the significance of the mask. If the mask produces this sense of release and control in the wearer, so that as he acts as the mask dictates he thereby becomes even more inspired by the mask, what reactions does the observer of a masked performer have?

Joseph Campbell, in the first volume of his monumental study of world mythologies, writes about the effect of the masked personnage on an audience.

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[57] Kenneth Macgowan and Herman Rosse, Masks & Demons (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1923), p. xii.

[58] Man, Play, and Games, trans. Meyer Barash (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), p. 95.

> The literal fact that the apparition is composed of A, a mask, B, its reference to a mythical being, and C, a man, is dismissed from the mind, and the presentation is allowed to work without correction upon the Sentiments of both the beholder and the actor. In other words, there has been a shift of view from the logic of the normal secular sphere, where things are understood to be distinct from one another, to a theatrical or play sphere, where they are accepted for what they are experienced as being and the logic is that of 'make believe'--'as if.'[59]

There is, then, a corresponding release for the spectator as he participates in the experience of the mask. And possibly also a presentiment of control. One definite function that we know a mask performs in society is to control that society through intimidation.

Ron Sieber, in an article about African masks which are used as agents of social control, notes,

> . . . masks may be described as symbols or foci for the spiritual forces that loaned their authority to the edicts and acts that emanated from the mask.[60]

And Caillois also concurs with this idea that masks can be used as "instruments of intimidation and political power"[61] if the society believes in and has given that power to them.

As the cultural historian, Walter Otto, says, "The mask is pure confrontation--an antipode and nothing else."[62] This confrontation occurs not only between the mask and the mask wearer but also

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[59]The Masks of God, Vol. I: Primitive Mythology (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), pp. 21-22.

[60]"Masks as Agents of Social Control," The Many Faces of Primitive Art, ed. by D. Fraser (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 258.

[61]The Mask of Medusa, trans. George Ordish (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1964), p. 106.

[62]Otto, p. 91.

between the masked figure and his audience. It is the mask that establishes the identity of the wearer for the audience. And conversely, it is the response of the audience to his mask that reinforces the wearer's identification with his mask. Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, has observed and commented on this process in a primitive society.

> His audience, responding not to him but to the mask he wears, gives him clues, and he in turn becomes in feeling temporarily transformed into the creature whose image has been fashioned out of wood or straw, of bark or leather.[63]

Pizzorno calls this reciprocal action in which the belief of the audience in the identity of the mask also causes it to exist for them, "the circle of the character-spectator."[64] (A.T.) In fact, Pizzorno claims the actions of the audience and the masked figure are frequently complementary to each other. In other words, if it is the intent of the masked figure to produce terror in his audience, the more he succeeds in producing this effect, the more aggressive he will become.[65]

The reaction of the audience to a masked actor is not part of the main focus of this study. We are not dealing here with masked theatre forms. Yet the young apprentice actor improvising with masks in the classroom does benefit from the response of his partner, if he has one, and from the observation of the rest of the class.

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[63] "Masks and Men," Natural History, LV, No. 6 (June, 1946), p. 283.

[64] Pizzorno, p. 164.

[65] Ibid., p. 157.

From this deeper examination of the implications of our working definition of the mask and the exploration of the nature of masks, we have seen that to work with a mask is to be engaged with a series of powerful opposing, and yet confluent, forces. We have seen that strong polar tensions exist between the static front and the dynamic profile of the human face; between the sense of presence and absence, of life and death, felt to inhere in the concrete mask; between the mask and the mask wearer before the mask is assumed; between the internal response of the mask wearer and the outer reality he projects as pressing in on him once the mask has been assumed; and between the masked figure and his observers. The mask in its transforming power simultaneously conceals and reveals, releases and controls, protects and intimidates, depersonalizes and identifies not only the mask wearer but those who watch. It is the potency of these effects that demand the mask be handled with respect.

> One cannot help wondering why modern man has not made better use of the mask than he has. Here is a device fraught with psychological power that we have abandoned to our children or that we dust off for sporadic moments of fun and gaiety.[66]

It was Jacques Copeau, the French animateur, who did realize these powers inherent in the mask and applied them to the training of his young acting students. In a single forceful paragraph, Copeau summarizes all that we have tried to state about the mask and its potentials. He claims that these are actual experiences that an actor undergoes when performing in a mask.

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[66]Harry L. Shapiro, "Magic of the Mask," The New York Times Magazine (April 15, 1951), p. 28.

> 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.[67]

It is the purpose of this study to investigate and elucidate how this experience of the powers of the mask has been translated into an effective method of actor training.

Now that we have defined and examined the nature of the mask and its effects, and have restated the objectives of this study, we can outline the direction of this investigation.

First, we shall take a look at the historical milieu in which the rebirth of the mask in the modern world occurred, paying particular attention to the responses of those that were affected by their experiences of the mask. This will be followed by an examination of the life and thought of Jacques Copeau; his discovery of the mask as a training device and the application of this discovery in his theatre schools. Then we shall note the current actor training programs that presently employ this method, followed by a brief description of the different types, construction materials, and designs of these training masks. When those preliminaries are

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[67]Jacques Copeau, as quoted in Peter Burton and John Lane, New Directions: Ways of Advance for the Amateur Theatre (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1972), p. 284.

concluded, we will be ready to examine in detail the actual procedures and techniques used in this method of training apprentice actors with masks. And in conclusion, we shall see what the implications and value of this training are for an acting student.

CHAPTER II

THE REBIRTH OF THE MASK IN THE MODERN WORLD

It was towards the latter half of the 19th century when the Western world began to rediscover the mask as more than a decorative ornament. And with its rebirth in the modern world, the appearance of the mask becomes so ubiquitous in the Fine and Performing Arts that to detail its history and significance could easily become an end in itself. This is exactly the purpose of Walter Sorell's recent book, The Other Face: The Mask in the Arts. Because of this renewed interest in the mask, there was a revival of interest in earlier forms of theatre which employed masks, such as the ancient Greek, the Italian Renaissance Commedia dell'arte, and Asian theater, especially the Japanese Noh drama. There were also attempts by playwrights, directors, and designers to create new masked theater forms bearing no relationship to earlier models. But for our purposes, we shall focus on only those manifestations of the mask, especially in the performing arts, which contribute to our understanding of what the mask is and how it affects the wearer. Except, we will not examine in this chapter the important discoveries made by Jacques Copeau with the mask in an actor training situation. His life and thought are to be the subject of the following chapter.

Whatever their inclination, the recovery of the old or the discovery of the new, those theatre artists who adopted the mask were struggling to break out of the stranglehold of the staging and acting requirements decreed by adherents to the concepts of realism-naturalism. They wanted to re-theatricalize the theatre. The mask became symbolic of this antirealistic movement. These artists saw in the mask a new and profound metaphor for man's perception of the composition of his own personality and of his societal relationships.

In 1872, Friedrich Neitzsche, the German philosopher, published The Birth of Tragedy From the Spirit of Music,[1] a work infused with the concept of masking--masks of Apollonian order and control and masks of Dionysian chaos and release. He wrote that tragedy was born out of a conjunction of these two forces, but appeared especially when the Dionysian spirit assumed the mask of Apollo.[2] In this work, Neitzsche was not only concerned with dramatic criticism but with propounding a view of the nature of man.[3] Both in The Birth of Tragedy and his later work, Beyond Good and Evil (1886), Nietzsche's "insistence upon looking behind physical phenomena for more profound truth" and his "conception of the Dionysian and Apollonian forces within man foreshadows Freud's

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[1]The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967).

[2]Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[3]Oscar G. Brockett and Robert R. Findlay, Century of Innovation (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), p. 143.

conception of the human psyche."[4] Both Nietzsche and Freud, with his publication of The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900, demonstrated that man's outer appearance and behaviour and his inner needs and longings were not necessarily one and the same--that the outer aspect was frequently a mask behind which the true being lay hidden.

This concept was given further credence by the writings of Freud's disciple, Carl Jung. With the publication of his Psychology of the Unconscious in 1912, Jung began to revise Freud's concept of the unconscious. For Jung, there was another part of man's psyche which Freud had failed to recognize. This was the collective unconscious which Jung claimed readily responded to archetypal images and patterns of experience.[5] While in the process of defining what he meant by the collective unconscious, Jung employed the image of the mask, or as he called it, the persona.

> This arbitrary segment of collective psyche--often fashioned with considerable pains--I have called the persona. The term persona is really a very appropriate expression for this, for originally it meant the mask once worn by actors to indicate the role they played. . . . It is, as its name implies, only a mask of the collective psyche, a mask that feigns individuality, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role through which the collective psyche speaks.
>
> When we analyze the persona we strip off the mask, and discover that what seemed to be individual is at bottom collective; in other words, that the persona was only a mask of the collective psyche. Fundamentally the persona is nothing real: it is a compromise between the individual and society as to what a man should appear to be.[6]

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[4]Ibid., p. 144.

[5]Ibid., p. 265.

[6]"The Persona As a Segment of the Collective Psyche," Two Essays On Analytical Psychology, in The Portable Jung, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), pp. 105-106.

Both Freud and Jung emphasized the superficial nature of the mask behind which the more authentic individual was concealed. As Sorell explains Jung's concept,

> The formation and wearing of our mask is a general experience and a seeming necessity for life in our society. The persona is the mask which protects us not only against the other people behind their masks, but also against our own real self.[7]

These philosophical and psychological concepts gave encouragement to the already active antirealistic movement in the arts that was trying to express a deeper reality, not through the accumulation of surface details as the realists, but by a direct presentation of man's inner life.

Yet, in contrast to the way the image of the mask was being employed by writers such as Nietzsche, Freud, and Jung, these antirealists had themselves revived and adopted the mask for precisely the opposite reasons. For these artists, the mask represented not man's outer condition but his inner state of mind. The mask was not to be considered a false face; it was the true face. It was the ancient theatrical device of the mask that allowed them to abstract and externalize in concrete fashion this very inner subconscious world. And it is this perception of the mask with which we shall be primarily concerned. For it was these artists who rediscovered the old powers of the mask living still "in the blood and in the bones"[8] only waiting to be revived.

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[7]Sorell, p. 13.

[8]Edward Sullivan, C.S.B., "There will be time, there will be time to prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet," Persona Grata (Houston: University of St. Thomas, 1960), n.p.

James Ensor, the Flemish painter, was one of those artists who rediscovered in the mask a paradoxical and complex symbol for his psychological insights. His "Man Gazing at a Negro Mountebank" (circa 1879) was only the first of a series of disturbing paintings depicting man's face as a mask.[9]

Walter Sorell writes that Ensor's constant fascination with the mask was due to the fact that Ensor considered the mask "as the live realization of the real man in man, as the face with which to unmask the hidden hypocrisy, all camoflaged meanness."[10]

Ensor's own statement about the latent powers inherent in masks is significant because of his perception of their essentially dramatic nature.

> And the mask cried out to me: Freshness of tone, sharp expression, sumptuous décor, great unexpected gestures, unplanned movements, exquisite turbulence.[11]

It was the French poet-playwright Alfred Jarry who, in a September 1896 article, "Of The Futility of the 'Theatrical' In The Theatre,"[12] first proposed that the mask be re-introduced into the theatre for the actor.

> The actor will have to replace his face by the effigy of the character, by means of enclosing it within a mask, which will not, as in Ancient Greece, have the quality of laughter or tears (which do not constitute character at all), but the

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[9]Sorell, p. 163.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., quoting Ensor, p. 165.

[12]trans. Barbara Wright, as found in Ubu Roi, trans. Barbara Wright (New York: New Directions, 1961).

> qualities of character: the Miser, the Hesitator, the Greedy Man who commits crime upon crime. And if the eternal qualities of the character are incorporated in the mask, there is a simple means . . . of bringing to light . . . those qualities dominant at any given moment.[13]

Jarry had been greatly influenced by the marionette theater and knew that the various positions of the marionette's head could, by the play of light and shadow over its surface, evoke every expression. This he now claimed the masked actor could do also.[14] He also acknowledged that the masked actor, like the marionette, had to have an appropriate voice, body, and set of gestures to complete the image the mask suggested.[15]

In December of the same year, when Jarry's play, Ubu Roi, burst upon the stage of the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, Jarry had asked the director, Lugné-Poë, to put a mask on the face of the lead actor. But this idea was not carried out, although heavy makeup was used.[16] There seem to be two major reasons why Jarry wanted to re-introduce the masked actor into the theater of his day. One was to eliminate the influence of the star-actor personalities that distorted plays into a vehicle for their own aggrandisement.[17] The other and more important reason was openly confessed by Jarry himself in the

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[13]Alfred Jarry, "An Approach to Abstract Decor," trans. Michael Bullock, as found in Art and the Stage in the 20th Century, ed. Henning Rischbieter (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1969), p. 26.

[14]Jarry, "Of The Futility," pp. 180-181.

[15]Ibid., p. 181.

[16]Brockett and Findlay, p. 138.

[17]K. S. Beaumont, "The Making of Ubu: Jarry as Producer and Theorist," Theatre Research, XII, No. 2 (1972), pp. 148-149.

preface to the play that he delivered to the first night audience (even though what he says about the actors' willingness to appear masked was not true and did not occur):

> Our actors have been willing to depersonalize themselves for two evenings, and to act behind masks, in order to express more perfectly the inner man, the soul of these overgrown puppets you are about to see.[18]

This recognition of the depersonalizing aspects of the mask on the actor was to become extremely important to those artists who made use of the mask in the modern world, expecially to the thinking of Edward Gordon Craig, the British stage designer and theorist.

But, as has been said, the masks were not used as Jarry had requested and this first attempt to employ masked actors in the modern theatre failed, not to be revived again until the Polish dramatist, Stanislaw Wypianski, presented his play, Liberation, in Warsaw, Poland in 1903.

As his contribution to the growing anti-realistic movement in the theater, Wypianski brought on stage in the second act of his play, twenty masked figures "to express the inner, intellectual monologue of the hero; i.e., the maskers' debate with Konrad about life, art, self-identity, fate, free-will and the future."[19]

In March of 1908 a new theater journal appeared that was to have a profound influence on many theatre artists, including Jacques Copeau. This was The Mask, published in Florence, Italy, by Edward

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[18] King Turd, trans. Beverley Keith and G. Legman (New York: Boar's Head Press, 1953), p. 12.

[19] Donnita Ryan, "The Mask In The Russian Symbolist Theater" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brown University, 1969), p. 33.

Gordon Craig, an ardent advocate of the new movement in the theatre away from realistic staging and acting. It was Craig, who, more than any one else, was to spread the gospel of the mask as the salvation of the theatre.

In the first issue of this journal appeared his article, "A Note On Masks."[20] (The authorship of this article is attributed to a John Balance, but this is only one of the many pseudonyms under which Craig contributed articles to his own magazine.)[21] Possibly influenced by the ideas of Alfred Jarry,[22] Craig stressed in this article "the importance of the mask to the Life of the Theatre of today and tomorrow."[23] After claiming that "human facial expression is for the most part valueless,"[24] in the theatre, Craig proceeded to explain why the mask was more important as an instrument of expression.

> 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. . . .
>
> It is doubtful whether the actor will ever have the courage to cover his face with a mask again having once put it aside, and it is doubtful whether he shall see that it would serve as a gain.[25]

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[20] The Mask, I (March, 1908), pp. 9-12.

[21] Denis Bablet, Edward Gordon Craig (Paris: L'Arche, 1962), p. 144, n 19.

[22] Beaumont, p. 153.

[23] Balance, p. 10.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

What Craig desired was, like Jarry and others, a theater not tainted with the everyday reality of the realists or at the mercy of strong star-personality actors. He saw in the mask that agent that would create a more abstract figure out of the actor and give him that "sense of being beyond reality which permeates all great art."[26] Denis Bablet, in his book on Craig, summarizes the objectives Craig hoped to obtain with the mask.

> Craig set no store by the play of features that seemed so important to theatre people of that day. He loathed the absurd mimicry and exaggerated grimaces which aimed at making the stage characters seem 'true to life'--reducing the face to a mere instrument of conventional realism. It was logical that in the attempt to release the actor from his emotional shackles, Craig should strive to rid him of everything that contributed to his servitude and of all that helped him surrender to it. To cover the actor's face with a mask would depersonalize him, make him 'un-natural'; it would compel him to pay attention to his movements, to rely on his physical means of expression, to re-create instead of reproducing. The mask is a safeguard against realism, a guarantee against the emotions.[27]

But even though Craig felt assured that the mask would return to the theatre and revitalize it,[28] he warned against two inherent dangers in this revival of the mask: the danger of the antiquarian, and the danger of the innovator.

> It would be a sad thing, therefore, if masks, sham-Greek in idea, sham-Greek in their manifestations, should be brought into the Theatre, appealing to the curious only by creating a subject for small talk. No! The Mask must return to the stage to restore expression . . . the visible expression of the mind.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Edward Gordon Craig, trans. Daphne Woodward (New York: Theatre Arts Books, Inc., 1966), p. 110.

[28] Balance, p. 11.

> There is a second danger . . . the danger of the innovator. As Art must not be antique, neither can it be up-to-date. . . . the inspiration which led men to use the mask in past ages is the same now as it ever was and will never die. It is this inspiration that we shall act under and in which we trust. Therefore let no one attempt to put this thing aside as being of the antique, or an eccentric explosion of 'L'Art Nouveau.'[29]

Craig did not have long to wait for his hopes concerning the revival of the mask in the modern theatre to be realized. On February 7, 1910, at the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Germain in Paris, Edmond Rostand's fantasy play, Chantecler, appeared, in which the actors were costumed as barnyard animals. Craig hailed this production as the "triumph of the Mask"[30] even though many of the actors' faces were visible beneath the heads of the animal costumes they wore.

Nor did he have long to wait to see his fears concerning the revival of the mask in the theatre realized also. In a short review entitled, "Masks In Berlin," that appeared in the January, 1911, issue of The Mask, Craig castigated a revival of a Greek tragedy that employed "wretched imitations of old Greek masks"[31] such as he had warned against.

> And, while the idea of the Mask as a means of facial expression is good, the attempts made by Ignorant enthusiasts to materialise [sic] this idea are lamentable.
> . . . . . .
>
> But why was the effect so ridiculous?
> Because the actors knew neither how to have the masks made, nor how or when to use them. Yet in spite of this first failure

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Semar, John (pseud. E. G. Craig), "'Chantecler' And The Return Of The Mask," The Mask, II, No. 10-12 (April, 1910), p. 171.

[31] III, No. 7-9 (January, 1911), pp. 145-146.

> the mask still remains, a means of expression if you have the power to know how to make them speak.[32]

As Craig later insisted, "We must return to the use of the Masks only by advancing to another condition of mind. . . ."[33]

If his plea for a return to masks in the theatre wasn't startling enough, the April, 1908, issue of The Mask contained what was to be Craig's most provocative article, "The Actor and the Über-marionette."[34] To set the tone for his remarks, Craig quoted the famous Italian actress, Eleanora Duse.

> To save the Theatre, the Theatre must be destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague. . . . They make art impossible.[35]

In this article, Craig again struck out against the highly emotional acting style of his day. His main thesis was that since the actor was too much under the influence of his fluctuating emotions, he could not truly be an artist.

> Art arrives only by design. Therefore in order to make any work of art it is clear we may only work in those materials with which we can calculate. Man is not one of these materials.
>
> The whole nature of man tends towards freedom; he therefore carries the proof in his own person, that as material for the theatre he is useless. In the modern theatre, owing to the use of the bodies of men and women as their material, all of which is presented there is of an accidental nature. The actions of the actor's body, the expression of his face, the sounds of his voice, all are at the mercy of the winds of his emotions; these

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[32] Ibid.

[33] "Japanische Masken No Und Kyogen," review of book by Frederich Perzynski, The Mask, XII, No. 4 (October, 1926), p. 163.

[34] The Mask, I, No. 2 (April, 1908), pp. 3-15.

[35] Ibid., p. 3.

> winds which must blow forever round the artist, moving without unbalancing him. But with the actor, emotion possesses him. . . .[36]

What Craig would put on the stage in place of the human actor was the totally controlled and controllable Über-marionette.

> The Ubermarionette will not compete with life--but will rather go beyond it. Its ideals will not be the flesh and blood but rather the body in trance--it will aim to clothe itself with a death-like beauty while exhaling a living spirit.[37]

What Craig actually had in mind when he spoke of the Über-marionette is not easy to determine. Charles Lyons in his article, "Gordon Craig's Concept Of The Actor,"[38] states that Craig's concept of the Über-marionette as the ideal actor is not a consistent one; rather, it is an evolutionary concept."[39] Whereas Craig in his original essay on the Über-marionette suggested that it be an "inanimate figure,"[40] in following articles this concept changed to that of a hieratic figure, with the actor, as in the Japanese Noh Theatre, "content to hide his person and personality under the mask and the robe and had learnt to value the result."[41] Then as a result of the influence of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy's article, "Notes on Indian Dramatic Technique,"[42] Craig began to admit that it might be possible

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[36]Ibid., as found in Total Theatre, ed. E. T. Kirby (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1969), p. 34.

[37]Ibid., p. 51.

[38]Ibid., pp. 58-77.

[39]Ibid., p. 61.

[40]Ibid., p. 40.

[41]"Foreign Notes: Japan: Tokio," The Mask, III, Nos. 4-6 (October, 1910), p. 96.

[42]The Mask, VI, No. 2 (October, 1913), pp. 109-128.

for an actor to be so trained and disciplined (as the actor still was in the traditional Indian theatre) that the need for the inanimate Über-marionette was no longer required.[43]

Craig really wanted to make sure that he achieved his goal of making the actor subordinate to the total design of the production.

> The Über-marionette and the actor as Über-marionette both represent the theoretical death of an unsuitable material: the ego-ridden, freedom-centered, hyper-emotional actor.[44]

As both Charles Lyons and Denis Bablet point out, "There is an unmistakable connection between Craig's views on masks and his theory of the uber-marionette. . . ."[45]

> By requiring the actor to strip himself of all egoism and learn to control himself, and by advocating the resumption of masks, Craig was making the actor into pliable material. By de-personalizing him, he was destroying the seeds of any possible resistance. . . . The actor is both his own instrument and the instrument of the stage director, and this is necessary if the whole production is to have the unity without which it cannot be a work of art.[46]

Sheldon Cheney in his book, The New Movement In The Theater[47] tried to quiet the storm of controversy that Craig had created among theatre people with this article by explaining what he believed

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[43]Gordon Craig, "A Plea For Two Theatres: II: A Durable Theatre," The Mask, VIII, No. 5 (August, 1918), p. 19.

[44]Theodore Herstand, "Actor-Uber-Marionette," Theatre Notebook, XX, No. 4 (Summer, 1966), p. 155.

[45]Lyons, p. 65, n 31.

[46]Bablet, trans. Daphne Woodward, p. 111.

[47](New York: Kennerley, 1914).

to be the relationship in Craig's mind between the mask and the "perfect actor."[48]

> To make the face a mask, to blot out of it all traces of personal feeling or emotion, but to paint there every shade of expression demanded by the character impersonated--that is the work of the perfect actor. The mask Gordon Craig had in mind must be an artificial one for the temperamental actor; but for the actor whose every movement is part of a preconceived design--and 'art arrived at only by design' he truly says--the human face is the mask; behind it is hidden the actor's own personality; upon it are expressed only the feelings and emotions of the part. The plea is hardly more than a protest against the actor who is continually parading his own idiosyncrasies and his own shapely legs; a plea for surrender of individual personality in favor of deliberate action and designed movement that can be directed by the artist of the theatre.[49]

In order to achieve his goal of creating the "artist of the theater of the future,"[50] Craig established a School for the Art of the Theatre at the Arena Goldoni in Florence, Italy, in 1913.

Prior to Craig's establishment of his school in Florence, the Art et Action organization, headed by the husband and wife team of Edouard Autant and Louise Lara, founded what they called a "laboratoire de theatre" in Paris in 1911.[51] Francis Jourdain describes the type of work that went on at this laboratory theater.

> One analyses, one studies. And one experiments, that is, one DARES; they think that it is useless to start over an experiment

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[48]Ibid., p. 73.

[49]Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[50]Gordon Craig, "The Artist Of The Theatre Of The Future," The Mask, I, No. 3 & 4 (May-June, 1908), p. 58.

[51]Francis Jourdain, "Introduction," Art et Action: Laboratoire de Théâtre (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1952), n.p.

> that has succeeded a hundred times. Adventure is holy. To create is to risk: there is the only knowledge that should be drawn from the Past. Tradition? It is before and not behind.[52] (A.T.)

According to Jourdain, the primary aim of the Art et Action group was "renouvellement"--renovation.

> Renovation of theatrical material, of the form and the foundation, of the contents and the container (the spirit of the text, the quality of the word, indeed its musical quality); achievement of a synchronization among the various dramatic modes of expression; evocation of the abstract through the concrete; utilisation of old themes, old myths not to be dug up and restored but brutally rejuvenated, treated with a drug which, under the dust, respects only the seed, extracts it from the corpse and revives it; recourse to fantasy, to buffoonery in order to render the gravest thoughts, the most pathetic concepts sensible.[53] (A.T.)

In January of 1911, Art et Action presented the play, Le Sculpteur des Masques, by the Belgian playwright, Cromelynck.[54] This was to be only the first of a long series of presentations in which the uses of masks were to be explored by this group in their attempt at "evocation of the abstract through the concrete."

Craig's school was also to be an experimental laboratory. But his school would not present plays for the public, and it would provide both practical and theoretical training for the students.[55]

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Edouard Autant, Louise Lara, and Akakia-Viala, Art et Action: Laboratoire de Théâtre (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1952), p. 69.

[55] Bablet, trans. Daphne Woodward, p. 162.

For Craig, if his school was "only making experiments for the future," it would be a "mad school."[56]

> What was it that Craig wanted to study? First and foremost came MOVEMENT: 'the Movements of the Elements and Man'. . . . Connected with movement would be DANCE--ceremonials--postures, etc. Connected with dance would be MIME. Next on his list came LIGHT. . . .
>
> Connected with the above would be experimental work with his SCREENS. . . . Then there would be experiments with MARIONETTES of all kinds and sizes, in his everlasting quest for animated figures which could be controlled by an artist; connected with this, there would also be experiments with MASKS.[57]

Craig saw the program of study at his school as divided into three areas: the Past, the Present, and what he called, "the speculative Future."[58] Study of the mask was to be definitely included in the curriculum. Craig had already started a collection of Western and Asian masks for research purposes.[59] Students were to research the history of the use of masks in the theatre and learn how to actually make and use their own.[60] But masks were to be studied only in those sections of the program dealing with the Past and the Future.

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[56]John Cournos, "Gordon Craig And The Theatre Of The Future," Poetry and Drama, I, No. 3 (September, 1913), p. 338.

[57]Edward A. Craig, Gordon Craig (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 168.

[58]Cournos, p. 338.

[59]Enid Rose, Gordon Craig And The Theatre (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., n.d.), p. 107.

[60]John Nicholson, "A Students Impression," A Living Theatre (Florence, Italy: Arena Goldoni, 1913), p. 47.

> No mask will be used in the Section of the Present.
>
> The mask will be studied in the Past Section, but actual experiments with masks will be made in the Future Section. Everything will be kept sensibly in its place. The mask would be out of place in the modern theatre. It has to do with the future. The mask in the Greek Theatre has to do with the past. Everything outside the Present Section will be experiment--mostly fragmentary.[61]

In a handsome brochure publicizing his school and its work, one of the students, Ernest Marriott, wrote an article on what the actual course work was at the school.

> The subjects of study are as follows: Gymnastics, Music, Voice training, Scene designing and painting, Costume designing and making, Modelling, Fencing, Dancing, Mimo-drama, Improvisation, Lighting Theory, History of the Theatre, Marionette designing, making and performing, Stage Model making--all of which are part and parcel of Stage Managing.[62]

It was only after writing his essay on "The Actor and the Über-marionette" that Craig discovered the Renaissance Italian Commedia dell'arte theater form. Craig's son, Edward, in his biography of his father, notes that Craig learned of a modern-day theatre in Florence where the improvisational techniques of the commedia dell'arte were still used by the actors. While attending this theatre, the faculty and students of his school gained a first-hand experience of the art of improvisation which they then incorporated into their training program.[63]

> This art, like everything that looks easy, required patient methodical study; the actor must bring to it imagination,

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[61] Cournos, pp. 339-340.

[62] "The School at Florence," A Living Theatre (Florence, Italy: Arena Goldoni, 1913), p. 46.

[63] Edward Craig, p. 292.

> intelligence and a resourceful tongue. The study of the art of improvisation was more than ever necessary, for it would help towards the regeneration of the theatre.[64]

Prior to Craig's re-discovery of the commedia dell'arte theatre, there had already been a revival of the old pantomime form, the harlequinade, which had led naturally to a renewed interest in its predecessor, the commedia dell'arte. In 1899, a German actor, R. Lothar, had revived the harlequinade with his production of King Harlequin. What Lothar had seen in the harlequinade that appealed to the modern sensibilities was the "problem of seeming and being, that is, with what might be called the dissolving pictures of symbolism and reality. . . ."[65] The harlequinade became especially popular in Russia and greatly influenced those Russian theatre artists searching for new theatrical forms.

On December 30, 1906, at Vera Kommisarzhevskaya's theatre in St. Petersburg, Vsevolod Meyerhold opened his production of Blok's The Fairground Booth.[66] It was in this production that Meyerhold first used commedia dell'arte masks and conventions. He became so intrigued with the concept of masking and improvisation and its value for the creation of a non-naturalistic acting style, that when he established his own studio in 1914, commedia dell'arte masks and techniques were an essential part of the program of study.[67]

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[64]Bablet, trans. Daphne Woodward, p. 166.

[65]Leo Wiener, The Contemporary Drama of Russia (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1924), p. 145.

[66]Vsevolod Meyerhold, Meyerhold On Theatre, trans. Edward Braun (New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1969), p. 21.

[67]Ibid., p. 156.

Two other significant Russian playwrights who became enamoured with masks and commedia dell'arte as a means towards an anti-realistic theatre form, were Leonid Andreyev and Nikolai Evreinov. Andreyev's play, The Black Maskers, was produced in St. Petersburg in 1908. And in the same year, Evreinov published his important essay, "Apology of Theatricality."

> He argued that there is an innate human instinct for transformation which makes each person wish to become someone other than himself and to transform life into something more interesting and desirable. This theatrical instinct takes precedence over all esthetic concerns. 'To make a theatre of life is the duty of every artist. . . . The stage must not borrow so much from life as life borrows from the stage.' Through highly controlled acting, masks, non-realistic scenery and lighting, the stage should show life worth living to the fullest.[68]

With the scholar, Konstantin Miklashevsky, Evreinov experimented with traditional commedia dell'arte masks to try and discover what effect the mask had on the actor and vice versa. The results of their experiments were published in Miklashevsky's book, The Commedia dell'arte, in Petrograd in 1914.[69]

In the chapter entitled, "Wearing the Mask," Miklashevsky made his most important observations concerning the reciprocal relationship that occurs between the mask and the actor.

> From the very first, the actor who puts a mask on his face no longer bases his acting on the mobility of his physiognomy,

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[68]Brockett and Findlay, p. 260.

[69]Mic, Constant, La Commedia Dell'Arte. Ou Le Théatre Des Comédiens Italiens Des XVIe, XVIIe & XVIIIe Siècles (Paris: Editions De La Pleiade, 1927). This is the French edition of the text from which the above information was obtained. Miklashevsky also shortened his name to Mic for this edition.

> but on the movement of his body; and doing this produces very judiciously a theatrical point of view. In effect the art of mimicry of the face in theater produces nearly the same effect as a cameo hung on the wall: in drawing nearer to it one can distinguish the details and admire them, but it does not decorate the room.[70] (A.T.)

Miklashevsky further noted that that part of the audience watching an unmasked actor who doesn't know how to use his body to communicate is always being deprived from seeing his expressive face by the necessity of his moving about and turning on the stage.[71] The heart of his thesis was that the actor who only uses his face was untheatrical; the masked actor who was forced by the mask to express the character with his whole body and not just with his face was "essentially theatrical."

> But the mask has not only 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 theater and, thanks to its sculptural character, it remains expressive from whatever point one contemplates it, whereas the mimicry of the face is untheatrical, is only accessible from the closest and most expensive seats, and exists only by depending on a single particularly advantageous point of view.[72] (A.T.)

Then Miklashevsky added one further and crucial insight.

> But there is still more, thanks to the work of our imagination, the fixity of the mask immediately vanishes before our eyes when the actor who wears it emerges from his immobility and beings to act.[73] (A.T.)

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[70] Ibid., p. 117.

[71] Ibid., p. 118.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

In an explanatory footnote, possibly added for the later French edition, he enlarged upon this idea.

> Many times the author had the occasion, in the course of his lectures, to proceed with these experiments which demonstrated that the expression of the mask depended on the bodily attitudes and changed with them.[74] (A.T.)

It is evident from these comments that Miklashevsky had gained his unique understanding of the mask and its effects on the actor and audience not from historical research but from observation and involvement with sensitive actors who had rediscovered the long-forgotten life within the mask. Thus, Miklashevsky, Meyerhold, Craig, and soon others, would be concurrently following similar paths of inquiry about the nature of the mask and its effects on the wearer.

When the First World War broke out in August of 1914, Craig's school at the Arena Goldoni in Florence was forced to close. It had only been in operation for one year. But Craig continued to live at the school until it was requisitioned by the Italian Government in 1916.[75] This visionary artist of the theatre was to have a profound influence on the thinking of all the theatre artists of his day.

The war years saw an explosion of theatrical activity involving the use of mask--now in the United States as well as in Europe. Much of the renewed interest in masks was due to Craig and his writings in The Mask. Craig's concept of the Über-marionette

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Bablet, trans. Daphne Woodward, p. 172.

and an abstract theatre, his interest in Asian masked theatre forms, especially Japanese Noh, combined with a growing interest in creating a modern counterpart to the traditional commedia dell'arte improvisational techniques with their stereotyped characters and situations for revues and cabarets.

In 1915, Oskar Schlemmer began his exploration with masks to create "images that expressed metaphysical ideas"[76] by giving the first performance of part of his Triadic Ballet in Stuttgart, Germany. Dancers were dressed in masks and fantastic costumes. In fact, Schlemmer saw little difference between costumes and masks. For him, the costume was "the principle of the mask, extended to the entire body."[77]

In the United States, Percy MacKaye staged his huge outdoor pageant, Caliban By The Yellow Sands, in New York City in 1916. Under the influence of Craig's writings, he had tried masks in earlier pageants and realized that a new type of acting was required if masked performers were to be effective. And this new technique would be extremely valuable for all actors to experience as well.

> The influence of such a restoration upon the art of acting may be imagined. Its new requirements would involve a plasticity and eloquence of the entire body, in gesture and presence, comparable to the expression required of the Greek dancer.[78]

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[76]Walter Gropius (ed.), The Theater of the Bauhaus, trans. Arthur S. Wensinger (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 8.

[77]Schlee, "The Stage At The 'Bauhaus,'" Theatre Arts Monthly, XV, No. 4 (April, 1931), p. 347.

[78]Percy MacKaye, The Civic Theatre (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1912), p. 60.

In Caliban, with masks designed by Robert Edmond Jones (who had briefly attended Craig's school in Florence), MacKaye was able to explore the use of the mask both for speaking and non-speaking actors in what he called their "concealing and revealing usages for modern theatre symbolism. . . ."[79] Robert Edmond Jones, himself, observed with this production that masks "do not cramp the actor, but inspire him."[80]

Asian theatrical forms and production techniques began to be of interest in the West when the Japanese dancer, Sada Yakko, her husband, Kawakami, and a troupe of Japanese actors became the highlight of the International Exposition in Paris in 1900.[81] The German designer, Georg Fuchs, in his important book, Revolution In The Theater (1909), wrote about his enthusiastic reactions to Kawakami and Sada Yakko's acting skills.

> The art of Kawakami and Sada Yacco, which we have found so enthralling is incomprehensible unless one considers certain national standards of education for physical and oral expression. The Japanese actor does not shriek and does not rant. There is seldom loud talk upon the stage, and nothing happens which would offend the most fastidious company. Yet Japanese theatre reaches heights of intensity of which we have no idea and does so simply by stylistic means. In whatever is shown upon the stage, whether it is the most tragic circumstance, the most

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[79]Percy MacKaye, Epoch: The Life of Steele MacKaye (New York: Boni & Liverright, 1927), pp. 479-479n.

[80]Robert Edmond Jones as quoted in Hiram Kelley Moderwell, "The Art of Robert Edmond Jones," Theatre Arts Magazine, I, No. 2 (February, 1917), p. 59.

[81]Leonard C. Pronko, Theatre East and West: Perspectives Toward a Total Theater (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 120.

> terrible mental anguish, the maddest abandonment, or the most brazen buffoonery, the measured rhythms of the dance are always observed, just as in the field of plastic art the Japanese woodcarver always respects the confines of the plane in which he works.
>
> The Japanese art of acting is indebted for this supremacy of style to its vital connection with fundamental principles, that is, with the elementary physical sources of mimetic art.[82]

Sada Yakko and her troupe performed material from the most flamboyant of the traditional Japanese theatre forms, Kabuki. And it was this form that most Westerners of the period knew as Japanese theater. But the traditional masked theater form, Noh Drama, soon became well known in the West when Ezra Pound published his book on Noh and William Butler Yeats began producing his Irish Noh plays in 1916.

Actually, Yeats was introduced to the traditional Japanese Noh drama by Ezra Pound, who at that time was his secretary. Pound was working on organizing the notes and polishing the translations of a number of Noh plays collected by the late Asian art historian, Ernest Fenollosa.[83] In his notes, Fenollosa had written that "immense vitality is given to a good mask by a great actor, who acts up to it until the very mask seems alive and displays a dozen turns of emotion."[84]

[82] trans. Constance Connor Kahn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959), pp. 59-60.

[83] Richard Ellman, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (New York: E. P. Dutton, Co., 1948), p. 213.

[84] Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa, The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan (New York: New Directions, 1959), p. 70.

Yeats, himself, had already started using the concept of the mask as a metaphor in his writings early in the century.[85]

> As he wrote in 1909, 'I think that all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self: that all joyous or creative life is a re-birth as something not oneself, something which has no memory and is created in a moment and perpetually renewed.[86]

Thus, Yeats was already favorably predisposed to masks when Pound showed him Fenollosa's material. With a knowledge of these Noh plays, Yeats found what he believed to be the appropriate theatrical form for his own dramatic treatment of Irish legends and myths. He had already simplified his staging requirements at the suggestion of E. Gordon Craig.[87] Now in the Noh drama he saw the correct form and style for a play on this bare stage as well as the value of employing actual masks on the faces of his actors. Here again, Craig's thoughts about masks were influential.

> A mask will enable me to substitute for the face of some commonplace player, or for that face repainted to suit his own vulgar fancy, the fine invention of a sculptor, and to bring the audience close enough to the play to hear every inflection of the voice. A mask never seems but a dirty face, and no matter how close you go is still a work of art; nor shall we lose by staying the movement of the features, for deep feeling is expressed by a movement of the whole body. In a poetical painting and in sculpture the face seems the nobler for lacking curiosity, alert attention, all that we sum up under the famous word of the realists 'vitality.'[88]

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[85] Ellman, p. 171.

[86] Ibid., p. 174.

[87] William Butler Yeats, "'Introduction' to Certain Noble Plays of Japan," as found in Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa, The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan (New York: New Directions, 1959), p. 152.

[88] Ibid., p. 155.

Yeats' first play modelled on the Noh form, At The Hawk's Well, was performed in 1916 with masks designed by Edmund Dulac.

Other groups also began to explore the techniques of traditional Japanese drama. Two years later, in 1918, the Art et Action group in Paris presented an evening of Japanese theatre, followed in 1919 by a production of the Noh play, Hagoromo, found in Pound and Fenollosa's book.[89] (Further impetus to those seeking to retheatricalize the theater through an exploration of the Noh drama was to come later with the publication of Arthur Waley's The Nō Plays of Japan (London, 1921) and Noel Peri's Cinq Nô (Paris, 1921).) Art et Action also continued its research into creating its own masked drama forms with the performance in 1918 of Meral and Honnegger's Le Dit Des Jeux De Monde with masks by the painter Guy-Pierre Fauconnet.[90]

Even Cambridge scholars were getting caught up in the great revival of interest in the mask. In 1916, Frank B. Jevons published his pamphlet on the origin of Greek tragedy, Masks And Acting.[91] In this work, Jevons speculated that the use of the mask in the ancient Greek theatre was not just to aid the spectators in their ability to see and hear the actors, as had been the prevailing theory on the use of the mask in that theatre, but declared that the origin of Greek tragedy was actually to be found in the mask itself. "The

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[89]Autant, Lara, and Akakia-Viala, p. 67.

[90]Chancerel, Le Masque, I, p. 67.

[91]"Occasional Publication of the Classical Association," No. 7 (Cambridge, at the University Press, 1916).

proposition that in Ancient Greece there was no acting without masks and no masks without acting, states not merely a theory but a fact."[92] For Jevons had come to the conclusion, "To wear a mask is to act. . . ."[93]

Meanwhile in Italy the playwright, Chiarelli, wrote his popular play about appearance and reality, The Mask and the Face, which was to have a powerful impact on Luigi Pirandello.[94] The Italian avant-garde artists known as the Futurists called for the use of actual masked figures, live or mechanical, on the stage.[95] And do did the Dadaists and Expressionists.

Hugo Ball, one of the founders of Dadaism, wrote in his diary about the amazing experience he had when he first encountered Marcel Janco's masks at the Café Voltaire in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1916.

> Janco had made for the soiree a number of masks that were more than just inspired. They were reminiscent of the Japanese or ancient Greek theater and yet were absolutely modern. . . . We were all present when Janco arrived with his masks and everyone immediately put one on. Then something strange happened. Not only did the masks immediately call for costumes, they also dictated a quite particular kind of gesture, full of pathos and bordering on insanity. . . . The motor force of these masks spread through us with an irresistible vigor. . . . The masks simply demanded that their wearers should set in motion a tragic-comic dance. . . . What fascinated all of us about the masks was the fact that they embodied not human, but

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[92]Ibid., p. 11.

[93]Ibid., p. 7.

[94]Brockett and Findlay, p. 354.

[95]Michael Kirby, Futurist Performances (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1971), p. 117.

over-life-size character and passions. The horrors of the day, the paralyzing background of things were made visible.[96]

Yvan Goll, an Expressionist, in the preface to his plays, The Immortals (1918), proclaimed "that the primary symbol of the theater is the mask."[97]

> The mask is rigid, unique, and impressive. It is unchangeable, inescapable; it is Fate. Every man wears his mask, wears what the ancients called his guilt. Children are afraid of it and cry. Man, complacent and sober, should learn to cry again; the stage serves that purpose. And do not the greatest works of art, a Negro god or an Egyptian King, often appear to us as masks? In the mask lies a law of the drama. Nonreality becomes fact. For a moment, proof is given that the most banal can be mysterious and 'divine,' and that herein lies Sublime Truth.[98]

The kinds of masks Goll wanted were not in the least realistic, but mechanical and abstract.

> Therefore the new drama must have recourse to all technological props which are contemporary equivalents of the ancient mask. Such props are, for instance, the phonograph, which masks the voice, the denatured masks and other accoutrements which proclaim the character in a crudely typifying manner: oversized ears, white eyes, stilts. These physiological exaggerations, which we, shapers of the new drama, do not consider exaggerations, have their equivalents in the inner hyperboles of the plot. . . .[99]

So, in this second decade of the 20th century, while the horrible destruction was occurring on the battlefields of Europe, the mask emerged in the theatre as a symbol of the dislocation and anarchy of man's inner and outer worlds.

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[96]Hugo Ball, as quoted in Rischbeiter, p. 164.

[97]"Two Superdramas," trans. Walter H. Sokel, An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama, ed. Walter H. Sokel (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), p. 10.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid., p. 11.

Brecht 'In Setuan'

Cousin's mask – looks more powerful & might a little grotesque – (big) made out of her imagination

Dinell's [illegible] also powerful made out of his imagination

If the mask was an important metaphor or symbol for artists prior to and during World War I, after the war the image of the mask appeared everywhere as if by spontaneous generation. Joseph Gregor in his book, Masks of the World, writes about this sudden increase of interest in the mask.

> . . . exhausted by the individualism of the pre-war era, which had led to countless styles and experiments in the theatre, taste now reverted to the collective, to the dynamic, to the choric; and the natural costume for this stylized art was the mask. Since there was now a great vogue for dramatic dancing, as distinct from the ballet, the mask was welcomed as a means of depersonalizing the chorus and assuring its generalized value. The danced myths of the primitive peoples had found the mask ready to hand; the new dramatic dance had to rediscover it--no easy matter, when both myth and mask had to be invented at the same time. The general tendency was towards mechanization, a healthy reaction from the over-individualized theatre of the preceding age. Only rhythm now counted, not the logos, the spoken word. In these circumstances the features might well disappear under a mask.
>
> This wave, which lasted for about the first decade after the war, was general.[100]

Walter Sorell also reflects on the reasons for this enthusiasm for the mask in the period immediately following the war.

> After the First World War, when all the old values collapsed with the empires and traditional ideas, the search went on for the forgotten primitive forms and sources which were resurrected in basic modern dance, in the volcanic stammering cries of Expressionistic despair, in the Dadaistic fury of self-defiance, and in phantasmagoric Surrealism with its glazing of Freudian imagery. 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. The mask triumphed in leading man back to its cruel sources and projecting its influence with a sophisticated gesture, often hiding as a mask behind non-masklike masks.[101]

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[100] Gregor, p. 21.

[101] Sorell, p. 15.

As both Gregor and Sorell point out, the war had torn off society's respectable mask and exposed the rotten skeleton beneath. There was a general disillusionment that set in after the war. Some artists' responses to this were expressed by a need to return to even more primitive sources as a way to confront the nature of man and society as revealed by the war. These primitive roots were found in African art and culture. And it was especially the strange abstract African masks, seen as representative of man's unconscious drives and fears, which now exerted a profound influence on these artists.

In 1923, La Creation du Monde, a ballet by Darius Milhaud, was performed with huge masks covering the bodies of the performers. These masks, based on African sources, were designed by Fernand Léger.[102] In an essay entitled, "The Invented Stage," Léger presented his rationale for using such huge masks which reduced the actor's function to that of manipulator. It has echoes reminiscent of Craig's call for the Über-marionette.

> The mask dominated the ancient stage and the most primitive peoples use it in creating a spectacle. In spite of the feeble means at their disposal, they realized that the human likeness on the stage hindered the development of a lyrical state, of a state of astonishment.
>
> They wanted to transform the human face.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> A stage of invention must be created. The human material appears on the stage, but its value as spectacle is only equal to that of the object and the décor.[103]

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[102] Rischbeiter, p. 96.

[103] as quoted in Rischbeiter, p. 97.

It was in the post-war period that the ideas of the psychologists, such as Freud and Jung, became more generally known and accepted as tremendously relevant to intellectuals and artists. The significance of their concepts about the conscious and the unconscious with its repressed instincts was not lost on the contemporary playwrights as potential dramatic material. Because of their ideas, much of modern drama has been concerned with what Eugene O'Neill called "an exercise in unmasking."[104]

One European playwright of the period who became obsessed with the concept of masking, particularly as it related to the theme of illusion and reality, was the Italian, Luigi Pirandello. In his play, Right You Are--If You Think You Are (1917), Pirandello presented his first treatment of the masking complex in man that he had earlier expressed in his essay, Umorismo (On Humor), in 1908.[105]

> Today we are, tomorrow we are not. What sort of face have they given us with which to play the role of someone alive? An ugly nose? What misery to have to carry around an ugly nose all one's life. . . . It's fortunate that in the long run we cease to notice it. Others notice it, it's true, when we have succeeded in believing that we have a beautiful nose; and then we can no longer understand why they laugh when they look at us. They are such fools! We console ourselves by noticing what ears that one has and what lips that other, yet they are not aware of them and they have the nerve to laugh at us. Masks, masks. . . . A puff of wind and they pass and make way for others. That poor cripple there. . . . Who is he? To run towards death on crutches. . . . Here life crushes someone's foot; there it pulls out someone's eye. . . . A wooden leg, a glass eye, and forward! Everyone tidies up his mask as best

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[104]"Memoranda on Masks," The American Spectator (November, 1932), p. 3.

[105]trans. Anthony Caputi, as found in Modern Drama, ed. Anthony Caputi (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1966).

> he can--that is, the exterior mask. But inside there is still that other which often does not agree with the exterior one. Nothing is true! The sea is true, yes, and the mountains, and the stone, and the blade of grass; but man? Eternally masked, without wishing to be or knowing it, by those very things that he in good faith believes himself to be: handsome, good, gracious, generous, unhappy. To think of all this is to laugh; yes, to laugh.[106]

Pirandello continued to explore this theme in later plays. In the preface to the 1924 edition of Six Characters In Search Of An Author (1921), he called for special masks to be worn by the fictional six characters.[107] In Henry IV (1922), Pirandello requested mask-like makeup for the protagonist who had become fixed in the character of his masquerade costume through an accidental injury to his head which had affected his mind. One of the other characters recalls the moment of the injury.

> Donna Matilda. I shall never forget that scene--all our masked faces hideous and terrified gazing at him, at that terrible mask of his face, which was no longer a mask, but madness, madness personified.[108]

Pirandello extended this masking concept with its questioning of seeming and being further by attempting to destroy for his audience their ability to tell the difference between illusion and reality in their experience of his plays. He created whole productions that were to be carefully rehearsed and then performed as if they were actually taking place for the first time in the theatre which the

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[106] Ibid., p. 476.

[107] Sorell, pp. 76-77.

[108] English version by Edward Storer, found in Eric Bentley (ed.), Naked Masks: Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1952), p. 159.

audience was attending. These plays were Each In His Own Way (1924) and Tonight We Improvise (1930).

In some of his later plays, The Fable of the Exchanged Son (1934) and the unfinished The Mountain Giants (1937), Pirandello again requested the use of actual masks for his characters.[109] Sorell sums up Pirandello's unique interest in masks and masking in his plays when he writes,

> For Pirandello the masks are not psychological or symbolic but philosophical devices. Like the masks on the Greek stage of antiquity, they present a moment of an irreparable and continuous experience, as the tears on the mother's face express the epitome of grief. Pirandello's masks only suggest being masks.[110]

It was only after the war that the avant-garde movements in Europe began to seriously inflitrate the American theater. In Arthur Hopkin's production of Macbeth in 1920, the first serious use of masks on the stage in the United States began. Robert Edmond Jones, the designer, had included "the spectacle of three colossal silver masks in the black void above" the stage.[111] The witches also wore masks to suggest the idea that they were "abstractions of fatalism. . . ."[112] The production proved to be a failure.

But when, in the same year, Miss Margaret Severn, an American dancer, appeared in the Greenwich Village Follies performing in four masks by the Polish-American, W. T. Benda, the American fascination

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[110] Sorell, p. 77.

[111] Oliver Sayler, Our American Theatre (New York: Bretano's Publishers, 1923), p. 211.

[112] Ibid.

with masks in the theatre began. During the 20's and 30's there was actually a craze for "Benda-masks." Everybody wanted to use them--even on fashion models in Vanity Fair (Figure 1).

A journalist who visited Benda's Greenwich Village studio (Figures 2 and 3) responded enthusiastically to a demonstration of the transforming power of the mask (Benda had appeared in one of his female masks).

> I was familiar with the argument--and favorable to it--advanced by Gordon Craig, W. B. Yeats, and others, advocating the use of masks in the theatre on the ground that they cancel the actor's purely individual idiosyncrasy, and by wiping an obliterating hand over his too self-declarative personality permit him to become archetypal, as it were, and thereby to open a window upon the noumenal world--that 'supernal world' in which all the phenomena of this sensible world have their use. I had believed that masks might do this thing, but in Benda's studio I experienced it.[113]

But since Benda was a magazine illustrator and was not intimately connected with the theatre, he had very little lasting effect on the use of masks in the American theatre. He continued to make masks for his own enjoyment (Figure 4) and to study what makes masks come alive on performers. His research in this area was extremely significant, and we shall return to it later in this study when we examine mask design and the effect of the mask on the mask wearer.

Masks did not appear again in the serious New York theater until Eugene O'Neill's expressionistic play, The Hairy Ape (1922). And then they were used in only one scene in the play to create

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[113]Claude Bragdon, "A Plea For Masks," Theatre Guild Magazine, VIII, No. 4 (January, 1931), p. 47.

Figure 1.--Fashion models wearing masks by W. T. Benda. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

Figure 2.--W. T. Benda and "friends" in his Greenwich Village studio. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

Figure 3.--Mrs. Benda in one of W. T. Benda's female masks under Benda's huge Uber-marionette. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

Figure 4.--W. T. Benda wearing his favorite mask with his daughter, Glena. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

"denatured Fifth-Avenue promenaders. . . ."[114] This was O'Neill's first use of masks in his plays.

In 1923, Kenneth Macgowan and Herman Rosse published their study, Masks & Demons. Macgowan also wrote The Theatre of Tomorrow[115] the same year. Both books were to prove very influential on the American theatre artist interested in masks, especially Eugene O'Neill.

> In the mask and the marionette--the inanimate given life--there lies an almost equal fascination for the worker in the theater of tomorrow. In the work of the playwright who writes for the circus-theatre there will doubtless be a place for these venerable and not unholy devices. Masks may play their part, and in a more precious way, the marionettes. Both involve a certain strange and enthralling sense of the mystic quality of the theatre, of art commanding life and of life springing from art. They take a more natural place in those theatres where realistic illusion is of necessity banned. One can conceive of a drama of group beings in which great individuals, around whom these groups coalese, could be fitly presented only under the impersonal and eternal aspect of the mask; or, again, a drama in which the foil to the mob is the marionette who is thought to give it utterance. One can conceive as easily the mask and the marionette finding an inevitable use in intimate symbolic drama or in the expression of the unconscious.[116]

Macgowan's prediction of masks for intimate symbolic drama came true in the 1923-24 season at the Provincetown Playhouse, which featured three experiments in masked drama. The first of these was the American premiere of August Strindberg's The Spook Sonata, directed by R. E. Jones and James Light. It was O'Neill who suggested

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[114] Sayler, p. 212.

[115] (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1923).

[116] Ibid., p. 275.

the use of masks for certain of the characters.[117] James Light designed and constructed the masks for this production as he was to do for O'Neill's adaptation of Coleridge's poem, "The Ancient Mariner," for the second bill of the season.

In a perceptive article, "The Mask," written for the playbill of "The Ancient Mariner" production, Light defended their use of masks.

> A mask is not merely the reproduction of a human face used by an actor to represent a person not himself, but the embodiment of a dramatic quality in a medium which has a spiritual texture. . . . The mask alone is constantly true, the sublimation of the attributes of the god in a face that human eyes can bear.
>
> This spiritual significance is the real material of the mask. . . . The real material of the mask is the emotion that seems to dwell in its lines and shadows.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> As a matter of fact, the overtone of the supernatural or unnatural which the mask has for us today, is the echo in us of the spiritual readiness we once had. What it once did to bring the god before our primeval fathers, what it did to show to human eyes the emotion of the divine, it can still do--according to our capabilities.
>
> We are using masks in "The Ancient Mariner" for this reason; that we wish to project certain dramatic motifs through that spiritual atmosphere which the mask peculiarly gives. We do not use the mask to imitate life, but to intensify the quality of the theme. The mask cannot represent life, because it always has a life of its own, and indeed, is a living thing if only because it has been for ages the bearer of the emotions of gods and men. But it can be used, as we are trying to use it, to show the eyes of tragedy and the face of exaltation.[118]

The third use of masks at the Provincetown Playhouse that season was in O'Neill's play, All God's Chillun Got Wings. In this

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[117] Donald Gallup, (ed.), "Eugene O'Neill's 'The Ancient Mariner,'" The Yale University Library Gazette, XXXV, Number 1 (July, 1960), p. 61.

[118] Provincetown Playbill, No. 3 (Season 1923-24), pp. 1, 5.

play, a huge Congo mask was used to symbolize the primitive aspects of life for the character Ella Downey.[119]

O'Neill's fascination with masks soon became an obsession. He used them in The Fountain (1925), The Great God Brown (1926), Marco Millions (1928), and Lazarus Laughed (1928). He thought of Strange Interlude (1928) as a "new masked psychological drama . . . without masks,"[120] and had planned to use them in his trilogy, Mourning Becomes Electra (1931) but later abandoned the idea. His final use of actual masks was in Days Without End (1934).

O'Neill's most extensive use of masks was in Lazarus Laughed. All of the characters except Lazarus were to be masked. Under the influence of Macgowan's writings, O'Neill felt that the masks for stage crowds were particularly appropriate to plays "whenever a sense of impersonal, collective mob psychology is wanted."[121] When it was produced at the Pasadena Playhouse in April, 1928, "three hundred masks, which include the double size masks of Greek tragedy, the half face of the commedia dell'arte, and the ordinary full face mask" were employed.[122]

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[119]Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau, The Provincetown: A Story Of The Theatre (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1931), p. 105.

[120]Eugene O'Neill, "Second Thoughts," The American Spectator (December, 1932), p. 2.

[121]Eugene O'Neill, "A Dramatist's Notebook," The American Spectator (January, 1933), p. 2.

[122]"The Tributary Theatre," Theatre Arts Monthly, XII (June, 1928), p. 447.

The Great God Brown represents O'Neill's most complex use of the mask. In an article published in the playbill for this production, Kenneth Macgowan commented on the unique features of O'Neill's use of masks in this play, the first play "to dramatize changes and conflicts in characters"[123] with masks. In the article Macgowan attempted to unravel O'Neill's complex use of the masks as *personae* for his characters.

> O'Neill uses the naked face and the masked face to picture the conflict between inner character and the distortions which outer life thrusts upon it.[124]

If this had been all that O'Neill had wanted to convey, there would have been no problem in understanding the play for the audience. But this would also have been a simplistic employment of the mask as a psychological symbol on the stage and O'Neill knew it. Macgowan proceeded to explain O'Neill's more difficult conception.

> With this established, he goes on to use the mask as a means of dramatizing a transfer of personality from one man to another.[125]

In the play this is conveyed by one character assuming the mask of another. But this transfer of *persona* by the visible exchange of masks was now meant to symbolize a change of the inner state of being of his character rather than the outer societal mask which it had signified earlier. O'Neill, caught in paradoxical concepts

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[123]"The Mask In Drama," *Greenwich Playbill* (January 23, 1926), p. 1.

[124]Ibid., p. 6.

[125]Ibid.

of the mask and the face--which one conceals and which one reveals--never resolved the dilemma.

In 1932 and 1933 he wrote three articles for The American Spectator on his understanding of the place of masks in modern drama.

> Looked at from even the most practical standpoint of the practising playwright, the mask is dramatic in itself, has always been dramatic in itself, is a proven weapon of attack. At its best, it is more subtly, imaginatively, suggestively dramatic than any actor's face can ever be.[126]

Now O'Neill had decided that masks are a "symbol of inner reality."[127]

But only in "A Dramatist's Notebook" did he comment on the effect the masks had on his actors.

> It was interesting to watch, in the final rehearsals of 'The Great God Brown,' how after using their masks for a time the actors and actresses reacted to the demands made by the masks that their bodies become alive and expressive and participate in the drama. Usually it is only the actors' faces that participate. Their bodies remain spectators that have been dragged off to the theatre when they would have preferred a quiet evening in the upholstered chair at home.[128]

But O'Neill realized that modern actors would probably object to the mask because it would depersonalize them and demand a new kind of acting style.[129] (His perceptions about the effect of the mask on the actor, like W. T. Benda's, went unnoticed as applicable for actor training.) Even when O'Neill dispensed with

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[126] O'Neill, "Memoranda on Masks," p. 3.

[127] Ibid.

[128] p. 2.

[129] Ibid.

the convention of using actual masks in his plays, the process of masking and unmasking was still central to his dramaturgy.[130]

In their evaluation of the increased use of the mask in the performing arts after the war, Gregor and Sorell also mentioned the mask as instrumental in the origins of modern dance. The primary exponent of its use in dance was the German dancer, choreographer, Mary Wigman. Her first choreography involving masks was Ceremonial Figure (1927), followed by Witch Dance (1928), Song of the Norns (never completed), and Totenmal (1930).

> Most of Mary Wigman's dances were concerned with the revelation of inner states of being. It was, therefore, a logical step for her to make use of masks in some of her dances.[131]

Miss Wigman discovered that the masks designed for her dances really created their own choreography. While working on the Song of the Norns, she confronted the mask of an old woman.

> What looked back at me was the age-old, archaic face of a very old woman, so totally remote and removed from life that the language of this creature could only be motionless silence. This woman could no longer lift her foot, and her deadly tired hand could not even finish that last gently symbolic action, the cutting off of the thread of life which was her destiny.[132]

For the anti-war spectacular, Totenmal, ninety full-face masks were made by a Professor Goldschmidt in Munich.[133] For this

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[130]Eugene M. Waith, "Eugene O'Neill: An Exercise in Unmasking," O'Neill, ed. John Gassner (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 30.

[131]Sorell, p. 118.

[132]Mary Wigman, The Language of Dance, trans. Walter Sorell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), p. 73.

[133]Ilse Schneider-Lengyel, Die Welt Der Maske (München: R. Piper & Co., 1934), caption to Illus. 77.

production, Miss Wigman devised a system for introducing her dancers to the mask and teaching them to let the mask control their movements.[134] These and other comments on the value of the mask for the performer by Mary Wigman will be explored further in a later chapter.

By the mid 1930's interest in the mask for theatrical production had declined sharply. Only two major groups continued to explore masked drama: Art et Action and Léon Chancerel's Comédiens Routiers. (Chancerel had become intrigued with masked theatre while associated with Jacques Copeau's troupe, Les Copiaus.) Masks on the stage had been explored and exploited in every conceivable manner. The mask had been revived only to decline again before the onslaught of World War II. And it would not be until the 1950's before a significant renewal of interest in the mask and masked drama would again occur with the Berliner Ensemble's production of Bertolt Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle (1954), Tyrone Guthrie's production of King Oedipus at the Stratford Shakespearian Festival in Canada in 1954 and 1955, and Jean Dasté's performance of The Caucasian Chalk Circle in Paris in 1957.

This revival of interest in the mask that appeared at the close of the 19th century, coupled with a desire for a more abstract theatre, can be attributed to man's need to participate in something beyond himself.

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[134] Wigman, The Language of Dance, pp. 94-95.

> For rather than mirror nature in a photographic sense, the mask confronts us with a portrait more or less removed from the world of reality. It is a visible expression not merely of a human or animal face but a portrayal of an inner image responding more to the emotional needs of the maker, the wearer, and the community of spectators in general. Considered thus as a spiritual manifestation the mask can be said to symbolize concretely what so frequently must be regarded as transcendental, or, as an expressive gesture pointing to a far deeper source of observation, not of outer, but of inner nature; an effective bridging of the emotional experience through its visible manifestation.[135]

But our primary concern in exploring the rebirth of the mask in the modern world has been to extract those insights gained through experience of the mask by its adherents. The artists had reawakened the forces latent within the mask. They discovered that the mask contained a dynamic power to which their psychophysical being readily responded. But for the most part, their experiences were fragmentary, scattered, and abortive. Meyerhold, in Russia, had tried to incorporate his understanding of the mask into his actor training program, but was forced to abandon his research under growing political pressure against experimentation in the arts. Gordon Craig never reopened his school. Only Jacques Copeau would be able to conduct a serious investigation of the effects of the mask on the performer, and be able to develop a teaching method whereby the irresistable powers of the mask could be put into service for training young actors.

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[135]Muensterberger, n.p.

CHAPTER III

JACQUES COPEAU AND THE MASK IN ACTOR TRAINING

There is general agreement that Jacques Copeau (1878-1949), the brilliant French critic, animateur, and acting teacher, was the originator of the method of using masks to train actors. It was a method he discovered, experimented with, and developed in his acting schools, or in groups under his patronage, between the years 1915 and 1929. This is not to imply that Copeau was the first to rediscover the mask in the modern world or the first to employ masks in theatrical productions, as we have seen. But he was the only theatre artist of his time to recognize in the mask a valuable training device for the unmasked actor; one that should be incorporated into the actor's training program and not just limited to training in Commedia dell'arte or in other masked theatre forms. As we shall also see, it was Copeau's concept of what the modern theatre should be that led him to recognize in the mask a powerful agent that could help him achieve this vision with respect to the actor.

Copeau's main artistic life falls conveniently into four periods: prior to 1914; between 1915 and 1919; 1920 through 1924; and from 1924 to 1949. This final phase ends with the disbanding of his troupe known as Les Copiaus. Even though Copeau's nephew,

Michel Saint-Denis, formed a new group, La Compagnie des Quinze, in 1930, Copeau claimed that he was not involved with its work, although he did admit to there being a "family resemblance."[1] We shall study each of these four periods in turn, examining the development of Copeau's ideas about the theater and the actor with particular emphasis on his concept of the mask and its value in actor training.

The First Period: 1878-1914

Before 1913, while still a young theatre critic in Paris, Copeau struck out at three groups that comprised the Parisian theatrical world of his day: the Comédie Française, the new Independent Theatres (such as Antoine's Théâtre Libre and Lugné-Pöe's Théâtre de L'Oeuvre), and the popular Boulevard Theatres.[2]

What Copeau disliked about the Comédie Française was that it was caught in the trap of preserving and promoting an acting style clothed in tradition centuries old. He felt this might eventually kill the public's enjoyment of Molière and the other classical playwrights.[3]

His argument with the Independent Theatres was that they tended to have too narrow a vision in terms of what theatre was. They were caught in another trap, that of promoting the "isms":

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[1]"Remembrances of the Vieux Colombier," trans. Nanette Sue Flakes, Educational Theatre Journal, XXII, Number 1 (March, 1970), p. 18.

[2]Albert M. Katz, "The Genesis of the Vieux Colombier: The Aesthetic Background of Jacques Copeau," Educational Theatre Journal, XIX, Number 4 (December, 1967), p. 434.

[3]Waldo Frank, The Art Of The Vieux-Colombier (New York: Éditions de la Nouvelle Francaise, 1918), p. 23.

realism, naturalism, expressionism. He saw both the acting style and the stages of these theatres cluttered by exaggerated behavior and superfluous material in an attempt to be either a copy of external reality or present an internal reality. But, for Copeau, both groups lacked the essential thing: "inner truth."[4]

When he was twenty-seven, Copeau published an article in the journal, L'Emitage,[5] that denounced in ringing tones the popular Boulevard theatre of his day. He was particularly virulent with the actors.

> The theatre managers and their hirelings have one single occupation--will my play make money? They have of course very heavy burdens to bear, but none is heavier than the actor's greed. Vain and arrogant, the latter are the true masters of the situation; their whims, their despotic ignorance rule the stage. A play is unrecognizable once it has passed through their hands. They modify the text, add, delete and transform it to suit themselves; they are supposed to be the collaborators of the authors, and they are their tormentors.[6]

We have already noted that it was this same reaction to the dominance of the star-actors that fed Gordon Craig's protests against the modern theatre and led him on the search for the perfect actor who would be subordinate both to the script and to the director. We know that Copeau, like Craig, was fond of quoting Duse's strident statement, "To save the theatre it must be destroyed; may all the actors and actresses die of the plague. . . ."[7]

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[4]Katz, p. 435.

[5]15 February 1905.

[6]Copeau, as quoted in J. Chiari, "Jacques Copeau," World Review (January to June, 1952), p. 38.

[7]Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, "A New French Theatre," The New Republic, X (April 21, 1917), p. 351.

In the December, 1910, issue of La Nouvelle Revue Française, an influential journal Copeau had helped found, he reviewed Jacques Rouché's book, L'Art Théâtral Moderne.[8] Rouché's book summarizes the work of many of the innovative theatre artists of his day: Fuchs, Meyerhold, Stanislavsky, Craig and Appia. Rouché was mainly concerned with applying what he had learned from his research of these theatre artists to the French theatre. He wanted "la renovation théâtrale"[9] to occur in the French theatre, but was primarily interested in achieving this through the simplification and harmonizing of the décor and costuming.[10] To promote his ideas, Rouché directed the Théâtre des Arts from 1910 to 1913, and was the man who provided Copeau's first entrée into the theatre by producing his adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel, The Brothers Karamazov, in 1911.[11] Copeau was thus strongly influenced by the concepts of Rouché and through him learned about the work of other European theatre artists who were also seeking ways to revive the theatre. But Copeau came to believe that Rouché's "interest was in the graphic, the two dimensional"[12] on the stage.

In the September, 1913, issue of La Nouvelle Revue Française, Copeau published his own theatrical manifesto, "An Essay of Dramatic

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[8](Paris: Edouard Cornely & Cie, Editeure, 1910).

[9]Ibid., p. 4.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Brockett and Findlay, p. 222.

[12]Frank, p. 50.

Renovation: The Theatre du Vieux-Colombier."[13] In this important article, Copeau set forth the principles by which he would guide his new Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, opening in October.

The key word in the title of this manifesto is "renovation." (It was a term used previously by Rouché and the Art et Action group.) Copeau was not interested, as were so many others of his time, in a revolutionary theatre--the overthrow of the present and the establishment of something totally new and different, which was really the aim of his contemporaries at Art et Action. Instead he wanted, like Rouché, to purge the existing theater of all that was base, corrupt, and degrading for the performers as well as for the audience.

> We do not feel the need of a revolution. We have our eyes set on too great a model for that. We do not believe in the efficacy of aesthetic formulas which are born and die every month in the little clubs, and whose boldness results above all from ignorance. We do not know what the theatre of tomorrow will be. We proclaim nothing. But we dedicate ourselves to reacting against all the baseness of contemporary theatre. In founding the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, we are preparing a place of refuge for future talent.[14]

Copeau wanted the Vieux-Colombier to be the place where new playwrights could be sure their works would be respected and not changed to suit the pet theories of the management or the personalities of the leading actors. And this respect for the text was also to extend to his treatment of the classics as well.

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[13] trans. Richard Hiatt, Educational Theatre Journal, XIX, Number 4 (December, 1967), p. 447.

[14] Ibid., p. 451.

> We shall never presume--under pretext of making them more meaningful to us!--to adapt Molière or Racine to the fashions of the day. That would be a pleasant diversion indeed, to undertake to rejuvenate from the outside what is eternal to the core, and to season with a bit of modern verisimilitude that which overflows with truth. We shall forbid ourselves these fantasies. All the originality of our interpretations, if one finds any there, will come only from a profound knowledge of the scripts.[15]

To carry out his renovation, Copeau needed a new kind of actor and a new kind of theater. He gathered around him a group of young actors, among whom were Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin, Valentine Tessier, and Suzanne Bing. They had already been tainted by other acting training and experience, but had nevertheless felt the call to be "unselfish enthusiasts, whose ambition is to serve the art to which they dedicate themselves."[16] Dullin, in particular, had been struggling to learn the art of improvised comedy that was still alive in the provincial cabarets and fairs.[17] This would prove important to Copeau and the company.

Actually, these young actors were to be initiated by Copeau not only into a new style of acting but into a way of life.

> 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 specialization. In short, we shall do our best to renormalize 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![18]

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., p. 452.

[17] Frank, p. 32.

[18] Copeau, "An Essay of Dramatic Renovation," p. 452.

In fact, Copeau had already ensconced his troupe in the French countryside at Limon, training them in his own ensemble methods to prepare them for their first season of shows in Paris. Their days were spent as follows:

> Two hours every day were devoted to sight reading, which Copeau considered an exercise in intellectual suppleness and in vocal articulation. At least one hour a day was spent in outdoor activities, such as swimming and fencing, and the evenings were reserved for improvisation.[19]

The idea of using improvisation to rehearse a scene was a new approach for these actors. It may have been suggested as a rehearsal technique by Dullin,[20] or Copeau's application of the theories of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze who used improvisational techniques to teach rhythmic qualities to his young students.[21] Copeau had his actors develop each scene by first improvising the character in the given situation. Then, after each scene was fully explored in that manner, he would give them the actual text of the play.[22] It was at the Limon rehearsals that Copeau recognized improvisation as an important actor training technique, and this led him to contemplate how improvisation might be included in his future theatre plans.

> He had suppressed the personalities [of his actors] but somehow the artists grew in importance, giving the sense of

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[19]Albert Katz, "Copeau As Régisseur: An Analysis," Educational Theatre Journal, XXV, Number 2 (May, 1973), p. 164.

[20]Barbara Kusler, "Jacques Copeau's Theatre School 1920-1929" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1974), p. 28.

[21]Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, et al., The Eurhythmics Of Jacques-Dalcroze (Boston: Small Maynard and Company, 1913), passim.

[22]Katz, "Copeau As Régisseur," p. 164.

> power to create their own dramatic action by and through each other, which took him back in thought to the great days of Italian comedy and suggested that the much vaunted 'theatre of the future' must follow the line of improvisation.[23]

Knowing that he would eventually meet with resistance on the part of his present actors to some of his innovative ideas about acting and staging, Copeau realized that he would have to start a school for actors in order to fully achieve his goals.[24] But he was not able to do this immediately because of the demands of preparing the first season of the new company.[25]

Copeau further realized that a new style of acting must have a new style of theatre for its successful presentation. He condemned "realistic setting which tends to give the illusion of things themselves,"[26] and instead wanted "a schematic or synthetic setting which aims at suggesting them."[27] He wanted a true simplicity in setting that "could suggest rather than depict a locale."[28] Along with the dismissal of realistic settings went the possible dependency on stage machinery and unique lighting effects that others in Europe were advocating. Copeau had his reasons.

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[23]Sergeant, p. 351.

[24]Copeau, "An Essay of Dramatic Renovation," p. 452.

[25]Ibid., p. 453.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Katz, "The Genesis of the Vieux Colombier," p. 436.

> To be deeply interested in inventions of engineers or electricians is to accord a secondary place to the canvas, the paint box, the arrangement of lights; under whatever form it is to deal in tricks. Old or new, we repudiate them all. Good or bad, rudimentary or perfected, artificial or realistic, we deny the importance of all machinery.[29]

Copeau was abolishing the importance of lighting and scenery for his stage. Instead he would have what he called the "tréteau nu" (the naked stage).

> The use of the stage and its simplest crafts will act on us as a discipline, by forcing us to concentrate all truth in the feelings and actions of our characters. Let the other illusions disappear, and, for the new work, leave us a bare stage![30]

This idea of a naked stage would become the central concept in Copeau's thoughts about the theatre.

Copeau took over a former music hall, the Athénée Saint-Germain on the Left Bank of Paris and with Francis Jourdain redesigned the interior.

> The 1913 stage was relatively spartan. The drawing of the 1913 Vieux-Colombier shows a bare stage, with two doors cut into the proscenium arch, providing additional entrances.[31]

It was in this permanent and neutral space that Copeau's company held their first performances during the 1913-1914 season.

Copeau's troupe performed fifteen different programs in their first season, opening in October with Thomas Heywood's A Woman Killed With Kindness, and closing with Shakespeare's Twelfth Night

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[29]Copeau, "An Essay of Dramatic Renovation," p. 454.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Katz, "Copeau As Régisseur," p. 167.

in May. Three works of Molière were performed: L'Amour Médecin, L'Avare, and La Jalousie du Barbouillé.[32] It was the preparation and performance of these three plays of Molière, along with the rehearsal technique of improvisation, that were to have important consequences for Copeau's rediscovery of the value of the mask in actor training.

When the war started in August, 1914, Copeau's company of actors was disbanded and the men sent into the armed forces. Years later, Copeau summed up the experience of that first year of his theater.

> From October, 1913, to June, 1914, I underwent a haphazard and crude apprenticeship in a real life experience of the profession of actor, of stage manager, and of leader of the company. What I was groping for was a unified performance, life on the stage which was not inferior to the poetic life of the drama, and which was faithful to it.[33]

The Second Period: 1915-1919

After he was demobolized from the auxiliary forces in 1915 for a lung ailment, Jacques Copeau had time to devote himself to study and contemplation of the results of his first year of theatrical production. André Gide, a close friend of Copeau's, gives us a glimpse of a restless Copeau in his diary entry for August 21, 1914.

> Copeau arrives at the rue Langier just as we were about to go up to bed and delays our curfew an hour. He seems

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[32] Clément Borgal, Metteurs En Scène (Paris: Fernand Lanore, 1963), p. 199.

[33] Copeau, "Remembrances," p. 3.

> younger, more Diderot than ever, eagerly embracing every new project. He talks of reopening the Vieux-Colombier for theatrical presentations and recitals improvised for the occasion, and he would like to organize them at once. He also talks of going abroad since he is doing nothing in Paris; he would like to become more involved. . . .[34]

Copeau did go abroad in 1915 after receiving an invitation from Gordon Craig to visit him at the Arena Goldoni in Florence. Even though Craig and Copeau had difficulty communicating because Craig did not speak one word of French and Copeau very little English,[35] Copeau stayed in Florence visiting Craig for a month (from the middle of September until the middle of October).[36]

Albert M. Katz in his article, "The Genesis of the Vieux-Colombier," says that one thing Copeau was greatly interested in was the school that Craig had started at the Arena Goldoni in 1913.

> . . . Copeau was impressed with its curriculum and operation which allowed students to practice the various facets of their arts in addition to studying theory.[37]

Once, while visiting the Arena Goldoni, Craig showed Copeau the huge model for his projected production of Bach's St. Matthew's Passion.[38] Craig's designs for the staging of St. Matthew's Passion had evolved over the years since it was first envisioned in 1906.

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[34]The Journals of André Gide, trans. Justin O'Brien, Vol. II (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 69.

[35]Jacques Copeau, "Visites à Gordon Craig, Jacques-Dalcroze et Adolphe Appia," Revue de la Société d'Histoire du Théâtre (December, 1963), p. 357.

[36]Claude Sicard, (ed.), Correspondance Jacques Copeau Roger Martin du Gard, Tome I (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1972), p. 187.

[37]Katz, "The Genesis of the Vieux Colombier," p. 438.

[38]Copeau, "Visites," p. 361.

The final designs contained a "permanent stage structure on two principal levels, the lower stage, or 'crypt' to be used for the 'terrestrial' parts of the drama and the upper stage, or 'chancel' for the 'celestial' parts."[39] When the scale model was constructed later from these designs, Craig simplified the design even more and added a stairway and new levels.[40]

Even though Copeau was repulsed by Craig's idea of presenting St. Matthew's Passion as "the most big thing ever seen in America,"[41] he saw in the model a fulfillment of his own ideas about what the naked stage should look like.[42] He wrote to Louis Jouvet, who was in the army at the time, enthusiastically telling him that Craig had shown him a stage that would answer all their needs, and that Craig had also devised a new lighting system for this stage that eliminated the need for footlights and other on-stage lights.[43]

Although they had many ideas in common, Copeau and Craig differed over what figure was more important to the theater, the actor or the director. For Craig, the director had primacy because it was his job to synthesize all the production elements into a unified artistic whole. The actor must be subordinate to the director's total design. Copeau, on the other hand, felt that

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[39]Bablet, trans. Daphne Woodward, p. 171.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Copeau, "Visites," p. 361.

[42]Bablet, trans. Daphne Woodward, p. 171.

[43]Letter from Copeau to Louis Jouvet, October 10, 1915, as quoted in Maurice Kurtz, Jacques Copeau: Biographie d'un Théâtre (Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1950), p. 61.

the actor was the primary figure in the theatre. Henri Ghéon, the French playwright, best sums up Copeau's views on the matter. Copeau, he says,

> . . . was convinced of one thing: the primacy of the actor--the actor who is the very warp and woof of the play, the living presence of the author, giving substance and life to his design. Everything is done by the actor and for the actor; all the rest is superfluous.[44]

For Copeau, the director's job was to synthesize all the elements but only in order to help the actor fulfill his function as the interpreter of the play. In writing about the function of the director, Copeau declared,

> Hence, the director is the playwright's righthand man or substitute in the matter of producing the play. His work is based on an agreement, a kind of contract which he is able to sign because of his insight and to which he is bound because of his sincerity. But trouble arises the moment he makes use of some of his professional skill to distort the playwright's work, to introduce into the fabric of that work his own ideas, intentions, fantasies, and doctrines.[45]

Even with this basic disagreement between them, Copeau and Craig discussed a possible joint venture between Craig's journal, The Mask, and the Vieux-Colombier, and the possibility of introducing Craig's movable screens as a staging device at Copeau's theatre in Paris.[46] These plans did not materialize, but Copeau was always to acknowledge the great influence that Craig had on his thinking,[47]

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[44]The Art Of The Theatre, trans. Adele M. Fiske (New York: Hill & Wang, 1961), p. 73.

[45]"Dramatic Economy," trans. Joseph M. Bernstein, Directors on Directing, eds. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1963), p. 224.

[46]Copeau, "Visites," p. 366.

[47]Sergeant, p. 352.

especially in stage and setting design. Copeau had already taken to heart what Craig was to state later; that "to create a simplified stage is the first duty of a master of the Drama."[48]

On October 19th, Copeau was in Geneva, Switzerland, meeting with Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, the founder of eurhythmics. Copeau, who already knew of Jacques-Dalcroze's work through his writings, observed his eurhythmic classes with young children and inquired about the organization of his school.[49] The stay with Jacques-Dalcroze convinced Copeau of the necessity of using improvisation and rhythmic movement in training actors.

> I am now certain of the point of contact and of understanding, certain of the relationship between the methods of Dalcroze and those which I meditate on, of the virtue of general rhythmic education as a base for professional instruction of actors.[50] (A.T.)

It was through Jacques-Dalcroze that Copeau was also introduced to Adolphe Appia, the Swiss stage designer, but there are no accounts of their first meeting.[51]

While in Geneva, Copeau also met Georges Pitoeff, the former Russian actor in Meyerhold's troupe who was now directing plays in the city. He witnessed his production of Blok's The Fairground

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[48]Gordon Craig, Scene (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 15.

[49]Bettina Leibowitz Knapp, Louis Jouvet Man Of The Theatre (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 41.

[50]Copeau, "Visites," p. 369.

[51]Kusler, p. 48.

Booth, the play which had started Meyerhold on his revival of Commedia dell'arte techniques.[52] But Copeau never mentioned this production as influential on him in any way.

When he returned to Limon in November of that year, Copeau met with Suzanne Bing, one of the actresses in his former company, who was now helping Copeau plan his school. His school was to be like Craig's, a laboratory where he could work out his theories.[53] Copeau wanted most of all to create an ensemble of actors, or as he termed it, a chorus.[54]

> To begin with, the important thing was not to make the exceptional individual stand out, but to assemble, to train a company and have them live in harmony. I should say in better terms, in dramatists' terms, that it was a matter of creating a chorus, in the ancient sense. A technical concern of a basic nature led us from the very first to the source of inspiration: the chorus is the mother-cell of all dramatic poetry. Indeed we were thirsty for poetry.[55]

Copeau opened his school, under the direction of Suzanne Bing, in the same month, with a dozen students all under the age of twenty.[56] These young people met his requirements of not being tainted by previous actor training.[57] Copeau wrote to Jouvet on

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[52]Jacques Copeau, Souvenirs Du Vieux-Colombier (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1931), p. 53.

[53]France Anders, Jacques Copeau et le Cartel Des Quatre (Paris: A. G. Nizet, Editeur, 1959), p. 38.

[54]Copeau, "Rememberances," p. 9.

[55]Ibid., p. 9.

[56]Knapp, p. 42.

[57]Anders, p. 38.

November 29th that the school had started well and that the subjects being taught were dance, rhythm, singing, and acting.[58]

> The initial training began with the students imitating animal sounds, assuming the shapes of trees, benches, and other inanimate objects in order to make their bodies supple and adaptable for any theatrical purpose. Varied improvisations, rhythmic attitudes, and the use of masks were part of their training.[59]

This may have been Copeau's first use of masks in his training but the evidence for this view is not well founded.[60] At any rate, Copeau was applying improvisational techniques that he had gleaned from his meetings with Craig, Jacques-Dalcroze, and from his own prior experience with his actors. Copeau now observed that children had a unique ability to improvise roles for their play.

> But it is from the spontaneous play of children, with its verve, its simplicity, its inventiveness, that he believes most can be learned. The School of the Vieux-Colombier, which can merely be mentioned here, is destined to be the nursery of the theatre.[61]

From his experience with these young students, Copeau was convinced that "'the theatre of the future' must follow the line

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[58] Ibid., p. 37.

[59] Knapp, p. 42.

[60] There is strong disagreement with the view that Copeau first used masks with his students in the 1915 school. Barbara Kusler in her dissertation on Copeau's theatre school claims that masks were first used in the later 1920 school. Also, Copeau's daughter, Marie-Hélène Dasté, in a personal letter to this writer, stated that she believed masks were first introduced in the 1920 school. Bettina Knapp, whose quote is used above, cites Maurice Kurtz's book on Copeau as the source for this information, which many writers assert is unreliable.

[61] Sergeant, p. 352.

of improvisation."[62] The necessity for a school to carry out this program of reform was now more important than ever. "Et c'est pourquoi: first of all, the School; do you understand?" he wrote to Jouvet, underscoring in English its importance for him.[63]

Copeau was now thoroughly inspired by the potentials of improvisation to create actors and playwrights. He began to research its history.

> It is an art which I don't know, and I am going to look into its history. But I see, I feel, I understand that this art must be restored, reborn, revised; that it alone will bring a living theatre--the plays of players. Leave literature. . . . Create a fraternity of players . . . living, working, playing together . . . creating together, inventing together their games, drawing them from themselves and from 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.[64]

What Copeau discovered while doing his research was, of course, the commedia dell'arte. In this form he found mirrored his own ideas concerning the value of improvisation as a base for acting and playwrighting coupled with the use of a simple platform stage for presentation. And, the use of masks for the actors as a way to represent fixed character types, although this did not seem to be important to him at the time.

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[62] Ibid., p. 351.

[63] "Lettre a Jouvet du 25 Décembre 1915," quoted in, Anders, p. 37.

[64] Christopher D. Kirkland, "The Golden Age, First Draft," The Drama Review, Vol. 19, Number 2 (T-66) (June, 1975), p. 58.

Copeau now became anxious to form a group of modern farceurs modelled on the commedia pattern. He wrote excitedly to Jouvet,

> . . . inventing a dozen modern, synthetic characters of a 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 an accessory type.
>
> 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 personnage which is his property, who becomes himself, whom he nourishes with 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 personages put themselves into all the 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 immutable physiognomy, (just like that of the actors). I already see three of these personnages . . . the Intellectual (doctor, philosopher, etc.), the Agent (or representative) (deputy, minister, electoral agent, grocery merchant, etc.); the Adolescent (the 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.).[65]

Jouvet responded enthusiastically to Copeau's suggestion. In a letter dated January 31, 1916, he pleads, "I want to be a farceur, I will be nothing but a farceur?"[66] (A.T.)

In a later letter, Jouvet continued with his enthusiasm for Copeau's project of forming a modern commedia dell'arte troupe

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[65]Letter from Jacques Copeau to Louis Jouvet, Winter, 1916, trans. and quoted in Katz, "The Genesis of the Vieux Colombier," p. 446.

[66]"Quatre Lettres de Louis Jouvet A Jacques Copeau," Cahiers Renaud-Barrault (October, 1954), p. 107.

and included some suggestions for an improvisation based on material from Rabelais for Copeau to try out at his school.[67] For Jouvet believed that it was necessary to base improvisations on a text of some sort and not leave it all to the imaginations of the actors.[68]

Copeau also tested out his idea for a modern commedia dell' arte troupe on André Gide. Gide's response was positive, too.

> If this plan is realized, I forsee and long for an audience in complicity with the actors, urging them on and communicating enthusiasm to them.[69]

In June of 1916, Copeau returned to Geneva to see Jacques-Dalcroze. There was also another meeting with Adolphe Appia. Copeau had read his book, Music And The Art Of The Theatre (1898), and had been very impressed by Appia's ideas.[70] In his article, "Jacques Copeau, Appia's Finest Disciple," Walther R. Volback writes about this meeting.

> Appia and Copeau were drawn to one another from the moment they exchanged their first sentences. This is not surprising since they had so much in common. Appia found in Copeau a stage director who had the same basic concept of the art of the theatre and Copeau met in Appia the artist who was capable of explaining to him what he was groping for. They were on common ground in their love for Moliere and Shakespeare. Copeau did not share Appia's predilection for opera, in particular for Wagner's music dramas, but he understood Appia's principles as regards musical values in their relationship to dramatic action and dialogue. Appia's hierarchy

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[67] Ibid., p. 116.

[68] Ibid., p. 117.

[69] Gide, p. 118.

[70] Katz, "The Genesis of the Vieux Colombier," p. 441.

> needed no persuasion to be appreciated: the predominance of the performer, the spatial setting, the major role assigned to lighting and the minor role given to painting were sensed by Copeau and thus immediately and fully accepted.[71]

Copeau and Appia talked of Hellerau, the school Jacques-Dalcroze had founded in Dresden, Germany, before the war. Appia had helped to design this "first theater in modern times without a proscenium arch."[72] They discussed the production of Orpheus and Eurydice which Appia and Jacques-Dalcroze had staged there in 1913.[73] For that production, Appia had designed a simple arrangement of steps, platforms, and curtains, which by simple lighting changes would give a sense of differing locales and achieve the three-dimensionality of the actor moving in space that Appia desired.[74] They also talked about the intimate relationship that must occur between the play text and the playing space, and between the text and the mise-en-scène.[75]

> He [Appia] had also come to believe that the rhythm embedded in the text provides the key to every gesture and movement to be used on the stage and that the proper mastery of rhythm will unify all the spatial and temporal elements of a production into a harmonious and satisfactory whole.[76]

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[71] Educational Theatre Journal, Vol. 17 (March, 1965), pp. 206-207.

[72] Brockett and Findlay, p. 203.

[73] Copeau, "Visites," p. 372.

[74] Brockett and Findlay, pp. 204-205.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., p. 205.

These ideas of Appia's were tremendously important to Copeau, as they confirmed his own thinking and experience on the subject.[77] His later writing reflects Appia's profound influence on him.

> We have found that a good script, a play that is well written for acting on the stage, contains timespans--movements and rhythms--comparable to those in music and, as in music, capable of generating space. The question of what space or playing area to choose in a given play, or in a given scene from a play, is therefore not an unimportant matter. For there is a stage economy that corresponds to dramatic economy, a performing style engendered by a literary style; and indeed, a theater's physical structure may serve to heighten and enhance the intellectual structure of a play or, on the contrary, to distort and destroy it.[78]

Copeau also mentioned to Appia his ideas for his farceurs and the creation of a new improvisational comedy. Appia was stunned and delighted with Copeau's suggestion because he had just been thinking about such a possibility himself when Copeau arrived.[79] With this meeting of minds, these two men became close friends and remained in contact with each other for many years. Copeau even referred to himself as Appia's disciple.[80]

With the war still on, the French Government was persuaded to send Copeau and his company to New York City as cultural ambassadors until the war was over. (Copeau had already given a series of lectures in the United States in support of the Little Theatre Movement.)[81] Jouvet was released from active duty to join the

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[77]Copeau, "Visites," p. 373.

[78]Copeau, "Dramatic Economy," p. 222.

[79]Copeau, "Visites," pp. 373-374.

[80]Volbach, p. 208.

[81]Knapp, p. 42.

company, but Dullin was not allowed to come until some months later.[82] This, of course, meant that Copeau had to shut down his fledgling school in Paris.

Jouvet preceded the company to New York and helped to redesign the interior of the Garrick Theatre along the even more severe lines that Copeau now wanted after his meetings with Craig and Appia. The new plans called for all sense of separation between the stage and the auditorium to be minimized as much as possible.[83]

Reporting in The New Republic about Copeau's earlier lectures, as a preface to the arrival of his troupe in the United States, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant wrote down her impressions of Copeau's theatrical objectives.

> To restore the importance of the drama Copeau's method is elimination [italics added]; elimination of the vain and artificial personality of the actor, suppression of the décor, of the very idea of a setting. Action, he says, is the essence of the art of the theatre, and action is movement. The degree to which the rhythm of this movement is imposed on the actor by the spirit of the piece will determine its significance. He must find its echo in his own heart, and while drawing his whole force thence, subordinate himself to the total effect.[84]

Miss Sergeant then went on to quote a highly significant statement by Copeau.

> If I stretch a grey cloth on the stage instead of a décor, it is not because I think I have discovered a new and definitive decorative formula. It is a radical remedy, a purgation. It is because I want the stage to be naked and neutral [italics

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[82]Ibid., p. 43.

[83]Katz, "Copeau As Régisseur," pp. 167-168.

[84]Sergeant, p. 351.

> added], in order that every delicacy may appear there, in order that every fault may stand out; in order that the dramatic work may have a chance in this neutral atmosphere [italics added] to fashion that individual garment which it knows how to put on.[85]

Here again is a restatement of Copeau's desire for the tréteau nu, the naked stage, which he had proposed in his 1913 manifesto. But now he is even more insistent on the reasons why he must have it. And as we shall see, these ideas of "elimination," and of a "naked and neutral" stage, will begin to apply to his concept of the proper starting point for the actor as well.

The Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier opened in New York City on November 27, 1917, with a program dedicated to Molière. Copeau wrote a play, L'Impromptu du Vieux-Colombier, based on Molière's famous short play, presenting his philosophy of theater, and it was performed along with Molière's farce, Fourberies de Scapin.[86] A "ceremony in which the comic dramatists of all ages, represented by typical characters from their works, wreathe with laurel"[87] the bust of Molière closed the evening's performance.

The production of Molière's farce, which employed stock characters based on commedia dell'arte figures, gave Copeau an opportunity to test out his hopes for a new company of farceurs. As in the commedia, certain roles were played in masks--Copeau himself played Scapin, the rascal servant. In reviewing the

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Knapp, p. 43.

[87] A. G. H. Spiers, "The Opening of the Vieux Colombier," The Nation, CV, No. 2736 (December 6, 1917), p. 642.

production, A. G. H. Spiers rejoiced that Copeau "has brought to life once more the actors of the commedia dell'arte. . . ."[88]

The Vieux-Colombier troupe played in New York for two seasons. During the 1918-1919 season, Copeau again staged a Molière farce, Le Médecin Malgré Lui, in which Jouvet played Sganerelle. Again the actors were masked "to symbolize their basic passions."[89]

But even though Copeau had a great influence on the Little Theatre Movement in America, the two seasons in New York were not a financial success, and the New York audiences decided they were not an artistic success either. American audiences were not ready for the non-realistic approach to production. That acceptance was to come after the war. For the present, the ultra-realistic approach of David Belasco still reigned supreme with American taste.[90]

Copeau, looking back in later years on this discouraging time, said,

> Through these trials, the chronicle of which I will spare you, we plowed our furrow, we exercised our influence, we prepared the road for others. In leaving America, we left behind an example, a reputation which has not been erased since. Personally, I almost left my skin, along with a lot of other things. I brought back a suffocating harvest of experiences from it, and several wounds which I had a hard time healing.[91]

With the conclusion of the war, Copeau and his troupe returned to Paris in 1919 ready to begin work again at their old theatre.

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[88] Ibid., p. 644.

[89] Knapp, p. 51.

[90] Brockett and Findlay, p. 486.

[91] Copeau, "Remembrances," p. 6.

The Third Period: 1919-1924

One of the first things that Copeau did when he and his troupe returned to Paris was to have Jouvet remodel the stage of the Vieux-Colombier along simpler, even more severe lines, than those used in the New York theater. The proscenium arch was now entirely eliminated so that there was no physical barrier separating the auditorium and the stage.[92] A two-level apron was extended into the auditorium, and at the back of the stage a permanent arch was built which had an alcove beneath it and steps leading up to a flat open balcony on top of the arch. Steps then continued on to a doorway high in the stage right wall. Footlights, borderlights, and strip lights were eliminated. All light for the stage came from four units suspended in the auditorium. What Copeau now created was the "first presentational playhouse in the modern world. . . ."[93]

As Henri Ghéon frankly admitted about Copeau's architectural solution, "You either like such total nakedness or you don't."[94]

> The stage and the actor thus regained their original meaning, their essential and primordial function: no more and no less than to serve the author's idea, to make it legible, intelligible, in form and rhythm, convention and reality, keeping what is natural without the banality or corruption of the naturalistic school, preserving style without the pomposity and absurdity of the conservatory fossil; to live in acting and act in living; all that for the actors. Copeau's stage gives them a practicable area with breadth, and depth and height in which to move, thanks to the varied stage levels

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[92]Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones, Continental Stagecraft (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1964), pp. 171-183, passim.

[93]Ibid., p. 172.

[94]Ghéon, p. 74.

> on which they can successively group and separate, filling the entire stage with arabesques or mass patterns emphasized by the costume color scheme--all in order to project the inner meaning of the play. Significant handling of set, lighting, and incidental music illuminate and support the word and the movement.
>
> Such are the elements of Jacques Copeau's reforms of stage design. He did not invent, but brought tradition back to life for our day.[95]

The newly remodelled theater opened on February 10th with Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale. It was to close down only five years later in February of 1924.

Not only had Copeau's ideas on the new renovation of the stage of the Vieux-Colombier crystallized in 1919, but so had his ideas on the training necessary for an actor.

> Already, at the beginning of the year 1919, I was obsessed by a need which will take up most of my interest five years later: to shelter vital experience from a premature exploitation. Gordon Craig had posed, justly and resolutely, the necessity of a school as a principle of renovation. Stanislavsky gave us the example of those 'studios' from which his influence was to radiate immensely.[96]

Copeau made extensive notes on the ways to achieve this proper education of an actor in his journal for the year, as a preparation for the opening of his full-time school for apprentice actors: the École de Vieux-Colombier.

One of Copeau's primary goals, as it was with Craig, Jacques-Dalcroze, and Appia, was to work to create in the student actor an

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[95] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[96] Copeau, "Remembrances," p. 6.

"awareness and experience of the human body,"[97] so that he would be physically expressive on stage.

> 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 peculiar to the movement being done.
>
> Knowledge and mastery of the movements of the body must not, any more than those of the movements of the face, grow out of imitation of oneself, or of others, or of painted or sculpted images. Without banishing human observations or aesthetic knowledge from the training of the actor, it can be said that it is not in the changes in his own face in the mirror, that the actor will learn to modulate the intensity of his dramatic expression. He will have to have an internal knowledge of the passions he expresses, whether through personal experience or through that kind of divination that is peculiar to the artist. And he will have to acquire the anatomical knowledge, and muscular mastery of his instrument, which is his own face. . . . The dramatic artist at rest and in action always has an internal awareness of the show he is putting on. At the moment when he expresses it, the passion or the dramatic movement he is interpreting has ceased to be an object of study to him, but it has not ceased to be an object of awareness. He directs them, but he is possessed by them.
>
> No affectation of any kind whatsoever, whether of the body, the mind, or the voice. What we are seeking is headlong harmony.[98]

One can easily see how these ideas have been influenced by Appia and Jacques-Dalcroze's belief in the reciprocal relationship between the internal and the external world of the actor; that every physical movement has a corresponding emotional effect and that every emotional feeling has a corresponding physical manifestation.[99]

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[97]Jacques Copeau, "Notes On The Actor," trans. Harold J. Salemson, Actors On Acting, eds. Tody Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (New York: Crown Publishers, 1970), p. 219.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Brockett and Findlay, p. 203.

In other notes, Copeau wrote about what must be the "starting point of expression"[100] for the actor. The starting point must be "to establish silence and calm within himself."[101]

> The state of repose, calm, relaxation, détente, silence, or simplicity. In reading aloud as well as in his spoken interpretations and in his physical playing or action or business, the actor always starts from an artificial attitude, a bodily, mental, or vocal grimace. His attack is both too deliberate and insufficiently premeditated, or, what is even simpler and more serious, insufficiently felt.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> To start from silence and calm. That is the very first point. An actor must know how to be silent, to listen, to answer, to remain motionless, to start a gesture, follow through with it, come back to motionlessness and silence, with all the shadings and half-tones that these actions imply.[102]

Copeau could almost be writing here about his concept of the naked and neutral stage. Elimination of unnecessary gestures and facial expressions in the actor is now as important to Copeau as the elimination of unnecessary architectural details in his theatre. The actor, like the stage, must first exist in a neutral state (silence and motionlessness),

> . . . in order that every delicacy may appear there, in order that every fault may stand out; in order that the dramatic work may have a chance in this neutral atmosphere to fashion that individual garment which it knows how to put on.[103]

For Waldo Frank, there is a direct relationship between Copeau's aesthetic philosophy and his pedagogical philosophy.

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[100] Copeau, "Notes On The Actor," p. 220.

[101] Ibid., p. 222.

[102] Ibid., pp. 220-222.

[103] Sergeant, quoting Copeau, p. 351.

> Copeau is a Bergsonian in aesthetics. He sees his pupil-actor as a first material, as a sort of molecular or germinal organism which he requires at the outset as general, as undifferentiate as it is possible to be. His purpose is to let these actor-pupils, builded up from a rock-bottom of body--, voice--and mind--expression, organically achieve their drama.[104]

Copeau now believed that the actor must begin with this "general" and "undifferentiate" state--this state of neutrality. The problem was how to get the apprentice actor to achieve this neutral and yet dynamic state; this "fulcrum" point for all his later development. The method which Copeau was to discover to effect this neutral state in the actor was the improvisational training in the neutral and inexpressive mask.

Copeau opened his École in the fall of 1920.[105] Jules Romains was director of the school and Copeau's daughter, Marie-Hélène, the secretary.[106] Bettina Knapp says, "The school had probably the most brilliant and best-equipped teaching staff in France in that period."[107] Jouvet, Suzanne Bing, and the Fratellini brothers (clowns) among others were on the staff.[108] According to the brochure describing the advent of the school, the purpose of the school was to train actors (comédiens), dramatists, and

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[104]Waldo Frank, "Copeau Begins Again," Theatre Arts Magazine, IX (September, 1925), p. 587.

[105]Again there is disagreement regarding the actual starting date of the school. The school did open in 1920, but on a very limited basis. The full program of study was not offered until 1921.

[106]Knapp, p. 62.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Kurtz, p. 108.

technicians.[109] The professional training unit of the school was to be open to twelve students (male and female) between the ages of fourteen and twenty.[110]

Besides the core of professional students, who were day-boarders at the school, there were also commuting students (limited to ten) and auditors (limited to twenty).[111] Another unit of the school was to train thirty children between the ages of eight and twelve two days a week in singing, dancing, costuming, and various games and improvisations.[112]

The variety of course work listed for the opening year, 1920-1921, included (a) courses open to the public (lectures on works in the repertoire of the company and on theater in general); (b) courses open to all students (theory of the theatre--Greek Tragedy; theory of theatre architecture, especially the Greek theatre; poetic techniques in theory and practice; Greek culture and civilization; diction and singing); and (c) closed courses only for the professional apprentices (physical education, eurhythmics, singing, instrumental music, French language, memory exercises, beginning reading and speaking, education of the dramatic instinct, development of the dramatic sensibilities, scene study, and technical training in practical scene shop work).[113]

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[109] Ibid., p. 107.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid., p. 108.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., pp. 108-110, passim.

The professional training program was to last approximately three years, and students who passed the finals were to remain with the performing company for another three years.[114]

According to Waldo Frank, "The basic principle touching upon the school was that there must be no theory save as an essence of experience."[115] Michel Saint-Denis, Copeau's nephew, elaborates on this principle.

> 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-established methods: experience would furnish these in time, but to begin with all was invention, discovery and consequently liberty with its close corollary discipline.[116]

Copeau's training philosophy as he was to explain it later, was,

> . . . to follow the natural development of the child's instinct for acting, limiting ourselves to encouraging him, to furnishing him a fulcrum, to procuring for him the means of expressing himself according to his own taste, imagination, needs of entertainment. At first we gave him an obedient body.[117]

He then went on to explain in outline the program of study.

> . . . from gymnastics to the idea of interior rhythm, to music, to dance, to mimicry with masks [italics added], to speaking, to the elementary dramatic forms, to conscious acting, to scenic invention, and to poetry.[118]

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[114] Knapp, p. 64.

[115] Frank, "Copeau Begins Again," p. 587.

[116] "A School of Dramatic Art," World Theatre, IV, No. 3 (Winter, 1954), pp. 38-39.

[117] Copeau, "Remembrances," p. 9.

[118] Katz, "Copeau As Régisseur," p. 166.

It was in the course work described in the 1920 brochure as "the education of the dramatic instinct," taught by Copeau and Suzanne Bing, where the improvisational exercises that led to the discovery of the mask as a training device occurred. Jean Dorcy, a pupil at the school later, suggests how this may have come about.

> 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 to develop our own little dramas. The mask was born in this laboratory.[119]

Dorcy also mentions the search that then became necessary to find the proper mask that would produce the required state of neutrality for the actor desired by Copeau.

> 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.[120]

It was the discovery of this neutral, inexpressive mask (Figure 5) in his own workshop that enabled Copeau to lead the student actors back to that proper starting point, that state of neutrality, of silence and motionlessness, that he recognized as the basis for all of the actors' future training.

> The use of masks greatly facilitated their [the students] explorations--proving to be an important link with ancient

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[119] The Mime, trans. Robert Speller, Jr. and Pierre de Fontnouvelle (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers, Inc., 1961), p. 12.

[120] Ibid., p. 13.

Figure 5.--Examples of Copeau's neutral training masks and demons with raffia hair. Courtesy of Mme. Dasté and Barbara Kusler.

> Greek theatre and primitive dramatic experience. In his desire to give students an understanding of the roots of drama as a basis for their own creations, Copeau concluded that the use of masks was of incalculable value; giving students an unknown power and assurance. The mask imposed a great power and amplitude on each movement. Through mask exercises Copeau was able to develop the completeness of movement and sense of style and 'mesure'--moderation, sense of proportion and time--and the kind of consciousness and control he had been seeking.[121]

Dorcy, elaborating about the effects of the mask on the mask wearer, utilizes imagery and concepts borrowed from Copeau.

> What happens to the actor who puts on a mask? He is cut off from the outer world. The night he deliberately enters allows him first to reject everything that hampered him. Then, by an effort of concentration, to reach a void, a state of unbeing [italics added]. From this moment forward, he will be able to come back to life and behave in a new and truly dramatic way.
> . . . To re-establish dramatic harmony, it will be necessary to act according to the law of the mask; to create and comply with the rhythm imposed by the theme, to emphasize contrasts, and to eliminate superfluous movements and amplify or exaggerate the remaining motions.[122]

He also mentions that the proper exercises for developing this state of neutrality and exploring its implications took months of hard work.[123]

> Beginning exercises were confined to performing simple gestures to discover what the mask itself imposes: slowness, largeness, simplicity. By first taking time to put on the mask and collect their thoughts and free themselves for the influence of the mask ('recueillement') they would hopefully avoid the danger of affectation.[124]

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[121] Kusler, p. 116.

[122] Dorcy, pp. 12-13.

[123] Ibid., p. 13.

[124] Kusler, p. 117.

The students were asked to dress in tights or shorts so that the body of the actor was as naked as decency permitted.[125] Here again was another expression of Copeau carrying out in all areas his demand for the creation of a neutral base from which to build. They coined the term, "to shoe the mask" for assuming and adjusting to the mask, so that the phrase would reflect the concept of the mask as a second skin and not as a garment that could be easily taken off.[126]

Notes in the Dasté collection at the Bibliothèque de L'Arsenal list the subjects for the early mask exercises 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.[127] (A.T.)

Waldo Frank, who observed the improvisational work in masks at the École du Vieux-Colombier, noted that the sequence of the exercises followed what Copeau believed to be "the genesis of the Word."[128]

> First, there was the body, with its complex of movements and emotions physically expressed; then there were many bodies--bodies interplayed and grouped. From this, as a fruit from a tree, arose the Word: and was art in so far as it expressed the intricate rooted life from which it sprang. . . . But

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[125]Étienne Decroux, Paroles Sur Le Mime (Paris: Gallimand, 1963), p. 17.

[126]Dorcy, p. 13.

[127]Kusler, p. 346.

[128]Frank, "Copeau Begins Again," p. 589.

> always the elaborated word-form was in immediate contact with the organic life-form that underlay it.[129]

From Frank we learn that there was a definite overall structure to the mask exercises: from silence to sound; from individual to group work.

> 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 ere they be 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 of spoken word are taken from them: so that in their graduation 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.[130]

The sequence of silent improvisational exercises not only involved individual creations of natural phenomena (animals, man, and the four elements as manifested in nature), but a combination of these as devised by a group of students in a scenario of their own creation. They were given three minutes to prepare the scenario before they had to present it.[131]

> The scene is bare let us say, save for a table. A boy jumps on this, masked. He is portraying a tree in a sunny field. He is not acting a pantomime: he is improvising a drama; and the first factors to convince are his associates. His arms and body, marvelously swaying, convey the shady scope of bole and branch moving in a breeze. A wayfarer enters (like all the others, masked). He espies the shade and goes to it, escaping the heat of the sun. He sleeps. Enter a flock of sheep. (These are boys and girls on all fours, costumeless, of course.) They see the trees, nibble

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., p. 588.

[131] Decroux, p. 18.

> at its leaves, seek its shade. They come in collision with the man. Man and beasts are frightened off. . . .[132]

It was such exercises as these that got Copeau heavily criticized by the more established acting schools which claimed he was teaching future actors of Sophocles and Racine to first bleet like sheep.[133]

Frank also observed choral improvisations done in the mask.

> A group of pupils come to the front of the stage. They must produce, despite their masked faces a vision of a strand and of fisher-folk peering out upon a stormy sea. Their bodies create not alone their own emotion, but by a subtle fugue the heave of the water. A rowboat comes up. It is created by two actors in a rhythmic unison of propulsion. They leave their boat and mount the stairs to the apron. They have news of the drowning of a comrade: the news transfigures the group. The scene shifts to what is an interior of a fisher cottage. The wife and children await the master. The friends come in with the tragic tidings.
>
> The stage is a crowded street in Paris. A naughty poster rouses the risibilities of the bonnes femmes. A gendarme interferes and tried to tear down the poster: he has to cope with the vigorous protests of the bons becs de Paris. (No word is spoken, no face is seen, there is of course no 'business' on the bare stage, nor has there been a preamble of explanation.)[134]

From the silent exercises the students went on to non-verbal sound explorations in the mask.

> He [Copeau] permits him to use his voice not in speaking or in singing, but in a sort of primitive gamut of autopoetic sounds. The body must express the idea, masked or muted. The voice at the beginning is a kind of arabesque like the castanet in the classic Spanish dance.[135]

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[132] Frank, "Copeau Begins Again," p. 588.

[133] Dorothy Knowles, French Drama of the Inter-War Years (London: George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1967), p. 21.

[134] Frank, "Copeau Begins Again," pp. 588-589.

[135] Ibid., p. 588.

Decroux tells us more about these non-verbal sound improvisations. Not only the mouth but the hands and feet were employed to create the sounds of nature, of the village, of the household, and of animals.[136]

Following these non-verbal vocal exercises, the students started to create characterizations which then led to the improvisation of scenarios with impromptu dialogue.[137] Michel Saint-Denis gives us a glimpse of the final kinds of improvisational training at Copeau's school (but this was not necessarily masked).

> Later, as the skills of the company increased subjects became far more ambitious: peace, war, exodus, dreams and reality, animals and supernatural beings filed past in a world from which human impediment and the law of gravity seemed to be absent.[138]

In 1923, Étienne Decroux, who was later to become famous as a mime teacher, entered the École du Vieux-Colombier. His description of the program of study shows that important revisions had occurred in the curriculum since the opening year.

> 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 they would better understand Greek plays. And from there they went to the theatre of the Middle Ages, and then to the Commedia dell-arte, and then to the Italian Comedy, and finally approached 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, too, a course in costuming taught by a specialist that showed costumes through the ages. Students were taught to make their own costumes. There was a course in sculpture taught by a sculptor, so the student could make his own mask. They became sculptors themselves,

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[136]Decroux, p. 18.

[137]Kurtz, p. 109.

[138]Saint-Denis, "A School of Dramatic Art," p. 40.

> to a certain extent. So they made masks, and costumes, and were taught the history of music, and so many other things as well! There were as many teachers as there were pupils![139]

It was in the summer of 1923 that Copeau had his students start on an extensive training project: the preparation of a Japanese Noh play. This masked theater form combines poetry, music, choreographed movement and masks in performance on a bare stage. It is no wonder that Copeau became attracted to it. The project was under the direct supervision of Suzanne Bing.

> Her notes tell us of their excitement at the similarity of the dramatic laws exemplified in the Nô and those Copeau had outlined in his Theory course. The Nô seemed an ideal application for their musical, dramatic, and plastic studies; their improvisations had led them into the style of the Nô--with its emphasis on slow-motion and highly charged masked action, music, and dance--more than French contemporary work.
>
> The Nô also exemplified Copeau's philosophy of discipline and self-abnegation: in it, actors had to subordinate themselves to a very strict form as well as to an ensemble.[140]

Copeau and Bing worked with Arthur Waley's and Noël Peri's books on the Noh that had just been published. They decided to do a translation of the play, Kantan, found in Waley's book.[141] Copeau's own reasons for attempting a Noh play with his students were,

> Finally, in order to sum up our effort and to reveal the results of several years of work, we had taken the study of a Japanese Noh. Why a Noh? Because this form is the most demanding that we know of and requires of the interpreter an exceptional technical training.[142]

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[139]Thomas Leabhart, "An Interview With Decroux," Mime Journal, Number One (1974), p. 29.

[140]Kusler, pp. 148-149.

[141]Pronko, p. 90.

[142]Copeau, "Remembrances," p. 11.

The performance was to be given the next spring, in March, 1924. But it never occurred. The lead actor fell and hurt his knee and the performance had to be cancelled. The British director, Granville-Barker, who was in the audience for the last rehearsal, was tremendously impressed by the success of Copeau's training methods with his students.[143]

Copeau, himself, eight years later, commented:

> . . . this Noh, the way it appeared to me at the final rehearsal, in its depth of scenic understanding, the measure, the style, the quality of emotion evoked, remains for me one of the jewels, one of the secret riches of the work of the Vieux-Colombier.[144]

But Copeau's friend, André Gide, who was also present at the final rehearsal of the Noh, was not so enthusiastic. In fact, he was very disturbed at the direction Copeau was now headed in his thoughts about the theater.

> He terrifies me when he declares that he was never nearer the attainment of his goal than in the Japanese Nô which he staged. An accident prevented him from showing it to the public, but I saw the last rehearsals. . . . A play with no relation to our traditions, our customs, our beliefs, where, factitiously, without much trouble he achieved an arbitrary stylization of an exactitude not subject to controls, totally artificial, made up of slowness, stops, of a sort of wooden reaching after the supernatural in the tone of voice, gestures, and expressions of the actors.[145]

In May, 1924, Copeau abruptly closed his school and theatre and took some of his students to a country chateau in Burgundy

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[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Gide's Journal entry for 15 January 1931, quoted and trans. in Eric Bentley, "Copeau And The Chimera," Theatre Arts Magazine, XXXIV, No. 1 (January, 1950), p. 49.

where they could be trained more effectively away from the temptations of the Parisian theatre world. Trouble had already arisen between the acting company of the Vieux-Colombier and the school because Copeau was spending too much time with the development of his apprentices. Dullin had left the company in 1921; Jouvet had left in 1922. The loss of Jouvet, especially, must have been a severe blow to Copeau. A rivalry had developed between the company and the school; between the actors Copeau no longer found exciting because he could predict their every move and intonation and his students who were in the process of discovering all the potentials in themselves as actor-creators.[146] Copeau was attempting to revive with his students his old dream of a modern troupe of commedia dell'arte performers. Disappointed that he had not inspired many playwrights to write for his company, he shifted the focus of his work from the interpretation of a given text by an actor to the original creation of a text by actors and playwrights working together improvisationally.[147] But Copeau at this point did not seem to recognize the danger ahead.

> This process of research, of returning to first sources, this purging of the point of departure, led to the formation of a group of actor-creators fatally specialized and avidly directed towards a particular sort of repertoire--which had to be either discovered or invented.[148]

Before he finally closed down his school, Copeau gave a farewell performance with his apprentice actors to an invited

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[146] Saint-Denis, "A School of Dramatic Art," p. 39.

[147] Ibid., p. 41.

[148] Ibid.

audience. The students presented their own scenarios, which included masked mime pieces.

> Molded in their black jerseys, a procession of women and men enters the scene. They wear their masks on their heads like the visors of helmets.
>
> No musical accompaniment. The walking of these young bodies makes all the music. No set. Bare stage. Wood, iron, cement. No special lighting effects. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Each mask had been made by the wearer. They thus get more than a neutralization of the face. Their exaggeration expresses a type, betrays a desire. They materialize a secret aspiration toward a different reinforced or attenuated personality.[149] (A.T.)

From this description of the masks worn by the students, it appears that Copeau had developed his improvisations with masks beyond the neutral, inexpressive mask. This appears to have been a sort of character mask; at least, a mask expressing emotion.

Decroux was also in the audience for this performance and was astonished by the brilliance of what he saw on the stage. He was only a first-year student and thus not permitted to perform.

> The development of the actions was sufficiently skillful so that one possessed several hours in a few seconds and several places in one.
>
> One had simultaneously before one's eyes the battlefield and the civilian life, the sea and the city.
>
> The characters moved from one to the other in complete verisimilitude.
>
> The acting was moving, comprehensible, plastic, and musical.[150] (A.T.)

Copeau gave a short introductory talk to this final presentation in which he stressed the idea that the use of masks must not develop into a new theatre form (as was already happening in the

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[149] Doat, quoting a journalist, p. 46n.

[150] Decroux, p. 18.

Parisian theater around him). Masks and pantomime were not to be thought of as ends in themselves, but means to an end--the creation of more flexible and expressive actors.[151]

In looking back over this period from 1919 to 1924, it is evident that Copeau's discovery of the mask as an inspiring agent for the student actor was developed into a structured series of exercises that became, along with improvisation, the core of his teaching method. By 1924, the evolution of this training method was practically complete. What Copeau was yet to learn and experience would only strengthen his conviction and deepen his understanding about the value of the mask in the training of the actor.

The Fourth Period: 1924-1929

When Copeau closed the doors of his theater and school in 1924, he turned over the keys, materials, and acting company (what was left of it) to Jouvet.[152] With some of his students from the École, Copeau moved to the village of Pernand-Vergelesse in Burgundy and there formed a new company, Les Copiaus.[153] Among this group of hopeful students were several young people destined to become leading figures in the modern French theater: Jean Dasté, Léon Chancerel, Étienne Decroux, Michel Saint-Denis, and Marie-Hélène Copeau (soon to marry Jean Dasté in 1928).[154]

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[151] Doat, quoting journalist, p. 45n.

[152] Knowles, p. 20.

[153] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[154] Anders, p. 55, n77.

Copeau's aim with Les Copiaus was to fulfill at last his dream of a modern commedia dell'arte troupe.[155]

> Much of the work centered upon a group of about ten type-characters that Copeau considered to epitomize the basic aspects of human behavior. 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 extraneous elements from a characterization and to rely entirely on the most essential and expressive means.[156]

It is obvious from this description of the work of the new company that two new changes had occurred in the mask work: that Copeau had changed his mind and was now developing a masked drama form, and that the masks themselves had changed to be more conscious representations of character types. In fact, Les Copiaus trained in Burgundy with four different types of masks of their own making (Figures 6 and 7): impassive neutral masks, fantastic and grotesque masks, abstract masks, and character masks (Figures 8 and 9).[157] Chancerel mentions that when he was in Burgundy with Les Copiaus, he remodelled a traditional commedia mask of Pulcinella with which Auguste Bovario, a member of the troupe, created an exciting new characterization.[158]

> Little by little the work and playing with the characters every day enriched what were at first only simple silhouettes. Each evening the actors appeared in costume and masks, playing their character performing daily activities: eating, drinking,

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[155] Knowles, p. 21.

[156] Brockett and Findlay, p. 365.

[157] Kusler, pp. 194-195.

[158] Le Masque, I, p. 45.

Figure 6.--Masks drying at Pernand in 1929. Courtesy of Mme. Dasté and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

Figure 7.--Jean Dasté making masks in Burgundy. Courtesy of Mme. Dasté and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

Figure 8.--Suzanne Bing under the mask of Célestine in the play L'Illusion. Courtesy of Mme Dasté and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

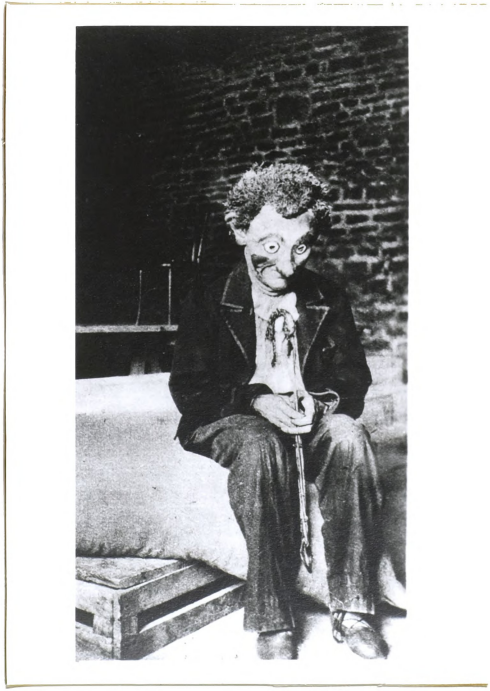

Figure 9.--Michel Saint-Denis under the mask of the character Knie in L'Illusion. Courtesy of Mme Dasté and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

> walking, or they performed little farces or scenarios with street types: one who picks up cigarette butts, prostitutes, policemen, etc. . . .[159]

Not only did the troupe improvise scenarios with these modern day commedia characters, they also created choral dramas with masked figures which they performed at village festivals in France and on tour in Europe.[160] One of these was the fantasy play, L'Illusion, adapted by Copeau from Fernando de Rojos and Pierre Corneille (Figure 10). As the Noh play had been the summit of the École du Vieux-Colombier, so L'Illusion became the summation of the work of Les Copiaus.[161] Copeau later described the performance of this piece:

> The actors could be seen stopping and singing on a village square, making a game of mounting their portable stage. And the comedy, or rather the mystery play, took place with masks, a little music, ghosts, an old peasant, a witch, a princess, assassins and demons. Finally, the dream dissipated, the little company would roll up its curtains, gather up its props, put out its lanterns and then move on. . . .[162]

Masks permitted the small company to play many different roles in the production. Copeau's dream of a modern commedia troupe had now become a reality. Copeau, himself, sometimes played the masked character of the witch.[163]

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[159] Kusler, p. 208.

[160] Copeau, "Remembrances," pp. 15-17, passim.

[161] Ibid., p. 16.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Georges Lerminier, "Copeau et l'heritage du Vieux-Colombier," Encyclopédie du Théâtre Contemporain, dirgée Gilles Queant, II: 1914-1950 (Paris: Olivier Perrin Editeur, 1959), p. 37.

Figure 10.--Michel Saint-Denis, Suzanne Bing, and Jean Dasté under the masks of the characters Knie, Célestine, and Mr. César from the play, L'Illusion. Courtesy of Mme Dasté and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

Even though Copeau's dream had been seemingly fulfilled with the plays collectively created and performed by Les Copiaus, he did not appear satisfied and there arose serious disagreements as to the future of the work within the group. In 1929, Copeau left Les Copiaus because of an offer to be director of the Comédie Français. He thought that this would be his opportunity to renovate the most prestigious of French theaters and through it all of French theater in general. But oddly enough, the offer was never confirmed. Copeau, disappointed, now decided his major involvement in theatrical endeavors should end. After 1929 he returned to the theater only occasionally to lecture, direct plays, and write and mount religious pageants. One of these was his own play, Le Petit Pauvre (1941), based on the life of St. Francis of Assisi. During the occupation of France, Copeau was made the director of the Comédie Français, but was soon dismissed because of his son's activities in the French underground.[164] He died in 1949.

When Copeau left them, Les Copiaus quickly disbanded. Léon Chancerel had previously left the company and formed his own troupe, the Comédiens Routiers, which was to continue the research into improvisation, masked drama, and choral drama started under Copeau.[165] And in 1930 Michel Saint-Denis headed up a new troupe, La Compagnie des Quinze, composed of actors from Les Copiaus. They

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[164]Brockett and Findlay, pp. 365-366, passim.

[165]Jean Mercier, "Comediens Routiers," Theatre Arts Monthly, XX, Number 7 (July, 1936), pp. 523-526, passim.

performed all over Europe. In 1931 this group returned to the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier to take up residence. Copeau returned to his old theatre to give two lectures opening the first season of plays by this new company. Four years later Saint-Denis dissolved the company and went to London to establish the London Theatre School.[166]

In looking back over the life of Jacques Copeau, one can see that the period in which most of his important theatrical activities took place was from 1913 to 1929. This was during the time when the mask was reborn in Western culture as a dominant image and metaphor for the conflict between man's inner and outer worlds, as we have seen in the previous chapter. But for Copeau, the mask was not a striking philosophical image of the human condition. The mask was for him a potent instrument for achieving the desired objectives he had in mind for training an actor. For Copeau, the practical values of the mask far outweighed its philosophical values. He never spoke of the mask in the mystical tones of Craig or any other of the champions of the mask at the beginning of this century.

We have noted those things that led Copeau to the mask: the use of improvisational rehearsal techniques; his research into the history and methods of improvisation which led him to the commedia dell'arte; his love of Moliere; Gordon Craig; the masked drama experiments going on all around him; and his own intuitive

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[166]Saint-Denis, "A School of Dramatic Art," p. 42.

insights as to the potential value of the mask for the actor. Copeau first discovered the value of the mask for actor training at the École du Vieux-Colombier in 1920. In the years between 1920 and 1924 he discovered the neutral mask and the beginnings of the character mask. With Les Copiaus in Burgundy, Copeau explored further the neutral and character masks as well as developing two new masks: the grotesque and the abstract. He also brought the improvisational training in the mask to its logical conclusion in masked theatrical presentations.

In the previous chapter it was evident that many other theater artists were also exploring the use of the mask in performance and had valuable insights as to the effect of the mask on the performer and the audience. But only Jacques Copeau seriously investigated the psychophysical effects of the mask on the mask wearer and incorporated these findings into an actor training program.

Albert Katz sums up what he believes to be the primary objectives Copeau had in mind for this actor training program:

> Copeau's goals for the actor were: (1) simplicity of style with no affectations either of 'technique' or 'naturalness;' (2) a concentration on character, building the performance on motivation and character revelation; (3) a thorough tuning of the instrument-actor by training the voice, body, and mind to enable the actor to achieve the first two goals in any kind of role and in any style or play; and (4) the cohesion with the other actors in an harmonious and homogenous ensemble.[167]

For Copeau, the starting point both for the actor and the stage had to be the creation of a state of neutrality--the naked

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[167]"Copeau as Régisseur," p. 164.

stage; the "naked" actor--a fulcrum from which to move. For the stage this meant elimination of the proscenium arch and stripping the stage to its barest necessities. For the actor this meant undergoing a depersonalization, stripping off his own peculiar personality traits in order that he might re-clothe himself with the character. The renovation needed both for the stage and the actor was a rebuilding and reconstruction from within. For the actor it was an attempt to first establish in himself a more universal state of mind--where all men are alike--before the distinguishing, individualizing characteristics appear. The actors were to return to silence. Once there they could start the evolutionary process of discovering their identification with the elements of nature, with the animal world, and finally with man.

Waldo Frank, comparing Copeau's system with others, makes an important observation. He writes,

> The modern disease of the theater is our endemic one of a disestablished unity. Human impulse, human form, actor and play are 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 through the actor to the public are unitarily present. He proposes to permit this germ to grow into an organism in its own inscrutable way.[168]

Copeau's dream was to create a troupe of comédiens--actor-creators. In France there is distinct difference made between the word acteur and the word comédien--although both are translated

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[168]Frank, "Copeau Begins Again," p. 590.

into English as "actor." Louis Jouvet, Copeau's close associate, has written about the distinction made in the French theatrical world between these two words.

> We must first of all make a technical distinction between actor and comedian, terms that are used interchangeably in common parlance. The actor can only play certain roles; he distorts the others in line with his personality. The comedian, however, can play all roles. The actor takes a part, the comedian is taken by it.[169]

In a long essay entitled, "Reflexions d'un Comédien sur le 'Paradoxe' de Diderot," written in 1929 after his extensive explorations of the relationship between the mask and the actor, Copeau discussed this final point of Jouvet's: how the actor (comédien) is possessed by his character.

> You say of an actor that he enters into a role, that he puts himself into the skin of a character. It seems to me that that is not exact. It is the character who approaches the actor, who demands of him all of which he has need in order to exist at his expense, and who little by little replaces him in his skin. The actor allows the character free rein to do so.
>
> It is not sufficient to see a character well nor to understand him well, in order to be apt in becoming him. It is also not sufficient to possess him in order to give him life. It is necessary to be possessed by him.[170] (A.T.)

Copeau's idea was that the character, seen as an external being, takes over the psychophysical life of the actor. The actor's only job is to be a sensitive and skilled recipient. What this actually describes is the concept of the character as a mask which the actor puts on for a performance.

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[169]"Comedian and Actor," trans. Joseph M. Bernstein, Actors On Acting, eds. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (New York: Crown Publishers, 1970), p. 241.

[170]Notes Sur Le Métier De Comédien (Paris: Michel Brient, 1955), p. 25.

And indeed, this is what Copeau himself declared.

> The virtue of the mask is still more convincing. It symbolizes perfectly the position of the interpreter in relation to the character and shows in what sense fusion takes place between the two.[171] (A.T.)

Copeau's summary of all his experience as an actor and his observation of the mask and its value for an actor once he is in the dynamic state of neutral readiness concludes,

> 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 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 never have felt or 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 the 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.[172]

Copeau stresses in this passage two important and seemingly paradoxical ideas in this crucial statement of his concerning the effects of the mask on the actor. First, the mask is an agent of control: the mask "seizes" the actor and "controls" and "dictates" the actor who must "obey" it. Secondly, at the same time it is an agent of control, it is also an agent of release: the actor "feels a new being flowing into himself" and "experiences emotions he could never had felt or feigned without its aid." We have previously noted (Chapter One) that this experience of control and release is a typical response to the wearing of a mask.

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[171] Ibid.

[172] Copeau quoted and trans. in Burton and Lane, p. 284.

Michel Saint-Denis, Copeau's nephew, has also elaborated on these paradoxical effects of the mask on the performer.

> A mask is a concrete object. When you put it on your face you receive from it a strong impulse which you have got to obey. But the mask is also an inanimate object which the personality of the actor will bring to life. As his inner feelings accumulate behind the mask, so the actor's face relaxes. His body, which is made more expressive by the very immobility of the mask, will be brought into action by the strength of inner feelings. Once the actor has acquired the elementary technique that is demanded by wearing a mask, he will begin to realize that masks dislike agitation, that they can only be animated by controlled, strong, and utterly simple actions which depend upon the richness of the inner life within the calm and balanced body of the performer. The mask absorbs the actor's personality from which it feeds. It warms his feelings and cools his head. It enables the actor to experience, in its most virulent form, the chemistry of acting: at the moment when the actor's feelings are at their height, beneath the mask, the urgent necessity of controlling his physical actions compels him to detachment and lucidity. Submission to the lesson of the mask enables an actor of talent to discover a broad, inspired and objective style of acting.[173]

From the experiences of these two great twentieth century theatre artists, it is obvious that they consider the mask an extremely valuable device to use in the proper training of an actor. But what are the procedures that one follows in teaching this method? And how do the actors learn to submit to the lesson of the mask? Since Copeau's time, other acting teachers (primarily his students or those taught by his students) have built upon the foundations of this unique training method Copeau originally established. They have expanded and enriched his perceptions. It is with the elucidation of the "elementary technique that is

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[173]Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, pp. 103-104.

demanded by wearing a mask" and its effects on the actor that this study is now to be concerned.

CHAPTER IV

MASKS IN CURRENT ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

Present-day teachers in this country who use masks in their training programs are inheritors of two major branches of the tradition stemming from Jacques Copeau. One branch consists of former students of Michel Saint-Denis (Copeau's nephew) who were trained either at the London Theatre School or at the Old Vic Theatre School in England. These are Pierre Lefevre (now at the Juilliard School, Drama Division) and Jeremy Geidt (at the School of Drama, Yale University). Lefevre's students, or those influenced by him, who have also been important resources for this study, are Yann LeBonniec (trained at L'École Supérieure D'Art Dramatique, Strasbourg, France), Peter Frisch (formerly on the staff at The Juilliard School and now at Harvard University), and Libby Appel and Estelle Spector at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago.

The other main branch of faculty in this country using masks in their teaching consists of former students of Jacques Lecoq. Lecoq, himself, was trained under Jean Dasté (Copeau's son-in-law) while in the Compagnie des Comédiens de Grenoble from 1945-1947. In 1951 he founded the school for the Piccolo Theatre di Milano, and in 1956 opened his own school, École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. His students teaching here are Carlo Mazzone-Clementi

(who now heads his own school, Dell'Arte, Inc., in California) and Bari Rolfe (who is currently teaching in the Professional Actor Training Program within the School of Drama at the University of Washington).

One teacher who has been influenced indirectly by the teachings of Copeau, Saint-Denis, and Dasté is Rolland Meinholt, who is in the Drama Department of the University of Montana.

Before looking at the various specifics of the mask courses taught by these faculty members, we must compare briefly the training philosophies of Michel Saint-Denis and Jacques Lecoq. In doing so we will note some distinct differences in their approach to actor training which will extend to their attitudes about the mask and its part in the actor training program. These differing attitudes will also be reflected in the thought and work of their students who are now teachers in the United States.

Michel Saint-Denis was instrumental in establishing five major theatre school: the London Theatre Schools (1935-1939), the Old Vic Theatre School (1946-1952), the École Supérieure D'Art Dramatique, Strasbourg, France (1954-), the Drama Division of The Juilliard School in New York City (1956-), and the National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal (1960-). His educational philosophy was to take relatively inexperienced but promising young students between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three and create an ensemble that would work well together throughout an intensive three-to-four year professional theatre program.

> Do you also appreciate why a school of acting must recruit young people, adolescents? We aim at the complete professional development of this unique artist: an artist who is his own instrument; an artist who, apart from the necessary cleverness and even shrewdness which is required for the practice of any art, needs at the beginning of his career something of the naive and open attitude which belongs to children and tends to disappear after adolescence.[1]

Saint-Denis' primary emphasis in his schools was on training the actor, although technical courses for non-actors have frequently been involved in the program also. His desire was to train actors for any type of theatrical performance, but the schooling always stressed a thorough grounding in period styles and the classics.[2] The work, no matter how experimental, was always to be directed towards the proper interpretation of the text.

> First of all we encouraged invention and imagination. The school was always partly experimental; but to avoid conceit and extravagance we maintained that our chief practical purpose was wholly and above all to serve interpretation, and that in dealing with an important play it was healthy to consider the author as the only creative person: director, designer, and actor had to understand the author's intention and submit to it.[3]

The Saint-Denis schools employ masks in two courses. The first year's work in silent improvisation culminates with the use of the Tragic Masks. These are symmetrical but strongly modelled full-face masks representing the four ages of man.[4] The second year starts with improvisation in the Comic Masks, which are

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[1] Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 108.

[2] Ibid., p. 97.

[3] Ibid., p. 92.

[4] Ibid., p. 103.

three-quarter and half-masks allowing for verbal explorations.[5] This second-year work eventually leads to the development of an improvised text.[6] The mask courses, though thought of as an important and integral part of the actor training program, are seen only as a "temporary instrument"[7] for the actor's use.

> Submission to the lesson of the mask enables an actor of talent to discover a broad, inspired and objective style of acting. It is a good introduction to classical acting. It is a good preparatory school for tragedy and drama in its greatest styles.[8]

Saint-Denis did not place a great deal of emphasis on Copeau's concept that the starting point for the actor should be a state of neutrality. The actor in his practice costume may have to be "as naked as possible" but it is in order "to conquer his self-consciousness."[9] And even though Saint-Denis stated, "The mask absorbs the actor's personality from which it feeds,"[10] he did not pursue the thought any further. So the concept of the actor starting from a neutral state is in evidence but it is not stressed.

Jacques Lecoq, on the other hand, makes the achievement of this neutral state central to his whole program; a basic starting point for the further development of the performer.

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[5]These and other masks will be described more fully in the following chapters.

[6]Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 105.

[7]Ibid., p. 103.

[8]Ibid., p. 104.

[9]Ibid., p. 102.

[10]Ibid., p. 104.

Also, in contrast to Saint-Denis' approach, Lecoq takes into his program mainly experienced performers and other professional people who have finished their schooling.

> The students don't arrive at the school inexperienced. Many have already had theatrical experience--have preconceived ideas and set opinions. In the beginning it is necessary to disabuse ourselves of what we have learned in order to reach a state of not-knowing, and therefore to open ourselves to the rediscovery of the elementary. We are unable to see what is beside us and alive; plant, tree, water, horse, and all those things that don't change fashion every ten years.[11]

To help them achieve this "state of not-knowing" in order to make a "rediscovery of the elementary," Lecoq introduces his students to the first of his series of masks, the Neutral Mask (masque neutre). The Neutral Mask is a simple, symmetrical, full-face mask. With it the actor is to make, in Lecoq's words, "a profound return to the enfant [sic] discovering his first state of being."[12] Or as one of his students, Laurence Wylie, understood it,

> Under the mask, each person becomes an individual without a past, without knowledge, without preconceptions, and ready to discover the world.[13] (A.T.)

Another student of Lecoq, Bari Rolfe, explains the effect of being in this neutral state.

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[11] Jacques Lecoq, "Mime-mouvement-Theatre," trans. Kat Foley and Julie Devlin, yale/theatre, IV, Number 1 (Winter, 1973), p. 118.

[12] Jacques Lecoq, "From Mime to Theatre," unpublished article, trans. unknown, Harvard University, Archives, Theatre Collection File on Lecoq.

[13] Laurence Wylie, "A L'École Lecoq J'ai Découvert Mon Propre Clown," Psychologie (Août, 1973), p. 24.

> The neutral act is one that is economical, simple, and direct. . . . The result of understanding neutral is far-reaching; one learns to react to the thing itself, without past experience or future projection intruding upon it.[14]

Masks are central to Lecoq's training program. A student taking the full two-year program will now encounter seven different types of masks: Neutral Masks, Expressive Masks, Larval Masks, Grotesque Masks, Utilitarian Masks, Commedia dell'arte Masks, and the Clown Nose.[15] These masks of Lecoq's are much more subtle in modelling and ambiguous in expression than those used in the Saint-Denis' schools.

Lecoq's school in Paris is not primarily set up to train actors or to promote a single style of theatre. It is for all those interested in theatre: actors, mimes, directors, playwrights, and teachers.[16] Recently Lecoq has also been asked to apply his unique understanding of space and movement to the training of architects.[17]

And whereas Saint-Denis' goal was to train actors capable of interpreting a variety of texts and styles (reflecting Copeau's emphasis at the École du Vieux-Colombier), Lecoq's goal is to train theatre people to become actor-creators, able to perform in

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[14]"The Mime of Jacques Lecoq," The Drama Review, XVI, Number 1 (T-53) (March, 1972), p. 37.

[15]Lecoq prefers not to think of the Clown Nose as a mask, but it does function as one and others have described it as such, so it will be included in this study.

[16]Brochure of École Jacques Lecoq, n.p.

[17]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

any style of theatre but also able to create theater from their own resources (reflecting Copeau's later work with Les Copiaus in Burgundy). Lecoq does very little work with play texts in his school other than those devised by the students themselves through improvisation.

Both Lecoq and Saint-Denis recognized the mask as an important instrument in training the actor. And they strongly agree that training of the actor's body in movement is mandatory as a first step in his training. Saint-Denis called training of the body the "first technical need of the actor. . . ."[18] Lecoq writes more philosophically about this same need for movement training.

> It is in the gesture behind the gesture, in the gesture behind the word, in the animation of materials, of sounds, of colors, of lights, that the school is founded. The human ability to mime enables us to recognize everything that moves; man, with his entire being, identifies himself to the world by recreating it.
>
> The impulse of expression--particularly those of dramatic expression, and later of dramatic creation, are created out of the silent body of man.
>
> The fire that I see burns within me. I recognize the fire by identifying myself with it in acting; I add my fire to the fire.
>
> The impressions of the body impart life to words, but when the words leave the body to travel in the comfort of their definitions, they become paralyzed and die--conveying only emptiness.
>
> Likewise, our approach begins with the body.[19]

For Lecoq and Saint-Denis, then, the training of the actor to be confident and flexible with his body is an essential

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[18]Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 97.

[19]Lecoq, "Mime-Mouvement-Theatre," p. 117.

prerequisite to the work in the mask. And it is the mask training which will teach the student to become expressive with his body.

Lecoq and Saint-Denis also agree that one of the primary pedagogical methods to use in training actors is improvisation. Lecoq would approve of Saint-Denis' description of improvisation as a "bare and open field of action" by which,

> . . . the young student, obliged to concentrate and to invent, can experience the very fact of acting and can be led almost naturally and unconsciously to the mental and physical transposition required by style.[20]

But Lecoq would add one more idea to this one: that the method of improvisation also helps the actor gain a new understanding of himself and of others.[21] Here, again, the differing direction of the training by these two men becomes evident: Saint-Denis, towards the interpretation of a text; Lecoq, towards self-discovery and original creation--both of which are aspects of Copeau's original teachings.

With this understanding of the differences and similarities between the training philosophies of Saint-Denis and Lecoq, we can now examine the specific course work in masks offered in schools in this country as part of actor training programs.[22] We shall begin with those either initiated or influenced by Michel Saint-Denis.

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[20]Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 102.

[21]Wylie, "A L'École Lecoq," p. 23.

[22]Information on the various programs has been taken primarily from the schools' current catalogs, unless otherwise noted.

The School of Drama at Yale University is one of the oldest and most prestigious drama schools in the country. It was established in 1924 and now offers the Master of Fine Arts degree in playwrighting; acting/directing; scene, costume, and lighting design; theatre design and technology; and theatre administration. It also offers the Doctor of Fine Arts degree in theatre criticism and dramatic literature. Thus, it is solely a graduate program in theatre, lasting three years, and modelled on the conservatory approach to training students in all aspects of theatre.

One course in masks is taught in the School of Drama. It is called, Cabaret and Masks, and is required for all acting majors, although selected directing and playwrighting students can also take the course. It used to be a course placed at the end of the first year of training, but is now being moved to the beginning of the second year. Students will already have had training in acting, voice, and stage movement before taking this course in improvisation with comic character masks.

Twelve to fifteen students are allowed in the course at a time. It is thought of as an important adjunct to the other training, and the student's performance in the mask course is part of his overall evaluation with respect to further training in acting at the school.

Jeremy Geidt, who teaches the mask course, was trained at the Old Vic Theatre School in England and later taught comic mask improvisation there.

The Drama Division of The Julliard School is a four-year professional program limited to training actors. There is a possibility of an additional two years of advanced course work for actors of exceptional promise. Only twenty-five to thirty students a year are taken into the program. They will have had little, if any, prior training in theatre before coming to the school.

Two required courses in masks are offered to these students. The silent improvisational work in the full-face Tragic Masks comes at the latter half of their first year of training. The corresponding course in the Comic Masks is placed at the beginning of their second year. The Comic Masks allow for verbal improvisation. Both courses are run with only seven to eight students in a class at a time. Training in improvisation and movement are prerequisites to the mask work.

The courses in mask improvisation are seen as central to the program of study and the development of the actor. They are also very important in the evaluation of the students who wish to continue in the training at Juilliard. Those who do not respond well to the mask work are thought to lack creative imagination and will probably be asked to leave the program.[23]

Pierre Lefevre teaches the mask courses at Juilliard. He was trained at the London Theatre School and later taught at the

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[23]Mr. Lefevre told this to me while I was observing one of his mask classes at Juilliard.

Old Vic Theatre School. He also directed the program at L'École Supérieure D'Art Dramatique in Strasbourg, France, and has taught at the National Theatre School of Canada. He now teaches six months of the year at Juilliard and six months in Strasbourg.

Peter Frisch, who was formerly on the faculty at The Juilliard School and observed Lefevre's classes, left Juilliard in 1973 to head his own school, The Contemporary Theatre Collective, in Massachusetts. It opened in the fall of 1973 but closed early in 1974. It was to be a three-year professional training program for actors. Three sequential courses in masks were to be required for the first-year students: Neutral Masks, Character Masks, and Fantasy Masks. Training in improvisation, movement, and voice was to occur concurrently with the mask work.

Mr. Frisch is now on the faculty of Harvard University where he has had the opportunity to use his Character Masks in an acting course.

The use of masks in the actor training program at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago is only two years old. The Goodman School, one of the oldest and best known professional training schools in the country, offers two and three-year programs on the Undergraduate and Graduate level leading to B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees. The single mask course, Acting Laboratory in Mask Characterization, is part of the Undergraduate curriculum and is required for all acting majors. It is offered in the second half of the Sophomore year. Up to twenty students are allowed in the

class at a time. Prerequisites to the course are physical training, improvisation, and movement classes.

The Acting Laboratory in Mask Characterization is taught jointly by Libby Appel (Assistant Professor in Acting) and Estelle Spector (Instructor in Movement and Dance). The course is a product of their interest in the mask as a provocative instrument for the actor and their investigation into mime and the mask training technique of Saint-Denis and Lefevre.

Rolland Meinholt teaches a course in improvisation with Character Masks as the second term of a three-term sequence of acting courses on the Sophomore Level in the Drama Department of the University of Montana. The department is both an Undergraduate and Graduate school of theatre, granting liberal arts and fine arts degrees through the Master's level. The course work in improvisation with masks is required for all acting students. These students have already completed courses in acting and dance prior to the mask work.

Mr. Meinholt became interested in actor training with masks while engaged in graduate work at the University of Washington. His graduate thesis was concerned with Jacques Copeau and the schools associated with his theatre. He first began to use masks in actor training while at the Institute of American Indian Arts at Santa Fe, New Mexico. Mr. Meinholt is also interested in the extension of the mask training into masked drama.[24]

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[24]This information was gleaned from Mr. Meinholt's taped interview, see Appendix H, passim.

Having mentioned the major programs and teachers in this country involved in mask training under the influence of Michel Saint-Denis, we shall now turn to those faculty and programs influenced by Jacques Lecoq. We shall look at the backgrounds of the teachers, note what mask courses they teach, and see how the mask courses fit into the overall actor training programs at their various schools.

The Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington is a conservatory program within the School of Drama leading to a B.F.A. degree. Students entering the three-year intensive program must have already completed two years of regular general requirements at the Undergraduate level. Only fourteen students a year are allowed into the program.

Two courses in masks are part of the required program of study. Prior to these courses the students have been involved with gymnastics, fencing, and movement training. Ms. Bari Rolfe, who teaches the mask courses, states why she believes training the actor's body is of first importance.

> My point of view is that the actor's whole organism is indivisible, for functioning muscles, sensory systems, and conscious gesture all affect one another. Organic training treats the whole, but it can also emphasize separate aspects. The body needs physical training, first, so that muscles become flexible, coordinated, and capable of a diversity of movement. A second emphasis is placed on the body manifestations of internal life, and consists of exercises to remove hampering inhibitions, promote self-awareness, teach focus and concentration, and encourage authentic and spontaneous group interaction. Both of these areas are preparation for the total expressive use of the body, the actor learns to read and to express himself in body language, to choose movement that is meaningful, to master economy, to physicalize his

> intentions, and to achieve a theatrical non-naturalistic dimension of movement.[25]

The mask improvisations are part of this "second emphasis" of the organic training approach.

The first mask course involves silent improvisations in the Universal Mask. It is placed in the Spring Quarter of the first year of training. Continued silent improvisation in the Character Masks is given in the second year of training. Experience in verbal improvisation with the Commedia dell'arte Masks occurs through a commedia production given each year at the school. The mask courses are felt to be an integral part of the actor's development and are seen also as training that integrates previous experiences in acting and movement. Bari Rolfe, who teaches the course work in masks, was a professional dancer and choreographer in the United States and Mexico before her three years of study with Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

The former director of the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington was Duncan Ross, past Principal of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in England, and former Artistic Director of the National Theatre School of Canada--both schools influenced by Saint-Denis.

Carlo Mazzone-Clementi worked with Jacques Lecoq for nine years, first at the Piccolo Teatro di Milano and then at the École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. He came to this country in 1957 touring

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[25]"Towards Speech In Every Limb," Educational Theatre Journal, XXV, Number 1 (March, 1973), p. 113.

his one-man show, "Six Characters In Search Of Commedia." He has taught at a number of universities in this country, including the New York University School of the Arts. Recently Mr. Mazzone-Clementi opened his own school for the development of modern commedia, Dell'Arte, Incorporated, in California.

Mazzone-Clementi will employ two masks in his proposed three-year training program: the Metaphysical Mask (to be used in the latter half of the first year of training), and the traditional Commedia dell'arte Masks (to be used in the second year of the program). Training in physical self-discovery and movement will occur prior to the first mask course. Other courses in juggling, acrobatics, and mime will be concurrent with the improvisations in the commedia masks.

In looking back over the specifics of these mask courses, their prerequisites, and their position in the overall curriculum, we can draw six conclusions:

First, the mask course is seen as an important, if not essential, part of the actor training program.

Second, the mask course is only given to students in the latter part of their first year or in the second year of their training.

Third, some sort of training of the actor's body (whether in movement, dance, gymnastics, or fencing) is thought to be necessary prior to taking the class of improvisations with masks, so that the actor will be confident of what his body can do and be expressive with it.

Fourth, at Yale University and The Juilliard School, the actor's ability to respond imaginatively to the mask work may be crucial to his evaluation as a potential actor and determine whether or not he may continue in the program.

Fifth, those programs offering only one course in mask work always utilize the Character Masks.

And Sixth, most of these acting teachers see the mask training as a means to an end and not an end in itself. Only two of the teachers, Meinholt and Mazzone-Clementi, are interested in pursuing the implications of the mask training for masked drama. Some others (Lefevre and Rolfe) do train students in the Commedia dell'arte Masks for specific productions, but that work is not considered an essential part of the actor's training program.

CHAPTER V

THE MASK: TYPES, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

There are basically five different kinds of head masks: full head masks, full-face masks, three-quarter masks, half-masks (the French demi-masque), and masks covering only partial features of the face.

The full head masks are rarely, if ever, used in actor training. They are the kind of mask most frequently seen in masked theatre presentations, such as Jean Cocteau's Le Boeuf Sur Le Toit (Paris, 1920), Tyrone Guthrie's King Oedipus at Stratford, Ontario, Canada (1954-55) and his production of The House of Atreus (Minneapolis, 1967), Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theater shows, Otomor Kréjca's productions in Czechoslovakia, and the presentations of the Mummenshantz troupe from Switzerland. It is the full-face, three-quarter, half-masks, and partial feature masks that have been found most effective by the teachers involved in training actors.

The full-face mask covers the whole front of the head. By extending an imaginary line from in front of the ears upwards to the top of the skull and downwards to under the chin, you get the approximate area of the head covered by this type of mask. The

nostrils are cut out of this mask to aid in breathing, and the eyes are cut out in various shapes and sizes not only to aid visibility but to suggest differing characterizations. Sometimes there is a small slit open at the mouth to permit added air circulation in the mask. But the mouth is rarely shown parted, as this full-face mask is normally only used for silent improvisational work. (As we shall see later, having a slight opening at the mouth has caused some difficulties in the training.)

Exceptions to the above description of the full-face masks are those employed by Libby Appel and Estelle Spector at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago. Their full-face masks do have wide open mouths, covered from the inside by a sheer black material, and are used for vocal improvisational work. Another feature which distinguishes their masks from the others in this category is that they are slightly larger than the normal head, whereas the other schools use masks that are quite close fitting to the face. The full-face mask is the type originally used by Jacques Copeau at the École du Vieux-Colombier, and is now in use by all teachers employing the mask training technique.

This relationship of the size of the mask to the face of the actor is important, because "our eyes are accustomed to judge the height of people by the proportion of the head to the body."[1] If the mask is larger than the face, then the wearer will appear

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[1]W. T. Benda, "Untitled Article for Watson-Guptill, Publishers," unpublished article, courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler, p. 4.

smaller; conversely, if the mask is smaller than the face, the figure will appear larger.[2]

Pierre Lefevre at the Juilliard Drama School, Jeremy Geidt at the Yale University School of Drama, and Rolland Meinholt at the University of Montana also use a three-quarter face mask, which is basically the same as the full-face mask in size, except the mouth and chin have been eliminated to allow for verbal improvisational work. This mask, instead of extending under the chin, ends at the jaw line. As the actor speaks, and his real jaw is seen moving up and down, one has the illusion of the mask itself stretching and contracting in movement rather than a sense of the separation between the mask and the actor's jaw.

The half-mask, which only covers the upper half of the face and the front of the head, was also used by Copeau in his silent and verbal improvisational exercises. It was employed extensively by Copeau's close associate, Léon Chancerel, both in his training of the Comédiens Routiers and in their performances. The half-mask was the traditional mask of the Commedia dell'arte troupes of the Renaissance, so it is used in actor training in that form of theatre. Writing about the half-mask, but with particular reference to the commedia masks, Carlo Mazzone-Clementi notes,

> Commedia masks are a study in contrasts: the immobile upper half is in counterpoint with the mobile lower jaw of the actor, which somehow becomes an extension of the mask itself. . . . The appearance of the half-mask of the professional commedia performer . . . freed the voice and

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[2]Benda, Masks, p. 3.

> returned the body to prominence. Use of the half-mask allows greater physical freedom than a full mask. Made of leather, the commedia masks are light and flexible, permitting rolls and tumbles and displays of skill limited only by the capabilities of the actor wearing it.[3]

It should be mentioned here that Jeremy Geidt at the Yale School of Drama uses, along with his other masks, a unique type that is totally different from any already mentioned. His mask maker, Andrew Johns, has created three-quarter and half-masks that not only cover the front of the head but the top of the head as well. Sometimes the mask is attached to a wig that covers the rest of the head. At other times the mask is like an inverted bowl that sits on top of the head and comes down on the face just below the level of the nose (Figure 11).

Finally, there are the masks that only cover partial features of the face, such as the nose, cheeks, chin, or forehead. These have been used extensively by the teachers trained under Michel Saint-Denis, like Pierre Lefevre and Jeremy Geidt. Some of the Commedia dell'arte masks could also be considered partial masks as they only covered the forehead and the nose. So those teaching commedia use this type of mask also. At the École Jacques Lecoq in Paris, each student enrolled in the final segment of the two-year program is asked to put on the bulbous red clown nose and "discover the clown that sleeps within him."[4] (A.T.)

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[3]"Commedia and the Actor," The Drama Review, XVIII, Number 1 (T-61) (March, 1974), p. 60.

[4]Wylie, p. 17.

Figure 11.--An actor in one of Jeremy Geidt's Comic Character Masks at Yale University School of Drama. Courtesy of Jeremy Geidt.

The materials from which these training masks are made are papier-mâché, celastic, a plastic or acrylic resin, and leather. Of primary concern to the teachers is the durability of the masks they use with students. Besides the considerable artistic skill needed to sculpt an effective mask, mask making is a demanding and time consuming process, so the ability to find a material that will hold up over a number of years in the classroom is very important. Also, the kind of material chosen and its texture will stimulate the kind of response the actor has to it, which we have previously noted (Chapter I).

> The effects that objects achieve in terms of their communicative value are dependent not only upon arrangement but also upon variations of material, shape, and surface. Any material evokes tactile and thermal images--of smoothness, roughness, hardness, softness, coldness, and warmth . . . all set up 'chords' of tactile images that often produce sharp and immediate physical and emotional reactions. . . .[5]

Of equal importance is the weight of the mask. The mask must be light enough as well as durable or it will become too burdensome to the actor. But neither should the mask be so light on the actor's face that he forgets that it is there. Peter Frisch makes this quite clear in his comments on the necessity for the actor to feel the presence and the pressure of the mask on his face.

> There's something about a weight in front of the face. To view the mask and put it on and then not have it there, it seems not to be of great value. The viewing is half of it; the receiving of impulse. But to put it on, and then not feel it, is still to remain self conscious, to still be in your own skin essentially. But somehow this weight seems to be transformed to body impulse. At least, that's what I found happening to me.[6]

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[5]Ruesch and Kees, p. 93.

[6]Interview, see Appendix A.

Jacques Copeau's masks at the Vieux-Colombier were made out of papier-mâché or cardboard by his daughter, Marie-Hélène, by the students themselves under the direction of Albert Marque, and by Henri Cordreaux. Cordreaux also made masks for Saint-Denis' Compagnie des Quinze and for Léon Chancerel's Comédiens Routiers. While in a German prison camp during the winter of 1941, he wrote one of the two most important books on papier-mâché mask construction, Fabrication du Masque.[7] The other standard work on papier-mâché mask construction, Masks, by W. T. Benda, was written in 1944. Both books have long been out of print.

Papier-mâché has been the most popular medium used by mask makers because it is light in weight and inexpensive. But the problem with papier-mâché masks is that they are not the most durable (although Benda's masks made in the 1920's and 1930's are still in extremely good condition). Nevertheless, masks made of papier-mâché are currently used in their actor training programs by Bari Rolfe, Jeremy Geidt, and Rolland Meinholt.

The material that has supplanted papier-mâché as a good medium for masks is celastic. This is a plastic impregnated fabric that comes in various thicknesses. After it is dipped in a solvent (acetone, methyl-ethyl-keytone), it becomes flexible and can be draped or molded easily. When the solvent evaporates, the celastic is hard and will take any kind of finish. The celastic masks are light in weight, slightly flexible, and very durable. Masks made

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[7] 2nd ed. (Paris: Editions Bourrelier et Cie, 1946).

of this material are used by Rolfe, Geidt, Meinholt, Mazzone-Clementi and Appel and Spector at the Goodman School.

Plastic masks are used by Jacques Lecoq, but only for his highly experimental Larval Masks. The training masks at the Juilliard School were made for them by Abd'ul Daker Farrah out of an acrylic resin tinted to approximate flesh tones and to convey various moods. These acrylic masks are somewhat heavier than the other kinds of masks mentioned, but the resin does capture the translucent quality of human skin and is very durable. But even these masks will eventually chip or break if dropped by the students too many times. Two-dimentional acrylic masks are used by children in the Aesthetic Education Program devised by Cemrel, Inc.

The art of making masks in leather, popular during the Renaissance, was rediscovered by the late contemporary Italian sculptor, Amleto Sartori of Padua. Through his research into the mask making techniques used for the leather Commedia dell'arte masks of the 16th century, through his study of Renaissance book-binding procedures, and through his own experimentation, Sartori recovered a lost art (Figure 12).[8] With his untimely death in 1962, his son, Donato, began carrying on his father's research "to unite the experiences of theatre and sculpture in such a way as to raise the leather mask, as a component of the playwright's

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[8]Vivi Leone, untitled article, The Sartori Theatrical Masks, Exhibition Catalogue (New York: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, n.d.), p. 5.

Figure 12.--Leather masks by Amleto Sartori for a production of Aeschylus' The Oresteia. Courtesy of Instituto Italiano di Cultura, New York City.

characterization, to a new artistic level."[9] Leather masks are currently used by Jacques Lecoq and Carlo Mazzone-Clementi. They were all made by Amleto Sartori before his death. It was Lecoq who got Sartori initially interested in making masks when Lecoq was teaching at the University of Padua and later when they worked together at the Piccolo Teatre di Milano.[10] These leather masks are extraordinary creations, being both light-weight, pliable, and durable. The flexibility of the leather causes it to shape itself to the face of the actor wearing it. In this way, the leather mask seems to take on different characteristics and contours with each actor who puts it on. When asked if there was any difference between wearing a leather mask and one made out of another material, Lecoq replied that it was the difference between wearing cashmere and wool.[11] For Mazzone-Clementi, the leather mask does have an added psychological effect on the actor in contrast to the other materials.[12] The actor is actually wearing a second skin on his face.

What Lindley Powers Spencer writes about the 16th century leather commedia masks in his dissertation, "Masks In Theatre," also applies equally well to these modern-day leather creations by Sartori.

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[9]Donato Sartori, untitled article, The Sartori Theatrical Masks, Exhibition Catalogue (New York: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, n.d.), p. 10.

[10]Leone, p. 5.

[11]Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

[12]"Commedia and the Actor," p. 60.

> Stiff, yet pliable, leather was the perfect answer to their needs. It could be molded and tooled to any desired shape; could be dyed any desired color; was unbreakable, cool to wear, and easy to hold on the face.
>
> Of all the materials ever used for mask manufacture, these Italian leather masks have a peculiarly alive quality despite their unnatural coloration, stylized features and immobile planes. The 'livingness' so apparent even when the mask is held in the hand is probably due to the fact that it is made of tanned hide, once itself 'skin,' and the burnished smooth texture of the finish seems literally to breathe under the fingers. On an actor's face, this unique mask appears to become part of him, a living part of his own soul.[13]

Needless to say, these leather masks are expensive. But because of their unique properties, they are probably the most effective of all the masks that could be used in actor training.

The size of the mask and the type of construction material chosen are important in mask making, but it is the design of the mask that is crucial to its final effectiveness.

> In mask-making you must be a mystic in order to put living overtones into inanimate pulp, to give your false-face an uncanny quality as if it were a thing that breathed. You must be an adept at Design--not just design with a small 'd'--to make more than a likeness of a face: a mask must be an essence and not a substance, a type and not a typification.[14]

It is not the purpose here to present a detailed explanation of mask design, as excellent books on that subject (i.e., Benda's Masks and Cordreaux's Fabrication du Masque, mentioned previously), already exist. But it is important to outline some basic design principles so that the different training masks described in the next four chapters will be more fully comprehended. For it is the

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[13] Spencer, p. 278.

[14] Paul McPharlin, "To Make A Mask," Theatre Arts Monthly (September, 1925), p. 593.

mask maker who determines through the arrangement and quality of his sculpture how the mask will affect the actor.

> Therefore, in an oddly subtle way, maker and wearer must complement each other; within each should be, if only latent, a susceptibility to the impersonation, if caricature is not to result . . . so that once finished and put on, the mask will transfigure the human, internally and externally: he becomes a living work of art, and a working archimage.[15]

According to Mazzone-Clementi, Amleto Sartori was one who acknowledged this need for the mask sculptor to engage the mask wearer.

> A mask by Sartori was a sculptor's interpretation of a characterization which would enter an actor's face and body. It was meant to interact with his words and gestures, to add to his completeness, to lessen the gap between stage and audience and to help convince the spectator that life itself is a stage.[16]

Hector Ubertalli, an Argentinian mask maker, expressed a similar view of the need for a connection to be made between the intent of the sculptor and the response of the viewer.[17] Ubertalli's comments on his own role in the creative process were,

> Into any mask I make, I pour my experience and my own 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.[18]

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[15]Lesley, Jr., p. 6.

[16]Untitled article, The Sartori Theatrical Masks, Exhibition Catalogue (New York: Instituto Italiano di Cultura, n.d.), p. 8.

[17]Mirta T. Mulhare, "Hector Ubertalli: a maker of masks," American Artist, XXV (October, 1961), p. 62.

[18]Ibid.

For W. T. Benda, the sculpting of a mask was to be the "result of a thrilling inspiration and long and careful meditation based on accumulated knowledge."[19]

One basic principle involved in mask design is simplification--simplifying the design by the elimination of all superfluous details.

> The lines of a mask must be simple and few; abundance of detail renders the mask illigible at a distance. . . . A mask which appears for thirty seconds on a silent character can, if absolutely necessary, be complicated [in design], but a mask which must be inhabited by an actor embodying a character who speaks, behaves, listens, and reflects must have simple lines, beautiful planes that take the light well, clean intersecting planes, and precise contours.[20] (A.T.)

Simplification of the design is also necessary so that the sculptor can intensify those qualities of the character he is trying to create, "eliminating all that does not lead directly toward that goal."[21] Benda called this the need to make "the masks impressive. Since the principal purpose of masks is to stir a wide scope of varied emotions in the onlooker's soul. . . ."[22]

Another point to be made is that only through the simplification of design does the mask become an "instrument of participation" as Pizzorno has called it,[23] for the actor and the audience.

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[19]"Modern Masks And Their Use," The Encyclopedia Britannica, XV (1946), p. 15.

[20]Cordreaux, p. 14.

[21]Benda, Masks, p. 23.

[22]Ibid.

[23]p. 13.

If the mask has "too polished a finish or too detailed an execution [it] leaves no room for the imagination to work."[24]

> Anyone who has worked with masks knows that in performance they are not rigid or impassive; rather, they form a blank screen on which the audience may project the emotions that the words suggest to them; and for this reason, in modelling, it is safer to put in too little than too much.[25]

Peter Schumann, director of The Bread And Puppet Theater, agrees that the more specific and fixed the mask's expression is, the less flexible it can be in performance. He observed, "A face that is already completely cast, that's just expressing the horror at four o'clock in the afternoon about Aunt Daisy dying . . . that mask will be very hard to make laugh or do anything but that expression."[26]

W. T. Benda contended that the ability of the mask to live and change expression was also conceived in the design and sculpted into the mask and therefore not totally dependent on the expressiveness of the actor's body or the projections of the audience's mind.

> I frequently hear the remark that my masks change their expressions. This is a deception which is explained by the fact that our so-called facial expressions are not entirely dependent upon changes of the features due to the contraction of the facial muscles, but also upon the movement and position of the head and neck. When the wearer of a mask changes the position of his head it gives the impression at times that the expression of the mask changes. There is, for instance, the mask representing a rather sweet type of girl with eyes cast down. These downcast eyes make her look demure and shy if the head is inclined, but as soon as the head is raised above level and the eyes remain looking down you have the

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[24]Peter Arnott, Plays Without People (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 100.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Peter Schumann, Interview, see Appendix B.

> impression of haughtiness and disdain. There is a mask of a frowning man, with the head up he looks martial, proud and commanding, but that same frown changes into an expression of sorrow and gloomy brooding if the head is lowered.
>
> These are merely the simplest and most obvious examples. In most cases the expressions of my masks are not definite, but are complexes of subtle, hesitating suggestions of expressions which in action undergo more complicated changes.[27]

It was also Benda's theory that no matter whether the mask was simply modelled or heavily modelled, the sculptor in his design must observe other basic principles--those of "rhythmic coordination."[28]

> But at times a single feature, a certain peculiarity, may become a theme for a mask in which, around this one characteristic, the rest of the face shall be logically developed according to all the principles of rhythm and coordination. As a simple example, we may take the case where an unusually prominent and peculiarly shaped nose is the theme. The rest of the face has to be built in conformity with its characteristics; its lines must find support and balance in their rhythmic continuity through all parts of the face in order to achieve harmonious ensemble and semblance of life.[29]

In fact, Benda went so far as to state, "A certain combination of harmonious lines will always portray a certain character."[30] (See Figures 13 and 14.) For Benda, the design of the mask utilizing the principles of rhythmic coordination must always be based on "real forms that exist in nature, human or animal."[31]

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[27]W. T. Benda, "How Benda Revived The Use Of Masks," The Boston Transcript, April 17, 1926, n.p.

[28]"My Talk About Masks, 1944-1945," unpublished lecture notes. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler, p. 3.

[29]Benda, Masks, pp. 23-25.

[30]Benda quoted in Grace Turner, "Masks, Mystery and Truth," This Week Magazine, March 31, 1935, p. 20.

[31]Benda, "Modern Masks," p. 15.

Figure 13.--A model in W. T. Benda's mask of "The Golden Beauty." Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

Figure 14.--W. T. Benda posing in one of his favorite masks. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

> We must feel the bone construction of the face, the tenseness or relaxation of the facial muscles and the quality of the skin.[32]

Benda even decorated the inside of his masks with abstract designs suggesting the spirit and character of the mask, so that the actor would be reminded as he donned the mask of the being he was to portray.[33]

In his book, Alter Ego, Everett Lesley, Jr., illustrates how he feels character can be created in the sculpting of the mask.

> By modifying, to a greater or lesser degree, the parts of the face which we connect with character, the mask inflects the associative tone. Eyeless, it becomes vacant or secretive; a nose exaggerated or twisted or beaked will excite comparisons with humors and animals friendly or rapacious; and the mouth, smiling, sensual, compressed or awry, can indicate every temper from malevolence to charity. Unless the wearer is to remain motionless, the mask should have three-dimensional versatility: a nod, a toss of the head, a turn to the right or left, should expose the modelling which substitutes, in a static countenance, for the play of expression.[34]

The impulse of the mask on the actor must be to compel characterization and to compel movement. As Pizzorno realized, every mask is a choreography.[35]

It will be noted that the training masks under discussion in the following chapters have distinctive design features: the Universal Masks (Chapter VI) are simple and symmetrical in design, whereas the Character Masks (Chapter VII) are more heavily modelled and ambiguous in terms of age, sex, and emotional state; the

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[32]Ibid.

[33]"A New Art In Masks," The Literary Digest (November 13, 1920), p. 32.

[34]Lesley, p. 5.

[35]Pizzorno, p. 153.

Miscellaneous Training Masks (Chapter VIII) are too diverse in design qualities to categorize simply here; and the design characteristics of the Commedia dell'arte Masks (Chapter IX) have been proscribed by tradition for centuries.

In these next four chapters we shall examine in more detail the special design features of these various training masks and note the relationship of the design to the function it serves in the development of an actor who is being trained with this method.

CHAPTER VI

THE METHOD: THE UNIVERSAL MASKS

The first masks used for actor training, if more than one course in mask improvisation is offered, will be designated here by the general title of the Universal Masks, in order to refer both to their basic design concept and their function. The term is derived from that used by Bari Rolfe for her primary mask, the Universal Mask, which is known in Europe as the Neutral Mask (masque neutre). In the United States, this Neutral Mask is usually known by another name because of the unfortunate connotations and associations American students have with the term "neutral," confusing its meaning with the word, "neuter," which does not seem to occur in Europe. In this study, therefore, we will use Ms. Rolfe's term, Universal Mask, only in a plural form, Universal Masks, to refer to all those masks in this category and not just to the more specific characteristics of the Neutral Mask employed by Jacques Lecoq, Bari Rolfe, and others. But before proceeding to the training techniques and exercises employed with these Universal Masks, we will first examine the various kinds of masks in this category.[1]

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[1]It will be helpful to keep in mind that for these four chapters on the techniques of the mask training (Chapters VI-IX), we are dealing with past and present adherents of this training

Historically, this type of mask, when it was first employed by Jacques Copeau at the École du Vieux-Colombier, was known as the Noble Mask (masque noble), and was an altered form of a French Mardi-Gras mask.

> The mask of which we speak is a mask without expression called a 'noble mask'--like those that were the dance masks before the 'reform' of Noverre in the 18th century.--This will be a carnival mask repainted in a uniform color; a cardboard, a paper, or a cloth molded by each one to the shape of a face. . . .[2] (A.T.)

The Noble Mask was originally a full-face mask, but Copeau also made it into a half-mask by cutting off the lower portion to allow his students to use it for vocal improvisations later in their work.[3] The repainting of these carnival masks made them even more neutral and uniform in appearance. Chancerel used solid color such as a light ochre for the male masks and an ivory color for the female masks.[4]

The Neutral Masks

Of the differing training masks now in use, those that appear closest to these original masks used by Copeau are the

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method. Copeau, Saint-Denis, Chancerel, Doat, and Dullin are former teachers who employed the method. Appel/Spector, Frisch, Geidt, Lecoq, Lefevre, Meinholt, and Rolfe are present instructors of the mask improvisational technique.

[2]Léon Chancerel, "Jeux Dramatiques" Dans l'Education (Paris: Libraire Theatrale, n.d.), p. 49.

[3]Doat, p. 45.

[4]Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 133.

Neutral Masks of Jacques Lecoq. (These same Neutral Masks are also used by Bari Rolfe in this country, but, as mentioned earlier, she has renamed hers the Universal Mask.) The Neutral Mask is a full-face mask sculpted like an idealized human face (Figure 15).

> The neutral mask has simple regular features, even non-realistic, and without any particular individual traits--perhaps rather like the face of a Greek statue. Walter Pater's remarks on Greek sculpture could fit the neutral mask: 'It is the expression of only the structural and permanent, purged of all that is individual and of the special moment.'[5]

This mask has little if any definition as to age, sex, emotional state, or personality.

> The regular, perhaps non-realistic features of the face express no emotion, nor any state other than just being. The mask embodies only that which is true of all mankind, hence the name of universal mask.[6]

Lecoq compares this mask to the mask of the young female character mask in the Japanese Noh Drama,[7] and says that it is a mask that contains no inherent conflict in it;[8] that it "neither laughs nor cries,"[9] and that "it is neither literary or psycho-dramatic."[10] But Lecoq does believe that the Neutral Mask is nevertheless a dramatic mask: "it is dramatic as a man in space is

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[5]Bari Rolfe, "The Actor's World of Silence," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LV, No. 4 (December, 1969), p. 398 n12.

[6]Bari Rolfe, "T'ai Chi Ch'uan," unpublished article. Courtesy of Bari Rolfe.

[7]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Margo Miller, "Genius of the mime, world beyond words," Boston Sunday Globe, March 29, 1970, p. 92.

[10]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

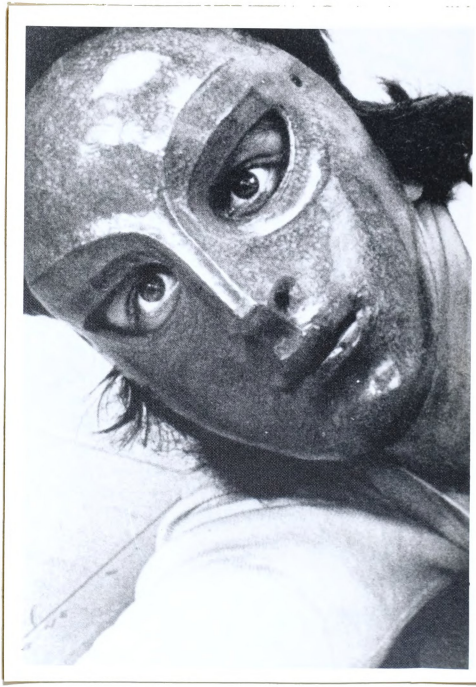

Figure 15.--The Neutral Mask of Jacques Lecoq. Made in leather by Amleto Sartori. Courtesy of Richard Phelps Frieman and the editors of Psychologie.

dramatic; a man in space is always dramatic."[11] That is, by its very nature the Neutral Mask is dramatic; the potential for drama resides in it. Etienne Decroux in his description of the Neutral Mask discusses why he believes it has these inherent dramatic qualities.

> What do I mean by the term neutral or inexpressive mask? The neutral or inexpressive mask has a form that permits the actor to portray all possible sentiments without being ridiculous. Thanks to the neutrality of the mask I can depict joy by jumping in the air, or anger by jumping in the air, without anyone finding a dissonance between the mask and what I'm doing. I could depict repose, or the need for activity, dying, or sleeping, or waking up. If this mask allows me to do everything, even the most diverse and contradictory things, without seeming ridiculous, then it's a neutral mask.[12]

The sculptured features of the Neutral Mask are perfectly symmetrical, which is never true of the human face. This is one reason why the Neutral Mask is considered a non-realistic mask. It has generous eye-holes so that the actor will have no trouble seeing, and the mouth is cut open slightly, besides the nostrils, to aid in breathing. But the open mouth is not to be used for speaking through, as this mask is only used for silent improvisations.

Even though this Neutral Mask is to be ageless and sexless, it does appear to represent a face in the prime of life, like a Greek statue, and there are subtle differences, other than a size distinction, between those masks worn by the male and female actors.

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[11] Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

[12] Decroux, as quoted in Thomas Leabhart, "Etienne Decroux on Masks," trans. Thomas Leabhart, Mime Journal, Number Two (1975), p. 56.

The Female Neutral Mask is a bit more rounded and softer in appearance than the Male Neutral Mask, even though all individualizing elements have been eliminated. (Lecoq, by the way, acknowledges these differences and does not permit his male actors to wear the female masks and vice versa.)[13]

The Tragic Masks

The type of Universal Masks used in the Saint-Denis schools (Old Vic, Juilliard, Strasbourg) are called the Tragic Masks, which is in contrast to the Comic Masks used later in their program.[14] These Tragic Masks 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.[15]

From the above description by Saint-Denis, it should be evident that these masks are much more specific in terms of age than the Neutral Masks of Lecoq and Rolfe, or the original masque noble of Copeau. They are also modelled so that "each expresses a particular sentiment: sorrow, anger, serenity, agony. . . ."[16] (A.T.)

There is, then, in these Tragic Masks a very definite emotional feeling to be conveyed by each mask. These masks are also

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[13]Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

[14]Unfortunately no photographs of the Tragic and Comic Masks at The Juilliard School were available for this study. The mask designs are under a copyright.

[15]Saint-Denis, Theatre: Rediscovery of Style, p. 103.

[16]Yann LeBonniec, "L'Improvisation," Nos Spectacles, 138 (Janvier-Mars, 1970), p. 7.

symmetrical in design and some are more heavily modelled than others. The adult masks are less modelled than the old age masks and are most like Lecoq's Neutral Mask. Many of the Tragic Masks seen to be adaptations of Japanese Noh masks, particularly the Old Woman mask. The adolescent mask appears more sexless; others are more definitely male or female. These masks also have large eye-holes that bring the eye close to the front of the mask for unencumbered vision.

The Metaphysical Masks

The most extreme departure from the original masque noble of Copeau is the Metaphysical Mask of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi. When he was first teaching in this country, he used Lecoq's Neutral Mask, but his students also had difficulty with the term "neutral," as did Bari Rolfe's. "What do you mean?" asked one student, "I'm a homosexual?"[17] The human features of the Neutral Mask, even though idealized, caused his students to dramatize and to vocalize, thus creating characters and situations.

> On the Neutral Mask, the mouth in a way is there. And that makes the difference, because you say, "Why don't I speak?" "Why don't I eat?"[18]

Since the improvisations in the Neutral Mask are to be conducted in silence, Mazzone-Clementi redesigned the mask into a very abstract being within the elliptical shape of the human head and called it the Metaphysical Mask (Figure 16). This mask, identical

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[17] Mazzone-Clementi, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix E.

[18] Ibid.

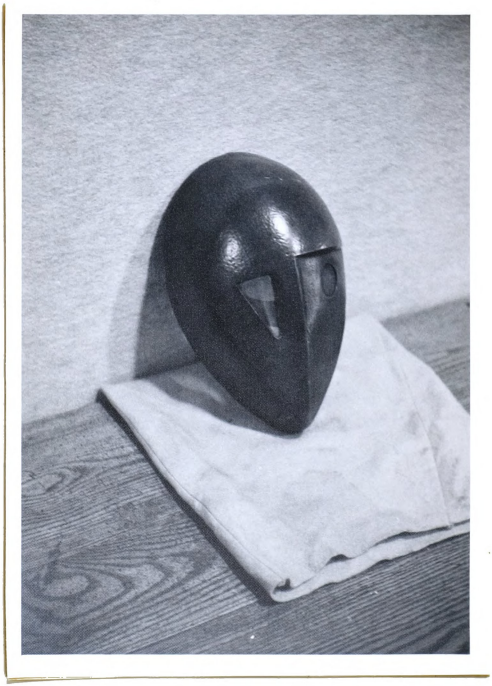

Figure 16.--Carlo Mazzone-Clementi's Metaphysical Mask. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

for both male and female actors, is symmetrical in overall form and the features are geometrical. Also, each side of the "face" is different. The right side has no eyebrow ridge and contains a triangular eye, whereas the left side has a strongly chiseled straight eyebrow and a round eye.

> Curves and straight lines. Life is straight line or curve. I go forward and that's a straight line and that means tension. So curves and straight lines. . . . Tension and elasticity. [Henri] Bergson more or less.[19]

There is a raised crease in the mask that acts as a nose and a dividing line for each vertical half of the mask, but there is no mouth in order that the students will not be tempted to vocalize or dramatize in this mask as they did in his Neutral Mask.[20]

Even with these extreme sculptural differences from the Neutral Mask or the Tragic Masks, the overall effect of the Metaphysical Mask on the viewer is one of harmony. Yet, because it is not perfectly symmetrical in features, there is more of a potential for movement and action within the stillness, or as Mazzone-Clementi puts it, a "tension" within the lines of the mask that does seem to violate slightly the concept of achieving a totally neutral state. According to Lecoq, there is to be no conflict in the features of the Neutral Mask (or in the Neutral state for that matter).[21]

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[19]Ibid.

[20]Bari Rolfe in a recent letter to this author wrote that she now sees her Universal Mask as European and feels the need for something more stylized and general that isn't specifically Caucasian, Black, or Asian for her use in this country. Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

[21]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

Mazzone-Clementi has called his mask the Metaphysical Mask rather than the Neutral Mask to more clearly state his concept that "behind the physical there is a center of your activity. You can call that neutral, zero, universal--call it what you like."[22] He calls it metaphysical. It represents a state of being like the "condition of vegetables, or animals. . . ."[23]

So, within the Universal Masks category there are three different kinds of full-face masks being used: Lecoq's Neutral Mask, which is also Rolfe's Universal Mask; Juilliard's Tragic Masks; and Mazzone-Clementi's Metaphysical Mask. They all perform basically the same function for the actor.

> The universal mask is also an inner mask. It represents only that which all of us have in common, what is universally true. The only way to reach it in ourselves is to focus on what is common to us all, reorganizing our energies to perform an act simply and directly. This focussing of energies makes the simple act more intense and sends us to an inner core of being. That inner core is one's center, and is more truly unique than character or personality traits; it existed before all else, and no two are alike.[24]

These, then, are the masks used to create/effect that state of neutrality in the actor that Copeau felt was the necessary starting point for all further acting training.

Since the Universal Masks are the first masks used in the training, it is important to know how they are introduced into the

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[22]Mazzone-Clementi, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix E.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Bari Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

classroom situation, and by what process the students is sensitized to their use. As Macgowan and Rosse warned in their book, Masks and Demons,

> The mask is not to be carelessly assumed or lightly put off. Primitive man knows that there must be initiation and a certain ceremony. If he puts on a false face without the proper incantation, there will be no power.[25]

Most teachers would agree that assuming the mask cannot be casually done. The student must have the proper respect and attitude toward the mask or the coming work in the mask will be valueless. The instructor's role in creating this proper atmosphere is very important. LeBonniec, talking about his training at Strasbourg, tells the following story about his teacher:

> As one of us had already put on an old man mask, and tried to perform by simulating a broken and hesitating walk, the professor stopped him; what the student had proposed was a sort of realistic game completely in discord with the gravity, the mystery and the poetry of the mask.[26] (A.T.)

LeBonniec goes on to recount,

> The professor explained that if we refused to contemplate the mask, if we sought to demystify it, to break the feeling of awe that should be born in us, the exercise would lose all interest.[27] (A.T.)

Charles Dullin felt that the student who put on the mask without the proper approach to it was committing a sacrilege.[28] Bari Rolfe exhibits these same feelings when she writes,

> If the masked actor behaved in his usual manner, he and the spectator both would become aware of a flagrant incongruity.

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[25]Macgowan and Rosse, p. vii.

[26]LeBonniec, p. 7.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Dullin, pp. 122-123.

> That is why he cannot simply don a mask and go about his daily business, as one young enthusiast wanted to try. The self-effacement, the separation, cannot then take place. The mask does become, should become, a sacred object, the actor feels a sense of magic, of grandeur and of mystery, which are too often lost in the slick, commercial shuffle and the wise-cracking exchange of the theatre.[29]

In order to establish this respect and awe for the mystery of the mask, most of the teachers have a very definite procedure, or "initiation rite," that they follow. This procedure usually begins with an orientation talk or lecture about the mask and its potential power and effectiveness for the student if approached properly. In a following discussion with the students, the teacher tries to correct any false ideas about the mask. Pierre Lefevre, at Juilliard, stresses during this time that the improvisations to be done in the mask and the masks themselves seem to demand that the work be limited to the high moments in life; those moments which are more poetic, more singular--what Lefevre terms the "Golden Number."[30] For Bari Rolfe,

> . . . it is important to me to tell students why the mask works. For psychological reasons I don't understand, or need to, a mask in place creates the urge to identify with it. Therefore, the harmonious, unconflicted features of the universal mask help to create that state in the face and body of the wearer.[31]

Peter Frisch, in contrast, prefers not to lecture the students about the mask but to get them involved actively in the discovery process.

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[29]"Behind the Mask," unpublished article. Courtesy of Bari Rolfe., p. 5.

[30]Pierre Lefevre, The Juilliard School, Drama Division, Class Observation and Notes, May 2, 1974.

[31]Rolfe, Personal Letter.

> I think that basically the kind of thing that they should do at least in the first session is not so much to put them on and start doing things before they're ready, but at least to practically start things: "Okay, what do you see?" In other words, training the eye. That must be done with a student. "What is the difference now?" "Is there a difference between you and him?" "Why?" "What is that?"[32]

But most teachers prefer a more gradual introduction of the students to the mask than this stated by Frisch.

The next step for some of the teachers is to bring into class the actual masks and show them to the students. The teacher may, as Pierre Lefevre does, choose a mask and hold it up, turning it in the light so that the students may observe the sculptural qualities of the mask and the possibilities of its changing expression due to the play of light and shadows over its surface.[33] And then the teacher may demonstrate for the students the procedure he wants them to follow so that they may see how the mask is assumed, and what then happens once the mask is in place on the face of the performer if the correct preparation has taken place.

Following this, the students are allowed to choose a mask that they respond well to and that fits them. (Masks can always be stuffed out with cotton, kleenex, or foam rubber to assure a good fit.) In a place off by themselves, sitting or standing, they also should feel the sculptured features and texture of the mask with their hands. Dullin wanted his students to "study the mask

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[32]Peter Frisch, Contemporary Theatre Collective, Harvardhouse, Littlefield, Massachusetts, Interview, July 11, 1973, see Appendix A.

[33]LeBonniec, p. 7.

in all its aspects, live with it; make it a companion, become its confidant."[34] (A.T.)

Mary Wigman, the German dancer-choreographer mentioned earlier, also devised very similar techniques for her dancers who were to wear masks in the anti-war production, Totenmal. In her book, The Language of Dance, she writes,

> . . . a way had to be found to come closer to these masks. We tried it with 'meditation exercises.' The female dancers sat on the floor with their backs to the wall and stared at the mask lying in their laps; one minute--two minutes--five minutes. No word was spoken. Only a softly played gong melody filled the room.[35]

This sensory exploration of the mask is important because it is during this meditation on the mask that the student must allow his imagination and memory free play to make all sorts of connections, associations, and to produce images in terms of atmosphere, gesture, movement, and body attitude. This is when the mask functions for the actor as an affective object.

And this is all that the teachers using the Neutral Mask want their students to meditate on. Those, like Lefevre, using the more descriptive and specific Tragic Masks also want their students to think about improvising a character and a brief situation, or "phrase," that does contain some organic shape (a beginning, and a middle, but not necessarily an end).[36]

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[34]Dullin, p. 122.

[35]Wigman, p. 94.

[36]Lefevre, Juilliard Class Observations and Notes.

At this point it is important for the instructor to caution the student, as Doat used to do, that this meditation on the mask and the following work in the mask must not become an intellectual game, where the student imposes on the mask what he thinks it demands. The student must allow the sensory exploration of the mask to suggest to his body and imagination those movements necessary to its fulfillment.[37]

This meditation on the mask is normally carried on for at least one full session, but may be conducted for a longer period of time. Lecoq requires his students to observe the mask for eight days before they can try it on.[38] This may seem too extreme, but he considers the mask work tremendously important and central to his program of training.

After observing and meditating on the mask, the techniques of assuming the mask are next introduced. It is at this point that Bari Rolfe makes certain that when the students get to the point of putting on the mask, "they accept being under its influence; if it is necessary to clarify any question, they are to lift the mask in order to speak. This is meant to set up firmly the convention of being someone else whenever the mask is in place."[39] The method for assuming the mask evolved by Copeau and his students at the École du Vieux-Colombier was almost a ritual and may have been

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[37]Doat, p. 52.

[38]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[39]Rolfe, "Behind The Mask," p. 7.

influenced by Copeau's knowledge and interest in the Japanese Noh Theater where a proscribed ritual for donning the mask is followed.

According to Jean Dorcy, one of Copeau's students, the term coined for putting on the mask was "shoeing" the mask, "because the mask was supposed to cling to the face; to fit as closely as a shoe, rather than like a garment or a hat."[40] Dorcy also described the school's initiation rite.

> Here are the rites I followed so as to be ready to perform masked:
>
> (a) Well seated in the middle of the chair, not leaning against the back of the seat. Legs spaced to ensure perfect balance. Feet flat on the ground.
>
> (b) Stretch the right arm horizontally forward, shoulder high; it holds the mask, hanging by its elastic. The left hand, also stretched out, helps to shoe the mask, thumb holding the chin, index finger seizing the opening of the mouth.
>
> (c) Simultaneously, inhale, close the eyes and shoe the mask. In all this, only the arms and hands are active. They carry out the small movements necessary to fasten the mask on the face, arrange the hair, verify the proper adjustment of the elastic, so that the mask will cling well and hold without slackness.
>
> (d) Simultaneously, breathe and place forearms and hands on the thighs. The arms, as well as the elbows, touch the torso, fingers not quite reaching the knees.
>
> (e) Open the eyes, inhale, then simultaneously close the eyes, exhale and bend the head forward. While bending the head, the back becomes slightly rounded. In this phase, arms, hands, torso, and head are completely relaxed.
>
> (f) It is here, in this position, that the clearing of the mind occurs. Repeat mentally or utter, if this helps, during the necessary time (2, 5, 10, 25 seconds): 'I am not thinking of anything, I am not thinking of anything. . . .'
>
> If through nervousness, or because the heart was beating too strongly, the 'I am not thinking anything' was ineffective, concentrate on the blackish, grey, steel, saffron, blue, or other shade found inside the eye, and extend it indefinitely in thought: almost always, this shade blots out conscious thought.[41]

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[40] Dorcy, p. 13.

[41] Ibid., p. 109.

Even though Dorcy maintains that this was his own personal method for shoeing the mask, the outline of the technique he gives is the same as that described by two other followers of Copeau, Jan Doat and Léon Chancerel. But there are some minor differences. Both Doat and Chancerel claimed that it was the left hand that held the mask and the right hand that held the elastic in the shoeing process.[42] They also both preferred that the actor should stand throughout the initiation to the mask. A more important addition to the procedure noted by Chancerel was the fact that the mask should be shoed in two separate steps: first, stretching out the elastic over the head and putting the mask down on the top of the head; then, in a second separate movement, lowering the mask over the face.[43] This two-step procedure was also noted by a journalist who attended the final presentation given by Copeau's apprentice actors at the École du Vieux-Colombier before it closed in 1924.[44]

Now, with these Universal Masks in place on the faces of the actors, the process of purging, of finding essentials, really begins.

> In the studio or classroom the sensitive actor puts on a mask in order to do a given exercise. He remains still for some seconds. He empties himself--his mind of plans, his body of customary rhythms and movements. He even empties his lungs of air so that something different can come to him with a fresh breath.[45]

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[42]Doat, p. 53; Chancerel, Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, pp. 131-132.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Doat, pp. 45-46n, see Chapter III, p. 111, n149.

[45]Rolfe, "Behind The Mask," p. 5.

Taking this cleansing breath, important both to Dorcy and to Rolfe, helps the actor not only to clear his mind so as to attain the neutral, but teaches him to breathe properly in the mask. Wearing a mask changes one's normal breathing pattern because the mask restricts the intake of air. But it is a forced physical inhibition that can be used to change the actor psychophysically as well. Now the concern must be to breathe not as yourself but as the mask you are wearing would breathe. LeBonniec, watching his teacher demonstrating the mask, observed that changes occurred when the teacher put on the mask.

> Then he put on his mask, manipulating it with great care, with respect and, as soon as he had it well adjusted on his face, his breathing became deeper, his movements broader, more affirmed, his body developed in a different rhythm from that of normal life, but perfectly in accord with the expression of the mask and that [the expression of the mask] seemed no longer to be fixed.[46] (A.T.)

For Chancerel this was the relaxation stage when the actor should "abandon himself" to the mask and open himself to receive the being the mask expresses.[47]

At this point there are two differing opinions as to what should be included in the next step after the actor is masked. The problem can be briefly stated by saying that the disagreement is between those who allow their students at this point to see themselves in the Universal Masks in a mirror (Rolfe) and those teachers who do not allow their students to look at themselves in a mirror (Lecoq, Lefevre).

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[46]pp. 7-8.

[47]Chancerel, Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 132.

Bari Rolfe does allow her students to observe themselves in a mirror but only for a brief moment. She justifies this by saying,

> There is a process to learning a new mask. The actor first simply looks at it for a time, then puts it on and does nothing as he observes himself in a mirror, letting him begin to identify with it. He becomes immersed in it, and slowly searches for the appropriate walk, small gestures. He is bringing the mask and mask-wearer into harmony with each other. . . .[48]

For Ms. Rolfe, the brief glance in the mirror helps the masked actor more closely identify with his superimposed image.

Jacques Lecoq is representative of those who do not allow students in their Universal Masks to use a mirror. For him, it is because his Neutral Mask is to be, as Ms. Rolfe has called it, an "inner mask," and the actor must only dig deeply within himself, working from the presence of the weight of the mask on his face and the image projected in his mind's eye as derived from his prior meditation and exploration of the mask. He is not to be conscious of or be concerned about the surface of the mask since that is to anxious about what effect he would be producing externally; about performance.[49]

The actor when donning the Universal Mask tries to approach a "state of receptivity,"[50] or, as Lecoq calls it, "the fulcrum point . . . this fulcrum that doesn't exist,"[51] but towards which

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[48]Rolfe, "Behind The Mask," p. 6.

[49]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[50]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

[51]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

the actor strives. With his first breath in the mask, the actor starts to bring himself into harmony with the mask.

> When this harmony and fusion are achieved, he feels a sense of simplicity plus authority; he has learned to 'carry' the mask.[52]

When this beginning transformation of the actor has been accomplished, and for each actor the length of time required will be different, the actor is ready to begin the exercises that will take him deeper into the mask and into himself. The exercises will be not only a process of self-discovery, but will bring a deeper understanding of the concept of neutrality/receptivity and how it can be used effectively in his later work with and without the mask. As mentioned earlier, these exercises in the Universal Masks are all silent improvisations.

For Jan Doat, these beginning exercises in the mask followed a very definite progression from the simple, the concrete, and the particular achieved by observation, to the complex, abstract and general created by the imagination.[53]

The first exercises must be quite simple and brief tasks. Chancerel called them, naissance du masque (the birth of the mask).[54] One of the first things he did was to have the masks (actor) discover his own body and how it moves.[55] Bari Rolfe presently

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[52]Rolfe, "Behind The Mask," p. 6.

[53]Doat, p. 52.

[54]Chancerel, Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 132.

[55]Ibid.

asks her students similar things: "Find a way this mask might walk, might stand, might sit, maybe one typical gesture of it."[56]

After watching one of his students complete this beginning exercise, Chancerel wrote,

> One day I saw Olivier Hussenot do this exercise in a mask. His character discovered that he had a body, arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet; that, on these feet one could stand up and use them to move, all this learning to walk ending in the craziest dance translating the joy of existence.[57] (A.T.)

In LeBonniec's training, the students were allowed to try this connection with the mask for only a few minutes. Whenever they felt their concentration waver and they were being other than the mask, they were to stop and raise their masks to the top of their heads.[58]

For Chancerel it was extremely important for these beginning exercises to be carried out by the student before an experienced observer, so that the student would be told if the exercise was being done with sincerity and authenticity; if it came from internal impulses and was not imposed from without.[59]

In the critique of their students, Lecoq and Rolfe, as did Doat before them, make use of the pedagogical method of via negativa (the negative way). That is, the teacher tells the student what was not neutral, effective, or sincere in his work but does not

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[56]Rolfe, Interview, March 1, 1974, see Appendix C.

[57]Chancerel, Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 133.

[58]LeBonniec, p. 8.

[59]Chancerel, Le Masque, II, p. 25.

indicate or demonstrate to the student how to correct it. According to Doat, "it is up to the student to find it, knowing his sincerity and his temperament."[60] (A.T.) Bari Rolfe explains Lecoq's use of this method thus,

> . . . it leaves affirmative paths open for the student to find. This teaching strategy acts as a kind of benevolent frustration; by blocking the paths taken by the actor, you oblige him to look for another.[61]

She has also stated the purpose of this teaching technique and its results in a paradoxical statement that she quotes to her students: "I correct the non-neutral by a series of no's--which results in a yes."[62]

As mentioned earlier, the exercises in the masks start very simply and get progressively more complex. They also begin as individual exercises, though done together as a class, and then become partner and group exercises.

These beginning individual exercises at the École du Vieux-Colombier have been outlined by Jan Doat in his work, L'Expression Corporelle du Comédien. The whole class participated simultaneously in each exercise but without relating to each other. The instructor called out words or phrases to the students who were standing masked and relaxed before him. The students, after meditating for a moment on what he had just said, moved into a position that they felt

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[60] Doat, p. 53.

[61] "The Mime of Jacques Lecoq," p. 38.

[62] Student Comments and Notes, unpublished notes. Courtesy of Bari Rolfe.

physically expressed this word or phrase. They held that position for a brief moment to confirm the impression and then returned to their relaxed stance.[63]

The content of these first exercises that Doat recounts were composed of sets of tasks dealing with the exploration of the five senses. First the students were to handle imaginary objects, making their object as concrete and specific as possible by exploring its weight, texture, shape, and function. Next, the students were asked to experience certain physical sensations such as fatigue, heat, and cold. Then they were asked to explore actively the five senses more fully, followed by an exercise in which one of these senses was then deprived them, such as being deaf. Next came simple physical actions, such as throwing, lifting, and pulling objects. At the end of this set of exercises the students were to give bodily expression to some simple clear emotions.

It was at this point that the various parts of the first set of exercises became combined to make the exercises of the second set. These were more difficult to fulfill. Their purpose was to stretch the actor further. For example, a simple emotion was combined with a simple physical activity, or an exploration of one of the senses was paired with the handling of an imaginary object.

In the third set of exercises, the students were asked to physically represent inanimate objects. Following this came the

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[63]Doat, p. 53.

final and most difficult exercises: physicalizing moral and abstract ideas such as "glory" or "strength."[64]

Doat also suggested that one way to increase the discipline of the group was to take the briefest parts of the different series of exercises above and give them rapidly to the students, having them try to fulfill them quickly and completely.[65]

Charles Dullin was also concerned in his early exercises in the mask with simplicity and with the exploration of the external world. He called his exercises the decouverte du monde (discovery of the world).[66] For his students, Dullin employed the neutral half-mask.

> Strive to forget as much as possible your body and its heaviness.
>
> Stretched out on the ground, your face covered by a half-mask, relax by seeking total annihilation.
>
> A light breath brushes your face, passes over your body; you open your eyes and you 'discover' the world; the sky, the earth, the vegetation.
>
> According to your temperament you will experience a feeling of plenitude, of joy, or of strength, or also even of terror; you stand erect on your legs, which are still heavily riveted to the ground; in the sky clouds pass, there is the desire to touch them or fear of the mystery.
>
> You see a fountain, and you approach it; the water gives you back your image; the water runs through your fingers. . .
>
> The sun appears and dazzles you. . .
>
> The blood which circulates in your veins, the life which you feel in you, impels you to violent physical reactions; you tear yourself from the earth and you improvise a dance. . . .[67] (A.T.)

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[64] Doat, pp. 54-55.

[65] Ibid., p. 55.

[66] Dullin, p. 116.

[67] Ibid., p. 116.

This exercise of Dullin's is very similar to the work of Hussenot observed by Chancerel (see pp. 183).

Jacques Lecoq, because of his philosophy of first having the actor achieve a total neutrality and then working from that state of being, has a different set of beginning exercises.

> The analysis of movements of the most precise physical actions (their least effort for maxium rendering) and the neutral dramatic state (state of availability with neither past nor passion) permits us to better comprehend the manifestations of life in a state of permanent discovery, without preconceived ideas or projections of personal conflicts.[68]

In his school brochure Lecoq lists these beginning exercises in the mask as "Neutral Mask and identifications with nature."[69] (A.T.)

> Through improvisation, we re-enact people, elements, animals, plants, trees, colors, lights, materials and sounds. Going beyond their images, we become conscious of their space, their rhythms and breath.[70]

The actor must make a total identification with each of these areas--so much so that no element of the human is seen, except, of course, in the exercises dealing with being a human. The student "works under the neutral mask so as to take no attitude toward the object or situation he is studying."[71] We are really dealing here not with "states of being"--nor is the focus on doing something or accomplishing some external goal or fulfilling some need, but on fully identifying with some thing "becoming" more completely itself.

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[68]Jacques Lecoq, "Mime, Mouvement, Theatre," unpublished trans. of article, p. 2. Courtesy of Jacques Lecoq.

[69]Lecoq, School Brochure (1974), n.p.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Miller, p. 92.

And "becoming" involves movement, with inner movement always to be exteriorized. One could become totally identified with water, for instance. The student is told to "first find the form, then its rhythm."[72] Only in action, in movement, in the process of becoming, can the "being" be made manifest. The more specific information that follows will help clarify this concept.

In the improvisations dealing with the four elements (earth, water, air, fire) the student is to "explore each, learning with one's body what it means to be rooted, fluid, floating and exploding. . . ."[73] There is to be no conflict here, just a dynamic state of becoming. Lecoq explains this cryptically by saying, "If the Neutral Mask looks at the sea, it becomes the sea."[74] Students try to identify themselves totally with the four elements as concretized in such things as clouds (air), waves (water), fire (fire), and trees (earth).

> Students will do the exercise of the tree; the body is the trunk, arms are branches, fingers are leaves. Often the student's eyes will watch the growth of its tree, but that's not total enough an identification--trees have no eyes. The purpose is to get the entire body identified with the image.[75]

In Ms. Rolfe's class of first year students working in the Universal Mask at the University of Washington, the students were improvising this first set of exercises dealing with the total

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[72]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

[73]Mazzone-Clementi, "Commedia and the Actor," p. 62.

[74]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[75]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975; see also Appendix C.

identification with the four elements. Ms. Rolfe set up the subject for the improvisations (the four elements) and students volunteered to present an improvisation to the rest of the class. The procedure was as follows: once the student had volunteered, he would go to a table where the masks were spread out, choose one that fitted him well, stand with his back to the class observing the mask for a few moments, shoe it, and then take the stance and the breath of preparation before presenting the improvisation.

One student who volunteered chose a narrow full-face mask with a yellow cast. After completing her preparation, she faced the class, hunched over, and rolled forward twice, ending up with her arms spread out in front of her followed by her fingers stretched out wide and flat. Then she reversed the whole movement until she was back on her feet. After holding the final position for a moment, she removed her mask.

Ms. Rolfe asked the class three questions about this student's improvisation: What element did they see? In what form was the element found? And was the rhythm accurate for the element in the chosen form? The students had no problem identifying the element as water and the form as that of a wave coming in and breaking on the shore, then drawing back to form a new wave.

Another student did an improvisation as a cloud moving along in the wind. One student, who presented an ice cube melting, was criticized for not first establishing the form strongly enough before he began (the sense of "squareness") and for not having all possible parts of his body participating in the melting process.

This meant that his identification with the element in its changing form was not complete enough.[76]

When the students work at identifying with animals, the purpose is not to try to create a human with an animal image or animal characteristics as is usually the approach with Stanislavski-trained teachers, but it is to be the animal completely in its form in its internal and external rhythms.[77] Dullin also used a similar exercise that stressed the rhythms of certain birds, such as the swan, the eagle, the duck, and the turkey.[78]

In working with inanimate objects, one object that always appears in the student's work is the machine.

> Most people will do a mechanical motion with arms, or a plié of the legs. But if the rest of the body is asymmetrical, or twisted, or if the eyes watch the motion, the total body isn't enough involved in the machine image.[79]

When doing improvisations having to do with the identification with a human being, one must keep in mind that the human being meant is not the actor but the Universal Mask, a creature that demands more controlled movement and gesture than the actor himself. The actor is given simple work movements (like rowing a boat,

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[76]Bari Rolfe, Professional Actor Training Program, School of Drama, University of Washington, Class Observation and Notes, February 28, 1974.

[77]Bari Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," excerpt from unpublished article. Courtesy of Bari Rolfe, p. 46.

[78]Dullin, p. 121.

[79]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975; see also Appendix C.

or building a fire)[80] or sports motions to fulfill. In either case, the actor is not to create a character doing these movements. Since the Universal Mask is simple and harmonious in design, the action must be done simply and economically with only the appropriate movements necessary to accomplish the task. This is the effect that the Universal Mask has on the actor and the work it seems to demand from the actor.

After this first stage of work is accomplished, the human identification exercises can be combined with the earlier series of the four elements to produce results like "man as tree; man moving as the sea."[81]

The final stage of this individual work in the Universal Masks involves extended improvisations on various themes which do contain a controlling form or shape. These scenarious bring into play all of the previous exercise work. Dullin gave several of these exercises in his chapter on improvisation. One of these is as follows.

> You are compelled to cross a mountain torrent. You struggle against the current. You have overestimated your strength, the current carries you away. You struggle desperately, you lose your footing. You are drowning.[82] (A.T.)

Dullin noted that this improvisation was first performed in one of his classes by his student, Antonin Artaud.[83]

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[80]Rolfe, "T'ai Chi," p. 4.

[81]Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

[82]Dullin, p. 124.

[83]Ibid.

Another of these extended and structured improvisations by Dullin was one in which the actor as an owl was attracted by the light shining from the window of a house in the dead of winter. When the light was extinguished, the owl, now feeling very alone, died.[84]

Chancerel had a favorite exercise he called, "All that glitters is not gold,"[85] (A.T.) where a figure worked hard to attain what he perceived to be a precious object only to discover that it was worthless.

> It allows for a whole series of movements capable of translating discovery, lust, approach, the actions of gathering, of examining, and the following deception, which can be cast in anger, good humor, or discouragement, whichever the character by whom the player feels inhabited would want it.[86] (A.T.)

Jacques Lecoq does extended improvisation on the theme of evolution in his Neutral Mask.[87]

Bari Rolfe has her students use her Universal Mask in presenting various Japanese haiku poems. In this way she provides a synthesis for her students of all of their previous exercises in the mask.

> Students select a haiku poem, or write their own. I suggest that it deal, as so many of them do, with animals and elements because that would synthesize much of the mask work to that point. I ask them to do a short study around the poem, not to illustrate it or do a literal movement interpretation. After

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[84] Ibid., p. 121.

[85] Chancerel, Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 134.

[86] Ibid., pp. 134-135.

[87] Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 50.

all, the poem is complete in itself. But the student is to enlarge the concept somehow--what might have led up to it, or happened after, or deepen some aspect of it. For instance, there's a lovely poem about the monkey who jumps to catch the moon. One girl, as monkey, jumped for the moon. She did it again but her body was a bit straighter. And a third time she was straighter still. At last she was mankind reaching for the moon.

The student decides on his/her own presentation; usually the poem is read before, during or after the movement study. Sometimes a student will abstract the whole. At times unexpected, imaginative things are offered--one young man did the poem about the childless woman, and smashed imaginary dolls.

When a class shows the work on haiku for a demonstration, we often use sound. Simple, percussion only, transitions, or recorded Eastern music. And if a student wants to read his/her own haiku, the 3/4 universal mask can be used.[88]

We have been looking at individual improvisational exercises in the Neutral/Universal Mask. Let us now examine the exercises in another one of the Universal Mask types, the Tragic Masks of the Saint-Denis' schools. Because of the very different sculptural qualities of the Tragic Masks, the improvisations in them tend to be much more concerned with creating a character and situation than in the Neutral/Universal Masks. The students are asked to observe the mask and follow wherever it leads them in terms of atmosphere, character, and improvised situation. This improvised situation is only to be a fragmentary piece, but it should include some kind of overall form: at least, a starting point and some development. It should also involve a transition from one mood to another. Mr. Lefevre tells his students to "introduce your sketch more clearly by putting a title on it."[89] This is to make sure that the starting

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[88]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975; see also earlier explanation in Interview, Appendix C.

[89]Lefevre, Class Observations and Notes.

point is firmly established before going on with the improvisation. Lefevre calls this beginning improvisation a "sketch," and explains his use of the term by saying that it "should be a sketch instead of a portrait painting."[90] He also warns his students to take time in observing the mask and in planning out the improvisation before donning the mask, because, "the mask can be a prison if you don't decide everything before you go into it."[91]

Students begin with the Tragic Masks by choosing a single action to fulfill with the mask. Then they gradually move to more of a scenario-sketch. Lefevre encourages them to do a parallel action to something they remember from a Shakesperean play, a famous poem, or novel. Students work alone developing their sketch. Frequently they will stop and slip the mask up to the top of their head, or take it off and observe it closely again before proceeding with their work on the sketch. While they are working, Lefevre coaches from the side, telling them to be more specific in their work and to make sure they choose the right signs to communicate the moment. He cautions them that if they feel themselves "mugging" under the mask they should try to channel that impulse somewhere else in their body.[92] When one student is ready with a sketch, the class is called together to observe their fellow student's presentation. Afterwards there is a critique by the instructor and the other observers.

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

The improvised sketches observed at Juilliard included a male student wearing an adult male Tragic Mask. He improvised a hunter stalking a deer with a bow and arrow. He missed his first shot, stalked the deer further into the woods and killed it with his second shot. Elated, he ran to the deer but was unable to lift it up and drag it off, so he slumped down exhausted beside it. Blood ran down from the animal onto his hands. He noticed this and recoiled in horror at having killed a living thing.

In another presentation, an actress wearing the sorrowful, old age Tragic Mask improvised a sketch about an old woman who had been a clown in her youth. She entertained a child she met in a park with magic tricks, and while doing so became youthful and happy for a brief time again. During the critique of this sketch, Lefevre pointed out two things to the class. One was that the old age masks help the student circumvent the need to do the stereotyped postures and movements of old age. The other comment was about the extraordinary change that seemed to occur on the face of this mask full of sorrow when the actress moved into expressing youth and happiness with her body. He said, "When the body is chirping, it makes the mask chirp."[93]

This is exactly the result of the body being fully integrated with the mask and affecting it as mentioned by Doat in his book.

> Little by little, as the student learns to make his body speak; you will be surprised at the fidelity with which the unmoving and inexpressive mask will follow the bodily expression

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[93]Ibid.

> of he who wears it; it will laugh, it will be afraid, it will watch . . . it will be the face of an old man or of a young man. . . .[94] (A.T.)

In contrast to these two very successful sketches was an improvisation by a male student wearing the mature middle-age Tragic Mask. He mimed a wealthy man sitting down to a table and demanding his food. When the imaginary servant brought it, he didn't want to eat it, but did so to please his servant. After dinner he dismissed his servant and fell asleep. It was a confusing improvisation because so much of the understanding depended upon the attitudes and activities of the imaginary servant. Lefevre commented that the student had tried to convey too much information and that the sketches should be more simple and fragmentary. The student admitted during the critique that he had a hard time receiving impulses for the mask he had chosen, so he just created this improvisation separately from the mask and wore it in order to fulfill the exercise. Here was a good example of a student imposing something on the mask which the mask he chose couldn't handle. The improvised sketch was therefore not successful.

One interesting variation of the above exercises with the Tragic Masks, which is never done in the Neutral Mask because it is foreign to the concept of the Neutral Mask, is an exercise Lefevre calls, "Point-Counterpoint."[95] Once the student has established the age, character, and emotional state of the Tragic

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[94]Doat, p. 45.

[95]Lefevre, class observations and notes.

Mask chosen, he is asked to play the opposite of those three qualities for a brief time and then return to the original state. (This was what was happening in the second example of the students' work at Juilliard given above.) In this way, the student learns to break out of any stereotyped patterns of physical expression he may be working in with his mask while at the same time he learns how to shape and give form to his improvisation by the movement back and forth between the two states of being.

Following the individual exercises in these different Universal Masks, the students are given exercises that must be completed with partners. At Juilliard, no more than three actors are permitted to work together on an improvisation. Carlo Mazzone-Clementi pairs off his students in their Metaphysical Masks in an exercise that he calls "Recognition," in which they observe, approach, and explore visually the external reality of the other person.[96]

Bari Rolfe allows her haiku exercise to be done with two or three people. Lecoq has an exercise where two contrasting elements are presented at the same time by two different actors.[97] Doat mentioned exercises done with partners where they were given a location, such as a hotel lobby, or a waiting room in which they had to interact so that the emphasis was on a public and social mask and not on a private and internal world.[98]

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[96]Mazzone-Clementi, Interviews, August 7 and August 8, 1974, see Appendix E.

[97]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[98]Doat, pp. 55-56.

Henri Cordreaux in an article in Cahiers d'Art Dramatique, gave a masked improvisation exercise for three actors based on Peter Breughel the Elder's painting, "The Parable of the Blindmen." The scenario of the exercise was to have the three blindmen enter with one leading and the others each holding on to the person directly in front of him. They come up against an obstacle and the leader helps the other two past it. While he is doing this, they all lose contact with each other and panic. They wander around trying to find each other. At this point the actors choose either joyfully to find each other again or wander off separately without doing so.[99]

Saint-Denis mentioned drawing scenario material for no more than three actors from striking dramatic moments in classical tragedies or dramas.[100] He then commented that this is as far as silent improvisations can go in the Tragic Masks.[101]

But most teachers do extend their work in the Universal Masks into full group exercises. Doat suggested that exercises like his waiting room exercise could be expanded to include more actors than two or three.[102] Both LeBonniec and Rolfe mention using myths, legends, and moments from history for group improvisations in

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[99]"École du Comédien," Cahiers d'Art Dramatique, No. 9 et 10 (Juillet, 1946), p. 25.

[100]Saint-Denis, Theatre: Rediscovery of Style, p. 104.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Doat, p. 56.

the Universal Masks.[103] Dullin suggested fables of LeFontaine as source material for group work.[104] Cordreaux had a group exercise based on Edgar Allen Poe's "The Mask Of The Red Death."[105] Chancerel used to have his whole group perform exercises together where they physicalized changing emotional states, such as fear, joy, and despair. He used a percussion instrument in the background to underscore and convey the emotional content of the moment (i.e., a bell ringing for joy; a drum roll for fear, etc.).[106] Lecoq also uses group improvisations as an exercise in establishing group inter-relationships and creating the sense of an ensemble. His improvisation on evolution (described earlier as being done by the actors individually) can also be done collectively. For Lecoq, this group exercise work can relate directly to creating a chorus for a play such as a Greek tragedy.[107] LeBonniec felt that his own experiences in the group exercises in the mask furthered his personal progress in the areas of concentration and physicalization.[108]

The function and purpose of these various silent exercises and improvisations in the Universal Masks is perhaps best summed up succinctly by Peter Frisch. He says that their function and

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[103]LeBonniec, p. 8; Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 50.

[104]Dullin, p. 121.

[105]Cordreaux, "École du Comédien," pp. 24-25.

[106]Chancerel, Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 135.

[107]Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

[108]LeBonniec, p. 8.

value for the actor is "more to eliminate than to create. In other words, it's a step between 'nothing' and 'character.'"[109] Ms. Rolfe agrees with him wholeheartedly.

> Temporarily, and without affecting his own personality, he is asked to push into the background his own gestures, postures, reactions, rhythms, in order to prepare for wider range and greater scale of character delineation. The mask enables him to see those traits as elements of characterization, voluntarily used or changed at his conscious will.[110]

Mazzone-Clementi concurs with Frisch and Rolfe that work in the Universal Masks is the beginning of characterization. And he adds,

> When he accepts the neutral mask and is at ease in it, when he has overcome the terror of losing his face and finally accepts the head as what it is--the last vertebra--then he is ready to begin working with the character masks. . . .[111]

So, when the students have achieved the goals of the exercises in the Universal Masks, the next step on their way to learning the craft of acting is the introduction to and the training in the Character Masks.

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[109] Frisch, Interview, see Appendix A.

[110] Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 47.

[111] Mazzone-Clementi, "Commedia and the Actor," p. 63.

CHAPTER VII

THE METHOD: THE CHARACTER MASKS

If the Universal Masks represent the Archetypal Man, then the Character Masks represent man with all his individualizing traits and differing physiognomies. If the Universal Masks represent the One, then the Character Masks represent the Many. If the Universal Masks are a part of Nature and identify with it, then the Character Masks are creatures that know they are a part of Nature and yet somehow separate from it. Lecoq expressed this contrast between these two type of masks by saying,

> 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. The forms and styles then appear. . . .[1]

Whereas the Universal Masks are symmetrical in shape and design, with little, if any, suggestion as to age, sex, emotion, or personality (except in the Tragic Masks), the Character Masks are asymmetrical and do suggest more definite qualities such as age, sex, emotional state, and personality. One significant difference in the modelling of the Character Masks, in contrast to the Universal

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[1] "From Mime to Theatre," n.p.

Masks, is in the size of the eye openings. In the Universal Masks, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the eye openings are large so as not to obstruct the actor's vision. And they are also uniformly shaped from mask to mask. In the Character Masks, the eye openings are different shapes and sizes. This acts as a strong suggestive clue as to the personality of the mask but can create practical difficulties for the actor, who must now adjust to the possibilities of restricted vision while wearing this type of mask. But even this hinderance can be made to work creatively for the actor's characterization explorations in the mask (Figure 17).

Bari Rolfe explains the differences between the Character Masks and the Universal Masks in the following fashion.

> The character mask is totally different from the neutral mask; it is individual, personal, dramatic, can be funny, and, like all of us, contains its own internal conflict. These masks represent a man enlarged to the dimension of stage characterization.[2]

It is important that these individualizing elements mentioned by Ms. Rolfe as part of the Character Masks be only suggested by the sculptor in making the mask. There should be a great deal of ambiguity left in the modelling so that the student may imaginatively participate in it--discovering and completing from his own inner resources the realization of the type of character the mask represents. Bari Rolfe comments on this point,

> And with the character mask I have one prevailing idea, and that is that they should be as ambiguous as possible. They are ambiguous as to sex--except for the bearded ones, they

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[2]"Three Training Masks," p. 51.

Figure 17.--Bari Rolfe with a Universal Mask (right) and a Character Mask (left). Courtesy of Bari Rolfe.

> can play either sex. They are ambiguous as to state of being. In other words, I don't have a happy one, or a sad one, or anything like that. But when making them I often have an idea in mind and perhaps it'll be executed and it's successful, but that doesn't mean that it cannot be played a totally different way and just as successfully.[3]

In other words, by not having the character or emotional state firmly fixed in the features of the mask, the actor's response to those externals is given more possibilities to feed on and his physicalization of those responses has a greater latitude than with the Universal Masks, where there is a more fixed, controlling, and restricted range. This, of course, has to do with the differing purposes of the masks: those of the Universal Masks (especially the Neutral Mask) are to "essentialize" the actor, to eliminate the personal traits of the actor so he can "see those traits as elements of characterization, voluntarily used or changed at his conscious will;"[4] those of the Character Masks, by contrast, are to augment, enrich, elaborate or admit new potentials for movement, gesture, and other aspects of characterization. With the assumption of the Character Masks, there is no longer a complete subtractive process occurring in the actor, as in the Universal Masks, but an additive process, or as Lecoq calls it, an "adornment."[5]

But there is a very real sense in which the student beginning work in the Character Masks must first undergo a "neutralization"--imaginatively putting himself in the state of becoming that was

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[3]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[4]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 47.

[5]see Lecoq quote, p. 201 above.

promoted by the Universal Mask. It is as if these Character Masks must be understood as placed on top of the Neutral Mask already imaginatively assumed by the actor. Lecoq explains this concept in this way: the Neutral Mask "is like the bottom of the sea; it's quiet, it's still. The Expressive [Character] Mask is like the waves; underneath is the Neutral Mask."[6]

After achieving this neutral state of receptivity, the actor can then begin adding in or "adorning" himself with those elements of characterization, "the waves," as Lecoq calls them, as freely as he feels led by his personal responses to what he perceives as the dictates of the mask. And with the inherent ambiguities in the features of the mask, no two students will see the same mask in quite the same way. Jeremy Geidt of Yale comments that in his nearly nine years of teaching Character Masks with the same set of masks, the students always come up with different characterizations. Their figures may be close relatives to previous characterizations presented in the class, but they are also distinctly different.[7] Bari Rolfe has written that she has seen two students take the same mask and create totally different characterizations with it. "A compulsive, thoughtful, methodical bookkeeper mask with pursed lips can appear as a brisk, cheerful Auntie, always knitting."[8]

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[6]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[7]Jeremy Geidt, School of Drama, Yale University. Interview, September 9, 1974, see Appendix F.

[8]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 52.

In contrast to this notion, Jacques Lecoq maintains that each of his Character Masks, which he calls his Expressive Masks (masques expressive), is a very definite personality type which he guides his students to find by the via negativa teaching method. He allows only a certain degree of latitude in interpretation from this central core that he feels must be expressed by each actor wearing the same mask.[9]

Bari Rolfe, on the other hand, has come to the conclusion that there is no singular and proper interpretation of Character Masks, but that "everyone's concept of any one particular mask is going to be different, and that all of it is valid."[10]

When we extend this need for ambiguity in the Character Masks further, another significant difference between the Universal Masks and the Character Masks appears. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that there is no conflict at all inherent in the Universal Masks. In the Character Masks, there is inherent conflict. This means that the mask itself exhibits some sort of struggle going on in its features: "it has a jutting brow that's upset and a smiling face,"[11] or there is a contradiction between the "being" the face/mask projects and the "being" the body of the actor projects. In other words, the actor can play with the mask or against it. Working against the Character Mask is known as playing the counter-mask (countre-masque).

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[9]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[10]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[11]Libby Appel, The Goodman School of Drama, Chicago, Illinois, Interview, October 18, 1974, see Appendix G.

> Character masks--the cretin, the smiler--can be played straight, or against type (the contra-mask). Thus, a cretinous face on a vigorous body suggests smeaky [sic] power, and smiling face on a tired body give up [sic] the pathos of the loser. Lecoq joked that the 'jesuitical' mask has no countermask, and he earlier observed that the contra-mask is not necessary to depict conflict by pointing out that Charlie Chaplin's open fanned-out feet are already at war with his inward shoulders so that 'Chaplin needs no dramatic story, he is the story.'[12]

This ability of the Character Masks to be played also as these countermasks permits them to portray comic figures, such as "Cyrano de Bergerac, the grotesque face and the poetic soul; Oliver Hardy with his gross form and delicate air; Tartuffe the supreme hypocrite."[13] With Cyrano the contrast is between the outer and the inner realities. For Oliver Hardy the incongruity of his character is manifest between his physique and movement qualities. In Tartuffe, the contradiction between what he is and what he pretends to be is not evident in his physical makeup but only becomes manifest in his actions within a given situation. It would call for a much more subtle and complex use of the mask.

Since Lecoq believes he knows his Character Masks and how they must be physicalized, he also knows what their countermasks must be. Bari Rolfe, on the other hand, says that the countermask will be only the opposite of the interpretation given to the Character Masks by the students.[14]

This countermask concept is similar to the Point-Counterpoint idea used by Lefevre with his Tragic Masks, but whereas in that

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[12]Miller, p. 92.

[13]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 52.

[14]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

exercise the student wearing a Tragic Mask is to move momentarily from the dominant emotion and personality of the mask to its opposite and then back again, the playing of the countermask is from the beginning a separate and unique characterization.

It is interesting to note here that the Neutral Mask of Lecoq and Rolfe can be used as a Character Mask, but when it is brought into play with the regular Character Masks, it no longer functions or acts like a Neutral Mask. In relationship to the other masks, it is now "a face which is guarded, which doesn't play a free improvisational reaction to life . . . that face becomes an overcontrolled mask."[15] The Neutral Mask does not function well as a countermask either. With its symmetry, simplicity, and absence of internal conflict, it demands of the actor that these external qualities be made the internal ones as well. That is why it serves so well in the stripping and subtractive process of neutralizing the actor. The Character Masks, on the other hand, with their ambiguity and inherent conflict, do permit the actor more complexity of characterization. He has the choice of playing either so that the internal and external are one (the movements of the body are in alignment with the mask and complete it), or so that there is a disparity between the external (the mask) and the internal (what the character really is as communicated by the rest of the body).

The transition for the actor from working with the Universal Masks to working with the Character Masks is an important one. If

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[15]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

the actor has not learned to work in the Universal Masks, it is doubtful if he can handle the Character Masks without going through an initiation process similar to that for the Universal Masks. "While the Universal Masks teach the actor what is neutral, they also teach him what is not neutral so he may see these elements as characterization possibilities."[16]

Jan Doat mentioned the possible difficulty an actor might have in working with the Character Masks if there had been no prior training in the Universal Masks.

> When, instead of covering himself with the noble mask, the actor covers himself with a mask with a personal style, a definite expression, a marked personality, he will receive from it an injunction, a bodily inspiration which will make him take on the appearance, in silhouette and gesture of the character indicated by the mask.
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> But this astonishing phenomenon only concerns the actor experienced with the mask.[17] (A.T.)

So, if the student has had no prior experience with the Universal Masks, then there is a definite need for that initiation process.

It is with those schools that only offer actor training with Character Masks (Yale, University of Montana, the Goodman School, Harvard), that we can best see what form this initiation process into the Character Masks will take.

At the Goodman School of Drama, this course is entitled, "Acting Laboratory in Mask Characterization."[18] It is divided into

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[16]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

[17]Doat, pp. 46-47.

[18]Libby Appel and Estelle Spector, "Acting Laboratory in Mask Characterization," Course Syllabus. Chicago, Illinois: The Goodman School of Drama, p. 1.

three areas of work: "discovery of the character," "developing the character," and "extending the character."[19] The initiation into the mask work is in the first part, the discovery of the character. The purposes of this section are outlined as follows:

> The emphasis in the discovery period is on the outside stimulus--the mask--and what it does to stimulate your inner resources. You make no decisions about the character when you first encounter the mask--you keep yourself open to what it feeds you, what it makes you do. When you do initiate any action from inside yourself, you must immediately assess how the mask and the action intermesh. There are no right and wrong decisions. You are in the process of working with an artist's conception, this mask, to develop a character, to give it life, voice and body. You must continually strive to negate cliché and dig into your deepest resources to find the life-line of this character.[20]

Libby Appel and Estelle Spector, the team teachers of this course, have also devised a rather unique introduction to the mask for their students.

> We begin with a kind of Encounter Session in which one person, we ask someone from the outside, usually a graduate assistant who is not an acting student but is there to help--to come in and put a mask on. Only one mask is brought to class--that day--that very first day. And we have that person just sit with the mask on and we ask the class to feed in what they're seeing, and, of course, from every angle you see it differently: "I see somebody who is very shy." "No, I see somebody who is very happy." You know. The purpose of that is to give them the idea there is built into the mask not only paradox but all kinds of myriads of choice in personality. And so that there is less fear in approaching it, that you're not going to a character that already exists, that there is something that's there before they are even touching the masks at all. This session lasts for about an hour and twenty minutes. And they talk about it. They do not try on the masks. It's just that one person. They ask the person to move around a little bit, and the investigation is a talking one.[21]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Appel, Interview, see Appendix G.

Then during the next two or three sessions after their initial encounter with the masks, the time is spent in allowing the students to try on the different masks until they find the one they want to work with for the rest of the semester.[22]

In contrast to this approach is that of Jeremy Geidt at Yale, who talks to his class first about the nature of comedy, commedians, and the ability of the well-rounded actor to be able to transform himself into various characters. He also has the class learn how to do farcical physical gags, such as "pulling chairs away from people, trips, falls, belches, farts, noises of flies, corks coming out of bottles, getting an electric shock, endless physical gags,"[23] before they even see or work with the masks. After they have learned how to handle these physical gags, he takes his students to the mask room and tells them only to "pick up a mask and don't make a judgement on what it's going to look like on your face."[24] The students are to put on a mask of their liking and then immediately look in a mirror. There is no meditation or sensory exploration of the surface of the mask at all before putting the mask on the face.

Bari Rolfe believes that this introduction to the Character Masks should be a bit more gradual.

> When you first present the Character Mask it's a matter of getting acquainted with [it]. And that's when we talked

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[24]Ibid.

today about spending a long time just looking at them, feeling them, looking at themselves in the mirror. . . .[25]

The duration and the type of initiation session for the Character Masks may depend on the type of mask being used. Jeremy Geidt, with his very quick approach to the mask, does employ highly exaggerated farcical masks that instantly suggest a character type. Bari Rolfe, on the other hand, using a much more subtle and ambiguous mask, needs a longer gestation period before the actor is ready to start working in his mask. Chancerel described the initiation into the Character Masks as a necessary process of trial and error.

> I repeat, it's a matter, by researches, stumblings, of discovering how the mask looks, hears, crys, laughs, meditates, desires, waits, becomes impatient, suffers, exalts, how it passes from one state to another, not emotionally, but physically, bodily, muscularly. One will watch that this work be extremely precise, urged on, correctly and completely executed. 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 this work is very tiring (bodily) for the beginner who is not yet trained and that it demands of him a great intellectual and physical sincerity. Likewise, the mask rejects unpityingly all which is not a sincere expression of an intensely perceived emotion.[26] (A.T.)

But if the students have had the prior training and experience in the Universal Masks, and this has sensitized them to letting the mask control and prompt their movements, to using their bodies effectively to complete the masks, they will have a very immediate and positive reaction to the Character Masks. The transition to the Character Masks is then not at all difficult.

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[25]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[26]Chancerel, Le Masque, II, p. 25.

They find them easier to connect with and to bring to life because of the strong sensations they now receive from the exciting variety of expressions found in these masks as against the single idealized and simplified form of the Universal Masks, especially those known as the Neutral Masks.[27]

There are four types of Character Masks currently being used in actor training programs: the full-face, three-quarter, half-mask, and partial features masks. Only Lecoq, Rolfe, and Appel/Spector use the full-face Character Masks in their teaching.

As has been mentioned previously, Lecoq calls his Character Masks by another name, the Expressive Masks (masques expressive). His masks are also the most subtley modelled and suggestive of all of the different kinds of Character Masks in use. Lecoq's masks are made of leather and tanned to various shades of brown to create variety and to suggest differing personalities. Bari Rolfe's masks are very similar to Lecoq's, only hers are made out of papier-mâché or celastic, and each one is tinted a different color so that it can also suggest an emotional state as well as character traits (Figure 18). Lecoq and Rolfe use their Character Masks to continue their work in silent improvisation because they feel that students should learn that characters must first be revealed through action and not words.[28]

In contrast to those of Lecoq and Rolfe, the full-face masks of Appel and Spector are heavily modelled and border on the grotesque.

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[27]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 51.

[28]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1974.

Figure 18.--Bari Rolfe's Character Masks made of papier-mâché.
Courtesy of Bari Rolfe.

They are made out of celastic and are all painted a uniform brown color highlighted and shadowed to emphasize the sculptured features. They also have open mouths like those in ancient Hellenic tragic masks, in contrast to Lecoq's and Rolfe's Character Masks, as these masks are used for vocal as well as silent improvisations (Figure 19).

The Character Masks at the Juilliard School are of the three-quarter or half-mask type and are known there as the Comic Masks.) These acrylic resin masks, tinted to approximate skin tones, are more heavily modelled and realistic than their Tragic Masks. They have less ambiguity and subtlety than the Character Masks of Lecoq and Rolfe. Indeed, Lecoq, when he recently saw the Juilliard Masks, commented that he felt that they were not freely suggestive enough for the students. They were too fixed in expression, too typed, too old-fashioned.[29] These Comic Masks are used at Juilliard for finding the character vocally as well as physically through improvisation.

Peter Frisch also uses three-quarter masks of the Juilliard type in his work at Harvard.

Rolland Meinholt uses only half-masks in his classes at the University of Montana. He feels that half-masks are easier for the students to make and that they also work best for teaching physical and vocal characterization.[30]

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[29]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[30]Rolland Meinholt, Department of Drama, University of Montana. Interview Cassette Recording Tape, December, 1973, see Appendix H.

Figure 19.--Libby Appel and Estelle Spector's Character Masks at the Goodman School of Drama. Courtesy of Libby Appel.

Jeremy Geidt at the Yale Drama School has probably the widest range of types of Character Masks for his students to use: three-quarter masks, half-masks, and partial features, all in various colors. As mentioned previously, his masks are not at all realistic but are exaggerated farcical creations that strongly suggest a type character and personality (Figure 20). Partial feature masks were also used at the Old Vic Theatre School and the Strasbourg Theatre School.

We will not deal in this chapter with the current training being conducted in the Commedia dell'arte masks, even though they could be considered as Character Masks, because the training in the commedia masks is considered as very specialized work, and for some programs, not absolutely essential to the actor's training. Training procedures in the Commedia dell'arte masks will be the subject of a later chapter (Chapter IX).

All of the teachers using Character Masks, except Lecoq, find the mirror a necessary and indispensible aid. This is the reversal of the position previously taken by the majority of these teachers on work in the Universal Masks. Lecoq does not want his students to use mirrors even with his Expressive Masks, as he feels they will still become too concerned with the surface image. For him, as with his Neutral Mask, the realization and physicalization of the character must come from deep inside the actor, from his response to the mask. It must be realized by the actor without regard for the external appearances that a mirror provides. He would strongly disagree with such statements as these:

Figure 20.--Jeremy Geidt's Comic Character Masks on the shelf at Yale University School of Drama. Courtesy of Jeremy Geidt.

> Mirror work, I have found, is extremely important. This allows the actor to see how the sculptured qualities work, how the light and shadows work, how the attitude of the head and--particularly the attitudes of the head and the relationship to the body, to the use of gestures and how it relates to the mask.[31]

> I think the Japanese Noh technique of the character being in costume and mask and studying himself in the mirror, is a very important technique and I stress this, and we have a mirror in class for this purpose.[32]

> When you first put on a mask, look inward for a moment and feel the effect that wearing a mask has on you, psychologically. Then look at yourself in a mirror. . . .[33]

But for Lecoq, to employ a mirror for the Character Masks is to be concerned with performance, with masked drama, which he feels is contrary to what the mask as a tool for training the actor is all about.[34]

But in one sense, Lecoq himself is acting as a mirror for his students as he guides them into the proper interpretation of their mask. For the other teachers, who don't feel, as Lecoq does, that there is only one way to interpret a Character Mask, the use of a mirror is mandatory because it enables the student to discover his own appropriate physicalization for his mask. But why is the mirror so important for use with the Character Masks and not with

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[31]Joy Spanabel, Department of Theatre, University of Rhode Island, Interview via Cassette Recording Tape, Winter, 1974, see Appendix I.

[32]Meinholt, Interview, see Appendix H.

[33]Ellen Terry and Lynne Anderson, The Theatre Student: Makeup and Masks (New York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc., 1971), p. 95.

[34]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

the Universal Masks? Perhaps a clue to answer this question is found in Bari Rolfe's statement that her Universal Mask is an "inner mask"--

> It's an inner mask in the sense that it draws forth from one's inner core what is needed to perform the action which is outside. I see no internal response if it means going to one's inside; paradoxically that happens if the actor responds appropriately to what is outside. If I'm to pick up a pebble, I must reach down for it, must grasp and lift it with only the energy needed for the task, etc. There's no inner exploration involved, only simplicity, directness, no history or anticipation.[35]

But with the assumption of the Character Masks, you also assume additional individualizing elements. There is now the possibility for inner exploration, complexity, indirection, a past and a future to be concerned about in the process of physicalizing the mask.

Lecoq is right to be concerned about the problem. As we can see from the following comment of LeBonniec's, there is a real danger in allowing the masked actor to work in front of a mirror.

> For these exercises [in the Character Masks], one accessory is indispensible: a mirror--it is nonetheless not, outside of make-up use, a very recommendable instrument. To play before a mirror in order to study gestures and expressions is in general a disastrous process, since one risks to fix perfectly artificial expressions and attitudes.[36]

But if the actor is properly initiated to the idea that the mask represents for him first of all an internal reality which is then to be made manifest through the external actions, then he should be adequately prepared to work with his reflected image in a mirror.

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[35]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

[36]LeBonniec, p. 8.

Jeremy Geidt makes a very strong case for the necessity of the mirror work with the Character Masks when he says,

> . . . it was Michel Saint-Denis who used to tell me, 'When you're stuck, you go back to your text.' That the only thing you've got is your text, and you go back and back to your text. I say in the mask work, go back to the mirror. 'Cause that's all you've got. You gain there. You just go back to that. Your mirror and your mask is your text.[37]

The transition and initiation into the use of the Character Masks is still conducted with a respect for the mask as an almost sacred object, as it was with the Universal Masks, but proceeds much faster if the students have had the prior experience in the Universal Masks. For Bari Rolfe, the students find the Character Masks "much easier to animate than the neutral mask; for one, because the preparatory work in the neutral mask has brought to the actor's attention many more elements of characterization."[38]

After students have found a mask that appeals to them and have tried it on, the intensive work with their reflected image in a mirror begins. Lefevre tells his students to stand in front of the mirror with the mask on and start breathing in terms of the character while looking in the mirror.[39] Again this initial breathing in the Character Masks is an extremely important beginning step, as it was with the Universal Masks. But whereas the first breaths in the Universal Masks were to cleanse and purge the actors in order to affect the neutralization of their being as they all

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[37]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[38]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 51.

[39]Lefevre, Juilliard Class Observations and Notes.

assumed the same deeper, more measured and uniform breathing pattern that corresponds to the Universal Masks, here the quality of the breathing changes with each Character Mask they assume and these are different for every mask.

Once they have found their Character Mask's breath, the exercises work in the masks can begin. As with the Universal Masks, the series of exercise generally move from simple to complex, individual to group work.

After the initial moments of trying to capture the character's breathing habits, the actor is asked to start physicalizing the character, working slowly and specifically.[40] The students in Peter Frisch's mask characterization class at Harvard were told to "let the first strong impulse in your body surface, and slowly let it spread to all parts [of the body]."[41] Bari Rolfe gives more specific instructions to her students by having them perform simple tasks in front of the mirror. She asks them to "find a way this mask might walk, might stand, might sit, maybe one typical gesture of it. And then try different masks in that, just that very small challenge sort of a thing"[42] (Figure 21).

At Juilliard, after the students have donned their Character Mask and found its breath, they walk towards and away from the large

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[40]Peggy Buchko, Personal Letter, February 14, 1974.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

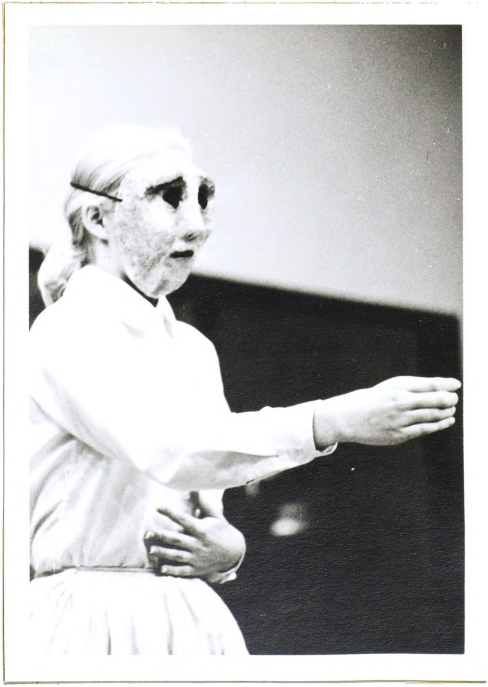

Figure 21.--A student trying out a gesture to see if it is appropriate for the Character Mask in one of Bari Rolfe's classes. Courtesy of Bari Rolfe.

mirrors in the room trying out different possibilities for movements and gestures as they go.[43]

These techniques are reminiscent of those devised in 1930 by Mary Wigman for her dance students in order to help them develop an appropriate characterization through movement. She writes that after the dancers had meditated on the mask for one session (see Chapter VI, p. 176).

> The same was done next evening. But that time the dancers had just the masks on their faces and observed them as reflections in mirrors which they had brought with them. This way we gradually adopted and became immersed in the style and character of the masks.
>
> Then I began with the molding of each single figure. I have every dancer approach the large mirror in my studio in order to show where the discrepancy could be found between mask and human shape. I particularly remember the dancer wearing the mask of an old woman. The dancer's body was in utter contrast to the tormented face of the mask, furrowed by wrinkles and with the expression of one about to die. Only with utter cautiousness did I then succeed in giving the young body the gait, posture, and gestures, the imprint of the decrepitude of old age. It was an endlessly troublesome detailed job during which I was not only concerned with bringing mask and mask-wearer into harmony with each other, but also with determining their style and with turning them into types while preserving their individual character.[44]

The response of the students to the Character Masks is usually strong and immediate. LeBonniec, writing about his own reactions to the Comic Character Masks at Strasbourg, says,

> The results are surprising, certain elements match perfectly the architecture of the face, render it unrecognizable, give it a new personality, at a single glance you discover a new individual in the mirror. The material is there to play, the imagination has only to let itself go.[45] (A.T.)

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[43] Lefevre, Juilliard Class Observations and Notes.

[44] Wigman, pp. 94-95.

[45] LeBonniec, p. 8.

Petty Buchko, in a letter describing her experiences as a student under Peter Frisch's instruction, writes,

> In my experience (and I believe this can safely represent the majority of people in the class), the work in some ways is almost effortless--that is, upon donning the mask and looking in the mirror, an immediate and irresistable transformation takes place--an almost instantaneous physical (and mental) reaction utterly alien to what I really am formulates.[46]

Jeremy Geidt frequently has students with extreme responses to the masks playing insane people in the Comic Character Masks when they first put them on.

> You may get them as soon as they begin that they go mad. And you get mad characters, which are obviously not funny. I let them get that out of their system, if they're not being violent . . . sometimes they get violent and I have to stop them . . . because it does take over; the character takes over.[47]

There is, then, a very definite correspondence between the kind of modelling the mask has (whether subtle or exaggerated) and the type of reaction the student is liable to have to it. The more exaggerated the masks (like Geidt's and Appel/Spector's), the more extreme the responses. Later on in the work with the Character Masks, students will also experience "shocks of recognition" when they recognize an actor in a Character Mask as resembling someone they know in real life.[48]

In a fascinating account of her discoveries while working with W. T. Benda's masks, the American dancer, Margaret Severn, wrote,

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[46]Peggy Buchko, Personal Letter, March 3, 1974.

[47]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[48]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

> In the quick and contrasting changes of personality which they made possible, tremendous scope is given to the dancer's imagination in the creation of new movements and steps. Unthought of gestures suddenly leap into being when one ceases to be one's self and becomes immersed in the character of the mask.[49]

Miss Severn went on to comment about what actually happened to her as she approached and wore each new mask.

> When I first looked in the face of the Oriental Princess, for instance, it seemed so real, so completely a personality in itself, that I did not think of making up steps to do in it. It seemed to me that the Princess herself knew exactly what she wanted to do, so I placed her countenance over my own, and, keeping the image of it in my mind, I began to dance. The movements were slow and sinuous; the dark slant of her half-closed eyes suggested gestures that were at once reserved and rhythmical. The inscrutability of her expression carried me still further into attitudes and movements that were meant to tantalize and fascinate though remaining unexplained and distant.
>
> Then there was the skull of the hideous old man--a face expressing bitterness, miserliness, and hypocrisy, together with a glint of wicked humor [Figure 22]. . . . When wearing it, my body seemed naturally to fall into grotesque and ugly attitudes. I clutched with grasping fingers at the thin air, feeling a malicious joy in my own hideousness, showing only an occasional gleam of the hypocrite's fear.
>
> Utterly different is the character of the 'Silly Doll' or 'The Flirt.' [Figure 23] This ridiculous little creature has exquisite golden hair, enormous staring blue eyes, and an impossibly small rosebud mouth. If she could speak, she would certainly use baby talk and be sure to lisp. She has a habit of putting one finger in her mouth, and she loves to hunch up one shoulder and stare at you over it in naive [sic] surprise--she is obviously a born coquette, though all the while she seems seriously to assure you that she doesn't know what flirting means. Of course, when she dances, she chooses twinkling little ballet steps. She twiddles her toes in and out so quickly that you can hardly see them move. She shows you that she has an exquisite little ankle, and that her mood can be as variable as her steps.[50]

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[49]"Use of masks in dancing," Theatre Arts Monthly, IV (October, 1920), p. 274.

[50]Ibid., pp. 274-279.

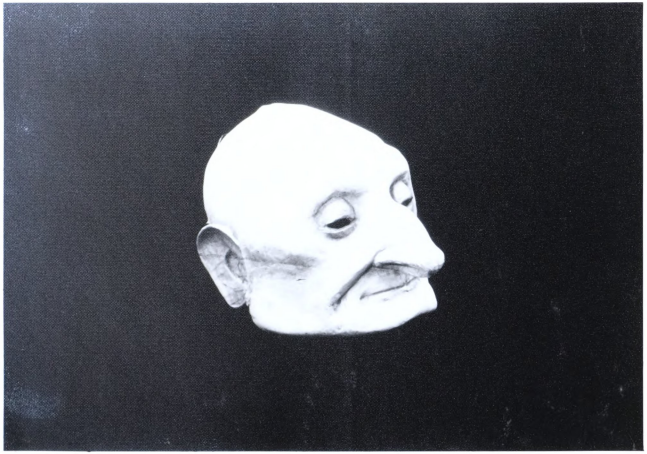

Figure 22.--W. T. Benda's mask, "The Miser," used by Miss Severn in The Greenwich Village Follies of 1920. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

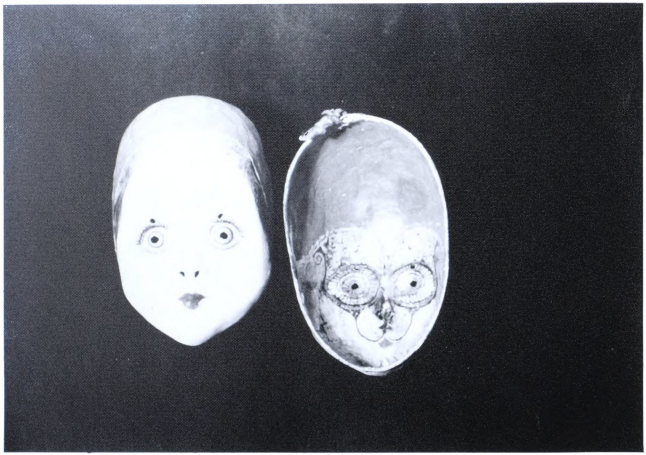

Figure 23.--W. T. Benda's "Silly Doll" mask in a double-exposure photograph showing both the surface and the inside of the mask. Note that Benda decorated the interior of this mask with an abstract design suggesting a cat. Used by Miss Severn in The Greenwich Village Follies of 1920. Courtesy of Mrs. Glena Benda Shimler.

The extraordinary experiences that Margaret Severn writes about here do not appear to be unusual experiences for those involved in training with the Character Masks. It is interesting to note, too, that the Benda masks Miss Severn used were only for silent mime work and dancing. Yet she felt definite impulses as to how at least one of these masks (Silly Doll) would have spoken if given that ability. We shall see later in this chapter that one important function of the Character Masks is to prompt appropriate vocalizations which are then explored and expanded into verbal improvisations.

As mentioned earlier, Lecoq and Rolfe do not allow any vocal improvisations in their Character Masks. And these solid full-face masks prohibit that from occurring. Perhaps it is best, then, to examine more closely at this point their use of these silent Character Masks before proceeding to the work of the other teachers who move quite quickly into having their students perform vocal explorations with their Character Masks.

The Character Masks For Silent Improvisation

The last improvisations conducted in the Neutral Mask of Lecoq and Rolfe are the actor's identification with Man--the Universal Man, the Archetypal Man. Man is seen as separate, or in the process of separating himself from an identification with Nature, but still attached to it, still affected by it. The actor in his Neutral Mask must improvise Man dominated by an element, a material, a plant, or animal: "man as tree; man moving as the

sea."[51] And because Man is concerned with having a new identification separate from Nature and unique from other men, Lecoq asks his students to act out situations with conflict in them. He will put two individuals in Neutral Masks, each one dominated by a different and opposing element (i.e., fire and water) together, and they must carry on a silent conversation through their movements and gestures.[52] In another variation of this same exercise, Lecoq will set up a situation where one man dominated by a plant and the other man dominated by an animal must share a train compartment.[53] In other words, Lecoq is asking his actors, "What happens when fire meets water, ivy meets tree, rubber meets glass?"[54] What happens is a conflict between the various opposites that have been paired off and must relate to each other.

> 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 [the Neutral Mask] is no longer sufficient. It must measure itself and make itself up; the mask, the artifice [the Character Mask].[55]

Because the human figure must be newly identified he is now involved in conflict. It is at this point that Lecoq and Rolfe dispense with their Neutral Mask and introduce their Character Masks. The Character Masks are therefore concerned with the "dimensions of

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[51]Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

[52]Ann Banks, "French Without Language," Harvard Today, XVIII, Number 1 (Fall, 1974), p. 4.

[53]Wylie, "À L'École Lecoq," p. 25.

[54]Lecoq, as trans. and quoted in Banks, p. 4.

[55]Lecoq, "From Mine to the Theatre," n.p.

conflicts."[56] (A.T.)--not only external conflict between elements as in the last exercises in the Neutral Mask, but primarily with internal conflict within the mask/character itself. It is the ambiguous and conflicting features in the sculptured qualities of these Character Masks which must now be expressed by the students through their movements and gestures.

After her students have individually discovered how their Character Masks might move, Bari Rolfe sets up a large group scene based on Elmer Rice's play, Street Scene. This is to help the students explore further their Character Masks.

> The actions of the scene are mainly those of entering and leaving. Each actor animates several masks, and the same mask is used by different players as they perform brief actions.[57]

Ms. Rolfe explains that it is no longer just discovering the character through movement, but through action within a situation, "in work."[58] Lecoq also does similar group improvisation in his Expressive Masks to have the characters establish relationships with each other and to teach the actors the need for an ensemble approach to their work.[59]

Other exercises created by Ms. Rolfe for use with her silent Character Masks include short open-ended scenarios in which a

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[56]Jacques Lecoq, L'École Jacques Lecoq, School Brochure, Paris, 1974, n.p.

[57]Rolfe, Personal Letter, March 21, 1975.

[58]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[59]Lecoq, Interview, August 7, 1974, see Appendix D.

beginning and a middle are given, but for which the students must discover their own ending given the characters/masks within the situation (Figure 24).[60]

In another of her exercises, Bari Rolfe reverses the previous experience the actor has had in the Neutral Mask of trying to identify with an animal, by now having the actor use an animal image while he impersonates in his Character Mask. She explains the difference between these two exercises by saying, "to do the animal in the Universal Mask is the total identification with animal; to do it in the Character Mask is the human being who has an animal identification. So you construct the other way."[61] She clarifies this remark by giving an example from one of her classroom exercises in which this occurs:

> I have one in which you choose your mask and then a group of people, say five of them, work in an office. It's morning and they all enter the office and they start their tasks. And then slowly as they work, they become more and more identified with their animal, and, in fact, they become the animals, you know, and then they can come out of it. Well, then, that means you choose certain tasks. If you're going to flick your fingers over a card file, that might be like scratching in the earth . . . to bury an acorn, or something like that. If you're groggy from too much last night or you're going to work late at night and you go over to the wash basin and splash cold water on your face, and then do one of these male brr-r-r! kinds of things, then that suggests a horse. So it's in the action that you choose that the animal image comes out. It's not just being the animal, it's choosing. . . .[62]

One of Ms. Rolfe's favorite exercises in her Character Masks (and observed by this writer in her class at the University of

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[60] Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

Figure 24.--Three students in Bari Rolfe's Character Masks improvising a scene. Courtesy of Bari Rolfe.

Washington) is based on Harold Pinter's one-act play, The Lover. Ms. Rolfe first outlines the play as follows: Sarah's husband leaves for work. After he is gone, Sarah changes her clothes and with them her personality to get ready for her lover's arrival. The lover arrives, taunts and badgers her and finally leaves. In a hurry to change back to her former clothes (and personality) before her husband comes home again, she forgets to change her shoes. When the husband gets home, he notices the shoes and a quarrel ensues. Ms. Rolfe uses this outline as a scenario for an improvisation in her Character Masks with "each actor using two masks. Then for a more complex task, the actors could attempt to play their differing personages in only one mask."[63]

In the use of this exercise in Ms. Rolfe's class of second-year students, two men volunteered to take the roles of Sarah and her husband, using two masks each. Both were completely convincing in their total physical transformations as they changed personalities back and forth during the improvisation.[64]

In talking about the differences between the types of exercises for the Universal Masks and the Character Masks, Ms. Rolfe explained that "there are a lot more realistic situations in the Character Mask, none in the Universal Mask, none, but in the Character Mask, yes, recognizable human, even ordinary, situations."[65]

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[63]Rolfe, "The Actor's World of Silence," p. 398.

[64]Rolfe, Class Observations and Notes.

[65]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

After the students have learned to establish physically the personality of the Character Masks, they learn to play the countermask, which is working at a deeper, more psychologically complex level of characterization. As mentioned earlier, here the students create with their bodies the opposite of what the masks suggest to them, so there is "an apparent conflict between the face and the body, the face and the personality, or the face and the act."[66] Besides the examples of possible countermasks previously given above (pp. 207-208), further examples of types of countermasks which were noted in Lecoq's classes by Laurence Wylie were,

> He who wears the simple-minded mask expressed a superior intelligence; the mask of the old fop is worn with humility; the sneaky mask hides an honest and timid soul.[67] (A.T.)

Bari Rolfe even writes about encountering countermasks among students in her classes.

> A common real-life countermask I frequently meet is that of the student whose class work is elaborately casual and too slow for dramatic purposes, and whose every characterization includes a slouch. That particular countermask may hide resistance, nervousness, self-consciousness, lack of confidence--it almost never reflects true relaxation. The entire body becomes the countermask.[68]

As Lecoq acknowledges, the idea of playing the countermask is close to our real experience of other people and is therefore filled with dramatic possibilities. Because of the increased ambiguity and

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[66]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 52.

[67]Wylie, "À L'École Lecoq," p. 25.

[68]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 53.

conflict in our response to a countermask, the "true" person behind the countermask can only be revealed through action.[69]

The Character Masks For Verbal Improvisation

Now that the work of Jacques Lecoq and Bari Rolfe in their silent Character Masks has been examined, we can turn to those acting teachers who do use their Character Masks for the "reintegration of voice and gesture."[70] These teachers are Appel and Spector, Frisch, Geidt, Lefevre, Mazzone-Clementi, and Meinholt. As mentioned previously, the masks for most vocal work are usually three-quarter or half-masks, although Appel and Spector at the Goodman School do use a full-face mask with a large mouth opening for their vocal work in the mask.

The problem with using a full-face mask for vocal work is that that section of the mask covering the mouth area can muffle and distort the sound being produced. This was one of the objections that W. T. Benda had to using full-face masks for spoken drama on the stage.[71] And these distortions will occur if the mouth opening is not parted enough or if the mask sits too far forward on the face so that the lips of the actor are not close enough to the mouth opening of the mask. It was mentioned earlier that the Goodman School masks were similar to ancient Hellenic tragedy masks in that they had very wide mouth openings. In 1930, there was an extremely

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[69]Wylie, "À L'École Lecoq," p. 25.

[70]Rolfe, "The Actor's World of Silence," p. 398.

[71]Masks, p. 53.

interesting experiment conducted with masks copied from the ancient Hellenic ones. It was discovered that the voice of the person speaking in one of these mask replicas actually increased in vocal effectiveness. His speech had more intensity, more variety, and greater carrying power under the mask.[72] Those teachers at the Goodman School do find that their full-face masks are effective for their vocal work.

Joy Spanabel at the University of Rhode Island always makes sure that her actors wearing masks, and these are usually three-quarter masks, discover what influence the mask may "have on vocal quality by creating an additional resonance chamber. . . ."[73] So the presence of the mask on the actor's face will affect the quality of his speech either in positive or negative ways, which can be an added element to the characterization.

One of the first things an acting student wearing a three-quarter or half-mask must do is explore the relationship of his own mouth and jaw to the mask. Peter Frisch has his students in the three-quarter masks examine themselves in a mirror while slowly and carefully working their mouth in order to see how it can be manipulated to complete the modelling of the mask.[74] This procedure must also be followed when the half-mask is used. The actor must

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[72]Albect Neuburger, The Technical Arts & Sciences of the Ancients, trans. Henry Bosse (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 361.

[73]Spanabel, Interview, see Appendix I.

[74]Buchko, Personal Letter, February 14, 1974.

discover and use his lower jaw as "an extension of the mask itself. . . ."[75]

As with Lecoq and Rolfe's full-face Character Masks, the work in the three-quarter and half-mask Character Masks begins with silent exercises. These exercises, similar to those for the Universal Masks, help each actor discover the physicalization his mask requires. When each student has his character firmly fixed through breathing, physical movement and gesture, the vocal explorations of characterization can begin, "provided that the strength of his acting brought him to words, but avoiding chatter or imposed and self-conscious nonsense."[76] As the student has already learned to allow the mask to free him physically, he must now allow the mask to release him vocally.[77]

Frequently students will discover that they are afraid to try any vocalization in the mask because they have become so secure in their silent work.[78] To overcome this apprehension, Frisch gives the following instructions to his students at Harvard,

> Now, just as you let the body impulse which guided your physical work to surface, let the voice or sound of the creature [the mask] surface when it is ready to. Words are not important (though they may be used): the basic timbre or tone belonging to the creature is.[79]

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[75]Mazzone-Clementi, "Commedia and the Actor," p. 60.

[76]Saint-Denis, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 105.

[77]Frisch, Interview, see Appendix A.

[78]Appel, Interview, see Appendix G.

[79]Frisch, as quoted in Buchko, Personal Letter, February 14, 1974.

Most teachers, like Frisch, prefer that their students not try verbalizations as the first vocal experiments in the mask, but start with sounds or whispers and then let those evolve into words and short catch phrases. After that is accomplished the student can then build to improvised speech and dialogue.[80]

Pierre Lefevre cautions his students not to push for results as they begin to explore their character vocally. He tells them that the work must be slow and unhurried and that they are to explore until they find the right sound/words for their masks.[81]

Incidentally, by way of contrast to the other teachers, Jeremy Geidt does not spend much time in silent exercises. His students go right to work physicalizing and, when they feel ready for it, vocalizing.

> So you really don't meditate on it?
>
> No, put it on. Put it on and look in the mirror. It's what comes back from the mirror to you. Something starts bubbling inside you, you may find you're making noises.[82]

And the "noises" that the actor makes, whether abstract sounds or verbalizations, must not be with the actor's own voice qualities. As Alfred Jarry realized in 1896,

> It goes without saying that the actor [under a mask] must have a special voice, the voice that is appropriate to the part, as if the cavity forming the mouth of the mask were incapable of uttering anything other than what the mask would say if the muscles of its lips could move.[83]

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[80]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[81]Lefevre, Class Observations and Notes.

[82]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[83]Jarry, "Of The Futility of the 'Theatrical' In The Theatre," p. 181.

This is the same realization that Jacques Copeau had; that for the actor, "the very tones of his voice will be dictated by this mask. . . ."[84] So, not only does the mask demand specific movements and gestures to complete it, it also requires a definite vocal quality.

> The mask imposes not only the walk, the gestures, and the carriage of the actor, but also his voice, which should be transformed, transposed.[85] (A.T.)

Geidt warns his students, "If you are in character, then you're in character, and don't waste your energy source, which is the mask, by speaking to me or to each other in your ordinary voice."[86] If the actor finds it necessary to speak in his ordinary voice, then he must lift the mask before doing so. This again serves to underscore the separation between the reality of the actor and the reality of the mask/character, which we noticed was also important to maintain in the Universal Masks.

Not only will the Character Masks prompt the student to explore different vocal qualities in order to discover the appropriate sound/speech for his mask, but he will also discover that once he has found the right voice for his mask, it will allow him to speak freely in improvisations. In fact, the actors may find the freedom to use language that they did not normally allow themselves to use much in everyday life. Jeremy Geidt mentions his

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[84] Copeau, as trans. and quoted in Burton and Lane, New Directions, p. 284.

[85] Chancerel, Le Masque, II, p. 18.

[86] Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

students in their Character Masks suddenly spouting obscenities.[87] And Léon Chancerel had a similar experience when one of his friends put on the remodelled commedia mask of Pulcinella with its large phallic-like nose.[88] Saint-Denis commented about this phenomena of the freedom of verbal improvisation when he wrote that at the Old Vic Theatre School, "We found that speech often sprang truthfully and genuinely from comic characterizations."[89] Jan Doat also mentioned in his book that the mask would give the actor the "necessary verbal ease."[90] (A.T.) But he went on to caution,

> He will learn to say only what is necessary: to speak too much is to harm the physical performance, to speak too much can paralyze the performance and take away its life.[91] (A.T.)

In other words, the mask not only frees speech, but also demands an economy of speech. "Appropriate" and "economical," Bari Rolfe's words about the effect of the mask on the physical being of the actor, apply here equally well. Further proof of this double aspect of the mask to simultaneously free and control speech is reflected in the understandings of two playwrights who both worked with masked drama. In He Who Gets Slapped by Leonid Andreyev, the character, HE, says, "There is a mask on my face, and I play: I may say anything like a drunkard."[92] And the contemporary British

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Chancerel, Le Masque, I, p. 45.

[89] Theatre, The Rediscovery of Style, p. 105.

[90] p. 56.

[91] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[92] Leonid Andreyev, HE Who Gets Slapped, trans. Gregory Zilboorg (New York: Bretano's, Publishers, 1922), p. 60.

playwright, John Arden, responding to an interviewer's question about the simplicity of language used in his masked drama, The Happy Haven, replied,

> The masks seemed to demand it. . . . I cut about half the images because I found that an actor wearing a mask does not need elaborate language--the mask is so powerful in itself that it needs a more naked expression of emotion.[93]

Once the actor has found the appropriate verbophysical reality for his mask, the next exercises have the class work together in an improvisation placed in a neutral setting, such as a park or waiting room, that allows the characters to enter and leave in a more or less passive fashion. (It is also a less threatening situation for the actors who are just learning to vocalize in their masks.) In succeeding exercises, the same places can be used with characters in a more active relationship, "in work," and these new situations can now even contain a reversal which promotes conflict and struggle between the characters.[94] These exercises serve to help the actors confirm their characters vocally as well as physically.

In order to assist his actors to confirm their characters vocally, Pierre Lefevre at Juilliard has a series of four telephone exercises which he puts his actors through in small groups. In the first of these, the actor is told to just listen to a person talking on the other end of the line. When he is doing this, Lefevre coaches from the side for the student to start answering that person in

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[93]Arden, as quoted in Tom Milne and Cline Goodwin, "John Arden," Theatre At Work, eds. Charles Marowitz and Simon Trussler (New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1968), p. 42.

[94]LeBonniec, p. 11.

monosyllables. Finally the student is to hear the person on the other end of the line getting more excited and aggressive and respond in kind.[95]

In the second Telephone Exercise the masked actor is to hold a conversation on the phone in which changing moods and events occur during the call.[96] It is not important that these first two exercises be projected and heard by the rest of the class. In this way the student gains some security in his exploration of the character vocally before having to present it to the rest of the class. But beginning with the third Telephone Exercise, the verbal improvisation must be heard. In this third exercise, Lefevre puts three students side by side in chairs in front of the class. Each is to call up somebody he knows well and talk with them--all simultaneously. Again these conversations are to include varying dynamics as in the second exercise.[97]

In his fourth and final Telephone Exercise, Lefevre puts two students in chairs in front of the class, asks them to call somebody they know well and start talking. Then on a given signal from him, the telephone wires get crossed and the two characters find themselves talking to each other. Here the actors' task is to keep the conversation going as long as possible after the wires have been crossed.[98] In the example of this exercise observed in

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[95]Lefevre, Class Observations and Notes.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid.

the class of second year students at Juilliard, a hilarious, yet believable, improvised conversation developed between a Jewish delicatessen owner trying to place an order for more supplies and a Frenchman new to American trying to get a caterer for a soirée.[99]

In order to push the actors even further in the vocal confirmation of their characters, Lefevre next goes to an interview exercise where one student actor is selected to be interviewed by the rest of the class. In this way the actor is helped to assert strongly the identity of his Character Mask. The actor whose character is to be interviewed is told to answer slowly at first, letting the mask dictate the response. Lefevre again coaches from the side, saying, "Don't search for it, let it happen."[100] The character placed in front of the class in a chair is asked questions about himself by the rest of the class. In each of the three interviews observed, the actors spoke easily and believably in character. The characterizations did tend to have the outline of stereotyped figures, but they also went beyond this into an individualized characterization within the overall type. Since this was the first time these students had tried this exercise in their Character Masks, the students were all excited by the amazing results they achieved. LeBonniec speaks about his own experience of release in the vocal improvisations in the Comic Character Masks,

> In these exercises the actor is both author and actor, he feels comfortable 'in the skin of his character,' he can then dare

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

> to let himself go, free himself from the inner resistance of shame, of reserve, thereby really living the role he creates: he acquires facility, suppleness at the level of invention and of the performance, he frees himself.[101] (A.T.)

Appel and Spector at the Goodman School, have a unique two-character improvisation in the Character Masks in which the students are asked to find how their masks would be "relating to and with words."[102] A locale for the improvisation is chosen, such as an attic, Jail cell, lunch counter, elevator, etc., and then the actors are given their choice of a word or phrase from a list like the following devised by the instructors:

> Hello, goodbye, come, go, sweet, nasty, door, yes, in, out, shit, love, hate, warm pudding, god damn it to Hell, I like you, can I help?, my foot itches.[103]

The character may only use one word once in the improvisation. Students first work together privately developing their improvisation and then present it to the rest of the class.[104] In a later and more difficult exercise, the students are asked to find a piece of non-dramatic literature which their characters can use and that says something about them. Libby Appel recounts the effectiveness of this exercise by giving an example from one of her classes:

> One boy, for example, who found his character to be a very suppressed, strong, and violent kind of thing, found an Indian war chant, a poem. (And you have to not only just recite it, you have to devise a situation in which those words would come.) And what he did was attack another man . . . he didn't

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[101] LeBonniec, p. 11.

[102] "Acting Laboratory In Mask Characterization," Course Syllabus, p. 2.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

> use it [the poem] as an Indian; he was mugging a person. (And he used another character in the class--and interesting in the choice of the character that he used. He picked one of the happy-go-lucky types, who worked absolutely perfect for him.) His intention was to get the man's money, but because the words [of the war chant] were so implicit in his soul,--this chant about blood and horror, you know, this death-resurrection kind of thing--the words were used with the body to not only get the money, but take out everything he had against society with this particular man. . . .[105]

A more advanced type of exercise in the Character Masks is the creation of vocal countermasks as well as physical countermasks. LeBonniec was involved with these at Strasbourg and gives some examples in his article.

> It is amusing, for example, to make a large person with a crude aspect, a soft and timid being; to give a loud voice and an authoritative air to a skinny weakling, his appetite for authority will approach the ridiculous. . . .[106]

The students at Juilliard are also trained to create vocal countermasks.[107]

At some point in the training of the actors in the Character Masks (it varies with the different programs but normally occurs after the actors have their characterizations set), the students are asked to dress themselves in a costume appropriate to their mask. Usually the students are allowed to use old costumes the school has left over from past productions.

> And it's fascinating to see them dressing in character and they've got the character, and you know that something's cooking and they don't pull down the clothes the way they would, they take them down as a character and put them on. . . . They

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[105]Appel, Interview, see Appendix G.

[106]LeBonniec, p. 11.

[107]Lefevre, Class Observations and Notes.

> may overdress the character and then begin to pare down so they have less and less on.[108]

Geidt also mentions that students frequently come up to him and deposit parts of their own apparel and jewelry with him because it no longer fits with their Character Mask and they find it disturbs their concentration on completing their character costume-wise.

> . . . I mean suddenly I'll find a character coming up to me (I stand in the room) and they'll take off their ring or their watch and give it to me without saying anything, going along with the thing that you don't speak in your own voice, because if you look down at yourself, and you look in the mirror, you've got this marvelous, marvelous, mask on, you look down and see your own bracelet, your own watch, or your own shoes, it can blow it for you.[109]

Pierre Lefevre demands that his students finally wear nothing to class that is foreign to their character.[110] At the Goodman School, this costume work is extended into lectures and discussions on costume and period styles given in the mask characterization class by the school's costumers. Then the students improvise how their masks/characters might live and move in costumes from those different periods.[111]

The use of props to help the student more fully realize his character is also available to the students in some of the programs. Peter Frisch tells his students,

> See how your character handles things, relates to and uses objects (in any way); what further indications this gives you

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[108] Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Lefevre, Class Observations and Notes.

[111] Appel, Interview, see Appendix G.

> in regard to its body (i.e., perhaps in sitting down you'll discover the character/creature has a very little spine . . . a limitation.) Perhaps it needs to grab objects rather than handle them gently, or vice versa. Working with props may guide your creature into various directions: however, be wary of allowing the prop(s) to totally alter the character you have built-discovered thus far.[112]

Justifying the relationship between prop and characterization, Jeremy Geidt observes, "Chaplin without his cane wouldn't work. The cane must give Chaplin a feeling inside him."[113]

But the real object used as a prop may not be appropriate because it does not correspond to the same amount of exaggeration or enlargement as the mask.

> . . . the funny thing is that they may want a cigarette for character and they look wrong. Because a cigarette is too naturalistic. What would look right is a piece of rolled up paper. And if you need a cigar it has to be a <u>big</u> cigar because an ordinary cigar looks too normal. You're mixing your media.[114]

Michel Saint-Denis also mentioned allowing his actors in their Comic Masks to use simple scenery pieces that they found stimulating as well as props.[115]

The final goals for the students in the Character Mask training are, of course,

> . . . to make them better actors, to make them freer, to make them braver, to make them take more risks, to stimulate the imagination, to make them think in a farcical and commedic way as opposed to a naturalistic way, to make them realize the uses of an external thing giving them an internal impulse.[116]

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[112]Frisch, quoted in Buchko, Personal Letter, February 14, 1974.

[113]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[114]Ibid.

[115]<u>Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style</u>, p. 105.

[116]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

The teachers in the various programs go about their final work in the Character Masks in different ways.

At Yale, Jeremy Geidt spends the final three weeks of his course evolving a scenario with his students which is then performed for the rest of the drama school at the end of the semester. All of the students in his class are involved in this final presentation. An interesting locale is chosen and the characters are set free to improvise within it. Mr. Geidt stands to the side taking notes on humorous lines and situations that occur so he can later help the students recall them and shape the final scenario. This final scenario is highly structured with definite cues and some memorized lines that have to be said by specified characters at the proper time.[117]

At Juilliard, Strasbourg, and Harvard, the final work in the Character Masks involves the development of a brief scenario by two or more characters. This scenario must include nine or ten units of action. Peggy Buchko, a student of Peter Frisch, writing about her own experiences in this final project at Harvard, says,

> The partners consciously collaborate on a certain series of interactions they wish to take place in the scenario. The best, most spontaneous work will come out of improvising the scenario repeatedly, then polishing by 'setting' most of the physical behavior and dialogue. The pathos or humor will surface naturally out of the scenario if the timing and relationships are clear.[118]

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[116]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Buchko, Personal Letter, March 3, 1974.

Perhaps the most unusual final work in the Character Masks is carried out under the direction of Rolland Meinholt at the University of Montana. Because of its unique nature, we will examine it in some detail. It is the creation of a performed scenario that is based on an historical event or a literary work. This presentation is the culmination of a two-term sequence in Intermediate Acting. Only the second term deals directly with mask characterization work, but the topic of masks and masking is brought up in the Fall Term when a subject area for the Winter Term's work is chosen.

> For instance, one year we did the story of the Donner Party crossing the Sierra Mountains and I got a book called Ordeal By Hunger, that's a very famous book about the Donner Party. This current year the people have chosen the Huguenot Massacre, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, as the general area of study.
>
> Now once we've chosen the general area, we begin to study the area, find out about it, find out what happened and who were the people involved. (These areas are not always historical, incidently. The two I've mentioned are, but we could conceivably pick a novel or whatever. The important thing is, that whatever we pick has a great deal of character information.)[119]

It is in the Second Term, though, that the Character Mask work really begins.

> Then in the Second Quarter, we begin the quarter by working on the mask for the character. First we choose the character that each person in the class will play in the general story area that we are undertaking. Then they begin designing on paper, or however they wish to--some people have not actually drawn anything, but they have brought in textures that mean something to them, or they bring in photographs or paintings or whatever means something to them in terms of their character. Then we actually begin working at making the masks. And I think this is terribly important that the students make their own masks. At least it's important in terms of the kind of character work that I'm using the mask for. They're reading

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[119]Meinholt, Interview, see Appendix H.

> about their character, they're finding visual things that mean something to them in terms of the character, and they're actually working on the mask all at the same time.[120]

(Jacques Lecoq has just begun to allow his students to make their own Character Masks after they have practiced in his Expressive Masks.)[121]

When the students have finished constructing the masks for their specific character,

> . . . the next step is to have them develop a costume for the mask, and then we go into character interviews, in which we have a visit by the person the mask represents to the class. And we interview that person and we ask many questions about their life, their relationship to other people.
>
> Then normally I go into what I call a Character Dance, which is in thirty-five moves or less they show, or attempt to show, the very soul-beat of the mask and of the character that the mask represents.
>
> Then we begin a small group improvisation with the people in the class who are closest to the character. . . . Then we divide up and allow them to work on those natural relationships together. For instance, in the Donner Party, we've had the Graves family work together and the Murphy family work together. There are many families that are helpful subdivisions.
>
> We then begin working in larger groups combining two groups of people that have relationships within the context of the story. And finally, we, after having spent some time talking about the story and perhaps altering it to make a tighter dramatic structure and to highlight the conflict in the story, we begin a group of improvisations for the whole class which extend over the whole class period, which is an hour and a half every day. And we usually keep this up for at least a week, and perhaps more, developing the entire story.[122]

Thus, in this unique program, the various individual and group exercises of a whole term's work in Character Masks are centered around a common literary or historical incident. This approach

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[120] Ibid.

[121] Fay Lecoq, Personal Letter, April 22, 1975.

[122] Meinholt, Interview, see Appendix H.

may not give the students as much freedom of invention as some of the other programs, but does help to unify and give direction to the course. It also provides the students with a more solid context in which to improvise.

This, then, is the extent of the use of Character Masks in training actors to transform themselves physically and vocally into the character they are to portray. Most programs end their use of masks in helping to train the actor here because they feel that they have exhausted what the masks can do for their actors.

> Comic masks led us to attack certain problems; character studies, reactions, evolution, reversal of characters in different situations, etc., but the masks constituted artificial stimulants to the imagination, they imposed appearances generally close to caricature, that is, enlarged, picturesque natures, lightly exaggerated.
>
> It became a matter for us in this new stage to go towards a deeper psychological research, based on the most delicate, the most nuanced, almost ungraspable, and at the same time less spectacular sentiments.[123] (A.T.)

But some programs do offer further work in masks, some of which is experimental in nature. These programs will be the subject of the next two chapters.

In trying to sum up the overall concept of the two major kinds of masks used in actor training, the Universal Masks and the Character Masks, we can again defer to Bari Rolfe, who, with her experience and profound understanding of the masks and their function, has again stated it so well.

> To summarize: the neutral mask is what we are, the character mask is what we choose, the countermask is what a character mask

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[123] LeBonniec, p. 13.

might choose. They can even be thought of as one atop the other. Their prime purpose is to make the actor aware of himself, his body, gestures, assumptions, and elements of characterization, and the layers of masks can help him deepen his chosen characterizations.[124]

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[124]Rolfe, "Three Training Masks," p. 53. In her letter to this writer of March 21, 1975, Ms. Rolfe rewrote the above quotation in the following manner: "The universal mask is what we are; the character mask is our self-image; and the countermask is the image our character presents to the world."

CHAPTER VIII

THE METHOD: THE MISCELLANEOUS TRAINING MASKS

This chapter will deal with those masks used by various individuals to explore further the relationship between the mask and the mask wearer, primarily in actor training situations. Therefore, we will examine the Emo Masks of The Aesthetic Education Program; the Larval, Grotesque, and Utilitarian Masks of Jacques Lecoq; the Fantasy Masks of Peter Frisch; and finally, the Clown Noses of Jacques Lecoq.

The Emo Masks

The Emo Masks are part of a series of instructional materials, entitled The Five Sense Store, developed by Cemrel, Inc., for The Aesthetic Education Program in order to teach elementary grade students basic concepts in aesthetics. The aim of the program is to "enrich a person's life by increasing his capacity to use his senses joyfully in experiencing his world."[1]

The Emo Masks, an abbreviation for Emotion Masks, were designed to be used in the third part of this program, called

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[1]Bernard S. Rosenblatt, Creating Characterization: Teacher's Guide, Aesthetic Education Program, Cemrel, Inc., New York: The Viking Press, Inc./Lincoln Center For The Performing Arts, Inc., 1973, p. 4.

"Aesthetics and the Creative Process"; more specifically, for the package on "Creating Characterization."

These Emo Masks are flat, yet flexible and sturdy, two-dimensional acrylic masks that are held on the students' faces with elastic cords. The eyeholes and nose have been removed, but there is no opening at the mouth. There are six different masks in all. Five of these are painted with simple, strong lines so that each one clearly represents an emotion: happy, sad, angry, surprised, and pleased. The sixth mask is blank.

After the student has gone through an introductory section on the various kinds of emotions and how they can be expressed physically, he is asked to select one of the Emo Masks, name it (i.e., Emo Sad), put it on and try to create "simple and appropriate movements"[2] that might express the emotion conveyed by the mask.

At this point the teacher is given a warning on how to evaluate properly what is happening with the student.

> In selecting a movement to express his Emo's emotion, the student should make the choice by himself and then see if the movement communicated the emotion to others. The emphasis is on the student's exploration of movement as a means of expressing emotion and not on excellence in performance.[3]

After the students have explored the movement possibilities for one Emo Mask, they participate in an exercise called "The Guessing Game," where one student dons the blank mask and tries to convey to

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[2] Ibid, p. 19.

[3] Ibid., p. 18.

the others through his movements and gestures what emotion he is portraying. The class, now acting as an audience, tries to guess what the emotion is.[4]

In the next lesson the student is made aware of the different sound qualities of the voice and how the voice can express an emotion. Again the student uses the Emo Masks and tries to create the appropriate sound for the emotion of the mask.[5]

This exercise is followed by improvisational exercises combining the two previous lessons.[6] Thus, the vocal and physical explorations are integrated in order to more fully express the Emo Masks' emotional states.

Finally, the student is asked to create without an Emo Mask "a simple characterization (really a personification of a single emotional trait) by using his own body and voice" in a brief improvised scene with three other students.[7] These improvisations are then presented to the rest of the class. In this way the transition to presenting a characterization without a mask is achieved.

In an extension of this last exercise, known as a "satellite lesson" in the program,[8] the student is asked to select first a

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 20.

[6]Ibid., p. 24.

[7]Ibid., p. 26.

[8]Ibid., p. 36.

color and then a texture that suggests an emotion. Then the student is to choose an Emo Mask that he feels conveys the same emotion as the color or texture and improvise with that.[9]

This use of masks in an elementary grade level aesthetic educational program has many striking similarities to the professional actor training programs we have been examining. Here, too, the mask is used to free and stimulate the imagination of the wearer so that he will explore vocal and physical ways to create a character (though it is limited to expressing a character through an emotional state). And the child learns, as does the actor, that he must make conscious choices as to what vocal and physical qualities he will use to portray his character. Of course, with the more skillfully modelled masks for the acting students, greater depth of characterization can be achieved.

The Larval, Grotesque, and Utilitarian Masks

Jacques Lecoq has only recently introduced the Larval, Grotesque, and Utilitarian Masks into his program of study. He considers these masks as highly experimental and has no definite goals for the work in these masks other than helping the students to stretch their imaginations further and to free them again from the drift towards realistic human behavior that they have had while working with their last set of masks, the Expressive Masks of character types.[10]

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[9]Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[10]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D; also, Fay Lecoq, Personal Letter, April 22, 1975.

The Larval Masks (masques lavaires) are "devoid of human features so that no specific characterization is suggested by it."[11] These are full-face masks, frequently larger than the human face. They suggest animals, birds, and humans in fetal states--shapes and features just emerging; just forming into beaks, snouts, or noses--the "larval" stage of existence (Figure 25). Students work with these Larval Masks every day for a month.[12] Again, Lecoq asks them to discover the appropriate physical life of these strange creatures. According to Bari Rolfe, the students take one of the masks, "simply put it on and let it guide them in the way the other masks do."[13] Interestingly enough, the Larval Masks are the only ones in which Lecoq allows his students to work with their reflected image in a mirror.[14] Because of the amorphous nature of these Larval Masks, it is difficult for the students to keep its image sharply focussed in the mind's eye.

The individual exercises in the Larval Masks begin with Lecoq asking his students, "What kinds of movements correspond to these masks?" "What space, rhythm, speed, direction do they suggest?"[15] (A.T.)

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[11] Rolfe, "The Mime of Jacques Lecoq," p. 38.

[12] Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[13] Rolfe, "The Mime of Jacques Lecoq," p. 38.

[14] Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[15] Wylie, p. 25.

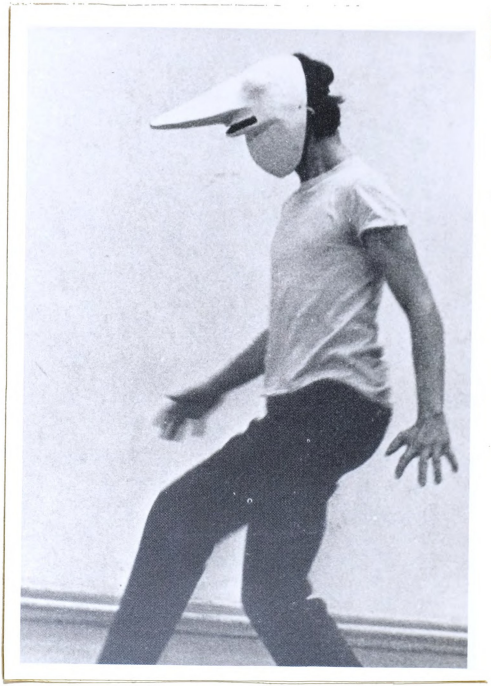

Figure 25.--A student physicalizing in one of Jacques Lecoq's Larval Masks. Courtesy of Richard Phelps Frieman and the editors of Psychologie.

Bari Rolfe, in her article on Lecoq, mentions that one class working in the Larval Masks responded to them by improvising on an adjective suggested by the mask.[16]

Laurence Wylie, who attended classes in the Larval Masks, observed that,

> 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.[17] (A.T.)

Once the students have discovered the life of their individual Larval Masks, Lecoq puts them to work improvising in partners (Figure 26) and then all together on an extended improvisation in which they are to invent the life of an imaginary world complete with its laws and social customs.[18]

Two former students of Lecoq have taken their experiences with his Larval Masks, extended them and incorporated them into their performances as part of the Mummenschanz, the Swiss Mime-Masque Theatre troupe.[19]

The latest additions to Lecoq's training program are the Grotesque and Utilitarian Masks. Little information is available on these masks. The idea behind the Grotesque Masks may be similar to one that W. T. Benda explored in his own mask-making experiments

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[16]Rolfe, "The Mime of Jacques Lecoq," p. 38.

[17]Wylie, p. 25.

[18]Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

[19]Micky Levy, "Mummenschanz Masking," Theatre Crafts, VIII, No. 6 (November-December, 1974), pp. 18-35; also, Bari Rolfe, "Masks, Mime, And Mummenschanz," Mime Journal, Number Two (1975), pp. 24-35.

Figure 26.--Two students improvising in the Larval Masks of Jacques Lecoq. Courtesy of Richard Phelps Frieman and the editors of Psychologie.

earlier in this century. Benda's Grotesque Masks were "derived from animal, bird, fish, or insect characteristics which, when embodied in a human face, produce an extraordinary intensity of character. . . ."[20] Examples of Benda's Grotesque Masks are seen in Figure 27, where human and bird features were combined, and Figure 28, where human and fish characteristics were merged.

The Utilitarian Masks are those masks currently in use in the modern world as protective devices (i.e., gas masks, welders' masks, etc.). Lecoq is currently exploring with his first-year students their reactions to the different types of hockey masks he gathered while on a recent trip to the United States and Canada.[21]

The Fantasy Masks

Free play of the actor's imagination with its corresponding physicalization is the goal of the Fantasy Masks proposed by Peter Frisch as an experimental part of his program. At the present time these Fantasy Masks are only in a theoretical stage, but Mr. Frisch does have some definite ideas about what kinds of masks he wants to use and their function in his actor training program.

The Fantasy Masks will not be a single type of mask but a series of three different masks by which the students will progress from the more concrete image to the more abstract image. The first of the Fantasy Masks will be animal masks that have human characteristics, or human faces that have strong animal characteristics--Frisch

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[20] Benda, Masks, p. 28.

[21] Fay Lecoq, Personal Letter, April 22, 1975.

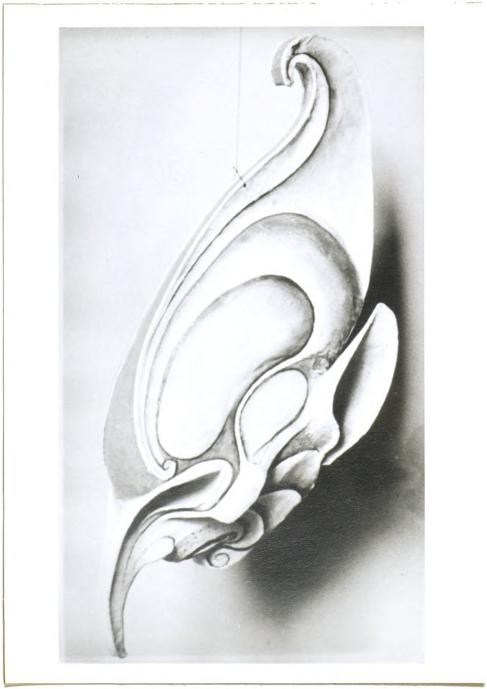

Figure 27.--W. T. Benda's Grotesque Mask combining human and bird characteristics.

Figure 28.--W. T. Benda's Grotesque Mask combining human and fish characteristics.

is not quite sure how to phrase exactly what effect he wants here.[22] (These are very much like the Grotesque Masks of W. T. Benda mentioned above.) But in either case, Frisch feels that the actor is still working with a recognizable face: with a nose, mouth, eyes.[23]

The second set of Fantasy Masks he will have his students wear will be what he calls "violent distortions."[24] He gives no specifics about these masks other than as with all masks, they must have strong emotional associations for the actor. As Frisch puts it, there must always be a strong "stimulus-response relationship."[25]

The final set of Fantasy Masks will be complete abstractions. "The mask might be a pattern, a zigzag. Some sort of op-art thing, possibly."[26] He may even use masks of pure color.

> I mean we might just design a circle of flaming crimson red. And then if these are done with celastic, then we might take a pencil and put just one dot, and see how that alters [it]. A smudge or something here. What does that do?[26]

Mr. Frisch is not only interested in exploring the physical reactions to these Fantasy Masks, but also the vocal response.

> What I'm interested to find out also is what happens vocally when they start working with Fantasy Masks. The dog mask, for example, to start with the elementary part of the Fantasy Masks, let's say the dog mask is there. When the student starts doing, 'Woof, woof!' you're in trouble . . . it might require a howl, a grating sound, and it's up to the student to find out the essence of that mask and reproduce that.

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[22]Frisch, Interview, see Appendix A.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

> But what happens when you get into a zigzag? What as a zigzag do you want to say? But how do you find out except by putting the zigzag into a situation where he needs something? Like how does he feel about his relationship to the field that he's on?[27]

Tht objective that Peter Frisch is working towards with his Fantasy Masks is similar to what Jacques Copeau wanted with his use of the mask as a training device: to create an actor that will have the widest number of resources at his command, so that he can play anything demanded by the variety of styles in the contemporary theatre, even "how to play a state of being."[28]

> But I feel very strongly that there are processes by which that [a state of being] can be as strong, or a stronger reality for an actor than a character. There <u>are</u> circumstances if you are a zigzag: you begin somewhere, you end somewhere, you are a certain color, you're a certain texture . . . it alters one's way of thinking.[29]

These ideas of Peter Frisch's about the abstract masks and their effect on the wearer are reminiscent of the experiments of Oskar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus School in Germany in the 1920's.

> He [Schlemmer] transformed into abstract terms of geometry or mechanics his observation of the human figure moving in space. His figures and forms are pure creations of the imagination, symbolizing eternal types of human character and their different moods, serene or tragic, funny or serious.[30]

One way in which Schlemmer sought to transform the actor/dancer into this abstract entity was through the use of masks and costumes.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Gropius, p. 8.

> The transformation of the human body, its metamorphosis, is made possible by the costume, the disguise. Costume and mask emphasize 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.[31]

By creating masks and costumes with geometrical shapes, Schlemmer transformed his actor/dancers from the "merely individual and temporary . . . into the universal and timeless."[32] It was the costume and mask that dictated the movement of the dancers.

> The costumes are of great importance; in fact the costume, not the man, creates the dance. The dancer's function is only to wear the costume and to impart motion to it.[33]

In Schlemmer's concept of his non-naturalistic theatre, "man may find his place again. No longer as an actor of human passions, no longer representing human conflicts, but as a space-object in constant transformation, as a co-star or as a counterpart."[34]

Two contemporary performing artists who have also shown their concern for an abstract and metaphysical theatre, and use the mask to achieve that end, are the American dancers, Alwin Nikolais and Erick Hawkins. For Alwin Nikolais, the mask was a way to concretize his philosophy of "man being a fellow traveller within the total universal mechanism rather than the god from which all things flowed."[35] For Erick Hawkins, using masks on his dancers was a way

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[31]Oskar Schlemmer, "Man and Art Figure," The Theater of the Bauhaus, ed. Walter Gropius, trans, Arthur S. Wensinger (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 25.

[32]Ernst Scheyer, quoted in Sorell, The Other Face, p. 155.

[33]Schlee, p. 344.

[34]Ibid., p. 347.

[35]Marcia B. Siegel, (ed.), NIK a documentary, Vol. XLVIII of Dance Perspectives (Winter, 1971), p. 11.

> . . . to reveal to the audience the deepest essence of the theatrical art, which is to highlight, in sensuous form, metaphysical notions which alone determine how the human being lives his life and how a society lives its collective life.[36]

E. T. Kirby in his article, "The Mask: Abstract Theatre, Primitive and Modern," concludes that it is the mask with all its metaphysical significance that best symbolizes the ethos of the abstract theatre.[37]

The Minimal Mask; The False Nose

One of the final and most difficult sections of Jacques Lecoq's training program occurs in the second and final year. It is the segment entitled, "discovering one's own clown."[38] (A.T.) Here the students put on the red false nose of a clown--the minimal mask.[39] This bulbous rubber or plastic nose is held on the face with elastic cords stretched back behind the head. Even though all the students wear identical clown noses, they all appear distinctly different (a small amount of grease-paint is allowed which the students use to paint makeup masks on their faces) (Figure 29). Lecoq has not been the only one to discover that changing the size and shape of the nose changes the whole physiognomy of the face. Jeremy Geidt quotes Laurence Olivier as saying that

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[36] Sorell, quoting Hawkins in The Other Face, p. 156.

[37] The Drama Review, XVI, Number 3 (T-55) (September, 1972), p. 6.

[38] Lecoq, School Brochure, 1974, n.p.

[39] Rolfe, "The Mime of Jacques Lecoq," p. 38.

Figure 29.--Two of Jacques Lecoq's students wearing the clown nose--the minimal mask. Courtesy of Richard Phelps Frieman and the editors of Psychologie.

before he fully knows a new character, he must discover his proper nose.[40] And the mask makers and designers working on the French production of Gogol's Dead Souls (1960) decided to use only false noses instead of full face masks, and discovered that the "artificial appendages so upset the architecture of the face as to make it too improbable, to create proportions which were offensive to the eye. Thus we arrived at the worst: the grotesque."[41]

Students find that wearing and completing this smallest of masks, the false clown nose, the most difficult and demanding work of all. Each student is asked to rediscover and reveal his own personal clown; "the one that has grown up with us and which society does not allow us to express."[42]

> It is Lecoq's belief that the essential nature of the best traditional clowns is found in an individual's basic weakness--in the characteristic that makes us a flop in the eyes of other people. To succeed as a clown, one must search for this primary weakness, recognize it, flaunt it--and incidently, make people laugh. Obviously not a pursuit for the immature or the weak of ego.[43]

To achieve this goal, both the students and the faculty at Lecoq's school dress up in outlandish clown outfits.[44] Then they sit in a circle on the floor and the students are asked to go to the center of the circle one by one and try to make the rest of the group

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[40] Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

[41] Jean Rouise, "The Noses," World Theatre, X, Number 1 (Spring, 1961), p. 59.

[42] Lecoq, "Mime-Mouvement-Theatre," pp. 119-120.

[43] Banks, quoting Wylie, p. 5.

[44] Wylie, p. 27.

laugh.[45] What the student discovers is that if he tries to act foolish, to clown, he does not succeed in making the group laugh.

> The secret as it turns out, is to do nothing. To face the group, lonely and ridiculous, without playing a role or trying to disguise one's bide (central flaw).[46]

In other words, the student must realize that, "One plays a role in order to hide his 'flaw' and that is exactly the opposite of what must be done."[47] (A.T.)

Once the students have "mastered the comical art of being themselves,"[48] they do further explorations of their clown by finding its appropriate walk, and how it might "jump, run, crawl."[49] They also explore the clown character in various emotional states, such as fear, pride, shame, and surprise.[50] All the while the students are evaluated by the instructors and told when the movements are false and unconvincing.[51]

The students are asked to create a name for their clown and to find an object they can carry around with them that will reflect their clown's unique personality. Laurence Wylie mentions finding an old broom for his clown character.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Banks, p. 5.

[47] Wylie, p. 27.

[48] Banks, p. 5.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Wylie, p. 27.

[51] Ibid.

> It was a really old, beat-up broom, just falling apart. I found it was nice to drag it after me, but when I was embarrassed, I could use it to sweep with and cover my uncertainty that way . . . pretend I had some reason for being there. When you sweep, there are all kinds of gags you can do--like pretending there is something sticking to it, that you can't get off.[52]

Wylie admits that he did not understand why a broom felt "right" for his clown but the other students and faculty members agreed with him that it was.[53]

If we pause at this point and look back over Lecoq's use of the mask in his training program, we can note that he employs a progression of masks: from the full-face masks (Neutral, Expressive, Larval, Grotesque, Utilitarian) to the three-quarter and half-masks of the Commedia dell'arte (treated in the next chapter), and finally to the tiny clown nose. With the full-face Neutral Masks, the internal world of the actor is stripped back to its essential nakedness and is made ready to be clothed with different forms: the full-face Expressive, Larval, Grotesque, and Utilitarian Masks. On assuming the stereotyped features of the three-quarter and half-masks of the Commedia dell'arte, the actor's face is partially revealed to participate in the life of the mask. But when the actor comes to put on the tiny unprotected clown nose and makeup, the uncovering of the face of the wearer is practically complete. In the metaphysical, psychological, and literal senses, Lecoq does exactly what one of his student's claims,

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[52]Banks, quoting Wylie, p. 5.

[53]Ibid.

> 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.[54] (A.T.)

These, then, are the miscellaneous training masks used by the various teachers as extensions of their work with the Universal and Character Masks in actor training. In the next chapter we shall look at a further extension of the mask work into the specialized form of the Commedia dell'arte Masks.

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[54] Wylie, quoting a fellow student, p. 27.

CHAPTER IX

THE METHOD: THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE MASKS

The examination of the Italian commedia dell'arte masks has been left until last because with these masks we enter a very different type of training situation--one with different objectives from those of the other masks already mentioned. The objectives of these former masks were to free the actor physically, emotionally, vocally; to stretch his imagination; to make him aware of himself and his potentials for performance in any form of theatre. In contrast to this, the objectives of training in the commedia dell' arte masks are to teach an actor how to perform in a very specific form of masked theatre.

In Italian, the word for mask, maschera, refers to any kind of stereotyped character, but more specifically to those stock characters of the Italian Renaissance theatre form, the commedia dell'arte.[1]

> In the Italian commedia dell'arte, the mask grants free expression to the popular voice, and here the actors create, at the same time, their character (social types like Pantalone, the Spanish Captain, and the Zanhi) and their masks. Through a conventional type, these artists, using their individual virtuosity, express and give continuity to a collective social consciousness.[2]

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[1]Mazzone-Clementi, Untitled Article, p. 8.

[2]Nina Vidrovitch, "Introduction To The Mask," Mime Journal, Number Two (1975), p. 22.

Thus, in commedia dell'arte, the mask as well as its corresponding characterization has been firmly set "in terms of personality and characteristics"[3] by traditions established by commedia actors during the late 16th through 18th centuries.

> For instance, the miser is always miserly, the lovers are always in love, the doctor is always pedantic. You see, there are no variations among that permitted.[4]

Most of the acting teachers currently training students in commedia techniques would agree with Bari Rolfe when she states emphatically, "Commedia cannot change!"[5] Lecoq, in his school brochure, lists commedia dell'arte as one of the "boundary lines of the theatre" (A.T.), along with Greek Tragedy, Classical Japanese Theatre, and Pantomime Blanche.[6] For Lecoq this means that through the study of these finalized forms,

> . . . the student might gain an understanding of the extremes of acting which would employ his entire being. It serves him as a point of reference.
>
> Thus Commedia dell'arte, where the play is action, and Greek Tragedy, where the word is flesh, are the form of theatre where the actor is entirely engaged; pelvis, solar plexus, and head.[7]

So, when the actor comes to study one of the traditional four masked roles of the commedia dell'arte (Pantalone, Dottore, Pulcinella, Zanni), he is more restricted in what he can and cannot

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[3]Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Lecoq, School Brochure, 1974, n.p.

[7]Lecoq, "Mime-Mouvement-Theatre," p. 119.

do. These masks lack the ambiguity as to character type which the other masks had and thus do not allow the actor to create his own totally individualized characterization. Here the character traits are known and must be expressed.

> In the commedia dell'arte, the isolation of avarice in Pantalone or of intellectual pretension in the Dottore is completely crystallized in their masks. The actor cannot escape into the complexities of personality. In a sense he is the prisoner of the mask, and he must play out his part in terms of the statement it makes, rather than in terms of some complex of emotions that go beyond that statement.[8]

This idea of the mask as a "trap" has not been noted as significant before, except in the case of students who found it difficult to respond to the mask work. But it is interesting to note that it is now used as a comment on the commedia masks, and not just by Russell Graves above. L. P. Spencer in his dissertation, "Masks In Theater," quotes Carlo Mazzone-Clementi using this same image in connection with the commedia masks.

> The mask is a trapped condition of that particular moment around which the whole character turns. It is a prototype expression--the prototype caught in momentum, and that is why it is alive. It is a virtuoso moment.[9]

And if the character traits are known, then it should follow that movement and gesture are also restricted more than is usually the case. And this is so. Giacomo Oreglia points out in his book, The Commedia dell'arte,[10] "Each of the Masks has its own

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[8]Russell Graves, "The Psychological Effects of Masks," Theatre Crafts Book of Make-up, Masks, and Wigs, ed. C. Ray Smith (Emmaus: The Rodale Press, Inc., 1974), pp. 170-171.

[9]Mazzone-Clementi, as quoted in Spencer, p. 415.

[10]Trans. Lovett F. Edwards (New York: Hill & Wang, 1968).

characteristic style of performance."[11] This does not mean to imply, though, that every aspect of the commedia work is minutely proscribed and delineated. When Amleto Sartori began to revive the art of making leather commedia masks, he discovered that "the stock characters of the Commedia were far from stock."[12]

> The mask, traditionally, was a direct extension of the personality of the actor who wore it; the variations are especially marked in masks that belong to the greatest actors. For this reason, the Sartori masks are highly individual creations, rather than mere reproductions. They evolved out of rehearsal, where the sculptor sketched and absorbed the verve of each actor, adapting traditional design to modern sensitivity. The mask of Marcello Moretti is his alone, and whenever it is duplicated for collectors, it is labeled as the Harlequin of Moretti in Servant of Two Masters.[13]

Mazzone-Clementi also comments on this notion of the individuality within the stock characters, or the "comic prototypes," as he prefers to call them.

> The actor must always bring something fresh and personal to his role. No two Pantalones should be alike. The actor must find his own unique characterization without betraying any of the characteristics of the prototype. It is in this challenge that the joy of performing commedia comes.[14]

And Bari Rolfe echoes these ideas about the actor bringing his own insight and creativity to the commedia role/mask when she comments,

> Now there are the personal parts of it that can come in the way the actor moves. No two doctors do move alike, but they

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[11] Ibid., p. 3.

[12] Leone, p. 5.

[13] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[14] Mazzone-Clementi, "Commedia and the Actor," p. 64.

> are always pedantic. No two Pantalones do move alike but they are always avaricious . . . excepting Arlechino because it's the key figure and it's the most documented and the most described and the most everything, and so, and I don't know where this comes from, we do have (and I got mine from Lecoq), we do have typical gestures for Arlechino and I teach those. A few of them for Pantalone, but not nearly so many. And none for the Lovers, who aren't masked at all by the way. The description that I use for them is that they are very much like Shakespeare's heros and heroines and they move in the period and that's all, there's no other way for them to move. The Captain, however the actor animates that mask of the Captain, but he is always a braggart, he's always blustering and he's always cowardly. So you have those restrictions. . . . And this is part of the challenge to the actors, to accept those structures and restrictions and yet make it an individual thing.[15]

It is interesting to note that Jacques Lecoq's only vocal work in masks is done in these commedia dell'arte masks. He tries to have the student discover the traditional voice for the mask, not by telling him what qualities it should have (known from extant records), but by telling him what qualities it does not have (again the *via negativa* method). For Lecoq, it is important that the student find his own way to the right voice, or at least come within a given range of the true voice of the mask. Training in the commedia masks is an essential part of Lecoq's schooling for potential actors, because it is here that they learn to integrate their voice with the mask/character they are to play.[16]

Since the character traits of the commedia characters are known, as well as some of the traditional movements, gestures, and vocal qualities, the actor's job is not to invent freely from his

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[15] Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[16] Lecoq, Interview, August 6, 1974, see Appendix D.

own imagination, as with the regular training masks. Now he must "accept those structures and restrictions and yet make it an individual thing."[17]

It must be remembered that the techniques of the commedia dell'arte actors were practically lost and forgotten during the 19th century and have only been recovered through scholarly research and theatrical experimentation in this century. Yet, as Mazzone-Clementi points out,

> Although we can conjecture about commedia in a historical framework, we cannot know what it was like. There are no existing scripts, no photos. There are only a few paintings, a few sparce descriptions, and a horde of mostly untranslated scenarios. Yet, a great interest in commedia continues. Anyone can open the drawer marked commedia dell'arte, but, having opened it, how does one know what to choose from it? For some, commedia means a dusty reincarnation of the postures and poses of a Callot, charming in print, but deadly on the stage.[18]

For Mazzone-Clementi, the attempt to recapture the form of commedia dell'arte as it was during the 16th through 18th centuries is "a shallow and limiting approach to commedia."[19] What he is attempting to do at his new Dell'arte School in California is establish a new "kind of theatre that points out our human frailties and foibles"[20] much as the Renaissance commedia troupes did, and as Copeau tried to do with his troupe, Les Copiaus. For Mazzone-Clementi, the stock characters of the Italian commedia are as

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[17] Rolfe, Interview, see Appendix C.

[18] Mazzone-Clementi, "Commedia and the Actor," p. 59.

[19] Ibid., p. 64.

[20] Ibid.

alive today as they ever were. His job has been to discover the contemporary counterparts to the old types.

> When I came to New York, people said, what does the Bergamo mask correspond to in America? And I can say because he's a con man, and you can look at the eyes and he's a con man, and you can see together they [the two Zanni masks] work together and share the same energy. This guy [Brighella] prepare the ground and this guy [Harlequin] will tumble because he has the wondering eye. And that con man speaks with a certain slow gutteral sound and I compare to the Southern minstrel show, the carpet bagger; so I indicated when I got to New York areas where people should study dialects and develop a characteristical use of the language and dialects. And when I was there, because of the social thing, Arlechino was more of a Puerto Rican, you know, Puerto Rican fast kid. And when I saw on the streets all those Puerto Rican fast kids, I said, "Damn it, they got to find it!" I was feeling right that in New York, the Puerto Rican is the fast one [Zanni].[21]

Along with creating a new commedia dell'arte theatre, Mazzone-Clementi is also interested in revitalizing the actor. What he wants to develop are actors who "are skillful, perceptive, inventive, united and generous. . . ."[22] For Mazzone-Clementi, then, as it was for Jacques Copeau, the "magnetic appeal of commedia . . . has been to rediscover the magic of the performer: how he worked, what he did, and to some extent, why he did it, consciously or not."[23] And it is this concept of commedia training that makes its relationship valuable to this study, because it can tell us more about the relationship between the mask and the actor.

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[21]Mazzone-Clementi, Interview, August 8, see Appendix E.

[22]Mazzone-Clementi, "Commedia and the Actor," p. 64.

[23]Ibid., p. 59.

Before proceeding further, we will give a brief description of each of what are known as the traditional "Four Masks" of the commedia dell'arte.

The first two masks are for the old men: Pantalone, the Venetian, and Dottore, the Bolognese Doctor.

The actor playing Pantalone, the miser, wears a brown half-mask with a prominent hooked nose, and occasionally round spectacles (Figure 30).

> The moustache was grey and sparse. A white beard stretched from ear to ear, and came to one or two points well in advance of the chin, so that the tufts shook ludicrously as soon as Pantaloon began to talk.[24]

The Russian scholar, Constantin Miklashevsky, quotes P. J. Martelli who compared Pantalone's mask to "the head of an owl."[25] (A.T.)

The Dottore's mask "covers only his forehead and nose, and his skullcap conceals his hair."[26] Duchartre, the French commedia scholar, adds the information that the mask was black or flesh-colored and the actor rouged his cheeks[27] (Figure 31).

Oreglia gives the most complete description of the next mask, that of the Neopolitan, Pulcinella.

> At first Pulcinella was hunchbacked, with a phallic nose, long moustaches and a peaked beard. . . . Towards the end of the seventeenth century he lost his moustaches and beard and wore instead a half-mask, black or brown, furrowed with

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[24]Pierre Louis Duchartre, The Italian Comedy, trans. Randolph T. Weaver (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 188.

[25]Miklashevsky, p. 30.

[26]Oreglia, p. 86.

[27]Duchartre, p. 201.

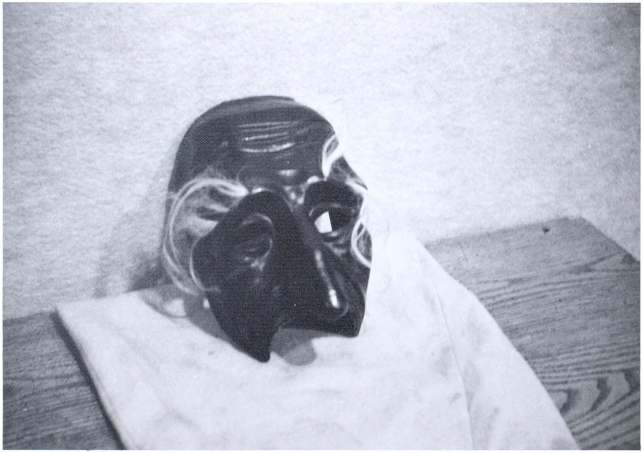

Figure 30.--Commedia dell'arte mask of the character Pantalone. Constructed in leather by Amleto Sartori. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

Figure 31.--Commedia dell'arte mask of the character Dottore. Constructed in leather by Amleto Sartori. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

> wrinkles and with a large wart or carbuncle on his forehead. His nose was beaked. . . .[28]

Chancerel adds two important notes: that the nose was curved like a parrot's beak, and that the eyes of the mask were open and almond-shaped (Figure 32).[29]

Finally, there are the masks of the two characters known as the Zanni, Brighella and Harlequin--the two serving men from Bergamo.

Brighella, the name of the first zanni, wears a half-mask. Oreglia calls it "animal-like and of olive hue, with slit eyes and crooked nose."[30] Miklashevsky claims the mask was black and had whiskers around the mouth[31] (Figure 33).

Harlequin, or Arlechino, the second zanni, and probably the most popular maschera of all, wore a unique mask constructed of two separate pieces.

> Harlequin's authentic mask consisted of a half-mask and a black chin-piece. The eyebrows and beard were bushy and covered with stiff bristles. The forehead was strongly lined with wrinkles which accentuated the slightly quizzical arch of the eyebrows. The eyes were tiny holes beneath, and the ensemble gave a curious expression of craftiness, sensuality, and astonishment which was both disturbing and alluring. The huge wen under the eye, the wart, and the black colour completed the impression of something savage and fiendish. The mask suggested a cat, a satyr, and the sort of negro that the Renaissance painters portrayed. Indeed, the potentialities latent in the mask of Harlequin are various and without end.[32]

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[28]Oreglia, pp. 92-93.

[29]Chancerel, Le Masque, I, p. 45.

[30]p. 72.

[31]p. 30.

[32]Duchartre, p. 135.

Figure 32.--Commedia dell'arte mask of the character Pulcinella. Constructed in leather by Amleto Sartori. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

Figure 33.--Commedia dell'arte mask of the character Brighella. Constructed in leather by Amleto Sartori. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

Miklashevsky again quotes Martelli who compared this mask to une marmotte, referring both to the monkey-like look of the mask and to the fact that it had a chin strap that gave it the appearance of a kerchief tied under the chin.[33] Oreglia further notes that the carbuncle on the forehead was either red or black, the nose was snubbed and the cheeks were hollow.[34] It is in the Sartori recreation of this Harlequin mask that the Italian actor, Marcello Moretti of the Piccolo Teatre di Milan, became world famous[35] (Figure 34).

Each of these masks had its own traditional movement pattern, gestures, and vocal qualities. And it is these characteristics the contemporary actor attempting these roles in the traditional masks must bring to life from his own resources. He must "live up" to the mask.

We have already noted that the commedia masks are more "fixed" in their delineation of the characters' personality traits. But this description of the masks as "fixed" does not mean that the commedia masks lack the ability to change expression. Whereas there is no ambiguity in the character type, there is ambiguity in the characters' expressions.

> The masks of the commedia dell'arte . . . wore an indefinable expression as full of possibilities as of impossibilities, like the Mona Lisa, which every generation interprets differently. We speak of the art of 'playing

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[33] p. 30.

[34] pp. 57-58.

[35] Ibid., p. 64.

Figure 34.--Commedia dell'arte mask of the character Harlequin. Constructed in leather by Amleto Sartori. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

> the mask' as though a precious stone were brought into play, because the feeling which each mask conveys varies according to the angle from which it is seen, and consequently it can range from the most extraordinary comic effects to the most disturbing or terribly tragic emotion.[36]

In fact, the masks had to be able to change expression in order to play the changing emotional states of the characters they represented.

As we have already seen with the training masks, this ability of the masks to change expression is due to a combination of factors: the skill of the sculptor and the skill of the actor.

Vsevolod Meyerhold, the Russian director-teacher and an ardent advocate of the revival of the commedia dell'arte, referred to this ability of the actor to change the expression of the mask when he wrote about the Harlequin mask,

> 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 aide of the mask.
>
> The actor who has mastered the art of gesture and movement (herein lies his power!) manipulates his masks in such a way that the spectator is never in any doubt about the character he is watching: whether he is the foolish buffoon from Bergamo or the Devil.[37]

The Russian commedia scholar, Constantin Miklashevsky, through his association with the playwright-director Nikolai Evreinov and their experimentation with the commedia masks (see Chapter II), also came to the same understanding of this secret relationship

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[36] Duchartre, p. 42.

[37] Meyerhold, p. 131.

between the actor's body and his mask; "that the expression of the mask depended on the bodily attitudes and changed with them."[38] (A.T.)

Duchartre agrees on this point with both Meyerhold and Miklashevsky:

> The mask presupposes, furthermore, a constant and perfected play of the body which is an art in itself, requiring thorough study; in other words, the body must become a supplement to the mask--a new face in fact. . . .
> If the body was lacking in plastic eloquence the mask was meaningless. But if the body was subtle in its play the mask became a far more effective means of expression than the muscles.[39]

It seems obvious that these three commedia dell'arte scholars understood clearly the intimate connections between the mask and the mask wearer; the necessity for the actor's "absorption of the mask into himself, and the projection of himself through the mask." As we have already noted, this concept is just as valid for the training masks as for the commedia masks. Just putting on a mask does not work. The actor's verbophysical mechanism must be sensitized to its demands.

To illustrate how a sensitive actor can respond to a commedia mask, we can turn to Léon Chancerel's observations on the results of a slightly modified Pulcinella mask on his friend, Auguste Boverio, another member of Copeau's troupe in Burgundy.

> It was in fact with a traditional Polichinelle mask which I had modified a little (an opening under the eyebrow around the eye, a nose painted red, moustaches and beard of blue marabou) that our friend Auguste Boverio set out to invent the character of Bitouille, a character who, moreover, had not

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[38]Miklashevsky, p. 118n.

[39]Duchartre, p. 42.

> had any public existence. In this mask, dressed in white like Pulcinella, Auguste Boverio gave forthwith free vent to his comic genius, multiplying jokes and burlesque inventions, helped by his sense of acrobatics and dances, and a long training in gymnastics. Dear Auguste had truly created a character in the great tradition of Zanni, who lived completely on the stage and brought back to it the dynamism, the verve, the spontaneity, and the skill of his remote ancestors.[40] (A.T.)

In this passage we note the powerful effect this specific commedia mask had on one responsive actor. For Chancerel, the Pulcinella mask had a striking double effect: it seemed to revive in the actor the traditional commedia character with his acrobatics, his gags, and obscene jokes in all their former glory, and at the same time the actor appeared to be a reincarnation of the old Pulcinella from the past. From our perspective this is only further evidence that supports the major thesis of this study: this commedia mask performed the same function as the training masks by freeing the actor's imagination, the actor's body, and the actor's voice (Figure 35).

For Mazzone-Clementi, the commedia dell'arte masks work at a profound psychological level on the actor.

> These masks of character are metamorphic. Their life, too, must be discovered and united with the life and visions of the actor. When this unification is successful, magic occurs. Behind any mask lies an entity deeply connected to the personality of the performer.[41]

These "connections" between the mask and the actor have also been one of the most provocative aspects of the use of the training masks in developing the actor's capabilities. If the mask can move

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[40] Chancerel, Le Masque, I, p. 45.

[41] "Commedia and the Actor," pp. 63-64.

Figure 35.--Commedia dell'arte mask for the character of the Captain worn by Carlo Mazzone-Clementi. This character is usually not masked. Courtesy of Carlo Mazzone-Clementi.

the actor deeply, then it can come alive through his limbs and voice. And conversely, the actor is reborn through the mask.

We have now come full circle in our discussion of masks and their effect on the wearer, for it was the revival of interest in the commedia dell'arte and its techniques of improvisation that first led Jacques Copeau to the beginnings of the method of using masks in training actors.

CHAPTER X

MASKS AND FACES: THE VALUE OF THE MASK TRAINING FOR THE ACTOR, EVALUATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

> For the training of the actor, the knowledge and practice of performing masked in school exercises, seem to me indispensible. In depriving the apprentice actor of the assistance of the face, the mask obliges him to perform with his entire body; to do away with making faces; to get outside himself; to deeply, physically and psychologically, understand the worth of a position, of a gesture, of a step; to develop in him the pure dramatic instinct, the feeling for performance, for the character, for the situation; to leave photography in order to raise oneself to statuary; to understand that art interprets nature but does not copy her.[1] (A.T.)

Now that we have examined the various training masks and the techniques employed with those masks, we need to ask three important questions: (1) What are the limitations of this method? (2) What adjustments or transitional period does the actor go through in proceeding to act without a mask? and, (3) What positive "carry-over" effects does undergoing this training approach have for the actor?

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this method is that it cannot provide the apprentice actor with an experience and exploration of the psychologically complex characters that he will be called upon to create in modern dramas. Since a mask does have limits to what it can express, this also limits the actor. And

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[1] Chancerel, Le Masque, II, p. 15.

at the same time, the characterizations created by the actor under the mask tend towards caricatures--typical figures rather than fully individualized figures.

Yet while this is indeed true, it was Michael Chekhov, the Russian actor-teacher, who suggested that it was not harmful but very helpful for the actor to recognize and create the typical aspects of his character, at least as a starting point for the characterization. For Chekhov, all theatrical roles were based in types, and "the 'type' which the actor plays is given to us by nature, but each individual 'character' must come from the playwright."[2]

As we have just noted in the previous chapter, even the commedia dell'arte masks with their extreme stereotyped characters are given distinctively individualized qualities by each actor who wears the mask. We have also seen how unique characterizations can occur with the more subtle and ambiguous kinds of masks. So, while the limitations of the mask are indeed apparent, they can, on reflection, be seen from a more positive point of view also.

Another possible adverse factor for the actor who will normally perform unmasked is, as LeBonniec puts it, that "the masks constitute artifical stimulants to the imagination"[3] of the student actor. For the actor working in non-masked theatre must come up with his own interpretation and visualization of the role

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[2]Michael Chekhov, To The Director And Playwright, compiled by Charles Leonard (New York: Harper & Bros., 1963), p. 57.

[3]LeBonniec, p. 13.

from his study of the play and his experience of life. In the final analysis, the actor must see the character for himself and devise the gestures, movements, voice, and face that are congruent with that image. Interestingly enough, though, as LeBonniec also admits, this mask training method is one that provokes a greater interest and need in the actor for a closer observation of other people and their habits.[4] Thus, the actor gains a heightened ability to visualize his characters more clearly, more completely, because of the stimulus to his imagination provided by prior training with the masks.

The teachers using this method do recognize the limitations of what this training can do for the actor. For Michel Saint-Denis it is only a "temporary instrument" given at a certain stage in the actor's training process and then dispensed with.[5]

And Peter Frisch, in responding to a question about whether continued training in the mask was important for the actor, voiced what may be considered the general attitude about this training method:

> I don't know. I would suspect that there is a point of no return. That there's a certain security about approaching that [the mask], about knowing what it does to your body and your voice, and after the third or fourth character taken on and successfully employed at certain junctures in the process, where you're having trouble, the mask technique--that after you have that craft behind you, except for a once-every-five-years refresher course to make sure you're not getting too cocky, I think that it might be behind you.[6]

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[4]Ibid., p. 11.

[5]Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 103.

[6]Frisch, Interview, see Appendix A.

This method of training actors is thought of, then, as only "a means to an end,"[7] as Jeremy Geidt puts it and not as an end in itself (unless there is an interest in extending the training into developing a masked theatre form as Léon Chancerel did in France before World War II).

From this cursory review of the possible limitations of the method arises the next question: What adjustments or transitional period does the actor go through in proceeding to act without a mask?

It seems like an appropriate question to ask. What is unusual is that not one person (teacher or performer) has even commented upon this question. While there has usually been such a careful initiation of the student into the mask, there is no apparent concern or structured debriefing for the student out of the mask. At most schools the student is taking other acting courses concurrently with this mask training, so the integration between the approaches is already occurring.

When the training work with the masks is completed, the student simply moves on to more complex, non-masked, character creations in a more structured context; from improvisation to the analysis and interpretation of a text. Saint-Denis, writing about the Old Vic Theatre School training, said,

> The truth is that to counterbalance the amount of imaginative experience acquired by the actors in their many different kinds of improvisation, the time had come for them to master

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[7]Geidt, Interview, see Appendix F.

> form and style before they could regain their freedom of invention. Until then creative acting would remain an unattainable paradise.
>
> It was then that real talent and artistic temperament began to make themselves evident.[8]

It is only when we proceed to the next question (What positive "carry-over" effects does undergoing this training approach have for the actor?) that we begin to arrive at some answers as to why none of the proponents of this method seem concerned with any possible re-entry problems the actors might have moving into working without masks.

Let us restate the question. When the student removes the mask to work without it on his face, what effects of this training method does he retain that are beneficial to him in his future work? In order to answer this question we need to look at some students' comments:

> It seems to me that the action of the mask is to unmask, since, if on one hand it stifles timidity, the worry of having feet and hands which one doesn't know what to do with, on the other hand it frees a certain part of us (let us admit the least bad) and opens to it a window where it can escape. The mask helps us a lot to be sincere, to enter into another being and then to let it live and breathe while forgetting the effect produced.[9] (A.T.)

> I feel very strongly that the mask course was most valuable to me personally, and should be one of the mandatory requirements for actors. It teaches him to 'step out' of his own little shell, practically to melt away and to make room for a new personality. As it teaches the aspiring actor to become an object or a certain character, it teaches the important phase of wiping off one's facial expressions and to express solely with body language, which later becomes almost automatic

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[8] Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 106.

[9] Chancerel, quoting a student in Le Théâtre et la Jeunesse, p. 133.

> in acting. This class teaches control and a tremendous amount of concentration, movements which are simple yet larger than life, and to listen to oneself as well.[10]
>
> I now have much more confidence in my ability to control my movement and presence on stage, and to make these elements a contribution to more complete characterizations.[11]
>
> This mime and mask class has been the most satisfying class I have taken at Valley State. I have felt the growth of my body's awareness, I have made improvements in my acting scenes as a result. 'Stage fright' seemed to vanish when I put on the mask. Because of this comfortable feeling with the mask I now feel more self assured on stage with the mask off.[12]
>
> It broke my stereotype! I'm always cast as an engenue [sic] so everything I did was cute and young and squeaky. But not now![13]
>
> It helps me to express nonverbal feelings. We learn to economize, to be clear, precise control and stage presence. To economize and channel energy equally.[14]

If we try to summarize these comments about the value the mask training has had for these students, we notice certain ideas being repeated: that the mask training has freed the actor psychologically and therefore physically; that it has taught the actor to divest himself of his own personality traits so that the role can be more completely fulfilled; that it has given the student a self-knowledge and self-assurance to perform with authenticity on stage; that the student has discovered his body as a powerful instrument that must be as expressive on stage as his face and

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[10] Rolfe, Student Comments and Notes, p. 2.

[11] Ibid., p. 1.

[12] Ibid., p. 2.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 1.

voice; that he must integrate body, voice, and face into a total characterization; that his powers of concentration have been increased; and that he has learned control of his psychophysical being so that he can present a more effective characterization.

As we noted in Chapter I of this study, the mask has a paradoxical effect on the wearer. It is both an agent of release and an agent of control. It is an agent of depersonalization as well as an agent of essentialization. It is always an agent of integration and transformation. For Jean-Louis Barrault,

> The mask has a deeper significance: it externalizes the inner life, it extracts from the human being the second existence of his instincts and, hence, when an actor no longer has the subtle expressions of the features at his disposal, he must discover a deeper system of expression like so many taps which are suddenly turned on. The technique of acting changes . . . under the mask you no longer look with your eyes, but with your neck; under the mask, you are no longer yourself, you are the character. Timidity disappears and one gains a much greater capacity for expression. Even one's toes rediscover their personality, the muscles of the abdomen find their raison d'etre, the body regains a whole theatrical function . . . it is the mask which helps us to regain the human being's totality of expression.[15]

And for the dancer, Mary Wigman,

> The mask extinguishes the human being as a person and makes him submit to the fictive figure of the dance. The mask is merciless and does not tolerate any deviation from the theme which it helps to determine and influence--and often creatively. It is felt in its living silence and its demands. As soon as the dancer has fully recognized it, the mask begins its reign of dictatorship.[16]

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[15]as quoted in "Greek Tragedy: Its Production, II. The Foreign Producers' Point of View," World Theatre, VI, 4 (Winter, 1957), p. 277.

[16]Mary Wigman, The Mary Wigman Book, ed. and trans. Walter Sorell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), p. 124.

But, as Jan Doat says, "The method serves the talent, it doesn't replace it."[17] (A.T.) It does seem to be a factor that this method is most beneficial to actors of talent, however impossible it is to define precisely what that means. Michel Saint-Denis declares, "Submission to the lesson of the mask enables an actor of talent [italics added] to discover a broad, inspired and objective style of acting."[18] Mazzone-Clementi concurs, "I mean if he is a good actor, he should be able to wear a mask."[19]

But it is not, of course, a foolproof method. There are some students of talent who never seem to make the connections between the work with masks and their other acting training. Libby Appel cites one such example.

> . . . he was so brilliant in the mask class, the total synthesis of body, of comedy, of character, of believability, of being able to control the action and yet allow it to happen--everything you want, okay? And besides that a character that was so delicious you wanted him around all the time because he was so funny and so charming. And never put on, never pushed, always there. Never has that carried over into his work. What can I tell you? Just a brilliant clown, a brilliant comic, but not able to bring it into anything else. . . .[20]

Ms. Appel goes on to say that the student must experience the connections between the mask work and his acting without masks or the training will be ineffective.[21] This does not mean, however,

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[17] Doat, p. 47.

[18] Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style, p. 104.

[19] Interview, August 8, 1974, see Appendix E.

[20] Interview, see Appendix G.

[21] Ibid.

that the student cannot be an effective actor if the connections are not immediately and consciously perceived. Jeremy Geidt mentions one former student who did not consciously realize the connections between the mask work and her successful characterizations until years later.[22] For this student the lesson was learned intuitively. But it does appear from the evidence at hand that it is the better students who not only respond to this special technique but are able to make the connections between it and their other acting training without masks.[23]

> Whoever, having a mask in his hands and with the ambition to play with it, isn't seized by an emotion which suddenly detaches him from his own humanity and plunges him into a 'state' which he cannot define but where he enters of a sudden a sort of quasi-magical mysterious fever; whoever, having hidden his face behind a mask of a given character, doesn't feel himself as soon possessed by an irresistible force, burlesque or tragic, from head to foot . . . that one will perhaps be able to agreeably interpret 'the roles'; he is assuredly not and never will be a true dramatic 'creator.'[24] (A.T.)

There is also one further and most important "carry-over" that the student takes with him to his succeeding acting work. And that is that the student trained in this method may now perceive the characters he is to play in a new way. He may see them as masks. Two of Bari Rolfe's students confirm this idea.

> Thinking about the mask gets me into my character role in acting.[25]
>
> I can assume any mask (role) now, like for an audition.[26]

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[22]Interview, see Appendix F.

[23]Appel, Interview, see Appendix G.

[24]Chancerel, Le Masque, II, p. 17.

[25]Rolfe, Student Comments and Notes, p. 1.

[26]Ibid.

Should characters as conceived by the playwright be thought of as masks? As Richard Schechner points out, there is a real danger in thinking of them as real persons rather than as something devised by a playwright.

> A role is a theatrical entity, not a psychological being. . . . A role conforms to the logic of theatre not the logic of any other life system. To think of a role as a person is like picnicking on a landscape painting.[27]

Then what are the benefits for the actor to approach his characterization as if he were approaching a mask? There are not many critics who have written from this point of view--that the playwright's characters should be thought of as masks--but there are a few and their opinions are illuminating.

J. L. Styan in his book, The Elements of Drama,[28] deals convincingly with just this question.

> The concept of character derives from the mask. The mask imposes a tight control upon one aspect of reality to present it simply. Basically, it dispenses with the need to 'act': for two antithetic masks juxtaposed upon one stage provide the substance of a situation and the plan for a play. The development of drama, as Archer might have maintained, seems to have been the gradual freeing of the actor from the restrictions of the mask, but as long as the author was still writing for an actor on a stage, neither has been totally free. Always the basic premise of theatre has remained, that a play must concentrate and confine life within fixed limits.[29]

He also goes on to answer the related question of how we can still talk about character development in a play if the character is thought of as a mask.

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[27]"Aspects Of Training At The Performance Group," Actor Training 1, ed. Richard P. Brown (New York: Institute for Research in Acting with Drama Book Specialists/Publishers, 1972), p. 53.

[28](London: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

[29]Ibid., pp. 169-170.

> . . . the development of character is in fact nothing but a finer distinction of the features of the mask. It is properly the development of the image that deludes us into seeing a development in the character.[30]

Implicit in these remarks by Styan is the idea that the mask is not just the face of the character but his whole being as conceived by the playwright. Robert Benedetti, the American acting teacher, concurs with this opinion.

> The idea of mask must not be restricted to the face alone. Even our reading of facial expression in real life is much determined by the condition of the entire body.[31]

According to the maskmaker, W. T. Benda, "What our physical eye really sees [in the theatre] is the actor's movements that express certain moods and feelings, and it is our subconscious mind that fills in the gap, knowing from experience what facial changes accompany these movements."[32]

Further corroboration of this idea is given by the painter Maurice Grosser.

> At twice its height, the figure can be seen at once. It can be comprehended at a glance . . . understood as a unit and a whole. . . . At this distance whatever meaning or feeling the figure may convey is dominated, not by expression of features of the face, but by the position of the members of the body. . . .[33]

If we accept these statements, then Styan's conclusions have more plausibility.

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[30]Ibid., p. 176.

[31]"Notes To An Actor," Actor Training 1, ed. Richard P. Brosn (New York: Institute for Research in Acting with Drama Book Specialists/ Publishers, 1972), p.

[32]Masks, p. 4.

[33]Grosser, as quoted in Edward T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 78.

> The playgoer can finally admit character as a mask in its meaning and a puppet in its action, and judge it only by standards of reality and conviction which the orchestration and total purpose of the play demand.[34]

Tom F. Driver in his recent book, Romantic Quest And Modern Query,[35] also considers this same question.

> Translated into theatrical terms, dialectical reason means that every character is a mask. The character is the form of something other than itself--deeper, more mysterious, more mutable. If the playwright removes the character's mask, revealing what it hides, he will move the dialectic to a new level, but he will not resolve it. The character newly exposed will prove to be another mask, negating and being negated by what it hides. And so on. A human being can be represented in the theater only by a set of masks, one inside the other, all of them worn by an invisible presence. The character as such is only a stereotype (what else are minor characters in most plays?). The person is revealed in the tension between the fixity of his character and the mobility of his inner life. This tension reappears on each successive level of analysis.[36]

What Driver is expressing in this passage goes to the crux of our problem. If the mask is seen only as an instrument of concealment behind which the true being hides, then when the playwright rips it off in order to uncover for the audience the core of his character's being, that which is revealed is always only another mask. As we have discovered, to see the mask only as a concealing agent is to have a very limited vision of what the mask is. The more perceptive view is the realization that the mask, besides being an agent for concealing the character, is also potent as a revealing agent. The character and his mask(s) must be seen

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[34] Styan, p. 187.

[35] (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1971).

[36] Ibid., pp. 406-407.

not only as different but as intimately connected--that through the fixity of one (the mask), the essence of the other (the character) is revealed. Of course, we are now talking about the mask not just as a literal covering for the face, but more in a metaphorical sense as the whole outward appearance and behavior of the character.

Both Robert Benedetti and Richard Schechner use similar terminology for this metaphorical concept of the mask. Schechner employs the term "masks of dramatic action" for this concept.[37] Benedetti's phrase is "the mask of actions."[38] Both men understand this concept as operative not only on the stage but in life as well.

> The principle of the mask must be understood in a very broad way: a mask, or the principle of maskness, is any mechanism or behavior which is designed to project a sense of the self.
>
> Persona is the word for mask, and it's the word from which we derive the personality. Personality is a mask, a pattern of behavior whereby we present a sense of ourselves to our society.
>
> Theatre is, in fact, based upon this everyday life-principle. We, in real life, perform sets of actions which become a mask presented to others, upon which our social audience projects a sense of authentic 'self' which they tend to credit to the person performing those actions. If I convince you that I am a certain way, it is not necessarily because I am that way, but because I have performed my mask of actions successfully.[39]

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[37] Schechner, p. 53.

[38] Benedetti, p. 70.

[39] Ibid., p. 72.

The British actor Michael Redgrave also has this same perception of the composition of the human personality, but makes an important and distinctive addition to this theory which will return us to the question of how the actor handles this understanding of his human persona when he must deal with a fictional persona. He writes that the human actor contains within himself both Mask and Face. He declares, "The crux of the problem. Is it mask or face? I had better say at once that in my opinion the two cannot be separated."[40]

To clarify what he means about this divisible, yet indivisible, aspect of the human persona, Redgrave examines the difference between the "mask" and the "face" of the actress Edith Evans.

> . . . the essence of her emotional experience and the residuum of a life's philosophy. This is the actress's Face. The rest, her appearance, her voice, her techniques, her mannerism, are the Mask, but without the perfect discipline of the latter, the former would not be visible to us.[41]

What Redgrave, Benedetti, Schechner, and Driver realize is that a person is not a fixed being but a being in the process of becoming. We are always in the process of becoming who we are. And we understand others only by their becoming; by the mask of actions which they perform. Or, as Driver stated it, "The person is revealed in the tension between the fixity of his character and the mobility of his inner life."[42] According to Mazzone-Clementi,

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[40]Mask or Face: Reflections In An Actor's Mirror (London: Heineman, Ltd., 1958), p. 27.

[41]Ibid., p. 27.

[42]Driver, p. 407.

this participation in the process of becoming is one way the actual mask affects the actor. "It's going to provoke a becoming, and that's what the actor should be, a becoming, not a being. The mask helps because you must invent, you can't just lie there and suck your thumb."[43]

Therefore, not only is the actor himself in the process of becoming with his own personal mask of actions, but the actor's job is to portray a character who is also in the process of becoming through the mask of actions that the playwright has proscribed for it. And the central question now at issue, as Robert Benedetti sees it, "is whether the character which the actor portrays is a mask which he only wears, or whether (or to what degree) it becomes his own face."[44]

We have already seen in this study that this complex and difficult question can be answered from our knowledge of what happens to the actor under an actual mask, and, at the same time, what happens to an actual mask on the face of a sensitive actor. The mask "in-forms" the wearer, and the actor in turn brings the mask to life. You cannot just talk about a separation between the two entities, masks or faces. You must also talk about an intimate and inspiring connection. It is not only "masks or faces" as William Archer would have it;[45] it is also masks and faces. Driver

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[43]as quoted in Spencer, p. 362.

[44]Benedetti, p. 72.

[45]William Archer, Masks or Faces? "Dramabook" (New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1967). This book was first written in 1888. In it Archer tries to answer the question of how much the actor must be emotionally involved in his part.

is right. There is a dialectic at the heart of every character creation. But it is not only occurring between the character and his mask(s); it is also a process going on between the actor and his own mask of actions as well as between the actor and the fictional character. The actor's job is to give the illusion of resolving these dialectical relationships in the synthesis of his (the actor's) becoming, while making it appear that he is portraying the character's becoming. Michael Redgrave says that "the unmistakable stamp of an actor's personality or genius is always to be detected through whatever mask he has created for himself."[46] So also with the actor and his role, with or without an actual face mask.

> Even if I'm not wearing a literal, concrete mask, but instead the mask of actions, postures, and sounds which is, for example, Falstaff, you still have some glimmer of my own identity lurking behind that mask of action which is Falstaff.[47]

If we remember Louis Jouvet's definition of the difference between the words "actor" and "comédien" (". . . the actor can only play certain roles; he distorts the others in line with his personality The comedian, however, can play all roles. . . ."),[48] then we can perhaps interpolate this as saying that the "actor" is one whose own persona is too much in evidence through the mask of the character, while the "comédien" is the one who can don the character's mask

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[46] Redgrave, p. 27.

[47] Benedetti, p. 74.

[48] Jouvet, p. 241.

and appear to embody both the character and his own self through the character's mask simultaneously.

And isn't this concept of the actor's apparent merger with the character what William Archer was really implying when he wrote,

> The poet--say Shakespeare--fecundates the imagination of the actor--say Salvini--so that it bodies forth the great passion-quivering phantom of Othello. In the act of representation this phantom is, as it were, superimposed upon the real man. The phantom Othello suffers, and the nerve-centers of the man Salvini thrill in response.[49]

What else is this "superimposed phantom of Othello" but the concept of the character as a mask of actions?

It is the actor's job to insinuate and transform his persona into the persona of the character as the playwright has conceived it. If the actor has undergone the mask training, responded to it, and now visualizes each role he plays as a mask, then one immediate benefit will be that he will understand why this mask (the character) must have the appropriate physical, emotional, and vocal life to complete it. And why his own mask of actions must be neutralized so that the character's mask of actions may be fully assumed. In this way the actor is rescued from perceiving every role he plays through what Peter Frisch calls his "own neurotic self image."[50] Frisch, elaborating on this beneficial aspect of the mask training for the actors, says,

> It's just that he [the actor] is so trained that he can see what is on the written page. He can be, in a sense, objective at the same time that he, of course, enters into it when he

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[49]Archer, p. 220.

[50]Frisch, Interview, see Appendix A.

> works subjectively. (Which is also cleared up.) But when he reads a play that he's going to be in, he doesn't say, 'Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah!' [recognizing himself in the role] But he watches a figure moving, and he sees that figure for itself as opposed to his own interpretation based on what he needs to look for, to solve some neurotic fight he had twenty years ago.[51]

These words of Frisch echo those written earlier by the Russian actor, Michael Chekhov. In his book, To The Director And Playwright, Chekhov mentions that the good actor is always "expressing himself through their [the characters'] masks or personalities,"[52] but not in order to have the actor's personality seen. It is the mask of the character that must be clearly realized.

> Seeing and hearing the character thus in my mind's eyes and ears, as the playwright saw and heard him, studying him in every detail as he lives out his half life on the stage, I am better able to absorb the qualities which will transform me into the character; I am better able to alter my body, my voice, and my emotions to conform with those of the character instead of forcing his to conform to mine. By so doing, I become the character's instrument for conveying his life to the audience, as the playwright saw it. I do not make the character just another instrument for conveying my own personality.[53]

Chekhov suggested two valuable exercises for accomplishing this transformation into the character that are analogous to exercises used in the mask training. The first was for the actor to use his imagination to put on the face of a real person he did not know. Chekhov wrote about this exercise, that "the more you can imagine your face as resembling that of the person you have

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Compiled by Charles Leonard (New York: Harper & Bros., 1963), p. 21.

[53] Ibid., p. 50.

under scrutiny, the more you will feel the psychology that this person awakens within you. . . ."[54]

The other exercise was closely related to this first one. It asked the student actor to find an "imaginary body" for his character.

> You are going to imagine that in the same space you occupy with your own real body there exists another body--the imaginary body of your character, which you have created in your mind.
>
> You clothe yourself, as it were, with this body; you put it on like a garment. What will be the result of this 'masquerade'? After a while (or perhaps in a flash!) you will begin to feel and think of yourself as another person. This experience is very similar to that of a real masquerade. . . . But 'wearing another's body' is more than any raiment or costume. This assumption of the character's imaginary physical form influences your psychology ten times more strongly than any garment!
>
> The imaginary body stands, as it were, between your real body and your psychology, influencing both of them with equal force. Step by step, you begin to move, speak and feel in accord with it; that is to say, your character now dwells within you (or, if you prefer, you dwell within it).
>
> . . . But in any case, your whole being psychologically and physically, will be changed--I would not hesitate to say even possessed--by the character. When really taken on and exercised, the imaginary body stirs the actor's will and feelings; it harmonizes them with the characteristic speech and movements, it transforms the actor into another person![55]

What Chekhov has written here could have been written by Jacques Copeau. Only for Copeau it was the actual mask that stood "between your real body and your psychology, influencing both of them with equal force." It was the actual mask that "possessed" the actor; that inspired and demanded the transformation that would bring the actor into harmony with itself. As we have seen in this study, it is much more specific, concrete, and forceful for the

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[54]Ibid., p. 71.

[55]To The Actor (New York: Harper & Bros., 1953), p. 87.

apprentice actor to learn that he must transform his whole psycho-physical being into that of the character he is to play through the experience which the mask training gives him. Training the student actor with masks can provide him a valuable core of experiences and techniques that will only enrich his future development.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH PETER FRISCH

APPENDIX A

Interview with Peter Frisch of the Contemporary Theatre Collective at Harvardhouse, Littleton, Massachusetts. July 11, 1973.

Now you said you don't teach masks, yourself.

The person who will is in California and she will be out in September. Her name is Mallory Sandler. I was extremely interested in masks as a discipline because it runs, at least on the surface, antithetical to my own operating in the system, the internal leading ultimately to an external behavior, whereas to me, the mask training basically operates the reverse of this process, in so far as the person is given a totally external stimulus and from that he builds an inner life. So that I also happen to believe very strongly and one of the strongest tenets of this organization is going to be that we just don't settle on one theory and practice it, and crystalize some product for future ages to say, "Ah, yes, this was the penultimate movement, here." But what we're trying to do is explore every damn theory that's available. But what possibly ties it together is the investigation, that there are no assumptions made. In other words, we start from ground zero, whatever the history. Which we will know after we've done the research on it, and then again forget. And start right from scratch. So, in a sense, this is what I feel about the approaches to the mask, the approaches to. . . .

Where did this girl get her training in masks?

At Juilliard. Pierre Lefevre teaches masks there and he's worked with the Comédie Français and founded the Strasbourg School, which is another Saint-Denis school.

I was going to say, the tradition must come down through Saint-Denis.

That's right, yeah.

And from Copeau, who worked with masks.

Sure. But Pierre is a wonderful, really remarkable teacher. What he does with the mask . . . I'll have to admit there are certain things that he does with his students and for his students that I think the students might best do on their own, which is a problem of any teacher. But I think with Pierre's training, almost as a conservatory sort of training, one can depart from there. So she

[Mallory] ends up with a terrifically solid background. Last year, I used to watch the classes and the year before, I was really fascinated by them. Mallory was just extraordinary. She's a little girl, really beautiful, just gorgeous, blonde, big eyes. She's a character actress, not an ingenue. She gets hold of an idea, and she goes so far physically, vocally with it. She's wonderful with masks. She can take a suggestion from an eyebrow, from a fold in the cheek, and draw a whole character and create an inner life with it. And this is what's about to us.

So she's really going to teach masks for you and you have not yourself taught masks, or worked with them?

I've worked with them but I haven't taught them. Only in class and in faculty workshops rather informally. But most of the thing is the observation with those masks. Also I collect myself. I love them a lot.

Well, I've got a set of questions. If they don't apply, or because of what you haven't done, you can't answer those, then fine. I'd like to try and get to see Lefevre at Juilliard.

He's in Europe half the year and at Juilliard half the year.

And there is a man at Yale who also works with masks.

Who is that?

Jeremy Geidt. And I think he primarily works with masks in relation to Commedia work.

That's been the interesting thing, as far as I'm concerned, coming to it new, in one sense I haven't got the sense of tradition, although, yes, I've studied Commedia and done my papers and I've done my stuff. But in one sense I'm coming to it new, so my view of masks is divorced from the Commedia. So in some ways I think, and this has to do with Pierre in a way, I'm freer to deal with the mask as training actors without imposing a Commedia framework on them. Although I do believe in the character masks, which you know are . . . direct . . . persona.

Well, let's begin and we'll see where we get to. The first question you've sort of answered, and that's, "What course of study or training have you had that has influenced you with masks in training actors?" And that's come out of Juilliard?

Yeah. Mainly Pierre's work.

So you haven't really studied it, you're taking off again from things that you've seen. . . .

It's been from a series of observations and this sort of thing. I mean it's enough to know that masks should be in the curriculum, and to give Mallory a run for her money on asking her very fundamental questions and that's the way I feel about my job.

What kinds of masks do you use? Half masks, or full face masks. . . ?

Yeah, this is . . . mainly what we'll be doing is full face. Later on I think we will go to the half, and three-quarter, although three-quarter will be finally. There's something about a weight in front of the face. To view the mask and put it on and then not have it there, it seems not to be of great value. The viewing is half of it, the receiving of impulse, but to put it on and then not feel it, is still to remain self conscious, to still be in your own skin essentially. But somehow this weight seems to be transferred to body impulse. At least that's what I found happening to me.

So the full face will give you this weight, whereas the half-mask doesn't give you that much.

Right, that weight, constriction is a sense. In the beginning I think that's important. Later on. . . . That presence is very important.

So you will begin with the full face and then perhaps go on to the half mask rather than the other way around?

Right. Exactly. No, I think the initiation should be very strong and very full. We'll begin with the neutral mask. . . .

What do you mean by neutral mask?

I don't mean . . . I mean something different than Juilliard means here. Juilliard in their neutral masks, I think, divides it up into four ages: kind of a boyhood, a youth thing, a middle-age, and an old age. Now for me, the function of the neutral mask is it is more to eliminate than to create. In other words, it's a step between "nothing" and "character." I think the less that's imposed on the actor, ...

This is again working off of an idea of Grotowski, isn't it? I mean the absence, getting rid of. . . .

Oh, very much so, this is a very strong influence. The problem with that, of course, is when they're getting rid of neuroses in general. You can't get rid so easily unless you have some temporary thing to replace it.

[telephone call interruption]

Where were we? We were talking about neutrals. We start with the neutrals. And my neutrals are really going to be neutral. They are going to be a youth thing. No babies, no middle and old age. In other words, people their age [the age of his students] . . . the wrinkles aren't in, character formation, this kind of thing.

Have you seen these kinds of masks?

These are basically the kinds of things you find . . . the plastic masks, the see-through masks. . . .

The white dummy masks? It's a French made mask that is very clean, very. . . .

What we'll have to do, unfortunately, unless you have a suggestion which I'm very open for, is build a paper-mache mask. So that's the kind of thing we'll do with the neutral mask. And basically there should be X amount of masks, all of them the same.

[talk on obtaining the white dummy mask]

The main thing is the Juilliard masks begin to show, they're permanently done, there's a peel here, a little off here, and I can see in three or four years, they're really going to need a new set.

Okay, there's the neutral mask, and you've kind of given me the reasons that you're going to begin with that. Do you feel . . . you've not tried this out, have you with the neutral mask?

No, I've just watched Pierre'sclasses go from one to the other.

Do they start with the neutral mask?

Yes.

Oh, they do. It's really the extreme that you hit them with, isn't it? In other words, they have nothing to hang on to.

That's the thing, exactly. It's funny, you know, that first year in the school, they really, in a sense, have to be lowered rather quickly into, as it were, . . . and you find that the ones who are most reticent, who resist terribly, are the ones who are okay; it's the ones who very subtley come on and say, "Aha! I'm open and I'm nice and I'm free." That's where the real problems are. But in any case, when they come in here, they're going to be going through a number of various personal changes. And our function is simply to hold up the mirror. And in a sense, the mask is one aspect of that.

All right, where do you go next from the neutral mask?

Then we move into the characters. What we're thinking of right now, what we're going to try, and this is more or less right now on an experimental basis, and it may change as we work, if we feel they're not ready for the characters, we simply won't give it to them yet. Right now it's divided over a series of three terms, which conveniently the school is divided into. And by the way, we may be the only school to give it to them every day.

You mean mask work?

Every day.

For three terms?

For three terms. Again not towards performance, it has nothing to do with performance.

It's only self-exploration-self-exploration and creativity.

That's right. I've seen it work very, very well, and I know Mallory. And I think it develops the kinds of things that I see, the kind of freedoms that are explored, and that ultimately when the mask is put aside, the kind of strong commitment to work. And all that can be developed from the artificial aid, I don't see any replacement for it. Except in the diametric opposite, that we were talking about before, which is getting the imagination to the point where everything can depend on achieving your action. But to me they are both the same, and arrive at the same, very strong point. And to me, strong choices is what theatre is about.

All right, what kinds of character masks are you going to use?

They run the gamit. They're basically . . . I want them possibly a bit more human than the Juilliard masks.

Now what do you mean that you want yours more human than the Juilliard? I haven't seen the Juilliard.

Well, in so far that the Juilliard character masks are essentially caricature masks. Again here we come into our Commedia thing. For example, eyes might be big and black with bulging . . . but the kind of bulge goes into caricature. I feel there are many types which are easy to come to a conclusion about. Which is good. I mean, in the beginning, I think that strong impulse is fine with the character masks, but later on I don't. Anyway, I guess that's basically it, that they're stereotypical and they need to be rounded off a little more; they need to be a little more withdrawn.

More subtle?

More subtle, yeah. But you see I'm not really very certain on this point. Because the one good thing about those masks is that they do immediately strike a person, I mean that there's a very strong response to them. So on the one hand I have this desire to get away from the cliché in art and in an individual's thinking no matter how young he is, and on the other hand, whatever can bring out the impulse the easiest I'm after. So that's something that I haven't solved.

You'll be exploring that as you work.

We'll be exploring that. And if we see the kids start doing. . . . You know, there are things like that, with the weaker imaginations especially would go immediately to clichés, saying, "Oh, yeah, this is like . . ." and you can't work that way with a mask.

Do you have categories of character masks, then?

Not really. No I really don't. I mean, fairly human character masks is what I'm after.

A range of them?

Oh, absolutely, I mean, from the young baby, which by the way is a neutral mask in Juilliard, but I don't think it's a neutral mask at all--which may answer your question, "Gee isn't that surprising how they go into neutral masks," well, part of the neutral masks are slightly characters. But from that [the baby] to the old man.

Which sounds like Commedia to me.

That's right, it goes towards Commedia. To me some of the human masks are very Commedia.

What about animal masks? Do you plan to use animal masks?

All right, now these go into the third term. When you start with animal masks these are the beginnings of our new exploration, which are really kind of. . . .

Wait a minute, go back now. The first term would be just the neutrals, the second term is character, and the third term are. . . .

What I call fantasy masks. And these begin with things like animal masks. To draw them out of the human. Now this is where some of those Commedia masks will come in useful. A sort of a sleuth's step ahead of us, you know. We'll move a little bit more slowly. They are the fantasy masks, or, these animals, for example, will be like the Commedia in so far as they are basically human features that have been drawn into something . . . we are still dealing with a

face with a nose, mouth, eyes. The problem there is that the design has to be very good. Now this is what we are talking about with this fellow, because we are talking about him designing and building the fantasy masks.

Who is this?

A fellow named Tim Murphy, he's out in California. He's working on his own and does all sorts of masks and special effects, and things. He's in Los Angeles. . . . So we're into the fantasies. They would begin with animal masks and then they would go through things like real distortions, violent distortions. They might do . . . and then eventually get into abstractions; the mask might be a pattern, a zigzag. Some sort of an Op Art thing possibly. Then we get into the kind of theatre . . . now this kind of thing is not useful for Juilliard because there are no Op Art characters in 17th century . . . but for us where we're getting into the contemporary theatre, for us this naturally coincides with the kinds of things you have to do in many contemporary plays. How to play a state of being. . . .

Yes, a problem for actors.

Of course. But I feel very strongly that there are processes by which that can be as stronger, or a stronger reality for an actor than a character. There are circumstances if you are a zigzag, you begin somewhere, you end somewhere, you are a certain color, you're a certain texture, not only through association but through . . . you know, it alters one's way of thinking. Then again the immediate thing to do is jump to some sort of a zigzag rather than work through the. . . . But to make it valid, to give it a fullness which the classic theatre has, you've got to go through that process. I think the masks in this case will be a very strong catalyst for this. There might be color masks, too.

Color masks?

I mean we might just design a circle of flaming crimson red. And then if these are done with celastic then we might take a pencil and put just one dot, and see how that alters. A smudge of something here, what does that do?

You have said that you would begin the fantasy masks with animal masks moving to more extreme, exaggerations. . . .

And ultimately going into abstract.

Now, in the exaggerated masks, are those built more or less to convey an emotion?

Yeah, they are to mainly to evoke a strong association. . . .

Emotive association?

As opposed to. . . .

Intellectual.

Yeah. You see what we're looking for is really a stimulus-response relationship. To me it's what the mask is all about. Something as basic as that. The strongest abstraction. I mean a series of zigzags could just be a series of zigzags unless we were looking for blandness as a result.

Strong response is what you want.

For theatre. That doesn't mean it's dishonest. But if it's small it's of no use on stage.

Would you be going to something like Eskimo masks for the abstract masks, or African masks to get ideas, or. . . ?

We might.

You've kind of answered this question: "At what point do you introduce your actors to the masks?" Right in. . . .

In the first week.

And that continues for a year?

Right, right.

Now, will working with masks go beyond the first year, then?

Oh, sure.

It will continue all the way through the program then?

It won't be on an everyday basis the second year, but they'll be working with it, I'm sure, twice a week anyway.

So you really are making it an integral part of the program and not just 1st year work that gets left behind?

Yes. That's why we have it five days a week . . . that's a terrific amount of time. An hour a day.

That will tax everybody's abilities.

Find out what they are.

How do you introduce the use of masks into the class? What's the technique?

You really will have to talk with Mallory. I can tell you what Pierre does, and I can tell you the kinds of things I've talked with him about, but I really can't tell you what the final solution would be.

Well, anything will be helpful.

Pierre spends a lot of time talking. I feel this is a mistake. I feel the ground rules will be discovered as they go along, very quickly. But I believe that about all work anyway, that you should get up there and when you start drowning, you're given the specific thing that keeps you afloat. But to . . . the intellectual thing is. . . .

He starts with a lecture, an intellectual. . . .

The first session is a lecture, basically, on masks, the nature of masks, what they use, this kind of thing. . . .

He's really telling the student how to approach the mask, and you would prefer that they not be told.

I think that basically the kind of thing that they should do at least in the first session is not so much to put them on and start doing things before they're ready. But to at least to practically start things, "Okay, what do you see?" In other words training the eye. That must be done with a student. "What is different, now?" "Is there a difference between you and him?" "Why?" "What is that?"

The first thing is observation, then? Of the mask?

I don't know?

Well you were saying they shouldn't put it on.

I'm just saying, maybe not. Maybe Mallory feels they can. Again this is up to her. I have to leave her this, to let her ultimately let her do what she wants with it. But it's just that the question has been brought up that there's a problem.

What do they do at Juilliard when they [the students] first get them?

They study them. Each student takes a mask and just spends time looking at it.

How much time?

A period. And then they'll begin to put the mask on and try a few things.

When they put them on are they in front of a mirror so they can see themselves, or is it all just their own projection?

Well, they like to give him the classroom with the mirrors, but frequently they are not there. Very often they will have a narrow mirror and the kid will have to go over and take a look and just do a few things with his head and then go off.

So, there's got to be some process of sensitizing the student?

That's right, yes. But I think it can be done actively as opposed by lecture.

But you're not sure in your own case how you're going to go about this.

Yes.

Were there any other techniques used to sensitize the students at Juilliard? They hold the mask, examine it. . . .

It seems to be, I mean this is from observation. I may have missed a fifteen minute something or other that Pierre gave, you will have to ask him about that, he may have other ways. But it's mainly just examination of the mask.

And then trying it on. . . .

And once you've put it on, work with the head and then down to the body.

But you start with the head?

They seem to.

How do the students react to working in masks?

A lot resent it, it's really funny. And a lot think it's great. But again it's how they're predisposed. And it's usually intellectually predisposed, not emotionally predisposed. Some of the people, you know, "Truth, truth!" and then you put on the mask and "What is this? Aaah!" Some of them resist it, but usually they come around.

So students who resist, do they resist because of the depersonalization that the mask forces on them?

Yeah. [Peter leaves the room for a few minutes] No, I don't think that the resistence stems from that so much as from an idea that they may have. That is really a very Americanization of Stanislavski. And that they will stick to. You know, they have usually had one teacher who has been a good teacher, or it would be someone they have identified with, and the teacher has told them that basically you work internally. And I think that's basically that's the reason for the resistance. Why Americans have fastened on to this as a collective conscious choice I'm not going to go into . . . but when that is put in terms of the individual student, it may be meaningful, like they are afraid of depersonalization. But. . . .

But the depersonalization that the masks forces on the actor, is that a positive aspect for you?

No.

Dullin has a comment about that. He is anxious to get rid of all of the actor's "tics and manies" and the mask will do this, and the actor may resist this, but if he is forced to work in the full face mask, eventually all of these personal idiosyncracies will tend to disappear. . . . He gives an illustration of a ballet dancer working in front of a mirror. And that the mirror image becomes important, for the ballet dancer, training herself to perform in terms of the image that's projected.

Well, I think again we're talking about staging work. In training for the stage, the tics and manies, are . . . I mean every tic and manie that occurs means that when you do this gesture it will be a little less forceful because that energy is going to put into things that are out of control. And that's the demon of the actor, being out of control. And you can't have control over something that you're not aware of. And the student who comes in, because it's so tied up with his psychophysical history, is just not aware of all his tics and manies.

You think the mask then forces more control, demands more control?

Absolutely! Absolutely.

Than the inner method which seems to allow you to do what you want.

The way it is taught, yeah. No, I believe that a role must be as severely choreographed as it must be severely felt.

So the mask helps you do that, impose this discipline.

Oh yeah. That's right. So that when the impulse does happen, your response because of your training is not this [he gestures] but, something happens in the backbone, something happens in the shoulder, the elbow--that's contrived--but suddenly the stimulus-response training that you've had demanded (clean things have been demanded of you) it's reflected immediately and given.

Does any of your thinking come out of Jacques Lecoq's ideas on mime?

Probably, my closest friend in graduate school had just been through Lecoq. But I don't think so.

What insights or goals do you hope the actor will achieve by using the mask?

Well, first of all that he will understand, as we just mentioned, that any movement is not any movement of ours, is not necessarily the right movement. That there is a clarification that takes place automatically, through impulse, through automatic response. But that response can be trained, for cleanliness, and for specific work, through the masks. I also hope that the physical aspect of his defense system will be cleared out so that other things can come through. It's as much a taking away as a giving. But it's also finding other realities that they would never explore, they would never ever think of. The kind of thing that I think of when the actor says, "Oh, I know that character, that character is just like me. I do that all the time." Well, the fact is that the character is nothing like they are. They see it through their own neurotic self image, and as a result you wind up seeing again this guy throwing his, all this crap out at the audience, in the guise of what he thinks the character is like because he can identify, so he says, with certain things. It's the kind of thing where you have such a self awareness of your needs, who you are, what you want, that when you can read something on a page and it implies something different from what you are and what you need, that you can see it and make the appropriate adjustment. It offers you a real sense of self-awareness.

Are you in a sense saying that when you look at script . . . you seem to be stressing that the actor shouldn't say, "I am like that person," but you should recognize the differences.

It may not ever be a conscious process. It's just that he is so trained that he can see what is on the written page. He can be, in a sense, objective at the same time that he, of course, enters into it when he works subjectively. (Which is also cleared up.) But when he reads a play that he's going to be in, he doesn't say, "Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah!" But he watches a figure moving, and he sees that figure for itself as opposed to his own interpretation based on what he needs to look for, to solve some neurotic fight he had twenty years ago.

What changes occur in the actor when he puts on a mask? This will be more what you've observed, I guess.

It really is, and personally experienced too in the few little work that I've done, but it's an amateur's answer. The first thing that happens is that the impulse is that you can't get it out in the

face. People who are used to covering themselves facially can't do that. It's so basic, you start going like this [he gestures] and you hit the mask, you know. And suddenly, "Oh!" And then to understand the feeling that happens when you go like this, it's a moment of resentment, of whatever, and it can't happen here [the face] and to feel the impulse travel down and the leg stiffens. And the beginning of that awareness is the thing that is so valuable. All that stuff that is usually done here [the face] can be done with the body. And also parts of the body suddenly start coming alive. The person who may favor their hips will get a mask that has a line like this [he gestures] and they can't do that, you know, they go like that [their old posture] and it breaks. The hip comes out and it's wrong. Any sensitive person feels that.

What about vocally? Do you explore much vocally?

Juilliard explores vocally, but the adjustments that seem to be made in class, and again this is just from observation, are adjustments, their adjustments don't go as far as their physical adjustments, in other words, it's given second play. So that they may have a severe character, and the character may be doing something like this, they may wind up with a walk and end up with a hold . . . but the voice will come out, "Well, this is my voice." "Hallo!" It's nothing. It's not really researched. The impulse for the mask is not only physical but that it can do the same thing for the voice. Because the voice, the vocal mask in a sense, which is something I call it, maybe somebody else calls it that too, but the vocal mask, and I believe very strongly that the actor's voice is . . . for example the voice department at the big palace there, says, that you find your natural placement, your natural voice, this sort of thing, and I agree that you have to know where that is, but it's stretching that's involved. The chances are that the character did not have your face, your voice, and your body. What I'm trying to do with my actors is to insure that they know the possibilities of all the others. And will explore that possibility as freely, as objectively as they can. To this end, vocally, the vocal mask, is a major part of that; that they know what it means to make the voice, more reedy, less reedy, and not to think of one as better than the other. That the higher register can be reproduced fully, solidly without hurting the voice; the low register without forcing. There are ways to relax so that the formation produces a lower tone, this kind of thing.

So to get back to the question, the vocal mask is terribly important, and again, this will be a source of experimentation. One thing to add to that: we talked about fantasy masks. What I'm interested to find out also is what happens vocally when they start working with fantasy masks. The dog mask, for example to start with the elementary part of the fantasy masks, let's say the dog mask is there. When the student starts going "Woof, woof!" you're in trouble. What if the dog mask . . . it might require a howl, a grating sound, and it's up to the student to find out the essence of that mask and reproduce that.

But also what happens when you get into the zigzag? What as a zigzag do you want to say? But how do you find out except by putting the zigzag into a situation where he needs something? Like how does he feel about his relationship to the field that he's on?

What about emotional changes occurring in the actor?

Actually it would be hard to separate the two. Once the impulse moves down either you follow it or you stop it, and if you stop it you're twice as uncomfortable. . . .

Can it enhance, can it build the emotional impulses in the actor? Does it reinforce? Say you have a shy student who dons a mask of a very blatant open kind of thing? Will that very shy student fulfill that?

More easily than if he had to do without the mask.

Will you teach the students how to use masks, or are you going to let them discover for themselves? Are there certain techniques that you are assuming that wearing the mask you must know? Or are you going to let the students have a self-discovery process?

I think that's more a question for Mallory. I would tend to take again the . . . that the students work constantly and explore what we've got. It's not the kind of thing where you say this is right and this is wrong. You're saying you're either stopping your impulse to work or you're not. That seems to me to be the basis of criticism. You're either choosing one thing to the exclusion of another, even though we see it happening, or you're completely fulfilling the mask's requirements at that time or not. And that's the basis for review. No, I don't think there are or can be techniques which impose any sort of reality other than what happens between impulse and mask surface.

But there are certain ways of working with your head in the mask. [talk about the oriental traditions.]

But to me those are specific codified forms that have grown up in traditions. They are, again, not that clean slate, . . . Indeed some oriental masks will suddenly start tilting and bobbing, I'd rather have them come upon that rather than work within this framework.

But it does involve a concept that the mask does change under light sources.

Sure, that's what you have set up in your room. One of the things one of the teachers did when Pierre was not there (and the students loved this by the way) he would take an individual mask and he would hold it way away from them and slowly turn it, do things with it,

as you said. And they got a terrific understanding from just doing that. Mallory said that this is something that Pierre never does but is terrifically valuable.

. . . I'm wondering if there were techniques for that? [to make the mask come alive].

As techniques, I can't say, other than the obvious things . . . no, only through receiving impulses. See because, again, in the mask training, we're involved in using it as tool for training as opposed to let's say things for performance, or showing other people. We're not concerned with showing.

Pierre spends a lot of time with the character masks, creating scenarios, making stories, and while I think that should be worked on, I don't think it should be "We're going to present this." He spends lots of time on . . . , lazzi, this kind of thing. It's really Commedia, right out of Commedia, this character stuff. And it's good in a way for Juilliard, because Juilliard is there for the classics. They want to raise the standard of classic work in this country. That's their job. And not to extend contemporary thought. They know that, they stick to that.

How important is it for the student to make use of the sculptural qualities of the mask, in other words, his knowledge of how the light plays over the surface of the mask?

I think that's the most important thing, the sculptural quality. What they mean to the actor, I mean, we are not only talking about gestalting a series of bumps and scratches, but we're talking about taking the bump into itself. "How come it's sharper on this mask than any other one?" I mean just isolating a detail like that; that giving a guy an impulse. But that's still taking the bump from my point of view, from the training point of view, as opposed to what you were saying which is the sculptural from the performance point of view.

And you're not approaching that aspect at all?

Not yet.

Is it a possibility?

I think the job of the CTC in this particular case is not to reproduce Commedia, not to reproduce anything. If we were to work in masks, we would probably be working in the fantasy area, ultimately in terms of performance.

Dullin says that an actor using a mask must focus all his attention on his abdominal muscles. Does that have any meaning for you?

I would say the spine. One is the opposite of the other. So I understand. I don't think the actor should focus attention on it, but I think occasionally the question should be asked, "What is my impulse there?" In so far as the spine and that are the two impulse centers of the body.

Did the students at Juilliard find their work in masks carrying over to their work in other classes, or was there a separation?

That's a terrific question, and I think that's so important. I think the translation from one to the other was so difficult. And the way to help that, of course, is to take off the mask and to keep the mask on in your imagination. When a director only works from the internal and doesn't go to mask class, he doesn't know that when the guy says, "Well the tilt of the head here in relation to the man's own self-pity," he would say, "How did you arrive at that? That's external!" He couldn't take it to a mask improvisational response. And I think it's so terribly important [that a cross-fertilization go on].

How does the course in mask work relate to other courses?

I think the important thing there is that whole thing of the psychophysical blocs. More than most other courses it relates so directly, because that's what the mask can directly accomplish. It can go right to the externals, make the kids aware of their impulses that suddenly they can't do the things they always rely on. And maybe they realize for the first time that they rely on that. So it will make . . . in that way. It forms first the physical and then as we get to the inner actor we create the facade where the impulse is taken. And suddenly the emotional is taken without even thinking. And then you can build up the history if you want from a Stanislavski point of view. And needs, and you can work that way if you want. But the initial impulse will come from. . . . Anyway that does free them.

So you do plan that this work will dovetail into other courses? Dance? Mime?

Not dance! That's the worst thing . . . movement.

You're final goal then, in using the masks is to train the actor to be a better actor in existing form, and not really to train them for masked drama?

That's right.

Do you have any interest in exploring the possibility of exploring masked drama yourself?

Oh, yes.

What about with the school?

We'll see how it develops, I don't know. With the company . . . it will be more likely with the company.

What is the company other than the school?

A professional company. Much of the teachers come from the company.

Just the idea of masks as a tool. It's such a fexible and wonderful tool that meets the demands for almost every age in different ways. In that way it's a mirror.

I'm saying I can find the actor to play Oedipus with his own facial mask. Which will say more and still be universal. It doesn't mean realistic. But that he could do things and then change. And use light in certain ways.

By making his own face a mask?

Yeah.

Like Grotowski talks about.

I've seen him do it. I mean THE CONSTANT PRINCE was much that larger thing. This is not some guy in a loin cloth with a towel whipping himself. This was every frustrated impulse and fury that existed in every person in that audience and we knew it. And we cried and we wanted to leave. And the funny thing is that that mask was so fully supported emotionally. And to have that happen, the kind of thing that has to happen internally has to happen. And that was there. So you accepted that you accepted that as a mask. And when he hit himself with the towel, but kept that face, and didn't go "Ooh!", it suddenly became bigger, because it wasn't a realistic response to the moment. That's the very point.

That is a mask!

Right! Maybe that's almost a definition of the "mask"--that it's not directly connected to every impulse that is felt. As Grotowski says, the emotional score moves onto a different path, but he still has the same face. And suddenly you're in a different form.

Can you call it dislocation that occurs . . . the audience expecting the face to change, it doesn't change so new insight is gained.

It becomes larger, larger than the man.

Is continued use of the mask important for the actor?

I don't know. I would suspect that there is a point of no return. That there's a certain security about approaching that, about knowing what it does to your body and your voice, and after the third or fourth character taken on and successfully employed at certain junctures in the process, where you're having trouble, the mask technique, that after you have that craft behind you, except for a once every five years refresher course to make sure you're not getting too cocky, I think that it might be behind you.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH PETER SCHUMANN

APPENDIX B

Interview with Peter Schumann, Cate Farm--Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont. July 19, 1973.

You're mainly interested in masks, eh?

Yeah, masks and acting, and the relationship, and why masks at this point in the theatre. You're one of the few groups that are really doing consistent work with masks, rather than, say, Yale University who may do a show and use masks but they don't have a consistent program of using it to . . . so they are not exploring it . . . although there is a guy at Yale who does teach a mask course. . . .

Who's that?

His name is Jeremy Geidt. I think it's mainly to do with Commedia work. If anybody's doing something with masks, what they're doing. . . . Well, I suppose it gets very formal here. . . . If you think I've missed the boat on a question, just say so, and, you know, I wish you'd just be very . . . as free as . . . just say what you think. I'm sure you will be.

What training or study have you had that's influenced your work?

None whatsoever.

None whatsoever.

No, I couldn't say that. That sounds so unethical an answer, I guess . . . I don't think that my conscious training has influenced my work very much. It's more that . . . I guess, any creative person would tell you that you find out slowly that it's the things that you didn't suspect influenced you that influenced you, so to tell you that schools you went to or which people you were befriended or ?vined with during certain years in your growing up and then assume that that's what influenced you, you find out slowly that that's wrong . . . over the years, that whatever the things that you tried to defeat and that you tried to oppose are the things that influenced you strongly are those things that you thought you were advertising with your style and work, so I would be very skeptical about giving any personal commentary about what influenced me.

Had you done any study with masks at all, or is this something that you just happened to. . . .

I did a lot of theatre work when I was in high school. On my own.

This was in Germany?

Yeah. There were also people around me that . . . understanding in music and in masks, too. And I did a little of puppetry when I was a kid . . . in my family. So, I guess those two things should be my proper spheres of influence, but as I see it now they are really not. There are other things, just things that one wants to know in the history of art or in the . . . that may influence you much more than school or methodical type of things.

When did you begin the study of masks or using large puppets?

In Germany.

You did. When was that?

About masks, maybe about fifty-five, something like that. Puppets about maybe fifty-seven or fifty-eight.

Was there a reason for that?

Partially dance. Things that I did or sculpture that I did and that I wanted to use for movement.

Did you know Mary Wigman?

No, she wasn't active anymore at that time, she was dead already.

But you hadn't known of her work?

I had heard of her work, but never seen any. I had seen, moreover, some of her students. I don't think I was too impressed with that. There wasn't anything good in dance in Germany that was worthwhile pursuing, so what we did in Germany in that little group that I had was very much in opposition to what we saw and not in aligning ourselves with any movement that existed at that time, so we felt that our proposition was a lot like people who continue their tradition. That makes it harder to talk about influences.

Yeah, negative influences I guess. But do you know what started you no masks? Why the mask for you?

It's almost the wrong way of asking because I don't feel that I ever was a proper theatre man coming out of any . . . I have no real interest in this type of speech and psychological theatre can do, so I had to create some kind of platform that I could use my type of expression, sculpture mainly and music. And to create that stage myself was my way of making theatre. It's more like what some of the Happening people in New York did, I would say. It was pretty

much like that what I went through in Germany. I was glad to meet these people, to see their work when I came to the States, and to see that there were the same type of things that I was doing.

So masks came more from sculpture for you?

Yah. I wasn't ever a theatrical man, or Commedia ideas, or anything like that, or character casting, or anything. . . .

It's an anti-traditional theatre movement.

Yah.

Do you have different kinds of masks, or different catagories of masks that you work with?

We have different base for different groups of masks.

What are those?

We have face masks, slap-stick masks, we call them. . . .

What does that mean, slap-stick masks?

Sort of half-masks that have more . . . comic masks that are used for short skits that we call slap-sticks or that can be used for various little scenes in big shows.

Those are half-masks?

Mostly half-masks, yeah?

Why is that, because of language?

Not so much as a language, because of breathing . . . fast movement, I think. Fast movement is the main reason.

Physically moving quickly. Why does that differ from the full face mask?

Because they can't move, can't breath as fast, can't be as sportive in your movements when you have a tight fitting mask. The air holes . . . there is always air exhaust going into the mask and when you breathe, you breathe carbon dioxide.

You get whoosey.

Yah.

What other kinds of masks?

Well the rest we wouldn't really call masks, they're things that involve the whole head, maybe you've seen some in the barn there, big enough to fit over the whole person's head entirely. I wouldn't be sure that that should be called a mask. It is a type of a mask.

But you refer to them more as giant puppets?

No those are just . . . we call them masks, I guess, . . . heads. And then there are things that are mounted. Once they are on a stick or something like that, then its a puppet . . . and their relation/attention/creation is diverted and elongated and so different.

The attention of the audience you mean?

No, your own attention. The works that we put into such a thing becomes different. It's not so much your body anymore, it's a more translated type of work. We have to learn the activities that that stick with the elongation of the head allows for. And you learn the limits of that and what that can do and then. . . .

You mean making it come alive in its own right, or. . . .

Yah.

. . . or is it an extension of you?

It is an extension of you to a certain degree, it is more that you learn the particles of the larger body that you are a part of, find out what that puppet can do. It's more that then that it is an extension of you.

You have to live up to that?

Yah?

You have to become that, or make . . . that figure takes over?

It's almost that you have to quiet yourself down to the degree where you don't need as much personal movement, moving around any more. Where you can live with less and express yourself with very few motions and can be more sparce and realistic in the size of what you do, in what the rod puppet does.

Do you think the mask demands that kind of work?

Yah.

Precise and . . .

Uh-huh. True. A lot of good observation and a lot of good . . . feeling of an operator who has to learn to be a translator, who has to learn to not so much be interested in his own dancing body, but rather in fabrics and materials that he has to learn the weight of and the speed that's possible with that weight, and the expressions that go along with it. It probably seems to be a different range of characterization and of expressiveness that's given by very, very few simple means. To know the fabric that surrounded the weight of the head, of the place where the rod is molded in the head or in the hand and such things, you know, or the expression of the head . . .

Are there . . . You say you have to find out how things that are around it will, I guess, complete . . . make it complete? Is this done through just exploring? When you make a mask and it's a large one, the person inside of it . . . how do they go about doing this, how do they go about discovering what . . .

First there is observing it from the outside, seeing other people do it.

Watching others perform.

I guess so. What else . . . and another thing is learning by being in the chorus. Being in groups that do very similar actions, very similar movements. That's very often the first step for a puppeteer to begin with these. To be in a group and they do very similar movements and become really feel their way into the requirements of that movement, what you need to . . . how much output there is.

Then it's all conditioned by the mask?

Yah.

So the person coming into the group to work with the group the first time you're going to put them in a chorus, then, usually.

Usually.

As a starting place. Is there any technique you have for making them, I guess the word I want to use is, to sensitize them to the mask?

No, no special technique other than the demands that come out of the work for a show. The many different little bits of composition between sound and movement that are needed to amount to something . . . all these little steps together . . .

Is that a group process or is that your . . .

No, I'm pretty much directing that, but it's a group process in that there's areas of improvisation within that and that becomes important what people can do, how much feelings for the parts they have.

But primarily you're using your eye as auidence-director to say how much movement, or twisting of a head, or bending of a head, or inclining of a head is necessary.

Yah.

Are there certain kinds of masks that are good and others that are bad people or forces, or something like that? Does each have a unique design?

Uncle Fatso?

Yeah, Uncle Fatso.

Uncle Fatso's are bad, very bad people.

Do they have a certain kind of modelling, or color, or something?

Yah.

How do they differ from the so-called good characters?

Oh, that's hard to say. That's the end of almost when you make something to decide on that . . . it isn't before, it isn't decided before. It's not that we start with an idea that characterizes already, or with a play that needs so many bad and good characters and then these characters are invented, it's more that that's the output that that's what's coming out of the workshops. And then when we have so many characters that when you move them you find out what they are. Sometimes you'd be astonished.

Are you saying that the sculptor doesn't put this in there?

Yah, I guess I have ideas when I sculpt clay, what they are, but I like to be surprised by what they reveal afterwards when they move. Sometimes they reveal to be completely different from what you originally think they are. They are not necessarily what they are conceived to be. Once they start moving they have personalities more complicated than most puppeteers that have been in the theatre . . .

So you've got to be open to that, to perceiving that they may be something other than what you worked with as an idea. . . . Do you start with an idea in modelling a puppet?

Usually they are made in groups, in large groups of puppets. So I have ideas for that and I work a lot of variations of a theme and then I won't have that choice to pick out of that puppet. . . . The

simple light Uncle Fatso for example was meant to be the Madonna of this simple light show.

So somewhere after they're created, they take over a life of their own. How do the people respond to working in masks? Do the new people resist this?

Yah, they usually don't like it. They are fascinated from looking at it somewhat, that's why they come. And then they are disappointed to find out how little personal gain and personal range and explosiveness and growth and all that is in it. So it's a short living commitment, usually, that we get from people.

Why is that do you think?

Modern times, because of modern times. People like speed, and fast things, and grab it quickly and . . . trouble is other periods of history there people were very modest, even humble, and this is not the age of humility or modesty at all, it's the opposite. Everybody is, to say the least, a genius, or more.

You have quite a turnover in the group then?

Yah.

Does this hurt the work?

Sure.

What can't you do that you'd like to?

No, it isn't like that. I can do what I like to do, but a lot of the work that's being done wouldn't have, wouldn't need so many repetitions, wouldn't need so much reworking, redoing, as it does, as it is. It would be more work on progressive things in the theater, the experiments that puts us a little bit further.

Is this depersonalization that the mask has on the actor for you, then, a negative thing? It doesn't seem to be.

No, I don't think that it's negative in itself, you know. I just realize that for modern actors and for modern young kids, that it's something that is very hard to take. . . . Well, that's partially true. There are a lot of people who are nowadays attracted to this kind of enterprise who aren't really interested or willing to be in theatre. They are precisely interested because there is so little likening to theatre in what we are doing. It so much of an activity that is untheatrical and doesn't have that connotation of show-off and of overpersonalization.

But it is really a positive force for you?

Yah.

What do you see good in that, in the fact that you're getting rid of the hangups of the individual actors, their need to show-off themselves?

Well, for one thing, that we don't have to work with them, and also there's greater possibilities in masks and sculpture and the bending of casts, the operators, into those expressions, rather than outer forcing, enforcing the means for our will, for our goals, and . . .

Would you mind explaining that further? (Laugh.) You mean more of a range than what the human face and body can do?

The sculpture of the human face is as much the human face as the human face, maybe more so. But it is the demands that are given, the limits, the stronger limits, the greater casting of the area of work, the pulling together, for me, concentrates the expressiveness, the possibilities of what can be done. The area is large, but the limitations is. . . . It's strange, it's a very big area that you have in that field of having so many unaccountable number of possibilities as lots of sticks moving, but still limitations, physical limitations, are much more cast than this dancer or an actor. A dancer is limited only by style, an actor is only limited by style. But a puppeteer is limited by materials, by physical possibilities and impossibilities, so more physical clarity in the limitations that we are working with, and because of that I feel a greater field of working on the reality, working on or working with.

You mean as far as a greater simplicity necessary in the work.

Probably.

It means a different kind of play-making or playwriting, right?

Yah.

You can't do the plays of characters with psychological depth.

No, no you can't do Shakespeare with puppets.

Is that just because of the language? Or is it not just because of language?

Well, you wouldn't say anything good about Shakespeare to make him into a puppet show, because his plot would get left very soon, his wit and good dialogue would be lost in absurd movements, wouldn't prove too much anymore, and wouldn't be fulfilling anymore, wouldn't say these wise acts and beautiful things that he is saying. It's all in dialogue and in some imitation of human conversation. The puppeteer doesn't work with that, that's not a world of . . .

What about the Greek theater?

That's closer.

To puppet theater you mean?

To puppet theater.

But it was mask theater.

Right. Greek theater is sort of a down step from puppeteer as I see it.

You mean less than?

Yah.

Less limited or more limited?

Well in what I've defined, it's less limited but it's actually more limited in what it achieves, I think.

Can you tell me what you think mask theater achieves or doesn't achieve?

Well compared to the puppet, a mask is almost an in-between step between a puppet and an actor. And it's not quite as clear to me as . . . I said it before that the puppet is more physically limited, that it's, to my mind, not mean as more limited in respect to what it is able to do, the context that it can be put into, what it can express, so, to my mind, this is true comparing the puppet and the mask also that the puppet is the one that has the greater physical limitations and the greater expressiveness, and the mask is the thing that has the lesser physical limitations, the greater dancing body of the acting operator, but has much less possibility in itself, as itself, because of the . . . of too much behind it, of having too much expressiveness and power of the operator of the mask.

You mean the mask itself or the body is too expressive?

No, the body. The body that is behind it.

How much work do you do with masks? I mean, you use them in your shows, but how much have you done mask workshops, or have you explored what the mask can do or can't do?

Well, whatever comes up in shows, you know, the masks are used and are being worked with, and they are being explored in what that is, what they can do. It's often maybe . . . the demands of one particular scene or show, I think that's good for it, that isn't negative.

What would be the situation? Is it something that you just feel that that's right or do you have a reason for doing it?

It never comes up as such a question of whether mask or puppet, it comes up usually as how big something will be.

In relationship to other things on stage?

Yah. The mask is something that's close to where people size.

So then the size of something is really important to you?

Uh-huh.

What do you mean by that? You have all these tiny little figures over there in the barn and then you have these giant figures?

It's hard to say what do you mean by that, because actually in how little in . . .

In the script?

Yeah, that's the script.

Do you find that an actor wearing a mask can make the mask change expression?

Sure . . . I don't know if he's an actor, anyway he moves the mask around.

Is there a technique?

Yah.

What's the technique?

It's something you find out when you work up the mask. It's, eh, it has to do with light. The shadow of things moving in the light casts upon the expression. It's a very simple trick which puppetry exploits as a trick, usually, because puppet's eyes are just painted in and don't move, you see, but they move if you move them right, if you move the head right.

Now do you instruct the actor anyhow, or do you just sit back and watch them?

No, that has to be observed, and the person shouldn't be made conscious of what he should find this, this is a natural result of pursuing the possibilities, what a mask can do . . . when he gets there.

You mean the actor should know the possibilities of what the mask he is wearing . . .

Yah.

How's he discover it?

By observing, that's one thing?

Is it different for each mask?

It is, yah, but there's some basic, eh, well it's hard to say, I wanted to say basic method, but then you will say, okay what's the method.

That's true. So you have something to go on, right?

Hmm.

What is it that you find . . .

Well it isn't a method of acting, a method of teaching it.

But what is it you understand about it, the mask in the light, that will make it change . . . expression?

That cannot be generalized like that because it has to do with what you use the mask for. You may use the mask for crawling around slow motion on the floor, for running around standing on stilts, it has to do with how high that mask is, how low it is, it has to do how fast it is, how slow it is, it has to do with whether the hands are real, hands that move with fingers, or whether that is puppet hands that are used as that; every circumstance, and with the color of the thing it is completely different when using bright red or when it's dark shadings of burnt sienas or something like that. So there is no such thing as teaching anybody mask movement for one last, you know, generalizing from that, you know, this is what you do with a mask and this is how you move it.

You have to fight it through with each individual mask?

You have to fight that and find that with a mask in a . . . in its circumstances, in its, well, what is it useful, what is its ends.

Does the actor take the mask and explore it in the light or wear it and you kind of indicate what is working or what isn't working?

That's one way. A lot of it if you wear it yourself as the one who instructs you will find out yourself from inside, you will find out you needn't that observation from outside to wear this. You get a double thinking of translating that . . .

Sounds like a Japanese comment. (Misunderstood "needn't" as "needed" above.)

No, but it's something that's natural to sculptors too. I mean you can work in the negative and you can see a positive quite simply when you get used to that.

You're stepping outside while the mask is on your face, you're outside it seeing what's happening to it anyway.

Yah. Even if you, I mean a mask is too close to your face, you can't see the inside of the mask. But you can get that.

Is that easily picked up?

I don't know if it's easy, I don't know. I've seen the mime troupe who are very interested in working with masks perform over the years quite frequently. And I only saw once a guy who moved a mask in the mime troupe. But he was the instructor. He taught 'em, he taught the others.

This was the San Francisco Mime?

Yah.

Mazzone?

No, it was Renee Davis. He was in a show and played a little part in it, and that was real, that was very good.

Does anything special happen to a person putting on a mask? You don't find an actor, somebody putting on a mask either getting more physically free or vocally free or . . . this is what Juilliard is doing with their mask workshop, using it to free the actor.

I don't like that idea at all. Why does an actor have to be free? They're usually much too free already.

So your job is to control them with the mask?

I wouldn't say that that is a goal for a mask to help actors who have troubles with their psyche.

Does a mask become a puppet as soon as it is on a stick? Like the ones in The Simple Light? Were those masks we were using?

That's a good question, you should get that.

What do you think? How do you view those?

Well, if you want to define it, you know, by technical terms, I would say that's a mask when you wear it on your face, and when you use an extension then it isn't a mask anymore, then it's a puppet, it has a body to it.

Do you find that all masks can change expression, or that the more simple mask has more possibility for expression than the more grotesque mask?

No, I don't see any difference between a grotesque and what you call a simple mask. I don't quite see what the difference is.

I've been doing some photographing, some movie film of Japanese Noh masks at the Salem museum just with this idea . . . can they change and which masks change better than other masks. It seemed to me that those that were more simply modelled had more possibility for changing expression than a very grimace or a grotesque . . .

Well there are simply masks that are more specialized in their expression already, so masks that are more specialized in their expression will change less than puppets, than masks, that are less specialized in their expressions. A face that is already completely cast, that's just expressing the horror at four o'clock in the afternoon about Aunt Daisy dying . . . that's the mask, that mask will be very hard to make laugh or do anything but that expression.

You have a mask of an oriental girl there in the barn. I've seen a number of pictures of before. This seems to be a mask that can do a number of things.

Yah, that's a cast of a face. That's a very expressive piece because it doesn't have a specific . . . one expression. It can change a great deal just in the way it's being used.

Has the oriental theater been an influence on you at all? Have you interested in, say, Japanese theater at all.

Yah, interested, you know. I don't know if that's an influence, but I'm interested.

The Noh theater?

The Noh Theater, yah.

Why the Noh?

Well it seems the closest to me, to what I conceive to . . . what we can learn from.

What do you think we can learn from it?

Oh, hard to say in detail, it's just a great all around theater of many stages, of many human conditions, cast into something that one can understand, that becomes so that you can . . . it's laid out and you can see it. It's cyclic theater, very different from Western theater . . . from most Western theater.

Have you read a lot of Noh plays or have you seen Noh drama, or . . .

No, I've seen very little, only demonstrations of short pieces, never a whole cycle . . .

But have you read any of the plays, or . . .

Yah.

What about the writings of Zeami?

Of what?

Zeami, the guy that pretty-well formulated Noh theater with his father?

But I wouldn't say that that's a direct influence, it's just for me another . . . it's hard to translate these things . . . they are more picturesque almost and distant, and can influence us in some guessing of their original spirit, what they may have meant, rather than saying okay we . . .[from that they are useful to me, in that regard].

Only suggestively.

Yah. But not as . . . not become schools from them and exploit them.

Have you ever . . . tried to model any of the masks on Noh masks at all?

No.

What about the form of your theater? It seems to have parallels with Noh theater in the use of sound and the economy of movement, simplicity?

Yah, but not for reasons that we want to use that because it is there and it works with their theater, it's simply . . . I don't but I need more sound or more movement in the theatre, I'd rather like to work more . . . cast out, cut out more rather than . . . work on it until I come to some solution or something. So, at least as simple things more that influences I would say.

What do you want to achieve, what do you hope to achieve, what effect or purpose do you have in mind in using a masked actor or big puppets?

You mean other than an actor?

For your audience?

I don't want to achieve anything with my audience. I have no goal in mind of achieving something . . .

But you want to produce an effect of some sort don't you? A response of some kind?

But it isn't that you first feel for the response and then you start working on finding the effect that works the responses. It's too much . . . what do you with speech when you're addressing somebody? I mean, you're trying to say what's honest and true. And not try to understand why the vowels or consonants sticking all together do that and that kind of a job in someone else's brain. That would be an attributive. So, we are working on the speech and on the inside of it and then what comes out of it is unconscious and we are not in a position to control it or to do much with that. If we want that type of control, or if we want to exert influence, let's call it a political piece, then okay, we limit out thing to political theme to that type that allows for that. And then we go ahead and try to say these things when we want to say them. But that is . . . that's okay, that's not what makes the whole of the theatre.

What effect do you think a masked actor has on an audience?

A strange one. (Laugh.) Basically yes. An ordinary actor has to try to convey something with himself that he isn't himself, he has to fool people and make them believe in somebody whose lines . . . he borrows lines from a writer and with those borrowed lines has to achieve that great effect of making people believe in something . . . and the masked actor can obviously not do that kind of thing. He has to do something else. He has to come across as a masked actor which is either inhuman or demonic or really something quite consciously an actor with a mask.

How does he go about doing that though?

It will be different with everybody who works with a mask actor in a show. It's quite a different effect from an actor who has to persuade to a part, in a role and a character. I don't think that a masked actor can have that . . . can ever achieve that. Or should ever want to achieve that.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW WITH BARI ROLFE

APPENDIX C

Interview with Bari Rolfe, Assistant Professor, Professional Training Program, School of Drama, University of Washington. March 1, 1974.

I just had a couple of questions on your exercises with the animals and with the inanimate objects. I've seen the elements (exercises) and you mentioned that the animals live naturally in their environment . . . this is all with the Neutral Mask, right?

It is all with the Universal Mask, yes. And I use animals in their environment as an example of being simple and direct. An animal tends to its needs when it has to, and to the extent it has to, and that's all. And that's interacting directly with your environment, and that's the kind of appropriateness which is part of the Universal Mask.

Does an actor then assume the role of a tiger or something?

No, no. That's only an example of where you look for examples of neutrality or universality. And I had in my own thinking come to this: that the two words, "appropriate" and "economical" together almost add up to the term "neutral." And wherever in this country we have a negative association with the term "neutral" . . . no body wants to be neutral . . . it's nothing . . . it's neuter . . . all those associations which don't exist in French. So I'm trying now to emphasize those words rather than "neutral." Also, that's one of the reasons for finding "universal" for the Universal Mask. So that's only an example of what they can see around them. The same thing is true of trees. And I think somewhere I have that quote from Emerson that an elm tree sets itself the task of doing only what it is able to do.

Now as far as the animal studies are concerned, the purpose of it is a little bit different. For instance, they could understand the notion of economy and appropriateness without ever doing animal studies. So working with elements, animals, and inanimate objects is for something else. That's to bring the total body into a focus whereby . . . they identify with something, which is what a given exercise is, they identify totally and no part of them remains outside. You can watch, for instance, somebody do an animal study and you still get a human feeling. Then they are not totally enough identified.

Well, I know how an actor uses animal images and incorporates movement or a certain kind of gesture, or where the impulse comes from for movement. But this is different from that?

It's different from that. And that's useful and we do that also after a while. But if you're accepting that as an actor you have this role and you have it identified with an animal and you want to use things like Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, it's a lot to know how a cat behaves in heat. I used to trade at a grocery store and the woman who waited on you was terribly, terribly nearsighted, and she wore very thick glasses and she even peered through them, and I always thought of a mole when I saw her. So I had this animal kind of identification and many people have it for themselves. [Etienne] Decroux is a horse.

Oh, really!

Yes, he has this image for himself. So, that's something else. That's a human being who has certain attributes that remind you of animals, and that's something else. Now the way to get that if you're having trouble finding it, is to do the total animal--a total identification. And then come out of it little by little, or else do it the other way around.

I have one Character Mask exercise, because that's much better for this kind of human identification; to do the animals in the Universal Mask is the total identification with animal; to do it in the Character Mask, is the human being who has an animal identification. So you construct the other way. I have one in which you choose your mask and then a group of people, say five of them, work in an office, it's the morning and they all enter the office and they start their tasks. And then slowly as they work, they become more and more identified with their animal, and, in fact, they become the animals, you know. And then they can come out of it. Well, that means you choose certain [representative] tasks. If you're going to flick your fingers over a card file, that might be like scratching in the earth.

Oh, I see.

To bury an acorn, or something like that. If you're groggy from too much last night or you're going to work late at night and you go over to the wash basin and splash cold water on your face, and you do one of these male brr-r-r-! kinds of things, then that suggests a horse. So it's in the action that you choose that the animal image comes out. It's not just being the animal, it's choosing.

So it's choosing to fulfill your actions as if you were the animal?

No, no. You're the human being but somehow the way in which you execute an action or like, let's see, . . . so you're getting

dressed and you shoot your cuffs, and you adjust your necktie or collar and this suggests perhaps a bird which is reaching forward with its beak.

But it seems to me you go beyond, slightly beyond capturing more of the bird than just to kind of slightly suggest it.

Depends on how deep you want to go. The person looking at it might not even need to know that it's an animal image, or what animal it is. But there's a sense of total integration; that everything you do has a kind of spinoff in a way, or else it's neutral and there is no component in it. And in a way, from neutral the other things jump out at you even more, it puts them in kind of a setting, kind of relief, so that you're not doing an unending series of actions that suggest . . . it's really suggestion more than anything else.

And this is the same approach with the inanimate objects?

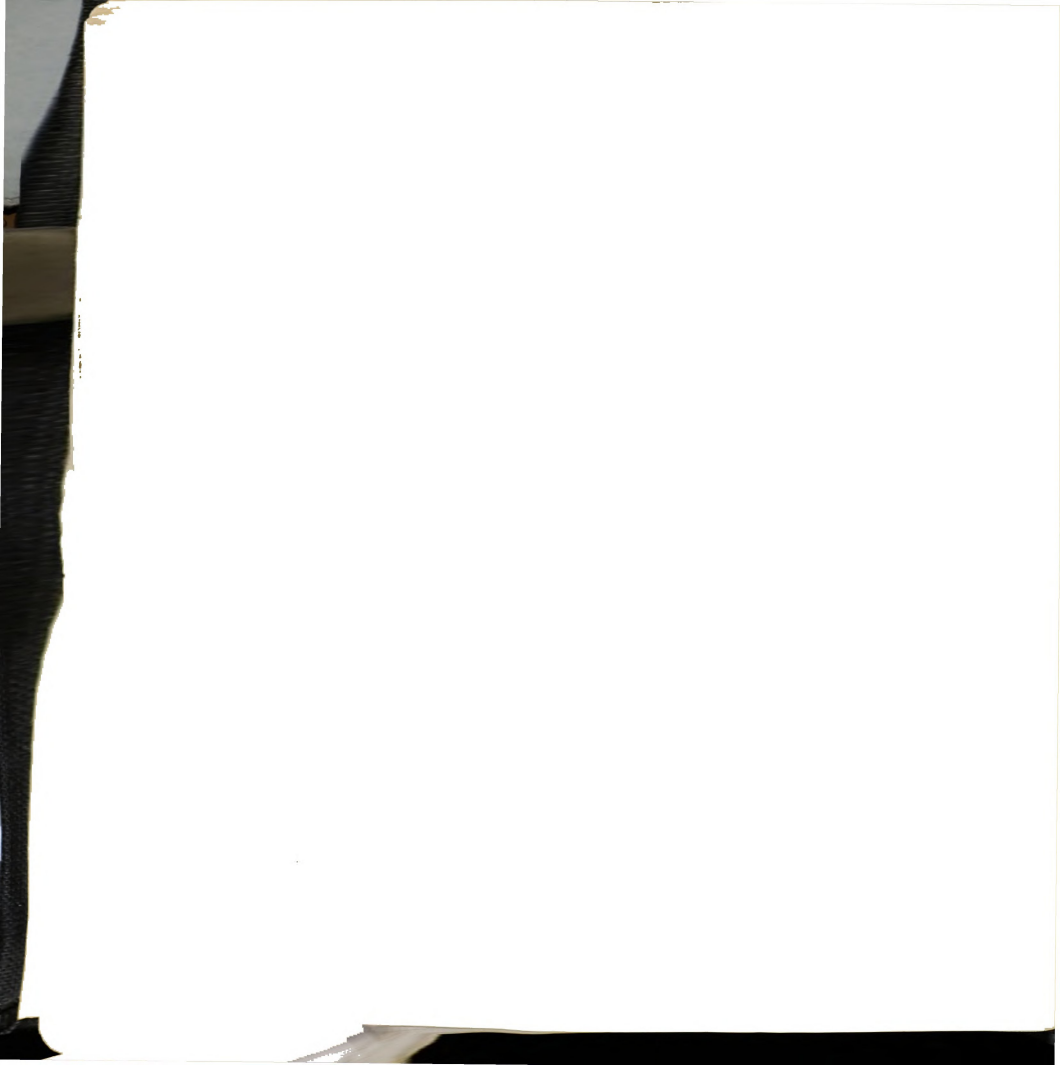
No, no. Now I'm really talking about two different things. Now to go back to the Universal Mask, and again the purpose of working with inanimate objects is total identification, so we don't even get that feeling of a human being. For instance, we were working on machines (and this you can do without masks) and most people start doing a machine-like movement in the arms, or else a little plié up and down the legs. But the rest of them watches what they're doing. You know, the head and the eyes are watching what the hands and the legs are doing. So a total identification means that the head and the eyes are part of the structure. And this is like a vertical pole from which things move out horizontally, but to make the total thing . . .

Another example: often, until it's called to their attention, students will do a tree and the body is the trunk and the arms are the branches and the fingers are the leaves, and then the eyes will watch the leaves coming out and that sort of thing. So, that's not total [identification], you see. We try and get the total identification so that there's no element of the human being creeping in . . .

Watching yourself growing as the tree.

Yes. That's human. Now, all of the studies of animals, elements, and inanimate objects which are part of the universal mask are for this "being carried away by"--and the mask helps "to be carried away." You know, when they [the students in class that morning] were talking, it's almost a transcendental reaction that you have, so you let yourself be guided, be led, be carried away by [the mask].

I thought it was interesting that the students today liked the Universal Mask, thinking back on it [students were working with



Character Masks in their second year]. . . that they found that both more frightening to begin with and then more freeing . . .

More freeing when they could accept it, yes.

Now, yesterday it was mentioned that you were going to move to having them [the first year students] do two contrasting elements at the same time . . . two people doing exercises at the same time. Is that what you normally do?

No, I've never tried that yet, and I got that from an article about Lecoq's school written by this Harvard man in anthropology. He was simply describing what they were doing in school. Oh, I didn't show you that [article].

No, you mentioned the magazine was . . .

Psychologie, and what I should do is send you a copy of it, I don't think it would be findable in French here. And it really hasn't a lot to do with masks, although there are some good pictures of the Larval Mask being worn, but you don't really know what happens with it.

What I have is one picture where they were all stretched out on the floor and a long shot taken of them.

Well, to look at it, you don't get a sense of the mask being a part of the body as you do with the Character Masks. It could well be a part of that whole body, you know, especially if the hair comes over the outside edges and that sort of thing. And it's funny too with the Character Mask, somewhere along the line, it never happens in the beginning, but somewhere along the line somebody will say, "Why that mask looks just like so-and-so!" And some links are set up. Which could not happen with the Larval Mask, but it was interesting to see it being worn, and to see what Professor Wylie said about that.

Wylie?

Laurence Wylie. He did a year's work on his sabbatical . . . mostly he . . . I said anthropology but I think I want to correct that. I believe he teaches French literature at Harvard and he had been at the work shop of Lecoq that they did at Harvard and that's where he learned about Lecoq, and when he got his sabbatical, he decided to spend it there. Not a young man and quite an experienced man because when I wrote to him, aside from the kind of exchange of experience and information we have, he said it was so wonderful to be able to talk Lecoq to somebody. And he's planning to come to the summer session.

Was he instrumental in getting Lecoq to come to Harvard?

Well, he had learned about Lecoq when Lecoq came to Harvard . . .

Let's see here. You work the full-face Character Masks singly and then in groups? Today was a group, well, two . . .

When you first present the Character Mask it's a matter of getting acquainted with it. And that's when we talked today about spending a long time just looking at them, feeling them, looking at themselves in the mirror, and then I set up simple tasks, very simple tasks for each of them: find a way this mask might walk, might stand, might sit, maybe one typical gesture of it. And then try different masks in that, just that very, very small challenge, sort of a beginning thing. Then I have found some material, this isn't Lecoq, but I found some material of Elmer Rice published by Samuel French, three short plays which are done without words, in fact, they are called, "Acts Without Words."

Elmer Rice?

Yes, you know, it's funny, that part of the course came in at the time they were doing Street Scene, and we agreed that this one particular play of the three was all the material he had left over from Street Scene and he didn't know what to do with, plus all the stuff that went into Street Scene including the same adjectives that he used to describe people. But what I found useful, and the reason that I use it is that it is a panoramic thing focussed in one place--that street before the house--and all the comings and goings of the inhabitants, of their visitors, of the people servicing it, like the janitors, the postman, the cops--all the people which would have any kind of relationship to an apartment house; and mostly it's a matter of an entrance and an exit. So, it doesn't ask very much of the actor . . . but this in and out, which is like Street Scene, in front of that apartment building . . . so there are very brief appearances which I felt was the next step in getting acquainted with the mask.

All right, you've learned how this one might walk, and stand, and sit, and have a gesture, now this particular mask is in work; that is, if he's a postman, he's delivering letters, if it's a policeman, he's walking the beat; if it's an iceman, he's delivering ice--it's that kind of thing. And because there are a great many characters, maybe twenty or more, and with a smaller class than that, each one has a chance to try several different masks.

Then sometimes I use another of the Rice plays and that's when the old soldier stays on stage most of the time, but now it's a little bit of a story, it isn't just a panorama. Panorama is not the right word, it's sort of the opposite where a lot of people are focussed into one spot.

But then, after that series . . . it depends where people are . . . sometimes I will take the play that they are working on and do what

I often do with plays, like The Lover [Harold Pinter], is sort of distill the action into physical actions only, getting rid of the text. Have them choose the mask that might be that character and run it as a mimed version of scenes or of the play. Or I also have a whole series of non-verbal little scenes, like a scenario, with a beginning and a middle. I don't often put an end to it because I feel the end should be open and let that happen. They'll do that in Character Masks. That'll take up most of the time.

Because at some point or other, the Countermask comes in and that's one of the things that they were saying today, that that was an interesting concept. "Things are not always what they seem" kind of idea. And putting a character into play, in a given situation, then something in the situation brings out the opposite in you; that jumps out, whether for a moment or if it changes completely, or whatever . . . it just depends on the situation.

Then a lot of them are not even a situation, but a setting, a Where, and there'll be maybe half a dozen people, half a dozen masks. And my emphasis in those is not always the characterization, although that's always part of the search, but the nonverbal part of it, because that's part of the character, too. If you have to make your needs known, or felt, and you haven't recourse to words or facial expression, . . . and I don't permit pantomime . . . how would this character manage to get what he wants to get? So there are a lot more realistic situations in the Character Mask, none in the Universal Mask, none, but in the Character Mask, yes, recognizable human, even ordinary, situations. You don't treat them ordinarily, there are public places . . . oh, swimming pools, waiting rooms, and things like that . . . situations that don't require . . . [private actions].

You move on then finally to the commedia, is that it?

Here, yes, or anywhere I can. I don't think of it so much as an extension of mask . . .

You said earlier that this was different. What is the difference?

I think I know why. Well, to put on a Character Mask and to work in that, you are listening to what the mask says and it is different for everybody. Now here's a place where my work differs from Lecoq. Lecoq will present the Character Masks, which he calls "Expressive Masks," and he will have his own idea of what this mask is like, and it is a very good idea. And all of us accepted that idea and developed what we could from that. Somehow or other I wasn't working that way, and I say that everyone's concept of any one particular mask is going to be different, and all of it is valid. Therefore, to find a Countermask is to find one counter to the one you have chosen. So the Countermask is always different as the mask itself is always different with each person.

Now the difference between that and commedia is that commedia cannot change.

You mean that it is pretty well set.

That is the mask! It's very well set, not only pretty well set, it's very well set.

In terms of gesture and movement?

No, in terms of personality and characteristics. For instance, the miser is always miserly . . . the lovers are always in love; the doctor is always pedantic, you see, there are no variations among that permitted. Now there are the personal parts of it that can come in the way the actor moves. No two doctors do move alike, but they always are pedantic. No two Pantalones do move alike but they are always avaricious . . . excepting Arlechino, because it's the key figure and it's the most documented and the most described and the most everything; and so, and I don't know where this comes from, we do have (and I got mine from Lecoq), we do have typical gesture patterns for Arlechino and I teach those. A few of them for Pantalone, but not nearly so many. And none for the Lovers, who aren't masked at all by the way. The description that I use for them is that they are very much like Shakespeare's heros and heroines and they move in the period and that's all, there's no other way for them to move. The Captain, however the actor animates that mask of the Captain, but he is always a braggart, he's always blustering, and he's always cowardly. So you have those restrictions.

So you have this core that always has to be there.

Yes, Yes. And this is part of the challenge to the actors to accept those structures and restrictions and yet make it an individual thing.

How have they reacted to that?

Very well. The first commedia production I had, I had two different Arlechinos, and they were totally different from each other and both very good. So that happens all the time. And yet they had the same movements, the same gestures, which were taught, but there is still some variation permissable in that depending on what the actor is and what he brings to it.

So they didn't get that upset that things were proscribed for them.

Not a bit. In fact, it's a help. Because they would ask at first, "Isn't there a particular way that this other mask moves?" So that they had to find a version of Pantalone or a version of the doctor themselves.

Do you allow them to improvise with the masks or do you use traditional material?

It's a combination of both depending on what they want to do, really. Where they feel confident. This is why I did the scene study book, because I did scene for those who were having a lot of trouble getting started. And partly it's the way that other people work. When I first came on this program, the man who had been here before me had worked differently with commedia. He asked his actors to improvise absolutely anything that came into their heads. Then, if you wanted to continue on the same scene, he would say, "I want you to use this, or this, or that, or that." And my feeling is that that was a terribly wasteful way to go. I ask them to observe the pattern of the character and improvise within that. So that to me, frankly, more of the stuff was usable.

Do you teach them lazzi?

I give them lazzi, but mostly they will make up their own, because that's so much fun, or I'll give them a suggestion for a lazzo. No, I don't particularly use those [traditional lazzi]. But some of the lazzi that I have in the scene study book are traditional ones. For instance, there's that traditional one of Arlechino describing certain remedies to the Captain. Oh, it's like to bake an apple--you put an apple in your mouth and stick your head in the oven; or, . . . but there's one that's more scatalogical . . . I can't remember the purpose of it but it's a medication that you apply to the hind parts, like cayenne pepper or something like that. Well, how Arlechino delivers these recipes is, I think, an individual thing, and for him to find even though the text might remain the same. Or Truffilino would pluck the wings off flies and eat them. But that doesn't help me very much, frankly. I wish I thought it was funnier than I think it is.

So that the scene study book gives, first, lazzi, something to gear into. I felt it needs something to gear into the dimension of the whole thing, and it be an exchange of text between two people for half a page, and I'll encourage them to find physical lazzi to be a part of it. Just like those recipes, I'll suggest things like "He's talking about applying this very peppery stuff to your hind parts, and he should be scatalogical, he should lift up his tunic and poke his rear out to the audience and smack it, and then when the burning sets in he should run to the river bank and sit in the river," and that sort of thing . . . that's the kind of thing you must find for yourself.

Then, scenes are a little bit longer, but not much, like a page or a page and a half at most. And there again it's text. And I feel that if they feel that they want the crutch of the text, use it. If they want to follow the exchange of the dialogue in paraphrase, in their own language, then they should do it. But I keep

people in the period, I don't have them put in "okays" and all that sort of thing. If you just want to take the idea and use it as a scenario and improvise on that, do that. Whatever level you want to tackle can be done even with written scenes. Think I'll publish it?

Yes, it really sounds good.

As far as working from scenario to production, I did it one year by writing a scenario, this is the one based on Romeo and Juliet, in other words, I gave the schema of the scenes and in the course of rehearsals, actors are improvising dialogue, and they improvised and improvised. Stuff that worked we kept and so after two or three times, over and over, and I was recording or my stage manager was recording, and then I would take it and sort of boil it down to its essentials.

Sort of mold it, shape it?

Yes. And then feed it back to them. It worked very well, but it takes longer.

Yes, that's a long process. That's the way Megan Terry works with a group.

And VanItalie does the same thing.

Do the actors in the commedia masks have to find the voice?

Yes, they do.

Or, is that prescribed also?

No, I've never heard, I've never read anything where they discuss the voice of the character.

But it can't be their own voice?

It can't be their own because it's a mask.

Right.

The main reason for it is that they're masked. I'm trying to think. . . . Well, there'll be things, no,that's the way you say something, things like Pantalone can go from blustering to whining very quickly, very easily. But that's because his gestures can do that too. No, there are no instructions that I know of of what to do with the voice. It's suggested by characterization. You have a blustering, braggart, Captain, then you are not going to bluster and brag in a whining,thin, piping, squeaking, voice.

Right. It must be of whole cloth. But you still see these masks as different from the Character Masks?

Only that in my concept, you don't have the range of choice of characterization that you can put into the mask as you can with the Character mask. You need to observe, you are forced to observe . . . now there are many similarities. The fact that the play is larger than life is true of both of them. The sensitivity that you develop to the Character Mask is what's going to help you in the commedia mask.

I've another thought on the voice. And I don't know what this . . . because I don't know enough about voice production, but I'm remembering that covering your face with a half or three-quarter mask, I think I mentioned this before, it covers certain planes of resonance, and therefore, you cannot produce the tone as you do without that covering on it. And you're not hearing it the same way and certainly the audience isn't hearing it the same way. So that's part of what happens in a mask, and until you learn that, until you know that, then your own natural unmasked voice doesn't go with the mask, just as a naturalistic, uneconomical gesture doesn't go with the mask.

Do you do any choral mask work? Lecoq has done choral work.

He hasn't done any in masks. That's all relationship, physical relationship of the bodies to each other.

Because Copeau did some in masks.

Did he? I didn't know that.

The footnote in the Doat book refers to that. And also Chancerel did. I have an article from Theatre Arts Monthly where it mentions that. So you don't do any choral work, oh, it's not masked you say?

No, not in mask.

[What follows is a long passage on Ms. Rolfe's unmasked choral work, which is unrelated to the topic of this study.]

Grotesque masks are something you're just exploring, right?

I'm not even exploring yet, I made two and brought them into a class and they were fooling around, and I was happy to have them fooling around, because I don't know either what I can do. So if it engages anybody's interest or attention, that's fine. I just want to see what the result will be.

I'm really not sure how much explanation a mask needs. For instance, when I went to San Diego last week, I was going to do two demonstration classes, one of them was in masks. And I had the Universal

Mask, and I made my usual pitch, the presentation, and people took the mask and they were . . . one of the teachers was watching and said, "What would happen if you just brought the masks in and put them down and didn't say a word?" And my immediate reaction was I think you would probably come to the same result, but it would take a lot longer. In other words, they would find out everything that I could tell them about it for themselves, but it would take a helleva long time. Because pretty soon it isn't me telling them, it's themselves--they telling each other, just like this first year group does. So it's an experiment worth trying . . . some day maybe I'll have the leisure to try it.

It sounds like something Peter Frisch is trying, wants to try, it's in his plans. It's called Fantasy Masks.

I found a man when I did that ATA [American Theatre Association] thing with masks, one teacher came up to me and, stupid me, I didn't get his name and address, in fact, he was the first one who spoke of this kind of non-human mask, and I said, "What do you do in it?" And he said, "Oh, legends, myths." Great!

That's what Peter's into, the archetypal, Jungian archetype.

And that's what I was saying too, that demonology, witchcraft are more grotesque. And maybe myths and legends are more fantasy. And all of this is to be explored. And I'd love to do it.

Can you explain the haiku exercise again?

I selected, or I asked them to select, if they want to do their own, the haiku which deal with elements, animals, inanimate objects, in other words, sort of a synthesis of the studies that we had already done, and there are often human beings in the same haiku. And I'll ask them to, well, of course I ask them to choose a haiku that appeals to you, and then do a study about it. Don't illustrate it. It's already been said better than you could. But find a movement component, either enlarge the concept, or do something else with it, or take that moment before the haiku could have begun, or take the result after the haiku is finished, or do something with it. For example, there's a lovely haiku about the monkey trying to jump up and touch the moon. And one girl started on one side of the stage way over in the corner and she was completely monkey. And she saw the moon, and she tried to jump up and catch it, and it carried her a few steps forward, and this was all upstage, and then she did it again, and this time she was a little bit straighter than the hunched down animal, and that took her a little forward. And then she did it again, and this time she was still straighter. Well, after about four or five tries, it was a person. And suddenly the moon shot was there. And it was an evolutionary cycle in a way. That's the kind of . . . you bring something in addition to the haiku.

Or else deepen it. There's another lovely haiku about the child-woman, who touches the toys in the marketplace. And this one girl did something that was so moving . . . and I've used it as an example of what to try. She didn't pantomime the woman going through the marketplace and touching dolls, but she stood with her back to the audience, and just looked down at something as if it could be on a counter. And she had her hands at her waist. And then she slowly turned toward the audience, and her hand did this kind of grasping, turning, pulling motion at her belly, and that was all. You see, I get gooseflesh even as I describe it.

Now did somebody read this to the side?

Now they can have their choice, of having it read during the time they're doing it, or before, or after, or whatever, so that the two illustrate each other.

But it's got to be read somewhere along . . .

Not necessarily, they don't even have to do that. Really, it's a completely free choice of how to tackle it. Most everybody opts for having it read. Neither can stand alone. I'm saying do something with a haiku so that it illustrates what you're doing, or you illustrate what it's doing, but neither one of you is complete without the other. That's the kind of thing I'm after. And because it uses all of these things that we've been working on. And it's such a beautiful poetic thing to happen, because sometimes people move in some of the most unexpected ways. If they do an abstraction, that's even greater.

The boy in class today with the blond beard. He has done the most poetic haiku I've ever seen. And look at the countermask that he plays . . . that casual, cool, cool, cat. And exquisite poetry. And he's the one who's so afraid to be a noble character.

Now the haiku you do is without sound, except for the reader?

When I've done demonstrations they've wanted to add sound, and sometimes it can be just percussion or done by live performers or I've got recorded stuff that can be used. They don't explore sound particularly with the haiku because they're wearing a mask. This is the Universal Mask, because they have to be available to be so many different things.

You said the other day that there was a real difference between Decroux's work with the mask and Lecoq's, or between their approach.

I never had mask work with Decroux. I've only learned about it from the short time I was with him, and from the photographs I've seen, and I've seen a film in which his studies of trees has actors using, not a mask in the sense that we know, because what he's after is a

complete effacement of the face. And so he had them wear stockings. So that it's not a recognizable human feature in any way. What he's doing is trying to get rid of the titling up there, so that it's a configuration in space with no recognizable specialties like heads, hands . . .

That sounds like Oscar Schlemmar's ideas.

So stockings are the only ones I know of. It's the only thing I've seen. And he has some photographs in his book, Paroles, and in this one film that I saw.

Very white, simple masks. But there's nothing in the book about mask work.

No. Nor in the four months that I was with him did he ever speak of masks. We never used them.

Do you have any interest personally in exploring the possibilities of masked drama? Other than Commedia?

I've used it as examples to students in presenting the mask, although we're concerned in what the mask does to you--actor--the Universal Mask particularly. There is still in my mind a place for it on stage even though there is no drama in the concept of universal. And this is the way Lecoq presents it. One of the differences between the two is that there is no inherent conflict in the Universal Mask; a Character Mask always has inherent conflict. So, without conflict there is no drama, but for some abstract themes that mask is tremendously effective on stage, and I tell which are the abstract themes I've seen work and that I think are effective. So the neutral mask does have a place on stage, and if in doing any of the kind of material that I would like to do on stage, this comes up as a natural part of it, I would like to do that. I loved doing Romeo and Juliet as a dumb show and with masks. That was fine. Dumb show can usually be done without masks, but somehow it lent itself, and of course these are Character Masks. So, anything in silence.

I can't remember if this is anything I've done or just thought of, but there could be kind of interpolated moments in a play when the action is completely silent and there are a number of plays where that is so, for the actors to suddenly whip out masks and to use them.

For instance, there is a silent section in Six Characters In Search Of An Author when some relationships are being illustrated, defined, and it's all done in silence and I think that would be tremendous done in masks, just that moment, just that artificial device. I saw a moment once, and that was at LAMDA [London Academy of Dramatic Arts], in the closing performance that they were doing at the end of the school year, in which they were doing some Shakespeare daily

illustrations of play, and I think this was from a book. But in the process of play, and they were doing a game of Elizabethan times, not hop scotch, or ring-around-the-rosy, but something on that level, and historically the plague struck London. And while they were playing, say ring-around-the-rosy, they had hidden masks among their clothes and one after another would take out this mask and put it on. They continued to play, but continued a little differently, a little slower. And not quite as gay, until pretty soon, all of the participants had masks on and all of them were moving in slow motion. That was very effective. That kind of thing I'd like to do more and more.

Masked drama, traditional masked drama, I just don't know enough about.

Of course there isn't a heck of a lot known about it either in the West. The East has a great tradition, a continuing tradition.

I think you said the other day there was a need for advanced mask work.

What did I mean by that? One association that I get with that is not mask work but mime work. I said I've taught an advanced mime class, maybe. Masks . . . what I know, and what I could teach, like in the second year it's convenient to make it, to have the work deal with the Character Mask, the Countermask, and as part of that, Clown, and Commedia dell'arte . . . and other than that I don't know. If I found something with the Grotesque Masks, or that other nice work, Fantasy Masks, that would belong there.

I wanted to tell you about what comes in some of the mime technique and spills over into the mask in one sense, and that is when I liken mime to a cartoon form, a Sunday comic section, or an animated cartoon in the movies, it seems to me that the challenge is the same for the mime and for the cartoonist. When you see a comic strip, say there are twelve blocks, what the artist has had to do is choose a frozen moment that tells the complete story of that moment one after another. And it's a stop, an immobility. But that immobility has to be read . . . that frozen moment is a totality in the same way that the mask is a totality. It's all there and you can see it in one glance. But that isn't all there is. So more goes on.

And then I was talking about the making of masks. And with the Character Mask I have one prevailing idea and that is that they should be as ambiguous as possible. They are ambiguous as to sex, except for the bearded ones, they can play either sex. They are ambiguous as to state of being, in other words, I don't have a happy one, or a sad one, or anything like that. But when making them I'll often have an idea in mind and perhaps it'll be executed and it's successful, but that doesn't mean that it cannot be played a totally different way and just as successfully.

But you have something in mind about age, right, when you're making one?

Well, that's easier to see, that's not as ambiguous. Because there are certain physical signs of age that are unmistakable. It's also interesting, though, to play with this type of contrast of having a mask of age on a more youthful body. And you see this type of thing. There's a retired general and he takes a certain pride in keeping himself up physically. And he does his pushup every morning. And so he has the sort of stringy, economical body of a younger man and with a face that's aged. It's kind of a Countermask. It's not what you'd expect when you first see it, or it's a Countermask that on sight has the conflict and is interesting. Which a Countermask can often be; on sight there's an incongruity that's interesting.

You're working on the mask for a state of being, not an attitude or an emotion?

No, not an emotion, and not even an attitude. A sense of integration of a being in how it's manifest in space and time and in intensity, which is the only way movement can be manifest. And that includes the voice. It should come together, the mask should bring all that together. And because it's so powerful, and because there's a sense of the mask dictating too, the wearer can just sort of keep out of the way . . .

That's one of the student's comments too, in those penciled notes you had written down.

Yes, because he was trying to impose something on the mask and the mask was fighting back, so you knew something had to . . .

That's amazing!

Yes, but what's interesting to me in that comment, is his linking that to what used to happen to him when he was learning a regular role--it had nothing to do with masks. He found that he was imposing something on a role, and that's why he had so much trouble memorizing lines.

Now back to making masks. I was saying that besides the ambiguity, sometimes I'll find some very specific techniques that I've just learned by doing. I'll make the corners of the mouth different on each side, so that the mask in profile looks different, and that's in contrast to my effort to perfect a Universal Mask. And I'd like to think that I'd make this effort to perfect it for the rest of my life.

One of the techniques that I use in trying to find a good mask for that [the Universal Mask] is to deliberately look for absolute symmetry. And that right away is a non-naturalistic face. Aside

from other techniques that you can use and that Sartori used for a non-naturalistic face. The absolute symmetry is one of them.

Have you been able to look at Japanese Noh masks up close and handle them?

Yes. Lecoq has one or two that he's brought back, and he keeps them in felt cases.

But back to the Universal Mask . . . and that's the association that I have. For instance, the female is an absolutely Universal Mask . . .

It's meant to be.

Is it? I didn't realize that?

It's the most non-realistic, the most ethereal, the most abstract, the most difficult to wear and to make live.

Now, I found that if I will pull a Universal Mask into play with the Character Masks, it's no longer a Universal Mask.

Oh, really?

It becomes then a face which is guarded, which doesn't play a free improvisational reaction to life, because we're improvising all the time. This is one long improvisation. But the person who doesn't reveal anything specific on the face is controlling too much. So in that context, that face becomes an over-controlled mask.

Now I've tried something else. In doing Romeo and Juliet with the Character Masks. Because I simply didn't have enough Character Masks, I used two of the Universal Masks, a man and a girl it happened to be, and for the first time I sprayed them gold, and they worked perfectly for the hero and the heroine. Partly because they were two, and they were coupled. Mostly they played together. They played with other characters, and that we find did become over-controlled. Because you remembered that you had seen them as the lovers. And because they were gold and the only ones that were gold, that set them apart. If they had remained a different color, it could not have worked in the same way.

The Japanese do something like that in the Topeng drama. The young prince and the princess, the lovers, have the white masks that's very pure, very simple, and the rest of the crowd in the drama have heavily modelled faces.

Yes, that makes awfully good sense to me.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEWS WITH JACQUES LECOQ

APPENDIX D

Notes on interview with Jacques Lecoq at the International Mime Institute and Festival, Viterbo College, Wisconsin, August 6, 1974. Translation of Lecoq's comments into English by Fay Lecoq. Interview was not recorded on tape at the request of Mr. Lecoq.

Lecoq's background:

(a) as a Sportsman, he learned to analyze movement
(b) he worked at the rehabilitation of paralytics after the war
(c) he learned the teachings of Copeau through his work with Jean Dasté.

Do you need movement/body training prior to the use of masks?

Yes, but masks will free the body even more.

Lecoq's comments on the nature and function of the Neutral Mask:

If the Neutral Mask looks at the sea, it becomes the sea.
It makes the actor a blank sheet of paper, a 'tabla rasa.'
It is a face with no past, but still dramatic.
It is neither literary or psychodramatic.
It creates a fulcrum point; it tends towards this fulcrum point which doesn't exist.
It is like the young woman in the Noh drama.
It attempts to erase the individuality; to get at the essence; to get at Man rather than this man.

Why begin the training with the Neutral Mask?

The Neutral Mask is not a surface mask but comes from deep inside one. The Neutral Mask is like the bottom of the sea: it's quiet, it's still. The Expressive Mask is like waves; underneath is the Neutral Mask.

Comments on the Expressive Masks:

It expresses an emotional state with a suggestion of character. The Juilliard masks are too fixed, too typical, too typed, not freely suggestive enough, do not allow enough range, too old-fashioned, too Japanese.

What is the training period in the different masks?

Neutral Masks are used every day for three months.
Expressive Masks are used every day for one month.
Larval Masks are used every day for one month.
Students will begin to make their own Expressive Masks shortly.

Why do you use the Larval Masks?

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.

How do you introduce the student to the mask?

Speak to the students about masks.
Then students talk about their understanding of masks.
Students look at the mask a lot before trying it on. They spend eight days looking at the mask and then they can try it on.
No mirror work, except with the Larval Masks, because there should be no concern with the play of light on the surface of the mask--that's masked drama.

Do you do any vocal work in the mask?

None, except in Commedia dell'arte. There is a right voice for each commedia character. But the student must find his own way to it with negative criticism. I know what is right and lead/guide the students to find it.

Does the actor have difficulty moving from the mask to a non-masked character in a play?

No trouble if he has talent, but he must know how to use his body.

Do you use the mask work to evaluate your students as to which ones will be potentially good actors?

No evaluation under the Neutral Mask or under the Expressive Masks, but definitely with the commedia masks, because of the addition of the voice which is necessary for the good actor to be able to integrate with the physicalization.

Notes on interview with Jacques Lecoq at the International Mime Institute and Festival, Viterbo College, Wisconsin. August 7, 1974. Translation of Lecoq's comments into English by Fay Lecoq. Interview was not recorded on tape at the request of Mr. Lecoq.

Can you clarify how the Neutral Mask is alive dramatically?

The Neutral Mask is identified with the elements: trees, wood, sea, fire.
This identification with the elements then becomes the basis for the character work: man as tree; man moving as the sea.
There is no conflict in the Neutral Mask.
This mask involves the concept of the triangular: the actual mask, the response of the actor, and the work.

Is the Expressive Mask identified with conflict?

Yes.

Do you use grotesque masks?

There are some grotesques among the Larval Masks.

Is the actor depersonalized under a mask?

Essentialization is a better work to use than depersonalization.
The Neutral Mask confirms the personality of the actor.
Students are not permitted to wear masks of the opposite sex.

Is it good for the actor's face under the mask to mime the expression of the mask?

It is not important either way.

Do you do group word in masks?

Yes. In both the Neutral and the Expressive Masks. This helps to establish relationships and a sense of the ensemble. It is also the basis for creating a chorus as in Greek Tragedy.

Is the weight of the mask important?

They should be conscious of the masks on their faces but not very much so.

Is there a difference between wearing a leather mask and one constructed from another medium?

Yes, it is the difference between wearing wool and cashmere.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEWS WITH CARLO MAZZONE-CLEMENTI

APPENDIX E

Interview with Carlo Mazzone-Clementi, International Mime Institute and Festival, Viterbo College, Wisconsin, August 7, 1974.

[Mazzone-Clementi showing the masks of the Commedia dell'arte]

I'm interested to know . . . maybe I can shoot questions to you, without interviewing you, because of just feed myself of your curiosity. It's such a large period, commedia, and of course the mask maker and the fact that it was leather mask maker proves that it was for professional play; fact it was invented a half mask: that was the first time in history it was a half mask. It focuses interest on the mouth, you know, speaking, as well as somersaulting, as well as projecting character. [puts on the mask of Arlechino and demonstrates]

Now you have to fulfill both what the eyes suggests and the mouth. I noticed that there was a very different treatment of your mouth in that mask versus that mask.

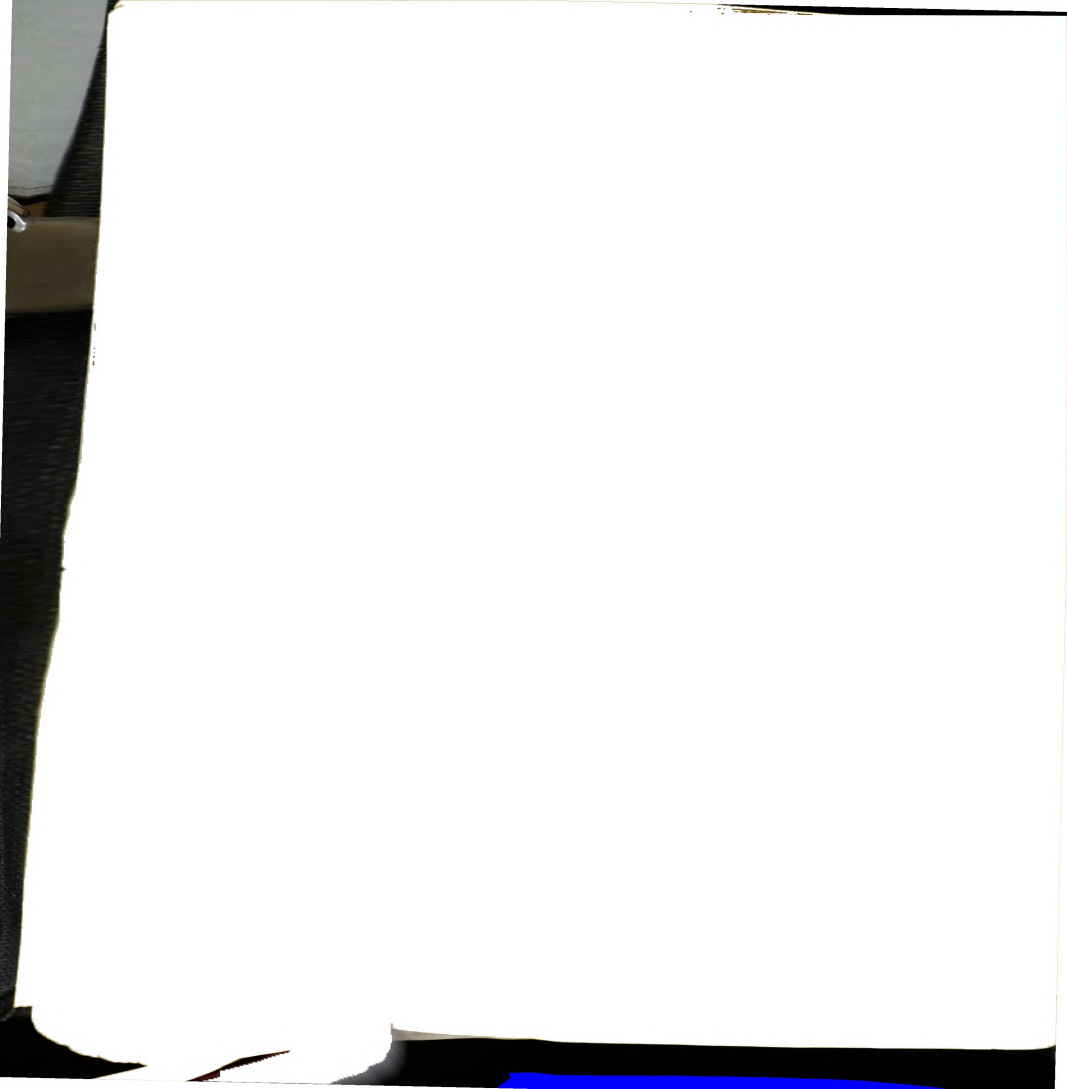
That's a huge mouth. A Zanni, he likes to eat; a tremendous mouth, the lip is extended. The survival thing, you know, the Zanni is the energy eat, how to eat, how to get the food, how to make it. Yeah, that's Arlechino, but it's a very late Arlechino, very Baroque, the Arlechino of the Servant of Two Masters, so it's not very much the characteristic of the early fathers of the Arlechino like this [shows another mask] this is Truffulino. Notice the eye. This is a wondering eye.

Staring.

Staring. [Pointing to another mask, the other mask that he was just wearing.]

Is your school set up only to teach Commedia, or is it that one of the major emphasis of the school? Is the school more to teach actors?

Mime and Comedy. I call Dell'arte School; mime and comedy. And "dell'arte" means creative. So in terms of creativity I'm thinking of what the commedia could be, and what it should be some day is not only up to me. . . . I'd like to create some Commedia situation, atmosphere, ambiance, that will eventually develop into a Renaissance in Commedia. So I call it Dell'arte because I'm really inspired



with the Commedia that was, and I'm going to go back to the sources. I like the prototypes. That's the way I work, whether secretly or not, I work all the time on the prototypes. But I'm not stiff. I don't want to make stiff . . .

So the student doesn't have to . . .

Stereotype.

So it really is an acting program . . .

Yah, it's an acting training program including mime, acrobatics, possibly (I'm trying to get a great acrobatic teacher), and I'm looking for a great teacher of whishu [talk about this acrobatic art used in training for the Peking Opera] I pay respect to the tradition of the orient because I think it will balance a lot of things we have here . . .

How long is the program?

Well, I try to do three years.

When does the mask work come into that?

I start the first year with the metaphysical mask.

Neutral mask?

It's not neutral.

So the metaphysical mask is not the neutral mask?

No. I came to this country and used the neutral mask Lecoq use, you know him? When I came here I find hard time to work with the neutral mask. Really hard time.

With the American students?

Yah. [he puts on his metaphysical mask]

Oh, yeah. Now that's very different from his [Lecoq's]. This is like Oscar Schlemmer. I immediately thought of Oscar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus had a similar kind of thing.

Cubism.

Oh my goodness. [Mazzone-Clementi is demonstrating the mask] So you begin with this?

Yeah? And do you know why? It gives that . . . and forgets connotation, it's here, and connotation is no more here. It's grey nothing. But it's the empty, the Vacuum; it's metaphysical, behind

the physical. My approach to Commedia is not to depersonalize, exactly, but it's very close to the fact that it's close to Zero. It's not exactly zero, but I insist on the fact that before you can be busy with anything, you have to reduce yourself to the first year of age. Not even two years old. It is a pre-literature. And I insist on that because it's the only way; because I have to get rid of psychoanalysis, in this country particularly. All the hangups and I say, well, you're in a state of being . . .

You have problems with that, don't you? Doesn't the student becoming . . .

No, becoming something . . .

[pointing to the commedia mask] that's easier I think.

No. This is very strange. I have much less problem after they pass the first period. Because I work on the recognition . . . that is, I have to make up, I have to think about . . . a partner has to be there, surfaces, texture, all those things. And they have to do the same to me. And both, we have this, we'll be able to work much faster, if we have other things. Because we are faced with the shy or hiding. . . . People hide themselves with their face, and jump in the dark with that [the commedia mask]. An extremely talented person right away understood the mask and get it, I mean; for one understand, ninety-nine are in trouble. So I make this transitional period. First year I work with this [the metaphysical mask].

How long?

Six months intensively, preparation . . .

Is that every day?

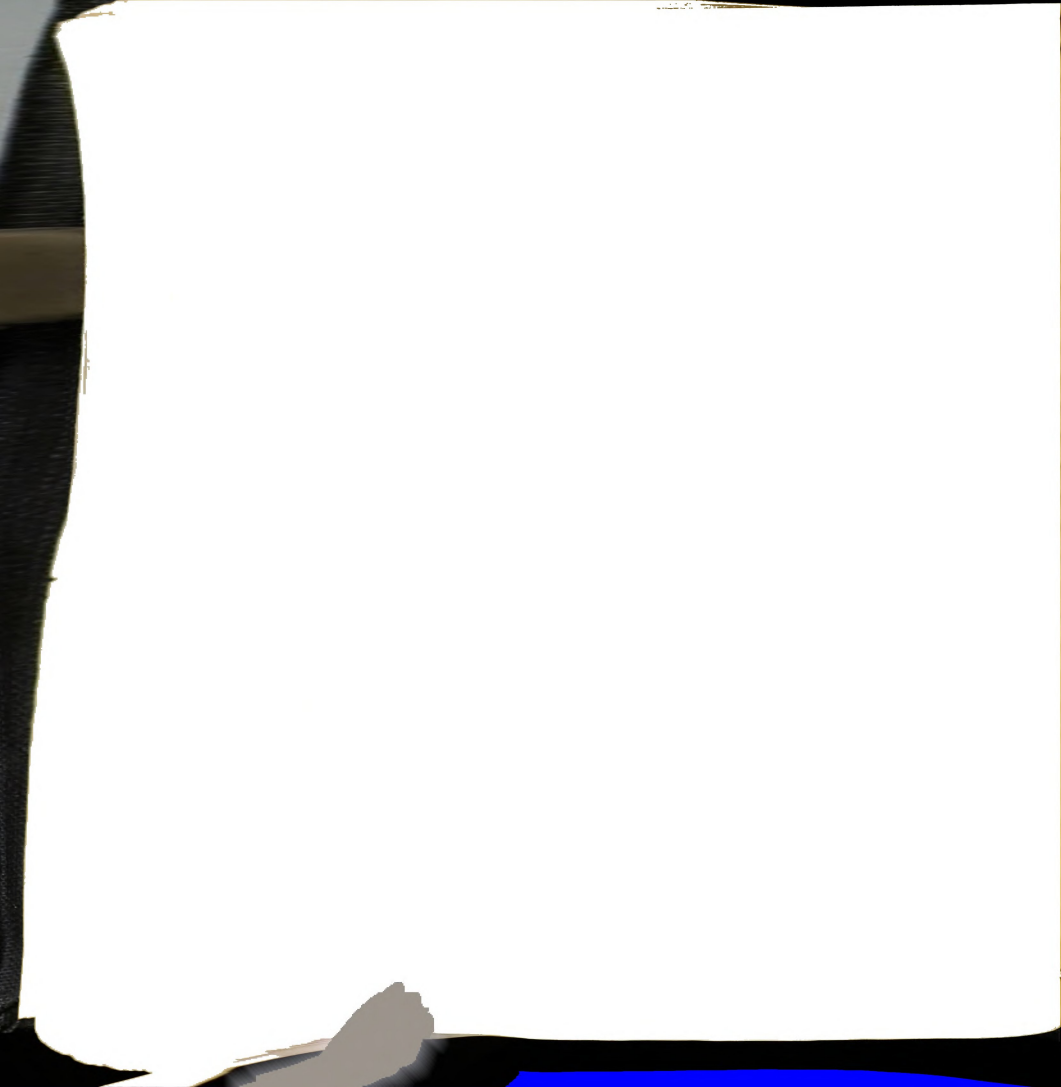
At least twice a week.

With the metaphysical mask. Are the others like that or shaped differently?

All metaphysical like this. Curves and straight lines. Life is straight line or curve. I go forwards and that's a straight line and that means tension. So curves and straight lines. So just in terms of movement, it moves like natural movement, or like artificial on either side. Tension and elasticity. Bergson more or less.

How do you introduce it to the students?

I lead them by exercises. I have exercises I call "The Showers." The main exercise is "Recognition," that's what I was doing. I



mean those white shoes [mine] interest me very much and I wonder where you got them. . . . I mean it's external. That means nothing to me, but I start to build, to externalize. . . . At the end I say, the mask.

Can you explain that further? How you sensitize them to the mask?

The mask is simple. It doesn't have a mouth. So it's one action at the end. It's one word: it's Father, or it's brother, or it's Sears! It's a partner, it's important a coming recognition. And that's where spontaneity comes from. Because it's a sharing of energy.

All right, let's say it's the first time you're going to meet with them and bring the masks in, . . .

First I do this without the masks. This "Recognition" is without the masks. And this is one of the exercises I call "The Shower." And once they know the exercises I call "The Showers" then I give them the metaphysical masks. Then the mask confirms what I am saying. Then with the mask they really realize that it is action. The security comes to them . . . the flow of life is right here [in the mask] is improviso . . . what I don't know is more important than what I know. In Commedia that's what you have to go. I have exercises of marching and accepting by the back what I don't see [he demonstrates all this] I never see the whole thing. What I see is what I'm going to. I don't know if I make sense. The mask is with sight. So the mask is alive only when it is on. And that's all the job with a mask, it's a projector of light. [He holds up his right and his left hand.] What people look at [right hand] that's one mask; what I would like them to see but they never see [left hand]; what I am is the two [he moves the right and left hand together and overlaps them in front of his face] together. And I don't know, but I am. And I know what I am is the total of two. It is a metaphysical condition, because it doesn't really exist, because I don't know what I am. Pirandello accept.

They're going to respond to this [metaphysical mask] by movement?

By action.

Anyway they want to?

No, there is a boundary. Before touch you can indicate touch. But if you touch you recognize. The moment you wrestle you finish, you become one in struggle. Two forces fighting. And that's not valid. So you are to be separated; the other; it is constantly interaction . . .

With a partner do you mean?

Yes.

Is the metaphysical mask involved then with struggle, with conflict?

Could be. But is very, very hard . . . I don't force.

I mean the Neutral Mask supposedly has no conflict in it, that's what I'm trying to get at.

The metaphysical is more a state of being like the Neutral. Basically it's the same as the Neutral mask, only to you . . . you know what happened to me, working with the Neutral mask, and kids were not understanding, they would dramatize. The Neutral mask is a dramatic point for the American kid for some reason. I couldn't work . . . they dramatized . . .

You mean they started to create character and story and that sort of thing? Rather than state of being?

Exactly.

This is obvious that you've got to work at more state of being with [the metaphysical mask].

Yes. That will give them exactly the condition of vegetables, of animals but in a state not exactly to talk. That's why I cut the mouth. On the Neutral Mask, the mouth in a way is there. And that makes that difference, because you say "Why don't I speak?" "Why don't I eat?" "Why don't I have things like that?" This is the risk. And this [the metaphysical mask] is keeping inside, and keeping digging inside [speaking now of the metaphysical mask]. And you have to find out all the things that you cannot do without forcing. Then you know that you cannot force. You don't have to force. I have two of them [the metaphysical mask] that I usually use of leather, then I have a collection of celastic I use with the kids.

This is not mirror work, is it?

Not at all.

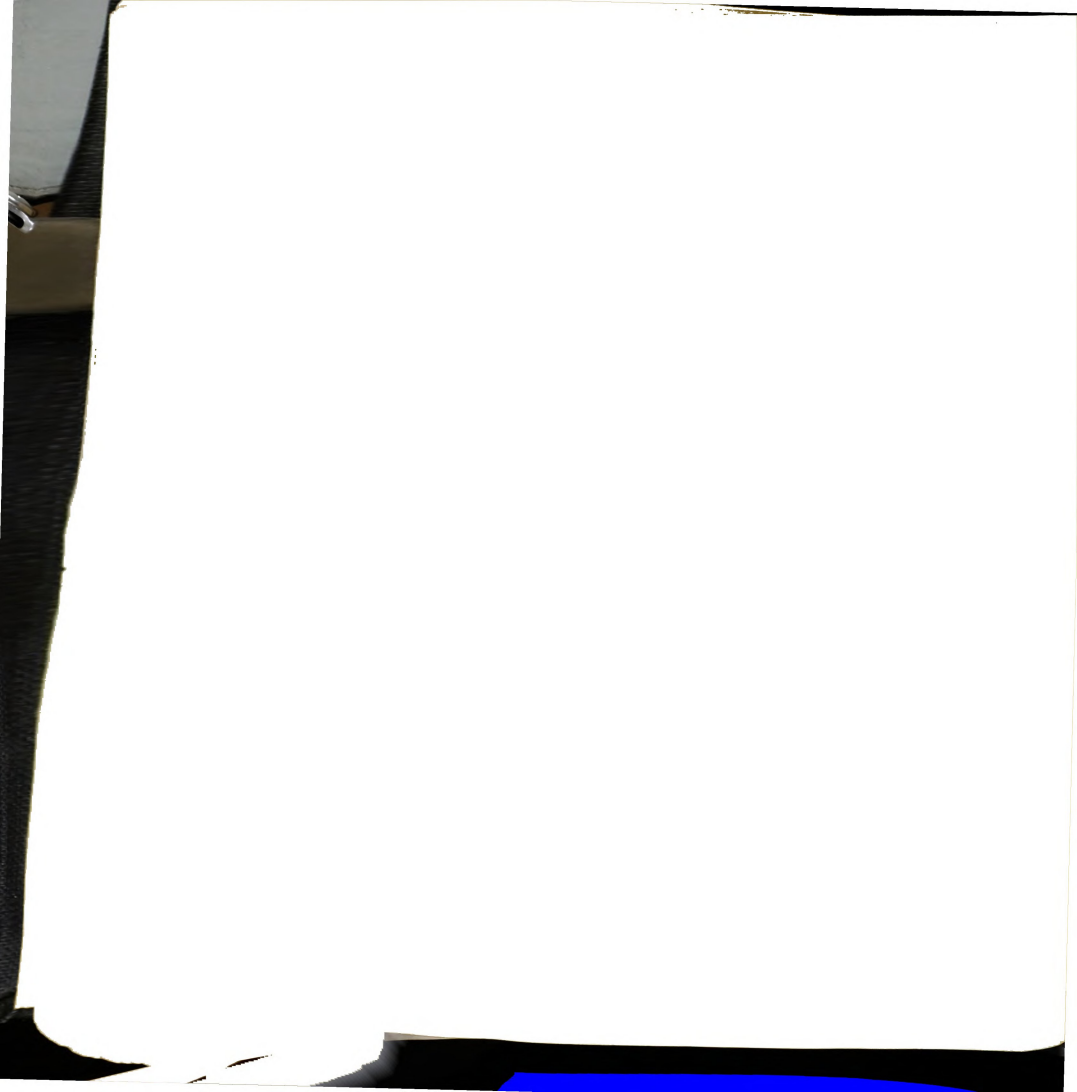
That would be disastrous, I suppose.

Oh, yes.

Do they hold the mask and observe it for awhile before they put it on?

Oh, yes, they study it a lot. They learn a lot by watching. I always end the class, they must never work alone, so they see what happens . . .

So part of the introduction is also a demonstration.



Yah, I indicate more than demonstrate. Hint, you know.

Suggest and let them discover.

Yah, let them discover. I have a succession of situations for discovery. I do a lot of discovery work.

Do your exercises go from simple to more complex?

Yah. First alone, then with a partner, and only at the end do we do a big spontaneity game. I have one spontaneity game called "the case" another is called, "the maze." I work a lot in the dark. The first day or two is just going around . . . I blindfold people in the end. And "the maze" is blindfolded, very blindfolded. Really they go bumping against things and they find out that they can't fight that moment, especially after they are coming from the ultimate door or the gate of liberation, usually coming from a garbage can so it doesn't give you very much information. But they have to find out all the time where they are coming from.

Do you next go to another kind of mask next, or do you go to the Commedia?

[inturrupted by woman who also wanted interview]

I came here in '57, '58 I work New York, then I went to Carneige Tech in '59 and at the end of '61 I designed this [the metaphysical mask].

The Neutral mask is not working, but this [metaphysical mask] is to do the same thing, though, as the Neutral Mask does.

Yah, prepare the ground how to wear a mask of those [commedia masks] for the actor without grimacing underneath. The Neutral mask they still dramatize.

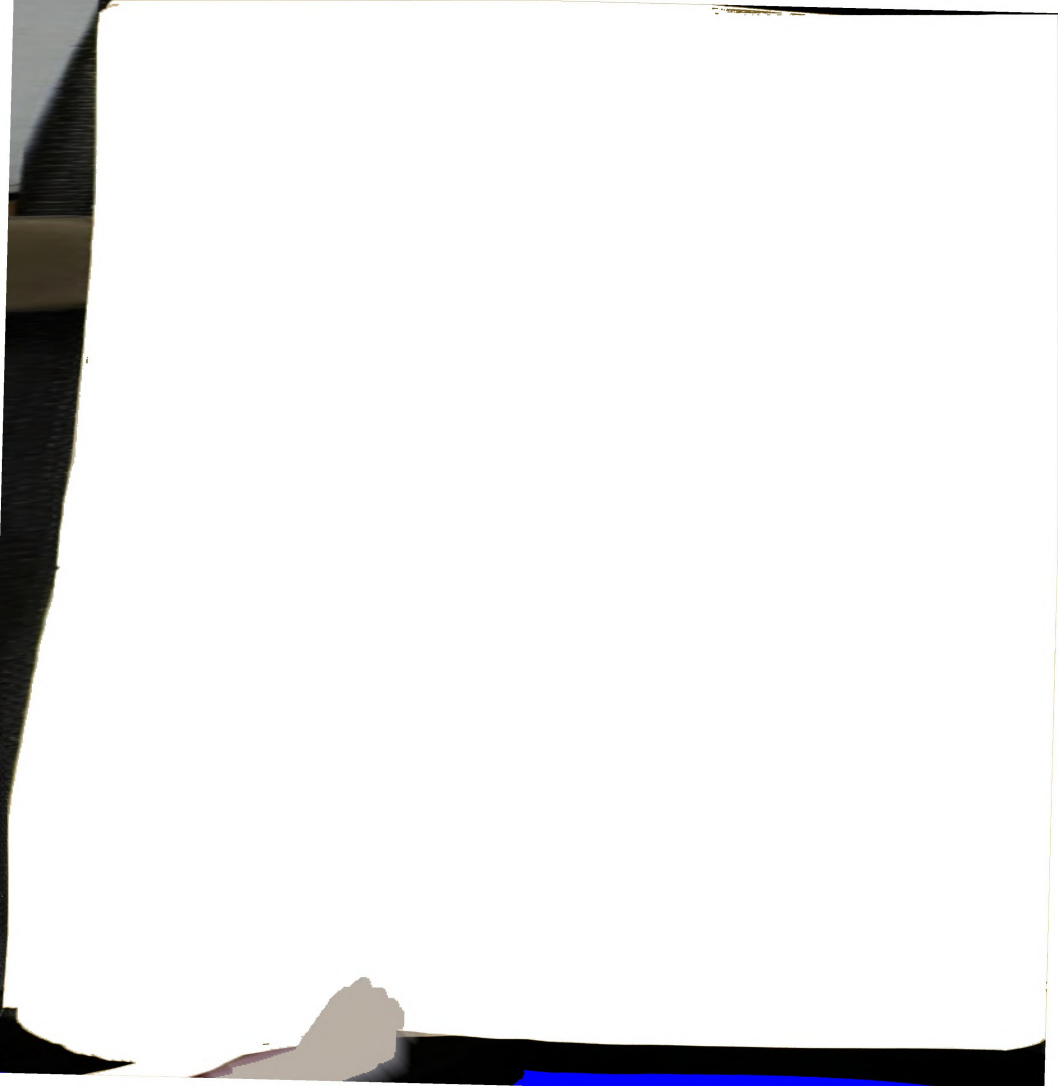
They don't understand the concept of "neutral," which in this country means "nothing."

The most common thing for me when I used the term neutral was, "What do you mean, I'm a homosexual?" "I'm homosexual, I want to be homosexual, I can't be neutral." Oh, gee.

So you designed this. It looks like Sartori's work. Did he do this?

Yah. This and the partner was the last he did before he died. He sent to me.

For me, looking at this, there doesn't seem to be any distinction. I mean it can be either male or female.



It can be also anything.

But for Lecoq for the Neutral masks he has male neutral masks and female neutral masks, but anybody can wear this.

Yeah, it's only the size of the head. The thing is that being, it's physical. I'm physical. I'm automatically metaphysical. I'm the same guy.

Do you get any mechanical response to this?

Oh, yeah.

Students going into a robot-like thing with this?

Oh, yeah.

So they do do robot-like or mechanical type movements with this?

It can promote mechanical-like new life, but it will go because the guy has something metaphysical there that will drive him. I mean it's his own condition. And then he will find out what the layout for that is, and then he will open up . . . behave like a revolving door. "Do you realize you did not have a center of yourself as a being, you were just carried by automatic thing?"

So in other words you want the human being in . . .

In control . . . I mean accepting what happen to him. I do a lot of drunk exercise in my "shower period." Not just one drink, I tell them, beer, wine, highly alcohol, and I give them all at once so they have to make the distinction to affect their body. They will find where things are . . . I give them kinesthetically very happy to discover.

There seems to be a lot of movement and body training prior to introduction to the mask.

Absolutely.

Why is that? Why before the mask?

It's body with a mind; never without a mind. The mind has a decision all made. I feel that then I will go for that and then I will understand. And discovering with body first . . .

But if you're freeing the body and the individual prior to the use of the mask, why the use of the mask? I mean, what can that do more than you can do without it?

A mask should protect you to reveal. Once you take this out [the mask] and you put there [on your face] you are so happy to reveal

what you have. So you don't hide. I mean there are two things happening under a mask. Either you hide or you reveal. Either it protects you or it hides you. If I can reveal right now as if I had the mask; you see, I am ready. So I can take off the mask, I can drop the mask and put anything [on]. So I will always have a mask as if I don't have a mask.

Couldn't you have that without having gone through the mask, though?

First of all we have to use the mask in Commedia. So it can't be the same actor who doesn't use masks. It's actor training. A mask scare the person or excite the person. So they go out and lose their sincerity.

Aren't they afraid of losing the projection of themselves on stage?

But not enough to really lose it. That's why this [metaphysical mask].

So that's really a self-discovery mask.

It's a self-discovery of where the real character is at the center. That's why I call metaphysical. I mean, behind the physical there is a center of your activity, you can call that neutral, zero, universal, call it what you like.

But the actor, it seems to me, would go through a period of fearing that that mask would destroy him.

No, not if they realize what it does. They would realize that it is protecting more than . . . it is scary . . .

It's freeing.

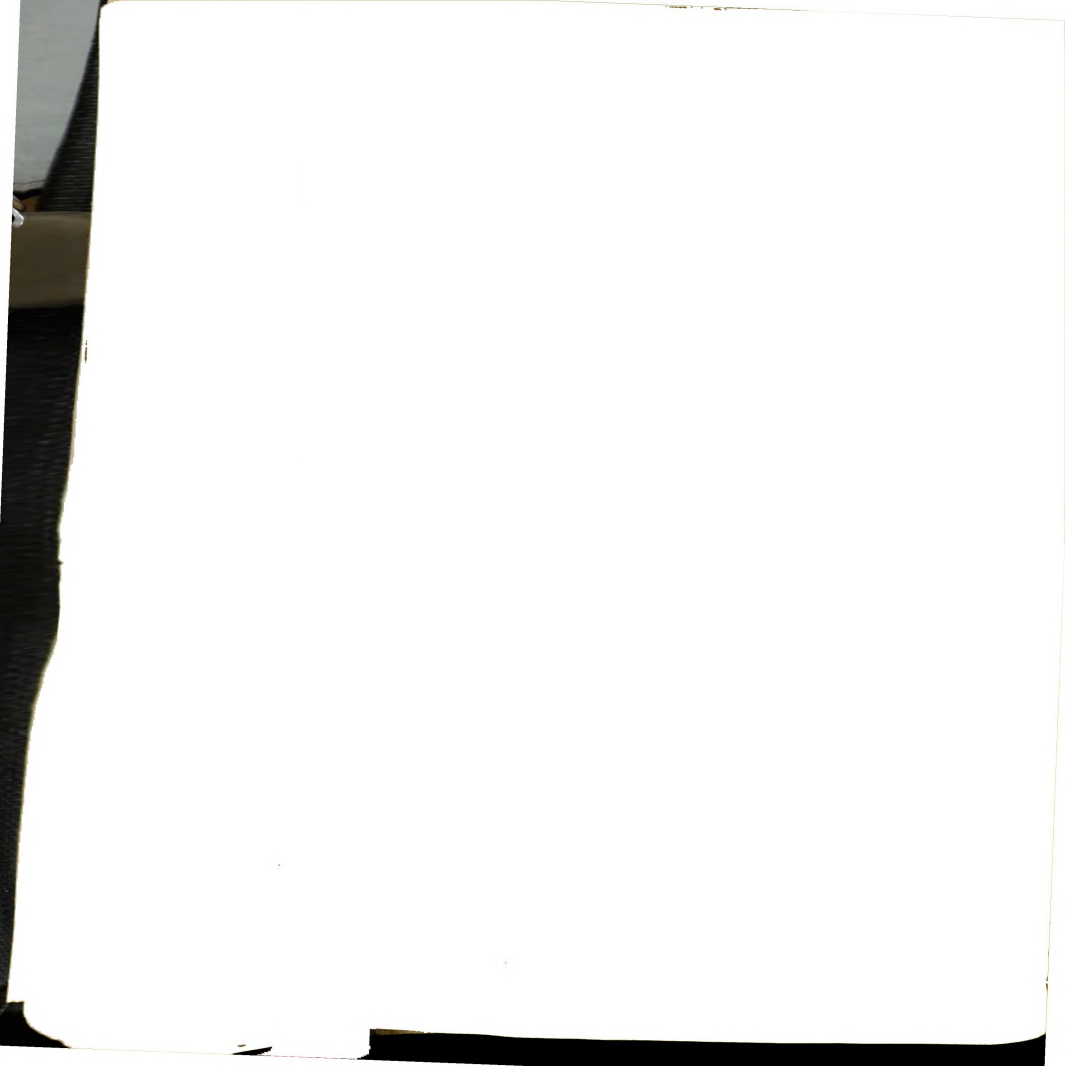
Yah, it frees them. Because it is hiding their connotation. They feel they are losing their connotations. That's why I mean "metaphysical." That's better than brainwashing, because it is in a state of half-dream. The step into myth cannot be done from reality it has to be done through dream. So, reality--dream--myth. And once you have your eyes closed, you have all these images.

Ah, okay, good [insight that the mask allows you to dream]. [Mazzone closes his eyes.]

You see I am dreaming right now, and I allow myself to do that.

So that helps you to do that.

Yes. And the step from dream to myth is large . . . it is an expansion. And this is a hand now, because I have my face; but if I don't have my face, it's not a hand anymore.



Then is this . . . moves them into a kind of archetypal situation.

Exactly! Jung. Archetype.

And do you explore that through exercise?

Yes, as much as I can, as much as I know. I'm very ignorant of it and I'm studying still. As a matter of fact I foresee a future theater that I would like to develop: Theater of Probabilities. Where the audience will experiment with the metaphysical mask. I see a building where people will come and stay one day and walk out different.

Now is there a mask in between the metaphysical and the commedia?

No, I forsee some day I will have to create masks. And I'm sending somebody to study with Donato Sartori this summer. I'm going to create a series of masks coming out of this, between that [the commedia] and this [the metaphysical] is too far. Between this [metaphysical] and the neutral first one.

When you look at your students working in the mask do you, this mask and then these, do you . . . a student who works well is these, is that a good mark of a potentially good actor?

No. I would say I prefer the student is a good actor. I mean the mask is going to be a test. If the mask doesn't kill him. I mean if he is a good actor he should be able to wear a mask.

Okay, suppose he doesn't respond to this work at all, what do you think?

But I'm not working for Tennessee Williams, or Arthur Miller, you know, it's . . . I prefer a Classical repertory, a repertory of attack, attack repertory.

So the mask seems to have been used more for the Classical repertory . . .

I'm not denying that the mask would be creative for the other actors. I mean this area should work for everybody [the metaphysical mask]. That area is absolutely confined [the commedia mask].

Well, I have some other questions, but I think you'd better go.

Yah.

Interview with Carlo Mazzone-Clementi, International Mime Institute and Festival, Viterbo College, Wisconsin, August 8, 1974.

[I had been photographing Mazzone-Clementi's masks as the interview started]

[He was also posing in various masks with a hat he could put in any shape]

Each one [of the Commedia masks/characters] have dialects as you know.

Yeah, this is one question that I wanted to ask. How do you have the student find the voice to go with the mask?

Very, very hard. It takes so long, first. That's why I'm interested to have them using metaphysical mask or create their own mask.

Oh, you let them create their own masks?

Yeah.

Out of what? Anything?

Anything. Starting with papier-mâché or simple materials, when we have to do scenarios, things like that, that's what we do.

Oh, you let them make their own? So there is a mask in between the metaphysical and the Commedia.

But pushing toward . . .

Moving toward the Commedia.

Yeah. This is a mask that doesn't become very good, but this point. I consider them larval, you know larval, I mean kind of seeds . . . I'm talking about professional they should know what they're doing. They don't really know what they're doing, they just wear a mask and that's all. [Talk about one of his students.]

How do you get them to vocalize. Do you have a mask you use prior to this?

Well, I indicated that the con man is in some place, you know, Southern California.

When I came to New York, people said, what does the Bergamo mask correspond to in America? And I can say because he's a con man, and you can look at the eyes and he's a con man, and you can see together they [the two masks of Zannis] work together and share the energy. This guy prepare the ground and this guy [with the round small eyes] will tumble because he has the wondering eye. And that con man speaks with a certain slow gutteral sound and I compare to the Southern minstrel show, the carpet bagger; so I indicate when I got to New York areas where people should study dialects and develop a characteristical use of the language and dialects. When I was there, because of the social thing, Arlechino

was more of a Puerto Rican, you know Puerto Rican fast kid. And when I saw on the streets all those Puerto Rican fast kids, I said, "Damn it they got to find it." I was feeling right that in New York, the Puerto Rican is the fast one [Zanni].

So you're really saying that they have to find American voices . . .

Of course I didn't say speak with a different British accent. Probably if I had been in England I would have found something . . .

But are you saying that they really have to come very close to what the, to what we know about the voice for these masks?

This guy speaks this way [taking up a Zanni mask]. In Tuscon you say, I'll just say the name of the town. In Tuscan you say, Bergamo de sopra, Bergamo de soto, Upper Bergamo and Lower Bergamo. He comes from Bergamo alto and Arlechino is from Bergamo de soto. Now in dialect it is [he imitates the sound which is very low, gutteral, and without distinct consonants]. It's an old German sound, the Lombards, and this sounds like Bergen. Bergen is a name in Germany. And its very gutteral. And it's funny because it is a con man with that accent. In Venice they laughed, they roared because it's obviously in the countryside man is a little bit more refined than the other one. And this is the situation. He is controlling the other one and is such a villain. Arlechino is very much like a Chinese opera, the sound is very much falsetto. That's why the Puerto Rican accent with the broken voice is [he imitates the voice].

So you're trying to get as close as possible to the traditional . . .

Yeah, because I think sounds are in comedy, basically. I think there are universal sounds. "Commedia" in Greek means sounds with movement. And that's why in English you have in order to laugh you have to have music. Musical Comedy, it's an observation. It's a repeated matter . . . a sound with an action that is funny, tickles. When I say "tarantella santarello," you laugh without understanding what I am saying. And why? Because it is the sound that tickles. And that means no language, it's a pre-language. It's a one year old that laughs. And thats why when I went to perform in Germany, they didn't understand a word, and they were laughing, I said, "Jesus, how can they laugh as if they understood the situation. They didn't understand the words." This is before language. There are sounds that hits here [belly] or here [heart] or hits here [head] or both.

I basically teach laugh and cry together. And I go from laugh to cry and cry to laugh and we never discuss the emotions, as a matter of fact, I say stay away from the emotions. But be in control of your laugh and your cry.

So its a technical thing.

Oh, yeah. Absolutely. But they develop an instrument. Once they hit the audience with that and they realize what happened to the audience [he laughs loudly] eh, something else. It's surprise. You can say that's mad, of course. But that's the point. It's zanny. The first lesson is zanni. Zanni means you don't predict about the energy; you control the energy for the use of the energy. So it's not enough brute energy, it's a second level; you control the energy: technique. Use the energy at the top, imagination, images . . .

Do you let the students improvise in these masks?

With this mask, not much. That is the first [the metaphysical mask] then eventually they can have a Neutral mask if they want to make of their own, but that I ask, if they want to discover more of the universal point. And make them free to create a third mask of their own. Once the prototype, I try to sculpt the prototype, every person I see . . . you have a strong Arlechino, Brighella condition. You are an absolute zanni, besides I haven't heard . . .

You heard my laugh [at the previous night's performance].

Unhuh, you see, that confirmed to me, I heard that laugh, I said this laugh in the back is one of the zanniest things in the audience. It exploded. It came real, you couldn't hold any more, you shout, it had to come out. You're big instead of small, but you could be a great Arlechino but you could also be a Brighella [he holds up the Arlechino mask beside of my face].

True.

It's exactly on the bridge between the 1st and 2nd zanni, I think.

Are you saying that when you look at your students . . .

I recognize . . .

You say you play this character because of something about them.

Well, I look at the whole thing. I study the whole thing together. The first exercise of recognition . . . and I look at your foot, your step, your walk, I mean not self-consciously, but you study me, I study you. Then we share and we get spontaneity. I don't see myself. Remember what I said. What people see, what I want them to see, and what I am. I don't know and I don't care about but I am and I do because I am. And it's not just self-centered, but it's with expansion and with conservation, and with sublimation. I don't hold energy, energy flows, I'm just a carrier.

So you don't let them improvise on their own with these masks. It's a mask prior to this?

Yeah. I try to work for the creative performer. The mask helps to break the shell of whatever is the second year of age on. We are all being taught do this, this, this, this. The child is in the audience and the performer must know the child that is in the audience so he better be one year old.

So getting back to one year old is this mask [metaphysical mask]. [Clementi is miming.]

I've never seen this hand like this before. . . . Oh, yes, I'm going to work on this table right now with my character. And if I want to be anything in acting, as you know, it's texture, reality, . . .

Does the mask help the actor discover that "super-objective" as Stanislavski calls it?

Very hard. Because they [the students] are very much all time Freudian, I have a very hard time talking about Jung or talking about anything. To be free from the psychosexual . . .

Focus inward.

That's why I call metaphysical, because that will help to free what they see. . . . What is a larval? What is the thing moving? The thing moving is life.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW WITH JEREMY GEIDT

APPENDIX F

Interview with Jeremy Geidt, Yale University School of Drama.
September 9, 1974.

Anyway, you want me to just summarize what we've . . .

Well, I think if we just run down these questions we will come . . .

Fine.

Well, I was just interested in getting down your background. When you started teaching here and how long you've been teaching this course.

Well, I trained with Michel Saint-Denis at the Old Vic Theatre School in 1946 to 1949, which is a long time ago. I then found I was quite good at what we then called Comedy Character Improvisation with the masks. And then I went back to teach. And so a couple of years after I left the school I was brought back to teach Character Improvisation. I then taught a lot of other things apart from that, but that's what I was brought back to do.

That was using masks?

That was using masks and work on gags and work on . . . But it would be physical gags--pulling chairs away from people, trips, falls, belches, farts, noises of flies, corks coming out of bottles, getting an electric shock, endless physical gags. And I still do that here. I really didn't teach it much until I opened a school in New York, called the New Theatre Workshop which was out of a theatre that we built. I was then with a thing called The Establishment, which is a satirical revue which came out of Beyond The Fringe. And we had a very good building which was the old El Morrocco Club on East 54th Street, which has subsequently been torn down, and we rented the two floors above it and turned one into the new theatre and above that we had more space so I began a school with John Burn and Brian Bedford and I began to teach it there. I found this person who could make masks.

What did you say his name was?

His name is Andrew Johns, if he reads this I want him to call me. Put that in.

An explanatory footnote.

He did these masks. And then I was living in New York as an actor and as a writer and Bob Brustein, when he got made Dean here, called me and said would I like to come and teach and I said yes. So I've been here since then. And it's something that appeals to Bob Brustein very much, he likes this type of comedy. He also understands what it can do to develop an actor, to be able to improvise, he's always been very keen on improvisation, he's always been very keen on our things in The Establishment, The Second City, The Compass Players, and those on the Coast, the Committee. And so this does teach them to improvise.

So at the same time we discuss Comedy, or not Comedy really I suppose, but Farce. And comedians. Why one comedian is better than another comedian and why is Jerry Lewis to me madly unfunny while Groucho is particularly funny, or Chaplin . . . the Marx Brothers I put in what I call Surrealistic Comedy. . . . Why are there not as many good comedians now as there used to be? Why is Benny better than Hope? Because Benny's character is more, he has less jokes, while Hope has great delivery. So one discusses that in order to get out of the "artiness" of the thing, one may tend to think that mask work is arty . . . and as I said, we discuss comedy and then we usually work on a few gags. Sometimes I get them to tell a funny story. Come back the next day and tell . . . so I begin to see whether they can build and have a sense of Comedic rhythm.

Is this taught at any one level?

We're changing it . . . we're beginning to change it. Where I've always had them is to teach it at the end of the first year. And this has worked out very well because I'm usually not in . . . we have the advantage of being members of the company and this can cut across because I have to rehearse in the afternoons, but it so happens that I haven't been in the end plays or something, and I've been able to rehearse a play and be able to have enough time to . . . I like to work about five days a week on this, two hour periods, so that they get into the habit of being able to recreate and rehearse a scenario.

For how many weeks?

About six weeks.

About six weeks. Every day?

Yes, every day. Now this year I'm starting a different course which I won't use the masks in . . . and when the time comes up at the end of the year, I'm going to find I must have more time than two hours a week. It's not the sort of thing you can do and then pick up, it's got to be a continuing process. And so that's how

I teach, I mean one can leave it at that, at the moment we've only been back a few days and we're still sorting out schedules and time tables.

Is it a required course for the students?

All acting courses are required. There are no electives. There's a program that's laid out and they have their acting and their voice and their movement. And this year, when Bobby Lewis comes, he's got an idea of amalgamating, so that the voice teacher, the acting teacher, and the movement teacher are all in the same class.

This is the kind of thing going on at Juilliard and at the University of Washington and they have found that the mask course can be the integrating course. Interestingly enough.

Makes a lot of sense.

Because they're all searching for a course where voice training, movement training, and acting, which has been compartmentalized, can come together. And they've found that the mask can do it.

The comic mask or . . . the tragic mask?

It moves to the comic. Well, you see, . . .

Because they don't use speech with the straight mask.

Right, with the four ages of man masks, . . . well, you see, they call them the comic masks at Juilliard because that comes out of Saint-Denis. If you come out of Lecoq, as they do at the University of Washington, they've got what they call an expressive mask which is also a full face mask, but they can go to a 3/4 mask . . .

They can? And so they speak.

But it's not comic, it's very different from the Juilliard, from your masks too, it's much more suggestive . . .

Well, these are very strong.

Yes, these are very strong, and Lecoq wants things much more suggestive.

Yes, well he would, he's a much more delicate . . . I mean mine is . . .

It's interesting to compare the two schools, both coming from Copeau.

Right. All coming from Copeau. That's very interesting you say that because Copeau was Michel's uncle.

And Lecoq came through Dasté who was married to Copeau's daughter.

And the Saint-Dasté was at the school in London. And Alvin Epstein worked with Lecoq.

So you're both here. Fascinating these two . . . but the fine differences in the approaches . . .

Mine is wham-bang-thank-you-ma'am right-on-the-line heavy, I mean, out front, coarse, no subtlety, although there are subtleties inside for the actor, because the feelings are very strong but at the same time they're . . . there is a fine balance. Many times they'll come up to . . . I don't let them speak with the mask on in their ordinary voice. They don't say, "Oh, look. . . ." When they get very good at it I let them do it, I mean it's the one thing they've got so if they're going to come and speak to me, they take the mask off. And frequently they say to me, "Look, I can go one way or the other way, I can go that way or that way." And I say, "Well, take a good look in the mirror. Just look in the mirror and see what it does." And they will. Thats what I say, there are subtleties and the character one way or the other. You may get them, as soon as they begin, that they go mad. And you get mad characters which are obviously not funny. I let them get that out of their system, if they're not being violent . . . sometimes they get violent and I have to stop them . . . because it does take over, the character takes over. And you find it very releasing, and you always know when you've had a good day with it; they take their masks off, the face looks entirely different: it's very flushed, and excited, and it's very hot, too, so they're prespiring, and their eyes are very bright. The other thing you can tell when a mask works, is you can't tell a person's got a mask on. That suddenly you know there's no mask . . .

That's fantastic!

When I was a teacher all the time I'd teach the students all year, you see, I'd see them every day of the week, and I wouldn't recognize them, I'd have to tell by the hair or something. I mean sometimes I just didn't recognize them.

That's when they're fully integrated.

They're fully integrated and they're dressed and they've got something on their head, a hat on, and their body's working in a certain way and you just don't know who the hell it is. . . . The characters always tend towards the gross, the obscene, the, eh, . . .

Chancerel says this with the Punchinella nose that that tends to make everybody do obscene things.

Well it does and it's very funny. I mean the language is extraordinary. And that's why people like the shows I put on because it's

always frightfully dirty. It's not just dirt, but you tend to, I mean you. . . . I remember one in New York, which wasn't dirty, but a priest who was a shyster priest, you got a lawyer, it would be a shyster lawyer, you don't have anybody who is just ordinary nice. If they're nice, they're very, very, very, Very, VERY nice. If they're bad they're terrible.

So it's pushing towards extremes.

It's a farcical extreme.

Are there any prerequisites to this mask course at all?

No, none, the whole acting program here is designed that they just take the acting course.

They're kind of locked into that.

They are locked into that. It's not like undergraduate work where you can select. This is a total professional course. I understand why you ask the question but it's not . . .

Well, some courses require that they have a great deal of movement and improvisational training prior to the mask work.

No, it just fits into the curriculum, it just fits into the training . . .

But have they had that?

Yes, they have had that.

And you find that's important prior to coming to the mask?

No, not really. I think it should come at the end of their first year or the beginning of their second year. It certainly shouldn't come at the beginning of their first year and it certainly shouldn't come at the end of their second year.

Nobody does that, starts off with the mask.

It's too much for them to take. Therefore they have to have a certain amount of training to be able to cope with the experience of it. And it certainly can't come late in the second year, I don't think, although this year I may be trying that. You see, we're a little different from Juilliard, because Juilliard only trains actors, doesn't it?

Well, they have that possibility for four year there, I think. Where it's an integral part of your program.

Our program is actors, directors, designers, critics, lighting designers . . .

Theatre historians . . .

Yes, all that, so we've got all those so that we cannot . . . we always say this to people who come here, and it took me a long time to get used to it myself, this is not an acting school. But that can be a hinderance if you want a sheer pure acting program. You say, right, the masks must come on the thirty-fourth week of so-and-so.

And Juilliard's objectives are different.

Yes, they are. I mean, I think, I know people who teach there [lists off those he knows at Juilliard] I think their training is more traditional and ours is not. I mean our training is influenced by what goes on at the rep. And although we are not experimental, ours is a theatre not of the actor, necessarily, and not of the playwright, and it's not just the idea, it's a mixture of all those. It's not the director's theatre, it's a playwright theatre if anything. And an approach to that playwright. So our training is influenced by that.

But you can take the mask work as a sort of entity and it will work almost anywhere. 'Cause it is the sowing the seeds, it's like the girl I was telling you about who several years later [admitted that the mask work was very helpful to her in her acting work]. It is a seed sowing thing. It's also immediately rewarding, because you can see, you can feel you've done something. Like wallpapering a room, you can see, "Ah, I've done it, it's there." Very quickly.

You mean for the actor it's rewarding.

Unless they get stuck and then it's very depressing for them, and that's always a problem.

So what would you say the objectives of the course were, then?

It's a silly answer: to make them better actors, to make them freer, to make them braver, to make them take more risks, to stimulate the imagination, to think in a farcical and comedic way as opposed to a naturalistic way, to make them realize the uses of an external thing giving them an internal impulse. Chaplin without his cane wouldn't work. The cane must give Chaplin a feeling inside him. I find this very important for an actor and I think it's the thing that's neglected in this country. I think in England we work too much on the outside--Olivier always says he has another nose before he knows the character. There's a story I always tell the kids of letting something out of my apartment one very hot day in New York and there's a cop walking down third avenue. And he's walking like

this [he demonstrates] and I thought why is he walking like that? 'Cause he had a gun and the gun made him walk like that. If he was walking down the street like that he'd be picked up for being a fag . . . the external thing gives that cowboy walk.

Big honcho.

Yes. I'm sure people . . . I know what one does as an actor when one gets a sword on; one works differently, one stands differently. And that's why I say you don't have to have a corset if you're trying to be a lady, you can tie a string around you. It's a feel. Therefore, although it is external work, it's madly internal. And this I think is probably one of the main objectives of the course. We don't talk in those terms, that sounds a bit academic. But that's the objective, I guess.

The mask forces them to explore physically, right?

Yes. And vocally. They have to find their voices.

The voice that fits the mask.

Yes. And the dress, and the costume.

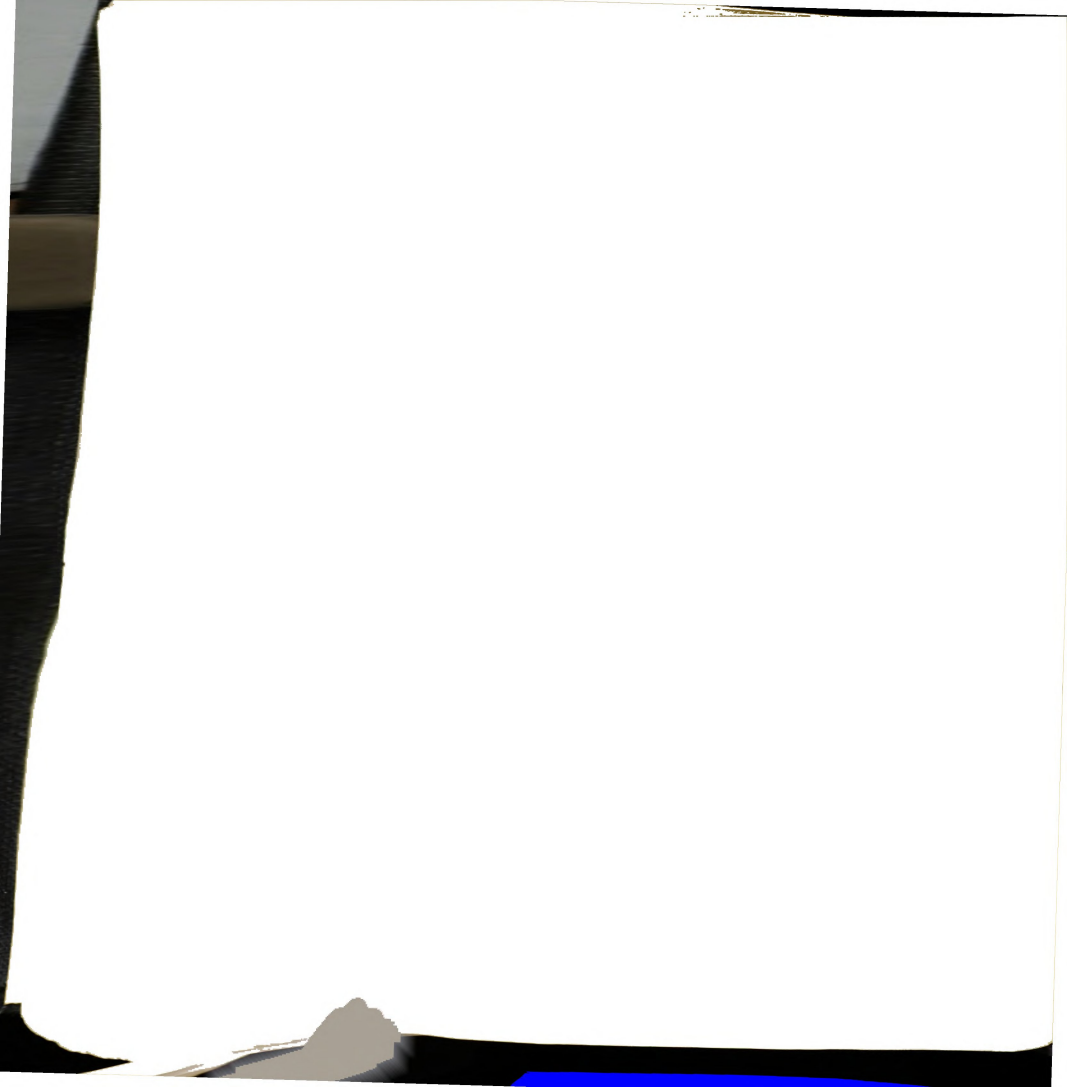
How would you run down what you told me about the sequence of how you have them work?

Right. Well, first, pick up a mask and don't make a judgement on what it's going to look like on your face.

So you really don't meditate on it.

No, put it on. Put it on and look in the mirror. It's what comes back from the mirror to you. Something starts bubbling inside you, you may find you're making noises. You go towards the wardrobe racks that are right behind, so it's all in the same room, and start dressing. And it's fascinating to see them dressing in character and they've got the character, and you know that something's cooking and they don't pull down the clothes in the way they would, they take them down as a character and put them on. You may find them making little noises or catch phrases that will begin to . . . sometimes they won't. Then they'll dress the character and start it working and they'll begin to find a prop that will help them. They may overdress the character and then begin to pare down so they have less and less on. They may find they've almost got it and they want something else that's a prop that makes it work for them. Then they'll begin to interact with each other and relate to each other, in the room and then outside the room in the bigger room.

Is this silently?



Depending on how far they've gone.

You let them pretty much play it . . .

It has to be entirely up to them. I can't regulate it. I can see when they're being forced. I have to let them do it, I mean I will say, "You know you are not being true." But they'll know it, and by this, you know, they're intelligent people. And they're professionally oriented students and they don't want to fuck it up any more than I want them to fuck it up. I mean, I have to trust them. I mean there are some, when you get a bad student who is lazy, who will pretend he can't get something, that's because he mooches off, or has had a bad day or something. And then you'll have to deal with him. But generally, I let them do whatever they want to do. I will say to them, if you come up to another character and begin to talk, maybe you are working very well, maybe you've got a lot of speech, you improvise a lot of funny things, and the other person won't . . . hadn't got that far, and you'll bug them. And I just say to the person being bugged, take your mask off and say to the other person, "Get out of here!" And put it back on and go back to your work. They're usually very good about that. You will get a person who goes beserk and bug everybody. For that at the end of the session we always take the mask off, and change our clothes, and settle down and discuss what we've found. And there'll be the old, "For Christ's sake, why didn't you shut up, Charlie, you were ruining what I was getting together." "I'm very sorry, yes, . . ." But I have to let them go. And I have to let them do it. So that they then become the speech, and . . .

Do you tell them to find how their head tilts, or the gesture that goes with the mask?

Very little. It happens, it's organic. It's that that comes from looking in the mirror; looking in the head mirror, and then in the long mirror. The thing I also tell them to do and they find, I don't have to tell them, they'll find it, I mean suddenly I'll find a character coming up to me (I stand in the room) and they'll take off their ring, or their watch and just give it to me. Without saying anything, going along with the thing that you don't speak in your own voice, because if you look down at yourself, and you look in the mirror, you've got this marvelous, marvelous, mask on, you look down and see your own bracelet, your own watch, or your own shoes, it can blow it for you. The other thing that can blow it for you is when your getting you're character and it's going very nicely, but you can't find the voice. And you can't find a way to come to speech. And you begin to do it and it blows it. This is why I say bring it to speech through a whisper, a noise, like I said through a [he makes a shushing sound] through your teeth and that sort of begins something happening. Or I've seen people use catch phrases, I mean bloody stupid things like . . . somebody who'll be playing a, I don't know, it sounds so false when I do

it, but just to give you personally an idea, you suddenly find someone saying, "Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh, my God." and the "Oh my God." will come out of a physical thing. The "Oh my God" will come out of someone doing this with their hands" and then with "Oh my God" they will go into more speech and you'll find them improvising very funny things. People who are not particularly witty in life, suddenly this releases them and they become very funny.

I've seen that happen at Juilliard and it's unbelieveable.

Then what I do when they've all got a character, I give them random situations to go in, and they're usually blank situations, take a waiting room, a doctor's office waiting room, a railway station, I had a very funny one take place on a desert island. And then they see how that works. And then eventually we decide on a specific place. And they begin to improvise. As I say it's nearly always something giving the physical setup we have here the entrances, that they come on, they make their entrance and they sit down, and they still keep in character, and then the ones who are stronger take over and begin to do the thing. It's nearly always a meeting or get together or something.

And you work on this over a period of time.

Say out of six week teaching period it will take up the last three weeks. The first two weeks, the first three weeks getting to know how to work. And working on gags, and trips, and falls. What I have done very successfully was one year there was a playwriting student here. And he came and watched the class and he was fascinated by what they were doing. And the kids began to improvise and he began to write. And the next day he would come in and say "Now look at this." And I would say, "I can't do it." and some of them resented it. Some of them resented it very much that he had taken over their characters. But after a bit they began to see that what he was doing was setting their characters. Helping them . . . in fact, he won the award for the best playwright of the year. And it was really very good and it was fascinating to work with a playwright who was in such tune with these people. And after that they didn't mind it at all, in fact they rather liked it.

So what they do is rehearse a half-hour scenario, a half-hour, a bit more than that, and then there's a panic, I mean you get a class of fifteen people all improvising at the same time, the noise is fantastic. What they don't realize is that they have got to give the stage to other people. And then they begin to, and then it comes out like a play. And then we give a showing to the school, or people I invite, and they've always been very successful. Successful in so far as people have laughed a lot and successful in so far as the kids have learnt from them. I like to go towards performance although I don't use it as an end in itself, I think that when they've lived with the characters for some time, they

should perform them, because that is the out . . . and also it's very rewarding to hear all that laughter.

A sense of completion, I suppose.

Yes, it is a sense of completion and they like that and it's usually at the last day of the year. So that's good. And that's the sequence, and the most important thing when they get stuck is to go back and look in the mirror. I believe at the Bristol Old Vic they used to teach it, and they used to carry handmirrors. I think that's wrong. I think that's relying too much on the external.

Lecoq doesn't allow this at all. But he has a meditation on the mask.

Well, this isn't mine. You see mine is this give and take back from the external. And the mirror's very important. Rich Little, or one of those impressionists, I saw him on the Dick Cavett Show, and he was doing some impressions and Dick Cavett said what about so-and-so, and he said, "I'm working on that one" and he pulled out a picture of Nixon, it wasn't Nixon but let's say it was Nixon, and he had to look at the picture and put it back. He was refreshing himself and this is same thing as the kid going back to the mirror. Sort of refresh themselves.

And if they come and talk to you out of character, then they are to lift the mask.

They are to lift the mask. They can't speak . . . you see it's the only thing they've got . . .

And you want to make that distinction clear?

Yes. If you are in character then you're in character and don't waste your energy source which is the mask by speaking to me or to each other in your ordinary voice. After they get better at it I don't . . . but at the beginning I'm very strict about it.

Those are the ground rules.

Those are about the only ground rules I have. That and no smoking in the room because of . . . and also the funny thing is that they may want a cigarette for character and they look wrong. Because a cigarette is too naturalistic. What would look right is a piece of rolled up paper. And if you need a cigar it has to be a big cigar because an ordinary cigar looks too normal. You're mixing your media.

Masks demand a . . . stylization?

Exactly.

A dangerous word.

Yes. They don't demand a stylization, they demand . . .

A theatricalization?

Well, it's larger than life. So I wouldn't really use the word "stylization," because it's a style of it's own but it's . . .

You mentioned, I think, that the actors do find that this does carry over into their other work?

Yes, well, the story I told you about the girl I taught at the Old Vic, and all that. Yes, they make the connection. How they do it I don't know. I mean that's entirely up to them. I mean acting is such a personal thing. But I know that people have said to me frequently, "now I see what you meant you talked to me about this, my God, I'm so glad we did that because it's now paying off so well for me in this play." Particularly in a farcical thing, or not even . . . as I say, The Possessed. I mean, those are very extravagant characters, although they may be tragic and funny as well. There's something that comes out of that size of playing. It will give you a sense of size in the same way as your tragic mask, as I put them, they give you a sense of size too.

But you don't use them at all?

I don't use them at all. I haven't had time to teach that. I would like to. If I had more time I would. The demands of the school and also I don't know if Bobby Lewis, who is now doing the program, I don't know if he would find . . . this [what he is doing now] does fit in with his. But he likes to work, he has a whole thing of working from pictures. Taking an external thing from a picture, a painting.

That's a very European way of working. Thank God it's coming in.

Right, right. Well, I'm a very external actor myself. I don't mean to say I'm negating anything. I just don't happen to think . . . I mean, I don't know anything about the method, don't ask me about that. I don't know.

Well obviously it's gone wrong in this country.

Yes.

The mask is obviously an agent of release for the actor?

Yes.

What about agent of control?

Well, the funny thing is you would think that if you slap a mask on your face you're going to put yourself under very rigid control. Right, you think that mask is going to lead you in only one way and control you. It doesn't, it releases you. It is up to the actor to frame it. Like an artist who is disciplined by the size of his canvas or a poet when he is writing a sonnet is conditioned by the number or lines, or if you're writing a concerto you're conditioned by the form. The form has to come from the actor and has to be . . . he has to discipline himself to keep it within a framework.

Is the mask a framework, though?

The funny thing is the more you're released, the more you find you have to discipline yourself . . . the easier it is to discipline yourself. Because you're going . . . something is flowing. It's what I say that sometimes at the beginning they go mad. And they go to a mad character that is obviously not funny. Or an epileptic, or something that obviously is not right, or a terribly sad person who is right in on themselves, and nothing's happening. But when it works, it disciplines itself . . . the nature of the work disciplines itself. And then, as I say, they all begin to speak at the same time, they realize that doesn't work. So they have to take turns to speak. So the agent of control, as you say, is . . . that's up to them. But it works because of the nature of the work. That sounds silly to say, but because they're released, to make that release work, they have to be disciplined. Does that make any sense?

Well . . . I guess I feel somehow that the mask somehow sets the limits, or doesn't it? You can't do anything in the mask. Somehow only certain types of gesture, movement, . . . vocalization goes with that mask.

No, depending on the person who is using that mask. As I say they [the masks] can be male or female.

Okay, Lecoq would disagree.

I know.

As I said mine is a very much on the line thing; it's a wham-bam; it's farcical; it's broad; it comes out of American vaudeville; it comes out of English musical hall.

You're amazed every time, then, of the possibilities that these masks provide?

Oh, yes. Everybody that uses those masks--those masks have been used by students coming up to nine years now, on an average of 20 students a year--they've all come up with different characters. You'll get certain ones that lend them because the costumes,

because the fact that there is a pith helmet there, and because there's some Naval uniforms, they will tend maybe because of the clothes to go in roughly the same direction. I've never seen the identical same character. I've seen relations of the characters about the place, but I've never seen the same thing. But the agent of control, which is a very good phrase, is something that they bring themselves. It won't work unless it's controlled, you see. It's like verse, if you ride verse, if you're in control of verse and verse is taking you along at the same time.

It's a kind of paradox, which acting is anyway.

Exactly. It is a paradoxical thing. And therefore I couldn't say there is a certain agent of control . . . anymore than you can say it is an agent of release. The two go together. If it gets out of hand it doesn't work. Therefore, it's a discipline of it's own. I mean, just like acting.

What about . . . do you have any problems with the actor feeling depersonalized under the mask? That he's losing something, losing himself?

It's never been expressed to me, maybe they've been too embarrassed to admit it. And it will only happen, I would say, when the mask wasn't working for them. When it works for them, they feel so happy and they love it; when it works well for them they're terribly exhilirated. And it was always very nice when a student who hasn't been doing frightfully well in some of the acting classes, and suddenly the end of the year, when I go at the end of the year, suddenly it may work for them and they find a whole new thing in their lives. And it refers back to the other acting classes and they find releases and that's a marvelous feeling. As a teacher you feel you've done something and as a student it must be marvelous, too. I was somewhat like that myself. 'Cause I wasn't doing particularly well at the Old Vic School. And then I came to the mask work at the end of my first year . . . and that's when I was asked to go back and teach. I mean, I was asked to go back and teach that particular thing. Then I actually taught the other masks as well.

Now, is there any sense of evaluating the student in his mask work? Is this a criteria . . . if he works well in the mask he's going to have better potential for being a good actor? Or if he doesn't respond to it he's going to have problems as an actor?

I would say that if he doesn't respond to it at all, he's going to have problems as an actor, yes.

At Juilliard, you see, it's right at a critical point in their training.

Well, it's a fairly critical point here. When we have our evaluation sessions, when the faculty sit around, I'll say, "Now look,

he did very well in his mask work." "That's good because he didn't do very well for me in my text work" or whatever. And I will fight for a student who happens to have a facility for it. Everyone else will say that he's dreadful. I'll say, "No, he's going to be a brilliant comedian."

Because for yourself and for some students you've seen the mask as the thing that's clicked with them.

That's clicked with them. And then I'll say, "You wait til the end of next year and then you'll see."

[interview interrupted by a knock at the door]

I don't know where we were? Let's see.
I'd like to go back to the idea you were telling me about of your and Alvin Epstein going there [to the masks room] and your thoughts about further work in the mask.

Well, this is theory.

Well, I'm interested in this because at the end of this I may want to put in a proposal for possibility of how you could structure a great segment of an acting program around these masks.

It would really only be from my point of view to go back and find if as a fairly experienced actor I was released any further by. . . . Whether the experience I got from doing mask work myself at my stage of development, or Alvin's, is compounded in the same way as a 1st year student doing it. Would I get as much or more again from it as they got in their 1st year, me being an actor twenty-five years? Do you see what I mean?

Would it take you any further?

Would it teach me anything new? Yes, would it? Would it explore parts of me that I haven't used? Would I find through it other approaches to my work as an actor with text? I always say . . . no, I don't always say, it was Michel Saint-Denis who used to tell me, "When you're stuck, you go back to your text." That's the only thing you've got is your text, and you go back and back to your text. I say in the mask work, go back to the mirror. 'Cause that's all you've got. You gain there. You just go back to that. Your mirror and your mask is your text. Now whether I am going back as a experienced actor will find anything new, I don't know. I just want to try. Even this morning, putting on those masks, I saw things happening and that was only for a second. Would it return me . . . I just don't know. It's pure theory and can only be done by going over there and doing it. In a way one's rather afraid to do it in case something doesn't happen. "Christ, I'm rotten, I can't do it!" You know, then you have to face the students and you wouldn't care

to say. That's why I wouldn't do it in front of them 'cause in case I couldn't do it. I have worked all those masks, I have had all those masks on my face and something's happened to me. I've never dressed them all. But it would be dreadful if I couldn't do it after all these years.

What about with a different mask? Different set of masks?

Well, I haven't got 'em.

But is it possible you'd be opened up or led further with different kinds of masks?

No, there, are about thirty masks there, about thirty-five masks there you see. You run the whole spectrum of types with those masks, from the timid to the . . . from the outside . . . the one you picked up with the blond hair on it obviously takes people in a timid way, although I've seen that mask do a very extroverted rock-and-roll singer. I've seen that be female and male.

As you said, the masks were sexless.

Yes.

But some of the teachers are doing some exploratory work with grotesques, they have grotesque masks, some of them have fantasy masks, others, like Lecoq has a mask he calls the larval mask . . .

What's that?

It's like based on bird, animal shapes just suggesting those. And he uses that in a very kind of experimental course with his students improvising with that.

Well, I would say when I used to teach all the time, the work I did before this mask work, was work on animals. I do think that animals have a lot to do with it. I wouldn't use animals masks, personally, but that's me, because mine, as I say, is really more down to earth, I think, than Lecoq. Mine is a very earthy thing that I do. And therefore it comes out of animals in a way, because I mean, again I'm going to use Olivier, I mean the sort of raven image for Richard The Third, . . . Animals I think are very important for an actor. I think all those sort of obvious . . . is it steak or is it liver; is it roast beef, or is it fish; is it red wine or is it champagne--to do with the character is all important.

Now coming back here [from the mask room] you were talking about if you had a mask maker here, which would be ideal, you could work from a full-face perhaps to a 3/4, then to a half, to a nose . . .

And then to makeup. Again that's theory. I haven't tried it.

Well, you said you didn't know Lecoq's program too much, but he does go from what he calls his Neutral Mask through his Expressive Masks, which are the characters, to a Commedia and then finally ending with a Nose. Clown nose.

Well, that's . . .

But it's not quite as neatly planned out as I've just expressed it.

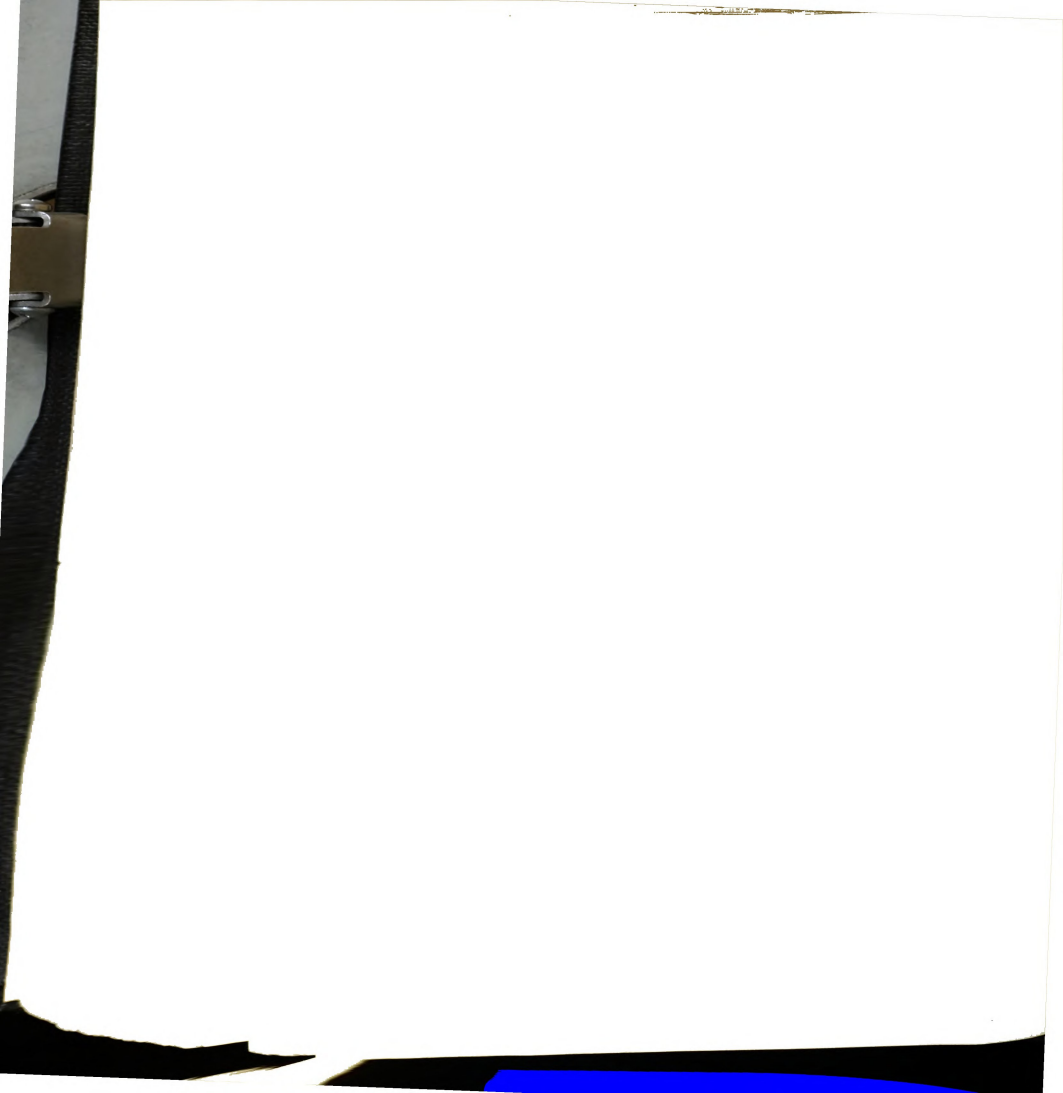
I mean, mine hasn't been done but it's something that George Devine and I've talked about, because George basically taught me this what I'm teaching now. I've adapted what George taught me and what was taught at the Old Vic, because I was teaching at the Old Vic in the '50's. Early fifties. And things have obviously changed. And also one's in a different country. And there's a different . . . not really, I see the same characters . . . I mean I used to tell the people when I was teaching at the Old Vic to go out in the Waterloo Road, which is the fairly slummy part of town, and look at the people that pass, and all that. It's the same thing here, you get the same sort of characters. And it's just sort to give them the courage to start inventing them for themselves. It gets the imagination going too. It should.

You're not personally interested in masked drama?

No, I think it would be frightfully boring. It just doesn't appeal to me. I adore working with masks with students.

But it's a means to an end, as you say.

It's a means to an end . . . I think there should be a showing of the work they do. And maybe if one had a comedic company of one's own, made up of skilled comedians, I was going to say, maybe one would do masked shows with them, but if they're that skilled comedians, they're not going to need a mask. I mean Bert Lahr didn't need a mask. Bert Lahr's face was his mask. What is good about this is that it teaches them to transform and I think this is terribly important, and this goes back to the earlier things I said about the animals, I think it is very good to get the feeling of transformation in an animal. Before I work on animals I do simple transformations, which sounds so awful, but being a pool of water that turns into a fountain, a piece of bacon that's being fried, it sounds ghastly, but I mean in fact it's very useful because they do transform. And I think a lot of acting is transformation. I'm bored with the sort of actors who are always the same person. I mean, there are certain people who do this extremely well. Noel Coward had a marvelous stage personality. Julian Beck has a stage personality. They're manufactured. I don't call them acting, not acting in a creative sense and when they could transform. In fact, Coward could transform.



The mask helps this transformation, the ability to transform?

Yes, I think it's very important for that, I should have said that earlier. And I'm putting this as an afterthought, it's something that I talk a lot with them [the masks]. The ability to transform is something that I think is terribly important for the well-rounded actor. And I think again what happens in the commercial theatre, and the commercial theatre does influence the other sort of theatre, say what you will, that people are so busy becoming a salable piece of meat for the commercial theatre that they fix on one particular aspect or their personality or their talent . . . while I think that the well-rounded actor--Guiness is a perfect example of how he could transform, even Peter Sellers, Oliver obviously is, Gielgud, on the other hand, is more inclined to be himself. I think Brando has the ability to do it and you saw that in The Godfather, I mean a wonderful transformation. I just wish he did more on the stage. But I can't see Gregory Peck doing it . . .

Or Cary Grant.

Cary Grant. Although Cary Grant is an extremely good comedian. Because they have set their own stage personality . . .

You don't use any texts at all in the mask work?

No, it's all improvised stuff.

But you work at it? So that they can do it again?

Yes, they have to . . . what I do when I'm rehearsing, I've never done it with a tape recorder because I think it would worry them to hear themselves, but I'm continually writing notes, notes, notes of the lines I think are funny or lines that I've heard, because they might forget them. And they do get into it to such an extent that they don't know what they've done.

Oh, so you do work at really creating a scenario?

Yes.

Where you know a certain line is going to be said at a certain point?

Yes, so that they have to be able to be . . .

So it becomes pretty structured towards the end?

Yes, it does, it becomes very structured. But it takes a couple of weeks. And I make a list of entrances so they have cues, and the cues have to be given. They have to remember, so that they are. . . . It's entirely their own creation, all I do is just

shape it for them. They've invented the characters, the situation, and the dialogue, and the action.

You said the class was about fifteen?

Yes, about twelve to fifteen.

I really think that's about all I had, which seems to be quite a lot. I'm very pleased, that's great.

Well, I hope that will help. I'd be fascinated to see what else you've got,too.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW WITH LIBBY APPEL

APPENDIX G

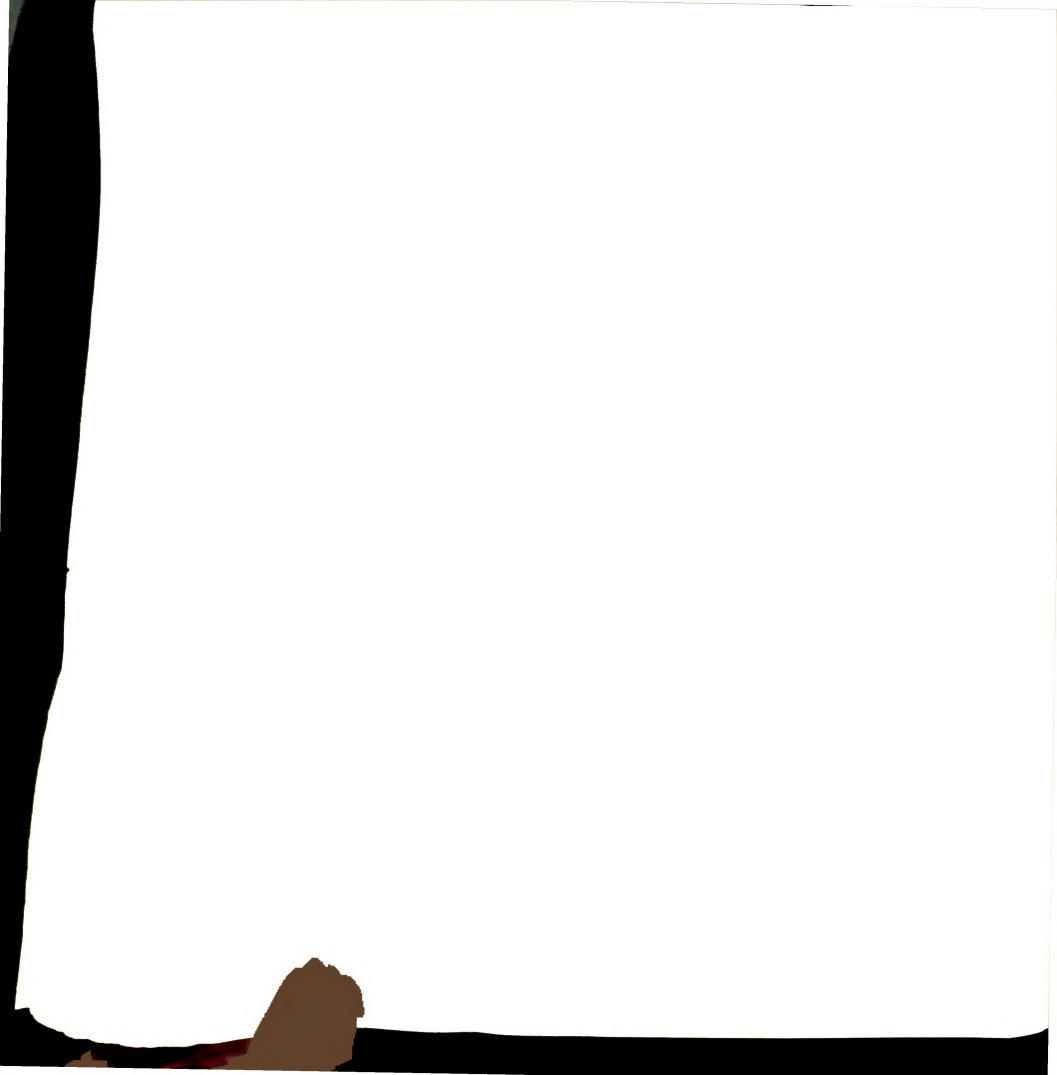
Interview with Libby Appel, The Goodman School of Drama, Chicago, Illinois. October 18, 1974.

One, where did you come up with the idea, what's influenced you about the mask work?

Well, it came about frankly because we found that on the schedule that Estelle [Spector] and I were able to create another course. It's the first time that a new course has been created on the curriculum in a long time. And because of particular kinds of scheduling problems here, that has not been accessible, we've always been slotted into courses that are part of the program when we came to work here. And quite separately, finding ourselves in union with the same idea, both of us were obviously interested in pursuing our disciplines further, because there's never enough time in regular work, but we found that there was a congruence in what we both wanted, naturally there's a congruence in everything that everyone wants in terms of acting coaching, but we found that there were some very specific things that we wished to capitalize upon--a further exploration of how to find character out of yourself and make it your own, which I'm a very great believer in the fact that all characters--everything under the sun is in your philosophy, Horatio--it's just that you don't allow certain things to be experienced and you've closed certain memories, images, ideas, aspects, feelings, off because you have to live in this world, but it's all there for you and has been there for you since your birth. And how to bring that further forward, not just in improvisation work which we do very strongly in the first year, which I teach, and scene study, which I also teach in the second and third year, and styles, etc., we wanted to . . . I wanted to find another approach in how. Estelle wanted to capitalize and go further with extending body movement out of the dance medium and out of any kind of formal structure that has to do with movement for actors, and both of us found that we were both interested in masks and had the feeling just to begin with,that masks itself would be the thing to do it. I had seen Arnie Lazlo's work, we had all heard about Pierre Lefevre on the faculty and had talked about him. Neither Estelle or I had ever studied masks or mime but read up as much as we could about these things and really evolved a process of working, not so much derivative of anybody's else's process, although it's possible that it is, we don't even know, you know you find something yourself and you think it's the only idea that

ever existed, of course seven thousand other people have been doing it for years. It really came out of a desire to consolidate and expand upon ideas that had been floating in our minds as teachers and directors for years, you know. And because there was a chance to create a new course, and because the Dean, himself, was interested in masks, . . . like the three of us said "masks" at the same time.

A hook, a thing to start the process. As I said to you earlier, not necessarily because using masks as a style in itself, and certainly not necessarily to get it as a separate art form as in the use of mime or something like that, but as a further extension, the way you'd give a character a costume piece. At first we didn't know if we'd have any money for masks, we thought just a hat or one prop, but we realized that that would not serve us because one of the things that masks does that nothing else does is that it covers, it covers a portion of your body, of course needless to say you've been involved in actor training,you understand that the greatest difficulty is to get something from up here [the face] to down here [the rest of the body] and when you haven't got the use of this [the face], you have to use this [the body]. And we've found that that has had the greatest success in what we're doing, even though that's not necessarily the primary goal. I think "mask characterization," the way we title the course, is--an acting laboratory in mask characterization--is really what we would consider to be our primary goal. How to find a character. How to create a character. And the differences in an Arthur Miller script, the form is there, the circumstances are given, and you have to find how to use <u>you</u> to fill those particular circumstances. The old Stanislavski motif of what would I do "if" I were the character in these given circumstances. The difference between the mask and the Miller script, or whoever's script, is that the mask is much freer, it already has a structure. It has as you say, Sears, a certain amount of antithesis in it; it has a jutting brow that's upset and a smiling face, or it has paradox built within, but the structure is much freer than the script, the circumstances are much less given. And therefore in someways it's much harder because you have to start from scratch, you only have a small amount of form. But we have found that it is easier because they [the students] find that they are freer to use their impulses, they feel less restricted by the words or by the character circumstances. And in some cases we've not had the opportunity to develop it as far as we've wanted to and of course the course is new, it's only been tried now three times. We have found especially with superior students, which you're going to say and I say too, that there's no problem with them anyway, that there is a direct feed in--they are freer in exploration work, they are freer physically, they are freer imaginatively, they use the moment more freely--all the things that we want to do in the other classes seem to come to a kind of fruition in this class, and then suddenly, "Ah, yes!" and they [the students] use it in performance. It's not as complete as we wish it to be, but that's



what our search is about. But I would say that our major emphasis, then, is in finding a direct, a more direct route to the impulse, the hidden image, to help you explore character, and find character.

Are you saying, then, that the character must be found in the mask as sculpted?

Not necessarily. Your response to it. The mask as sculpted gives you a certain amount of information to begin with. I find in watching them work, that becomes less and less dominant . . . it's a very strange thing, it's almost, and I find it to be very true each time, almost a kind of extrasensory thing. The mask tells you when something's wrong. You try something, because you had this idea and you were dying all day to do it, and you try it and it just doesn't work. That's because the structure, as simple as that mask structure is, says "No!" to you, it talks to you in it's own way, as we found in their choosing of the masks, certain masks could not go on their faces. They yelled at them," I don't belong to you!" That sounds a little spacey, but it seemed to have happened. And it's happened three times with three different groups, so I really feel that there's a certain amount of veracity to it. However, what I'm getting at is that the sculpturing of the mask is not the limitation, it . . . personal impulse . . . the sculpturing of the mask and what the mask is feeding you may start things but it is not the end-all information center. Much more seems to be allowed to come from here [the body]. A very interesting thing happened, and I think I can give you an idea of this, . . . yesterday, one of the girls that was working yesterday with the mask found that in her working alone, you know working on her score of actions to complete one simple action all the way through, she found that she was working within a certain space--she had a chair and she had a place where she was going to a mirror, an imaginary mirror in front of her--and she had a very forthright, direct, and very angry kind of person that has been building for the past few weeks. And she's not quite sure where's it's taking her, but she knows that that's been stimulated every single time the mask's been on. Well, as she was working and she moved away from her chair to go to her mirror, some other boy came into her space, he was searching for a key, and he picked up her chair and he picked up the cushion, well, the frustration with the mask on was fantastic. What the girl wanted to do was smash him in the face. What she did do was pick up her mask and say, "Libby!" and I said, "Put it on. Deal with it." Her own persona would be much too afraid, I know the girl, would be much too afraid to deal with that forthrightly in a way that her own emotions would probably want her to take, but she would sidestep it, she'd rationalize with the boy, she'd be polite with the boy, or she'd call on the teacher to deal with it. But the mask had already gotten to the point where it wanted to take care of it itself, but she afraid to use that, you see. That's, by the way, what we have found to be true often. Sometimes, these characters, and we're not in any way interested in psycho-drama at all, but

sometimes these characters are a little frightening. Last year we had a situation where a girl had a mask, it's interesting how you choose a mask, she chose a mask, this tiny fragile little girl, almost like a piece of glass, she chose this enormous mask, very strong features, very sensual features, with strength, and she couldn't deny them. They were there. And every time she worked, they were there, and she kept pulling away, and yet they were there. Well, by the middle of the semester we found her hiding more and more, going behind curtains, not being able to deal with it, and it was the girl who could not face what was true about her that was coming . . . that was stimulated by the mask. Eventually she was able to deal with it. Not as fully as she would have wanted to have dealt with it, but, of course if that girl is ever going to play a sensual strong creature, which, God knows, the dramatic literature is filled with, she's got to have found that person in herself. She cannot deny it. And we find that experience is indicative of many experiences; that often it brings forth things that people will say, "Listen, they're not going to think this about me, are they?" You see when it's Biff Loman it doesn't matter, because it says Biff Loman on it, but the mask, in a sense, makes you more naked.

Jeremy Geidt at Yale says he allows his class to go through madness first with the masks. And they very frequently do. He has some extreme masks that he uses. And he says that they just go insane with the first . . . but they've got to get through that.

Yes. To be able to find a logic to its behavioral pattern. We are looking for behavior logically, but extended because of the mask. Another thing that I don't wish to deny, and I don't think I mentioned to you at all, is obviously the masks' features are larger. Not only do they cover, they are larger. Not only do they have paradox, but they are larger than the actual face and each one of the features more extended. And one of the things that is the demand of the mask is to fill the body to a much larger extent. Now we're early in this course, but that is one of things that we are working towards. To fill the space, not only personality wise, and logically behavioral wise, and that it should be able to be based in a kind of realistic behavior process, but nonetheless it's extended. Not to caricature, but to the furthest extent that it can go. We do sometimes go into the caricature for a while in order to be able to pull back.

Does this make the actor play better onstage?

Exactly, by extending. We have had situations that would resemble madness, in fact the other day . . . we work a lot of our tasks in the beginning are highly structured. The sensory kinds of environments that Estelle and I provide: a tunnel that you're going through, that narrows, that forks, that you have to go through backwards, that's coming down on you--that we provide--sensory environment--a kite that you're flying and that leaves you totally free and soon you become one with the kite. And your body moves

through the air as if it is the kite. And some of these exercises take a half an hour to an hour to do, and what happens is that the individual loses all inhibition and the body becomes involved with either the struggle or the pleasure and begins to trust the image. Rowing a boat out to sea and losing the oar and the winds coming up, you know the kinds of things that either have crisis in them or extreme pleasure or sensuality kind of implicit in the imagery, so that the body is freed, not so much for them to discover the character but . . . we're working concurrently with discovery as well as the kinds of exercises to free, and then we stop the exercise when it reaches it's peak point, make them shake out, and then recreate the last moment of it in front of the mirror. And I can't begin to tell you what Estelle and I haven't seen from Marat/Sade and any number of mad, mad plays--extremely full, extremely exciting from a director's point of view but that's really not our point of view in the class at all. We're really not looking for the kinds of images that we can play with ourselves. We're looking to free the actor and to make him more creative.

It's very obvious that the mask does this: it frees the actor.

Most of the time I would say. Some people . . .

Do not respond to it. For you is the mask work, I know you've only done it three times now, but is this some indicator that this actor is going to have . . . you know, if he responds well to the mask work, is he going to have a chance of being a good actor or if he doesn't is he going to have real problems in his acting? Is there a correlation?

That's a very good question. There is both a correlation and unfortunately an antithesis. Yes, we have found that it has in some cases, with people that have--and who can define that crazy word, some sort of "talent"--or something to begin with, that the mask helped to free and also bring technique to what they're doing. Because once they experience this, Sears, this incredible knowledge, and I contend, and I'm sure you've heard this from every acting teacher that ever lived, the problem of teaching acting, or the problem about learning acting is that it is totally experiental, it is not a head learning and you can give them theories until they die, and if they don't experience the moment, forget it. And that moment of click seems to happen more in the mask class, the experience and then suddenly the "Ah! I know!" you know. And that carry over seems to happen more often with the better students.

Okay, then something comes along like our experience last semester--now I don't know in the long run of things what's going to happen with this particular actor, but I can't begin to tell you how for two years we tried to make a breakthrough with this actor, not sure whether the talent was there, not sure what was there, but continuing

to work as one sometimes does even though you say you're going to get rid of the ones that you say aren't great, you still hold on to them. He was so brilliant in the mask class, the total synthesis of body, of comedy, of character, of believability, of being able to control the action and yet allow it to happen--everything you want, okay, and beside that a character that was so delicious you wanted him around all the time because he was so funny and so charming. And never put on, never pushed, always there. Never has that carried over into his work. What can I tell you? Just a brilliant clown, a brilliant comic, but not able to bring it into anything else--still stiff . . .

Not able to make the connection.

Exactly. And I as a matter of fact had him for scene study as well as the mask class. And if you only know how I'm begging and pulling and pushing and trying to get somewhere with him and still the same kind of stiffness as soon as the words were there, the same kind of mask that comes between "me" and the words, you know. But the character alive in a way that I would have shown him to you, or to Pierre Lefevre, or to any of the greatest mask people in the world, with the most tremendous pride, because this is what it's all about, and then into Catch-22, or a play, forget it. What can I say, it hurts.

Can you kind of outline the way you introduce the students to the masks and the beginning exercises . . . you know, what the program of study is, what the kinds of exercises are that you do?

Yes, I will try to give you some sort of outline of how we work. To begin with we have what we call "Encounter Sessions." I ought to give you as a matter of fact and maybe it will make some sort of sense to you, although it's really notes for us [their outline of the content of the course].

We begin with a kind of Encounter Session in which one person, we ask someone from the outside, usually a graduate assistant who is not an acting student but is there to help us, come in and put a mask on. Only one mask is brought to class. That day. That very first day. And we have that person just sit with the mask [on] and we ask the class to feed in what they are seeing and, of course, from every angle you see it differently: "I see somebody who is very shy." "No, I see somebody who is very happy." You know. The purpose of that is to give them the idea that there is built into the mask not only paradox but all kinds of myriads of choice in the personality. And so that there is less fear in approaching it, that you're not going to a character that already exists, that there is something that's there before they are even touching the masks at all. This session lasts for about an hour and twenty minutes, and they talk about it. They do not try on the masks. It's just that one person. They ask the person to move around a little bit

and the investigation is a talking one. And then, of course, we give them the kind of atmosphere that we feel is very important . . . we set that up. They are to come dressed as close to nude as possible, as close to neutral as possible in leotards and tights, or work clothes that really strip you down, get rid of all your jewelry, all of you that's possible--everything that's you come in as stripped as you can possibly work and still be free. And keeping the acting journal. I also suggest for them to read a book, I don't know if you know Mary Renault's Mask of Apollo. But you see, I don't know if you understand a professional school's atmosphere. There's no such thing as literary . . . [interrupted by student bringing masks back from the classroom].

So that sort of thing is set up for them and absolute silence as they enter the room that they begin an individual warmup. We set up the way the class is to go. We find that the class has a kind of sanctomoniousness to it that none of the other classes have. You come in there to work; you don't waste a bit of time; you come in silent; you come in stripped; you don't bring in what was yesterday, you come in with now; you don't talk--you find that they don't talk about the class to anybody else. It's very private; it's very exciting because there's a kind of monastery quality to it. And I don't want to push that too far, because we're really not after that so much as a disciplined atmosphere, that this is a work session. So we set that up in the very first session.

Second session, they come in and--the next two or three sessions the masks are against a wall in chairs numbered from one to twenty and then they work silently and alone with the mirrors and with themselves finding their mask.

Trying on different masks?

Trying on different masks until they find the one they respond to. Actually this is the first time we've had a class to twenty. So what happens is naturally you can see, especially if you're not allowed to talk, that the one that you wanted somebody else is going to take. So you've got to go through several masks and make several choices. Then at the end of those three sessions, the last ten minutes, they must come up to us and say "I want number 20." (On the back of each mask is a number.) "I want number 19." "I want number 7." etc., etc., and of course they are all very worried will they get the mask, you know, but they are not allowed to talk about it. They are not allowed to express it. They are not allowed to come up to us and query. It makes them work alone, privately; it makes them begin to set up a relationship to the mask. Sometimes it's successful. Some of them futz around for an half an hour before they begin to realize how serious this is to them. We don't interfere with that at all.

Okay, then the choice of mask is made. After that the program remains the same for the next five weeks, in that the first five

minutes is individual warmup, silent, physical warmup. The second five minutes is silent, free, alone with your mask. And then the next hour is spent on structured exercises. As I said, we begin with very simple tasks--the first thing is really just to break in your mask, okay? To make it feel as if it's a part of you. Setting up the chairs, exploring the room, listening, looking, . . . actual things in the room. Walking up and down stairs. Sitting on the chair. Very soon we still continue with actuality, we give them books and they have to read; they have to sit on a chair--keeping changing their position on the chair; keep their relationship to the book; keep their concentration--trying to build levels of concentration, levels of ability to keep focussed on two things, in a sense, at the same time: relationship to the chair, relationship to the book. (This is before we build sensory environment, we being that very soon after that.) And risk. They have to keep changing their positions in the chair, or the way they are working with the book, so that you find that some people wind up on these little plastic chairs in ways--if the exercise didn't go on for an hour, Sears, if they looked at it for a minute they'd be scared out of their minds, because they're perched in balanced positions that if you saw it you wouldn't believe a human body could do it, but because it keeps going, going, going, they have no choice, and it keeps going. What we're aiming at is that we're stretching them before they even know it to risky things so that they find that there is trust in their body and balance in their body without their having to think about it.

Let me stop you a moment. Are they moving in the chair, are they handling the objects the way the mask makes them do this?

They don't know yet. They don't know yet.

Are they wearing a mask?

Yes, they are always wearing the mask.

But they have not worked in a mirror?

They've looked in the mirror, and they've worked with the mirror for five minutes and now they're away from the mirror. They don't know whether it's them or "me" that's pushing them, or the mask. Because the whole point of the first couple of weeks is simply to break in the mask, so that's comfortable when you're doing hard work. But actually they find, and we encourage, that they are able to take risks with the mask on. And we'd say, "What's to make you think that it wasn't because of the mask?" So we're encouraging them to look for discovery. Okay. But not necessarily using what they already know about the mask. You heard me say today, "What you already know about the mask, start to bring in." But that doesn't happen until about now. We're finishing the fifth week of class. No, to begin with, it's strictly physical work, but the mask is on.

The very fact that the mask is on, I think, has a stimulation, but we're not stressing that.

Then we move into simple sensory tasks of reaching and pulling, you know, reaching for an apple or something very high up, or pulling at a rope, hanging pictures on walls. They are doing it as a group, all in individual spaces and keep them working and it's very exhausting. Only, as I'm sure you have found in actor training, when you get them past an exhaustion point, past thinking about themselves is when the real work begins. And we've found that to be true every single time. And it's been very exciting, because even if they haven't begun to discover a character, which is fine, they've really all pushed themselves past what they normally would allow themselves to do. And they've begun to concentrate on a sensory image, or sensory reality rather than actual--they've begun to endow the space. Which of course they were doing in improve class, but we've pushed it a little bit further.

Then we complicate the space, we make it hot or cold, or we give them a sensory condition, or an urgency, do you understand, so that there are several levels, they're not only grasping for something, they are also hot, or the air is coming in and it's hitting them in the shoulder while they . . .

So you start combining things?

Exactly. So that there are levels of concentration and their ability to sustain something becomes increased each time. The same token as stretching the body further, and remember that each day they have this time alone in front of the mirror to bring in to their work . . . and after a while I start encouraging them, "If you started getting feelings in front of the mirror, try to take them into the exercise for as long as they can last." Usually they can't last too long, because the exercise is too exhausting and takes you past that. Past thinking; past controlling that idea of what that character is like. Which is fine.

Also we work with . . . when they've done these sensory things, they find that things happen to their body. That's when we start using them in discovery. Estelle will say, now take that crawl through the tunnel, that last desperate pull you had to get to the end of the thing; take it up, upright, in an upright position and start walking with it. And of course you get these very extreme desperate pulling walks. And she'll say, "Start taking an inventory of where you hips are, where your chests are, where your knees are, where your . . . okay? And you get these very extreme walks and then we pull it back to kind of a natural walk and then they have to look at themselves in the mirror as they are making those walks. We're trying to find it in the body. And that's where they begin to find where the character is. And we usually take these walks from two or three or four different exercises, so that there's a choice. Some of them are more sensuous; some of them are more

desperate. By this time, not too many of them know exactly where they're going, but they've all of them had some sort of stimulating feeling. Some of them are getting more secure, like the girl who did, she didn't do it well, that was because it was the first time in front of an audience, but the girl that was sneaking out of the house. This has been happening to her, this pulling in; this fear of herself; shying away and yet attempting to reach out, you know, the jut of the chin, the pull out like this [demonstrates] and yet the pull in with the body, has been happening to her for last four or five sessions. She's now been able to take it into tasks, but it happened earlier from an earlier exercise, from a walking exercise, and it's beginning to have a character stimulation. Two people who were not here today, in no matter what they're doing now, that character seems to be coming more and more to the forefront. Usually it doesn't happen for six, or seven, or eight weeks, until the character comes. That's why we give them this leisurely time of sixteen weeks to create a character.

After we go through these risky and full body work to try and extend the body, to try and concentrate on several levels, to clarify tasks, we go into a period which is more to do with decision making. We make them, through experience, make decisions through telephone calls, through interviews [telephone rings--right on cue], make decisions about their characters that they hadn't thought about in advance but had to on the spur of the moment. [she talks on the telephone] [Estelle Spector has entered the office.]

[Estelle] I don't know if you've told him the ultimate, we find this very exciting, we adore it.

It's kick city.

Let me ask since we're stopped here, and get both of your reactions to this, how do you find this fits with students who are heavily into Stanislavski, and have the American misunderstanding of Stanislavski?

But they can't here [at the Goodman School] too much because they're all second year students and they've all had a certain amount of--some of them are very feeling oriented, but . . .

[Estelle] Neither of us have hit . . . I mean it's a good question to pose to us because neither of us have hit; I mean, it's really never been present. Since basically the ultimate thing is that each character comes from what you have anyway. I mean, you're the resource. I don't even understand how there could be a conflict.

Pierre [Lefevre] talked about a conflict with some of his students.

Well you see, the thing is one of the reasons that there is no conflict in a way, Sears, is because we happen to be their first year

teachers as well. So why we do base our work on, and of course there are many more of us than just the two of us, even though we are very different all of us, there are certain things that we're in concert on, and most of it stems from, I don't know if you know McGaw's book, Acting Is Believing, and since that is task oriented, physical action oriented, objective, intention oriented rather than feeling oriented, that's their common vocabulary as well. Now we have had situations, like we had a very fascinating discussion with them, we spend very little time, by the way, talking . . . just these things unfortunately require a certain amount of criticism, but we don't have long classroom discussions and things . . .

[Estelle] Lots of times we don't say anything at all. We come in and we go.

Right, or we go privately to talk to individuals, to spur them. But we had a very interesting discussion, because kids would find that they found the feeling and they wanted to recreate the feeling . . . that feeling was so wonderful, that "rush" of excitement that they didn't want it to end. They hadn't realized technically that they had reached their peak, they had fulfilled their task, and they tried to push and pull and hold on to it and of course the moment was gone . . . the soup was cold, but that's a very important thing to happen. We don't find them in conflict with our ideas at all, mostly, I suppose, because they're being trained by us, you see. We find them in conflict with themselves, but they didn't yell at us. Sometimes they are angry because they have to work so hard and they're tired. But in the end they like that a lot. At the moment there's an anger and we're such bitches that we'll say, "So use it!"

So then we move along to making kinds of decisions but we work very separately to begin with . . . each person is alone. Then we bring them into group encounters and situations where we set up the encounter: a bus, and you're waiting for a bus, and you have to know who you are and why you're there . . . while the character should become a nugget that's truthful and real, what his profession is or how old he is (we work with age too, by the way), or what period of history he's living or what country he's from can change from day to day. Do you see? What his occupation is, whether he's married or not . . . but his character traits will be developed by the end of the semester but one of the things we hope for, and we push for, is the flexibility that he could be in any situation, in any time, in any place. We bring them into groups individually as human beings, but then they start encountering one another and they start discovering their own character as reflected often by the way other people deal with them, other masked people deal with them. And then we make them make these kinds of decisions through experience, as I say, like suddenly getting a telephone call or you have to call for an interview, or you're up for a job, or somebody calls you that you haven't heard from in three years, and you have to talk. You can't plan it out before hand, you can't score it and

you just have to talk. And you find yourself able to make these kinds of decisions.

Once the character is established, we use that free time . . . we extend that free time from five minutes to ten, sometimes fifteen, sometimes twenty, in which we allow them to freely relate to other characters, not just alone. Freely improvise. And one of the things that was wrong last year that we're going to help this year, is that the characters took very often what they knew about the characters . . . the other characters in daily with them so they were never allowed to meet them again for the first time. And so certain characters were really boxed in by what people felt about them and could never transcend that. One of the things we hope to change is in these free group encounters, besides the structured group encounters that we give them, is to give them a definite kind of structure to go with the freedom, if you understand what I mean. In other words, you're walking in and meeting these people for the first time, or you've met them once before, or, you're going over to seduce that girl. In other words, give them a specific task quietly or as a group. So that there is a certain amount of liberation from yesterday and into what you want from it from today.

After group encounters and decisions we're beginning to make, we move into two phases of work: improvisations still for discovery purposes, and we're really trying to develop these characters by putting them together, by making you choose clothing and making you choose props that fit your character. And you have to bring them in and use them in improvisations that Estelle and I will structure, or we'll just say, "You're in a park." and two of them are up there together, or, "You're in a funeral home." and two of them are up there, or, "You're in a cellar." and two of them are up there and they work off that.

We do try to get into some kind of comic techniques. This simple exercise that we're working on now later becomes a little bit more complicated by . . . it's called, "Getting Into Trouble." In which the character, by that point fully developed, has to devise a beginning, middle, and end situation in which what he's doing . . . there is an obstacle, and usually the obstacle is funny, like I'm trying to hang up this tiny little picture with this huge ladder and the ladder is unwieldly, you know, man against the machine . . . the Chaplin, you know, the use of comic contrasts. "I want to look stunning today, and I'm wearing my best garb, and I go out and my umbrella won't open up and I'm stuck in the rain," you know, that kind of thing, or, "I'm walking through the field to go to this georgeous party and I step into a pile of dog leftovers." We don't give them that but they always wind up finding things that have the kind of comic contrasts . . . the course in a sense becomes a kind of potpourri. But really the intention of the course is to develop the character, but in little ways like this we're trying to make them understand how the character can function in both comic and tragic situations.

That's what I was going to ask, in both comic and tragic?

Oh yes, because some of the stress situations are tragic.

Do you find that most of them immediately go to the more tragic?

Definitely. The comic is much harder for them. One of the things that we did that we found highly successful in making them understand comic contrasts was in the simple tasks of hanging pictures. We gave them thousands of these little . . . you have an infinite number of pictures around you and a chair and an imaginary ladder, and, of course, imaginary pictures hanging on a wall, and you're busy hanging up and suddenly Estelle or I will say, "Uh oh, the picture on the left is falling." And a leg has to go out to get that. They're totally involved but the fact that in doing something that is causing another part of your body to function in an abnormal way, you're extending yourself into something, man against nature, and they found the comedy in something like that. They realize how that works, and we go into that. I wish you could have seen it the other day. A boy did a tragic situation, he got struck in an elevator, you know, this task thing, and he was pushing, pulling, and he was desparate, and he didn't know what to do and he finally, this very strong man (this is one of these boys that's already discovered this earthy down-right pushy kind of a guy who's moving along like this), found it in his body, I'm not sure he knows the psychology of it, and I'm not interested in that yet. He's found it in his body first, and here he is pushing and tugging at this elevator, and he sits down and cries because he was miserable because he'll never get out of there and to see him cry, and then suddenly the elevator opens, and there's a girl. Of course the shock to his body, and of course it was comic . . .

Did you give him that?

No. He found it himself. But what we do is try to point out to him is that it is comic. It's real but it is comic because of something happening unexpectedly to that kind of a situation.

Then . . . most of the work is improvisational . . . but then we move into period work in which we employ the costume designers and the costume department from the school . . . we happen to have two extraordinary designers who have worked professionally, Alicia Finkel and Virgil Johnson who are very fine designers, very brilliant in their field as well as very creative people. Brilliant academically. They bring in costumes and discuss period with them and we set up improvisational work based upon their characters living in those periods according to what their bodies have to do to function. And also we ask them to pick a piece of literature that is non-dramatic, because of course, none of these kids read anything but plays. That can bespeak their character. One boy, for example, found his character to be a very surpressed, strong, and

violent kind of thing, found an Indian war chant, a poem. And you have to not only just recite it, you have to devise a situation in which those words would come. And what he did was he was attacking another man . . . he didn't use it as an Indian; he was mugging a person (and he used another character in the class--and interesting in the choice of the character that he used. He picked one of the happy-go-lucky types, who worked absolutely perfectly for him). His intention was to get the man's money, but because the words were so implicit in his soul--this chant about blood and horror, you know, this death-resurrection kind of thing--the words were used with the body to not only get the money, but take out everything he had against society with this particular man. And that was a very successful use of a piece of literature from nowhere'sville that bespeaks your character, that you can put into situation.

When do you have them start to vocalize, or verbalize?

Okay. This is the first time we're doing it slightly differently than we did before. I'll tell you what we did before. We found it moderately successful, and that's why we're making a change. I'm not sure, we may have to go back to it if it doesn't work this time with what we want to do now. We found that working through the sensory experience, like through the tunnel, or through the kite, sound was expressed as part of the task, and we pushed the sound . . .

Did they know they were allowed to do this?

Yes, we would say, if a sound comes, allow it. And then finally, help a sound come, you know, until everyone was making sounds. Then we would stop the exercise, make them go to the mirror, and re-create the sound, find it's pitch without the stress situation. Anytime they'd lose the sound, they'd have to go back to the situation to bring it back again. Find it's pitch and it's variety. Then we'd find two or three choices from two or three different situations, the pleasure from the kite business, or from walking in the wind got usually much more sensual sound, usually a higher register sound; the pain sound from the tunnel was usually much deeper, lower, thing. And they would have choice; they would work on these sounds: they would have time to work with these sounds and the body and find whether the . . . what the character voice was. And we spent quite a bit of time in another period of free time working on just sound, recreating them, and bringing them back.

So the sound isn't coming from the mask, it's coming from the situation?

Right, right. Now that is what we did last year. Okay, we felt that that was taking too much time and we weren't sure that it was really placing the voice, really getting the voice out of the situation. This time, we're going to take a chance and simply let the

voice come from what they've discovered about the mask. And if it just doesn't feel right, stop it and start another one.

I'd like to ask you what you've found from your interview with other people. How they were able to find voice.

Well, see, most of them are taking it from the mask. Letting the mask dictate what the sound should be as well as the total characterization, physically, you know, it's also done vocally. Geidt at Yale just lets them work in a mirror . . . and he uses . . . well he has all sorts of kinds of masks, you know, full-face, half-mask, three-quarters, just false noses that they put on, maybe an eyebrow, or a cheek, he has such a variety of masks, probably the person with the most variety of masks being used . . .

And students are allowed to use as many . . .

Yeah, whatever they want out of that. And they just put it on and look in the . . . there's an oblong mirror about that high, and that gives them suggestions, impulses as to characterization physically. They go to a costume rack and they pull off what they want and try that. Then they go to a full length mirror and once they get fully in costume then he says, okay, work at verbalizing or vocalizing . . . and he says, don't think of sentences to say, just start with sounds, whatever sounds feel right, work for you, seem to be prompted by the mask. Then play around with that sound, see what happens, see what comes as impulses in terms of just a little catch-phrase or something. And he builds on it that way, you see. Growing from just a Mm-m-m-m, if that's the sound that comes from the mask . . .

Into "It's raining."

Yes. All sorts of things can grow out of it.

Would that then be the center of the voice, in other words, where the voice comes from?

I don't think he's worried about that. See, that's not what the . . . placement of the voice . . .

No I didn't mean physical placement. Look, I speak obviously, I have a much higher range, I could speak like this [in a high voice]. I've made psychological, physical, social choices to bring my voice down somewhere in my life. Even though my range could take me up as high as this and I could speak as high as this if I wanted to, but I don't. What I'm asking does that voice, those sounds that start to be emitted from that character at that particular moment, is that then the voice he would use if he were talking?

Yes, if that's what the mask prompts, but it all has to stem from the mask and if it works. If it's the wrong voice for the mask, both the actor wearing the mask and the instructor should know pretty quickly.

Yes, well, we found that even when it's taken from tasks, they know and we know too whether it fits with the mask or not. But we're going to try something similar to what you're saying by just playing around. Maybe we will start with sound, but one of the things we did last year was, it was interesting because the class was silent for so long and then when we allowed the sound, they didn't want it. When we allowed the words, they were very frightened of it; they are frightened of the next step, each time, because they're so free within the . . . that they're in and they feel as if they really cinched it, that when something new is added, they get very scared. But we took it slowly. When the voice was found, the sound was found, or the range was found, we started with words. I'd give them a random selection of words and they would simply explore the word, in relationship to other people or just for themselves. And before sentences could occur, before they were able to take them into things, . . . I think we'll use that word exploration again, but I think that we are more interested in seeing whether it can come from what you already know about the mask rather than task.

That I would say would be the main difference as I see it. Where the impulse is coming from. And since the mask can do all these other things, it can do that too.

Yes, that's right.

It feeds everything else, it can feed where the voice comes from, what it sounds like, what qualities it has.

We didn't know whether to trust that to begin with and that's why we started the other way, but I think we're ready for that change now ourselves. Like by now, we would be into that, but we're not yet.

One thing that I'm trying to do in the dissertation is give at each point a selection, if I have them, of types of exercises that are being done. Which, I think, will be helpful, so that it isn't just talking about it, but, you know, these are the things that are tried by the various teachers and they've found useful; they've found that work.

Do you want me to give you an example?

I think you have! I was just trying to explain what I was doing. I'm trying to give a summary of exercises at each point, which again adds the comparison value to the thing, you know, where they have come from in their training . . .

Yes, it is kind of interesting isn't it? You really do spot it. The funny thing is I have a feeling that Estelle and I are not really being influenced by any one particular place. It just kind of an eclectic feeling from our teaching,what's still to be needed and whether we can solve certain kinds of problems . . .

Well, this was the beginning way. When Copeau started out with this whole technique they had to work this way and others have.

We're probably thousands of years behind but we're happily discovering.

No, no. I'm not even trying to suggest that.

No. I know you're not, but sometimes I think that to myself. If I only had a month with Copeau all what we're busily discovering would seem so infantile, you know.

Maybe it's best to discover it for yourself.

I don't know. It's exciting, that's why she and I both feel a tremendous enjoyment out of it. Because how often, when you stop to think of it, do you get to create something right from scratch, you know?

Well, what I like here is that you're trying to bring two areas together that are frequently kept compartmentalized; that's the movement and the acting training, and that's being tried at a number of other schools. And they have found that the mask work can do this, which is so exciting.

Yes, I really feel that is the major problem of acting teaching, probably any kind of teaching, but since this is my field, I can only speak about this, and that is the question of when synthesis takes place. You find for so many years that you work in pieces, so to speak, and you're attacking pieces, and getting to parts and things, and very seldom do you see in the student in a three year progression it all come together. And yet that's exactly what you want because you need that kind of gratification for yourself to know, "Yes, he did it!" "Yes, it's all there." I think that what we're doing helps to propagate synthesis a little bit sooner, but it's not magic, and I don't think anything really is. I think like any learning experience it takes a while for anything to solidify, because people still continue to go back to easy answers before they trust the new routes that they've started to . . . you know. I don't know, well this is speaking about acting in general, which you're probably not very interested in, I don't know how much you've come across, but one of our major problems is that we have people coming in from all over, from all different kinds of thinking and most of it has propagated terribly bad habits. All the kinds of stage gimmick and trick that really in the end won't get them anywhere. It's a short cut to the audience, there's no question that the audience is the major goal ahead, but it is a short cut that they've taken that really side steps all the kinds of stuff . . . that they're never really going to be able to handle the hard stuff in acting because the short cut will only take them one way, and a lot of our time is spent trying to undo that trick and

get to a technique. And while they'll learn the technique here, whenever the situation becomes tense or crisis ridden, you go back to the trick.

You talked about having the students get as neutral as possible in terms of what they wore in the class; nude or neutral.

Right.

Has this got anything to do with what the mask can do for them? What's your motive for having them do that?

Well, precisely, obviously what you're getting at, and that is if they . . . well, my feeling is even if they wear dangling earrings or jewelry, or anything to do with their own person . . . in fact, there are almost too many colors in there right now, but we can't ask them to go out and buy a whole new outfit as far as leotards are concerned. If they bring too much of themselves, ironically, even though their using themselves, they are stuck with themselves. If they look at themselves as a kind of neutral vessel that they've stripped away, it's symbolic in a way and yet it's also experiential, that they've stripped away the way they normally would dress themselves and feel about themselves, because everything that you wear is an expression of your own self, even if it's haphazard . . . it is, unfortunately it's true, otherwise we wouldn't be able to observe behavior as actors if that weren't true. But, it has a logical law behind it. If you strip that away, you are stripping away that part of you that has already been dressed and finished. And you are symbolically and, hopefully, actually getting down to the center of you that you normally don't tap or touch because it's too trimmed, you know. And that along with the mask, that is already saying something, this kind of clear body, then you have a clear body to fill the mask's requirement with. Does that make sense?

Yes, oh sure! Lecoq has a mask that he claims and works with that will strip the body even further--strip the person. It's his first mask called the Universal . . . well, he calls it the Neutral Mask. Bari Rolfe calls it the Universal Mask, which is what it does.

I think that we would like to do that too. And I've seen the neutral mask work, but we don't have enough time. We only have one semester out of the deal, so . . .

Well, schools that are only using one semester of the work have . . .

Have gone to character masks.

Oh, sure.

Well that's why in a sense I think we're maybe in that cop-out region of neither going too far or far enough [in our work].

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW WITH ROLLAND MEINHOLT

APPENDIX H

Interview (Via Cassette Recording Tape) with Rolland Meinholt, Dept. of Drama, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana. December, 1973.

Key: Q = question
A = answer

Dear Mr. Eldredge, I shall answer your questions en masse in the order in which you've given them.

Series A:

Q # 1. When did you first become interested in the use of the mask for training actors?

A. My first contact with masks at all, was during my undergraduate years at North Western University when another student and I did a scene from Oedipus Rex and had a man in design, a grad. student in design, design masks out of paper, out of construction paper, for us. I was highly fascinated by the difference a mask made in my own personal acting and that of my partner in the scene. This initial contact lay dormant until such time as I was at the University of Washington as a graduate student and decided to do my thesis on the theatre of Jacques Copeau and the Vieux-Colombier and the schools associated with it. It was through studying and learning about Copeau's peculiar emphasis upon the mask and particularly the training that was developed by his nephew Jean Dasté at Saint-Etienne that I began to think of the mask in rather serious possibility as training for actors. It wasn't until I came to the Institute of American Indian Arts at Santa Fe, New Mexico, and began working with American Indian young people from all over the United States, that I actually began to use the mask as a training device.

Q # 2. What training or study has influenced your work?

I have partly answered above. There were some training things that I've not mentioned, for instance, one summer, at the University of Washington I trained with a Noh troupe, actually a Kyogen troupe, the Nomura family, who were guests artists. And of course they had masks in their possession and used them on stage. Also during the summer of 1971, I journeyed to Japan and saw many Noh and Kabuki performances which, particularly the Noh plays, use masks and of course, the Kabuki too uses a mask of makeup. Finally my study in American Indian culture during the six years I was in Santa Fe gave me what I

would consider a somewhat of an unusual and thorough-going understanding of the mask, for its own sake, if not in terms of using it in actor training.

Q #3. What kinds of masks do you use in your class: half-masks, full face masks, or some other kind?

A. For training purposes, I have found the half-mask to be the most useful. I have used full face masks in performances and shows, but I think given a choice to pick a style of mask, I would pick the half-mask every time, if your talking strictly about training.

Q #4. Why do you use the kind of mask you do and not others?

A. I prefer the half-mask for training, because first of all its lighter weight, I have a great preference for the movement of the jaw. And the half-mask is much easier for the beginning student to design. It has been my experience that the full face mask, in particular, are rather tricky to do and, of course, preclude any kind of speaking. Which is away from what I use the mask for, which is basically character work.

Q #5. Would you describe the different types of masks you use?

A. I have used the neutral mask on occasion. I have found it not as beneficial as the character mask, and that's certainly where the vast bulk of the work I have done falls. And the character mask. By larval mask, I would assume you mean an insect mask otherwise I'm afraid I'm not acquainted with the term. I don't believe I've used any insect masks. Animal masks we've used occasionally, but usually as part of a production in which there is an animal. Fantasy masks--I don't think I've done anything that you would directly call a fantasy mask, though some of the American Indian masks that I worked with while in Santa Fe come awefully close. Grotesques--I have worked with chiefly in Barrabas, de Ghelderode's play, I would like to do a great deal more work in that particular area.

Q #6. What variations of masks are there within each of these types?

A. It seems to me that there are two possible approaches to masks and there may be many more, but, just reading your question, and off the top of my head, one would be, masks made more or less to type, and the other would be specific masks for a specific person or character. It is the nature of masks that you will never have a clean category one way of the other, but I think the greatest success in the use of masks that I've had, is when a mask is so uniquely and strongly made that it sort of supercedes type, it is a specific

person. An example would be, . . . we had in a play that I wrote, an Indian play, there is a very wonderful old grandmother, and we had a rather unusual group of people, most of there were talented in several directions, not just theatre. And one of our boys, who was a very fine sculptor as well as an actor, and a dancer, made the mask for the old woman. It was a truly beautiful mask, but it didn't always seem so off stage. It wasn't until it got onstage that it really assumed true life. But, anyway, we did the show at least three times, with three different people playing the character. And one of the things that amazed me was that each time, the character of the old woman, she was the same person. It was like a person that we had all met a half year ago had come back and was visiting us again. The three people that were playing the character were first of all a young girl from the Carlvo (?) reservation outside of Spokane, and then a girl who was only a quarter Indian, in fact, she was blue-eyed and red-haired, and the quarter was Choctaw--she was from Oklahoma. And finally I played the role, so we actually crossed the sexual barrier. And in each case everybody felt that the grandmother was the same lady. There are many rational explanations for this . . . it supercedes that, I don't know how to explain it to you. The mask has a power all of its own, and particularly a good mask, of course, I'm talking about.

Q #7. What purpose of function does each type of mask serve?

A. Well I guess I'd have to say it's . . . again in relation to the above question, that it's my experience that the better made a mask is that the less variety of functions that you can put it to. If you're asking if there is such a thing as a comic mask and a serious mask, of course there is. I must be frank, I'm really not sure what you're driving at here.

Series B:

Q #1. At what point or level do you begin your actors working with masks?

A. Well, currently I begin them in their second year training, or intermediate acting course, the second quarter of the course.

Q #2. How long is the course of study with masks?

A. The specific course of study with masks is a quarter long, we're in a three quarter system here. It is the Winter Quarter of Intermediate Acting.

Q #3. How do you introduce the use of masks into the classroom?

A. I've just read ahead to question #4 here and I think I'm going to answer these together if that's alright.

First of all, during the first quarter of Intermediate Acting I begin talking to the students about, first of all a subject area

that we might concentrate on in our second quarter's work. For instance, one year we did the story of the Donner Party crossing the Sierra mountains and I got a book called Ordeal By Hunger, that's a very famous book about the Donner party. This current year the people have chosen the Huguenot Massacre, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, as the general area of study.

Now, once we've chosen the general area, we begin to study the area, find out about it, find out what happened and who were the people involved. (These areas are not always historical, incidently. The two I've mentioned are, but we could conceivably pick a novel or whatever, the important thing is, that whatever we pick has a great deal of character information.) Also during the first quarter, I begin talking to the students in those occasions where we need to sit down and rest a moment, or we're waiting for someone to show up, or that sort of thing, I begin talking to them about masks in a very casual way, relating to them many of the stories like the one I've told you just up a few points back. There are many other experiences that I've had with masks, working with them over ten years time now. Sometimes I talk about the Greeks and their respect and practice with masks. We talk about showing the mask. I just try to very informally begin to give a feel for what a mask is, what it's position is in the theatre. One of my favorite statements about that is, incidently, that . . . I don't know who said it, but it goes roughly, "The Theatre begins with a mask." And I firmly believe this. I think one of the main differences between acting and performing is a mask. So this is sort of how the very general sensitizing is done in the beginning.

Then in the Second Quarter, we begin the quarter by working on the mask for the character. First we choose the character that each person in the class will play in the general story area that we are undertaking. Then they begin designing on paper, or however they wish to some people have not actually drawn anything, but they have brought in textures that mean something to them, or they bring in photographs or paintings or whatever means something to them in terms of their character. Then we actually begin working at making the masks. And I think this is terribly important that these students make their own masks. At least it's important in terms of the kind of character work that I'm using the mask for. They're reading about their character, their finding visual things that mean something to them in terms of the character, and they're actually working on the mask all at the same time.

Incidently, after trying many materials over the years, latex, celastic, papier-mâché, hard fiber glass, just about every material you can think of, construction paper, I have in my own mind, at least, settled on a papier-mâché mask with a celastic foundation as being the best solution to getting a good mask from relatively inexperienced people and having a pliable material to work with.

Q #5. How do students react to working in masks?

A. Oh, a number of ways, actually. Some of them react in the sense that they feel they've almost come home. In their acting work things begin falling together for them that never had before. Other people are terribly frustrated, at first, and really fight against the idea of wearing the mask, and feel that there's somewhat of an imposition there. Other people are simply perplexed, I mean, the variety is endless. And I do find when I've had the students make their own masks that this makes a great difference in their sort of getting into the character and they seem to become fascinated with that face that they're working on and shaping, that's taking shape under their hands. Many of them have never sculpted anything in their lives and its sort of a brand new creative experience for them to see this thing taking shape. Of course there are always a couple in the class that just have a heck of a time getting anything that's decent and I take a very patient attitude toward them and encouraging and try to assist them along to something worthwhile. Sometimes even sitting down and showing them . . . doing one side in what I feel is what they're trying to get at and then having them complete the other side. Or more often, it's one eye, or something. And then generally when they get that experience, they can go on and do the rest of the face.

I think by the time we are done there's a general respect for the mask and for the power of the mask, but it's long in coming for many people. Also many people just warm up to the idea immediately.

Q #6. Do you see the mask as an agent of release or an agent of control for the actor?

A. Well, this is a highly involved question. I suppose I would put myself on the side of an agent of release for the actor, but somehow in answering this question we're not really talking about the question of what a mask truly does. There's something almost magical in . . . if the student working with a mask has a respect for and an acceptance for what he is doing, the result, somehow . . . yes, there's release but there's also control in a very subtle way because it's that primitive idea, you see, of the mask is the person. The mask is the God and temporarily the physical body of the mask wearer is usurped by the personality and the soul of the character whom the mask represents. While we might as moderns pooh-pooh this idea a little bit, I quite frankly find there's still something there. There's something you really can't explain to somebody else. We talk a lot about studying the mask, meditating on the mask, and if people begin doing that, it's just remarkable what begins to happen.

Q #7. What changes occur in the actor who puts on a mask?

A. Well, I have found depending on the acceptance and readiness of the student there are enormous changes in all three categories. We have in our acting class been working very physically up to the time we put on the mask, and we continue working physically along the lines of the body reflecting what a person is. And the mask being a stimulus for what that person is. And so there are very definitely in the way I teach the course physical differences. But the vocal and emotional differences just seem to come right along with it. It is in my mind the clearest way to get students to the point where they truly are playing somebody else besides themselves on the stage. It's the only way I've found that's effective in really teaching what character work is. And what a character is. And to get away for various manifestations of personality playing.

Q #8. Do students have any problems with the depersonalization the mask forces on them?

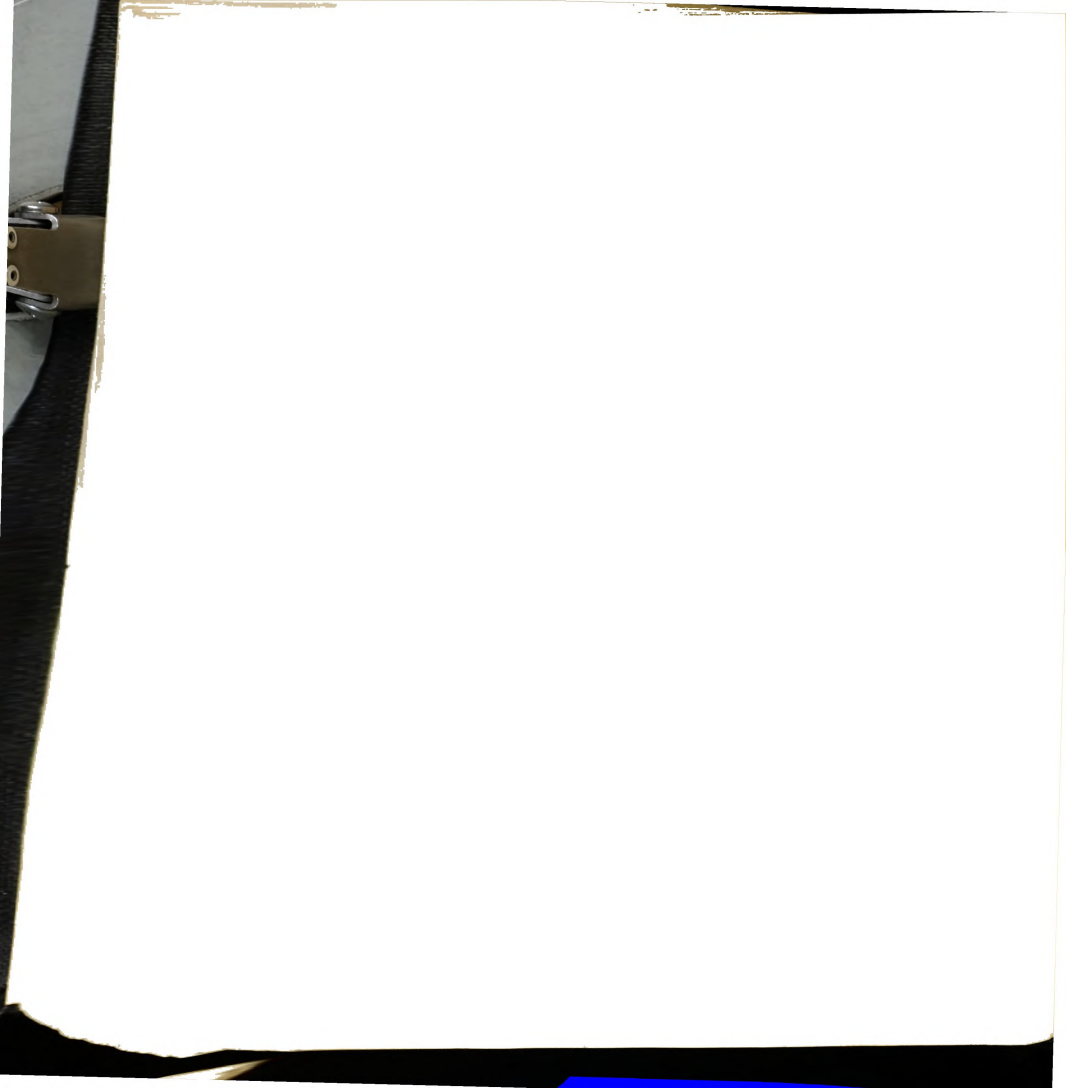
A. No, I don't think so. I think they would if you were dealing with the neutral mask, perhaps. It seems to me this is one of the problems with the neutral mask, but there is no depersonalization with the character mask I think, because something so strong is substituted for what you give up. And I have found that the ego has such a tight hold on all of us that you almost never get rid of that factor, the controller, no matter how far a student goes into the character, unless they were mentally sick before they came into your class. And I haven't had anybody like that.

Q #9. Do you see any value to this depersonalization of the actor by the mask?

A. We may be having some semantic difficulties here, but No, I see no value in depersonalization. There is, of course, a well known phenomenon of more of a sense of control when you're acting with a mask. There is almost a clear split between you the actor and the character. But this is highly beneficial, it's one of the things that I use a mask for. I think the conscious artist has got to be there and be trained to work in a very special way and I believe the mask helps us a great deal.

Q #10. What insight or goals do you hope the actor will achieve by using the masks?

A. Well I think most of these insight or goals I've already mentioned one way or another in answering your previous questions. For me acting is a matter of wearing a mask of some kind, whether literal or figurative. This is one thing I want to teach. A performer, just strictly a performer, is somebody who is like a standup comedian. I may be repeating myself word for word here, this is . . . (I recorded this several days after I did the first part of the questions here) . . . I think this is an important



difference for students to understand. There is no such thing as an ingenue role who doesn't exactly like you, and you don't have to do anything but play a variation of yourself. That assuming a different character is almost a religious activity in the theater . . . that is not to be taken lightly. And it is through assuming a different character in the fullest sense of the word that the actor is finally freed to communicate in a very special way with his audience. I think as long as the personality of the person is standing between himself and the audience, he is not going to get very far in developing impact. But once that personality is out of the way, the actor is put in the position to give to his audience and to his fellow actors, for that matter, in very profound ways that makes the theater an experience that everyone lives through, rather than an entertainment that is diverting. I have, incidently, no prejudices against entertainment. I just feel very strongly that the theatre can do things that no other art form on earth can do, and that much of what the theatre can do is tied up in the mystery of the mask. I could go on and on, but I don't think I will, it's liable to get rather pompous and overblown.

Q #11. Do you teach the students how to use a mask or do you let them discover it for themselves?

A. Probably a little bit of both. I don't bitch at the students if they don't do what I ask them to do. I encourage them. I think a student has to discover things for himself or it doesn't mean anything. Of course one of those things that I would like to improve in as a teacher over the years, is that wonderful ability to bring something to a student at just the moment he needs it, so that he can discover it at the moment of greatest need. Zen teachers are past masters of this evidently.

Q #12. Do you believe there is a general technique of working in a mask that will be effective for nearly all types of masks?

A. Well, I think, working in a mask without going through physical training and physical training in a communicative sense, in other words, what is your body saying, what is it doing, and also one thing I work on very profoundly is isolation--teaching an actor to do one thing at a time. For instance, doing a death scene with a hand. Then we also deal with the theories of Alexander Lowen (?) in terms of the body reflecting the character of a person, for instance, the positions of the spine and the general awakening of the students to the awareness of the core of all physical actions is in the pelvic or lower thoractic region. And the core of the mask lies there. If the mask doesn't inform that area of the body, then you're not going to get very far in working with it. Those two areas, of course the spine and the center of the being, are the two most important principles.

Now in terms of working specifically with the mask other than preparation for working with the mask, I've mentioned most of the techniques I use, I think the meditating on the mask is terribly important and, of course, the better the mask, the more effective this is. This makes it very important to be helpful and guide a great deal while the students are making the masks. They must come up with a good mask if they are to get the greatest benefit from the course. It's amazing how many of them do. I'm constantly surprised and pleased. Whereas you'd think this would be a major problem, this doesn't seem to be, for me at least. I think the Japanese Noh technique of the character being in costume, and mask, and studying himself in the mirror, or meditating on himself in the mirror, is a very important technique and I stress this, and we have a mirror in class for this purpose. Incidently, we do deal with costume, though it's very sketchy and throw-togethers, and we don't worry too much about period, but we do have people pull from their own clothes and then they visit the costume shop and pull what they can from there to develop a costume to go with the mask. And this is important, I think.

I think there is importance in the "shoeing" of the mask, though in my one mind . . . I mean its own thing to read about the shoeing of the mask and its another thing to actually make it mean something to yourself. I've often thought that primitive things, I think the Japanese theatre still does this act of feeding the mask. I've often thought that things like that might be helpful. I've not actually tried them, because they're sort of a little too much mysticism and spookiness involved in that and sort of a bowing of a religious tradition that really doesn't belong to us. I'm very leary of this kind of thing. I think we have to find our own way, we can't just pull a ritual out of the air for the sake of doing it, because somebody we respect does it. But I suspect something in that area would be most helpful in building the proper attitude toward the mask.

It is important for the actors to realize that their face is immobile, and yet at the same time, I feel, I say that I feel it's kind of academic, because I don't think I've ever seen a single case of somebody who has worn and worked with a mask for some time that hasn't come to this realization however he did it on his own. I don't know that you ever have to teach that, I think it just happens. Oh, perhaps once in a while, you have to say I can't tell what you're doing, and that sort of thing, and the actor whether it's subconsciously or otherwise, begins to realize that if it's going to be said, it's got to be said with the body. But I've never actually taught people to use their body in unique ways with the mask. I think the combination of having trained them for a full quarter in physical things and then putting on the mask seems to do it more or less automatically.

Q #13. Are there any specific techniques for the actor to learn with respect to each individual mask?

A. I can't think of any off hand, except that the meditation on the mask you are wearing is terribly important.

Q #14. How important is it for the student to make use of the sculptural qualities of the mask when he works in it?

A. It is important. Again I'm not sure this isn't something that happens. Certainly it happens with great frequency when the people who've made the masks themselves, and they've tried to design into the mask the qualities you mention, for instance, the refraction of light. I teach them the quality of surfaces, and the texture of surfaces, and that sort of thing and they hold the mask up to light as they are making them and check what they do do and what they might do if they change something else, and so forth. In other words, by the time they've made the mask, they have a very good idea of what it's going to do. At least on a beginning level. And then, of course, there is a constant discovery as they work in the mask, and every once in a while people in the class will comment after an exercise in which they use the mask, that "Gee, the mask did a neat thing when you held your head such a way" . . . something like that, you know. Then the actor instinctively incorporates that into his work. There are many discoveries that are made that way.

Q #15. Is there a definite sequence or progression to your use of the masks by the class?

A. Yes. We make the masks first of all, then usually the next step is to have them develop a costume for the mask, and then we go into character interviews, in which we have a visit by the person the mask represents to the class. And we interview that person and we ask many questions about their life, their relationships to other people. Then normally I go into what I call a Character Dance, which is in thirty-five moves or less they show or attempt to show the very soul-beat of the mask and the character that the mask represents.

Then we begin a small group improvisation with the people in the class who are closest to the character. The other characters in the class. They have natural relationships. Then we divide up and allow them to work on those natural relationships together. For instance, in the Donner Party we've had the Graves family work together and the Murphy family work together. There are many families that are helpful subdivisions.

We then begin working in larger groups combining two groups of people that have relationships within the context of the story. And finally, we, after having spent some time talking about the story and perhaps altering it to make a tighter dramatic structure and to highlight the conflict in the story, we begin a group of improvisations for the whole class which extend over the whole class period, which is an hour and a half every day. And we usually keep this up for at least a week, and perhaps more, developing the entire

story. And we also begin to use props, not specific furniture pieces, but what's around. And we begin scavaging around the building or in our propshop and use them in doing the large improvisation.

One thing I may do this quarter is to ask them to find a piece of music which has something to say about the character, which they feel is very close to the character, and design something in the way of physical movement for that. And they may do that in two's.

Q #16. Would you describe the different kinds of exercises and their purposes that you use with your actors in their work with masks?

A. I think I've been answering that in answering 15 so I'll skip on.

Q #17. Charles Dullin says that an actor using a mask must focus all his attention on his abdominal muscles. In your work with masks and actors, does this statement have any significant meaning for a masked actor?

A. Well, I think I've already answered that. The center of the body is not the abdomen, but it includes the abdomen, and I think as Grotowski says also, the base of the spine as well. And if the character is not centered in this area, then no amount of masks are going to help very much.

Q #18. Do you see any difference between Grotowski's "masks" made by the actor with his own face and the use of an actual sculptural object the actor wears?

A. Yes, there's a difference. It's much harder to do the former unless you've had experience with the latter. Obviously all theatre in this country and the Western hemisphere is not masked theatre, in fact, masked theatre is a great minority of it. But it's very difficult to give an actor a sense of the mask unless he's worked with one sometime in his life. I think Grotowski's thing is not something I would want to do to begin with.

Q #19. Is there an observable difference in the work of an actor who has had mask training over one that has not?

A. From my experience with the Indian young people at Santa Fe I can answer with a crashing "Yes!" Here at the University of Montana, I don't think I've had the time to answer as affirmative. I've not been here that long, and I've not been teaching these people using that method that long. The basic difference in the work of an actor who has had mask training over one who has not is in the total level of communication that such an actor with that training can achieve on stage. Such an actor is no longer limited

to merely verbal communication with his audience, and I think everyone must surely realize that verbal communication is the poorest form of communication in the theatre. Almost any other method of communication is much stronger.

Q #20. Do your students find this work with masks a valuable and helpful experience in terms of their other theatre classes?

A. I don't feel I've had enough feedback to answer this question with any certainty. If my students do, they've not made me overwhelmingly aware of it, but I have had some comments in that direction.

Q #21. How does the course work in masks relate to other courses in the Program?

A. First of all the use of a mask helps the students plug into his creative self. And once that creativity is released it cannot help but influence that student does in the creative arts. Secondly, I suppose there is a sense of design and of shaping the work that one does creatively that the student should carry into other classes that he would have. Of course, I definitely feel that this does lead to the actor being a better actor, and so that would definitely influence the acting courses that he would take beyond the immediate class in which he works with masks.

Series C:

Q #1. Do you do any work with masked actors in scenes from the ancient Greek and Roman Theatre or the Commedia dell'arte?

A. I don't do work in these areas as scenes in the acting class. I am often drawn to this type of theatre in terms of the major productions that I choose to do, and I feel that this is the valuable way to do this material, as a full production, a whole show, not breaking it up into little scenes which the actors do in class. I've already described to you the kind of improvisations and scene work that we do do in class. We often talk about Commedia dell'arte, particularly, and the Greek theatre. I'm not very fond of the Roman theatre I must confess, and use those theatres to illuminate and illustrate our work.

Q #2. How would you characterize your final objective in using masks in the training of your actors: to make them better actors in existing forms of drama, or to reawaken an interest in masked theatre?

A. I'd have to say, I'd like to do both, actually. There's no question in my mind that the first objective is achieved and I do believe very firmly that there is a place in the modern theatre for masks, literally and figuratively, and that the theatre would gain a great deal by using them; however, we have to find sort of

an organic means with which to use them, which is not always as easy to do as to say. It is not enough simply to throw a mask into a show simply to have a mask in a show. There has to be a logic, an artistic raison d'etre behind what you do.

Q #3. Do you have any interest in exploring the possibilities of a revival of masked drama?

A. Yes, I do. And trying to do so.

Q #4. What potentials and/or problems do you see in reviving masked theatre?

A. Well, I've already touched on that. You can't just throw masks into a play for the sake of using masks, there has to be an overriding artistic reason for the presence of masks in a play. For instance, in the Indian theatre, we slowly discovered and began to work on the principle of using masks on the highly unusual people in the dramas we were writing; people with a very mystical orientation and understanding of the Universe or people of a high comic nature. These are the people in the Indian theatre that are masked. Somehow we've got to come to the same kind of general principle in working with Western European drama. And it's all tied to our sense of ritual and our sense of mythology, and probably even more to our spiritual sense, because a mask more than anything else helps to convey a sense of the unknown, of the inexplicible. It sometimes seems in our society that we've lost a sense of these qualities, and yet art, I feel, loses most of it's impact without such a sense.

Q #5. What does a mask on an actor signify to you?

A. I find this rather difficult to answer. I don't know quite what your getting at really. I think if an audience is terribly aware of an actor wearing a mask, I don't think it's a successful mask. A really good mask gives the impression of not being there, of illuminating something beneath the surface of the mask so strongly and so much better than somebody's real face could, that the audience is not sitting there thinking that that character has a mask on, at least not beyond the first thirty second that they see it. I have a feeling that I'm not answering what you wanted me to at all, but this is one of those cases where you had something in mind and I can't lock into it.

Q #6. What effect does the masked actor have on an audience?

A. Well, now really, the effects are wide and varied and we could go on for ever. It depends on what kind of mask, and how the actor uses it: if he's been trained to it or not; if it fits in the play; if the mask is an organic creation. Ideally, as I say, the mask will illuminate something far beneath the surface of what is being portrayed that a face cannot do. It is a doorway to the unknown, the inexplicible, to the mystical.

Q #7. Has any form of Asian theatre influenced your work with masks?

A. Yes, the Noh and the Kabuki theatre. I travelled to Japan several years ago and saw a great deal of their theatre work, and I've studied it a great deal during the time that I was working with the Indian young people.

Q #8. Would continued training in masks and their use be helpful to the actor?

A. Well, I think everything I've said in answering these questions would place an affirmative to this question.

Q #9. What kinds of advanced mask work would you recommend?

A. I think the only advanced work that I would be interested in would be in terms of a production approach. I think beyond what I give the students, what I'd like to see them do is try to achieve some of the things I talked about above, in other words, finding a way to organically integrate and use masks in American drama in such a way that its not artsy-craftsy but becomes necessary as a way of doing and saying something that cannot be done and said any other way. I think this takes a great deal of experiment in production and people who have definite talent in terms of making masks should be encouraged to continue making masks so that their skills improve and perhaps work with a sculptor or some other type of graphic artist to develop their abilities. It would be interesting, I think, and helpful beyond my class to have a movement for the theatre class, which we do have, that took the peculiar problem of wearing a mask and having the body communicate. This probably would be very helpful to just specifically deal with that. But the main thing is to use masks onstage, to put them in front of an audience, and learn from that experience, and constantly work to improve and integrate the use of masks into our theatre work.

Series D:

Q #1. Who makes your masks?

A. I believe I've answered that.

Q #2. What instruction do you give to your mask maker?

A. I'm the only thing that even comes close to a mask maker here. And my instructions to myself are my own business. At one time, incidently, I tried to get a very talented Indian man from the Northwest who had made masks though he was primarily a sculptor. Unfortunately, the money fell through, it never came about to which to hire this gentleman, so I never had the experience of working with more or less professional mask maker. There really in my experience isn't such an animal. I'm about as good a mask maker as I've ever seen, and I'm not all that hot. Although I'm a lot

better than many. This is something that because of the non use of masks in the professional theatre where the money is we just don't have professional people in this field. It's unfortunate but perhaps my work and your work, if you were to be doing something more than just reporting on all this, and other people's work who are interested in the field, will change all this slowly over a period of time.

Q #3. Do you ever have students make their own masks? Why or why not?

A. Yes, I do, and I think I've explained rather fully above how and why.

Q #4. What materials do you find most suitable for your masks?

A. I think I've already said papier-mâché on a celastic base.

Q #5. What do the masks you use weigh? Is the weight of the mask important?

A. Usually as little as possible, though a mask that is too light, is not too good. A mask must have some weight, but if it's too heavy that also is defeating. I have never actually weighed a mask, I guess I go by hand feel as to what's right. It's odd. For some characters I think you need a heavier mask. For other characters something that's much lighter. But to get to where the mask is of so little weight that the actor hardly knows he has it on is in my experience not a good thing.

Q #6. What other schools or acting teachers do you know of that are using masks as part of their actor training program?

A. I don't know of any. There probably are many, I simply don't know of them.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW WITH JOY SPANABEL

APPENDIX I

Interview Via Cassette Recording Tape with Joy Spanabel, Theater Dept., University of Rhode Island. Winter, 1974.

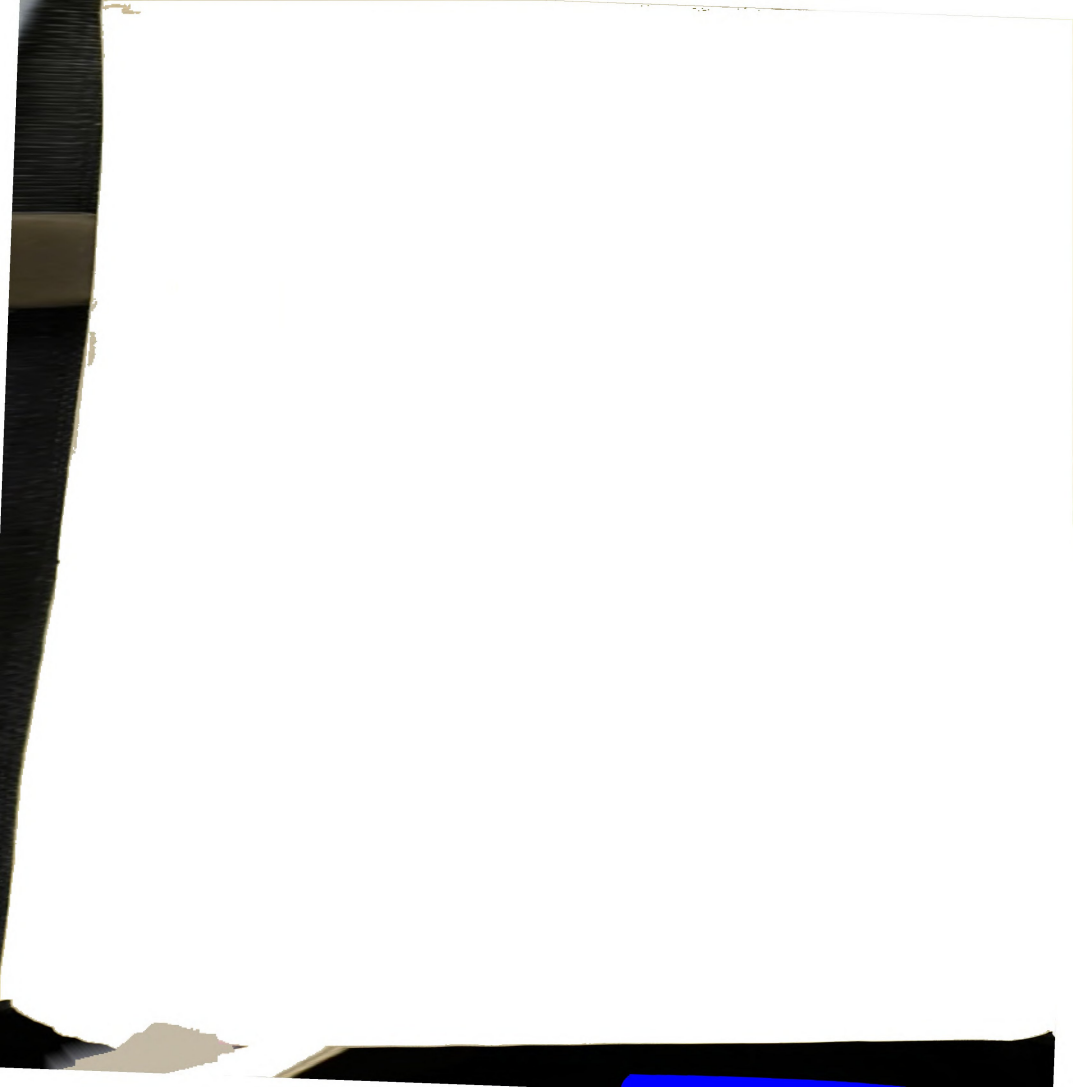
First of all, I should preface my remarks with the idea that my experience with masks has not been in the use of masks in the training of actors per se. My experience has been much more in the realm of designing and constructing masks for use in specific theatrical productions, productions in which the mask was used as a prop and/or accessory such as J.B. where the mask is not worn throughout the entire performance but used only at specific moments in the performance. I have also designed and constructed masks for classical theater primarily Oedipus Rex. I have also worked--designed and constructed--masks for Commedia dell'arte and also for children's theater where we incorporated the masks as animal figures rather than using animal makeup.

In addition to that, my students have designed and constructed masks for essentially prop use in productions in which masks were required for a specific scene, such as the ball scene in Romeo and Juliet.

Consequently, I do not know how much help my remarks will be in terms of the use of training of actors in the classroom, specifically. I can attempt to respond to many of the questions, based on the idea of the designer's approach to both the design and construction aspects of the mask, which enable the actor to utilize the mask to the fullest, to be comfortable and primarily to be heard, from behind the mask. In that light, then, I will attempt to deal with the questions that I feel I can answer more to the point of the apparent necessity of this particular study. The result is that some of my responses to these questions will take a slightly different turn, perhaps, than the type of response you are seeking for your study. But, let's give it a try.

In Series A, first question, regarding when I first became interested in the use of masks for training of actors.

Since my first use of masks was specifically for production use, it was not really a question of interest arising out of a new method of working or an additional method of training the actor, but rather the need--specific need--within the requirements of the production scheme, for the use of masks with the actor. In my work



with the actors, during the construction process and the resulting training period in terms of the work with the mask, I did find that it required a specific aspect of things and specific things that the actor needed to become much more aware of. In this light, I do feel that the use of masks for training of actors, particularly advanced actors, is very worth while.

Question 2: Training or study that has influenced my work with masks comes primarily from my work and research in theater history, and also the marvelous design capabilities that one can achieve through the use of masks. I feel that it is an aspect of theater that the actor should be definitely made aware of.

Question 3: The kinds of masks that I have ultimately used is really not the half-mask nor the full face mask; essentially what we have done is gone to a three-quarter mask, basically. In other words, a three-quarter mask is one which generally covers the face, often times the top part of the head, extends to the jaw line at the sides of the face, leaving the mouth open. The mouth area, then, has been treated in a way to blend it in with the mask, when it was deemed necessary. This, however, is not the case with the Commedia masks that we designed. However, we utilized this process with the animal masks; we also utilized it with Greek mask, the classic mask, and also some of the masks that we have built for . . . as prop accessories. We did use the full face masks for the production of J.B. We felt that there would be less problem of muffling, since those particular masks are held to the face rather than worn directly on the head; consequently, the actor has control over the mask and its placement in front of the face, so that it does not become a problem with muffling the voice.

Regarding question 5, I think you can tell from my previous remarks that I have used many different types of masks. The neutral mask is probably the least likely for my use in design. We have gone into a lot of character masks, a lot of animal masks, a few of the grotesque masks (for example, the Devil in J.B.).

Question 6: on the variations of masks: The character types are essentially based on the specific requirements of the production. In as far as the training of the actor goes, I would imagine that if I were to utilize these in an acting class--if I taught acting courses--that I would be inclined to incorporate as many character types as I possibly could, primarily because the mask does become the outward visual appearance and is quite capable of projecting a very specific mood and feeling.

Number 7: is difficult for me to answer. Within the acting class, I can see that the neutral mask could lead the actor into just exploring the whole use of the mask, and the head, and the use of attitude of the body and the head in order to help convey a mood.

Series B, Question 1: As indicated earlier, since I do not deal directly with the actors in their training program within the courses, I do not currently start them at any point; however, I feel that the use of masks with the actor in their training probably should come a little later in the training experience, rather than earlier.

Question 2: Does not apply to my point of reference.

Question 3: Again, this does not apply to my point of reference.

Question 4: In sensitizing the actors to the work with the mask, I have had experience with that, in terms of their use in production. Generally, since I am in the process of making the mask for the particular actor, I start from the outset, during the preliminary measurement period, when I am setting up to cast the mold for the mask, of beginning to explain various aspects of the mask to the actor. At that point I like to show them sketches and give them a basic idea of how--how the mask is going to appear when it is completed. I then like to take, once the mask has reached completion and is in the final fitting process--I like to have the actor, individually, experiment and play with the mask, in front of a mirror, generally, so they can begin to get some idea of what they look like, a sense of what the shape of the head now is, what the relationship is to the body, and how the whole--the mask, the costume, etc.--is going to begin to work together. At this time, I like to have them have some aspect of stage lighting, even if it's only a P.A.R. with some gels in it, but preferably some fairly strong light sources rather than the direct overhead florescent lights, so that they can begin to see how the lights and shadows work on the mask, so they can begin to understand how the mask can work in expressing moods, emotions, and the reaction that they are likely to get from--to get an idea of the reaction they are likely to get from the audience. I also like to have them work in groups, so that they can watch each other and begin to see what gestures and movements work and are strong enough to carry and those--and to see also those which are too small to become significant when the mask is worn.

Question 5: Generally there is one of two reactions--the students either become very excited about the use of the mask and begin working with it immediately and trying all kinds of things; the second reaction, unfortunately, is the most common, and that is one of feeling that they are now hidden behind the mask--therefore, their facial expressions (their own personal facial expressions) are no longer of any consequence and that they are hidden. The result often is one of frustration. They also find it very frustrating because of the loss of the peripheral vision which they are used to in working without the mask. I suppose the latter is the one that causes--is the most frustrating for the actor, to adjust to the loss of peripheral vision.

Question 6: As an agent for release or an agent of control for the actor?--I find very difficult to answer; obviously, it can work either way. Much of it depends upon the attitude of the actor; much of it depends on the actor's willingness to explore. It can be an agent of release for the actor (if I'm using the term release in the same way that you are) primarily based on the idea that the actor can now--must really now--begin to exaggerate and specify the movements that he makes within the mask. This, it seems to me, can become a release for the actor, since the actor no longer gets caught up in a series of very small, insignificant moves that the audience cannot see. By the same token, the previous definition can also be termed an agent of control, because the actor must learn the various methods that do work with the mask, as opposed to those methods which do not.

And of changes that occur in the actor. That again varies with the individual that is involved. It also, I have found, tends to depend on the type of mask. The more specific the mask in terms of character deliniation, or in terms of expressing a specific mood or attitude of the mask--then I find that the actor generally responds to that. The more neutral the mask, the less influence the mask seems to have on the actor, physically, vocally, or emotionally.

Question 8: Do students have any problems with the depersonalization the mask forces on them? As indicated in my previous statement, I have not found this to be much of a problem, primarily because the masks that I have dealt with have been very much character-type masks or have been designed for a specific purpose, so that there isn't--I have not felt a sense that the actor has felt depersonalized by the mask, but rather a sense, quite often, of the actor responding to the personality of the mask, if you will.

Question 9: Based on my response to question 8, and not having experienced this strong depersonalization, I am using the term--I am responding to the term "depersonalization" as one which implies an almost--how shall I say?--robot-type of influence of the mask, one that becomes--makes the individual more of a neuter, rather than specifying character or personality.

Question 10: Regarding insights or goals for the actor with the use of masks. Primarily, I guess I think of the mask as a simplification and enlargement of the head and the face. Also, thereby, an enlargement and a simplification of a particular mood or character trait. In this sense, then, it allows the actor to move into some of the simplification aspects of character. The result, then, ultimately can be a clarification and a simplification of a given role within the play, or for that matter within a given acting exercise that the student might be working with. I feel, then, in this light, that the actor can begin to strip away some of the clutter that often happens, in terms of trying to get into the multi-level or multi-faceted aspects of the characters, or of

the element or personification that they are dealing with at the given moment.

Question 11: Whether I teach the students how to use the mask or let them discover it for themselves. Actually, it's a combination. I like to work with the student at the outset, to give them an idea of, actually, the flexibility of the mask. I like to indicate some of the possibilities with the mask, essentially by letting them work with a mirror. From there, I feel that the mask is theirs to explore and to discover as many different techniques in working with them as they possibly can.

Question 12: Yes, I do believe that there is a general technique for working in a mask, and I believe that this is effective in nearly all types of masks.

Question 13: Specific techniques in each individual mask. Now here I feel that the individual--the individuality of the mask is something that really needs to be explored by the actor in the mask, because the two must begin to work as one.

Question 14: I feel that it is extremely important for the student to use the sculptural qualities of the mask. I believe that the play of light and shadow on the mask is essentially the basic function of the mask. The use of shadow--the way the shadow falls on the mask, the way the light plays over the surface, as you say--gives the mask a wide breadth of life and surprising versatility.

Question 15: On sequence or progression of the use of masks by the class, does not really apply. However, there is a sequence that I like to use for the actor getting used to the mask, and that's primarily wearing it; becoming used to it; becoming aware of how the mask fits on the face; how it is going to influence vision, primarily; any influence it is going to have on vocal quality by creating an additional resonance chamber--so that they become aware and comfortable within the mask, so that the mask no longer becomes the added feature. This is particularly true in productions when the masks are worn for the entire performance, where they become an intricate part of the character. From there, I let the actor work with the mask, explore its uses, explore the possibilities of the mask and then, in conjunction with the director, we sit down and try and work out those aspects which are most successful in the use of the masks, and try and weed out those areas which we find are not as successful.

Question 16: Again, this does not apply in the context of the preceding questions, particularly in response to the class. However, one of the things that I do during the fitting process is have the actors look at not only the masks that they are going to be wearing, but the masks of the other characters, and have--work

with them in terms of responses to the masks: what kinds of moods they find the mask expresses and their relationship to not only their mask but the other masks. On some occasions, particularly with the Commedia masks, we found that by having the actors almost work with the masks as, in their hands but as another person, so that they actually began to work with them more as a puppet, I suppose, than anything else, but working with them and responding back and forth between the mask and themselves. The idea here is to help the actor find and understand more clearly what the individual mask represents. We then have the actors begin to work in the masks, particularly in relationship to each other--in other words, the other actors in their masks. Mirror work, I have found, is extremely important. This allows the actor to see how the sculptural qualities work, how the light and shadow works, how the attitude of the head and--particularly the attitude of the head and the relationship to the body, to the use of gesture and how it relates to the mask. One cannot deal with the mask in the same way one deals with one's own face; for example, the hands in relationship to the mask. The gestures need to become more specific, much cleaner, in a way--the direct contact, the laying of hands on the masks, often times clutters the whole idea.

Question 17: No, I do not really believe that all the attention goes to the abdominal muscles. If anything, I think the focus of the attention must go really to the head. It must go to the head and then the body as a whole.

Comment on question 18: The Grotowski masks, in which the actor uses his own face, is in a sense very similar to the wearing of the actual sculptured object, on one level, in terms of, again, the simplification that I have mentioned earlier. It is the idea of selecting a base, a primary singular mood or emotion or character trait, and pushing the muscles--the actor pushing his own individual muscles on his own face--into such a position to project that image. The actual sculptured mask has the advantage in that it can be held in that position for the two hours or so of performance. Obviously, my comments are based from the design point of view--my comments are based from the use of mask within production rather than as a training process.

Question 19: An observable difference in the work of the actor, who has used masks, over one who has not. Not too any great degree, I suppose. Again, I'm speaking from the production standpoint. However, I have noticed that those actors that have had experience with masks in one production and move into a production that does not have masks--does not require the use of masks--often time, do not rely on the small, insignificant gesture and posturing of the head--not the facial muscles, not the use of the eyes, the eyebrows, the lips, the nose, etc.--but generally the bodily attitude, primarily the relation of the head to the rest of the body, is often times much cleaner, less cluttered with a lot of insignificant, often confusing little gestures of the head.

Question 20: Again, this is somewhat difficult to answer, except based on the idea of, yes, the students that have worked on the various productions have found that it helps them to understand more clearly the particular types of theater on which we have worked; in other words, those actors that worked with the masks in the production of Oedipus had a much better understanding of the use of masks and the entire--a little better concept of what the Greek theater was about, with the expansion, the enlargement, the larger-than-life idea, the singularity of character, the non-multi-faceted character that is so prominent in the Greek theater. And the same is true of those who worked on the Commedia production, the use of the Commedia masks; again, it helped them better to understand the comic character types utilized within the Commedia itself and also seemed to help enhance their understanding of other comic characters.

Question 21: Really does not apply, other than the relationship of production to other courses within the program. Here again, the use of production to give the students not only the practical experience of working with shows in different periods and in different styles, does have direct application to the other theater courses within the program.

Series C, Question 1: I believe I've already answered, but yes, I have done work with the masked actors for the ancient Greek theater--not the Roman--and also the Commedia.

Question 2: On characterizing the final objective in the use of masks in the training of actors, really does not apply specifically to my work. I do feel that the use of masks in the training of actors, is important as a training process for all types of theater but also to help them better understand the--the term that you used, the "masked theater"--to give them a better comprehension of that. As I've indicated earlier, however, I do feel that the use of masks is a valuable training asset.

Question 3: Interest in exploring the possibilities of a revival of masked drama--I'm not quite sure how you're using the term "revival"--I do feel that there is a great deal to be gained by the use of masks in the classical drama, to give the students an opportunity, particularly within the academic theater situation, to have some idea of what that is about--certainly the aspects of the Commedia, particularly today, with its present influence on much of the theater that we do. I also feel that it is a very valuable asset for children's theater, and offers another avenue for the actor and the producer to pursue in terms of creating vital and interesting theater.

Skipping to question 7: The next starred question--my previous work has not been influenced by the Asian theater. Recently, I've had an opportunity to work on some Chinese theater, in which the

mask-like effect is created with makeup; I found that very exciting, but have not pursued it far enough to know just exactly what I'm going to do with it in terms of my actual classroom work, other than to have the actors explore it in the makeup classes to see what kinds of things they come up with.

I'm not quite sure I understand question 8 in terms of the continued training in masks. Would the continued training in masks and their use be helpful to the actor? Continued in the fact that I think that in the acting classes it should be dealt with as a unit. I don't feel that it should be given a whole year or continued beyond the unit, unless it was utilized for a specific production.

Question 9: Regarding the advanced mask work which I would recommend. In the light of my background and non-use of this in teaching acting classes, since I don't teach the acting, any of the acting classes, I do not feel that I can really respond to this question in a very helpful manner.

Series D. Here we go! Question 1: Who makes your masks? My students and I make the masks. The instructions given to the mask-maker: generally, my instructions come from the concepts and the ideas that the director is after. From there, we set out to make the masks. I have developed a technique of mask construction which does not require making a positive and then a negative mold of the actor's face. Actually, it is a highly simplified and rather fast method of constructing masks.

Question 3: Yes, I have had students make their own masks. I have had students make their own masks in a course--one aspect of the advanced makeup course that I was teaching--I had the students make their own masks; a number of them were involved in an advanced acting course and working on scenes in classical drama. Therefore, I had them design and construct their masks for use in the classroom situation, with the scenes that they were working on. I feel that the construction of--the students constructing their own masks, particularly for classroom use, is particularly important and a very good idea, because it gives them an opportunity to become much more--to become very familiar with the mask from the outset. For production work, I have never been blessed with the time, nor have the actors been blessed with the time, which would allow them to construct their own masks for the particular character they were playing in the play.

Question 4: The material that I have found to be the most suitable for masks is celastic. It is light in weight; it is easy to work with; it can be sanded easily; it can take any kind of treatment; it is quite durable; it can be adjusted and remolded at any point along the line to enhance the fit; and, surprisingly enough, it is a very--it is a relatively inexpensive method. The celastic, granted, is expensive, but it does not require a great

deal to make the masks. I have also used the plaster-impregnated bandages, which we have applied directly over the actor's face to get the general shape; these I find somewhat less suitable--they are heavier; it is more difficult to get a smooth quality on the exterior of the masks; they are quite pliable and you can get a lot of fun shapes out of this material, but it is difficult to make adjustments once the mask has been completely molded. I have also, on one specific occasion, bought the transparent plastic masks, cut those and painted them, and used those--those are very, very inexpensive--they are about 15 cents apiece and it takes virtually nothing to cut them and paint them. These masks are also very light.

Question 5: regarding the weight of the mask--I've never actually weighed them--the celastic ones and plastic ones are really very light in weight; the plaster-of-paris bandages do become a little heavier. I do believe that the weight of the mask is important, particularly when the mask must be worn for two--two-and-a-half hours during the performance.

Question 6: I really do not know of schools or acting teachers that are using masks as part of their acting training program.

I don't really know how helpful the information on this tape is going to be to you, since your direction seems to be based, really, in terms of the use of the mask in the training of actors, the use of the mask within the classroom situation. As I said earlier, my experience has been with the use of masks in actual production. My own personal work has been based primarily on developing quick and easy and efficient methods of construction on the masks, as well as developing and working with creating the character traits with the mask. As I indicated earlier, I do feel that the mask can be a very flexible unit, that it is not necessarily a depersonalizing aspect for the actor, that it is, in many ways, a simplification, a cutting through to the core of a character, a character trait. I do not mean to imply that the mask is therefore valid or even recommended for all types of production. I do feel that it can be very valuable in a number of productions. I personally find the idea of the use of masks as a unit in an acting training program to be a very exciting idea. I believe that the mask is yet another tool that the actor can use. In that light, I think that any tool that the actor can get ahold of and master can only really enhance his skill, can only enhance his growth and development as an actor. Since my experience with masks has been primarily for production and for full-length plays, I am equally concerned with the fit and the comfort of the mask, with the actor's ease and flexibility within the mask. I am very concerned about the actor and the mask becoming as one, with the mask becoming really just another visual extension of what the actor is trying to portray. Consequently, it's very important for the

actor to feel quite--to become quite familiar with the mask, to feel very comfortable with the mask, and to feel the mask very much as part of the character, as part of the actor within the character, so that it does not become an element of fancy dress. Obviously, that preceding statement does not necessarily apply to the fancy-dress type of mask, such as the masks that might be used for the ball scene in Romeo and Juliet.

I hope the information that I've given you will be of some use for you. If there is other information that I can provide, I would be most happy to do so. I do have a series of slides and a verbal description of the method of constructing masks that I have developed, which could be made available if you require them for your study. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any other assistance.

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