

**THE MASK AND THE SELF:  
A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION INTO THE WAYS IN WHICH THE  
PHENOMENA OF SELFHOOD AND THE THEATRICAL MASK CAN  
ILLUMINATE EACH OTHER**

By  
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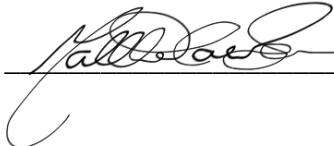
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### **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Matthew James Cawson, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012

## ABSTRACT

This is a historical and philosophical investigation into western theatrical mask practice, looking at the mask in Greek tragedy, focusing on Euripides' *Bacchae*, at the commedia dell'arte, focusing on the mask of Arlecchino, and at the neutral mask, focusing on the *masque neutre* of Jacques Lecoq. This thesis explores the historical and philosophical conditions under which these masks emerged, and enquires into how attitudes to the concept of selfhood and theatrical mask practice are related. The methodology combines the apparently disparate theories of Carl Jung and Michel Foucault in addressing the essential, archetypal factors informing mask practice alongside the historical and the epistemic. From a philosophical perspective, my central thesis is that the mask provides a "third thing" that allows a union of opposites, in this case the self and the other, particularly in the form of the conscious and unconscious self. From a Foucauldian perspective, I argue that the development of the modern concept of the self can be characterised by three historical moments of epistemic crisis that are accompanied by significant developments in the theatrical mask. The mask, at these moments, provides, in Jungian terms, compensation for the rupturing sense of self. The apparent incompatibility of Jung and Foucault belies their common Nietzschean heritage, and I argue for a degree of functional (though not ideological) complementarity between them.

I elaborate my argument to maintain that the theatrical mask has played a previously unacknowledged yet important role in the development of the western psyche, and can provide a unique insight into the development of the self. Within this context, I argue that the mask is poised to make a return to the stage, but that it has yet to find a theatrical form that transcends novelty and revivalism. I argue for the fundamental vitality of the mask as a potential force in contemporary theatre.

## CONTENTS

Contents .....	4
List of Illustrations .....	11
List of Abbreviations .....	14
Introduction.....	15
My Contribution.....	16
Methodology and Approach: Theatre, History and Philosophy .....	16
My Hypothesis .....	17
The Structure:.....	18
Context and Omissions .....	21
Chapter 1: <i>Autos &amp; Sōma</i> .....	22
Part 1: The Ancient Greeks.....	23
Unity in Multiplicity: The Fragmented Body .....	23
The pre-Socratic Philosophers: Flux and Mutability .....	24
Plato and Aristotle: Externality, Flux and Transcendence.....	25
Synaisthēsis.....	26
Plutarch (c.46 – 120AD): the Narrative Self .....	27
Part 2: The Enlightenment .....	28
David Hume (1711 – 76) and the Empirical Self .....	28
Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) and Individualism.....	29
Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804): the Empirical versus the Transcendental.....	29
Hegel (1770 – 1831): The Dialectic of Self and Other .....	31
Concluding remarks: The Self and the Loss of Self .....	32
Chapter 2: <i>Autos, Psychē</i> and the Diminishing Theosphere .....	34
Part 1: The Soul and Polytheism.....	34
Defying Locus: The Transcendental Soul.....	35
The Soul and the State: Transcendence, Unity in Multiplicity, and the Will .....	36

The Law and the Emergence of Will .....	38
Aristotle: The Will and Causality .....	39
Part 2: From Polytheism to Monotheism .....	40
Theological Fragmentation: Divinity and Corruptibility .....	40
The Soul and Ruptures of Selfhood .....	41
The Philosopher's New Clothes: The Platonic Trinity .....	47
Part 3: Monotheism and Philosophy .....	48
René Descartes (1596 – 1650): The Cogito and the Body-Mind Split .....	48
Hegel's Phenomenology .....	50
Conclusion .....	51
Chapter 3: Nietzsche, Jung and the Growth of the Unconscious.....	52
Part 1: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) and the Death of God .....	52
Nietzsche contra Hegel .....	53
Apollo Versus Dionysus .....	54
The Death of God – Behold the Man! .....	55
The Soul as symptom of the Diseased Animal .....	56
The Will to Power .....	57
The Übermensch .....	58
The Error of Causality .....	60
Part 2: Psychoanalysis.....	62
Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) and the Libido.....	62
The Tripartite Self.....	64
The Jungian Self: Archetypes, and the Collective Unconscious .....	65
Consciousness: Ego and Persona .....	66
Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious.....	67
Archetypal Images (or Symbols) and Numinosity.....	69
Universal Archetypes and Cultural Diversity .....	69

Some Specific Archetypes .....	70
Part 3: Jung, Nietzsche, and the Union of Opposites.....	72
Multiplicity without Cartesian Dualism.....	73
Conclusion .....	74
Chapter 4: Postmodernity, Neurology and the Quantum Self .....	76
Part 1: Michel Foucault (1926-84)—Self as Socio-Historical Construct .....	77
The End of Man and the Analytic of Finitude .....	78
The Subject and Power .....	81
Genealogy and Nature versus Nurture .....	82
The Analytic of Finitude Revised .....	84
Technologies of the Self .....	85
Foucault’s Mythic Structure: The Hero and the Monster .....	86
Conclusion .....	86
Part 2: The Scientific Approach.....	87
Neurology .....	88
Charles Laughlin: Jung and Biogenetic Structuralism.....	88
Thomas Metzinger: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity. ....	90
Neuroplasticity.....	93
Materiality and the Quantum Universe.....	94
Amit Goswami and the Transcendent, Nonlocal Self.....	96
Conclusion .....	98
Conclusion to Part I .....	100
The Initial Dichotomies .....	101
The Unholy Trinity: Nietzsche, Jung and Foucault. ....	101
<b>PART II</b>	
Chapter 5: The Mask.....	106
Part 1: Mask Theory.....	108

The Human Face as Locus of the Mask.....	108
The Face, the Mask, and Biogenetic Structuralism .....	109
The Biogenetic Hypothesis .....	112
The Legitimacy of the Biogenetic Hypothesis.....	113
Part 2: Mask Practice .....	115
Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 – 1940): The Mask, Dionysus, and the Universal I.....	116
Jacques Copeau (1879 – 1949) and the Noble Mask.....	119
Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956) and the Failure of the Alienating Mask .....	122
The Mask and the Spectator: A Circuitry of Power.....	127
Conclusion .....	129
Chapter 6: The Mask of Greek Tragedy .....	131
The Classical Self .....	132
Part 1: How do ideas surrounding the tragic mask reflect the concept of Selfhood in ancient Greece? .....	132
The Tragic Mask as Object.....	132
Vase paintings and the phenomenon of “melting” .....	136
Cultic Identity .....	137
Theatre as the “Melting” of Realities.....	138
The Physiognomy of the Tragic Mask.....	139
The Aesthetics of Neutrality .....	139
A Cinematic Illustration.....	141
The Mask and the Gaze.....	143
Conclusions: How do ideas surrounding the tragic mask reflect the concept of Selfhood in ancient Greece?.....	143
Vernant and The Tragic Consciousness.....	144
Part 2: To what effect was the mask used in <i>The Bacchae</i> , and how can this inform our reading of the play?.....	145
The Mask of Dionysus: .....	145

The Mask of Pentheus.....	150
Conclusions: To what effect was the mask used in <i>The Bacchae</i> , and how can this inform our reading of the play? .....	154
The Mask as Divine Element.....	155
Part 3: What are the philosophical implications on the concept of selfhood?.....	157
The Fundamental Duality of Self.....	157
The Tragic Division of Self .....	158
Dionysus and the Retreat and Return of the Origin.....	161
Conclusion to Part 3: The philosophical function of the tragic mask.....	162
Chapter 7: The <i>Commedia dell'Arte</i> .....	165
An Age of Dissimulation .....	166
Part 1. The Cultural, Religious, and Political Context.....	167
The Cultural Context: Classical and Folk Traditions .....	169
Commedia as Synthesis .....	170
Carnival and Theatre.....	171
The Spread of Commedia: A Universal Comedy? .....	172
Part 2: The Mask as Object.....	174
The Second Skin .....	175
The Half Mask .....	176
Part 3: Case Study: Arlecchino to 1750.....	177
The Origins of the Name.....	177
The Codification of the Mask .....	179
The Mask of Arlecchino .....	180
Tristano Martinelli (1557-1630) .....	181
Domenico Biancolelli (1636-88) .....	184
Evaristo Gherardi (1663-1701).....	187
Early Eighteenth Century Depictions .....	188



Goldoni, Sacchi, and Truffaldino.....	190
The Enlightenment, Physiognomy, and the Death of the Mask .....	192
Part 4: Arlecchino's Afterlife.....	194
The English Pantomime and the Harlequinade.....	194
Arlecchino Reborn: Marcello Moretti, Amleto Sartori, and Giorgio Strehler.....	197
Part 5: The Self through Masks, Shadows, and Technologies:.....	199
1. How do attitudes to the mask reflect the concept of Selfhood during the heyday of commedia? .....	199
2. What does the enduring popularity of Harlequin say about the nature of the Self, both individually and culturally? .....	203
3. What are the implications of the loss of the Mask for the modern Self? .....	209
Conclusion .....	211
The Death of the Mask and the Birth of 'Man' .....	211
The Trickster as Philosopher?.....	213
The Diagrammatic model .....	214
The Rebirth of the Mask .....	217
Chapter 8: The Neutral Mask.....	219
Part 1: The Neutral Mask: The Aesthetic and Practical Context.....	219
The Aesthetics of Neutrality: the Problem of Design, Gender and Ethnicity.....	220
The Mask in Action .....	222
Taking off the Mask.....	224
Part 2: The Philosophical Context .....	225
Neutrality and Emptiness.....	226
The Mask and Universality.....	228
The Mask and Gender.....	229
The Mask in Time.....	230
Conclusion .....	231
The Neutral Mask and the Hero Archetype .....	231

The Neutral Mask and the Analytic of Finitude .....	234
The Cosmic Impulse and the Mask as Hero .....	236
Concluding statement .....	239
The Diagrammatic Representation .....	239
‘Man’ as displacement of the Psychē.....	242
Mask, Thiasos, and the Creative Gaze.....	243
The Return of Masks.....	244
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	246

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1: Helene Weigel as Natasha Abashvili in Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Photograph by Thérèse le Prat. *Bertolt Brecht*.  
By Meg Mumford. p.123. Print.....124
- Figure 2: Quercia , Priamo della. 1442-50. *Torments of the Barterers*.  
Gilt and colour on paper. British Library. *Divina Commedia*.  
Dante Alighieri. Italy, N (Tuscany or Siena), c.1450. F.39v.  
Web. 16 April 2012.....178
- Figure 3: “Arlechin.” *Compositions de rhétorique de Mr Don Arlequin*.  
By Tristano Martinelli. Lyons, 1601. Page 6. Bibliothèque  
Nationale, Paris. *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique*. Web. 26 April 12.....179
- Figure 4: Photograph of 17th Century Arlecchino Mask and Matrix.  
Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra National de Paris, Archives.  
*Der Ursprung des Harlekin: Ein kulturgeschichtliches Problem*.  
By Otto Dreisen. p.173. Print.....180
- Figure 5: Sketch of the centrifugal ‘energy lines’ of Arlecchino’s mask.....180
- Figure 6: *Commedia dell’Arte à la cour de Charles IX*. 1572-77. Oil on  
Canvas. Musée Baron Gérard. *Arlecchino: Vita e avventure di  
Tristano Martinelli attore*. By Siro Ferrone. pp.28-29. Print.....181
- Figure 7: Coeure, Sebastien. *Dominique*. Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Hand  
coloured engraving. Harry Beard Collection. *V&A Search the  
Collections*. Web. 26 April 12. ....185
- Figure 8: Detail from Bonnart, Jean Baptiste. *Arlequin Protée, ou Aduocat d'vn  
Cler du Chastelet; contre le chien du Docteur*. 1684. Paris, Chez N.  
Bonnart. Bibliothèque nationale de France. *BnF Catalogue Général*.

- Web. 26 April 12.....186
- Figure 9: *Evariste Gherardi faisant le personnage d'Arlequin*. 1710. Paris, chez J. Mariette. Bibliothèque nationale de France. *BnF Catalogue Général*. Web. 26 April 12. ....187
- Figure 10: Bust portrait of actor Thomassin (Tomaso Visentini). 1750-90. Etching. British Museum. Web. 26 April 12.....188
- Figure 11: Watteau, Jean-Antoine. *Harlequin and Columbine*. 1716-18. Oil on oak panel. Wallace Collection. *WallaceCollection.org*. Web. 26 April 12.....189
- Figure 12: Rann on his trial before Judge Henry Fielding. 1828. *The Newgate Calendar*. Vol 4, p.14. *Exclassics.com*. Web. 26 April 12.....193
- Figure 13: Photograph of Harold Chapin's Harlequin mask. Pre-1911. V&A. V&A Theatre & Performance Enquiry Service. "Re: Pantomime Masks." Message to the author. 13 January 2012. E-mail attachment.....197
- Figure 14: "Arlecchino Gatto, mask by the Sartoris." 1980. The Amleto and Donato Sartori International Mask Museum, Abano Terme. *SartoriMaskMuseum.it*. Web. 26 April 2012.....198
- Figure 15: Photograph of a Scold's Bridle. London Science Museum. Web. 26 April 12.....200
- Figure 16: Xavery, G. J. "Harlequin is delivered of three boys, but only one survives." Eighteenth century. *The Marvellous Malady of Harlequin*. Plate IV. *The Italian Comedy*. By Pierre Louis Duchartre. pp.56-57. Print.....207
- Figure 17: Xavery, G. J. "Harlequin gives suck to the child. Mezzetin gives good counsel." Eighteenth century. *The Marvellous Malady of*

*Harlequin*. Plate V. *The Italian Comedy*. By Pierre Louis  
Duchartre. pp.56-57. Print.....207

Figure 18: Photograph of the neutral mask created by Amleto Sartori for  
Jacques Lecoq. *The Moving Body*. By Jacques Lecoq. p.39. Print.....220

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BGE</i>	Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
<i>BS</i>	Charles D. Laughlin, <i>Biogenetic Structuralism</i>
<i>BT</i>	Nietzsche, <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
<i>CPR</i>	Immanuel Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
<i>CW</i>	Carl G. Jung, <i>Collected Works</i> <sup>1</sup> (20 volumes)
<i>DA</i>	Aristotle, <i>On the Soul (De Anima)</i>
<i>DP</i>	Michel Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i>
<i>EE</i>	Aristotle, <i>Eudemian Ethics</i>
<i>EW</i>	Foucault, <i>The Essential Works of Foucault</i> (3 volumes)
<i>GM</i>	Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
<i>GS</i>	Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i>
<i>HAH</i>	Nietzsche, <i>Human, All too Human</i>
<i>HS</i>	Foucault, <i>Hermeneutics of the Subject</i>
<i>NE</i>	Aristotle, <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i>
<i>OT</i>	Foucault, <i>The Order of Things</i>
<i>PU</i>	Jung, <i>Psychology of the Unconscious</i>
<i>SEP</i>	Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<i>TI</i>	Nietzsche, <i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
<i>TSZ</i>	Nietzsche, <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i>
<i>UM</i>	Nietzsche, <i>Untimely Meditations</i>
<i>WP</i>	Nietzsche, <i>Will to Power</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Volume 9 of Jung's *Collected Works* is split into two parts, which will be referred to as 9a and 9b.

## INTRODUCTION

I have been teaching Theatre Studies and Performing Arts for eight years. As part of this teaching, I have found it immensely useful—for the students and myself alike—to experiment with mask work. One mask exercise, developed directly from Lecoq, which I have led with several groups of students is as follows: after a fairly extensive warm-up and introduction to the basics of the neutral mask, I ask my students to lie down in the space and wait for some music to begin. I ask them to wake up as though for the very first time—they have no past, no story, no prior awareness of themselves or others—and to respond intuitively to the music, the space, each other, and their own bodies, exploring this new environment in which they find themselves. This is one of my favourite exercises not only because it is a joy to watch, but because the students invariably experience something quite profound. This exercise is always followed by a discussion in which students relate their experience and their thoughts. What has struck me is that their experiences invariably fall into one of two categories. Those in the first category express a sense of freedom and liberation; they claim they are able to be pure, truthful and honest in their expression, to be their true selves. Those in the second claim a form of possession, as though the instincts and movements came from the mask, not from themselves, and actually claim to have ‘lost’ themselves in the mask (this group agree totally with the maxim *you do not wear the mask, the mask wears you*). Both categories of students agree on one thing: that the experience is profound and revelatory, often initially unnerving and given to provoking feelings with which they are not entirely comfortable—often those of intense aggression or deep sadness.

Some years later, those students who have stayed in touch still reference these explorations as a turning point, a moment when something about the nature of themselves and the nature of theatre was revealed to them, though none have been able to articulate exactly what that revelation was. I doubt such articulation is actually possible within the constraints of language, yet it can be read in the quality of their movements and the purity of their impulses during the exercise. They appear to connect with something primal and deeply personal, something inexpressible through words. This phenomenon is one that I wished to explore more deeply, and is the reason I undertook this exploration into the nature of selfhood and the mask.

### ***My Contribution***

Current researches into the *theatrical* mask (leaving aside the anthropological research into ritual masking) would seem to fall into two major categories: practical and historical. Some studies, such as David Wiles' *Mask and Performance: From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation* transcend both. Other studies, such as Peter Meineck's "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask" attempt to approach historical questions from a modern scientific perspective. What I have been unable to identify is any serious study that seeks to combine these approaches in a philosophical context. It is my hope that my contribution will help to open up the field of the theatrical mask to the realm of serious philosophical exploration, highlighting its potential as a cultural object and practice beyond the interests and professional curiosities of the theatre practitioner and/or historian as a phenomenon that reveals not only aspects of the individual self—an aspect exploited for therapeutic purposes by the likes of Sue Jennings—but that has an important part to play in the development of Western culture as a whole, and provides a unique historical and philosophical perspective on the development of that culture in which the self is embedded. I hope to develop a new and workable philosophical framework through which to explore mask history and practice in a more holistic yet rigorous way than is generally considered. Through this, I hope to be able to demonstrate the wider significance and potential of the mask, and as such to question and to challenge some of our current approaches to mask practice, particularly in relation to attempts at the historical revival of certain theatrical forms (most notably the *commedia dell'arte*).

### ***Methodology and Approach: Theatre, History and Philosophy***

The reason for adopting a philosophical approach needs explaining. To define theatre or to identify a singular purpose within it is impossible, and is not something I will attempt to do here. However, it is necessary to outline my own view on the matter, if for no other reason than to locate myself philosophically and intellectually within the debate. For me, theatre, at a fundamental level, seeks to question what it means to be human, what it means to live in a civilised society and what values are essential to that endeavour. It seeks a shared aesthetic, live experience through which to explore these questions on a mythic level. In this, I find the distinction between theatre and philosophy to be somewhat problematic, perhaps more aesthetic than essential, a phenomenon exemplified by works as diverse as Plato's Socratic dialogues and the Marquis de Sade's *Philosophy in the Boudoir*. It is natural to me to view the problem of selfhood and of theatrical practice as part of the same endeavour, and to view various historical moments and philosophical traditions through the lens of theatre.



As a consequence, my methodology will be to map out the wider historical and philosophical terrain in order to contextualise and analyse four significant moments in the history of the Western theatrical mask—three specific masks and the decline of the mask tradition—assessing major developments in the history of the self and exploring how the two are linked and what mutual illumination can be gained from this approach. As such, my historiographical methodology is distinctly Foucauldian, as will be explored in greater detail in chapter 4. The result has been to demonstrate the development of Western selfhood as the consequence of a series of ruptures resulting from significant religious, political and epistemic shifts in the status and the formulation of the individual, each rupture being accompanied by significant developments in the history of the theatrical mask that may be understood as compensatory in function.

### ***My Hypothesis***

Put simply, my central hypothesis is that the mask facilitates a union of opposites, specifically of self and other, in which the other can be said to be an essential aspect of the unconscious self. Moreover, these elements are archetypal in nature—aspects of the Jungian collective unconscious. Within the Jungian scheme, archetypes emerge at moments of imbalance, or crisis, in a compensatory role in order to redress that balance (explored in chapter 3). In Part II, I attempt to demonstrate this through the identification of three significant historical crises in the development of the self's relationship with the cosmos, particularly with the sphere of the divine, charting progress from polytheism to atheism via monotheism, that I suggest cumulatively result in the modern concept of the subject, the model for which is taken from Foucault's 'analytic of finitude' (chapter 4). It is my contention that these moments of historical rupture can be characterised as the epistemic rupturing of the phenomenal unity to be found in the mask, the final rupture in the production of modern 'man' coinciding with Nietzsche's 'death of god' and the disappearance of the mask in the Western theatrical tradition.

I will argue that by viewing both the self and the mask from this unique perspective, we may not only gain mutual illumination, but we may begin to get a sense of the potential power of the mask, which in turn may help to inform our approach to mask practice which, particularly with regards to the reinvention of the *commedia dell'arte*, misses the fundamental essence of the mask as a present, living, pan-temporal phenomenon that directly reflects the specific time and future-directed culture in which it is historically embedded, rather than existing as a historical curiosity. I will demonstrate that this culturally specific manifestation

is entirely consonant with Jungian archetypal theory and the concept of universality. I will argue, in these terms, that universality is too often misunderstood.

***The Structure:***

This study will be divided into two parts. Part I will address the historical problem of selfhood, taking a firmly chronological approach so far as possible, beginning with pre-Socratic Greece, and ending with modern neurological and scientific hypotheses.

Chapter 1 (*Autos*) will address the question of selfhood up to just prior to the birth of modernism from a somatic perspective, asking what insights may be gained from some of the key historical thinkers, beginning with Homer and ending with Hegel. I will address only those theories that contribute directly to the overall investigation, and as such, cannot be said to provide anything near to a comprehensive overview of the philosophy of selfhood. This chapter will address the developing notion of the self initially from the ancient Greek perspective, and then from the perspective of the Enlightenment. It will focus on the fluidity of identity, and will explore the paradoxes that arise when the prospect of an isolated, individual self as object is introduced by Kant. The concept of self-negation as a form of self-realisation will also be explored, and the prospect of a purely material self will be highlighted as inadequate proposition. Both this chapter and the next are intended to provide the historical and philosophical context for later discussions.

Chapter 2 (*Psychē*) will address the same period but from the perspective of the immaterial self, or soul. It will focus initially on the polytheistic Greeks, examining the problematic definition of the soul, and its relation to the body. I will then examine the implications of the radical shift from polytheism to monotheism, and the body-soul dualism that became a fundamental conflict at the heart of the self, culminating in the Cartesian body-mind dualism that continues to inform philosophical debate to this day. I will once more conclude with Hegel and dialecticism as an attempt to combat this essential dualism. Both this and the previous chapters will lead up to the introduction of Nietzsche and the birth of modernism.

Chapter 3 will change gear somewhat, focusing more specifically on two key theorists rather than continuing the more general survey of the previous chapters. It will begin with a substantial discussion of some of Nietzsche's key concepts, which will form an essential part of the overall philosophical position that I will take forward throughout the rest of this investigation. I will focus specifically on the concepts of the will to power and the *Übermensch*, as well as the fundamental Apollo-Dionysus dichotomy, which was to prove so

influential in twentieth century aesthetics as well as philosophy. In the second half of this chapter, I will focus on perhaps the greatest development in the subject of selfhood in the twentieth century, namely psychoanalysis. I will begin by outlining the key model of selfhood proposed by Freud, before proceeding to explore the thinking of his former friend and pupil, Carl Jung, in greater depth. I will argue that Jung's theories of archetypes and the collective unconscious, whilst often decried for their apparent 'mysticism,' continue to be validated by scientific developments. These key concepts will be presented as central to my thesis.

Chapter 4 will look at the postmodern era. Rather than explore the full spectrum of postmodern theories, I will concentrate on two key areas. Firstly, I will explore the thinking of Michel Foucault, who explores the nature of the subject from the perspective of language and epistemology, and who will provide the main historiographical methodology for Part II. I will also challenge some of the fundamental tenets of Foucauldian thought, particularly his apparent rejection of the unconscious and the prospect of universal human nature as proving inadequate when it comes to addressing some of the deeper questions of selfhood. Secondly, I will survey some relevant scientific and neurological developments that are essential to contextualising the modern understanding of the self. In particular, I will examine Charles Laughlin's hypothesis of biogenetic structuralism, which can be seen as the neurological equivalent to Jung's analytic psychology, and Thomas Metzinger's theory of the "No-Self," which will be shown to be philosophically concordant with Foucauldian constructivism. Finally, I will address the question of materiality in quantum terms, demonstrating the very concept of matter to be unstable, which poses new questions relating to the quantum self.

I will then conclude Part I with an overview of my own philosophical position, setting out the key propositions and the philosophical model I will take forward into Part II. I will argue that, despite their apparent incompatibility, the approaches of both Jung and Foucault (as intellectual descendants of Nietzsche) can be productively and effectively deployed in tandem to address key questions regarding selfhood: the dichotomy of *autos* and *psychē* of chapters 1 and 2 will be recast in the forms of Jung (*psychē*) and Foucault (*autos*).

Part II: Chapter 5 will introduce the mask, initially exploring it from the theoretical perspective of biogenetic structuralism and the researches of Charles Laughlin, introduced in the previous chapter, in order to highlight the key issues surrounding the mask, particularly in its ritual manifestation. I will place these key issues in the specifically Foucauldian context of the analytic of finitude in order to 'test-drive' and demonstrate how my hypothesis will work throughout the rest of the study. I will then move on to explore the theatrical mask from the

perspective of three key theatre practitioners, namely Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jacques Copeau, and Bertolt Brecht, in order to identify some modern uses of the mask, which has, I will show, been used to very different effects, and with varying degrees of success. Through this, I will show where there exists common ground between the ritual and the theatrical mask. I will conclude by explicating my central hypothesis in more depth within the context of the explorations so far.

Chapter 6 will explore the tragic mask of ancient Greece through the lens of Euripides' *Bacchae*, examining how a reading of the play might be influenced from the perspective of the mask. I will examine the play in the light of Jean-Pierre Vernant's hypothesis of the birth of the tragic consciousness as a result of the ambiguity of language in the formulation and interpretation of civic law. My aim will be to demonstrate that the mask can offer us an interesting perspective on this, and I will offer a diagrammatic representation of the Greek notion of selfhood and the subsequent tragic rupture, demonstrating how the mask provided a compensatory function—in accordance with archetypal theory—for the rupturing of Greek consciousness. This rupture will be argued to be between collective consciousness and the divine.

Chapter 7 will investigate the phenomenon of the commedia dell'arte, focusing particularly on the mask of Arlecchino. I will trace the developments of the mask through its life, death, and subsequent resurrection. This chapter will be the longest chapter given the time span covered, from the birth of Arlecchino to the death of the mask as theatrical convention. I will argue that the commedia dell'arte developed around another significant rupture, namely that between body and soul, culminating in the philosophical radical doubt of Descartes. I will argue that the specifically Christian context of this rupture is key: the mask of Arlecchino manifested the archetype of the Trickster, providing a focus on the body (which is the domain, at this juncture, of the Devil) in compensatory function in relation to the Christian rejection of the flesh. This chapter will then proceed to examine the decline of the convention of the theatrical mask in the context of the Enlightenment, locating the mask's demise at the same moment that Foucault posits the birth of modern 'man.'

Chapter 8 will look at the neutral mask, concentrating on the *masque neutre* of Jacques Lecoq, and will argue that this mask represents the archetypal Hero, a compensatory figure that signals transition from one phase of life to the next. I will explore how the mask, through specific practical exercises, seeks to reconnect the self with the body, impulse, and with the realm of the mythological, seeking union in the fragmented being of the postmodern self.

The conclusion will look at how the perspective of the mask provides us with a unique insight into the history of the phenomenon of selfhood, charting its development through significant moments in the history of both. I will argue that future mask practice ought to be informed by a deeper understanding of the philosophical implications and affective potential of the mask.

### ***Context and Omissions***

It is important to acknowledge that this thesis focuses exclusively on the Western concept of selfhood, and the traditions of Western theatre. It is also important to point out that the question(s) of gender have not been addressed, other than in relation to the neutral mask in chapter 8. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, the history of Western theatrical mask practice (and mask practice in general) is almost exclusively a male domain; secondly, the issue of gender is of secondary importance within the universalist theory I develop. Furthermore, the convention of using the masculine “he” to refer to “man” pervades all the writers whom I cite. I therefore deem it inelegant to qualify every occurrence of the masculine pronoun with an apologetic “*sic*,” and equally inelegant to suddenly shift to the feminine, or to the somewhat clumsy “s/he,” or “him/her,” when discussing these citations. I have attempted to remain gender-neutral at other times.

Finally, this thesis represents the base upon which I wish to build, a springboard into further study from the perspective of the mask in order to further develop my model, and to explore some important areas. The three main areas of interest for future study at this stage are the mask and gender, the mask and Buddhist philosophy, and the recent phenomenon of virtual masking via disembodied avatar representations. This historical investigation should therefore be viewed as the first step towards a much larger project of exploration and modification of the underlying model and assumptions. What I seek to ultimately achieve is a much larger corpus that explores a range of diverse human and cultural issues from the particular perspective of the mask, and to explore how the mask can engage with deeper philosophical and existential questions in a practical context beyond its more metaphorical usage.

CHAPTER 1: *AUTOS & SŌMA*

This chapter will run concurrently with the next, taking a dichotomous approach to the problem of selfhood. The word *autos* means both ‘self’ and ‘same,’ suggesting a level of identity with the self which, within the context of this chapter, refers more specifically to the material self, or body (*sōma*), that one may be identical to. This implies a level of unity that will be shown to be problematic. In this chapter, I will focus on the somatic, physical concept of the self, in contrast to the metaphysical idea of the soul, or *psychē*, which will be dealt with in the following chapter. In accordance with this dichotomous approach, I have identified four further key dichotomies that will provide the focus in my investigation into the question of self. They are as follows:

fixed	fluid
unified (or single)	fragmented (or plural)
active	passive
interior	exterior

I will not trace in detail each individual dichotomy throughout the history of human thought, but will instead identify their recurrence in some key theories in order to highlight their persistence. It is not my intention to provide a definitive or exhaustive account of the development of the history of the philosophy of selfhood. Rather, I aim to map out some of the most important developments in the field in order to establish a) the conceptual framework for my thesis, and b) the philosophical and historical context for my investigation into specific masks in Part II of this study.

This chapter will be split into two sections. The first will identify some important theories relating to ancient Greek thinking about the phenomenal, somatic self, looking at the concept of unity versus multiplicity in the fragmented *sōma*, or body, of pre-Socratic thought. I will then examine some of the key developments introduced by some important thinkers, most notably Plato, Aristotle and, much later, the ‘narrative self’ of Plutarch. It will be shown that the Heraclitean concept of flux provides a consistent and central feature of the developing concept of selfhood.

The second half will look at the self of modernity, beginning with the Enlightenment and the key figures of David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (considered by some to be the first “individual”) before moving on to look some important philosophical developments introduced by Immanuel Kant and identifying some important difficulties and inherent paradoxes within the dichotomous approach. I will conclude this chapter (and the next) by

looking at the dialectical approach of Hegel, which challenges the concept of *being* in favour of a continual process of *becoming*.

Whilst it is not my intention to construct a particular or definitive model of the self through this exploration, it is useful to begin with a working definition, which will be challenged in due course, in order to proceed. For this I will turn to Richard Sorabji's definition of the individual, which I will nominally equate with the self. In *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death*, Sorabji defines the individual as "something that *has* or *owns* psychological states as well as *having* or *owning* bodily states" (4). It should be noted that Sorabji excludes ideas of immaterial soul or essence from his definition and concentrates on the physical, visible entity, thus rendering his definition particularly apt to begin this chapter. 'Identity' will at this stage refer to *that which is owned*, the collection of bodily and mental faculties and psychological states of which the self is conscious, and through which it comes to know itself. 'Persona' will refer to the more identifiably external social roles which a person, consciously or otherwise, adopts depending upon social environment, and from which it acquires definition by others.

#### PART 1: THE ANCIENT GREEKS

This section will address the question of self from a predominantly materialist perspective. It will challenge the idea that the self is materially identifiable, demonstrating it to be governed by the key principle of flux, which in turn demands multiplicity and transcendence that defies physical definition or identification. Through exploring the notion of transcendence, I will show that the idea of a *no-self* is inextricably bound up with the idea of a self, and ask whether the ostensibly opposing concepts of self-realisation and self-negation are not in fact the same thing.

##### ***Unity in Multiplicity: The Fragmented Body***

We begin with the earliest documented writing that gives us serious insight into ancient Greek thought, namely the writings of Homer. From these it can be seen that the concepts of flux and multiplicity were already clearly established in literary terms, long before the discipline of philosophy was firmly established. The concept of mutability is addressed by Ruth Padel's *In and Out of Mind*, in which she describes the ancient Greek notion of the physical body as both mutable and permeable to a whole host of physical and metaphysical forces. On the physical level, Padel points out that in the fifth century BCE, the idea that consciousness was located in the brain was considered eccentric (12). In everyday life, the

self was thought to be located in the *splanchna*, or ‘guts’ (13), and that the heart was the centre of consciousness, both intellectual and emotional (19). The gods were evidenced in the innards, and could be witnessed by marks and divisions in the *splanchna* (17), so we encounter the idea of a fragmented being from a very early date. From the outset, we find multiplicity as “a core condition of consciousness” in Greek thought (18). Padel lists several viscera (the heart, itself in three parts: *kardia*, *kēr*, and *ētor*; the liver, or *hēpar*; the *phrenes*, etc.) which are in turn controlled by a series of emotive liquids (blood, *menos*, *thumos*, *cholos/cholē*): “Emotional and intellectual events are not merely describable in the same terms as physical movement: they *are* physical movement” (44). Pictorial evidence in support of the linguistic evidence for physical fragmentation of the self can be found in early vase paintings:

The most influential approach [to studying innards and their meaning] compared early vase-painting, whose human figures have limbs separated from trunk and no “middle part,” to both Homer’s multiple words for the body in its different aspects and Homer’s lack of a single word corresponding to our “body.” [...] What Homeric language has, abundantly, is “unity in multiplicity.” [...] The “unity in multiplicity” approach is useful in dealing with the further issue, not of “body” but of “self.” (Padel 44-45)

### ***The pre-Socratic Philosophers: Flux and Mutability***

One of the most important of the pre-Socratic philosophers was Heraclitus (c.535 – c.475BCE). Heraclitus is noted for his aphorisms regarding the fluid nature of things, which I will argue includes the self, and not just matter. The prospect that the self is in a continual state of flux is not new to Heraclitus. In fact, the idea seems to have been well known enough to be satirised early in the fifth century by Epicharmus. David Sedley, in “The Stoic Criterion of Identity,” reconstructs a scene from the fragments of Epicharmus in which two men discuss a debt. Character A states:

One man is growing, another is diminishing, and all are constantly in the process of change. But what by its nature changes and never stays put must already be different from what it has changed from. You and I are different today from who we were yesterday, and by the same argument we will be different again and never the same in the future. (255)

B agrees, and A concludes that he cannot therefore be the man who borrowed the money, hence the debt no longer exists. Here, by a neat *reductio ad absurdum*, we see this important



aspect of pre-Socratic thinking lampooned, an aspect that was likewise mocked by later thinkers, including Plato and Aristotle, who, as Daniel W. Graham points out, saw Heraclitus as violating the law of non-contradiction (*SEP*).

Amongst those who opposed Heraclitean mutability was Parmenides, forefather of the Eleatic school of thought. In Parmenides' poem, *On Nature* (or *On What Is*), he establishes the Eleatic position of a cosmos of absolute unity and immutability, claiming that this world of flux cannot be real (Warren 77-102). However, in denying its reality, he also acknowledges its existence, even if on an illusory level, and so Parmenides and the Eleatics are not able to deny flux from a phenomenological perspective, only to claim that the phenomenological perspective is an illusion. The atomists Leucippus and Democritus later attempted to reconcile the two positions by postulating immutable atoms that make up a mutable reality by means of spatial change whilst retaining material permanence (Warren 153-73, Sedley, "Atomism" 305-32).

Despite opposition, Graham argues that, for Heraclitus, paradox and the unity of opposites are logically demonstrated by concrete examples, such as "the road up and the road down being one and the same" (*hodos anō katō mia kai hotē*, B60). He says "Heraclitus is not merely concerned with the way things are, but with how humans react to the world. The shift of emphasis leads some to say that Heraclitus is primarily concerned with the human condition" ("Flux" 170). Whilst I will not make so bold a claim, it is my contention that the teachings of Heraclitus do have significant relevance to the nature of self and identity. Graham argues for a far greater stability within Heraclitus' fragments than many acknowledge. For example, concerning the 'River Fragments' (for example B12), he claims that Plato misread Heraclitus. Heraclitus did not say that one cannot step twice into the same *river*—rather one cannot step into the same *water*. The riverbed is the constant, whilst the water is in flux. Plato misses how Heraclitus "builds stability on a foundation of change" (174). An essential aspect of Heraclitus' teaching is the coexistence of flux and stability, just as the water and the river are conceptually enmeshed yet not exactly equivalent. Applied to the human analogously, we find such things as thoughts, emotions, desires and the spectrum of psychological and bodily states as the fluid running through the *relatively* stable bed of *autos*.

### ***Plato and Aristotle: Externality, Flux and Transcendence***

The locus of selfhood was not generally considered to be entirely contained within or defined by the physical body. It extended beyond the physical parameters of the body to include other

people and objects. For an example of this, I will first turn to Plato (c.423 – 348BCE). Plato highlights the important dichotomy of self and other in *Timaeus*, establishing a triadic model of the self, saying that the Creator mixed the individual from three facets: self, other, and essence, or *autos*, *heteros*, and *ousia* (35b).<sup>2</sup> He unifies self and other under the processual concept of being, or *ousia*, which is a blending of self and other (35a), an idea that would later be important to Hegel. Aristotle developed this idea further. In *Nichomachean Ethics*, he claims friends or loved ones (*philoî*) are second, or other, selves. He uses the words *heteroi autoi* (1161b25) and *allos autos* (1166a30), which shows the importance of both similarity and difference, whilst still under the salient concept of *autos*. This distinction is revealing for two reasons, firstly, because of the multiplicity of roles that the self-friend adopts (*allos* or *heteros*), and secondly because of the implications of the possible blending of identities. Sorabji interprets this by saying “Other persons may thus enter into one’s very identity, if we take identity in the sense in which a persona or a woven narrative gives one an identity” (Sorabji, *Self* 240). I would take this further and suggest that this blending of self with other lays the conceptual foundation for the phenomenon of deindividuation,<sup>3</sup> and suggests a fluidity of self that transcends somatic boundaries without venturing into the realms of the religious *psychē*. The inference is that, whilst no two physical objects may occupy the same spatio-temporal location, there is an element of self that is not quite so locally bound, or at least elements which may commingle like liquid in a way that the solid matter of body cannot.

### ***Synaisthēsis***

In *Eudemian Ethics* (7.1245b21-24), Aristotle goes further and addresses the blending of identities through shared perception:

For if it is possible to live with and share the perceptions [*synaisthanesthai*] of many at once, it is most desirable for them to be the largest possible number; but as that is very difficult, active community of perception [*synaisthēseōs*] must of necessity be in a smaller circle.

This sharing of experience with as many people as possible was, in ancient Athens, perhaps most evident at the City Dionysia and the tragedies that Aristotle found so compelling. However, Aristotle’s interest in this is textual and structural rather than the experience of the

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<sup>2</sup> Liddell and Scott give the definition of *ousia* as one’s being, state or condition.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of losing one’s sense of individual identity, which will come to be an important concept later; see p.54 below.

performance event,<sup>4</sup> and this is perhaps symptomatic of a deeper issue. I would suggest that Aristotle missed out on the deindividuated *synaisthēsis* that he regarded so highly due to the very nature of the role of the philosopher: the continual introspection and self-awareness required of the philosopher is in many ways an isolating experience, one that must have set him apart from the *hoi polloi* insofar as his requisite analytical predisposition precluded full immersion into the deindividuated mass; the very act of analysing blinded him to the very experience of tragic *synaisthēsis* he sought to analyse.

***Plutarch (c.46 – 120AD): the Narrative Self***

For the last aspect I wish to highlight, we travel forwards almost 400 years to Plutarch, who was to lend an important component to the prospect of stability of self: narrative. Sorabji interprets 473B-474B of *On Tranquillity* as the need to construct a coherent narrative framework in order to achieve any sense of tranquillity (Sorabji, *Self* 43), and to make sense of I/Time, or the concept of “*me and me again*” (4), which prefigures John Locke’s assertion that personal identity is dependent on memory (6).<sup>5</sup> It would appear that this I/Time constant provides a conceptual stability to the Heraclitean sense of flux. Sorabji’s interpretation is informed by Plutarch’s biographical *Lives*, which are notable for various reasons, not least of which is the selection of events Plutarch chose to relate:

For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall [...]. (Plutarch, “Alexander” 1.2)

Furthermore, as well as seeing the person within minutiae as well as more ‘illustrious’ deeds, Plutarch also shows a tendency to write not isolated lives, but comparisons, suggesting that not only is narrative essential to the ‘tranquillity’ of identity, as Sorabji claims, but that narrative identity is relative. Whilst the concept of narrative, or I/Time, stabilises identity, the concept of relativity simultaneously destabilises it, opening the door to an almost perspectivist account; identity becomes inevitably mutable depending on its environment. This implies that the self-as-narrative is dependent on context.

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<sup>4</sup> See Aristotle’s *Poetics* 4.

<sup>5</sup> For a fuller account, see Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), particularly the chapter entitled “Identity and Diversity.” In this chapter, Locke identifies memory as the constant whilst acknowledging the possible flux of materiality. For an argument against the identity of memory and self, see Thomas Reid’s *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785) and the example of the ‘Brave Officer,’ pp. 248-53.

It is with this sketch of the *autos* of antiquity in mind that we now move on to an altogether different historical age, namely the Enlightenment, and the question of subjectivity.

## PART 2: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment might be viewed as an attempt to demystify the world and to approach it with scientific logic and reasoning, rejecting mystical and metaphysical presumptions and looking instead at what can be proven empirically. This new emphasis on scientific methodology was to have an enormous impact on the way the self was viewed in relation to the cosmos, not only because it destabilised the religious cosmos (see chapter 2), but also because it puts at the heart of the philosophical endeavour the question of what, and how, it is possible to know. Our first port of call is David Hume.

### *David Hume (1711 – 76) and the Empirical Self*

This quest for certainty, reason, an understanding of the means by which we acquire knowledge, and what it is truly possible to know, sparked interest in the *subjective* nature of knowledge in relation to experience. Perhaps the greatest proponent of this subjective empiricism, with its absolute rejection of metaphysics, was David Hume, considered to be a major forerunner to cognitive psychology (Singh 37-50). Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* (1740) aimed to establish a psychological basis for knowledge and scientific enquiry rather than waste time with external or metaphysical speculation. Hume, reminiscent of Heraclitus, rejected the idea of the self as a fixed, single entity, suggesting instead a "bundle [...] of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (252), and which we rationalise as a self. Furthermore, "nor is there any single power of the soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment" (253). He claims we must invent "the notion of a *soul*, and *self*; and *substance*, to disguise the variation" (254), and points to the memory as the chief source of our illusory sense of a continued self. For Hume, there is no such thing as a soul that continues after death; the death of perceptions is annihilation (252). As such, given that *perception* is our entire existence, as opposed to Descartes' *thought* (see pp.48-50 below) which, for Hume, is merely another perception, all knowledge must be empirical, which means the experiencing subject, and the means of that experience, constitutes the more fit and proper area for philosophic investigation.

### ***Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) and Individualism***

Following on from the subjective emphasis of Hume came what we might call the first individualist, Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's ideas were both atomistic and communitarian, arguing for an autonomous, entirely subjective self. Huck Gutman summarises: "He is perhaps the first human being to insist on his own singularity. 'My mind,' he says [in *Confessions*], 'needs to go forward in its own time, it cannot submit itself to anyone else's. [...] For I knew that my experience did not apply to others'" (100). Here we see the phenomenon of individualism truly beginning, yet importantly contained within the ethical framework of communitarian duty and the social contract.

Rousseau also subscribed to something like the idea of the noble savage, though not, it must be noted, in a primitivist way. *The Social Contract, or the Principles of Political Right* (1762) points out the need for laws and civil responsibility to create a civilised man. For Rousseau, civic duty comes above all else. David Wiles points out that Rousseau saw Paris as a "society of masks" (*Citizenship* 121), a world away from the nobility of the natural savage, whose fall from egalitarian grace is a direct result of "the desire to be seen" (115), to be seen as *better than* rather than *equal to*. Thus the competitive aspect of man and all ensuing development is linked directly to the gaze: to be seen as "best singer, best speaker, most beautiful or most skilled" (*ibid.*), which implies the desire to be desirable, to be desired. In contrast, the simple honesty of the individual operating entirely for the benefit of the community is prized above all within Rousseau's ideal, in which exposure and transparency of self are equated with honesty. Rousseau's *Confessions*, according to Gutman, "consists in total exposure, and [...] its revelations are to be subjected to an external (and judging) gaze" (106). Thus the self of Rousseauist individualism exists in and for the community, and its confessional exposure to that community forms a central part of its communitarian duty. Hence, despite Gutman's assertions about Rousseau's individualism, the *ethical* individual does not yet exist apart from the community.

### ***Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804): the Empirical versus the Transcendental***

Immanuel Kant attempted to reconcile the predominant schools of thought of Rationalism (Descartes, see pp.48-50 below) and Empiricism (Hume). Kant takes up an almost Heraclitean view when he says, in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781):

Even if the saying of some ancient schools, that everything is transitory and nothing in the world is persisting and abiding, cannot hold as soon as one assumes substances, it is still not refuted through the unity of self-consciousness. For we cannot judge even

from our own consciousness whether as soul we are persisting or not, because we ascribe to our identical Self only that of which we are conscious; and so we must necessarily judge that we are the very same in the whole of the time of which we are conscious. But from the standpoint of someone else we cannot declare this to be valid because, since in the soul we encounter no persisting appearance other than the representation “I,” which accompanies and connects all of them, we can never make out whether this I (a mere thought) does not flow as well as all the other thoughts that are linked to one another through it. (A364)

Kant therefore argues for a physical consistency, but that consciousness cannot be said to be genuinely consistent with itself beyond the sense of “I” and the phenomenon of subjectivity, thus the sense of self is something metaphysical, “a mere thought.” Kant takes Hume’s bundle of perceptions, but rejects the perpetual flux with no unifying centre and argues for ‘transcendental apperception,’ which is the phenomenon that binds the experiences of self and world together and makes the “I,” as a *representation*, possible, which is a unity that enables continuity and judgement:

Now no cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name transcendental apperception. (*CPR* A107)

In Heraclitean terms, cognitions form the water, whereas transcendental apperception (that which allows our perception to transcend different individual moments into a unity of space and time [A 368]) forms the riverbed. Another implication of Kant’s reasoning is the continuing fragmentation of the self: implicit within apperceptive consistency and empirical fluidity is the body/mind dualism that permeates much of western thinking. The splitting of things up into transcendent *noumena* (unknowable things in themselves) and phenomena (things as they appear to the senses) on the one hand favours subjectivity, but on the other hand renders it impossible to truly know anything, which echoes the earlier criticisms of Heraclitus. Moreover, our knowledge of ourselves falls into the category of our knowledge of representations of objects—phenomenal self-knowledge necessitates the objectification of the self-as-representation.

The splitting of human consciousness into the intellect and the senses again fragments the unknowable whole, and serves to undermine the concept of a ‘self’ in favour of the even less tangible concept of subjectivity, the “I.” Once we view the self not only as a subject, but one that can perceive of itself as an object—and objects are known to the mind only by

means of representation (A104-5)—again the materiality of self appears more nebulous than it first appears. In terms of the locus of that subjectivity, its dependence upon unverifiable phenomenological experience renders it likewise more difficult to anchor: ‘Man’ is both transcendental subject and empirical object, what Foucault will later call the “empirico-transcendental doublet” (*OT* 319, see p.79 below).

***Hegel (1770 – 1831): The Dialectic of Self and Other***

Following on from Kant, Hegel also addressed the question of self and consciousness, and stressed the importance of recognition of who we are as distinct from others in order to achieve any meaningful sense of self-consciousness: “Self-consciousness exists *in and for itself* because and by way of its existing in and for itself for another; i.e., it exists only as a recognized being.” (Hegel, *Phen.* §178). The self, for Hegel, exists necessarily within a community, and as such the other is essential to the self. In the preface to *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Hegel states that “the nature of humanity is to drive men to agreement with one another, and humanity’s existence lies only in the commonality of consciousness that has been brought about” (§69). The ‘commonality of consciousness’ has Aristotelian overtones of ‘community of perception’ or *synaisthēsis* (*EE* 7.1245b21-24), and Hegel goes further by imagining a universality of consciousness, with pre-echoes of Jung. Redding summarises:

[R]ather than [consciousness] being immediate and singular, its contents must have some implicit universal (conceptual) aspect to them. Consciousness thus now commences anew with its new implicit criterion—the assumption that since the contents of consciousness are “universal” they must be publicly graspable by others as well. (Redding)

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Hegel for this study is the notion of the dialectic structure or process, and this is something he recognises in Heraclitus as the father of philosophy; he goes so far as to assert: “there is no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my Logic” (*Lectures* 279). It is from Hegel’s interpretation of Heraclitean flux that we get a distinct structure to the concept of human progress: “the [dialectic] process [of perceiving and understanding] reveals something about the nature of *all* such objects of consciousness—the fact that they *necessarily* change into something other than themselves” (Redding). Here, the notion of necessity suggests a distinctly teleological aspect to Hegelian dialecticism.

Hegel’s dialectic approach can be seen in particularly Heraclitean terms in *The Science of Logic* in Hegel’s unification of *being* and *nothingness*. “Being, the indeterminate

immediate, is in fact nothing, and neither more nor less than nothing” (§132), and “Nothing is, therefore, the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as, pure being” (§133). The ‘sublation’<sup>6</sup> of *becoming* must therefore mediate between the two static abstractions in order to give them existence (§180-83), thus the Heraclitean paradox is unified by motion. The implications of this go further, and the dialectic process of *becoming* is what defines conscious existence and offers unity, which Hegel applies not only to the process of thought and consciousness, but to human history. Though it is not accurate to attribute the classic ‘Hegelian’ dialectic of “thesis, antithesis, synthesis” directly to Hegel in terms of terminology,<sup>7</sup> the model is to be found within both *Phenomenology* and *Logic*, and so the classic model and terminology will be employed. A key factor of the dialectic process is that it is by definition in a permanent state of flux: the first principle identified within the teachings of Heraclitus by Hegel is that of *dialectic* flux, and he sees Heraclitus as the one who recognised the fundamental dialectics of *being* and *nothingness* as the opposites in the process of *becoming* (*Lectures* 279). The Aristotelian concept of the ‘prime mover,’ identified in *Metaphysics* as energy, suggests the first cause or principle as being that which causes motion, and motion implies flux. Even the atomists Leucippus and Democritus, arguing for Parmenidean constancy, had to acknowledge spatial flux, even if the materiality of atoms remained constant (see p.25 above). It seems that the principle of flux is, thus far, the first principle.

### ***Concluding remarks: The Self and the Loss of Self***

The porous *autos* of pre-Socratic Greece is one that was not considered to be self-contained. Rather, it was part of a cosmic order that penetrated and influenced it in ways that rendered the prospect of autonomy inconceivable. The self, in the Platonist and Aristotelian schemes, is likewise not an isolated being but a mixture of self and other. The concept of the blurring of boundaries between self and other also extended to physical objects as well as distinct, living consciousnesses. In *Eudemian Ethics* (7.1241b15-25), Aristotle claims:

But since the relations of soul and body, craftsman and tool, and master and slave are similar, between the two terms of each of these pairs there is no partnership; for they are not two, but the former is one and the latter a part of that one, not one itself; nor is

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<sup>6</sup> Or *aufhebung*, which can be described as the heart of dialecticism—it simultaneously means to preserve and to cancel, it suggests continuity through change, e.g. the concepts of both *being* and *nothing* are preserved and changed through the *sublation* of becoming.

<sup>7</sup> Hegel preferred such terms as ‘abstract, negative, concrete’ in *Phenomenology*, or ‘immediate, mediate, concrete’ in *Logic* (Redding, ‘Hegel’), amongst various other triadic, dialectic models. The structure of *Phenomenology* also follows the triadic model, which appears to be deeply engrained in Hegel’s thinking.



the good divisible between them, but that of both belongs to the one for whose sake they exist.

The locus—or rather limits—of self extends beyond the skin and includes objects as well as *philoï*. We can thus identify three clear phenomena emerging in terms of the blending of self and other: 1) the merging of self with object, 2) the merging of self with *philoï*, and 3) the co-perception, or *synaisthēsis*, of groups. Hegel likewise suggests the blurring of distinctions in the dialectic model of self-other. Conversely, the solitary self as *object*, in the Kantian scheme, would seem to pose something of a problem, a barrier to the world and one's engagement with it.

It is apparent that such concepts of flux and the blending of identities, even loss of identity, relate to higher, or at least desirable, states of being—Aristotle describes the phenomenon of *synaisthēsis* as an extremely desirable state, and the greater the number of co-perceivers (which equates to the greatest diminution of the relative self), the better. Around five hundred years after Aristotle, Plotinus observed that a certain loss of self occurs when engaged in activities such as reading whereby self-awareness can actually impede these activities (Sorabji, *Self* 241). The concept of 'losing oneself' in engaging tasks suggests that the self is an obstacle to happiness. The inference is that the self may be something to be negated in order to achieve the *eudaimonia*<sup>8</sup> of self-realisation. In other words, self-realisation may be equivalent to self-negation. We are left with the question: *Does the material self actually exist in a meaningful form, or does the phenomenon of subjectivity create the illusion of a self?* It is to the prospect of an immaterial self that I now turn.

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<sup>8</sup> Human flourishing and ideal self-fulfilment beyond the pleasures of the senses, see Daniel N. Robinson's *Aristotle's Psychology*, p.90.

## CHAPTER 2: *AUTOS*, *PSYCHĒ* AND THE DIMINISHING THEOSPHERE

This chapter will address the question of the soul, and will develop the concepts of immateriality and transcendence further. It will also demonstrate how questions of substance and divinity of soul develop the concept of multiplicity. Part 1 will explore the literary evidence of through Homer, then address the philosophical ideas of Pythagoras, Empedocles and, importantly, Plato and Aristotle and the emergence of the concept of agency, precursor to the will. Part 2 examines the implications of the shift from polytheism to monotheism on the developing concept of soul and perception of identity, and show how existing theories were transmuted from one theosphere to the other, and the theological implications of this will be interrogated. Part 3 will view the dualism of Descartes as a continuation of the Socratic tradition, arguing that the real contribution made by Descartes was methodological rather than substantive. It will be argued that the theological shift to monotheism, and its manifestation in the Spanish and Roman Inquisitions, was one that accelerated the march towards individualism and an increasingly isolated and dissimulative self. Finally, I will look at how the key philosophical questions of self and soul were addressed by Hegel, who attempted to combat Cartesian dualism in the formation of the self.

Like the previous chapter, this chapter will end with Hegel. It will be argued that Christian theological attempts to assimilate and unify existing philosophical questions failed on philosophical grounds, giving way under the pressures of inherent contradictions and paradoxes that arose from attempting to transpose polytheistic philosophy into a monotheistic theology, setting the stage for Nietzsche and his specifically anti-Hegelian, anti-Christian philosophical revolution in the following chapter.

### PART 1: THE SOUL AND POLYTHEISM

The first access we have to the Greek perception of the soul is through the writings of Homer. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus meets, amongst others, the *psychē* (soul or ghost) of his dead mother (*Od.* 11.84), as well as the *eidōlon* (phantom or shade) of Heracles (11.602), whose *autos* is with the immortal Gods. Sorabji points out that “Plutarch of Chaeroneia and Plotinus both identify Heracles’ shade with his soul” while his *autos* is associated “with the more divine soul” (Sorabji, *Self* 101). This complicates the matter of the soul in terms of what it is and how many forms it may take. N. J. Richardson identifies within Homer’s depiction of Hades and the soul a precursor to the Christian concept of life after death (60). He also claims that it was in the sixth century that the concept of the divine origin of the soul became

commonplace, especially amongst the followers of Pythagoras and the legendary Orpheus. Orphism professes original ontological divinity of the *psychē* whilst the body was descended from the Titans (Hillar 2). This duality is fundamental, combining the divinity of the *psychē* and the potential evil of the *sarx* (flesh), which would later become an important tenet of Christian theology.

Hendrik Lorenz, in “Ancient Theories of the Soul,” claims that the Homeric soul is spoken of only in relation to death, but by the sixth and fifth centuries, this exclusive association had been lost. By the fifth century, the common adjective for being “alive” was *empsychos*: the *psychē* was that which gave life to the body, strongly linked with the ideas of *kinesis* (motion) and, importantly, *pneuma* (breath), reflecting the popular idea that life was given to man by the breath of God (cf. *Genesis* 2:7; Aristotle also equated the soul with the principle of movement [*Met.* 9.1046b]).

Ruth Padel explores various representations and associations of the *psychē*, including breath, *thumos*, blood, and sometimes simply ‘life’ (30-31). It also means ‘ghost’ or ‘spirit;’ it flies after death. *Nous*—the intellect or mind—is more commonly associated with the divine than is the *psychē*; the divine and the immortal are not necessarily equivalent (33). A key factor in rendering a singular definition impossible is that there did not exist a single, unifying theology or religious doctrine, such as Christianity would later attempt to create. William Allan, in his article “Religious Syncretism: The New Gods of Greek Tragedy,” paints a picture of a Greek theosphere in constant flux, consciously accepting, assimilating, inventing and transforming gods, old and new, on a regular basis, one of the words for which was *synoikeiōsis* (117). The result was that the “religious universe” of every Greek *polis* was in perpetual flux (118). Each individual divinity was associated with a different area of human experience, and they each had a variety of names and appearances (Padel 7). Allan identifies Tragedy as a major syncretising force (133), and uses the example of Dionysus as an archetypal ‘new’ god, detailing his characteristically paradoxical status as both newcomer and established god. If we take a lead from the literary and Orphic traditions, the paradoxical characteristics of Dionysus render the Dionysiac soul itself definitively paradoxical, host to a multiplicity of meanings.

### ***Defying Locus: The Transcendental Soul***

From a philosophical perspective, the most significant feature of the *psychē* is the potential for transcendence. As early as Pythagoras, the soul was thought to outlive the body and transmigrate, an idea to be found in the thought of Empedocles and Plato (*Phaedrus* 249b).

Empedocles (fr.17) suggests that the soul may in fact maybe a ‘long lived’ *daimōn*, roaming the cosmos in search of a return to ideal *Love* amongst the gods, which Warren interprets as an “ideal state” in which “all individuality is extinguished” (149), suggesting once more the possibility that self-realisation is self-negation. Empedocles warns against eating meat based on the prospect of the transmigratory soul, and in a scene highly suggestive of Agave’s Dionysiac *sparagmos* of Pentheus in *The Bacchae*, says:

A father, lifting his own beloved son—now changed in form—sacrifices him with a prayer, the great fool. They have no idea, sacrificing him as he begs. But the father cannot hear the shouts and, sacrificing in his home, prepared a terrible meal. In just this way a son takes his father, children take their mother and, stealing away their life, they scoff their own dear flesh. (DK 31 B137, qtd. in Warren, p.150)

There are two major implications: firstly that meat-eating may be a form of spiritual cannibalism, and secondly that our true selves may be hidden not only from each other, but from ourselves. If the body is a vehicle for a transmigratory, mutable *psychē* or *daimōn*, this ‘ghost in the machine’ style existence renders the body a mask, outward appearance, or *prosōpon*, of the *daimōn* or *psychē*. The idea of the inner *daimōn* is important in that it refers to interior existence as opposed to external, setting the stage for the ‘inner man,’ which is a concept more traditionally associated with Plato (*Rep.* 9.589a), and would later become a central feature of Christian doctrine and the Pauline opposition between the inner (*esō*) and outer (*exō*) man (*King James Bible*, 2 Corinthians 4:16; see p.42-44 below). Of course, others rejected the idea of metempsychosis, as Xenophanes’ lampoon demonstrates,<sup>9</sup> and this highlights an important aspect of Greek consciousness: there was no single, dominating religion or dictum on the nature of the soul. Rather there was a multiplicity of ideas, gods and religious/cultic practices. The most significant aspect of the Greek perception of the self and its relationship with the cosmos is that of fluid, polytheistic—hence multiple—perspectives at its heart.

### ***The Soul and the State: Transcendence, Unity in Multiplicity, and the Will***

#### *Socrates and Plato*

For Socrates, the difference between the body and the soul was fundamental. In Plato’s *Phaedo*, Socrates states that “the soul of the philosopher greatly despises the body” (65d) because “pure knowledge is impossible while the body is with us” (66e). However, whilst it

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<sup>9</sup> See Xenophanes DK21 B7 for a satirical account of Pythagoras: “Once, when he came across a puppy being whipped, they say he took pity on it and spoke as follows: ‘Stop beating it, because it is the soul of a friend of mine. I recognised it shouting’” (qtd. in Warren 38).

appears to be Socrates who was the first to specifically advise of the importance of taking care of the soul (Plato, *Apology* 29d ff.), it is Plato who provides the first full exposition. For Plato, the *psychē* is immortal,<sup>10</sup> and in *Phaedrus* we find the concept of the tripartite *psychē* given through the metaphor of the chariot (246e ff.). Plato divides the *psychē* into three specific parts: *logos*, *thumos*, and *erōs*, corresponding to the intellect, the spirited, and the appetitive, demonstrating the conflict of the inner man as he saw it. It is the strength of the *logos*, or *nous*—which Plato was the first to associate with the head (Wiles, *Mask* 272)—that determines the balance (or virtue) of the individual.

The tripartite soul finds its analogue in the *Republic*, which raises another interesting point. Plato sets up the model of the ideal *polis* and the model of the *psychē* as mutually reflexive: the self and the society in which it lives are analogous. Socrates, in Plato's *Republic* (books II-IV) makes a comparison between the human soul and the ideal republic, or Kallipolis<sup>11</sup> (7.527c), which is not democratic: the utopian Kallipolis is run instead by “philosopher kings” (5.473d; see also book VI). The dialogue springs from a discussion of justice versus injustice, and Socrates argues that, in a just city, the citizens must themselves be just, which is achieved by means of correct education and training. The ideal state, as a reflection of the human soul, is exemplified by the virtues of wisdom (*sophia*, 4.428b-e), courage (*andria*, 4.429a-430c), and moderation (*sōphrosunē*, 4.430d-432a), corresponding with *logos*, *thumos*, *erōs* respectively. These would be realised by the structuring of the state into three corresponding classes—rulers, warriors, and producers—the result of which would be, naturally, justice (*dikaiosunē*, 4.433a-b).<sup>12</sup> This leads to an interesting ontological question of civic identity: to what extent can the identity of the individual be said to be distinguishable from the identity of the community if both are mutually reflexive? Furthermore, if the laws of the *polis* are widely considered to be equivalent with the laws of the gods, there must likewise be a reflexivity between the *polis* and the divine.<sup>13</sup>

### *Aristotle*

Leading on from this notion of shared identity and reflexivity, Aristotle goes further than to say *philos allos autos* (p.26 above), and says that both *philos* and *autos* exist as part of a single soul, or *mia psychē* (NE 1168b5), and that the one consists of many ([*he*] *esti duo ē*

<sup>10</sup> *psychē para athanatos* (*Phaedrus* 245c)

<sup>11</sup> From *kallos*, meaning beauty, and *polis*, meaning city.

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle would likewise describe the *polis* and the body in analogous terms, describing the heart as both the “hearth” and the “acropolis” of the body (*Parts of Animals*, iii.7-670a; cf. Wiles, *Tragedy* p.76).

<sup>13</sup> For more on the legal aspect, see Edward Monroe Harris' *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens*, pp.51-52.

*pleiō*).<sup>14</sup> This has clear ramifications on the prospect of individual identity. These comments seem to contradict his thoughts in *On the Soul*, in which the soul and the body are virtually identical:<sup>15</sup> the soul is the form and the body is the substance (*DA* II, 1.249a19-b15; cf. *Metaphysics* 6.1026a), which appears to negate the concept of transcendence. However, his citing of the proverbial ‘*mia psychē*’ suggests a transcendent, collective soul; transcendence is a prerequisite for *philos allos autos*. Furthermore, Aristotle’s switching emphases between *heteros* and *allos autos* suggests the importance of difference as well as similarity, in which the multiplicity of roles played by both *philoī* and *autos* are integral to the identity of the *mia psychē*. Moreover, Aristotle says man’s intellect, or *nous*, is the highest element and is connected to god<sup>16</sup> (*EE* 1248a24-29), and that “[*nous*] alone is immortal and eternal” (*DA* III, 5.430a). The linking of the soul with the mind removes the intellect from the physical and places it in the realms of the divine.

### ***The Law and the Emergence of Will***

The question of agency, or free will, has thus far not been addressed as it was not a concept familiar to the Greeks; Jean-Pierre Vernant points out that there is no vocabulary in ancient Greece to cover the concept of willing (46). The concept begins to emerge with the development of the law courts in classifying crime, whereby the level of culpability one has for one’s actions becomes subject to legal scrutiny. Generally speaking, there is no concept of an evil person—the religious view considers the evil of crime to be outside the person, and the person who commits the crime is its victim, carried away by external forces. Within this framework, Vernant concludes, there is no question of individual will (63). However, with the advent of the law courts, the question of intention becomes of central importance, and the opposing categories of *hekōn* and *akōn* come to the fore. *Hekōn* refers to an action committed of one’s own volition (later to be replaced by *pronoia*), whereas *akōn* refers to an action done despite oneself. *Pronoia* is a mode of knowledge, which infers premeditation. However, this does not imply an evil will, but the full knowledge of the situation (64). As the language shifted, the opposing categories became those of *eidōs*, to have committed the crime knowingly, and *agnoia*, to have committed it in ignorance. By Aristotle’s time, this had evolved into three categories: *akousion*, which is the unintentional crime, *adikēma*, the intentional crime, and *atuchēma*, the unforeseeable accident that has nothing to do with the question of knowledge or intent. Vernant asserts that within these categories of intent, the

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Euripides’ *Orestes*, in which Electra refers to her brother as her “partner in one soul” (1045).

<sup>15</sup> *he psychē ta onta pōs estin* (*DA* 8.431b21)

<sup>16</sup> For an account of God (or Mind) as “Prime Mover”, see *Metaphysics*, esp. book 7.

concept of ignorance is central, and the genuine question of free will does not arise. For example, if one were to commit a crime knowingly, it is presumed that this intent must be born of ignorance—ignorance either *causes* the crime, in the case of *adikēma*, or mitigates it, in the case of *akousion* (65). However, this concept of ignorance is itself not an excuse.

Aristotle explains:

Indeed the fact that an offence was committed in ignorance is itself made a ground for punishment, in cases where the offender is held to be responsible for his ignorance; for instance, the penalty is doubled if the offender was drunk, because the origin of the offence was in the man himself, as he might have avoided getting drunk, which was the cause of his not knowing what he was doing. (*NE* 1113b8)

Aristotle felt that man was essentially “originator and begetter of his actions as he is of his children” (*NE* 1113b5). However, he also recognises:

our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding activities. Hence it is incumbent on us to control the character of our activities, since on the quality of these depends the quality of our dispositions. It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme, importance. (*NE* 1103b7-8)

Here there is an interesting circularity in that a) character, or *ēthos*, is formed by action, and b) actions form character. As such, the early formation of character is the result of external chance, thus the amount of control or responsibility one may be said to have for one’s own character, hence actions, is significantly limited. Moreover, as Vernant points out, the question of culpability remains firmly to do with knowing what one is doing. So whilst we see the emergence of the *prospect* of the will, the category of the will “as a category based on purely internal conditions of action” still has no place within the Greek psychological or philosophical framework (69). The concept of free will, as will be seen, will become a central tenet of Christian doctrine, again related to the concept of culpability, but for now it remains absent as a specific category, with the emphasis being on knowledge and choice.

### ***Aristotle: The Will and Causality***

Related to the concept of will is that of causality—whence do actions and objects come? Aristotle was concerned with this in the great ‘chain of being,’ originating in a necessary ‘prime mover.’ He identifies four causes:

1. The material cause: “that out of which”, e.g., the bronze of a statue.

2. The formal cause: “the form”, “the account of what-it-is-to-be”, e.g., the shape of a statue.
3. The efficient cause: “the primary source of the change or rest”, e.g., the artisan, the art of bronze-casting the statue, the man who gives advice, the father of the child.
4. The final cause: “the end, that for the sake of which a thing is done”, e.g., health is the end of walking, losing weight, purging, drugs, and surgical tools. (Falcon)

What is significant about this is that causality dismisses the prospect of an intervening will. Even in the efficient case, the artisan is not the origin, for Aristotle claims that the knowledge of how to cast a statue is the primary source, thus once again placing *knowledge*, not *will*, at the heart of action (*Phys.* 195b21–25). Equally significant is the teleological presumption of a final cause. So we have a substance, a form, a primary cause and a final cause. This analogy is applied to nature, and in the creation of nature, or a human being, the same rules apply, thus necessitating a prime mover. Recalling Aristotle’s notion of the soul as the form (*DA II*, 1.249a19-b15), and applying the causal model, we can now see the self as composed of the first two causes, substance (*ousia*) and form (*eidos*), and located between two temporal causes, originary (*genesis*) and final (*telos*). This model was later taken up by Thomas Aquinas<sup>17</sup> who was to inject into the Aristotelian model the noticeably absent feature of free will (see p.43 below). Free will was unnecessary within the Greek, polytheistic episteme, and whilst we see the emergence of the question of agency into the field of ethics (or perhaps it is more accurate to suggest that the question of ethics necessitates the question of agency), the will itself, as a distinct philosophical category, still does not exist. It was not until the Church Fathers of Catholicism that the question of the will as its own force would develop into its own distinct category for moral investigation, stemming from the theological question of the origin of evil and the unquestionable justice and goodness of divine retribution. God is the originator of all, yet must simultaneously not be the originator of evil.

## PART 2: FROM POLYTHEISM TO MONOTHEISM

### ***Theological Fragmentation: Divinity and Corruptibility***

Early Christian scholars and philosophers attempted to transpose the philosophical thinking of their polytheistic predecessors into the new, monotheistic theology. The fundamental shift

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<sup>17</sup> See Aquinas’ *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics*. Book II, lecture 1.



from Greek polytheism to Christian monotheism would have enormous ramifications upon the concept of the self and its place in the cosmos, and attitudes to the individual would alter radically. I will argue that the Christian attempts at monotheistic unification led instead to dualism and an increasing tension between the internal and external worlds of the individual, causing a rupture that would prove fatal to any unificatory endeavours. I will argue that Plato's ideas of the tripartite soul became central to the new Christian theology, and that the relative comfort in which they lay in a polytheistic culture became far more troublesome within the new monotheism and its demands for singleness and exclusivity.

### *The Soul and Ruptures of Selfhood*

The materiality and nature of the soul would remain a key debate with the Church Fathers, ranging from the Platonic Augustine of Hippo to the Orphic Lactantius, down to the Aristotelian Thomas Aquinas.<sup>18</sup> For example, for Augustine the soul was mutable (because corruptible), immaterial, and occupied a situation somewhere between God and Man, though he rejected the notion that the soul may be made of divine substance, again, because corruptible.<sup>19</sup> Lactantius, on the other hand, continues the Orphic tradition of the divine element in the soul:

Therefore, although they [body and soul] are joined and connected together from birth, and the one which is formed of earthly material is, as it were, the vessel of the other, which is drawn out from heavenly fineness, when any violence has separated the two, which separation is called death, then each returns into its own nature; that which was of earth is resolved into earth; that which is of heavenly breath remains fixed, and flourishes always, since the divine spirit is everlasting. (“Divine Institutes” bk. 7, ch. 8)

However, rather than embark on a history of the Christian theology of the soul,<sup>20</sup> I wish to identify three key shifts in the Christian world view and the implications of these. They are: a) the doctrine of free-will and an increasing tension between body and soul, b) an increase in

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<sup>18</sup> See Thomas Aquinas' seminal and clearly Aristotelian *Summa Theologica*. Cf. *Quaestiones Disputate De Anima*, 2.1, §234, which states: “the Philosopher says in the *De anima* [II, 1, 412b6], that it is unnecessary to ask whether the soul and the body are one, just as it is unnecessary to ask whether the wax and its impression are one. [...] Consequently, with respect to its act of existing, the soul is not separated from the body. But the intellect is a part of the soul, as the Philosopher says in the *De anima* [III, 4, 429a15].” Cf. also *Compendium Theologiae* 1.167 (“The body is for the soul, as matter is for form and a tool for the craftsman...”).

<sup>19</sup> A fuller account of Augustine's concept of the immateriality and mutability and of soul can be found in Gerard J. P. O'Daly's *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, esp. pp.31-38.

<sup>20</sup> For an account of early Christian theology and Church Fathers, see John Norman Davison Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines*.

interiority due to an all-seeing God, and c) the demand for absolute exclusivity and loyalty to a single deity.

*A) Free-Will and an increasing tension between body and soul: Original Sin*

Here I will argue that the central tenets of Christianity led to a fundamental fragmentation of the individual, establishing a tension between body and soul that would prove significant.

The ancient tradition of the divine element of the *psychē* (or *nous*) became a central tenet of Christianity, and the Orphic notion of mortal flesh and divine soul would acquire a much deeper significance, the flesh becoming increasingly associated with sin. Biblical scholar, Lautero Riog Lanzillotta speaks of:

[the] typically Pauline opposition between σάρξ (flesh) and σωμα (body) in the First Letter to the Corinthians. Whereas the former represents all the lower functions of the human being and consequently perishes at death, the latter is not only associated with the identity of the human person, but is also said not to perish, since it is transformed from a σωμα ψυχικόν [‘physical body’] into a σωμα πνευματικόν [roughly, ‘spiritual body’]. (422)

The soul and the flesh become opposing forces; in terms of selfhood, the body itself becomes an enemy.

St Augustine of Hippo, in “On Nature and Grace,” draws our attention to the concept of Original Sin: “the flaw, which darkens and weakens all those natural goods, so that it has need of illumination and healing, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator—but from that original sin, which it committed by free will” (ch. 3). Augustine develops this further when he cites: “The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8)” (ch. 17).<sup>21</sup> From this, we see a seismic shift in the perception of the body into something fundamentally corrupt and shameful. Central to the doctrine of Original Sin is the doctrine of free-will. The Aristotelian connection between ignorance and evil is still present in Augustine’s *On Free Choice of the Will (De Libero Arbitrio de Voluntas)*, though free-will becomes essential to the distinction as a category in its own right in a way it had not been for Aristotle, that category being concerned with culpability and the righteousness of God’s punishments (1). Learning and understanding are considered unequivocally good (2).

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<sup>21</sup> See also ch. 8 where he refers to Galatians 5:17: “For the flesh lusts against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh: For these are contrary one to another: so that you do not do the things that you would.” Cf. ch. 15: “this is spoken not of the substance of the flesh, but of its works, which proceed from carnal concupiscence,— in a word, from sin, concerning which we have this precept: Not to let it reign in our mortal body, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof. (Romans 6:12).” Cf. also ch. 20: “let us not suppose, then, that human nature cannot be corrupted by sin, but rather, believing, from the inspired Scriptures, that it is corrupted by sin [...]”

Consequently, evil cannot be the result of learning or understanding, but only of ignorance. Evil, therefore, is not considered by Augustine as a thing in itself, but is defined in terms of lack—the ignorance that is evil is seen as a lack of knowledge or understanding of God’s reality, hence true evil must remain incomprehensible, and the source of human evil—which is Original Sin—resides somewhere in the free choice (*libero arbitrio*) of human will, or *voluntas* (Russell 201-2).

Likewise, according to Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, perhaps the most important work in Catholic theology after the Bible, the reason for the necessity of free-will is that of personal guilt and culpability: “Man has free-will; otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain” (I.83). This doctrine would later become an article of Inquisitorial doctrine (all books denying free-will were banned in 1583 [Lea 193-94]), and will be shown to be an important feature of Nietzsche’s rejection of Christianity and “slave morality” (pp.59, 62 below).

From this idea of the sinful flesh there naturally follows the phenomenon of corporal mortification, taking a lead perhaps from 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into *subjection*: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” The phrase “keep under my body” is ambiguous here. The English Standard Version’s translation is: “But I discipline my body and keep it under control.” The word used in the original Greek, translated in the King James Version as bringing one’s body under subjection, is *doylagōgō*, meaning to make into a slave. The word translated as “discipline” (ESV) or “keep under” (King James) is *hupōpiazō*, which Liddell and Scott interpret variously as to strike, strike one under the eye, give [him] a black eye, bruise, mortify. The original meaning implies clear violence done to the body, and exemplifies the enormous tensions created between the body and the soul, which completely destroyed any possibility of a unified individual or singular self. This fragmentation creates conflict with the body; it comes laden with sin, shame, and the threat of eternal damnation. This represents a fundamental, existential schism opening up between body and soul, “For these are contrary to one another” (Galatians 5:17).

The category of the will emerges from this dualism as the decision-making force of moral agency in the battle between good and evil, which is equivalent to the battle between the body and the soul. It ideally operates as an internal ‘third thing’ in the union of opposites (see pp.72-75 below), whose duty it is to reject the body and its carnal appetites in favour of the soul. In this respect, this union is not so much concerned with balance as with subjugation and self-conflict. If the body is the “plaything of demons” (Augustine, qtd. in Russell 197),

and the soul belongs to God (Ezekiel 18:4), free-will emerges as the theological necessity of human culpability. In other words, the will becomes the moral determinant of the self.

*B) Increasing in interiority due to an all-seeing God*

The new religion, as a result of this doctrine of guilt and shame, was to increase the necessity for a private, interior world, rupturing the self still further. As the focus narrowed from civic duty to private thoughts and deeds, so the world of the interior became the focus in a way that was alien to the Greeks because it was also the world of God's jealous focus and the source of his judgements. The existence of this all-seeing god was long established in the Hebrew religion, for example Psalm 139 says "thou understandest my thought afar off" (139:2) and "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether." (139:4). 1 Samuel 16:7 states: "the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." This all-seeing God was to acquire even greater significance in the New Testament as Christianity spread, the emphasis shifting more firmly onto retribution. Matthew 12:36 states: "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matthew 5:28 says: "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," which tells us in no uncertain terms that the imagining or thinking about sin is seen by God, who "looketh on the heart," as morally equivalent to actually committing the sin. Private thoughts became the realm of God's judgement.

Thomas Aquinas claimed that "a heretic is not one who lives improperly but one who believes improperly" (qtd. in Martin 28). Thus the focus on the 'inner man' acquired a prevalence previously not present. For the Greeks, religious duties revolved around the performance of ritual and outward displays, whereas the new dogmas of Christianity were based on an all seeing god who could see through the shameful and sinful flesh into a person's mind and read his or her thoughts and desires. Thus a conceptual power base was established by the Church, their police an all-seeing, all-knowing, proto-Orwellian God. If the *polis* and the *psychē* were mutually reflexive for Plato, the new model was perhaps more akin to Foucault's invocation of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, in which all things are visible at all times, which "induce[s] in the inmate a state of consciousness and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (DP 201). Of course, in addition to this, there was the less metaphysical Inquisition to back it up.

A similar idea was put forward centuries earlier by Thomas More in 1516, whose *Utopia* "is constructed so that one is always under observation" (Greenblatt 49), which, in true Foucauldian sense, disseminates power, produces compliant, "docile bodies" (DP 138),

and renders the self a cultural artefact. Whilst More's work was of a fictional place, the same rules of ubiquitous surveillance remained a theological reality. The practical, everyday reality of Inquisitorial power was that the performance of belief was perhaps more important than actual belief, which inevitably sets the scene for a rupture between the external and the internal. In "Technologies of the Self," Foucault states:

The duty to accept a set of obligations, to hold certain books as permanent truth, to accept authoritarian decisions in matters of truth, not only to believe certain things but to show that one believes, and to accept institutional authority are all characteristic of Christianity. (40)

*C) The demand for absolute exclusivity and loyalty to a single deity*

Here I will argue that the growing schism between the interior and exterior world was to tip the balance firmly in favour of the internal world, and the exteriority of the person would develop an increasing capacity, or rather necessity, for dissimulation. In other words, the rupture between body and soul was a rejection of the body that rendered it an artifice, or façade. This is because the carnality of the body was the most grievous sin, and the body, as the means by which self and other communicate, became tainted, so the somatic level of self-other reflexivity necessarily became subject to fictionalisation.

The polytheistic Greeks were free to worship different gods, to change allegiances, or to become members of different cults. Their religion was based on ritual practices associated with myths, rather than codes of belief (Wiles, *Mask* 202). The 'new' "jealous God" taken from the Semitic tradition demanded absolute faith and exclusivity (Exodus 20:5; Matthew 6:24).<sup>22</sup> However, just as the fragmented self became a battle ground of cosmic proportions, so too did the Church's attempts at a unifying theology. The ruptures were fraught with acrimony and bloodshed on an epic scale, from the persecution of the Gnostics through the divisive Crusades and Inquisitions, to the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and beyond.

It is at the juncture of the Reformation that Stephen Greenblatt's seminal *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* identifies the phenomenon of 'self-fashioning,' and identifies it as emerging from the theological differences between the Catholics and the Protestants. He identifies Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English as a pivotal moment, and the conflict between Thomas More and William Tyndale as:

[...] a radical and momentous social crisis: the disintegration of the stable world order, the desacramentalization of the church and state, the subversive perception of the role

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<sup>22</sup> For specific relevance of Matthew 6:24 in direct relation to the commedia mask, see p.204 below.

of the mind, and specifically the imagination, in the creation of oppressive institutions. (Greenblatt 113)

In short, Greenblatt seems to be arguing that in the midst of this theological crisis, this rupture at the heart of human experience, at the very “intersection of an absolute authority and a demonic Other” (76), a new mode of being emerged—the self as a consciously fashioned, cultural artefact. The real damage caused by this rupture was less the schism between the two factions, but the implicit and devastating idea that maybe neither was right, that “their theological system was a fictional construction [...] ‘God is not man’s imagination,’ Tyndale declared, but there was a time when such a declaration would have seemed unnecessary and absurd” (113).

John Jeffries Martin, in *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*, refutes many of Greenblatt’s claims. For example, according to Martin, the term *individualism* first appeared in French in 1821 (8-9). Instead, he argues: “Identity was *not* about individuality but rather explicitly about *the problem of the relation of one’s inner experience to one’s experience in the world*” (15). He also explores the concept of demonic possession, a common belief since biblical times, stating that the “body was porous [...] And possession was not something that was extraordinary [...] Rather it was part of the everyday experience of Renaissance men and women” (84). This porous being, at the mercy of spiritual agencies, black bile and humours, is highly reminiscent of the Greek perception of the self encountered previously. Martin suggests that the necessity of self-fashioning, or in his terms, “the performative self” (36), is clearly evident in the Inquisition,<sup>23</sup> in which external façades, or *personae*, were potentially a matter of life and death. The growing sense of interiority versus exteriority can be argued to be the result of an Inquisitorial necessity. It is interesting to note that around this time of religious dissimulation, the wearing of masks became fashionable in Venice (the whole city of which was eventually excommunicated in 1606). James H. Johnson, in *Venice Incognito*, devotes a chapter to this phenomenon, entitled “Age of Dissimulation” (86-101), in which he states, by the early seventeenth century:

Secrecy and imposed consent were the order of the day, enforced by sudden arrest, censorship, and the Inquisition. Some faced their accusers defiantly and with principled honesty. Many others devised strategies to withhold, mislead, or falsify. For both the great and the small, on the global stage of statecraft and in the intimate spaces of conviction, the mask was a matter of survival.” (87)

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<sup>23</sup> See Francisco Bethencourt’s *The Inquisition* for a balanced and scholarly account of the Spanish and Roman Inquisitions.

Whilst religious persecution was not a new phenomenon, it appears that the Catholic Church was the first to carry out such widespread, sustained and systematic persecutions. Under this regime, just as the flesh and the soul were set at odds with each other, so personal belief was threatened with heresy, and public obeisance to the Church was not a guarantee of safety. I would argue that it is not so much the case that identity was a purely external phenomenon for the Greeks, but that the interior and the exterior were more aligned, and so the differentiation did not need to be made, or perhaps was not so keenly felt. For those who did not believe in the prescribed doctrines of the Church, a growing schism between the internal world of private belief and the external persona necessary for survival became increasingly apparent, and the sinful flesh also became a dissimulative mask. By the time of Greenblatt's 'Renaissance self-fashioning,' the capacity for a consciously constructed identity as cultural artefact was already established.

### ***The Philosopher's New Clothes: The Platonic Trinity***

The Christian theosphere was constructed in a manner analogous to Plato's tripartite soul, which itself found its analogue in the structure of his ideal Republic. Just as the soul, the state and the realm of the divine were mutually reflexive, so the individual and the Godhead now found themselves in a state of increased reflexivity—the reflexivity between self and other becoming severed by the necessity for dissimulation in which the body became a façade or mask—in many ways compounding the sense of shame associated with the body.

As the theological debates about the existence, materiality and substance of soul continued, the results included the emergence of a fragmented godhead and his fragmented followers. The self became divided into an abstract mind, a shameful body, and a semi-divine soul (having undergone a form of metaphysical *sparagmos*) just as the single God himself was split into three divine, Platonic *sparagmata*:

- God the Father: *nous*, the mind or, in Platonic terms, the charioteer, or *logos*
- God the Son: *sōma*, god made flesh, carnal—and whose flesh was indeed punished and mortified—comparable to the appetitive, or *erōs*
- God the Holy Spirit: *psychē*, or *breath* of God, comparable to the spirited, or *thumos*, translated by Liddell and Scott as “*the soul; also, the life, breath.*” This is further reinforced by the stem *thuō*, which has associations of fire and smoke, particularly sacrificial, as well as spiritedness and violent passion, and forms the root of *thuis* (or *thuas*), meaning a frantic or inspired woman, a Bacchante (Liddell and Scott), which itself suggests a connection with the Greek *thiasos*. Furthermore, amongst the Holy Spirit's

various incarnations were those of both wind<sup>24</sup> and tongues of fire,<sup>25</sup> giving it physical presence, whence it possessed the apostles (Acts 2:1-13), suggesting parallels with Bacchic possession or ecstasy, especially when access to the Holy Spirit is granted through the drinking of wine at the Eucharist (Cox). This further strengthens the implications of *thiasos* as the spiritual connection between the collective and the divine. Thus Plato's tripartite soul found its analogue at almost all levels of the theosphere, even though now numerically diminished from many to one almighty god. This highlights how many key philosophical issues addressed by the Greeks remained as pertinent as ever, but the monotheistic interpretation and application radically altered the perspective from which the questions were addressed. The consequences of this upon the perception of self were fraught with tensions and schisms that shifted a previously innocuous 'unity in multiplicity' towards a fragmented being of deep division and internal conflict.

### PART 3: MONOTHEISM AND PHILOSOPHY

#### ***René Descartes (1596 – 1650): The Cogito and the Body-Mind Split***

It is within this context that we encounter one of the greatest philosophical revolutions there has ever been, instigated by René Descartes, and considered by many to signal the birth of modern philosophy. In addressing Descartes, I do not wish to explore the whole of his *Meditations* (1641), but only that aspect which is of import to this study, namely that of the mind-body dualism of the *Cogito*. In order to understand where this particular philosophical revolution came from, it is important to understand the context. Contemporary renaissance scholasticism and philosophy were concerned mainly with the explanation and defence of Christian doctrine (Parkinson 2)—the chief difference being their methods rather than subject—both were concerned with ancient texts, especially Plato and Aristotle, and their applicability to Christian dogma. The underlying presumption was that any sound philosophy must inherently support it.

Philosopher Carlos G. Prado, in *Descartes and Foucault: A Contrastive Introduction to Philosophy*, argues that Descartes' objective in his formulation of the *cogito* was not to

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<sup>24</sup> See Caroline P. Caswell's *A Study of Thumos in Early Greek Epic*, esp. ch. 4, "Θυμός Examined Further: Connection with the Winds" for an exploration of this link. Cf. Padel, pp.88-98 ('Breaths of Passion'). Cf. John 3:8.

<sup>25</sup> *του μεν ουν θειου τον πλειστην ιδεαν εκ πυρος ανεργαζετο* (The form of the divine class He wrought for the most part out of fire), Plato, *Tim.* 40a. Cf. Heraclitus, fragment B90 (amongst others), for his idea of fire as the primary element: *pyros antamoibē ta panta kai pur apantōn okosper chrusou chrēmata kai chrēmatōn chrusos* (There is exchange of all things for fire and of fire for all things, as there is of wares for gold and of gold for wares). Cf. Acts 2:3-4.



revolutionise philosophy, but to protect it from the sort of disruption his contemporary, Galileo—in his defence of Copernicus and the heliocentric universe—had subjected it to. His means of radical doubt was a way to ‘start from scratch’ and reconstitute knowledge and, in the vein of Renaissance philosophy, to confirm the existence of god beyond reasonable doubt. Such doubt, for Descartes, came only from prior error (37). Quite aside from his philosophical endeavour, it is this Christian context that must be taken as essential to understanding the underlying dogmatic motivation for his *cogito ergo sum*, which split mind and body into the now famous Cartesian dualism. Descartes wished to find a single indestructible truth on which to build, which was “I think, therefore I am.” Once we experience a clear and unchallengeable truth, this experience of such a truth will enable us to recognise the experience of truth. From this, Descartes was able to ‘prove’ the existence of God, and of the mind, thus linking the existence of both above and beyond the existence of the body. Descartes’ principle was that the contents of the mind, the idea, cannot be proven other than as an idea, which may be illusory, whereas the existence of the mind, as that which experiences thought, cannot itself be doubted. The splitting of body and mind in this way, Prado tells us, cannot be distinguished from splitting the body and the soul, because the mind *is* the soul in Descartes’ formulation (59), echoing Plato and Aristotle’s suggestions that *nous* is the divine element (see p.38 above). Furthermore, in *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas states explicitly, in question 75: “the human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.” This is an important theological move, as it clearly equates the mind with the human soul, and from this point onwards body-soul dualism became equivalent with body-mind dualism.

Descartes suggests that objects in the real world have their concurring images or representations within the mind; images, therefore, become representations of their causes. That truth exists in the first place is itself proved through the irrefutable “I think.” He entertains the possibility that all his perceptions are the deceits of an evil spirit, but concludes that the one deception that the evil spirit could never accomplish would be to make him doubt his own sentient existence. Descartes also introduces the idea of causality—nothing can exist without a cause. Descartes suggests that the only possible source of the idea of a being so perfect as God must be God. He refers to the scholastic notion of the ‘Chain of Being’ (see Copenhaver and Schmitt 152-53) in which no thing can produce something more perfect or more powerful than itself: therefore, Descartes cannot have created God as part of his own imagination (3:43); only God could be the cause of the idea of God. *Cogito ergo Deus est.*

Descartes' unwitting revolution was in fact an attempt to reify Christian dogma, which already enshrined mind-body duality. The methodology of radical doubt presented in the first two Meditations represents the real revolution, ironically one whose purpose was to prevent revolution. This will be explored further in relation Foucault in chapter 4.

### ***Hegel's Phenomenology***

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) would attempt a unifying, dialectic approach to Cartesian dualism. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he recognises the dichotomy of the interior and exterior self: "So we see the first of these, the concept of purpose, meant roughly speaking in the sense of the *inner*, and the other, actuality, meant roughly speaking in the sense of the *outer*. Their relation creates the law that says *that the outer is the expression of the inner*" (§262). Further: "The organic substance as *inner* is the simple *soul*, the pure *concept of purpose*, that is, it is the *universal*" (§265). He again asserts the necessity of the other (§349), and addresses the idea of the two becoming a single awareness: "They are conscious of themselves as being these individual self-sufficient beings as result of their having sacrificed their individuality and as a result of this universal substance being their soul and essence" (§351). Redding summarises:

[T]he mind of God becomes actual only via its particularization in the minds of "his" finite creatures. Thus, in our consciousness of God, we somehow serve to realize his *own* self-consciousness, and, thereby, his own perfection.

Again, we see the transcendental nature of the soul linked with a central unity akin to either God or a collective (un)consciousness, if the two are indeed separate. From a Hegelian perspective, the collective consciousness and the mind of God are one and the same, which suggests that the distinction between individuals is purely a matter of subjectivity rather than truly distinct selves: a single consciousness experiencing itself subjectively, the subjectivity creating the illusion of a self, reinforced by the physical vehicle of a transient body. This implies a lack of materiality to the soul and to the self, a metaphysical and transcendental phenomenon in a permanent state of flux and multiplicity due to the nature of its differing subjective manifestations. As we encountered in Chapter 1, there is a dialectic aspect to the self-other process, the other of which is God. Philosophically speaking, the most important aspect of this dialectic with the divine is that it must infer a teleological aspect—not only man as an 'individual,' but history as a process, works through this dialectical relationship with the divine towards a state of perfection. This implies, and will always imply, the glorification

of the present as the zenith of divinely directed history, a prospect that Nietzsche was to take particular issue with, as will be shown in the next chapter.

### CONCLUSION

It appears that, from the philosophical perspective of *autos* and *psychē*, the self cannot be easily contained or defined as a single entity. What emerges, yet again, is a Heraclitean sense of unity in multiplicity, of fragmentation, a being forever in flux, achieving phenomenal rather than ontological stability. The idea of the self as ‘that which owns’ psychological and bodily states would appear to serve as a conceptual stability that is useful for argument, but is not yet in itself an identifiable entity.

Of the dichotomies identified in the introduction, it seems the underlying drive is that of flux, which, from a philosophical perspective, precipitates through the others, favouring the concept of self as fluid (rather than fixed), multiple (rather than single), transcendent (rather than specifically interior or exterior), and, if transcendent, even collective, metaphysical (rather than physical). Despite the enormous impact upon the concept of self that religions, both polytheistic and monotheistic, have clearly had, and whether or not one accepts the existence of a God or gods, the conclusions *in relation to the key dichotomies* remain the same, even for such ideologically opposing figures as Hegel and, as will be shown in the next chapter, Nietzsche.

The next stage in the development of the self, particularly its relation to the divine, is the secularisation of the self and the “death of god,” and it is to this that we turn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3: NIETZSCHE, JUNG AND THE GROWTH OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

The aims of this chapter are twofold: firstly, to continue the narrative of the developing concept of the self, particularly in relation to the rejection of Christian dogma as the dominant ideological force; and secondly, to explicate and interrogate two of the three key figures that will provide the philosophical and critical heart of my thesis, namely Friedrich Nietzsche and Carl Jung (the third, Michel Foucault, will be addressed in the following chapter). Part 1 will be devoted to exploring some of the key ideas, and addressing some of the major contradictions, in the writings of Nietzsche, particularly in relation to the will to power and the concept of the *Übermensch*. Part 2 will begin with a summary of Freud and his significance as the father of psychoanalysis—though this will be more for the purposes of context and narrative coherence than to attempt an in-depth analysis of Freudian theory—before moving on to examine the second of my key theorists, Carl Jung. I will focus specifically on Jung’s concept of archetypes and the collective unconscious, addressing some of the key misconceptions surrounding Jungian theory. Part 3 will synthesise parts 1 and 2 by examining some of the key similarities and differences between Nietzsche and Jung, focusing on the concepts of individuation and the union of opposites, and identifying my own position on these important issues, which will be central to my hypothesis in Part II of this study.

I will end this chapter by signalling the more significant points that I wish to take forward in this study. A fuller and more discursive conclusion will appear at the end of the following chapter, which signals the end of Part I of this investigation.

### PART 1: FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844 – 1900) AND THE DEATH OF GOD

Before I explore Nietzsche’s philosophy, it is useful to briefly flag up some of the more important historical events that contextualise his position in relation to the waning power of Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church and the Inquisition, as the dominant philosophical force in Europe.

In 1806, Napoleon ended a thousand years of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (see Cavendish, *passim*), and in 1808 abolished the Inquisition, which was reinstated in 1814. In 1834, after a period of significant decline, the Spanish Inquisition was finally permanently abolished, and in 1869, religious tolerance was made part of the Spanish Constitution. In this same year, in the face of its imminent loss of power, the First Vatican Council, under Pope Pius IX, decreed the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Finally, in 1870, the

Italian Nationalist movement captured Rome, essentially stripping the papacy of temporal power, effectively ending the Roman Inquisition once and for all (in 1908, under Pope Pius X, The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition changed its name to the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office).<sup>26</sup> Thus the stage is set for a more secular Europe (Bethencourt 416ff).

### *Nietzsche contra Hegel*

As well as outlining the historical context, it is useful to approach Nietzsche's philosophy in the context of the previous chapters by way of his rejection of Hegelian philosophy.

Nietzsche's distaste for Hegel, whom he regularly signalled out as the primary target for his vitriolic rejection of previous philosophies, went beyond the question of Hegel's Christianity. It was Hegel's dialectical theory of history that Nietzsche found most anathema. He was to say: "I believe there has been no dangerous vacillation or crisis of German culture this century that has not been rendered more dangerous by the enormous and still continuing influence of this philosophy, the Hegelian" (*UM* 104). The philosophy to which Nietzsche refers is specifically that which presumes a teleological, dialectic progress that assumes the present to be the zenith of existence and that history has been leading to this point. That who "man" is now, in his "miserable condition," should represent the zenith, the "true meaning and goal of all previous events" and the "completion of history" is, for Nietzsche, a "dreadful and devastating" prospect (*ibid.*). Nietzsche turns his opposition into a personal attack on Hegel, suggesting that according to Hegel's dialectic, progressive view of history, Hegel ought to have claimed that "the climax and terminus of the world-process coincided with his own existence in Berlin," and that everything after him was "superfluous," a sort of "musical coda" to his own existence (*ibid.*). Nietzsche's prime objection to the teleological model is that it embodies the Panglossian presumption of 'the best of all possible worlds,' which leads to mankind bowing down in acquiescence to any "power" that "pulls the strings" (105). In fact, Deleuze was to suggest that "Anti-Hegelianism runs through Nietzsche's work as its cutting edge" (8).<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche's view of the self is much more essentialist, stating: "In essential respects we are still the same men as those of the time of the Reformation; how could it be otherwise?" (*HAH* §633), which is philosophically incompatible with the dialectical, progressivist model of Hegel. Nietzsche, rather than view the world as progress,

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<sup>26</sup> For Nietzsche's own historicisation of the Inquisition, see *Human, All Too Human* §633, which he describes as rational at the time, but no longer coherent with modern thought.

<sup>27</sup> For a fuller account of Nietzsche contra Hegel, see Stephen Houlgate's *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*.

or destiny, was nostalgic for the golden age of Greek tragedy, and he identified in this his own, and enormously influential, dichotomy, one that was fundamental and precludes all possibility of Hegelian dialecticism, and it is to this we must turn.

### *Apollo Versus Dionysus*

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche sets out what he considers to be the fundamental dichotomy of Greek art, which is the Apollonian and the Dionysian. He was to remain enamoured of Dionysus, and the Dionysian is a continual feature of his philosophy. I will here outline the dichotomy before moving on to explore his wider philosophy. It is important to point out that this dichotomy is Nietzsche's own invention, which he projects into the past as a means of formulating a vision of Greek consciousness—this dichotomy represents a highly influential and provocative interpretive tool, but is not an identifiable aspect of Greek thought. Nietzsche is imagining what lies beneath Greek culture rather than identifying a specific and acknowledged aspect of it.

The Apollonian represents form, image, beauty and reason. He likens it to dreams, in which joy is gained from the apprehension of forms. Apollo is not only the god of ideal form, but also of illusion; Apollonian beauty conceals the reality that lurks behind outward forms. Stephen Houlgate summarises: “[It] serves to conceal the horrific character of life from our view by transforming that life into images of delightful, idealised individuality” (186). The Dionysian, on the other hand, does not conceal but reveal and express life. It is again worth citing Houlgate's summary:

At the same time as we are faced with life, there is engendered within us a mysterious sense that we have lost our individuality in the wash of cosmic oneness. Life is thus no longer felt to be something which threatens our individuality, but also something into which we dissolve and in which we participate. (187)

The Dionysian is the realm of intoxication, of deindividuation, a state in which the “hostile barriers” of individuality that have been “erected between man and man, are broken down” and he experiences “Primordial Unity” (*BT* §1). He is the god of nature, and of music. In Greek tragedy, the Dionysian is the realm of the chorus which sings and dances its ecstatic dithyrambs to Dionysus. This concept of deindividuation will be vital for Nietzsche who, as we will see, is concerned almost entirely with the internal individual man. The *Übermensch* is the pinnacle of individuation, yet individuation cannot occur without deindividuation. Individuation, as will be explicated below, is the mastery of all the primal drives encountered

in the deindividuated state. I will outline some basic oppositions inherent in the Apollo-Dionysus dichotomy:

<b>Apollo:</b>	<b>Dionysus:</b>
dreams	intoxication
sculpture	music
form	formlessness
architecture	nature
individuality <sup>28</sup>	deindividuation
concealment	revelation

Nietzsche felt that Greek Tragedy was the pinnacle of Greek society and art, managing to balance both essential aspects of life in perfect harmony, but since Euripides, this harmony had been wrecked by “that new demon Socrates” (§12)—the dichotomy became not Apollo-Dionysus, but Socrates-Dionysus. Socratic reason rather than Apolline form and beauty now combated the Dionysian, and so, according to Nietzsche, tragedy died and “paradoxical thoughts” became the stuff of theatre rather than “Apollonian intuitions” and “Dionysian ecstasies” (*ibid.*). However, it is not the death of tragedy that is our main concern here, but something far more essential.

### ***The Death of God – Behold the Man!***

Along with the progressivist, dialectical view of history, the other great enemy was religion, particularly Christianity. Nietzsche famously declared, repeatedly, “God is dead” (*GS* §108, §125, §343; *TSZ* prologue pt.2; ch. XXV and LX). Nietzsche destabilises the prospect of divine (and dialectical) ‘truth’ by introducing the concept of perspectivism, the idea that there is no one absolute truth, merely a variety of perspectives, thus rejecting the validity of any single monist perspective, instead demonstrating the necessity of a multiplicity of perspectives if any “‘knowing’ from a perspective” of the technically unknowable *thing-in-itself* (in the Kantian scheme) is to be meaningful:

There is only a seeing from a perspective, only a “knowing” from a perspective, and the *more* emotions we express over a thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we train on the same thing, the more complete will be our “idea” of that thing, our “objectivity.” But the elimination of the will altogether [i.e. the Christian mode], the switching off

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<sup>28</sup> Individuality should not be confused with individuation—the two are not only not the same, but, I will argue, are in fact entirely incompatible (p.245 below).

of the emotions all and sundry, granted that we could do so, what! would not that be called intellectual *castration*? (*GM* III, §12)

In the prologue to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche addresses the body/soul problem:

Once the soul gazed contemptuously at the body, and then such contempt was the highest thing:—it wanted the body gaunt, ghastly, starved. Thus it intended to escape the body and the earth. (6)

In “The Despisers of the Body,”<sup>29</sup> he goes on to reject the concept of the soul as traditionally understood in the Christian sense:

“Body am I, and soul”—so speaks a child. And why should one not speak like children?

But the awakened one, the knowing one, says: Body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something on the body.” (22-23)

Nietzsche at once rejects the soul and the concept of the flesh as shameful, and places the body back at the centre of existence.

### ***The Soul as symptom of the Diseased Animal***

Nietzsche argues in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

[...] the belief which regards the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an atomon: this belief ought to be expelled from science! [...] But the way is open for new acceptations and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as ‘mortal soul,’ and ‘soul of subjective multiplicity,’ and ‘soul as social structure of the instincts and passions,’ want henceforth to have legitimate rights in science. (§12)

The soul is a multiplicity of drives, a mortal and non-divine aspect of the self in a state of flux, vulnerable to the outside world of Apollonian oppression. In *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche identifies what he considers to be the human ‘soul’ and the conditions for its emergence:

All instincts which do not find a vent without, *turn inwards*—this is what I mean by the growing ‘internalisation’ of man: consequently we have the first growth in man, of what subsequently was called his soul. The whole inner world, originally as thin as if it had been stretched between two layers of skin, burst apart and expanded

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<sup>29</sup> The phrase “Despisers of the body” would seem to be a direct reference to his old foe Socrates (*BT*), who is reported as stating: “the soul of the philosopher greatly *despises the body* and avoids it and strives to be alone by itself” (Plato, *Phaedo* 65d, my italics; see p.36 above).



proportionately, and obtained depth, breadth, and height, when man's external outlet became obstructed. (*GM II §16*)

The subject, which is the same as the soul (I §13) develops when the self is no longer identical with its actions and instincts. The subject is therefore that which has (the illusion of) choice, that which does this when it *should* have done that, which represents a separation from its essential self. As such, the subject is an aspect of a larger self, torn from it through repressed instincts. The instincts are an important aspect of the self for Nietzsche and, in a passage prefiguring Freud and, more particularly, Jung (see below), Nietzsche claims:

[T]he conclusions man still draws in dreams to the present day for many millennia mankind also drew *when awake*; the first *causa* that entered the mind as an explanation of anything that required explaining satisfied it and was accounted truth. [...] In the dream this piece of primeval humanity continues to exercise itself, for it is the basis upon which higher rationality evolved and continues to evolve in every human being: the dream takes us back again to remote stages of human culture and provides us with a means of understanding them better. We now find dream-thinking so easy because it is in precisely this imaginative and agreeable form of explanation by means of the first plausible idea that strikes us when we have been so well drilled over such enormous periods of human evolution. (*HAH I §13*)

We see in Nietzsche a sense of the self as primarily made up of drives and instincts, separated from them by means of religious ascetism and “bad conscience,” which is our tendency to see ourselves as sinners and repress our instincts, our “cruelty to our animal selves” (*GM II §24*). However, these atavistic forces are still alive within “*the diseased animal*” of the self (III §13)—sick through the inward directedness of his instincts, the *soul* being the symptom of that sickness—and are accessible through dreams, in which we reconnect with our instincts and learn the lessons of our ancestors, patterns of learned behaviour written within us through biological evolution. This world of atavistic instincts is the realm of Dionysus, glimpsed through the Apollonian dream-world of images (see *BT §§1-4*). “Thus: in sleep and dreams we repeat once again the curriculum of earlier mankind” (*HAH I §12*). It is through this reconnection with our true instincts that “we shall have discovered a new plot, a new possibility for the Dionysian drama entitled *The Soul's Fate*” (*GM “Preface” §7*).

### ***The Will to Power***

Nietzsche saw the object of existence as a form of self-improvement, the drive behind which he called the will to power. In *Genealogy of Morals*, he asserts that there is no real doer

behind the deeds: the “doer” is “a mere appendage to the action” (§13): the ‘subject’ that does—or more often, does not—is the symptom of the repressed instinct of a diseased animal. For Nietzsche, the deed is all. It is with this in mind that I address the will to power. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche equates all life with the will to power (contra Schopenhauer’s *will to live*, 90), which he identifies as “the very heart of life and the roots of its heart” (89); it is that “*which must always overcome itself*” (*ibid.*). In the human context of self-overcoming, and in the context of bad conscience, the will to power may be interpreted as the will to overcome bad conscience, the will to act according to one’s instincts and thus be one with one’s deeds, removing the intermediary subject. As such, one’s deeds will have power; they will be pure, untainted by the guilt that is bad conscience. More than this, one must achieve mastery over one’s instincts, or else one merely becomes a slave to them—“the one who cannot obey himself is commanded” (89). In this we encounter a great difficulty, that of becoming a creatively destructive, destructively creative force (90) who is one with his deeds, has mastery over them, but without the illusion of the subject as mediator between self and deed. Such a man, the *Übermensch*, is a man without (bad) conscience, a man of knowledge and irresistible power; a man with mastery over his own dangerously paradoxical being. Zarathustra instructs “Become who you are!” (192).<sup>30</sup> This suggests that, as well as—perhaps more than—the will to power referring to power or domination of others, power over the self and the instincts is the real goal. The will to power is greater than the will to survive (89).

### *The Übermensch*

Zarathustra exclaims: “What is great about human beings is that they are a bridge and not a purpose” (*TSZ* 8). In other words, the human being is not an end in itself but incomplete, suspended somewhere between animal and *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* represents its ideal potential. This must not be taken in the Darwinian sense of evolution, but in terms of self-mastery.

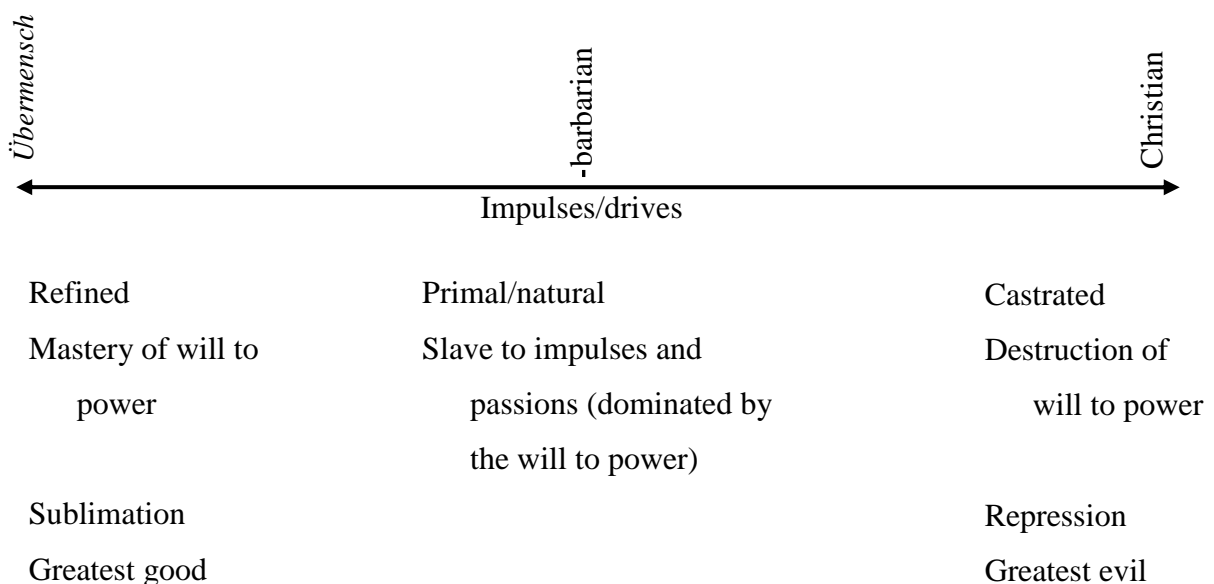
The human animal is a conglomerate of various competing drives and impulses, or wills. The “I” is the perspective of whatever drive is dominant in the moment, creating the illusion of a single selfhood, or “doer,” or in Sorabji’s terms, that which *owns*, but the measure of ‘man’ is to what extent he has mastered those drives and become one with them in a creative way. He is compared to a bow with great tension that comes from the presence

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<sup>30</sup> This line is taken from Pindar’s Pythian Ode 2, “For Hieron of Syracuse Chariot Race,” line 71, which says “Learn and become who you are.”

of oppositions and the contradictory feelings and tension they generate (Müller-Lauter 75), the union of which under a single mastery produces a dynamic, creative tension that is the state of the *Übermensch*. This is opposed to the Christian, who has defeated the drives and as such becomes impotent (or “castrated” *TI* 24), and to the “blond beast” or barbarian, who remains a slave to his or her impulses (*GM I* §10)—though preferable to the Christian.

Kaufmann explains that both reason and passion are manifestations of the will to power (235), and the Nietzschean ideal is a marriage between the two, not a domination of one over the other. The barbarian represents the mastery of the passions or impulses over reason; the slave morality exhibited by Christians represents (deeply flawed) reason over the passions. The key to mastering the passions and the reason is, according to Kaufmann, creative sublimation (218-20), which is the process of transformation of primal (or unacceptable) instincts into creative means of expression.



The *Übermensch* is defined by the mastery of self, by self-overcoming, and the creative tension between opposing drives. These drives are *sublimated* into creative, ‘refined’ means of expression, balanced (not controlled) by reason. Nietzsche’s notes suggest that the action itself is not important; what is important is that it is the manifestation of the will (*WP* §675). The self-overcoming (or mastery) of the *Übermensch* is the creative union of contradictory drives, all of which are manifestations of the will to power (Müller-Lauter 8; cf. Huskinson 30). Nietzsche ascribes to this mythic ideal an intense joy, the state of *amor fati* (or love of fate).

My formula for greatness in man is *amor fati*: the fact that a man wishes nothing to be different, either in front of him or behind him, or for all eternity. Not only must the necessity be borne, and on no account concealed—all idealism is falsehood in the face of necessity—but it must also be *loved*. (*EH*, “Why I am so Clever” §10)

The *Übermensch* is also a contradictory creature; for example, whilst he represents the pinnacle of potential human existence, characterised by both strength and wisdom, he is also “terribly delicate and fragile” (*WP* §996), the rarity and complexity of the *Übermensch* being the source of his fragility (Müller-Lauter 75-78). Müller-Lauter observes within the formulation of the *Übermensch* a contradiction between the “strong” and the “wise”: the strong exhibiting “the fixation of a perspective in exclusive opposition to other perspectives” and the wise “the opening up to the multiplicity of possible perspectives” (77). This requires alternation. The strength of a single, unrelenting perspective and the wisdom of multiple simultaneous perspectives cannot be co-present, thus presenting us with an irreconcilable paradox right at the very heart of the possibility of the *Übermensch*. However, I would argue that the wise is comparable to the profound spirit we find in *Beyond Good and Evil*, in which Nietzsche famously decrees “Every profound spirit needs a mask” (§40). This statement comes almost immediately after Nietzsche declares his doctrine that the will to power is the sole force of life (§36), and is addressed to the ‘free spirits’ who might preach such a doctrine. The free spirit is the path to the *Übermensch*. This path demands a protective mask, and only the mask needs to be strong. This, I contend, renders the necessary duality not as contradictory as Müller-Lauter claim (78). The mask, in this context, is a protective force for the fragility of the profound and free spirit.

### ***The Error of Causality***

Nietzsche argues that the *cause* of a deed originates not in the ego (or consciousness), but more properly in the events that had gone before it (*TI* “Errors” §3), and this is perhaps the best way to view Nietzsche’s view of causality, and, by inference, determinism (see Leiter’s “Nietzsche’s Theory of the Will”). Nietzsche’s prime objective is to point out that causality of the will originates *outside* of the individual’s consciousness—the individual will is an effect rather than a cause. What we experience is the subjective ego as the illusory source.

The basic argument derives from the specifically anti-Cartesian standpoint that a thought comes when it wants to, not when I want it to (*BGE* §17), which on the one hand disrupts the Cartesian model by undermining the “I think,” thereby invalidating the “I am,” but also posits the source of that thought outside the conscious will. Furthermore, in the

phenomenology of a simple action, say, standing up, we think the thought precedes the will that precedes the action. Our phenomenal experience is that the thought to stand, the will to stand, and the action of standing are a complete sequence in themselves, through which we experience the successful operation of our will. We seldom imagine ourselves as obeying that thought and the resulting will, but as being the source. In Nietzsche's formulation, the thought that precedes the will (and the illusion of the experience of exercising that will) is itself determined by circumstance, environment, and the physical and psychological make-up or condition of the person to whom the thought comes (see Leiter, "Will" 7, which calls this the 'Doctrine of Types'). Therefore, within that whole causal chain, our isolated experience of standing up and the accompanying will is epiphenomenal, an experience generated by external forces. Will does not equal the experience of willing, the latter is the illusory epiphenomenon of a previous former. But there can be no originary will given the impossibility of the *causa sui* (self-causation), of the possibility that one can "pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the slough of nothingness" (Nietzsche *BGE* §21). I would speculate that it is perhaps this rejection of an originary source that drives Nietzsche to the logical necessity of eternal recurrence.<sup>31</sup> The chain of being needs no origin if it is cyclic.

Within this model, the prospect of free will is greatly diminished, though not entirely negated in all respects: the slave mentality of Christian morality is one that negates free will whilst simultaneously professing it, which, for Nietzsche, is the ultimate lie. The *Übermensch* represents an ideal of free will whereby the self does not fool itself into believing in its own ego, but instead manages its ego in accordance with preconscious instincts—it is self-mastery, the sublimation of drives into creative deeds, a condition in which reason balances impulse in creative harmony (Kaufman 211-227). This is freedom—not freedom *of* will, which is the state of the animal or 'barbarian' (and equates to being a *slave* to the will), nor freedom *from* will, which is the Christian state of castration, or 'castratism' (*TI* 24; cf. Kaufmann 231), but mastery *over* will. By shifting the emphasis from freedom to mastery as the opposite of slavery, Nietzsche highlights the fundamental drive as the will to power, not the will to freedom, thereby diminishing the importance of the prospect of free will. The dichotomy is not slavery versus freedom, but rather slavery versus (self) mastery. Free will, for Nietzsche, is in fact an invention of the Church as a necessary fiction to impose moral culpability upon those who often lacked the freedom to bear such responsibility (cf. Aquinas,

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<sup>31</sup> See *GS* §341; *TSZ* III. §3 and IV. §§9-12; *WP* §1066. Cf. Sedgwick 53-52.

*Summa* I.83, see p.43 above), and as such, is a fiction of slave morality (Leiter “Moral & Political Philosophy”).

Nietzsche’s whole philosophy, unlike the dialecticism of Hegel, is concerned with the universal but internal man, with drives and impulses that are manifestations of the unconscious will to power. For Nietzsche, the unconscious is the seat of the true self, and the process of individuation was to bring the unconscious, which he referred to as *das Es*, or the “It,” which is the uncontrollable, and the rational (which we might equate with the Dionysian), into alignment with *das Ich*, or the “I,” which is the more Apollonian, rational, but illusory self: the *It* is in control, the *I* only *thinks* it is (*BGE* §17). These ideas would find themselves taken up and developed into a whole new science, and it is to this that we now turn.

## PART 2: PSYCHOANALYSIS

Before exploring the key theories of Carl Jung, who will provide a key component to my hypothesis, it is first important to contextualise him in relation to his teacher and father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Both Freud and Jung were deeply influenced by Nietzsche, with some of their most fundamental concepts having their bases in Nietzschean thought. However, rather than embark on an exploration of this, I will limit my discussion to the key aspects, beginning with Freud’s identification of the tripartite self and the centrality of sexuality to the libido and the formulation of the ego. The exploration of Jung will likewise centre around *his* notion of the (once more) tripartite self, though in more depth than the précis I offer here for Freud.

### ***Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) and the Libido***

Nietzsche’s influence is clearly evident in Freud’s taxonomy of the psyche, described by Nietzsche as split into the *das Es* and *das Ich*. Given Nietzsche’s assertion that the proper balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian is necessary to remain healthy (personally and culturally), it became necessary for Freud, and later Jung, to introduce a third aspect, comparable with the Platonist charioteer, or *logos*, to retain that balance. Freud’s model of the self was of *das Es* (the It), *das Ich* (the I), and *das Über-Ich* (the Over-I). But before I explore these, it is useful to identify how Freud’s theory of the self develops into the triadic model.

### *Narcissism and the Ego-Ideal*

Freud identifies two distinct forms of libidinal interest in the development of the child, which are a) *imitative*, in which the libido fixates onto another, and b) *narcissistic*, in which the libido sees the self as love-object (“Narcissism” 373) and needs no external other. The term “imitative” is chosen because Freud claims that the libido drives initially imitate the ego drives, which are initially concerned with self-preservation, and thus associated with those who feed and protect the child. The libido drives thus imitate the ego drives by fixating on the source of preservation, usually the mother. Narcissism marks the process by which the individual begins to understand its separateness from its parents and the world around it. Rather than a ‘perversion’ or undesirable character trait, narcissism is “the libidinal correlative of the egoism of the self-preservation instinct, an element of which is rightly attributed to every living creature” (358). According to Freud, the transference of the libido from the self, or ego, onto another, initially a parent or carer or one associated with protecting and feeding the child, forms a natural part of the development of the individual.

Linked to the idea of narcissism is the ego-ideal, which is an ideal image of the self initially created by external pressures and expectations, eventually internalised and forming an essential part of the self (380). Freud speculates as to a hypothetical “entity in the psyche charged with ensuring that narcissistic gratification is indeed achieved in accordance with the ego-ideal, and to this end incessantly scrutinizes the actual ego and measures it against the ideal” (381). Narcissism is an essential libido-drive that motivates the individual to exist as love-object for another (real or imagined). This, characteristic of Freud, places sexuality at the heart of existence. Our very sense of self, our core of experience, our phenomenal reality is, for Freud, fundamentally sexual: without narcissistic libido, we would have no sense of self; without *sexual* narcissism, the self would not exist as a phenomenon about which to speculate.

However, the development of the ego is also a development away from primary narcissism, which results in an intense struggle to retrieve it. The rupture occurs through the “displacement of libido onto an ego-ideal imposed from without; gratification occurs through the fulfilment of that ideal” (386). “Becoming our own ideal again in respect of our sexual urges as well as everything else, just as in our childhood: therein lies the happiness that human beings aspire to” (387). The relationship between the ego and the ego-ideal therefore constitutes an existential schism, a sense of separation within the self between the ideal and the physical reality, reminiscent of both Plato’s theory of forms and the tripartite soul.

### *The Tripartite Self*

Here, we turn to “An Outline of Psychoanalysis” in which Freud summarises his findings and the central concepts of id, ego, and superego, as they are traditionally referred to. However, these Latinate terms were introduced by the translator of the *Standard Edition*, James Strachey, and give an inexplicably alienating feel to Freud’s work.<sup>32</sup> I will instead follow Adam Phillips’ lead and disregard these terms as inauthentic translations of the German *das Es*, *das Ich*, and *das Über-Ich*, and instead use the English forms: the It, the I, and the Over-I, as relating to Freud’s concept of a tripartite ‘soul.’ Freud’s *Seele* (or soul) is not the immortal *psychē* of earlier philosophy (Bettelheim 70-79), but a distinctly mortal aspect of the self in the Nietzschean vein. Freud gives the distinctions as follows:

[The *It*] contains everything that is inherited, everything present at birth, everything constitutionally determined—above all, then, the drives originating from the bodily organisation, which here (that is, in the *Es*) find a first psychical expression in forms unknown to us. (Freud, “Outline” 2)

[...] the *Ich* has control over voluntary movement. It has the task of self-assertion, and fulfils it with respect to the *outside* world by getting to know the stimuli there, by storing information about them [...] and by learning to change the external world in an expedient way to its own advantage [...]. It also fulfils its task with respect to the inner world, that is, with respect to the *Es*, by gaining mastery over the demands of the drives. [...] The *Ich* strives for pleasure, and wants to avoid unpleasure. (2-3)

[...] the *Über-Ich* absorbs [...] contributions from [...] role models and respected social ideals. (3)

These authority figures include parents, educators, and other such important figures in the child’s development. It is interesting to explore the relationship between the ego-ideal and the Over-I (or super-ego) as both are the product of external agencies and codes of being, and both impact on the formation of the self. Freud describes the over-I as:

the vehicle of the ego ideal by which the ego measures itself, which it emulates, and whose demand for ever greater perfection it strives to fulfil. There is no doubt that this ego ideal is the precipitate of the old picture of the parents, the expression of admiration for the perfection which the child then attributed to them. (Freud, *Lectures* 64-65)

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<sup>32</sup> For a fuller discussion about the problems of translation, see Bruno Bettelheim’s *Freud and Man’s Soul*.



Thus it would seem that the relationship between the Over-I and the ego-ideal is in some ways comparable to the relationship between form and content, the Over-I being the form, and the ego-ideal the content. The Over-I represents a constitutive part of each person, just as the It and the I, but the content of each are different for each individual, and the ego-ideal will differ just as much as—and in direct relation to—the contents of the personality and the subconscious. Just as the It contains the inherited drives, so the Over-I contains the externally determined ego-ideal.

This tripartite structure of the self, and the relationship between Freud's It, I and Over-I, poses an interesting proposition. It suggests that the drives, passions and emotions are primarily internal forces (the It), and that morality, ideals and reason are primarily external (Over-I). This posits the conscious self, the subjective I, at the threshold of these forces. The inherited nature of the drives and the external nature of the social render the uniqueness of the individual at that threshold—indeed *as* that threshold—thus the self becomes the mediation of, and created by, both internal and external alterity. The uniqueness of the individual, just as in Nietzsche's view, can be said to be its subjectivity, its experience of being an "I." Freud recognised this when he described 'Man,' in terms reminiscent of the *daimōnes* of Empedocles and Pythagoras, as: "but the mortal vehicle of a—perhaps—immortal essence; like the lord of an entailed estate, he is but the temporary occupant of an institution that will outlast him" ("Narcissism" 363). Freud does not speculate as to the nature of the 'immortal essence,' and his feelings about religion are less than positive—he equates religious belief with neurosis and the delusory projection of atavistic and unconscious elements of the self (see *Totem and Taboo*, *passim*). Jung is much more sympathetic to the religious "feeling" than Freud, and has some clear ideas as to the nature of the divine that, unlike Freud, do not suppose neuroses.

### ***The Jungian Self: Archetypes, and the Collective Unconscious***

For Freud, the unconscious was essentially the reservoir of all that is repressed, particularly unacceptable childhood memories and sexual desires. This represented one of the major points of departure between the two, and it is in Jung's concept of the unconscious that we will find some of the key ideas that will form the heart of this thesis. Both Freud and Jung felt that the means of exploring the unconscious were dreams, but both had very different ideas as to the significance of such dreams. For Freud, the significance could be traced to the libido, but Jung felt there was something altogether more universal than the repressed *sexual* libido of the individual. The libido, for Jung, was the source of psychic energy that was not

explicitly or exclusively linked to sexuality. In this, it was much closer to Nietzsche's will to power than Freud's formulation.

Like Freud's, Jung's theories evolved and shifted as he took on new perspectives. I cannot attempt to incorporate the full spectrum here. Instead, I will address only those issues I consider most useful, and limit myself to those hypotheses that have been corroborated by subsequent theorists with a foundation in naturalism. In other words, I will avoid those areas that demand metaphysical or mystical justifications.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Consciousness: Ego and Persona***

Before we explore Jung's theory of the unconscious, it is important to put this unconscious into the context of the whole 'Self.'<sup>34</sup> For Jung, the psyche is structured in a very different way to Freud's model, though Jung too adopts a tripartite structure. Rather than the It, I, and Over-I, Jung identifies the consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Consciousness itself is part of a wider collective consciousness, which we might compare with Freud's over-I. It consists of "generally accepted truths" (CW8 ¶423) which are the "beliefs, values and ideals that are supposedly held in common by members of a community, and that serve as a sort of common ideological basis or cultural ideal for the community" (Shelburne 30). I would extend this definition further and suggest that the collective consciousness refers not only to ideological or ethical aspects, but must include the forms of knowledge and ways of thinking that belong to that culture—in other words, the episteme.

The personal, subjective experience of individual consciousness is formed by the ego; it is the "I," the centre of consciousness. It is a mere fragment of a much larger whole in which consciousness plays only a small part. The ego consists of its own self-consciousness, and the persona (Latin for mask), or constructed public façade. The persona is the most consciously constructed element of the Self, it is that aspect that mediates with the world and determines our social functioning. The persona is entirely culturally and historically constructed:

Every calling or profession, for example, has its own characteristic persona. It is easy to study these things nowadays, when the photographs of public personalities so

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<sup>33</sup> See Walter A. Shelburne's *Mythos and Logos in the Thought of Carl Jung: The Theory of the Collective Unconscious in Scientific Perspective* for an exploration of the scientific methodology of Jung, especially chapter 6, which deals with the charges of mysticism often levelled at Jung (charges which Shelburne counters on the basis of Jung's tendency towards metaphorical and allegorical expression).

<sup>34</sup> When discussing Jung's notions of Self/self, it should be noted that *Self*, with a capital S, refers to the whole Self, including the unconscious; *self*, with a lower-case s, refers to the conscious self (or ego consciousness); the *self* is a small part of the *Self*.

frequently appear in the press. A certain kind of behaviour is forced on them by the world, and professional people endeavour to come up to these expectations. [...] One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is. (CW9a ¶221)

The word “persona” was deliberately chosen by Jung for this dissimulative aspect of the self. In 1928 Jung summarises the persona in clearly Nietzschean terms of protecting and hiding the true self:

The persona is a complicated system of relations between individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual. (CW7 ¶305)

Moreover, the persona is not as “individual” as one might think. It is instead a mask hewn from the collective psyche; it is “*a mask which simulates individuality*, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whilst one is only acting a part which the collective psyche speaks” (*Papers* 457).

When we analyse 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 individual and society as to what a man should appear to be. (CW7 ¶246)

Ego consciousness, therefore, of which the persona is part, is formed at least partially from the epistemic collective consciousness into which it is born, rendering the external self a cultural construct. However, ego consciousness is merely the tip of the iceberg.

### ***Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious***

Unconscious forces are definitively excluded from the possibility of being known by the conscious ego (CW9a ¶490). Given that the unconscious forms the larger part of the Self, its contents must be considered if we are to understand the nature of that Self. The unconscious, like consciousness, is divided in two: the personal and the collective. The contents of the unconscious, as well as the ego and persona, are described as archetypes, the definition of which is significant if we are to avoid the characteristic misunderstandings that arise from archetypal theory. I will begin with one of Jung’s many definitions:

‘Archetype’ is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic εἶδος. For our purposes this term is apposite and helpful, because it tells us that so far as the collective

unconscious contents are concerned we are dealing with archaic or—I would say—primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since the remotest times. (*CW9a* ¶5)

Here we see an instant, but perhaps misleading, connection between Plato's *eidōs*, or ideal form, and Jung's archetype. The Jungian archetype is not quite so nebulous a concept as the Platonic *eidōs*; it is for Jung a biological reality, a genetic phenomenon that informs the neurological structuring of the brain, something that has been written into our genetic code by millions of years of evolution: "Archetypes are systems of readiness for action, and at the same time images and emotions. They are inherited within the brain-structure—indeed, they are its psychic aspect" (qtd. in Shelburne 53). Brooke clarifies: "the archetypes are those typical patterns of adaptation that have been passed on through phylogenetic history, they tend to be realized in typical, or archetypal, situations, for example, initiation, abandonment, marriage, childbirth, parenting, menstruation, dawn and dusk, seasonal changes, death" (40). Whilst archetypes have a very close relationship with instincts, they are not equivalent. Rather, they are "the unconscious images of the instincts themselves, in other words, [...] they are *patterns of instinctual behaviour*" (*CW9a* ¶91).

Archetypal behaviours can be seen within animals as well as humans, such as the migratory habits of birds, the functioning of hives of bees or colonies of ants; they allow the animals to function without what we might term "consciousness." The human animal is born with a whole host of complex archetypal instincts and behaviours pre-programmed into the evolving brain, and these form the foundations upon which the human element of ego-consciousness is constructed (cf. *CW8* ¶435; *CW18* ¶1271).

John Ryan Haule, in *Jung in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, traces the evolution of Jung's concept of the archetype as it developed through time, noting the consistently evolutionary and biological rather than 'spiritual' basis for the concept. It is an *a priori*, species-specific behaviour pattern, an evolutionary genetic code through which we apprehend and structure the world, and which shapes our responses to it (*CW10*, ¶12; Haule 12-15). These codes are inherent within the human brain, hence universal features of humanity. However, their manifestation, whether in the means of organising social hierarchies or individual archetypal images, are culturally informed, which accounts for their variety as well as their commonalities:

The unconscious supplies as it were the archetypal form, which in itself is empty and irrepresentable. Consciousness immediately fills it with related or similar representational material so that it can be perceived. For this reason archetypal ideas

are locally, temporally and individually conditioned. (CW13 ¶476. Cf. Haule 18; Shelburne 36)

### ***Archetypal Images (or Symbols) and Numinosity***

Jung is at pains to point out that the “archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is *altered by becoming conscious* and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear” (CW9a ¶6, my italics). The archetype itself is unrepresentable. The collective unconscious “consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents” (CW9a ¶90). The systematization that occurs in myths and rituals demonstrates the fundamental alteration of the archetype in its conscious, historically and culturally informed representation. It is therefore important to make a distinction between archetypes and archetypal images, or *symbols*. The forms in which such archetypes find their symbolic manifestations are the archetypal images of dreams, myths and fairytales.<sup>35</sup>

The symbol, as archetypal image, is distinct from the sign in that the symbol possesses what Jung terms “numinosity,” the numen being the specific energy of the archetype (Shelburne 44). Jung states the “symbol [...] unites the antithesis between real and unreal, because on the one hand it is a psychic reality (on account of its efficacy), while on the other it corresponds to no physical reality” (*ibid.*). Numinosity is less an ethereal ‘power’ as a measure of the affective power of the symbol, or archetypal image, which lessens over time as its symbolic nature potentially degenerates into sign alone, with recognised, knowable referents in the knowable (concrete or conceptual) world.

A word or image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider “unconscious” aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. [...] As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason. (Jung, qtd. in Shelburne 43)

This process of the reification (hence degradation) of symbols into signs occurs when myths become commonplace and lose their original connections to archetypes (49).

### ***Universal Archetypes and Cultural Diversity***

Whilst the archetypes are universal, their symbolic manifestations are by necessity culturally determined, which, rather than demanding homogeneity, allow for the full diversity of cultural difference. Jung states: “The collective unconscious is simply the psychic expression

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<sup>35</sup> See CW9a ¶492; cf. Brooke 40.

of the identity of brain structure irrespective of all racial differences” (qtd. in Shelburne 32).

Shelburne continues:

Moreover, one archetype may be emphasized in one culture but not in another. Due to the ambiguity of [the] collective psyche, then, Jung can discuss significant differences in the collective psyches of different groups due to cultural determinants while still maintaining the essential uniformity of the collective unconscious itself. (33)

If we take cultural differences to be temporal as well as geographical, we see how diversity is not only possible, but inevitable. This also highlights another important issue, namely the myth that particular archetypes must be perpetually prevalent. As Shelburne points out, “one archetype may be emphasized in one culture but not in another”; it therefore follows that, given the culture of today is not the same culture as a century ago, there is no reason to presume continuity in the prevalence or dominance of a particular archetype from one to the next.

### *Some Specific Archetypes*

The unconscious, like consciousness, is divided into the personal and the collective. The personal unconscious is the home of “the Shadow,” an archetypal negative of our own ego, the storehouse of all that we have repressed:

The shadow coincides with the “personal” unconscious (which corresponds to Freud’s conception of the unconscious). [...] The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly—for instance, inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies. (*CW9a* ¶513)

Jung, like Nietzsche, is concerned with the process of self-fulfilment, or individuation, the struggle to “know thyself,” to “Become what thou art” (Nietzsche, *TSZ* 192). This process is one that begins with a confrontation with one’s shadow, which can be a frightening experience, and which he likens to a doorway, after which is “a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no above and no below, no here and no there, no mine and no thine, no good and no bad” (*CW9a* ¶45). Jungian drama therapist Sue Jennings uses the mask as a protective tool when progress with her clients stalls: “I use masks to express aspects of the self that usually could not be expressed [...]. The mask is especially a safe container of the ‘self that is dangerous,’ or the ‘self that feels dangerous.’” (189-90). In other words, it allows the subject to bypass the

superficial layer of the persona and provide Nietzschean protection in the encounter with the Shadow.

Along with the shadow, the other archetype to exist within the personal unconscious is that of the anima or animus. Jung claims that “in the unconscious of every man there is hidden a feminine personality, and in that of every woman a masculine personality” (*CW9a* ¶511). The anima is the feminine within the male, and the animus is the masculine within the female. Central to this is the archetypal syzygy: “from the very beginning, from the son’s earliest childhood, the mother was assimilated to the archetypal idea of the syzygy, or conjunction of male and female, and for this reason appeared perfect and super-human” (*CW9a* ¶138), thus implying that gendered identity is in some ways flawed and that androgyny represents an ideal. This is symptomatic of a central theme in Jung’s work, which is the striving towards balance, equilibrium and the union of opposites.

Jung never provides an exhaustive list of archetypes, and claims that to do so would be impossible. However, he does identify some, two of which—the Trickster and the Hero—will be relevant to specific masks in Part II, and will be explicated in due course. The chaotic pleroma of the collective psyche is populated with gods and monsters and all the other archetypal images that exist within it, and which find their systematized expression within the fabric of any given culture, its folklore, its demons and spirits, its religions, its myths and its fairytales, and, of course, its masks (explored in Part II). Such archetypes not only shape our culture, but exist within ourselves; they form a crucial part of our psyche. Following the Socratic/Platonic, and later Hegelian, tradition, any true separation of the individual from the collective becomes impossible: the individual is as much a part of the collective as the collective is part of the individual. Jung claims that “there are present in every living psyche forms which are unconscious but nonetheless active—living dispositions [...] that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions” (*CW9a* ¶154), thus negating the prospect of pure autonomy. Furthermore, these archetypes are intrinsically transgressive. They “continually go beyond their frame of reference, an infringement to which I would give the name ‘transgressivity’” (*Synchronicity* 99). Jung attributes this transgressive nature to the fact that archetypes are not governed by mechanistic or causal laws, but are in fact a precondition of those laws, “the chance substrate on which law is based” (*ibid.*). The relatively unpredictable, irrational nature of emotions, instincts and drives are testament to the transgressivity of archetypes, which again diminishes the potential for true autonomy.

## PART 3: JUNG, NIETZSCHE, AND THE UNION OF OPPOSITES

According to Jung, the Self is a conglomerate of opposing drives:

Nothing in us ever remains quite uncontradicted, and consciousness can take up no position which will not call up, somewhere in the dark corners of the psyche, a negation or a compensatory effect, approval or resentment. This process of coming to terms with the Other in us is well worth while, because in this way we get to know aspects of our nature which we would not allow anybody else to show us and which we ourselves would never have admitted. (CW14 ¶706)

This issue of inherent opposition is the central theme to the study by Lucy Huskinson, *Nietzsche and Jung: The Whole Self in the Union of Opposites*, and it is in this book that many of the central concerns of this exploration are addressed. Perhaps the most significant idea that Huskinson addresses is the question of reconciliation and balance and the structural apparatus required in order to affect such a balance. She contrasts the approaches of Jung and Nietzsche in their structural approaches. For Nietzsche, balance is at the heart of the *Übermensch*, and is striven for in terms of opposition. It is Huskinson's contention that Jung's Self was a reformulation of the *Übermensch*, but that the fundamental difference was the necessity of the third thing:

[...] for Nietzsche and Jung, the symbol<sup>36</sup> is a source of creativity; [...] they also regard it as that which mediates between the opposites, thereby enabling their synthesis. [...] According to Jung, the symbol is 'a third thing' that lies outside of the opposites; creativity must come from outside the individual, so that the whole self is a matter of *discovery*. For Nietzsche, however, the symbol is inherent within the opposites themselves, so that creativity is found within the individual, and the whole self is a matter of *creation*. (3-4)

Jung argues: "If a union is to take place between opposites like spirit and matter, [...] conscious and unconscious [...] it will happen in a third thing, which represents not a compromise but something new" (CW8 ¶189, cf. Huskinson 70), though Huskinson laments that, beyond its functioning as a symbol, Jung never says what this third thing might be. Central to my hypothesis is that the mask may function as this third thing, and that it is in this dynamic, enabling and symbolic capacity that the mask operates by means of negating the persona.

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<sup>36</sup> Described previously by Huskinson in Jungian terms as something that is "in part conscious and in part unconscious—a dynamic living entity that expresses something that is not fully graspable" (2).



Nietzsche's emphasis on unifying opposing drives, or rather managing them in dynamic, creative tension, is made clear in *Ecce Homo* ("Zarathustra" §6): "It is precisely in [...] this access to opposites that Zarathustra feels himself to be the *highest species of all living things*" (qtd. in Huskinson 30). In *Will to Power*, Nietzsche claims that "Greatness of character does not consist in not possessing these affects [or opposing forces]—on the contrary, one possesses them to the highest degree—but in having them under control" (§928). Nietzsche's aristocratic notions of the *Übermensch* are mirrored by Jung:

[...] every step towards fuller consciousness removes him from his original, purely animal *participation mystique* with the herd, from submersion in a common unconsciousness. Every step forward means tearing oneself loose from the maternal womb of unconsciousness in which the mass of men dwell. (*Modern Man* 201)

In the common herd, the ego is determined by the social group, and so the question of agency is arguably quite simple: it is external and exists within the community. The process of individuation is the confrontation with various archetypes, which one must assimilate and master, thus individuation is a question of generating agency—a will to power. For Nietzsche, this process involves embracing the multiplicity of selves, of gaining as many perspectives as possible. For Jung, the Self exists primarily in the unconscious, and that which exists in the unconscious by definition cannot exist in the conscious, and so any encounter with the Self is always an encounter with the other. I will argue that the mask, as symbol, facilitates an encounter with the Self, necessarily experienced as an encounter with the Other.

### ***Multiplicity without Cartesian Dualism***

Both Nietzsche and Jung were opposed to the dualism of body and mind, both seeking conceptual reunification. Nietzsche's claims about the body have already been addressed (pp.56 above). Jung makes similar claims:

The body is the guarantee of consciousness, and consciousness is the instrument by which the meaning is created. There would be no meaning if there were no consciousness, and since there is no consciousness without body, there can be no meaning without the body. (*Nietzsche's Zarathustra* I, 350, qtd. in Huskinson 94)

Moreover, Jung addresses the idealism-materialism problem by suggesting a form of co-dimensionality:<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> An idea later taken up by Francis Crick (who helped to discover the structure of DNA) amongst others (see Haule p.71).

Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world, and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest on irrepresentable, transcendental factors, it is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing. (CW8 ¶418)

Here there is a form of materialism implied, but one that does not reduce the psyche to a secondary factor or effect. The sort of materialism Jung would have been familiar with, particularly through his friendship with quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli, is a particularly destabilised form of materialism in which matter behaves in simultaneously opposing and incompatible ways (see pp.94-96 below). The Self, like matter itself, is paradoxical: “The self is a union of opposites par excellence [...] the self, however, is absolutely paradoxical in that it presents in every respect thesis and antithesis, and at the same time synthesis... it is itself both conflict and unity” (CW12 ¶22). This highlights an important philosophical difference between Jung and Nietzsche—the language Jung uses is that of dialectics, suggesting that the Jungian process of individuation is dialectical. This departure may also account for the externality of the Jungian ‘third thing’ as opposed to the internality of Nietzsche’s.

#### CONCLUSION

The existential problems encountered in the previous chapters find themselves framed in the modern age by new questions. The key shifts most pertinent to this investigation are as follows:

- 1) Concern with the cosmological, spiritual, or *divine* aspect of the soul is no longer prevalent, and the religious aspects of selfhood are now more generally considered to be psychological (or archetypal) aspects of the internal self, a matter of private belief rather than public concern.
- 2) The tripartite model of the self, dating back to Plato, remains central, though its formerly reflexive, external nature is now fundamentally internalised as the structure of the inner psyche.
- 3) The self as an isolated object for scientific enquiry becomes increasingly evident.
- 4) The issue of agency, or will, becomes increasingly important and complex.

The influence of Nietzsche on the development of psychoanalysis is also significant, both in relation to Freud and to Jung, as the phenomenon of internality grows to the extent that it

requires the development of its own science.<sup>38</sup> The relegation of religious or spiritual concerns to psychological factors also reinforces Nietzsche's claims about the death of god, which suggests a rupture between the self and the 'divine' in much the same way as we saw a rupture between the self and the body under the Catholic Church in the previous chapter. This leaves us with an interesting existential question, which will be addressed in the next chapter: *Now that the self has experienced significant existential ruptures between itself and both the body and the soul, what, if anything, is left?*

Moreover, the emphasis on the internal self of the Nietzschean and psychoanalytical approaches does not seem to paint a complete picture beyond the casting of the external self as a façade or persona. More attention is needed to identify and analyse what this remaining construct actually is. To suggest that it is a Jungian persona is well enough, but unfortunately Jung does not provide us with the tools to analyse the nature of that persona, or the societal factors that construct it. Furthermore, whilst Nietzsche provides us with an extremely useful philosophical framework, his historiography is often deeply suspect, liable to sweeping generalisations, assumptions, and more than a little golden-age nostalgia for his own culturally loaded vision of ancient Greece. For example, the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy, whilst providing an extremely fruitful conceptual framework, is not a dichotomy the Greeks themselves identified. Consequently, we must look elsewhere for two important features: 1) a more forensic methodology with which to tackle the external world, as opposed to the internal and the unconscious, and 2) a more rigorous historiographical methodology. These will be provided in the next chapter.

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<sup>38</sup> For a fuller discussion of the influence of Nietzsche on Freud, see Paul-Laurent Assoun's *Freud and Nietzsche*.

## CHAPTER 4: POSTMODERNITY, NEUROLOGY AND THE QUANTUM SELF

This chapter will examine alternatives to the psychoanalytical approach explored in the previous chapter. Part 1 will focus on Michel Foucault and his rejection of psychoanalysis in favour of the human subject as historical construct, one in which the subject, within the contemporary episteme, is in a state of paradox, a sort of philosophical stalemate he calls the *analytic of finitude*, a concept that will provide the central critical and historical framework for my investigation in Part II. I will also challenge some of Foucault's thinking as forming an incomplete picture, missing the essential ingredient of human nature, which, I will argue, is implicitly filled by his overtly Nietzschean approach.

Part 2 will examine the self from a more scientific perspective, beginning with neurology, focusing on two opposing approaches that are directly resonant with the theories of Jung and Foucault respectively. I will then move on to look at the issue of materialism versus idealism from the perspective of the scientific crisis that split physics into two incongruent parts—the Newtonian and the Quantum—a rupture that completely destabilises any possibility of a complete, materialist approach to selfhood, or indeed anything else, on the grounds that the very nature of matter itself becomes paradoxical. I will then take this forward to examine the prospect of the quantum self, particularly the ostensibly esoteric theory of quantum physicist, Amit Goswami, which will be shown to be concordant with Jungian theory. The main purpose of this scientific exploration is to illustrate the scientific as well as philosophical feasibility of my central thesis rather than forming a central part of it.

Immediately following this, I will draw Part I of this investigation to a close, highlighting the most important issues, framing the central questions, and outlining the philosophical model I will proceed with in Part II. I will argue that, despite their apparent incompatibility, both Jung and Foucault can be used in tandem, via their common Nietzschean heritage, to form a holistic and workable critical approach.

However, before commencing my investigation into Foucault, it is worth pointing out that another important figure, Jacques Lacan, is one that I will not be addressing directly at this stage. The main reason for this is that Lacan's focus is explicitly language ("the unconscious is structured like a language" is something of a Lacanian catchphrase<sup>39</sup>) whereas, for the purposes of this investigation, whose central thesis revolves around the

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<sup>39</sup> In *Seminar XI* alone, Lacan asserts that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (with a couple of minor variations in syntax) no fewer than fourteen times.

mask, Jung's theories focus much more on image than on language, and are consequently much more useful. This is not to dismiss the importance of Lacan in the development of twentieth century thought, and occasional reference will be made to him where appropriate, but explication will be given as and where necessary as opposed to dedicating a significant section to him at this stage.

PART 1: MICHEL FOUCAULT (1926-84)—SELF AS SOCIO-HISTORICAL  
CONSTRUCT

Michel Foucault is one of the most important figures of the postmodern, poststructuralist age. He attempted, amongst other things, to trace a history of systems of thought, to identify what it was and, significantly, was not possible to think during different historical eras. His main focus was the modern human sciences (such as biology, psychology, sociology), which, according to Foucault, purport to offer scientific 'facts' about the subject that are in reality expressions of the ideological discourse of a given society. Foucault's 'critical philosophy' seeks to undermine these claims to "truth" by exposing their ideological context and genealogy (Gutting, "Foucault"). He traces the development in Western civilisation of how the self, or rather subject, has been conceived. Foucault rejects the psychoanalytic approach primarily on the grounds of Freud's approach to sexuality, or rather, his establishment of a "science" of sexuality that was to 'denature' it and bring it into the realm of discourse and the relations of power (Foucault, "Transgression" 29, see p.102 below). His main area of interest was those on the margins of society; for him, the best way to view a particular society was from the perspective of those who were excluded or marginalised by it, particularly the 'insane' (*Madness and Civilisation*), the 'criminal' (*Discipline and Punish*) and the 'sexually deviant' (*History of Sexuality*). Foucault's interest was less in the problem of human nature, and more in the epistemes of the societies in which people function, and which in turn construct the human subject. Foucault does not explicitly deny the existence of human nature, rather as Paul Rabinow observes in his introduction to *The Foucault Reader*, he "changes the subject and examines the social functions that such concepts have played" throughout history (4).

One of the first and most important things to note about Foucault is that he does not offer a unified system or model of the self, rather, he offers specific methodologies with which to approach particular problems, and so the temptation to discern a coherent model or consistent definition of the self must be resisted. In his introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, Gary Gutting advises us "to regard Foucault as an intellectual

artisan, someone who over the years constructed a variety of artefacts, the intellectual equivalents of the material objects created by a skilled goldsmith or cabinetmaker” (6); his theories are not intended as “permanent structures” but as “temporary scaffolding, erected for a specific purpose” (16). Nonetheless, despite the lack of a unified theory, which would arguably be ideologically anathema to any Foucauldian schemata, there are certain important aspects to Foucault’s developing view of the self that are highly significant within the postmodern, poststructuralist era.

Given the nature of Foucault’s output, it is not my intention to examine the totality of his work. Rather it is to address only those areas that are most pertinent to this study in order to identify, where possible, some fundamental principles. Perhaps the first and most interesting Foucauldian assertion to explore is the “end of man,” a statement deliberately evocative of Nietzsche’s ‘Death of God.’

### ***The End of Man and the Analytic of Finitude***

Foucault identifies the post-nineteenth century, post-Kantian episteme<sup>40</sup> as defined by the “analytic of finitude” in which the possibility of becoming the object of knowledge as well as the subject that knows arises (see pp.29-31 above). This double being, or doublet, is what Foucault refers to as ‘man’ (hereafter signalled by quotation marks to distinguish between it and the more normal use of the word). In order to proceed, we must clarify the field and the terms.

The field of Foucauldian analysis in terms of the analytic of finitude is that of representation. In the ‘classical’ era (between the end of the renaissance and the late eighteenth century, roughly coterminous with the Enlightenment), this assumed an equivalence between signifier and signified; the system of signification is not itself analysed. Once the system of representation becomes a focus of analysis, man as observer—formerly *outside* the system—is no longer separate from it, but is drawn into the system as that which, on the one hand, creates the representation and so represents, and on the other, is represented. Man becomes not just the observer but also the observed. This irreconcilable “doublet” is what Foucault refers to as ‘man,’ whose epistemic condition is the untenable analytic of finitude. ‘Analytic’ refers not to the practice or particular modality of analysis, but to the conditions that make that analysis possible. ‘Finitude’ refers both to factual limitations (or positivities) and to the possibility of fact (or fundamentals), which is made possible by those

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<sup>40</sup> An episteme is “the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities” (Foucault qtd. in Dreyfus & Rabinow 18).

limitations. It refers to the finitude of man, or rather 'man's position necessarily *inside* the analytic. Thus 'man' is characterised by the untenable position of being at once *outside* the system he seeks to analyse, whilst that system is that which contains him.

Dreyfus and Rabinow summarise the problem as man becoming not only the subject and object of knowledge, but also as "organiser of the spectacle in which he appears" (29). 'Man's finitude is defined by the limitations of his knowledge, but these limitations, in the absence of God, must have been imposed on himself *by* himself. Thus 'man' may claim total knowledge by virtue of his limitations as those limitations were imposed, hence defined, by himself. Thus 'man's finitude refers to his factual limitations (positivities) and to the possibility of those facts existing in the first place (fundamentals), of which he is a condition. It is worth citing Dreyfus and Rabinow's summary of the problem:

Modernity begins with the incredible and ultimately unworkable idea of a being who is sovereign precisely by virtue of being enslaved, a being whose very finitude allows him to take the place of God. This startling idea, which breaks forth full blown in Kant, that "the limits of knowledge provide a positive foundation for the possibility of knowing" (OT 317), Foucault calls the analytic of finitude. (30)

Foucault identifies three dichotomous ways in which the positivities, or factual limitations, are both distinct from and equal to the fundamentals, or the possibilities of those facts:

- 1) *The Empirical and the Transcendental* (OT 318-22): This refers to the idea that the Kantian opposites of empirical and *a priori* transcendental knowledge become enmeshed to the point of being phenomenally and functionally equivalent. Foucault states that the "threshold of our modernity is situated not by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called *man*" (319). The distinction between the two forms of knowledge that constitute 'man,' the first being that which operates within the empirical space of the body, the second being that which is culturally given through history as "a sort of transcendental dialectic" (*ibid.*), is muddled by the fact that historical, transcendental knowledge is "formed within the relations that are woven between men" (*ibid.*) and as such has an empirical basis or function. In other words, the transcendental is the empirical.
- 2) *The 'Cogito' and the Unthought* (322-28): This refers to our quest for knowledge and understanding. Our quest for self-knowledge represents the allure of the unthought:
 

Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the *episteme* without thought at the same time discovering, both in itself and outside itself,

at its borders yet also in its very warp and woof, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught. (326)

As such, the *unthought* represents the Other, which is equal to self-knowledge, thus equating self and other within the same epistemic being, an Other that is *equivalent* to the self, *within* the self, yet *beyond* the self: “modern thought is advancing towards that region where man’s Other must become the same as himself” (328).

- 3) *The Retreat and Return of the Origin* (328-35): This refers to the paradox of the doomed search for origins. The main paradox being that any discovery of the origins (of man, culture, language, etc.) lies perpetually in the future, which posits our origins in the future. This is symptomatic of the difficulty of man existing in time. Dreyfus and Rabinow recall Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein*,<sup>41</sup> which is described as a clearing in which objects and events can occur, but which are not equivalent with that clearing (39). The clearing itself is the possibility of its contents; as such, man is the condition and possibility of time and its contents which, paradoxically, have always “already begun” (Foucault, *OT* 330). These contents of ‘man’s temporal experience, real and imagined, including his own origins, “belong to a time that has neither the same standards of measurement nor the same foundations as him” (*ibid.*). This renders the impossibility of temporal equivalence ontological: man cannot be contemporaneous with himself (332). The “original in man” is that which “introduces into his experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master; it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the centre of the duration of things” (331). ‘Man’ exists both inside and outside of time: in measurable, empirical time and in some other *mythical* time, or times. He is both the possibility of time as well as the condition of his own temporal experience; he is the cause, effect, the experience of both, and the impossibility of either. In short, he is the incongruous nexus of both empirical and mythical time.

Thus the analytic of finitude, for Foucault, represents the absurd position of the modern epistemic ‘man,’ which is unsustainable, and which is what he refers to when he heralds

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<sup>41</sup> Heidegger defines *Dasein* (being-in-the-world-with) as follows: “Self and world belong together in the single entity, the *Dasein*. Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the *Dasein* itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world” (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* 297). The *Dasein* is not only located in its physical and cultural environment, but also its temporal, historical environment, thereby rendering it *contextualised* and *future-directed*: objects and people are entirely context dependant for their meaning, therefore identity.



inevitable “end of man” (385). Moreover, Foucault equates the ‘end of man’ directly with Nietzsche’s ‘death of God’ in terms of liberation from an oppressive episteme:

Nietzsche indicated the turning point from a long way off, it is not so much the absence or the death of God that is affirmed as the end of man [...]. Rather than the death of God—or, rather, in the wake of that death and in a profound correlation with it—what Nietzsche’s thought heralds is the end of his murderer; it is the explosion of man’s face in laughter, and the return of masks [...]. (385)

### ***The Subject and Power***

The one constant within Foucault’s exploration of the subject is the perpetual operation of power, both by it and upon it. Foucault sees power as central to the system of relationships into which the individual is born and in which the subject is created. In his early works, Foucault’s focus was on power as exercised by the state or by carceral institutions, but he later came to view power as disseminated throughout, operating within, and constitutive of, the whole matrix of human relationships. As Stuart Barnett observes in his introduction to *Hegel after Derrida*, in Foucault’s system, “the human and the culture it is a moment of—in all its discursive and non-discursive practices, no matter how seemingly mundane—become a signifying system in which the stakes are always power” (23). Foucault, particularly in *Discipline and Punish*, details how the state and its institutions exercise power over the individual, creating a population of “docile bodies” that are easily controllable. Barnett notes that, whilst Foucault identifies the operations of power, he does not offer any concrete means of resistance to it. However, whilst Foucault offers no direct strategies of protest, his identification of the functioning of power and the means and strategies by which it operates offers the implicit possibility of resisting this power through knowledge and awareness of its strategies. On this level, knowledge equals power. However, whilst power is a central theme in Foucault’s work, he never offers a satisfactory definition of what power is. In “The Subject and Power,” Foucault characteristically evades the question *what is power?* by addressing instead *how is it exercised?* (EW3 336-39). But as Dreyfus and Rabinow ask in their conclusion to *Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*:

What is power? It cannot be a merely external force organizing local interactions; nor can it be reduced to the totality of individual interactions, since in an important way it produces interaction and individuals. And yet, if it is to be a useful notion, something specific has to be said about its status. How can power be, at the same time, a

productive principle in the practices themselves, and a merely heuristic principle used for giving the practices a retroactive intelligibility? (207)

Whilst Foucault is reluctant to address the question of where power comes from, it is clear from his corpus that it exists as a function of relationships, and so we may reasonably conclude that the operation of power within those relationships comes from the individuals that comprise them. And if power exists as a function of that relationship, it must proceed from the *willing* of that power if we are to escape the metaphysical conclusion of it being an “external force organising local interactions.” As such, Nietzsche’s hypothesis of the will to power may well provide a workable plug to the Foucauldian lacuna, given that the gaping hole seems to be missing, perhaps more than anything, the basic concept of the human drive, or *will*.<sup>42</sup> Foucault later acknowledged this in “The Subject and Power,” claiming that “at the heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom” (EW3 342). He does not go on to expand upon or define this will, but his recognition of it and its recalcitrant nature is revealing. I suggest it is equivalent to Nietzsche’s will to power.

### ***Genealogy and Nature versus Nurture***

The archaeological approach, whilst particularly useful in Foucault’s early explorations, is a very limited approach. For example, it is unable to account for the ruptures between one historical mode of thinking and the next. It adopts a synchronic position and is unable to account for diachronic causality, progression or transition. The genealogical approach, first encountered in *Discipline and Punish*, was intended to remedy this (Gutting “Foucault”). Genealogy was a term used with the intent of evoking Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals* (*ibid.*), and its method was intended to develop the synchronic, archaeological discoveries and set them within a diachronic setting, demonstrating how one system of thought, through transition and progress, or accident and rupture, gave way or developed into another. The aim was to demonstrate how epistemic changes were the result of “contingent turns of history” (*ibid.*) and not part of some inevitable eschatological or Hegelian/dialectical march towards an ideal or prescribed end.

The genealogist’s interest in origins lies in the negation rather than the affirmation of ordinary essence. The objection, according to Foucault’s “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” is

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<sup>42</sup> See Teresa de Lauretis’ “The Stubborn Drive” for an account of Foucault’s attacks on Freud, and the suggestion that Freud’s concept of the libido is what is missing in Foucauldian analyses and therefore any potential models of selfhood. Cf. Joel Whitebook’s “Freud, Foucault and ‘the dialogue with unreason’” and “Against Interiority: Foucault’s Struggle with Psychoanalysis.”

to the notion that the essence is to be found at the source, or ‘miraculous birth’ (Rabinow 79). Foucault cites Nietzsche’s *The Dawn of Day*, §49, in his rejection of an essentialist view of origins: “We wished to awaken the feeling of man’s sovereignty by showing his divine birth: this path is now forbidden, since a monkey stands at the entrance” (*ibid.*). The monkey at the door that denies our divine origin means that the genealogist must examine *what-it-is* rather than *what-it-was* if one is to account for any sort of essence. This essence, for Foucault, is itself illusory:

[...] if [the genealogist] listens to history, he finds that there is ‘something altogether different’ behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms. (78)

This has significant implications on the body:

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body. (83)

As such, Foucault’s concept of humanity can be identified as being explicitly and exclusively constructivist. Yet Foucault was unable to sustain this position without explicit recourse to human nature to support his thinking: his reliance on a Nietzschean model places instinct and drive right at the very heart of the individual, as does his own statement on the “recalcitrance of the will” (above). Foucault’s focus on the subject as that which is subjugated is entirely in line with Nietzsche’s concept of the subject, which is synonymous with the soul (*GM I* §13), and is the direct result of the repression, or “turn[ing] inwards” of the instincts (*GM II* §16).

Foucault develops Nietzsche’s concept of the soul in *Discipline and Punish*:

It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, and within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished [...]. [It] is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. [...] The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body. (29-30)

However, if this Nietzschean concept of the soul is to work, there must be something to punish and constrain. As such, whilst the *subject* may be a socio-historical construct that is violently imprinted upon the body, the body itself is the locus of the ‘recalcitrant will’ that

must be countered—this “will” must, I would argue, be the primitive and animating instincts and drives of the human animal. Thus Foucault’s constructivist approach demands an essentialist counterpoint in order for power to function, for it to have something to function on. The self must comprise *both* elements working in opposition: 1) the internal, natural, genetic and instinctive self of the physical, *willing* body, and 2) the external, historico-cultural pressures of the society into which it is born and which attempts to dominate it and to articulate (or *will*) itself on and through that body, both of which (the body and the society) pre-exist the self that inhabits them. Thus, the ‘already there’ into which ‘man’ is born is the will to power, of which (to borrow Marxist terminology) the episteme is but the superstructure.

### ***The Analytic of Finitude Revised***

Whilst the condition of the analytic of finitude remained as Foucault described it in *The Order of Things*, he revised his formulation of it in 1982, positing its birth with Descartes rather than Kant, suggesting the real moment was when:

Descartes said: philosophy is sufficient alone for knowledge, and Kant completed this by saying: if knowledge has limits, these limits exist entirely within the structure of the knowing subject, that is to say in precisely what makes knowledge possible. (*HS* 26n)

Kant merely provided the “supplementary twist” (190) to Descartes’ uncoupling of philosophy, as concerned with knowledge, and theology, as concerned with ‘truth.’ Significantly, Foucault now saw the analytic of finitude not as a matter of the problems of language, but as the separation of philosophy from spirituality; philosophy, as a result of Descartes’ radical doubt, no longer needed theology to confirm its own truth (see p.48-50 above).

Spirituality,<sup>43</sup> for Foucault, is a matter of ‘care of the self’ (or *epimeleia hautou*) and ‘knowledge of self’ (or *gnōthi seauton*), and is the process through which one may affect transformations upon oneself—transformations of self-improvement that prepare the way for revelation or truth (*HS* 242). Cartesianism meant that no transformation was necessary (*HS* 190); the subject becomes capable of ‘truth’ without the necessity for *epimeleia hautou*, hence the process of despiritualisation began, or rather, was accelerated. Béatrice Han summarises: “The aporiae of the Analytic of Finitude now appear as the long-term

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<sup>43</sup> The French ‘*esprit*’ does not translate easily into English, and so the concept of spirituality here is perhaps best interpreted in this context as theological truth.

consequence of the epistemologisation of philosophy to the detriment of its spiritual dimension” (198). Foucault concluded that philosophy needs to divorce, or rather ‘emancipate’ itself from science (201) if it is to become meaningful and useful and escape the impasse of modern ‘man.’ Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* once again provides a solution in that it recognises the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental as a fundamental mistake (*ibid.*); it provides philosophy with a necessary degree of spirituality. In other words, the *Übermensch* demands perpetual *epimeleia hautou* and *gnōthi seauton* in the perpetuity of transformational self-overcoming. Foucault, in what seems an unlikely move, thereby calls for a re-spiritualisation, or re-mythologisation, of the episteme.

### ***Technologies of the Self***

Around this time, Foucault identified what he termed as four main “Technologies of the Self,” by which he referred to four main means by which power operates on and through the constructed self. However, this model allows space for the constructed self to be at least partially self-determining, even resisted, which suggests a discrepancy between the “self” that is constructed by the discourse of external power and the possibility of exercising power oneself. Foucault defines these technologies as follows:

- (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things;
- (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification;
- (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject;
- (4) technologies of self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

(“Technologies” 18)

Foucault does not significantly elaborate on the first two technologies, stating that the latter two are of most interest to him. Moreover, he does not elaborate on the apparent tautology of his decision to name his whole system after the fourth technology in his list, though the focus of his writing would seem to suggest that this was to provide his main interest in the project. The latter are likewise of more interest here, and will provide the focus in Part II.

The interesting point to note at this stage is that Foucault does not address the issue of who deploys these technologies of self. The key question must be: who or what utilises these technologies “so as to transform themselves” if the self is purely a construct? There must be

something behind these technologies—there must be a drive or will to deploy them and to affect such transformations. Moreover, given that these technologies are concerned with power and domination, this will must be a will to power, a proposition further reinforced by the fact that the Nietzschean will to power is the central feature of the ideal of the *Übermensch*, whose state is one of perpetual self-overcoming, or transformation.

### ***Foucault's Mythic Structure: The Hero and the Monster***

Finally, in my exploration of Foucault, I wish to take a step back and highlight how Foucault's rejection of underlying mythic structures is, perhaps unconsciously (accepting of course Foucault's apparent rejection of the unconscious), undermined by his own narrative. Despite Foucault's rejection of Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach to the underlying mythic structure of things (Grace & McHoul 1-2), there is to be found within his own work a very clear mythic, even *archetypal* structure in the Jungian sense. Gutting identifies the power of Foucault's works as lying not only in their intellectual prowess or their "carefully wrought histories and theories," but in the "much less consciously developed, deeply emotional myths that inform many of his books" which "take the traditional form of a struggle between monsters and heroes" (*Companion* 21). Furthermore, whilst the form of the monster differs as Foucault's focus shifts, they are "all manifestations of the grand bogeyman of French intellectuals since Flaubert: bourgeois society" (*ibid.*). The hero, on the other hand, is the individual, the self, battling against the dominating powers of bourgeois hegemony. As such, Foucault valorises certain marginalised figures, 'mad artists' such as de Sade, Nietzsche, van Gogh and Artaud, instinctively transgressive outsiders afforded the luxury of honesty and clarity not unlike the medieval fool who "stands center stage as the guardian of truth" (Foucault, *Madness* 14). These valorised 'mad artist' figures are archetypal outsiders, fools and magicians all, elements of the Trickster archetype (see chapter 7). Each of these is associated, like the Jungian Trickster, with transgression, with primitive, chthonic forces, with a certain libidinal, primal energy, with drives and with particular insights and quasi-esoteric sagacity. They are Shadows of the bourgeois "bogeymen of French intellectuals," speaking from *outside* the bourgeois order of things. In this, Foucault adheres to an underlying mythic narrative, implicitly confirming the universals he would seek to deny.

### ***Conclusion***

Foucault offers a highly perceptive and useful approach to historical selfhood and the construction of the hermeneutic subject, but his approach alone would appear to be marked by gaping lacunae that fail to explain some of the deeper questions pertaining to the nature of

the self—a nature which Foucault will not discuss, preferring instead to focus on the nature of the discourse surrounding it. His methodology provides us with valuable tools with which to identify and analyse key historical shifts in the hermeneutics of the subject, and to identify ruptures in the developing concept of selfhood, especially pertaining to the development of modern ‘man’ and the analytic of finitude, a concept which I find both compelling and resonant with my investigation. Consequently, along with Nietzsche and Jung, as will be discussed more fully in the conclusion to Part I, I feel that Foucault’s historical methodology provides an excellent model with which to investigate the historical significance of the theatrical mask in relation to the question of selfhood (and vice versa) in Part II. Foucault’s focus on the inscribed body and his acquiescence with Nietzsche that the soul is an aspect of the body places him, I would suggest, within the tradition of the exploration of *autos* in chapter 1, in contrast to Jung who would appear to be more in the tradition of the *psychē* of chapter 2. Rather than favour one approach over the other, I will endeavour to use both in tandem on the grounds that both provide us with important perspectives, and the use of both makes for a fuller, richer and more layered exploration.

## PART 2: THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

By way of introducing this section, it is perhaps just as important to say what this section is *not* as to say what it *is*. This section is not intended to develop or offer any specifically scientific hypotheses, or to provide an exhaustive or comprehensive survey of all the relevant scientific research into the concept of selfhood. Nor is it intended to claim any specific scientific expertise on my behalf. The purpose is to identify some relevant scientific developments and theories that may help shed light on the central problem, and to argue that my own theories are in themselves scientifically justifiable. I hope to show that within the scientific community there is little agreement, and certainly no conclusive definition, regarding the phenomenon of selfhood, and that, further than this, certain concepts that a cultural theorist may find relatively stable, such as that of material(ism), is far less stable than it at first appears. There are some respected figures within the scientific community who not only reject the concept of a self as thing, but who reject the very basis of a material universe. On the other hand, there are some highly useful scientific and neurological phenomena that directly support and add tangible credence to my thesis, such as that of neuroplasticity, which will be relevant later in this study. Some of the major revolutions in science in the twentieth century, such as that of quantum mechanics, would radically shift the grounds on which

previous debates on the nature of the human animal were founded. As such, much as philosophy could not ignore the scientific Copernican revolution, neither can any investigation into the self ignore our knowledge of the matter that constitutes it, the environment in which it functions, nor the neural mechanisms and electrical impulses by which it operates.

### ***Neurology***

Sigmund Freud began his career as a neurologist, and his psychoanalytic investigations grew out of his neurological studies. Needless to say, since that time our scientific understanding of neurology has changed radically. When the unconscious is spoken of in neurology, it tends to refer not to some dark recess of the repressed mind, but to physical processes that go on without our conscious awareness. Neurologists have discovered that within the brain there are billions of synapses, neurons, axons and dendrites, with various neurological functions and centres that control our physical being, but despite these advances, an identifiable neurological ‘self’ cannot be found with any degree of consensus. However, the exact structure of the brain is not something we need to concern ourselves with here; what must be examined are potential theoretical explanations for the phenomenon of selfhood in the absence of a central neurological self, or structure that recognises the various functions and stimuli as its own, a central regulating model. I will examine two important and opposing neurological hypotheses which correlate with the theories of Jung and Foucault respectively, before moving on to look at the prospect of the quantum self. The first theory I will look at is that of Charles Laughlin and *biogenetic structuralism*, which offers a neurological basis to some key Jungian hypotheses. I will then turn to Thomas Metzinger, whose central proposal is that, as a neurological centre of selfhood cannot be located, there is no such thing as a self beyond a constructed illusion.

### ***Charles Laughlin: Jung and Biogenetic Structuralism***

Laughlin’s theory of biogenetic structuralism states that our modes of interpretation and thought are based upon pre-established neural models that are evolutionarily engrained. The various structures of society, religion, art and nature (or how we perceive nature) are not reflexive of any objective reality but mirror our own neural structures, which are pre-programmed to make things fit into their own pre-existing structures. Laughlin is at pains to point out that this does not suggest homogeneity in social structures or cultural practices, rather it provides the seeds from which such phenomena grow in their many and diverse manifestations. The attempt at a grand, unifying theory is made, and the similarities with



Jung's notion of archetypes and the collective unconscious are striking; the archetypes exist within the structures of the neurological brain. Laughlin proffers a materialist and scientific basis for Jung's ontological model. The key assertion made by Laughlin is:

The major ontological assumption upon which biogenetic structuralism is founded is that there *exists no reality intervening between the central nervous system and the environment*. The corollary is that all other presumed levels of reality have analytic status only. Thus when philosophers speak of "mind," psychologists speak of "personality," American anthropologists speak of "culture," and sociologists and social anthropologists speak of "society," they are referring to patterns abstracted from behavioural (or introspective) equivalents of internal brain processes." (BS 11)

Furthermore, Laughlin proposes that these brain processes and structures provide us with *a priori* knowledge, which he calls *neurognosis*. Neurognoses include the models upon which myths are structured, based on evolutionary factors, the most important one being the "primitive, but universal, tendency to order reality into pairs that are usually subjectively experienced as opposites" (115), which is perhaps a self-evident conclusion for a structuralist, but links directly with the concepts of self/other, Apollo/Dionysus, ego/shadow, anima/animus, to name but a few. It is a factor that goes to the structural heart of the thinking of Nietzsche and Jung, and even Heraclitus (who all seek the union of opposites). The major relevance of Laughlin to this study is that his thinking offers a neurological justification of the Jungian model with regards to archetypes. Laughlin contends that Jung's assertions about archetypes were neurologically correct. Firstly he concurs with Jung's statement that "archetypes are, so to speak, organs of the prerational psyche. They are eternally inherited forms and ideas which have at first no specific content. Their specific content only appears in the course of the individual life, when personal experience is taken up in precisely these forms" (104).<sup>44</sup> And again:

This unconscious psyche, common to all mankind, does not consist merely of contents capable of becoming conscious, but of latent dispositions towards identical reactions. Thus the fact of the collective unconscious is simply the psychic expression of the identity of brain-structure irrespective of all racial differences. This explains the analogy, sometimes even identity, between various myth motifs and symbols, and the possibility of human understanding in general. (105)<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> From Jung's "Commentary on the Tibetan Book of the Dead." *Psyche and Symbol*, pp.292-93.

<sup>45</sup> From Jung's "Commentary on 'The Secret of the Golden Flower.'" *Psyche and Symbol*, p. 308.

Laughlin identifies the collective unconscious as the structural commonality of the neurological system, and identifies Jungian archetypes as items of neurognosis. Laughlin asserts that he disagrees with Jung on many important points, such as the comparison of archetypes with the Platonic *eidola*, or forms (104), but this would nonetheless seem to lend Jung a certain neurological credence, and it is on this level that Laughlin is relevant to this study. However, whilst locating certain human commonalities within the structure of the brain, Laughlin does not identify a hypothetical locus of selfhood. This, it would seem, is because no such locus exists, and the self remains an amalgam of various neural operations without a distinct or defining centre.

Some philosophers and neurologists have taken this to mean that there is no such thing as a self, or that the 'self' is essentially epiphenomenal. One of the leading proponents of the no-self theory is the German philosopher, Thomas Metzinger. It is worthwhile critically examining Metzinger's theory in order to clarify what is actually meant by a 'self.' In other words, I wish to show that the rejection of the phenomenon of selfhood depends entirely upon one's definition of selfhood. Moreover, Metzinger is significant as his neuro-philosophical hypothesis is directly comparable to Foucault's concept of the subject in much the same, if less direct, way as Laughlin's to Jung's.

### ***Thomas Metzinger: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity***

In *Being No One*, Metzinger details his theory of the phenomenon of subjectivity. The Self-Model Theory of subjectivity (SMT) is a representationalist thesis of the neuro-phenomenological self, claiming that the self as a neurological entity does not actually exist; rather it is the impression of a transparent neurological self-model, a matrix of interpretive faculties of the human organism's various functions and experiences. In contrast to Sorabji, who defines the self as the owner of physical and mental states and functions, Metzinger claims that this collection of physical and mental states creates an illusion of self.

Metzinger proposes that for the self-model to function properly, a prerequisite is that it must cease to recognise itself as a model in order to become a phenomenal self, hence its transparency. Metzinger asks: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for the appearance of the phenomenal self? He answers that two component models are necessary: The phenomenal self-model (PSM) and the phenomenal model of the intentionality relation (PMIR).

The content of the PSM is the content of the conscious self: your current bodily sensations, your present emotional situation, plus all the contents of your

phenomenally experienced cognitive processing. They are constituents of your PSM. Intuitively, and in a certain metaphorical sense, one could even say that you *are* the content of your PSM. (299)

The PSM experiences and processes the physical self as a unified entity with body parts, a spatio-temporal self-location and a first-person perspective that generates the phenomenon of subjectivity. Metzinger dismisses the idea that this necessitates a substantial self as owner in favour of an ongoing process of tracking bodily properties, which requires an integrated body model, or PSM (299-305). The model is not an entity or self, but a transparent *representation* of a self:

No such things as selves exist in the world. All that exists are certain information-processing systems meeting the constraints for phenomenality while operating under a transparent self-*model*. At least for all conscious beings so far known to us, it is true that they neither *have* nor *are* a self. [...] However, if an organism operates under a phenomenally transparent self-model, then it possesses a *phenomenal* self. The phenomenal property of selfhood as such is a representational construct; it truly is a *phenomenal* property in terms of being an appearance only. (563)

In *Ego Tunnel*, Metzinger will later describe the PSM and the ego interchangeably. He claims that “The Ego [...] is simply the content of your PSM. [...] But it can become the Ego only because you are constitutionally unable to realize that all this is just the content of a simulation in your brain. It is not reality itself but an image of reality” (8). In short, because we do not exist as a self, the reality we imagine is a mere simulation because reality itself cannot be perceived by something that is not real.

The PMIR (*Being No One* 411-20) is the model that relates the phenomenal self model to the phenomenal ‘world model,’ which essentially forms the relationship between the subject and the object. “PMIRs are like arrows pointing from self-model to object component” (413). They locate the ‘self’ within the world and give it a teleofunctional aspect, creating goal-directed behaviour and efficacy. It can also be directed inwards, which creates the potential for introspection and deep thought. The fact that we *think* that we *think*, that we imagine ourselves to exist as selves, is, for Metzinger, an illusion created by the system, by its transparency. He calls this “naïve-realistic self-misunderstanding” (332, 421). In these terms, the organisation and authenticity of ‘knowledge,’ and its problematic relationship with belief, imagination and myth becomes increasingly arbitrary based upon the non-existent self, or ‘I,’ as a computational model of data. Such a theory also runs directly counter to Sorabji’s concept of self as owner of states. The simulation of self is created by computational

processing of experience and information; the model and the data it processes are the things that exist, and the illusion of self belongs to the model. In other words, the illusion of self is created by the information that is processed around it. This model is in many ways concordant with some of Foucault's thinking, as Tim Clark<sup>46</sup> observes:

[...] in Foucault's case, the use by each person of the term "I" has no function other than its indexical, enunciative role as nominative and objective personal pronouns spread out on the plane of discursivity and power relations. [...] Like Foucault, Metzinger denies that any naïve readings of 'things' indexed by the personal pronouns "I," "you," "we," "she," or "him" have any ontological status. (65-66)

Clark goes further, and describes Foucault's theories as providing a "theoretical model for articulating a structural relationship between Metzinger's proposals concerning the primacy of phenomenal experientiality and the materiality of a history that is embodied in discursive, institutional, and productive practices that also frame human action" (69).

However, like Foucault's, Metzinger's theory is not unproblematic, and Dan Zahavi raises several objections with an increasingly irritated tone in a response entitled "Being Someone." Amongst the complaints about methodology and clumsy use of the word "phenomenology" is the highly valid objection that:

Metzinger himself, at least implicitly, remains committed to a rather classical conception of the self. According to this conception, the self is a mysteriously unchanging essence, a process-independent ontological substance that could exist all by itself, i.e., in isolation from the rest of the world (pp. 577, 626). Metzinger denies the existence of such an entity, and then concludes that no such things as selves exist. It should be obvious, however, that this conclusion would only be warranted if Metzinger's definition of the self were the only one available. (8)

Zahavi's objection here seems entirely justified. The idea of self as process, in a constant state of flux, has been around since at least the days of Heraclitus, and the only thing that Metzinger successfully argues against is his own definition of self, which, as Zahavi states, is implicit but never given. However, I would make a far more fundamental objection to Metzinger's model. His theories of the SMT are hypothesised in order to counter the lack of *thingness* to the self, the lack of psychological or neurological pinpointing of a 'self,' the lack of physical or scientific understanding. This may well be sufficient to claim that self does not exist in a quantifiable, materialist sense, but Metzinger's models are themselves as

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<sup>46</sup> Clark is a Professor of Media and Cyberarts at Concordia University

hypothetical as the selves they seek to eliminate. The PSM and PMIR would seem to be workable systems and his demonstration of their application in various pathological cases is compelling, but the basic problem remains that his proposed substitute for the insubstantial and unquantifiable ‘self’ is a model that suffers from these exact problems: his models are not neurologically locatable or quantifiable any more than is the ‘self’ they seek to replace. Metzinger essentially substitutes one hypothesis for another. This is not, however, to disregard Metzinger’s work or deny its importance. But the most useful aspect we can take from this would be the fact that, at present, the concept of a self remains unquantifiable in physical, neurological terms. The self would seem to prove as elusive to scientists as it does to philosophers. However, it is with neurology that I wish to stay in order to identify a specific important neurological discovery, which will prove to be significant in part II, namely, neuronal plasticity, or neuroplasticity for short.

### ***Neuroplasticity***

Neuronal plasticity is defined by *The Neurosciences Institute* as the phenomenon by which the brain, even in adulthood, “retains a substantial capacity for adaptive modification in response to continuing interaction with the environment” (“Learning, Memory and Cognition”). In *The Mind and the Brain*, Schwartz and Begley define neuroplasticity as “the ability of neurons to forge new connections, to blaze new paths through the cortex, even to assume new roles. In shorthand, neuroplasticity means rewiring of the brain” (15). The brain, in response to sensory stimulation, can restructure itself accordingly, including areas of the brain colonising others: “directed, willed mental activity can clearly and systematically alter brain function [...] and even its physical structure” (18). The philosophical implications on the concept of a self are significant, and would suggest that even the structure of the brain is to a large extent subject to the will. Furthermore, the environmental aspect to the structuring of the brain reinforces Heidegger’s concept of the *Dasein*, in which the self and the environment cannot be distinguished as separate entities. Moreover, habitual actions—and conceivably even ways of thinking—wire themselves into the brain and become physically embedded within its structure, which has significant implications for actor training (especially with regards to specific masks, see p.202 below); training physically inscribes itself upon the material brain. However, the concept of materiality is itself deeply unstable when looked at from the scientific perspective of quantum mechanics, and this must be addressed if we are to clarify the question of materialism versus idealism.

### *Materiality and the Quantum Universe*

At the quantum level, the very concept of substance itself is highly problematic. In this section I will examine the question of matter and will proceed to look at the prospect of a quantum self whose very substance is in question. One of the leading proponents of the *idealist* quantum self is Amit Goswami, retired Professor of Quantum Mechanics and author of *The Self Aware Universe*, whose quasi-Buddhist hypothesis once again lends credence to the Jungian model. Before I examine Goswami's theories, I will begin by identifying some of the key problems regarding the nature of matter at the quantum level.

In an interesting article by William J. Long. "Quantum Theory and Neuroplasticity," as well as the phenomenon of neuroplasticity, he also addresses the counter-intuitive quantum mystery of wave-particle duality, which he summarises as the fact that:

subatomic particles exist—or can best be represented as existing—as an immaterial wave of potential realities that only become fixed with material properties when the subject observes them. [...] Before the observation, the quantum system has a range of possibilities, afterwards it has a single actuality. (84)

This highlights a fundamental 'truth' of quantum mechanics: particles and subatomic particles, according to the laws of quantum physics, do not behave in the way that classical Newtonian physics would predict. For example, the idea that one thing cannot be in two places at once, or move at two (or more) speeds simultaneously, or even spin in two (or more) directions simultaneously, is simply not the case at the quantum level.<sup>47</sup> Particles are known to behave as waves, travelling all possible routes at the same time, until they are observed, under which circumstance they behave as particles 'should' and take one particular route, not revealing themselves to be in multiple places at once.<sup>48</sup> This exemplifies one of the key facts of quantum theory: there is no defined or fixed reality, only potential exists until an observer asks a specific question.

Werner Heisenberg, the theoretical physicist behind the Uncertainty Principle, observed a fundamental rule concerning the subjectivity of all experiments at the quantum level: "what we observe is not nature itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning. [...] [O]ne must never forget that in the drama of existence we are ourselves both players and spectators" (58). Not only does the gaze of an observer impact upon the behaviour of subatomic particles, but the very nature of matter as a stable entity is undermined by this

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<sup>47</sup> For a layman's explanation into these phenomena, see John Polkinghorne's *Quantum Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, and Jim Al-Khalili's *Quantum: A Guide for the Perplexed*.

<sup>48</sup> See Al-Khalili, chapter 1 for a clear and concise demonstration of this phenomenon.

duality—the particle exists in potential rather than actual form until it is observed, thus destabilising the very concept of matter. This is compounded further by the concept of entanglement.

Entanglement refers to the phenomenon in which the behaviours and destinies of particles become enmeshed through contact, and will behave identically and simultaneously, even if they are “as far away as one would like, from the other side of the laboratory to the other side of the galaxy” (Long 84). Any signal between them, according to Einstein, cannot travel faster than the speed of light, yet their simultaneity demands some form of connection, which is defined as necessarily *nonlocal*, meaning that it must exist outside of traditional, *material* space-time. The phenomenon of nonlocality necessitates some fundamental force or influence that exists outside of the realm of (currently) knowable, material science. He goes on to say “Particles are not atomistic and do not behave as distinct objects, but parts of a seamlessly interconnected whole that absorbs their individual identities” (84).<sup>49</sup> The implications of this are that “nothing can be self-defining and exist inherently” (85). The fact that we can see objects as objects that behave in the classical Newtonian sense, according to the currently accepted hypothesis, is because of the phenomenon of ‘decoherence,’ which is the suggestion that, when particles interact, “they are in effect measuring each other” (85),<sup>50</sup> which gives them a singularity instead of the almost infinite state of potentiality.

The scientific assertion that all phenomena lack a fixed, inherent existence is to be regarded as a universal truth, not contingent on the beliefs of any one individual or society. [...] Finally, quantum metaphysics also avoids the two extremes of materialism (all is matter) and idealism (all is mind). In quantum metaphysics neither mind nor matter take precedence as inherently real, together they give objects a defined nature. (85-86)

‘Metaphysics’ in this context refers to the state of the unobservable, the behaviour of particles that quantum physics has proved to be but that cannot be observed directly, such as the behaviour of particles as waves when they exist in their potential state, as yet un-pinned down to a fixed reality by the process of observation. Observable matter is created, or rather fixed, by the gaze of the observer, but this observable singularity is part of a wider and unknowable whole of pure potentiality. By knowing or observing it, we destroy it.

More recent advances in particle physics likewise offer some highly tantalising echoes of my overall thesis regarding the ‘third thing’ and the union of opposites. Mass,

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<sup>49</sup> See Al-Khalili, pp.91-97 for a fuller account of ‘nonlocality’ and ‘entanglement.’

<sup>50</sup> See Polkinghorne, pp. 43-44, 68-70.

which is what allows substance to exist—gives it form—is not an inherent property of the elementary particles of which all things are composed. Particles are themselves massless. Physicist Nicholas Mee<sup>51</sup> explains that mass is acquired through interaction with the Higgs field, which is what allows our physical world to exist in substantial form. However, due to the law of conservation (energy cannot be destroyed or created, only converted), for the Higgs field to be preserved, it requires a *third thing*<sup>52</sup> to interact with particles in order to give them mass, which is the product of this relationship. This third thing is the Higgs boson, which “enabled the matter that formed within the universe to evolve into complex and diverse structures” (14). Thus, at the very heart of material existence we see this philosophical ‘law’ exemplified in the fundamental building blocks of the cosmos. The Higgs boson is a function of relationships; it is the third thing that facilitates the interaction between two phenomena that would otherwise remain incompatible (much in the same way that the graviton is the hypothetical boson<sup>53</sup> that allows gravity to exert its force). It unites field and particle to create matter, or substance, in the harmonious and creative balance that we call the material universe. Thus the substantial self and the material universe in which it exists is a function, or product, of relationships, known as the ‘Higgs mechanism’ (230-34), which facilitates interaction between field and particle and allows particles to acquire mass.

### ***Amit Goswami and the Transcendent, Nonlocal Self***

According to Goswami, wave-particle duality does not represent a dualism of abstract and concrete, potential and actual, mind and matter, or mind and body, but a unification of the two: any dualism belongs to the realm of the perceiver rather than the thing perceived. The necessity of the observer to reduce potentiality to actuality would seem to draw into the equation the concept of consciousness at the most basic, quantum level. Goswami explores the possible implications of this on the concept of selfhood, and suggests that all the paradoxes of quantum mechanics, such as wave-particle duality and the concept of nonlocality, can be explained by means of consciousness. His suggestion is that neither quantum mechanics, nor any science currently known, can explain consciousness, but that consciousness can explain quantum science *if* we accept that consciousness has primacy over matter. Goswami is not the first to suggest consciousness as the basis for all quantum matter.

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<sup>51</sup> What I offer is naturally a very short and simplified summary of the theory. For more, see Mee’s *Higgs Force*, esp. p.231ff.

<sup>52</sup> It should be pointed out that Mee does not talk in terms of the “third thing;” I am appropriating the terminology to demonstrate the analogy.

<sup>53</sup> A boson is one of two classifications of elementary particles. The boson is associated with force (e.g. photons); the others, fermions (electrons, neutrons, etc.), are those that acquire mass and are associated with matter.



In fact, Max Planck, the generally acknowledged father of quantum mechanics, stated unequivocally: “All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force. [...] We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent Mind. This Mind is the matrix of all matter” (Max Planck, qtd. in Smetham 1053).

Goswami’s theory negates the possibility of objective reality, whilst at the same time embracing the possibility of universal truth. If the “wavicle” (wave-particle) exists as potentiality until it is observed, at which point it collapses to a singularity, Goswami reasons that for anything to exist in solid, observable classical form, then conscious observation must precede material existence. He likens his reasoning to Plato’s allegory of the cave, and suggests that the material, classical world is the manifestation of potential, whereby potential proper represents the archetypal, or *eidolon*, unknowable and definitively other (48-49). Goswami calls his theory *monist idealism*, and opposes it directly to the *material realism* of classical physics, which, according to Goswami, singularly fails to explain the strange phenomena and paradoxes of quantum physics, and which tends to posit consciousness as an epiphenomenon of material existence, despite the logical incoherence of such a statement given that conscious observation is a precondition of the wave-particle collapse and the resulting Newtonian manifestation of matter. Goswami concludes that consciousness creates matter rather than the other way around, reaching the Hegelian conclusion that consciousness is universal, and those who experience consciousness experience this universal (or collective) consciousness subjectively (cf. p.31 above).

Subjectivity, moreover, is an illusion that creates the feeling of separateness, and that misses the unity in all things. Just as Heidegger posited the *Dasein* as a system in and of the world—a functional system rather than a group of separate objects—so Goswami confirms our environmentally embedded self at the quantum level: it is our own conscious observation that collapses the wavicle into a single actuality, creates the manifest from the archetype, and that exists as a single unitary system. Consciousness becomes the ‘prime mover,’ and all self-aware beings are subjective manifestations of this universal, collective consciousness. The subjective human brain, in these terms, is not capable of apprehending ‘truth’ beyond the conceptual realm of hypothesis. Goswami summarises by citing Jung:

Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest on irrepresentable,

transcendent factors, it is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two aspects of one and the same thing [consciousness]. (127)<sup>54</sup>

Goswami suggests that our ego, the subjective “I” of conscious experience, corresponds with the local of Newtonian physics, whereas the collective unconscious represents the nonlocal, transcendent realm of quantum potential that exists outside the locality of space-time and within the archetypal realm of a universal, fundamentally *creative* consciousness, which is the precondition of all being.

Once again, we encounter the prospect that true self-realisation is equivalent to self-negation. The subjective ego is the primary barrier to union with, and realisation of, the fundamental creativity of the self-aware universe, which we are manifest *in* and *of*, and not distinct from, despite our phenomenological experience of the illusory distinctions between “I” and “you.” This distinction, for Goswami, is the domain of immanent Newtonian locality, whereas the underlying unity exists in the realm of transcendent quantum nonlocality. The inherent implication of this is that any steps towards self-realisation and the desire to ‘know thyself,’ from the Nietzschean, Jungian, or even (Goswamian) quantum perspective, must begin with the negation of ego and the opening up of the possibility of transcendence in order to access the universal, or collective. This, according to Goswami, is the realm of creativity.

As has been suggested by both Nietzsche and Jung, creative dynamism arises from the balancing of opposites in a state of dynamic tension, whether that be the Apollonian and Dionysian for Nietzsche, or the various archetypes and their negative aspects for Jung. For Goswami, “the creative act is the fruit of the encounter of the self’s classical and quantum modalities” (226), in which the local, classical mode adheres to learned rules, structures, and knowledge—comparable with Nietzsche’s Apollonian, the realm of *sōma*—and the nonlocal, quantum mode exists in the realm of potentialities and archetypes (or Plato’s *eidolon*)—comparable with the Dionysian, the realm of the *psychē*.

## CONCLUSION

It would appear that, despite the advances in science and technology, and in some cases *because* of those advances, the age-old questions remain—the major differences lie in their specific epistemic framing rather than the underlying seemingly unanswerable mysteries. The scientific approach may well provide some immensely valuable insights into the mechanical workings of the body, including the brain’s ability to rewire itself, but the scientific and

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<sup>54</sup> Goswami gives his reference as page 518 of *The Portable Jung*. Ed. J. Campbell. New York: Viking, 1971. Cf. p.73-74 above (ref CW8 ¶418).

neurological approaches are able only to speculate as to the nature of the Self, even to the extent of denying its very existence.

It also appears that the archetypal theories of Jung continue to gain scientific credibility, and this leads me to conclude that Jung does indeed provide a potentially credible critical model with which to proceed. However, on its own, there is the inherent danger that one could focus too much on unconscious, psychic and universal forces that generalise too broadly at the expense of tangible historical factors, events and accidents. In Goswami's model, causality is by no means uni-directional, but works both ways—both consciousness and matter are mutually affective (though Goswami clearly favours the primacy of consciousness). This approach, I feel, needs balancing or tempering with a contrasting methodology, one with a greater historiographical rigour, if it is to prove useful. This is provided by Foucault.

## CONCLUSION TO PART I

**Toward the Übermensch and a Union of Opposites**

Within this brief précis, rather than recapitulate all the issues covered, I will instead offer brief conclusions to the initial dichotomies that began this exploration, and highlight only the most significant points before outlining the philosophical model that I will take forward into Part II. I will begin by recalling the starting point.

If we recall Richard Sorabji's initial definition of the self as "something that *has* or *owns* psychological states as well as *having* or *owning* bodily states" (4), it has become apparent that things are not quite so simple. The aggregate nature of the self would certainly seem a consistent aspect, but the self as that which *owns* is questionable, and has been suggested by some as the product rather than the owner of the aggregate parts (a prospect that Sorabji rejects outright [*ibid.*]). Likewise, the somatic locus of self seems equally questionable, a common factor within many of the theories examined thus far being that of transcendence. Furthermore, I have highlighted some of the difficulties with the Kantian dichotomy of the empirical versus the transcendental, and likewise with the essentialist-constructivist approaches. With each approach, we seem to encounter a certain void at the heart of the question of selfhood. The self, it may be concluded at this stage, is a conglomerate of forces, internal and external, ostensibly unified by a particular perspective which offers a sense of stability, which is the "I," but this "I" is not one that can truly define its limits within its particular somatic being.

Moreover, I have identified the physical environment in which the self operates as a currently irreconcilable mixture of the quantum and the Newtonian in which the very nature of matter behaves in startlingly contradictory ways, adhering simultaneously to laws that fundamentally do not adhere to each other, thus entirely disrupting the materialist position given that matter itself has been shown to be inherently paradoxical. We have witnessed how our concept of both self and reality is epistemologically determined, which undermines the possibility of 'truth.' Yet amidst all this, we remain tied to a sense of phenomenal selfhood and the experience of consistency and continuity, a continuity we recognise in ourselves and in others, both in the present and in the archaic traditions that survive in the present.

As such, it is my contention that Heraclitus offers the most enduring and convincing outlook. His self-professed disciple, Nietzsche, appears to me to offer the most promising and workable philosophy of recent times, proposing a radical shift from the philosophic endeavours of the past that have led us to teleological progressivism and irreconcilable

contradictions and paradoxes, and indeed still lead us to a speculative denial of our own existence beyond the determinations of language, power, or economics. As such, I find within Nietzsche the liberating potential to proceed with a healthy scepticism, or at least caution, towards some of the trickeries of philosophy. However, unqualified Nietzschean philosophy is not without its problems, and needs tempering. I will develop this further below in the context of Jung and Foucault. But for the time being, it is important to address the initial dichotomies identified at the beginning of this study in order to assess what, if any, clarification has been achieved.

### ***The Initial Dichotomies***

I will present a brief overview of the conclusions I have reached in regards to the initial four dichotomies, and then move on to question the implications of these conclusions.

1. *Fixity versus flux*: My research so far seems to overwhelmingly favour the self as fluid rather than fixed. As such, the Heraclitean model of flux would seem to be the most enduring and ubiquitous idea encountered thus far.
2. *Single versus Plural*: The self, unless viewed from the Eleatic perspective of the unity of all things, appears to be, at the very least, an aggregate of different aspects, of often opposing drives, of conscious, subconscious and unconscious aspects, of public personae and private interiority, of self and other, and so a plurality of selfhood must be inferred.
3. *Active versus Passive*: The concept of agency is perhaps the most difficult to pin down. For this, I will take Foucault's model of the subject and power and suggest that this is a continual struggle between the desired freedom of the 'recalcitrant will' and the domination of external forces.
4. *Interior versus Exterior*: What has become apparent is the increasing interiorisation of the self, from a pre-Socratic exteriority to the postmodern state of interiority in which, according to Foucault, the possibility of exteriority has now become impossible. Whilst the interiorisation of self would seem a relatively safe conclusion, the impossibility of exteriority is something I will challenge in chapter eight.

### ***The Unholy Trinity: Nietzsche, Jung and Foucault.***

Rather than completely dismiss Hegel, as Nietzsche attempted to do, I will offer a brief overview of my view of the matter, beginning with Hegel in order to identify an important issue. Both Hegel and Nietzsche see the self as a mediation of opposing forces. To Nietzsche, these are *internal* and unconscious drives and impulses, whereas Hegel saw the self as the

reciprocity of self and *external* other is mutually constitutive. Nietzsche's demand for an internal third thing is one that denies reciprocity and social being, which is an important aspect of Hegelian dialectics that cannot be readily ignored.<sup>55</sup> Jung's development is the externalisation of the third thing in the form of the symbol, which is culturally informed and meaningful, hence the necessity for reciprocity is reintroduced into the Nietzschean scheme. This is compounded by the fact that the psychoanalytic model is concerned with formative and functional relationships, and addresses psychological problems within a social context. This is where Foucault's objections come in: the formulation of norms according to which these social relationships should operate is ideologically determined, and the discourse of psychoanalysis is informed by the discourse of power in which it functions. This discourse is that of the episteme, diagnosed, at present, as paradoxical and untenable.

Within this narrative précis, it is my contention that Jung and Foucault are not as incompatible as they at first appear. It is not my intention to argue for equivalence or exact concordance within the totality of their combined work. In fact, it would be nigh impossible to argue exact concordance within the totality of their own works, let alone a comparison.<sup>56</sup> It is important to acknowledge that fundamental differences do exist, both internally and comparatively. However, I intend, through a necessarily selective approach to their hypotheses, to demonstrate a far greater degree of compatibility than meets the eye. In order to proceed, I will posit them approximately upon a Nietzschean dichotomy, that of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, whereby the Apollonian aspect of the constructed self (within a Newtonian world of local realism) is constituted by Foucault, who may also be said to be concerned with the realm of *sōma*, and the Dionysian realm of the unconscious (within a universe of quantum chaos and nonlocality) by Jung, who is more concerned with the *psychē*.

This dichotomy, like many others, represents more a convenient fiction for the sake of clarity of exposition rather than a genuinely exclusive model, as will become apparent. I have already shown that Jung resists the nature versus nurture model (p.68-70 above), and so my casting of Jung in the Dionysian role is approximate rather than absolute. I wish to proceed by addressing the weaknesses or lacunae in each of their theories and examining where the

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<sup>55</sup> For a fuller discussion on the place of dialectics in the creation of self, in a specifically Hegel versus Nietzsche context, see Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, esp. ch.1 (Houlgate identifies himself as firmly Hegelian (22) in approaching the debate, and highlights some important misunderstandings of Hegel when attacked from a Nietzschean perspective).

<sup>56</sup> Foucault for one was very aware of his own inevitable inconsistency, and in response to this charge, he famously responded "Well, do you think I have worked all those years to say the same thing and not be changed?" (qtd. in "About Michel Foucault").

theories of the other might complement and go some way to completing them. But first, we must address the question of their ideological incompatibility.

Jung's hypotheses are arguably far more open to Foucault's than vice versa. However, Foucault's general acceptance of Nietzsche suggests he is less intellectually closed as his ideological opposition to psychoanalysis, the unconscious, and the prospect of universals would at first appear. To begin with, Foucault's relationship with psychoanalysis is itself highly problematic, which is exemplified by his inconsistent relationship with, and attitude towards, Freud.<sup>57</sup> But if we remove the ideological objection to the field of study and concentrate on the intellectual model of the self that Jung proffers, it may be possible that the two can work together better than one would expect. Foucault explicitly accepts the concept of the will at the heart of human nature, moreover, the will to power. As has been shown, the relationship between Jung's concept of the operation of the unconscious and Nietzsche's will to power are concordant, and so we find tacit acceptance of this possibility within Foucault's thinking.

Jung's main area of interest is the psyche, and as such it may be said that his definitions of the persona and, to a certain extent, the ego consciousness, is relatively simplistic and underdeveloped. In contrast, Foucault's area of interest is in the construction of the subject and its operation within historical and epistemic discourse, and leaves aside any question of the operation of the unconscious—the existence of which he does not refute, preferring instead to examine the “social functions that such concepts have played” (Rabinow 4). Hence his opposition is ideological. But beyond this, there is no intellectual reason offered by Foucault why such a thing should not exist. As such, as theorists of the historically constructed subject and of the unconscious essential self respectively, the two address different aspects of the self arguably neglected—but certainly not denied—by the other, and both take distinctly Nietzschean stances. This suggests the possibility of the two aspects working in functional and mutually enlightening tandem once we bypass the ideological opposition. My proposal is for functional complementarity rather than any unifying or modal equivalence. By moving forward with both models, approximate to Nietzsche's Apollo-Dionysus dichotomy, and the *sōma-psyche* distinction as defined in the opening chapters, it is my hope to be able to demonstrate functional coherence.

As a brief demonstration of my argument, I will begin with Jung's concept of individuation, outlined in chapter three, which consists of the union of archetypal opposites

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<sup>57</sup> See Joel Whitebook's “Freud, Foucault and ‘the dialogue with unreason’”(1999) and “Against Interiority: Foucault's Struggle with Psychoanalysis” (2005). Cf. See Teresa de Lauretis' “The Stubborn Drive.”

within the Self, or rather mastery over these archetypal oppositions in a state of creative tension. However, these constituent archetypes, yet unmastered, must be unknown, or at the very least, *other*. In Nietzschean terms, this mirrors Zarathustra's Pindaric instruction to "become who you are" (192). We see the full parallel with Jung when viewed in the context of Nietzsche's statement in *Ecce Homo* that: "To become what one is, one must not have the faintest notion *what* one is" ("Why I am so Clever" §9, p.254). This union would necessarily bring an end to the subject *as soul* (*GM I* §13). As has been shown, this corresponds with the 'end of man' heralded by Foucault as the dissolution of the 'man' as subject-object paradox at the heart of the post-Kantian episteme, or analytic of finitude. The link, in this case, is the fully individuated *Übermensch*.

Both Jung's concept of the collective unconscious and Foucault's concept of the episteme are rhizomatic in nature: they precede and form the basic conditions, potentials and limitations of the *subject* (which in each case is characterised by a split or conflict<sup>58</sup> between instinctual and social pressures). Their respective characters, archetypal and discursive, are essentially different, but it is significant that their function within the overall schemata of their progenitors is comparable, and operate on the level of power, thus leaving open the Nietzschean question of perspectivism: To what extent can these two schematically opposing rhizomes be radically different perspectives on a (functionally) comparable phenomenon? Or in Heraclitean terms, could these perspectives be simultaneously the road up and the road down?

Both Nietzsche and Jung deal with mythic reality, not at the expense of logic, but as a necessary counterpart to the metaphysics of logic. Foucault gives us the tools to identify and analyse the nature of the fictive episteme, whilst lamenting the loss of spirituality as transformative agent in his revised analytic of finitude (defined as the rupture between philosophy and theology). It is in this Nietzschean context that I view both Jung and Foucault as the foot-soldiers of Zarathustra: the one charged with the excavation of man's soul (the underlying *mythos* of human nature), and the other with excavating the historical construction of the epistemological façade (the underlying *logos*) that determines the fiction of our reality. It is my hope that it may become possible, through Nietzsche, that both the seemingly contradictory Jungian and Foucauldian approaches may be utilised in tandem, as *psychē* and *sōma* respectively, providing a level of functional complementarity rather than ideological

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<sup>58</sup> See Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, II §16 (cited above); cf. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, pp.29-30 (cited above), and Jung's *Complete Works*, Vol. 7, p.158, which states: "we can hardly avoid the conclusion that between collective consciousness and the collective unconscious there is an almost unbridgeable gulf over which the subject finds himself suspended" (qtd. in Shelburne 31).



incompatibility; both appear to address an inherent lack at the heart of the concept of selfhood.

It is upon this philosophical basis (of the void at the heart of the self), that I now turn to the mask. The following questions arise from the heart of the void: Can the mask, as the symbolic 'third thing,' help us to bridge this void and access a deeper level of meaning, or even a deeper level of the self? And if so, how? And, more importantly, how does this impact upon the way we view the theatrical mask in terms of its cultural significance, its social function, and its potential affective power?

## PART II

## CHAPTER 5: THE MASK

In order to address the questions raised at the end of Part I, in Part II I will examine the mask at key historical moments in the developing concept of selfhood in order to identify how the mask functioned, and to explore the philosophical implications of the practice. I begin Part II by turning to the mask itself. In this chapter I will address some of the more general, but nevertheless key, issues and theories surrounding the mask, and then move on to define the wider context of current mask practice and approaches to the mask by examining three key twentieth century theatre practitioners. The remaining chapters will then focus on specific historical masks in order to build up a historical picture that will hopefully shed new light on the phenomena of mask and selfhood.

I will seek to test and illustrate my central hypothesis that the mask, as symbolic “third thing,” facilitates a union of opposites through encounters between self and other. The mask, it is my contention, allows the wearer (and the spectator) to encounter elements of the collective unconscious and to connect with the Self on an essential level.

Amongst those oppositions that the mask potentially unifies are those identified by Foucault in the paradoxical being of modern ‘man’ as characterised by the analytic of finitude. As explored in the previous chapter, the Foucauldian approach contains within it a fundamental lacuna that necessitates something akin to unconscious drives in order for it to function as a complete or workable model of selfhood (an ambition never claimed by Foucault). Whilst making every attempt not to conflate theories of the unconscious with the theories of Foucault, they will at times be addressed side by side as seeking to provide a workable balance of contrasting methodologies. I will attempt to signal the distinctions where necessary.

This chapter will be split into two distinct halves. Part 1 will address some of the key theories that exist relating to how the mask functions, and, whilst the focus of my thesis is explicitly the theatrical mask, will refer to relevant ritual mask practices where necessary by means of explication, though no anthropological survey of ritual masking will be attempted. I will begin with an exploration of the neurological importance of the face in human communication, before introducing Laughlin and Laughlin’s theory of the mask. In addressing the Biogenetic Structuralist hypothesis, I will begin by highlighting three key areas of interest: 1) the mask and time, 2) the mask and the relationship between self and

other, and 3) the mask and levels of reality. These three key areas will then be placed in relation to Foucault's notion of the analytic of finitude in order to demonstrate the serviceability of this as a critical tool applied to theatrical mask practice. After establishing this context, I will then detail Laughlin and Laughlin's specific hypothesis of mask practice and its direct neurological impact upon the self in order to illustrate, and where necessary modify and develop, my own proposal. It is my hope that this will illustrate the potential neurological validity of my hypothesis.

Part 2 will then take an entirely different perspective and explore some of the key twentieth century practitioners to have used and written about the theatrical mask in order to establish the theatrical context of current thinking about the mask. These are Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jacques Copeau, and Bertolt Brecht. The primary reason for this choice is that the former two are instrumental in the history of the modern theatrical mask, and their discoveries provide valuable insight into its function and potential. The reason for choosing to include Brecht is that, as will become clear, his theories and uses of the mask provide an opposing viewpoint to Copeau's. These two contrasting approaches may be said to exemplify opposite ends of the spectrum with regards to modern practitioners' views of the mask. I will then explore the fundamental necessity of the spectator in the creation of the mask-performer unit, which I will hereafter refer to as the *Mask*; the *mask*, with a lower case *m*, will indicate the object. Each practitioner's section will once more end with a brief summary of my findings in relation to aspects of Foucault's analytic of finitude. I will conclude this chapter by summarising the model I wish to take forward through the rest of this study.

The succeeding chapters (six to eight) will explore how my hypothesis can offer a new perspective on the developing phenomenon of selfhood at significant historical moments, showing how the opposing methodologies of Foucault and Jung can operate in tandem, via their Nietzschean aspect, and through the unifying power of the mask. I will focus on key moments of existential rupture, or crisis, in the developing concept of selfhood that, I intend to show, are accompanied by significant developments in the history of the theatrical mask, from its birth to its death, and finally its resurrection. Through this research, it is my central hope to argue for the wider significance of the theatrical mask, and to argue that its current, relatively esoteric status within theatre as a sort of theatrical novelty or historical curiosity is a gross underestimation of its cultural, historical, and potential power.

## PART 1: MASK THEORY

***The Human Face as Locus of the Mask***

There does not seem to be a great deal of consensus as to the neural mechanisms of facial recognition amongst neurologists (Behrmann *et al*). On the other hand, there is general consensus as to the central importance of the face as means of communicating. Forensic researchers in 2008 found that, even in lying, the face cannot be completely consciously controlled, briefly “cracking” in fleeting moments to reveal the true emotion (Dalhousie, *passim*), rendering the face itself problematic. Straight away we encounter the face itself as a mask in two potentially opposing ways: 1) the controlled mask of conscious intention, and 2) the unconscious mask of the underlying emotional ‘reality.’

The nature of the expressions themselves appears to be relatively universal rather than culturally learned. Researchers at San Francisco State University found that by comparing thousands of photographs of the facial expressions of blind and seeing persons at the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and linking them with their emotional state, the statistical correlation between the two groups was almost perfect, including, interestingly, the appearance of “social smiles” on the faces of the losers, which use only the mouth muscles, unlike ‘true’ smiles (known as Duchenne smiles) on the faces of the winners, which use the whole face. In other words, if the “social smile” may be said to be a mask, we find the perhaps surprising feature that they are used by the blind as much as by the seeing, suggesting that the impulse to give facially performative signs is not linked with the ability to see; the face as a social mask appears, on the basis of this evidence, to be a universal phenomenon that precedes conscious visibility.

Other studies have reached slightly different conclusions. Researchers at the University of Glasgow in 2011 found that there are cultural nuances within facial expressivity, demonstrating different areas of facial focus in different cultures’ interpretation and production of expression (Caldara, Jack, & Schyns *passim*); the Chinese were found to focus more on the eyes in their interpretations, whereas Caucasians focused more on the eyebrows and the mouth, the results being subtly different expressions and moments of confusion between intercultural interpretations. This suggests the coexistence of a general universality with a degree of diversity within the more nuanced cultural manifestations.

The importance of the face itself can be understood from everyday experience; all researchers agree on the centrality of the face for successful negotiation of the social world. This would appear to be a genetically inherent or instinctive phenomenon: studies have found

that neonates prefer to look at faces and, importantly, *images* of faces, particularly happy faces with open eyes, over any other image, suggesting an inherent mechanism that leads the human being to seek out the face.<sup>59</sup> This is compounded by the phenomenon of pareidolia, the tendency to see faces in random patterns, which Alhfors *et al* consider an evolutionary inheritance—our brains are programmed to detect the presence of a face as quickly as possible: “An old-time hominid would be liable to pay dearly, had s/he failed to recognize a pair of glowing dots in the bush at dark as the eyes of a predator, mistaking it for two fireflies” (David Navon, qtd. in Alhfors *et al*).

### ***The Face, the Mask, and Biogenetic Structuralism***

In an interesting paper, “How Masks Work, or Masks Work How?” Laughlin and Laughlin explore the neurological functioning of the brain in relation to masking, proposing a hypothesis that neural perceptions of “reality” are affected in the masking process as a result of structural, neurophysiological transformations in the brain. Laughlin and Laughlin contextualise the issue of the mask in relation to the human face in terms of phenomenology and social function. They define the face as “the nexus of physical relations comprising the body and, beyond the body, the physical world” (61). Within that context, the expressivity of the face is two-fold: it a) symbolises emotion or intent, or b) dissembles, relating how (in accordance with the San Francisco researchers) dissimulative facial expressions can be observed in social primates as well as humans, suggesting an even greater degree of universality in the face as potential mask. They go on to explore how facial modification, whether through masking, tattooing, scarification, painting, piercing, or distortion, is to be found in virtually all cultures, concluding that transforming the face for symbolic purposes is a cultural universal, one which is often, though not exclusively, a means of communicating cultural rather than individual identity.

In order to explain their central theory, I will address the three key masking phenomena they identify, which I will place in the context of the three ‘doublets’ identified by Foucault as the condition of the analytic of finitude. I will then summarise Laughlin and Laughlin’s hypothesis of a neurological explanation of these phenomena.

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<sup>59</sup> See Dewar, *passim*. For a fuller and more scientifically detailed account, see “Discrimination and imitation of facial expression by neonates” by D. Cohen, R. Greenberg, T. M. Field, and R. Woodson, which details how such phenomena can be clearly identified at 36 hours.

## 1. The Mask and Temporality: Mythic Unity and Origin

One common feature of ritual mask practice is a connection with the daemonic or divine, very often the spirits of animals or ancestors. Such practices often entail transformation and possession, allowing the mask spirit to exist in the here and now of the performer's body in the performance space. Laughlin and Laughlin summarise:

Considered temporally, performance can experientially bind time so that events of the present are integrated with what occurred before, perhaps in mythological time (e.g. Australian aboriginal 'dreamtime'), and with what is yet to come. [...] Events in sacred time, i.e., at the origin of the world and the creation of people, are made real in the present. Events in the present become associated with the sacred and are thereby rendered profoundly meaningful. (68-69).

This pan- or atemporality is an important feature of ritual masking, disrupting the everyday linearity of time and allowing those present to co-exist in the mythic time of originary essence.

In relation to Foucault's concept of the retreat and return of the origin, this encounter with originary essences embodies, in phenomenal terms, that which is considered impossible within the modern episteme—that which "introduces into his experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master; it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the centre of the duration of things" (*OT* 331). The mask, within the ritual practices that Laughlin and Laughlin explore, unifies this paradox, a paradox that is only untenable in the context of the post-Kantian Western episteme.

## 2. The Mask, the Self, and the Other: Unity in Alterity

This encounter with the 'spirit' of the mask is a definitive blending of self and other. Quoting the anthropologist, M. C. Jedrej, Laughlin and Laughlin relate: "The mask is not only a complex symbolic object but is, more fundamentally, a simple structural relationship between a spirit that can be seen and a mortal person who, though also present, cannot be seen" (Jedrej 225, qtd. in Laughlin and Laughlin 72). Speaking of the "power" of the mask,<sup>60</sup> Laughlin and Laughlin suggest that the structuralist approach of Levi-Strauss approach of identifying its

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<sup>60</sup> Laughlin and Laughlin cite, amongst others, Crumrine and Halpin's *The Power of Symbols*, Napier's *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox*, Jedrej's "A Comparison of Some Masks from North America, Africa, and Melanesia," and Tonkin's "Masks and Powers" as sources for their conclusions about the "power" of the mask.

mythopoeic stature does not suffice. They reject a purely exegetic approach as revealing not the content, but the context:

The coalescence of hidden wearer and the spirit of the mask holds the key to this power [...]. In functional terms this fact seems to be a special case of the well known and more general principle of reversibility, that is, the principle of intensifying an already atemporal tension between pairs of opposites (e.g. temporal/atemporal, male/female, noble/commoner, king/fool) by reversing their mundane order. (73)

This reversibility of opposites may be essentialised as the phenomenal oppositions of self and other within the unity of the Mask, allowing into the experienced reality of the Mask thoughts and modes of consciousness not ordinarily experienced by the unmasked self.

This, I propose, is comparable to the ordinarily delineated modes of thought and unthought, of the Foucauldian ‘*Cogito* and the Unthought’ (pp.79-80 above) which will be developed throughout this study. Once again, we find a phenomenal unity that represents the equivalent to the epistemic paradox of the analytic of finitude, an episteme that denies the possibility of unity found in the phenomenality of the mythic being of the Mask.

### **3. The Mask and Reality: The Body and Transcendence**

Finally, within this system, we encounter the phenomenon of shifting levels of reality. Laughlin and Laughlin’s researches conclude that: “In most intact cosmological belief systems experience of the world is considered relative to the domain in which it occurs, and that domain is located in a cosmos of multiple realities. For people in such societies there is not a single world of experience but several” (66). This may be exemplified by Margaret Thompson Drewal’s *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*, which draws our attention to a specific ritual practice in which the protagonists appear to switch in and out of the prescribed form, which takes the form of dance, allowing for a great deal of spontaneous improvisation and play. Drewal tells us that “In Yoruba ritual, materials received from the past can be repeated—either elaborated, condensed, extended and expanded—or deleted entirely, all at the performers’ whims” (102); they mix myth with new materials, treating their mythological heritage as a living form to be reinterpreted and played with. “Just as the masks themselves refer backward in time, to ancestral spirits, to a presumed past, they simultaneously renegotiate the present” (94). The question of ‘belief’ in this particular context is neatly summarised:

If men as maskers were performing an illusion, then women as spectators were engaged in performing the belief that their illusion was reality. If, on the other hand,

action transforms consciousness and is indeed efficacious, then there was no such thing as suspension of disbelief. Rather, the spectator looked through the multiple levels of reality and moved back and forth between them at will. There was no puncture in illusion; there was no puncture in reality. There was only a reorientation of working assumptions. (103)

This highlights a duality within the practice of masking concerning the nature of reality itself. It is not quite so simple as to suggest that Masks (or indeed rituals) belong to one reality whilst the profane, unmasked belong to another. In the example offered by Drewal at least, the Mask can switch between layers of ‘reality,’ and potentially operate on each simultaneously, just as it can operate on the layers of the concrete and the abstract, the shown and the hidden, simultaneously. The issue of whether the performers really believe or experience themselves to be possessed is one that seems to lose the possibility of being answered in binary terms, and perhaps once again highlights limitations in the Western episteme. Laughlin and Laughlin suggest a phenomenological perspective: “The ordinarily invisible reality faces both actor and audience out of the mask. [...] a mask is a preeminent transcendental guide or clue to the essential qualities in which the mask is symbolically embedded” (70).

This, I would argue, represents the phenomenal unity opposed to Foucault’s ‘empirico-transcendental doublet.’ In other words, it is a mythical union between the empirical and the transcendental experienced through the phenomenal unity of the Mask. The disappearance of the mythical from our epistemic reality opens up an empty space in which the mask may provide a bridge. This void is characterised by the ‘doublet’ in which modern ‘man’ becomes both the subject and the object of his own knowledge as well as the condition for that knowledge. ‘Man,’ as post-Kantian representation (pp.78-81 above), replaces the connection with the mythic other of god or gods.

### ***The Biogenetic Hypothesis***

Having established the grounds on which Laughlin and Laughlin are working, I will now clarify their hypothesis:

Our hypothesis is that the transformation of internalized body image brought about by masking, along with the reversibility of outer-form oppositions, produces a symbolic penetration to alternative neurological entrainments that mediate extraordinary, transpersonal experiences of self and world. (74)



“Symbolic penetration” is described as the process by which initial image or sensation produces “a field of multiple somatic (perceptual, cognitive) associations that are its meaning” (*ibid.*). They argue that the mask activates a much wider range of neurological associations than the human face alone. “Entrainment” refers to the connecting of various “neurocognitive, neuroendocrine and other somatic systems to produce a moment of consciousness” (74). This is comparable to neuroplasticity in which the body’s neurological structures can rewire themselves in response to repeated tasks or patterns of behaviour; the key difference is that the rewiring process, or new connections that are formed, in this case refer not to a specific behaviour but to modes of consciousness, of perception itself.

Their proposal is that, through encounters with the mask, the normal state of consciousness, which is the state of mundane, everyday life, complete with a “normal” everyday body image, is altered through encounters with a wider range of experiences and “phases of consciousness” (75) in which an altered body image—altered by the presence of the mask—thereby exists in a different state of physical consciousness, a different phenomenal reality. When this experience is coupled with a specific belief system, or cosmology, the conscious brain has the capacity to interpret such experiences as sacred, religious, hypnotic, transportive, etc. In other words, phenomenal reality is fundamentally shifted. The nature or meaning of that shift is culturally interpreted.

Whilst the human face operates within given neurological networks, the mask as an aesthetic object operates on these and others, whilst as a symbolic object, it operates on still others, which are often (depending on the symbolic value) emotional, suggesting the Mask operates simultaneously on a much wider range of neural networks than the individual human face. The simultaneity creates fresh neural connections through perceptual and emotional neuroplasticity, or ‘entrainment,’ which may account for the intensely affective capacity observed within certain cultural practices. This affectivity “sets the stage for a transformation of initial experiential dualisms by means of reorganization of operating neurocognitive and neuroendocrinal structure mediating two sets of experiences” (77).

### ***The Legitimacy of the Biogenetic Hypothesis***

Of course, this was published in 1988, since when there has been a great deal of progress in the field of neurology. The neurology of facial recognition is not a simple area, and neurologists remain unclear as to the exact mechanisms. The research that Laughlin and Laughlin cite as identifying specific loci of various aspects of facial recognition has shifted as neurology has advanced. Moreover, I have not been able to discover any neurological

experiments into the effect of mask practice; it is highly improbable that such experiments are even possible, given environmental factors. Laughlin and Laughlin's hypothesis remains unproven, and possibly unprovable. Nevertheless, the logic of their deductions does not appear to rely on the locality of specific facial recognition mechanisms, nor on their exact neural structures, but in the prospect of those mechanisms and structures operating differently and being conjoined with others in the encounter with the mask. As such, it is my contention that their scientific approach—in the sense of being logically coherent and largely *deductive*—remains legitimate. There does appear to be some support for Laughlin's hypothesis; Peter Meineck's 2011 study "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask" presents evidence to suggest that not only do we recognise faces before any other image, but that subjects react more strongly to simple caricatures than to more complex portraits, and that, according to art historian Ernst Gombrich, "we generally take in the mask before we notice the face."<sup>61</sup> Laughlin's suggestion that the mask works via a greater number of neural pathways than the simple face would certainly seem to provide a reasonable explanation.

Moreover, in support of the Biogenetic-Structuralist hypothesis of synaptic firing and neuroplastic entrainment, I offer biologist and Nobel Laureate Gerald Edelman's theory that the magnitude of synaptic connections becomes diminished through habit and socialisation; some strengthen, others weaken, or even disappear (see Pizzato, *Ghosts* 162-63). In this respect, socialisation is a form of training. It is equivalent to a reduction of potential brain activity and the establishing of codified ways of thinking, perceiving, and behaving. In short, enculturation equals diminishing potential through the construction of a culturally defined (i.e. reduced) synaptic reality. Consequently, an important facet of keeping as many of these neural pathways open (and the potential of the individual to maximise creativity) is active imagination, or *play*. To play is to inhabit a reality other than the everyday, to inhabit selves other than our everyday self, to experience other perspectives and other levels of reality. To become overly 'civilised' is to lose touch with the level of the mythical and the magical, and to lose the childlike awe in the face of a wondrous and strange world. It is to have one's reality fixed to a single perspective, which is to greatly diminish our experience of being in the world. It could be argued that it should be considered to be as psychologically unhealthy as its opposite (being lost in a fantasy world)—both are delusional as they represent a loss of touch with important levels of reality. In both cases, we encounter a Nietzschean 'sick

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<sup>61</sup> For more on this research, see Meineck, p.134. Meineck is quoting Gombrich's *The Image and the Eye* (113); it should perhaps be noted that Peter Meineck is Professor of Classics at New York University and director of Aquila Theatre rather than a neurologist.

animal.’ Foucault would suggest that the reason it is not considered so is the practicality that those lost in scientific reality are more docile, more easily governable—this ‘man,’ with his reduced neural functioning, becomes little more than functional, a cog in a machine without ghosts. He becomes a trained and functional representation of man. Perhaps Foucault’s lack of recognition of the fundamental importance of the underlying, primal human drives is itself symptomatic of Nietzsche’s ‘sick animal,’ i.e. he is merely indicative of a western culture in which human nature, along with mythic reality, is rejected. The neurological changes in the brain that create other planes of consciousness (through encounters with the structurally affective mask) may themselves provide the necessity for an epistemic shift, one in which paradoxes are unified by phenomenal reality, thus necessitating an epistemic shift that is concordant with this reality: an episteme that affirms existence *as body* rather than undermines it as *representation*.

The face/not-face aspect of the mask speaks to parts of the brain that deal with faces in a more complex way, whilst simultaneously operating on the parts of the brain that would deal with, say, art, sculpture, even (potentially) language. Masking offers an I/not-I experience in a single unity in which the other, in all its alien and atemporal existence, is experienced neurologically as part of the self. The strength and meaning of this affectivity depends on the belief systems of those submerged in the encounter; in other words, self and other are united in an experience whose meaning is culturally constructed and dependent.

These pre-conscious potential connections in the brain, these inherited images of behaviour patterns or emotional situations are, as Laughlin and Laughlin acknowledge, Jungian archetypes. As such, Laughlin and Laughlin’s hypothesis suggests that archetypal encounters are facilitated by the neurological aspect of masking, which allows for the phenomenon of transpersonal experience. The mask, as symbolic third thing, facilitates a union of opposites.

## PART 2: MASK PRACTICE

Having explored the central hypothesis of Laughlin and Laughlin, and contextualised it within the respective approaches of Jung and Foucault, I will now change gear somewhat and approach the mask from an entirely different angle, namely from that of the theatre practitioner. I will address three key practitioners in turn (Meyerhold, Copeau and Brecht) and follow each with a paragraph contextualising my findings in relation to an aspect of Foucault’s analytic of finitude. I will then proceed to examine the relationship between the

mask and the spectator with particular reference to the gaze before concluding with a series of summative statements concerning the mask and its relation to the self.

***Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 – 1940): The Mask, Dionysus, and the Universal I***

For Meyerhold, one of the key aspects of mask was that it worked against the developing fashion for psychological realism that was prevalent in the school of his teacher, Stanislavsky (Braun 61). Meyerhold desired to awaken the power of theatre as he originally envisioned it, as a medium of conscious, even ecstatic art rather than an illusion of real life. In decidedly Nietzschean terms, he claimed “Drama proceeded from the dynamic to the static pole. Drama was born ‘of the spirit of music, out of the dynamic energy of the choric dithyramb’ [...] ‘The Dionysian art of the choric drama arose from the ecstasy of the sacrificial ritual.’<sup>62</sup>” (59).

Central to the power of Attic tragedy was the use of mask. “The mask of the tragic hero, the recognizable embodiment of the spectator’s own fate, the mask of single tragic fate which embodied the universal ‘I’, became slowly objectivised over the course of centuries” (60). The word “objectivised” here refers to the individual character that is the object of psychological curiosity in naturalistic theatre. This theatre has a “magic barrier” that “divides the theatre into two opposed camps, the performers and the onlookers; no artery exists to unite these two separate bodies and preserve the unbroken circulation of creative energy” (59). The advent of character, which Meyerhold identifies with Shakespeare, began a descent into the individual “I” which render stage figures “materialistic formulae” that obscure the “universal ‘I’” (60). For Meyerhold, there is a tension between the materialist, individual “I” and the essential, transcendental “I,” the latter of which is obscured by the individual but accessible via the mask. It is therefore curious to note that, in his own performances in the commedia style, he generally remained unmasked, seeming to prefer performing as the unmasked Pierrot of French theatre. This is reflected by the fact that his writing on the mask is often conceptual rather than empirical, using the mask metaphorically on the page rather than as a performer on the stage. One possible explanation is that his interest in the mask came from a critical, theoretical perspective, and from his interest in the fantastic and the grotesque, unlike Copeau’s, which, as will be shown, stemmed from practical exploration. In some ways it is perhaps more appropriate to consider Meyerhold (like Craig) a prophet of the mask rather than a true practitioner of the object.

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<sup>62</sup> Meyerhold gives no source for these citations, though they are distinctively Nietzschean in flavour.

### **The Acting Style of the Universal I, or the Biomechanics of a Socialist Ideal**

The acting style of the masked performer would require an altogether new, more physical approach that rejects naturalistic imitation; the mask demands a clarified and simplified means of gesture and expression. This ideal was to develop into his system of biomechanics—which is not, it must be added, a system for specifically masked performance—based on the socialist perspective of the skilled worker and an economy of energy through the eradication of superfluous movement (Braun 297-304). As such, we can view the concepts of the biomechanical actor and the universal I as socialist ideals.<sup>63</sup> In terms resonant with Artaud, he states “Every movement is a hieroglyph with its own peculiar meaning” (200).

The eradication of the idiosyncrasies of the individual self transforms the body, forcing it to communicate physically in a more ‘universal’ way. It demands a “stylized,” choreographic form of acting. “Stylization impoverishes life to the extent that it reduces empirical abundance to typical unity” (138). This physical change would necessitate an increased proprioceptive awareness alongside the eradication of non-essential movement. This, combined with the mask, creates a distance between the actor and the character (Pitches 58). The distance opened up by the mask was between the individual, ‘materialist formula’ of the self-as-character, and the external representation of (an aspect of) the universal I. We can interpret this as being the distance between two aspects of selfhood, not necessarily between inner and outer, but between the individual (persona) and the universal, or collective. This emphasis on the primacy of the collective and the eradication of the individual should be seen within the wider context of the collectivist ideal of Meyerhold’s socialist beliefs (Braun 197), despite the eventual stylistic rejection of “formalism” in favour of Socialist Realism (Pitches 41). Nevertheless, despite the political implications, within Meyerhold’s view of the mask, we encounter a recurrent theme in the phenomenon of masking, namely the mask’s ability to simultaneously conceal and reveal. By concealing the individual, the universal is revealed. Paradoxically, this distancing in fact represents a reconnection with the collective, Dionysian self within the space of the body. A distancing, in other words, that is transcendental unity.

### **The Grotesque, the Unity of Opposites, and the Blurring of Boundaries**

Above all, for Meyerhold, was the natural ability of the mask (particularly the commedia mask) to evoke the grotesque, which was at the heart of his theatrical endeavour:

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<sup>63</sup> See Mel Gordon & Alma Law’s *Meyerhold, Eisenstein and Biomechanics: Actor Training in Revolutionary Russia* for a comprehensive account of the biomechanical system (including a list of exercises) and its political context.

The grotesque does not recognize the *purely* debased or the *purely* exalted. The grotesque mixes opposites, consciously creating harsh incongruity and *relying solely on its own originality* [...] The basis of the grotesque is the artist's constant desire to switch the spectator from the plane he has just reached to another which is totally unforeseen. (Braun 139)<sup>64</sup>

The mask was the ideal device for accessing the grotesque; it could switch between planes of reality more readily than the unmasked face, which is exemplified by his description of Arlecchino:

Arlecchino is a foolish buffoon, a roguish servant who seems always to wear a cheerful grin. But look closer! What is hidden behind the mask? Arlecchino, the all-powerful wizard, the enchanter, the magician; Arlecchino, the emissary of infernal powers. [...] How does one reveal this extreme diversity of character to the spectator? With the aid of the mask.” (131)

Moreover, the “grotesque aims to subordinate psychologism to a decorative task” (141), and what better device for combating psychologism than the mask? To Meyerhold, the grotesque is comparable to Gothic architecture as “a miraculous balance [...] between affirmation and denial, the celestial and the terrestrial, the beautiful and the ugly, [...] the grotesque parades ugliness in order to prevent beauty from lapsing into sentimentality” (138-39).

The grotesque offered Meyerhold access to the fantastical, an ideal theatre that “will exist in its own right on the stage; *joie de vivre* will be discovered in the tragic as well as in the comic [...] and the commonplace of everyday life will be transcended.”<sup>65</sup> In this, he sought to prevent illusion and preserve the ecstatic theatricality of the event. The theatrical element was crucial; the audience should never forget that the performer is performing, that they are in a theatre, and the performers should likewise never forget that they are performing and become immersed in their personae. This was because “the more obvious the artifice, the more powerful the impression of life” (Leonid Advreev in a letter to Meyerhold, qtd. in Braun 63).

Another function of the Mask was to fuse history and the present in the moment (Braun 131; Pitches 59), allowing both to live simultaneously. Meyerhold observes how, in observing a single Arlecchino, the mask “enables the spectator to see not only the actual

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<sup>64</sup> For an account of the grotesque in action, see accounts of Gogol's “The Inspector General” (1926) in Braun's *Meyerhold on Theatre*, pp.209-30; cf. Susan Harris Smith's *Masks in Modern Drama*, p.17, which tells us how the officials wore “*svinye ryla*” (or pig snouts) as a form of “social mask”).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, p.228, which says that even Greek tragedy aims at “the eternal joy in becoming,—the joy that includes even the eternal joy in negating.”

Arlecchino before him but all the Arlecchinos who live in memory” (Braun 131). It allows the spectator’s imagination to operate on a different level, existing not only in a fantastical, mythic place, but in mythic time. Meyerhold asks: “Is it not the mask which helps the spectator fly away to the land of make-believe?” (*ibid.*). Events, character and plot are ‘shown’ rather than ‘told’ to the audience; the theatricality of the experience is heightened to the level of the mythic.

### **Meyerhold and the Cogito**

The mask has many advantages and phenomenal potentialities; its anti-naturalistic properties maintain the theatricality of the event and prevent immersion into the objectification of psychological illusion; it allows for more powerful, grotesque characterisation, and ultimately gives access, conversely, to universal truths and the universal “I.” The *cogito* of the thought, present self encounters the unthought of mythic time and space, a meeting place of self and other in the phenomenal unity of theatrical fantasy. The grotesque’s ever-shifting planes of transgressive reality deny the spectator, and indeed the actor, the opportunity to exist in a mundane world of deictic stability.

### ***Jacques Copeau (1879 – 1949) and the Noble Mask***

Jacques Copeau was inspired by Greek tragedy and Edward Gordon Craig<sup>66</sup> (Evans, *Copeau* 14-15, 70; Wiles, *Mask* 102), as well as Nietzsche’s philosophy and Bergson’s ideas of intuition and the *élan vital*,<sup>67</sup> or vital impulse (Copeau 197). He discovered the mask as a training technique in 1921 when trying to find a way around the “excessive awkwardness” of his students (Rudlin, *Copeau* 46). He details how, “in order to loosen up my people at the school, I masked them. Immediately, I was able to observe a transformation of the young actor [...]: the mask saves our dignity, our freedom. The mask protects the soul from grimaces” (Copeau 50). Initially, the masks Copeau used were crude, such as stockings or handkerchiefs (237; 240), and used predominantly for Nietzschean purposes of protection, but Copeau began to develop the mask and, with the help of Albert Marque, created the *masque noble*, or ‘noble’ mask. Copeau’s student, Jean Dorcy relates:

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<sup>66</sup> As a point of interest, Irène Eynat-Confino tells us in *Beyond the Mask: Gordon Craig, Movement, and the Actor*, that Craig was himself inspired by Nietzsche, even to the extent that his concept of the *Übermarionette* was so named to echo Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* (p.86); cf. Wiles, *Mask* p.103.

<sup>67</sup> The *élan vital* can be described as the original common impulse, or “vital impetus” from which all life grew. See Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*, pp. 53-54, and 174-85 (on the nature of instinct).

We had to find this instrument, the mask. In the beginning we fumbled about. We first covered our faces with a handkerchief. Then, from cloth, we moved on to cardboard, raffia, etc., in short all pliable materials. Finally, with the help of our sculpture teacher, Albert Marque, we found the desirable material<sup>68</sup> as well as the necessary modifications to the form of this new instrument. Without Albert Marque we should have continued to make masks “small and pretty.” A good mask must always be neutral: its expression depends on your movements” (qtd. in Copeau 240).

Copeau’s initial interest in the mask came from Greek tragedy, and the focus on community, the collective, and the mythic, universal, or religious elements (Wiles, *Mask* 104-5). He arrived at the idea of the noble mask not only as a result of his experiments, but also as a result of his interest in Greek tragedy whereby the mask offers the actor a level of ‘mystical transport,’ a nobility and heroism sufficient to the task of representing gods and heroes (105). Copeau’s Greek inspiration was stated explicitly when he said, in clearly Nietzschean terms:

The first to wear the mask were the priests of Dionysos, to celebrate religious ceremonies. The mask is born from a feeling of shame, a need to hide. The first masks were made of canvas and not painted—they were white [...] The characters wore the mask of their role type [*emploi*]. Variety in the appearance of tragic characters was restricted. The sobriety of means, the austerity, the few facilities they allowed themselves contribute much to the greatness of their art. (qtd. in Wiles, *Mask* 105)

The mask Copeau was envisaging was essentially a neutral mask (*ibid.*), which will provide the focus in chapter 8.

### **The Mask, the Body, and Transformation**

Copeau and his students discovered the primary importance of the body when wearing the mask, the need to simplify and to eradicate the ‘white noise’ of unnecessary movement in order to boil it down to its essential elements. Various exercises and games would be played in order to reach a level of honesty. Dorcy reports that “Copeau sensed how close we were still to children’s games, and he encouraged our inclinations, allowing us to invent and to develop our little dramas. It was in this laboratory that the mask was born” (qtd. in Copeau 240). This use of children’s games not only highlights the need for honesty and play, an important aspect later developed by Lecoq, but also the need for simplicity. The noble mask does not lend itself to complexity; it is fundamentally concerned with clarity and essence, with purity and economy of gesture, and with honesty. Copeau’s pupil, Jean Dasté, relates:

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<sup>68</sup> Papier-mâché (Rudlin, *Copeau* 46).



The mask demands both a simplification and an extension of gestures; something forces you to go to the limit of a feeling being expressed. [...] Begun as a school exercise, a research, the mask allows us to see a world which could give an actor a whole new life. [...] We left behind us altogether the naturalistic way of acting, and yet the characters possessed a greater reality and a greater vitality. One must project oneself with passion, intensity, and always with a certain joy, which amounts to “freedom.” (qtd. in Copeau 237).

Another student of Copeau and actor trainer, Michel Saint-Denis, described the process as “a means to discover in oneself the sources of acting” (qtd. in Gordon 150). Given the purpose of acting, in the Copeau school, was a means of discovering the truth of the character and of human nature, the purpose of the mask was to find the common denominator of humanity, to “escape from the prison of self,” to ‘strip down’ the actor by “ridding him of the mask of personality” (Gordon 150). On this level, their conclusions are remarkably similar to those of Meyerhold. For Saint-Denis, mask work was “anti-psychological,” requiring the actor to “draw on unconscious impulses” (162) which those of the Copeau school felt to be more honest than the personality. Rudlin interprets the effect of the mask in Freudian terms, claiming it to be “the ego subsumed by the id” (Copeau 48). As Gordon Craig said, “the mask is the only right medium of portraying the expressions of the soul” (Craig 7). When wearing the mask, Copeau says of the actor:

He is commanded by it. He obeys it irresistibly. Barely has he donned the mask, then he feels flowing into him an existence that he was empty of, that he never even suspected. It is not just his face that is changed, it is his whole person, the very nature of his reflexes, with ready-formed feelings that he could neither experience nor falsify with an uncovered face. [...] It is] lifeless until he weds with it, a newcomer from outside which takes hold of him and replaces him. (Copeau qtd. in Wiles, *Mask* 110).

The noble mask, for Copeau, was intended to bypass the “artificial attitude, a bodily, mental, or vocal *grimace*” (qtd. in Evans, *Movement* 79), which we might call the social self, or persona, and allow into it instead a “ready-formed” being, an already there selfhood experienced as other, a newcomer, that replaces him. In other words, there are two kinds of mask: one, which would be that of the everyday self, the personality, or persona, and the other, the theatrical mask that bypasses this in order to access an unconscious and collective, mythical universe.

Dasté approached the mask with a mystical respect, and used to half-close his eyes when donning the mask in order to prepare for the encounter, to prepare himself to be

“inhabited by something that was not my usual self; as if a double was living in my place: I needed different gestures, different poses to express what I felt. I wasn’t trying to perform, but to be” (qtd. in Wiles, *Mask* 109). Dasté goes further and claims that the mask “made me discover a world that we have inside us, an unknown world, forces that let us communicate with the universe” (109).

### **A Return of Origins: Possessed by Nietzsche?**

From these accounts, we can see how the mask potentially functions as a (re)connection with unknown forces that allow the wearer to access a sense of the universal other. Dionysian origins are directly sought by Copeau in the nobility of the neutral aesthetic, which will be explored at length in the next chapter. The similarities between Copeau and many of his followers with Meyerhold’s theories are striking, though we must acknowledge the explicitly Nietzschean flavour of the European cultural environment at the time (Taxidou 23-31). However, despite the decidedly Nietzschean aesthetic, the physical and theatrical innovations and discoveries were decidedly empirical in nature, and the effects on Copeau and his followers must be given some validity in their own right. Whether the experience was interpreted through a Nietzschean lens of a confrontation with a Dionysian other or not, the experience of transcendence is of fundamental importance, and is one that finds correlates within ritual mask practice of a wide range of other cultures, ones that cannot be said to be informed by Nietzsche. It is this, as well as my own practical experiences, rather than any encounter with Nietzschean philosophy or aesthetics, that leads me to believe that there is something immensely powerful in the mask itself. In other words, the transcendence and the feelings of connection with some originary, universalising force, or *élan vital*, cannot easily be dismissed. The phenomenality suggests an encounter with origins, suggesting the dissolution of the paradox identified by Foucault as the ‘retreat and return of the origin.’

### ***Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956) and the Failure of the Alienating Mask***

The rejection of naturalistic theatre was something that was also taken up by Bertolt Brecht, whose concept of the *Verfremdungseffekt* found in the mask a potential ally (though it would be wrong to suggest that Brechtian theatre is characteristically masked). We find in Brecht’s use of the mask a means of preventing over-identification with a particular character in favour of the recognition of a *type*, particularly in relation to social status. Brecht’s wider

battle against emotional empathy for theatrical characters<sup>69</sup> was one that he felt would be aided by the mask—the audience would not empathise or become emotionally involved with a masked character to the same extent. In other words, the mask was essentially an alienating device for Brecht, who took his inspiration for the mask from, amongst other places, Chinese theatre (*On Theatre* 91).

Meyerhold had used pig's snout-masks for *The Government Inspector* (Harris Smith 17, see p.118 n.64 above) as a sort of 'social mask' to politically represent the social function of the character rather than the individual psychology, and this is an idea taken up enthusiastically by Brecht (*ibid.*). Harris Smith tells us that Meyerhold's idea of 'social masks' was used by Brecht not only as a means of alienation, but as a way of "shocking the audience into self-recognition" by recognition of their own political 'type' (31). This technique allowed for a closer encounter with the "truth" as he saw it. He was to claim: "The actors can do without (or with minimum of) makeup, appearing 'natural,' and the whole thing can be a fake; they can wear grotesque masks and represent the truth" (Brecht 110).

Brecht used masks in *The Roundheads and the Pointheads* (1936) to call attention to the absurdity of the Nazi's persecution of the Jews. In describing the production, Brecht says "It was not the 'eternally human' that was supposed to emerge, not what any man is alleged to do at any period, but what men of a specific social strata (as against other strata) do in our period (as against any other)" (100). The masks used were about 20cm high and showed "drastic distortions of nose, ears, hair and chin" (102). These masks were not meant to appeal to any universal humanity, but to distinguish the inhumanity and absurdity of the situation (Harris Smith 32). Masks were again used in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, performed posthumously in 1958, in accordance with Brecht's direction. The gangsters wore masks based on white clown make-up to suggest the "violence and mockery of the circus ring" (34), hoping to be able to simultaneously convey both the comedy of the absurdity and the horror of the violence. Harris Smith points to problems in these productions and their intended effect, relating Ruby Cohn's objections in *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots* (pp.363-64), which suggested that medieval techniques of ridicule (referring to masked devils) were not effective for Brecht's audiences, who could not simultaneously laugh at and condemn ruthless murderers, and for whom the masks of *Roundheads* made the effort too simplistic (35).

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<sup>69</sup> It should be noted that his battle was not necessarily straightforward or entirely consistent. For Brecht's rejection of empathy (as opposed to emotion), see *On Theatre*, pp. 145-46. However, for his later admission of a certain degree of empathy, see pp.221, 271, and 277-78 (§53). For his view of empathy in rehearsal, see his "Notes on Stanislavsky," in which he says "It is interesting how Stanislavski admits falsehood-at rehearsal! In the same way I admit empathy-at rehearsal! (And both of us must admit them in performance, albeit in differing mixtures)" (161).

*Caucasian Chalk Circle* likewise used masks, but again not to their intended effect. The general rule was that the upper-class characters were masked, whereas the lower-class characters were not. This would suggest, whether it was Brecht's intention or not, that he was directing the audience's empathy towards to the working class, attempting to alienate the



Figure 1: Helene Weigel as Natasha Abashvili in Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

relatively inhuman aristocrats. Figure 1 (left) shows Helene Weigel wearing the half-mask of Natasha Abashvili, with makeup and headscarf to create a single grotesque, deeply unsympathetic face. Certainly it is possible to see how such a mask can function as alienating, but there are two problems here. Firstly, as Mumford observes, the convention of the upper-class characters as masked was perhaps too schematic (124), and secondly, as can be seen from the photograph, the half-mask borders on prosthetic, creating a very different effect to the half-mask of, say, commedia. This particular half-mask does not declare its artifice *in juxtaposition* with the face, rather it disfigures the face of the wearer, which is a different thing altogether. Harris Smith concludes that

“the response to the mask must be the means by which its effect is judged. In this case, as with many of Brecht's plays, the audience response was the opposite of what he intended” (34). Various explanations are offered by Harris Smith, such as problems with the numbers of the masks and the ideological implications in a politically loaded play, but I would suggest that the failure was more fundamental.

### **Marxist Masks and the problem of Alienation**

Brecht's view of the state of humanity is in direct contradiction to the function of masks thus far identified:

Emotions, instincts, impulses are generally presented as being deeper, more eternal, less easily influenced by society than ideas, but this is in no way true. The emotions are neither common to all humanity nor incapable of alteration; the instincts neither infallible nor independent nor incapable of reason; the impulses neither uncontrollable nor spontaneously engendered [...]. (100)

Brecht's Marxist, materialist view of the self is of a sociological, economically defined being who is ultimately alterable because constructed. For Brecht, there is no universal essence of humanity beyond a call to reason. This suggests a certain problem in Brecht's use of the mask; the reality he wished to address was the present, political reality as he saw it rather than the mythical or fantastical; the 'humanity' he wished to appeal to was rational and deictically fixed. Masks were not symbols, but (often derogatory) signs alone. Perhaps the starkest illustration of his political use of masks appears in *The Measures Taken*, first performed in 1930, in which we find a clear example of the mask used as a sign rather than a symbol, and designed specifically to conceal the identities of the wearers. The Four Agitators are given masks to wear in order to become Chinese propagandists (scene 2). They are instructed: "Tenacity and secrecy are the links / That bind the [Communist] Party network against the / Guns of the Capitalist world: / To speak, but / To conceal the speaker" (13). In scene 6, "The Betrayal," one of the agitators tears the mask from his face in order to break with the Party. He is subsequently shot in order to protect those whose identities are still concealed. Interestingly, it was the agitator's empathy—his misguided humanity—that overcame his revolutionary pragmatism and undermined the revolution. In this respect, the mask signified the "Cold endurance, unending perseverance / Comprehension of the individual and comprehension of the whole" (34), a politic that runs counter to the immediacy of human instinct and signifies instead cold, pragmatic rationality.<sup>70</sup> The mask, in this instance, again runs counter to its universalising and fundamentally *human* aspect; it signifies the rejection rather than acceptance of essence and impulse.

In "A Short Organum for the Theatre" (§42), he calls on ancient theatre:

A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar. The classical and medieval theatre alienated its characters by making them wear human or animal masks; the Asiatic theatre even today uses musical and pantomimic A-effects. Such devices were certainly a barrier to empathy, and yet this technique owed more, not less, to hypnotic suggestion than do those by which empathy is achieved. (Brecht 192)

The phrase "hypnotic suggestion" is interesting. It refers to a "stage image" that must expose the contradiction of the "living, unmistakable man, who is not quite identical with those identified with him" (191). Such an image of man would allow recognition yet at the same time make it seem unfamiliar. If we unpack this sentiment, I suggest we can uncover a deep

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<sup>70</sup> This is, of course, only one reading. For a discussion of other readings of the play—not centred on the mask—see Andreas Huyssen's *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, pp.82-87.

contradiction. It calls upon the necessity of finding an image of man that speaks directly to him, directly to the man who is not identical to those others. In other words, to find a single image capable of speaking directly to the individual aspect of each man within the collective. Brecht is seeking, whilst not using the words—which are antithetical to his materialist, constructivist outlook—that which is essential and universal in man. He seeks to address what is essential in each man through the ‘stage image’ whilst (politically) denying the existence of universality or essence. In other words, the mask as genuinely alienating whilst at the same time universalising is not philosophically coherent. Moreover, the masks used by Brecht are often (but not always) for the purpose of lampooning certain types for the purpose of unsympathetic derogation. The half-masks of commedia, as will be discussed in chapter 7, operate as symbols of deeper, more primal impulses and drives, whereas that of Natasha Abashvili is closely modelled on the human face, and in itself signifies nothing more than the human face. In other words, the actor derives no impulses from the mask, and instead uses it as a disguise that is subordinate to the political message.

### **Brecht and the Empirico-Transcendental Doublet**

Brecht is speaking to man as representation. The mask of Brechtian theatre seeks to alienate him from his own being in order to reveal to him a social reality. On the face of it, this seems reasonable. However, Brecht, like Foucault (and unlike Meyerhold), seems to deny a universal “I” beyond the cultural construct; yet Brecht too must acknowledge something behind the construct and seeks an image with “hypnotic” power to achieve his aim. The mask as a sign cannot do, for signs alone do not possess hypnotic power, given that hypnosis seeks to work on the unconscious. Symbols, on the other hand, possess such power (see p.69 above), the power or numinosity of which appeals to something beyond the intellect (or ego-consciousness) alone. Conversely, the Brechtian mask is a literal sign, operating within the same matrix of signification in which Foucauldian ‘man’ is trapped.

Perhaps a simpler way of highlighting the point is the contradictory stance Brecht has on empathy. The empathy that Brecht seeks to prevent is arguably the same force that is required to generate political comradeship or inspire revolutionary outrage within a Marxist system (unless the revolutionary zeal Brecht hoped to inspire was based solely on the injustices experienced by the self, a prospect that is incompatible with a communitarian polemic). The promotion of a non-empathetic view is to promote a view of man as a representation, not as a human being. In other words, Brecht’s use of masks as literal signs speaks to masks, not to human beings. The failure of Brecht is the impossibility of

Foucauldian, empirical ‘man,’ attempting to speak to a transcendental humanity that it simultaneously denies.

***The Mask and the Spectator: A Circuitry of Power***

Whilst I have been focusing on specific practitioners’ mask practice, one final but essential issue to address is the relationship between the Mask and the spectator. According to David Wiles, Michael Chase has developed an exercise whereby the actor gets to know his mask by means of mimesis with a non-masked actor, who becomes both active observer and instructor, instructing the performer in the ways of effective movement which the masked performer mirrors and internalises. In this exercise, for the mask to find life, the gaze of a spectator is essential. Chase refers to this activity as “charging the mask” (*Mask* 158). John Wright has a similar exercise that demands the presence of an external observer who helps to “wind up” the mask (“School for Masks”). It is therefore important to acknowledge the role of the spectator as an active element of the creative masking process.<sup>71</sup> The naturalistic tradition of ignoring the audience is unworkable in masked theatre; the Mask regularly directs its gaze at the audience in order to generate that charge. Whether it is the slow, hypnotic stares of Peter Hall’s tragic Mask (Wiles, *Mask* 138), or the frenetic *coups de masque*<sup>72</sup> of the commedia, the audience always remain the primary reference point for the Mask. Greg Hicks speaks of “tracking the house with his gaze like a spotlight beam, or dragging the audience round with him as though they were shards of metal drawn by a magnet, building up an unbreakable symbiosis” (*ibid.*).

Antonio Fava asserts that “the mask is not the explosive but the detonator. The explosive is always the actor” (*Commedia* 3). It is a pleasing metaphor, but it misses out an important element, namely the means by which the charge travels from the detonator to the explosive in order to make the circuit effective. The means by which the charge travels and affects the ‘explosion’ is the spectator, whom anthropologist Ronald Grimes claims is the animating force of both mask and masker (67-68). To recall Meyerhold’s metaphor, the theatre he railed against had a “magic barrier” that “divides the theatre into two opposed camps, the performers and the onlookers; no artery exists to unite these two separate bodies and preserve the unbroken circulation of creative energy” (59). This circulation, or circuitry,

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<sup>71</sup> Various practitioners use mirrors to ‘charge’ the mask. See for example Keith Johnstone’s *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*, p.166; cf. Ken Elston’s “Ritual and Inhabiting the Mask: An Actor’s Search for the Transcendent Creative State,” p.226.

<sup>72</sup> The *coup de masque* is a technique taught by commedia teacher Antonio Venturino as the punctuating ‘double-take’ and reference to the audience that accompanies any change of mood or situation; it is the core of the Mask-audience relationship without which, Venturino teaches, the Mask dies (personal interview).

it would seem, resides in the gaze. Proof of the importance of the spectator's gaze, even with the noble masks of the training room, can be inferred from the effort and intricacy that went into the design of the mask; how it *looks* is very important. If it were just a matter of concealing the face, there would be little reason to move away from handkerchiefs or cardboard, or any other means of hiding the face. But if the look of the mask is important, this must be, on some level, for the benefit of an observer: the wearer cannot see the mask. This would suggest that the efficacy of the process requires someone to view the Mask, even when the purpose is not 'performance' in the usual sense. Dasté describes noble mask as having "two long openings for the eyes, allowing the spark of a true gaze to pierce through. (qtd. in Copeau 237-38). It is therefore worth spending a little time exploring the phenomenon of the gaze in more detail.

The gaze refers not to looking, but to being looked at. Hegel says: "Self-consciousness exists *in and for itself* because and by way of its existing in and for itself for another; i.e., it exists only as a recognized being." (*Phen.* §178). One of the most important writers to develop Hegel's ideas on the gaze was Jacques Lacan. Lacan refers to the Taoist Choang-tsu's story of dreaming he was a butterfly, and questions whether or not it was a butterfly dreaming it was Choang-tsu: "in the dream, he is a butterfly for nobody. It is when he is awake that he is Choang-tsu for others, and is caught in their butterfly net" (*Seminars XI* 76). He therefore characterises our being captured by the gaze of others as being caught in a net, yet reliant on the other to define our existence. "From the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it, he becomes that punctiform object, that point of vanishing being with which the subject confuses his own failure [to live up to what the desirous gaze wants to see]" (83).

The gaze is essential to the reciprocity of recognised being, and is why the handkerchiefs and scarves of Copeau's early experiments would not suffice. Both the spectator and the performer exist in, and are constituted by, the gaze of the other—the gaze of a specific mask has its own power, which is mutually constitutive of both performer and spectator, whereas the 'gaze' of a handkerchief does not function in such a way. Moreover, to recall Laughlin and Laughlin's hypothesis, the mask radically alters the body image, the handkerchief does not. Viewed in this context, it becomes clear why the gaze of an 'other' is so essential to transformation and activating the Mask. The gaze is mutually constitutive, without the gaze, the mask dies, or rather, never lives.



## CONCLUSION

I will end this chapter by offering six key concluding statements, before clarifying my hypothesis and offering a brief explanation of my methodology.

1. The mask has two different potential practical functions: the mask as *sign* (in which the mask is subordinate to the self, who imposes meaning) and the mask as *symbol* (in which the self succumbs to the mask, and accepts ‘meaning’). The mask as symbol has a clear affective power which the mask as sign lacks. In other words, when a mask is used in a way that contradicts its philosophical purpose, as in the Brechtian sense of alienation, it lacks efficacy and loses its essential relationship with the self.
2. The power of the Mask is not to be underestimated. The mask can dominate the wearer.
3. The Mask provides the self with an encounter with alterity, which may be experienced variously as a transformation of consciousness, an alteration of reality, a confrontation with the unconscious, or even as possession.
4. The Mask is anti-psychological. It speaks on a universalising plane rather than an individual—the self is universalised rather than psychologised.
5. The circuitry of the reciprocal gaze between Mask and spectator is essential to the affective power of the Mask. To wear a mask with no spectator does not create the Mask.
6. The Mask is potentially atemporal.

The evidence I have surveyed supports the hypothesis that the mask is a symbolic third thing that facilitates the union of opposites. It is my intention to show that this is historically and consistently demonstrable through key theatrical mask practices. Moreover, this phenomenal union of opposites in the Mask may itself rewire the brain in such a way as to cause important structural changes, not only offering a different perspective of the self, but the potential to change the experience and understanding of *material* selfhood altogether—remembering of course that materiality no longer serves as a ‘solid’ or stable classification. The correlations between the findings of theoreticians, the experiences related by mask practitioners, and the paradoxes inherent within the Foucauldian analytic of finitude, all point to a fertile affinity between them, which I will explicate over the following three chapters. The paradoxical nature of the mask and the paradoxical nature of ‘man’ are tantalisingly similar. It is my contention that by historically identifying and locating some fundamental ruptures in the genealogical development of ‘man,’ we may be able to gain a fresh perspective on the

function and wider significance of the theatrical mask, whose importance I suggest is far greater than it has been credited with. In short, the mask does more than conceal and reveal the individual, but also conceals and reveals much about the wider culture from which it is born.

The parallel use of Jungian archetypal theory and Foucauldian genealogy is necessary in this context. Foucauldian theory does not account for the essential elements of human nature, which are central to this investigation. Nor can it account for the mask's unique perspective or its uniquely pervasive presence and relationship with human culture throughout history. The mask's presence in human pre-history can be dated back tens of thousands of years (Anati and Anati, 107-9), and, as a result, a methodology that deals with primal nature is necessary. Furthermore, given that the Foucauldian analytic is one of untenable paradoxes, a methodology that directly addresses the union of opposites would seem to be entirely apposite. Jung's Aristotelian notion of the external third thing<sup>73</sup> required for the symbolic union of opposites seems more functionally in line with mask practice than does Nietzsche's more Heraclitean notion of inherent unity. The difference, I suggest, is functional: ontological unity may be inherent (the road up is the road down), but phenomenal unity requires an external symbol to dissolve the boundaries of empirical categorisation that define modern 'man.'

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<sup>73</sup> See, for example, *Physics* 1.4.189a.

## CHAPTER 6: THE MASK OF GREEK TRAGEDY

**The Bacchae**

This chapter will examine the tragic mask in particular relation to Euripides' *The Bacchae*. The reason I have chosen this play is that it addresses, perhaps more than any other play, some of the central themes in relation to selfhood thus far explored, including questions of human identity and its relationship with the divine, its fluidity, and the nature of the God of theatre himself, which thus contextualises theatrical event in both the human and divine world. Moreover, the relatively late appearance of *The Bacchae* on the classical stage is offset not only by its apparent archaism, but by what many describe as its metatheatricity (Segal, *Poetics* 215-71), thus offering a theatrical perspective on something perhaps a little wider than the single historical moment of its initial production, namely the historical tradition of which it is part. Moreover, the question of the mask is central to the *opsis* of the final tragedy in two essential respects, and these will provide the focus when discussing the play.

The chapter will be divided into three parts in order to address three key questions:

1. How do experiences surrounding the tragic mask reflect the concept of Selfhood in ancient Greece?
2. To what effect was the mask used in *The Bacchae*, and how can this inform our reading of the play?
3. What are the philosophical implications of the above on the developing concept of selfhood?

In part 1, I will examine the mask as object, and explore the history of the use of the word *prosōpon* (or mask) in order to establish an epistemological and cultural context. I will also address the issue of the mask's physiognomy and the aesthetics of classical neutrality, as informed by vase paintings and classical sculpture. Within this context, I will briefly address the issue of the gaze of the tragic mask. It must be stated at this stage that, whilst a significant aspect of the tragic mask is its acoustical properties, this will not be an area on which I will touch on the basis that it does not address my primary focus, which is the issue of selfhood rather than sonority.<sup>74</sup> In part 2, I will explore the specific masks of Dionysus and Pentheus in

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<sup>74</sup> See Pickard-Cambridge's *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, p.195, for an account of the mask's amplificatory properties. See Dario Fo's "Hands off the Mask" (*New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 5 (1989), pp.207-9) for an account of the mask's musical qualities. See also Vovolis and Zamboulakis' "The Acoustical Mask of Greek Tragedy" (*The Face and Mask of the Actor*) for an example of modern experimentation with the acoustic potential of the mask.

relation to the meaning of the play in performance. I will limit myself to these masks and their direct implication on the meaning of the play rather than explore the vast range of wider themes and alternative critical readings. Part 3 will examine the philosophical implications on the nature of classical selfhood before going on to identify what potential perspectives this may offer on contemporary issues relating to the self. I will begin by briefly recapitulating some of the more pertinent aspects of ancient Greek selfhood identified in chapters 1 and 2.

### *The Classical Self*

In chapter 1, we encountered the important concept of flux, and the proto-Nietzschean perspectivism of Heraclitus, whose aphorism *hodos anō katō mia kai hotē* (B60) ('the road up is the same as the road down') suggests a unity of apparent opposites. The second issue is that of the externality of self. Greek identity was not the internal, introspective self of our own times, but one that existed primarily through the externality of one's civic identity, expressed through legal and ritual duties; it was a self, in Plato's definition, existing in mutual reflexivity with the *polis*. This leads to the third aspect, which is that the self is not considered an individual, but primarily a mixture of self and other, exemplified in the form of Plato's *ousia* (p.26 above), and Aristotle's notions of *philoī* as *alloi autoi*, and the shared perception of *synaisthēsis* (pp.26-27; cf. Wiles, *Citizenship* 14-15). Even a tool is considered an extension of the body (p.32). Ruth Padel explains the porous nature of the body at the mercy of external forces, both physical and spiritual, rendering the concept of agency somewhat problematic—the will was not a category within the classical Greek episteme (pp.38-40). The Greek self exists within a living cosmos of forces, an external and reflexive nexus of physical and metaphysical others. Finally, we should recall the self-other (or body-soul) doublet of Empedocles' flesh and *daimōn* (p.36), and of the related Orphic tradition of the self as half mortal body (or *sōma*), descended from the Titans, and half divine spirit (or *psychē*, p.35), descended from Dionysus. The Dionysian aspect of the self will prove to be central to this study.

## PART 1: HOW DO IDEAS SURROUNDING THE TRAGIC MASK REFLECT THE CONCEPT OF SELFHOOD IN ANCIENT GREECE?

### *The Tragic Mask as Object*

Our first problem when attempting to examine the tragic mask as an object is that none have survived. Likewise there is no extant contemporary writing on their construction, function, or even aesthetic qualities. The closest we have to contemporary evidence is from a few

surviving vase paintings.<sup>75</sup> It seems most likely that the masks themselves were made from linen, hardened with plaster or glue (Pickard-Cambridge 191). What we do know for sure is that they were not made to last. The tragic masks needed only last for the duration of the dramatic festival, after which they were dedicated to Dionysus, hung up in his temple and either ritually destroyed or allowed to degrade (Easterling, “Dionysus” 51). The lack of hard evidence has inevitably led to a wealth of speculation about the nature of the tragic mask in terms of its aesthetic qualities, which I will address in due course. However, first, it is useful to examine the history of the word for mask, as this reveals some interesting factors.

The Greek word for ‘mask’ was *prosōpon*, which is the same word used for ‘face.’ This suggests an almost diametrically opposed conception of the mask to the modern western usage, whereby the word ‘mask,’ used as a verb, means to conceal. Likewise, the idea of wearing a mask is nowadays considered dissimulative in function. Such dissimulative connotations are clearly not present in the Greek *prosōpon*. However, Pickard-Cambridge suggests that masks did indeed have a dissimulative function for those who took part in the Dionysiac *kōmoi* (or drunken ritualistic procession), which “were liable to become somewhat disreputable and respectable citizens preferred to conceal their identity” (191; cf. Calame 100-1). Even so, the dissimulative possibilities of the mask were not present within the word itself, which must be broken down further. Wiles explains the word is made up of *pros*, meaning ‘before,’ and *ōps*, which relates to seeing, the eye, or optics, so the word means “before the gaze,” which could refer to either the seer or the seen: “Slippage from seer to seen was easy in a classical world where *I am* coincides with *who I am seen to be*” (Wiles, *Mask* 1). Embedded within the language is the concept of reciprocity, a mutual dependence or circuitry of seer and seen.

The theologian and Philosopher of Religion John Penteleimon Manoussakis, in a paper entitled “Prosopon and Icon: Two Premodern ways of Thinking God,” examines the word *prosōpon* as referring to both “the face and the person” (283). He points to an interesting anomaly which is of interest here, namely that Homer tended to prefer the use of the plural *prosōpa* when referring to a single face (284). Further investigation into this reveals some interesting features. In both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, rather than refer to the singular face as a *prosōpon*, Homer does indeed consistently use the plural.<sup>76</sup> This suggests

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<sup>75</sup> See Oliver Taplin’s *Pots & Plays* (2007) and the introduction to *The Pronomos Vase and Its Context* (2010); also David Wiles’ *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy*, chapter 2, “The evidence of vases,” for more detailed discussions and interpretations of the surviving evidence.

<sup>76</sup> See *Iliad* VII, 212 (*prosōpasi*); XVIII, 414; XIX, 276; *Odyssey* 8.85; 18.173; 18.192 (*prosōpati*); 19.316.

that the solitary human face is, for Homer at least, highly irregular; without a gaze to appear before, it does not exist. Even in modern terminology, a face is spoken of in terms of its “looks.” A face only exists in the eyes of another, which likewise requires a face, or reciprocal gaze, so the plural form is favoured despite the apparent grammatical irregularity. In this linguistic anomaly, I suggest it is possible to discern the germs of the Platonic *ousia* as the product of *autos* and *heteros* (*Tim.* 35a-b), and of the Hegelian idea that the self “exists only as a recognized being” (*Phen.* §178). Wiles points out that, according to the evidence of vase paintings, “masks are always functions of relationships” (*Mask* 16). Based on the linguistic evidence, the same can be equally applied to faces. Furthermore, given the externality of the Greek concept of selfhood, it can be ventured that—in Homeric consciousness—the self, or at the very least, the face, is likewise a function of relationships, earthly or divine.

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, which in themselves are highly suggestive. In Book XVIII, line 24, of the *Iliad*, Homer uses the singular *prosōpon* for the only time to describe Achilles’ terrible reaction upon hearing the news of Patroclus’ death: “So spake [Antilochus], and a black cloud of grief enwrapped Achilles, and with both his hands he took the dark dust and strewed it over his head and defiled his fair face, and on his fragrant tunic the black ashes fell.” There are two other instances of people hiding their faces, both in *Odyssey* (19.361; 8.85), and both retain the plural. These examples of hiding the face are by the hands (19.361) or by a cloak (8.85), whereas Achilles’ smearing of the face acts as a form of mask, an idea reinforced if speculation that the first theatrical masks were not linen adornments but direct smearing of wine-lees onto the skin is correct. This tragic ‘masking’ provides the only instance in either the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in which Homer refers to the face or *prosōpon* in the singular. Perhaps the mask, unlike the face, may exist in isolation? Or perhaps, in this case, the mask may be described in the singular because its eyes do not perceive; the eyes of its wearer would be closed if smearing his face so violently, so this ‘mask’ exists only in the gaze of another without the reciprocity of a functional relationship.

If we turn to the Homeric hymns for further evidence, we find three uses of the word *prosōpon*, and here we find another interesting feature. Homer twice uses the singular *prosōpon* to describe a face, the first being Aphrodite’s (Hymn 10, line 2), and the second being Helios’ (Hymn 31, line 13). The only other time it appears is in “To Aphrodite” (Hymn 5, line 184) when referring not to a god but to the ill-fated Anchises, for whom the plural *prosōpa* is once again used. It would seem that, for Homer, the singular was reserved for masks and gods, and the plural for mortals. Hesiod likewise uses the plural for the single face

in “Work and Days,” line 571. The word appears three times in Pindar’s Odes, each in the singular: the first in “Nemean,” line 18, which calls for “the divine truth to show her face,” and the other two cases (“Olympian” line 3; “Pythian” line 15) to describe not a human face, but the façade of a divine, temple-like building. I have been able to find no instance of the great pre-tragic poets (Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Pindar) in which this convention is broken. The first time we see the singular usage is in Aeschylus’ *The Suppliants* (line 200). One possible explanation for this is the relative fixity of masks, divinities, and façades, in contrast to the fluidity of the human face, which is only singular if we discount its multiplicity of expressions and state of perpetual flux (including ageing). Whilst the gods may be notoriously capricious and volatile, their identities are relatively fixed in the mythology of the culture, even if that fixity includes, like Dionysus, a dual or protean nature. Furthermore, the multiplicity of the human face depends largely upon its relational aspect: smiles, frowns, and the whole spectrum of expressions are, generally speaking, reactive and functional; they are determined by context, circumstance and company. They are functionally relational.

The same use of the plural *prosōpa* to describe a single face is used by Sophocles in *Oedipus at Colonus*, line 315, when Antigone describes the approach of her sister, Ismene. However, by the time of Sophocles, this plural use has become somewhat the exception, and could possibly be explained by the fact that Ismene’s identity is defined *relationally* throughout the Oedipus trilogy as Antigone’s sister. All Sophocles’ other uses of *prosōpon* are grammatically conventional, as were Aeschylus’ and, barring one exception,<sup>77</sup> Euripides’. This suggests that the singular use of the word *prosōpon* initially referred to Gods, façades, and masks—the sphere of the fixed rather than the human realm of relational flux. But by the time of the golden age of tragedy, the singular was used democratically for gods, masks and humans alike, and signified an increasing fixity of individual identity. It is useful to briefly look at the historical context of this grammatical shift.

As masks became less a cultic practice and more a focal point of civic life, particularly at the City Dionysia, alongside the advent of democracy, the theatrical mask arguably became a symbol, or perhaps a symptom, of the Athenian quest for identity. This quest for identity is described by Vernant as that in which man was not only exploring the nature of his relationship with the gods, but was becoming a legal unit within the *polis*,

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<sup>77</sup> In *The Trojan Women*, line 836, Ganymede’s “fair young face” is described as by the Chorus as *prosōpa*. It could be that the relational aspect of Ganymede is so strong that this seemingly archaic usage is still relevant (i.e. to conceive of Ganymede is to automatically conceive of him as Zeus’ cup-bearer. His identity is purely and definitively relational—more so than Ismene’s. Furthermore, this relationship is founded almost entirely upon the legendary beauty of his face).

acquiring an increasingly quantifiable legal identity with its own implications and obligations (23-28).<sup>78</sup> In other words, the concept of identity was becoming more politically and legally fixed, and so the face—as the index of one’s public identity—became similarly less conceptually unstable, and settled as the more equable *prosōpon* rather than the fluid *prosōpa*.

It is with this linguistic perspective in mind that we turn to the pictorial evidence in search of further clarification, specifically the evidence of vase paintings.

### ***Vase paintings and the phenomenon of “melting”***

When tragic masks are depicted on vase paintings, we find the curious phenomenon that they are seemingly never depicted in action, though they are abundant when not being worn. This is because, with one exception (Calame 104) the mask appears to “melt” into the actor’s body (Wiles, *Mask* 16). There are of course differing interpretations of this phenomenon. The British Museum publication, *Images of the Greek Theatre* by Green and Handley, suggests that it is because of the nature of “serious theatre,” which “needs to maintain its dramatic illusion.” As such, the vase painters chose to “portray the myth itself rather than the immediate actuality of actors on stage” (25-26). This argument for the ‘suspension of disbelief’ is not entirely unproblematic, but the idea that the depictions were of the mythical reality rather than the theatrical actuality would certainly seem plausible. Other scholars argue that this phenomenon is due to the nature of the mask, particularly in the culture of ancient Greece; the mask is traditionally not an artefact but an agent of transformation (Wiles, *Mask* 41). Wiles identifies four possible reasons for this ‘melting’:

1. The audience ‘forgot’ that the mask was being worn due to the nature of the performance
2. A “formal taboo may have prevented representation of what was a sacred activity—a milder version of the prohibition on revealing what was seen in the Eleusinian Mysteries”
3. The painter did not wish to present an illusion of an illusion

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<sup>78</sup> All references to Vernant are from *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* by Vernant and Vidal-Naquet. However, all references to this book are to chapters authored by Vernant, never to those of Vidal-Naquet, so I will reference them by Vernant’s name alone.



4. Masks were like the vases themselves, which would normally contain wine: sacred vessels intended not to represent but to transform the perception of the user.<sup>79</sup>

Another possible explanation is one that does not necessitate the idea of *psychological* transformation as we understand it in the modern sense, but that nevertheless involves a complete transformation of identity, and one that is philosophically concordant with the archaic notion of *prosōpa/prosōpon*. If we recall Aristotle's suggestion of the relationship between body and soul being the same as craftsman and tool, or in this case, actor and mask, we can see that "between the two terms of each of these pairs there is no partnership; for they are not two, but the former is one and the latter a part of that one, not one itself" (*EE* 7.1241b15-25). If the human face is an index of identity, and the mask likewise, then when the actor wears the mask, he has a single external identity; the two functionally combine into a single unit: the Mask. As such, the phenomenon of "melting" would seem entirely logical. I therefore consider the phenomenon of "melting" to be the Aristotelian fusion of the two indices of identity into the one unit.

### ***Cultic Identity***

The cultic aspects of mask practice are relatively well documented (Pickard-Cambridge 191; Calame 105-6). Ritual masks, it would seem, are distinct from theatrical practice, yet the ritual context remains in the festival of Dionysus<sup>80</sup> in which tragic masks are considered sacred objects, dedicated to Dionysus after the performance was over and hung from the temple in his sanctuary (Wiles, *Introduction* 147). Aside from the City Dionysia, a great number of cults were operating and sanctioned by the city of Athens,<sup>81</sup> and masks—most often animal masks—were used in the cults of Artemis, Demeter, and Dionysus. These masks, whilst distinct from the theatrical mask, would by association inform the general view of mask use. These mask cults, according to Calame, each guard the passage between savage and civilized worlds. Artemis' domain is the rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. Demeter's is the "mystical mediation between above and below" in relation to the harvest, and Dionysus' is "the passage between submission to a civilised order and the liberation of natural forces leading to otherness" (106). Calame calls these "the cults of the periphery," of the "passage from interior to exterior" and "from the self to the different" (*ibid.*). Masks were

<sup>79</sup> See chapter 2 of Wiles' *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy* for a full and detailed account of the function of vases and interpretations of specific examples (pp.15-43).

<sup>80</sup> See Pickard-Cambridge, *Festivals*, esp. ch. 2, "The Great or City Dionysia," for a detailed description of the event; c.f. Csapo and Slater pp.103-20.

<sup>81</sup> For a fuller account of various cults and their practices, see Walter Burkert's *Ancient Mystery Cults*.

used as a form of identification with the cult, or perhaps more directly with the god him- or herself. As such, the ritual identification with the mask was a means of positive identification rather than a negation of identity. The social, cultic identity of the person was confirmed, not hidden, so the mask as a mark of positive identity could be argued to be within the normal way of seeing 'identity' within Greek cosmology, in which, once again, it would be perfectly natural for the mask to "melt" into the identity of the wearer.

### ***Theatre as the "Melting" of Realities***

Claude Calame explores the concept of the tragic actor as shifting between the *I* and the *he* in a complex interplay of self, narrative and "character." He claims that "the *I* of the enunciator/wearer of the mask continues to exist, while the he/she is created step by step by the action; in other words, the mask plays a supporting role" (107). This gives the actor the dual role of protagonist and enunciator of the protagonist in what Calame calls a "shifting in" and "shifting out" of character, and is what allowed the actor to play several roles of either sex in the same play. Calame acknowledges the contradiction this creates: the complete "shifting out" is opposed to the complete assimilation of the mask seen on the vases, but he dismisses this by the fact that the vases represent the mythological reality rather than the theatrical actuality. Both theatrical and vase representations refer to the same mythological reality; vases do not refer to theatricality. This would seem a reasonable assumption were it not for the fact that the vases also depict the theatrical reality of the actors not on the stage. It may be equally interpreted that, given the theatrical referent of the vases, the theatrical reality and the mythological reality, once the players were masked, become one and the same thing.

It is my contention that the shifting in and out that Calame proposes relies less on the deictics of the *I* versus the *s/he* of the actor as enunciator, and more on shifting in and out of mythological and everyday realities, for which theatre is a locus of coexistence: the mythological and the everyday "melt" into the reality of the ever-present mythology in the here and now, a here and now whose spatio-temporal locus is multidimensional. It requires not an either/or, but the double seeing of Dionysian ecstasy.

Vernant takes a different view to Calame's deictics of *I* versus *s/he*. Vernant argues that "Consciousness of self is, for the Greek, awareness of a *He*, not of an *I*" (qtd. in Wiles, *Mask* 265), suggesting that the person seeks his own identity in or through the eyes of others. If we accept Vernant's formulation over Calame's, whose notion of the *I* appears suspiciously modern, the actor's encounter with the mask takes on a far more definitive significance, and the phenomenon of the mask "melting" into the actor (or indeed the actor "melting" into the

mask) once again makes perfect and logical sense, quite aside from any decision by the painter to depict the mythic reality over the theatrical actuality. In these terms, the theatrical actuality might just as easily include the “melting” in that the public identity, or externality, of the wearer was identical to the mask worn.

### ***The Physiognomy of the Tragic Mask***

Naturally, in a study of the tragic *prosōpon*, it is useful to address the now maligned discipline of physiognomy, and for this I will again turn to Aristotle:<sup>82</sup>

It is possible to infer character from features, if it is granted that the body and the soul are changed together by the natural affections: [...] I refer to passions and desires when I speak of natural emotions. If then this were granted and also that for each change there is a corresponding sign, and we could state the affection and sign proper to each kind of animal, we shall be able to infer character from features. (*Prior Analytics* 2.27)

Everyday experience would suggest that the clearest and most immediately obvious corresponding signs to each change in the passions and desires are, in human beings, facial expressions. Therefore, if the passions and desires, or drives in more Nietzschean/Freudian terms, each have a corresponding expression, or face, then each expression could be considered to be not merely the face of the person, but of the dominant ‘passion’ or drive. Once this is understood, it could be claimed that each drive has its own face, or *prosōpon*, resulting in the containing person displaying many faces, or *prosōpa*, which are in fact marriages of two (or more) faces: that of the person and those of the drive(s). This, interestingly, would make the undisturbed *prosōpon* of the person comparable to a neutral mask, and the expressive face more accurately the *prosōpa* of pre-tragic antiquity. It is with the concept of this neutral base and its animating marriage with the passions and drives in mind that we turn to the aesthetics of mask physiognomy.

### ***The Aesthetics of Neutrality***

The evidence from vases and from the second century grammarian Pollux would seem to suggest that the masks were relatively neutral both in expression—though the mouths were open in order that the actor could speak—and in features, presenting a generic face

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<sup>82</sup> By Aristotle’s time, physiognomy was apparently well established. See *The Refutation of All Heresies* by Church Father Hippolytus of Rome, 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, for the claim that Pythagoras was the “discoverer of physiognomy” (37, 3n). See also J. Jenkinson’s “Face facts: a history of physiognomy from ancient Mesopotamia to the end of the 19th century” for the claim that the practice dates back to ancient Mesopotamia (2).

representative of only age, social status, gender and ethnicity and, occasionally, health (Csapo and Slater 398-400).<sup>83</sup> However, Pollux's descriptions are of fourth century masks, as can be seen by his attention to the *onkos* (an elevated hairline), which was an invention of the fourth century (Wiles, *Mask* 52, 54), and so great caution must be taken in inferring fifth century conventions from Pollux alone. The chief distinction that seems to be made, particularly between characters of the same age and gender, is through the hair (Csapo and Slater 398-400), though naturally costume would also play a key differentiating role. Moreover, neutrality was a typical classical aesthetic when it came to sculpture, and mask-making is certainly a form of sculpture, though, as Wiles points out, the associations with the statuesque are potentially dangerous in terms of acting styles (*Introduction* 149). Edith Hall suggests that tragic masks aimed at aesthetic beauty, and suggests we look more to sculpture than to ritual for clues as to their aesthetic qualities (101). Classicist C. H. Hallett notes:

[Neutrality] fulfils [...] the desire that sculpture possess a symbolic and universal quality [...] [T]he neutral Classical expression appears to take on a subtly different emotional tenor in different situations—largely through the postures and gestures of the figures. In violent struggle it can seem resolute and intent; in a stately procession serene and composed; in a grave stele melancholy yet resigned; in a victor statue modest and reflective; and in cult image inscrutable—passionless and perfect. Its apparent vacancy is in fact its greatest strength; for it renders the expression potentially ambiguous, or—more correctly—multivalent; and the beholder will tend to supply feelings appropriate to the context. (80)

Here we can see the phenomenon of projection at work, rendering the experience less the reading of a sign (i.e. a facial expression as index of the emotion) and more a dialogue between the neutrality of the sculpture and the emotional projection of the observer, who is necessarily active in this exchange.

According to Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 3.10.8), Socrates declared that the sculptor's business is to make visible the workings of the soul, which could seem natural given that the "art" of sculpture was not considered an artistic so much as a religious endeavour (the word for statue was *agalma*, meaning a gift or honour to the gods—masks were likewise *agalmata* for Dionysus [Wiles, *Mask* 44]). In these terms, the purpose of the mask-maker, or *skeuopoios* (57) could be said likewise to be to reveal the *psychē* of the 'character,' or *ēthos*,

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<sup>83</sup> For the earliest argument *against* neutrality, see Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (c.95CE), which claims: "Consequently in plays destined for the stage, the masters of the art of delivery design even their masks to enhance the emotional effect. Thus, in tragedy, Aerope will be sad, Medea fierce, Ajax bewildered, Hercules truculent" Quintilian (11.3.73); cf. Wiles, *Mask* p.73.

rather than to reproduce the outer physical likeness. Moreover, if the sculptor reveals the soul—the divine element of man—and the facial expression is neutral, we can speculate further upon the Greek view of the soul, the revelation of its nature likewise being an interpretation of the observer’s own projection, rendering the soul not separate or autonomous, but relational. The nobility that Copeau associates with the tragic hero aesthetically corresponds with the neutrality of classical sculpture (reflected in the *masque noble*). Perhaps, from another perspective, neutrality is symptomatic of the Orphic balance between the somatic and the divine. Whichever the case may be, if a statue’s neutrality may change tenor, then a moving mask must surely hold an even greater mutability.

### *A Cinematic Illustration*

The apparent mutability of the fixed, neutral human face was powerfully demonstrated by Russian film-maker Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov (a forerunner and one-time teacher to Sergei Eisenstein). In 1918, Kuleshov filmed actor Ivan Mozzhikin’s ‘neutral’ face between images of a bowl of soup, a dead woman in her coffin, and a child at play. The experiment was intended to demonstrate the potential power and effect of montage, but the footage amply demonstrates the *contextual* aspect of the interpretation of a ‘neutral’ facial expression. Film director Vsevolod Pudovkin reported in 1929:

The public raved about the acting of the artist. They pointed out the heavy pensiveness of his mood over the forgotten soup, were touched and moved by the deep sorrow with which he looked on the dead woman, and admired the light, happy smile with which he surveyed the girl at play. But we knew that in all three cases the face was exactly the same. (Cited in Sargeant 7)

This experiment has implications far beyond the effectiveness of cinematic montage; it not only demonstrates the significance of contextual framing in relation to empathetic responses, it also demonstrates the active nature of projection and interpretation in the triggering of human empathy. Furthermore, practical experience with masks can show how even the slight shift in the angle of the head can likewise vastly shift the interpretation of a fixed expression.

In addition to the importance of contextual interpretation, many have noted how asymmetry within mask design, as well as slightly exaggerated features, greatly enhances the mask’s ability to change expression.<sup>84</sup> The asymmetry of a mask would arguably detract from its neutrality somewhat—if, of course, we hold symmetry to be an aspect of true neutrality. However, even if this were the case, asymmetry offers the mask an even more effective—and

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<sup>84</sup> See Wiles, *Mask*, pp.24, 54, 57, 137, 167; cf. Easterling, “A Show for Dionysus” p.51.

affective—quality: ambiguity, which further increases the mask’s potential for expressivity and the triggering of empathetic responses (cf. Meineck 134, 145, 148-51).

Ultimately, the mask’s ability to change expression depends not just on the asymmetry of the design or the change of angles, but upon the active engagement of the spectator’s imagination. The tragic mask can be seen as that with which the passions of the seer conjoin in order to create a new face, even if only for a fleeting moment. It allows us to project our emotions and, consequently, to empathise. Charles Segal suggests that, within *The Bacchae*, “Dionysus serves as a screen on which the human characters project their own visions” (89). An actor’s facial expressions, on the other hand, give us the emotions and thereby promote passivity. Extreme emotion portrayed on the human face induces in some, a notable example being Peter Hall, a sense of personal distaste (23-24). Neutrality draws the emotion from us via our capacity for projection, and its ambiguity and subtlety of expression infers—importantly for the status of the tragic hero—a sense of nobility. As Rush Rehm argues, neutrality, be it the mask, the statue or the silver screen, demands and activates the capacity for projection (*Tragic Theatre* 40); the neutral expression, with its beautiful nobility, demands a level of active, dialogic engagement that the idiosyncratic, expressive face does not. We are arguably more likely to feel *sympathy* for the latter, but this is a far less democratic, universalising response than the active engagement of empathy. Likewise, a mask displaying a high degree of idiosyncratic features could be said to emphasise difference, whereas the neutrality of the tragic mask draws our attention to the common features that we all have or can relate to.<sup>85</sup> The relatively neutral tragic mask speaks not to, or even of, an individual, but the universal.

One final point on the issue of the neutrality of the tragic mask is that it must be distinguished from the *masque neutre* of Jacques Lecoq, which will be addressed in chapter 8. The neutrality of expression in the tragic mask is not the same neutrality as that which Lecoq aimed for, which was a sort of pre-individuated, silent and reactive mask designed to neutralise any sense of individuality; Lecoq’s mask rejects both history and character. The tragic mask, on the other hand, depicted such traits as age, gender, class, health and ethnicity and, importantly, as Vernant states, “the [tragic] mask integrates the tragic figure into a strictly defined social and religious category, that of the heroes” (24). This is in many ways opposed to the neutral mask of Lecoq, which seeks to avoid any such classification.

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<sup>85</sup> For an interesting neurological account of the affectivity of the tragic mask, pertaining to the relationship between foveal and peripheral vision, see Meineck’s “The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask,” esp. pp.124-26. Meineck also argues against the prospect of the neutral tragic mask (129-32), preferring instead the Noh mask as providing a model for changes in facial expression.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the origins of the modern *masque neutre* are to be found in Jacques Copeau's *masque noble*, which explicitly refers to the nobility of tragic neutrality (see p.120 above). Lecoq's mask has no presence outside of the absolute present, whereas the tragic mask seeks a mythical, pan-temporal existence, linking the historic past of the gods and ancestral heroes with the living present within a strictly defined cosmology.

### ***The Mask and the Gaze***

The gaze of the mask, from the evidence of vases, seems to have been considered a highly important feature. Merleau-Ponty said "I live in the facial expression of the other, as I feel him living in mine" ("Relation" 174). To live in the eyes and expressions of a mask, in phenomenological terms, is a very different matter to living in the eyes of a human face. The importance of the mask's gaze to the Greek consciousness can be seen from vase paintings: masks are very often depicted looking straight out from the vase, unlike the full human form, which was depicted in profile and whose gaze is directed away from the viewer (Calame 104; Wiles, *Mask* ch.2). Furthermore, eyes are always painted into the masks when not worn, which further reinforces the idea that the gaze was an essential quality, as indeed was motion (Wiles, *Mask* 22). An alternative explanation for the eyes being painted in would be that the masks were designed with the eyes in them, the pupils being the holes through which the actor would see, but this again would reinforce the notion that the mask's gaze was a key feature.

### ***Conclusions: How do ideas surrounding the tragic mask reflect the concept of Selfhood in ancient Greece?***

Viewed from the perspective of the mask, I would conclude that classical selfhood was almost entirely fluid, an external *ousia* of self and other on various levels, including inanimate objects, such as masks, divinities, and with other people, friends and strangers alike. The self was not an isolated or autonomous being, or 'individual,' but a being in perpetual flux, a nexus of civic and cosmological matrices in which identities could blend with those of ancestral heroes and gods in a mythic, ritual present. This suggests that time itself was not construed quite so rigidly as it is in today's scientific world; on the tragic stage, the identities of past heroes and pan-temporal gods could be manifest through the porous bodies of the masked performers and coexist in the mythical time of the ritual, theatrical event.

The self, through its exteriority, was consequently defined by the words and actions rather than the secret thoughts, intentions, and inner emotions of the person. The deictics of *I* (or rather *s/he*), *here*, and *now*, were not quite so rigid, suggesting a greater acceptance of fluidity and Heraclitean flux than is common in the modern, scientific episteme. The self, like the *prosōpon*, was not considered a self-contained unit but a function of relationships, both human and divine, especially in the Orphic/Pythagorean tradition (with which Empedocles certainly seems in accordance, in *Purifications*, at least).<sup>86</sup> However, as time progressed, the self began to take on greater individual significance, as can be seen through the gradual grammatical shift from *prosōpa* to *prosōpon*. Nevertheless, the equivalence of the word for mask and face suggests a lack of dissimulation that has come to be associated with the mask, perhaps symptomatic of the lack of a cultural need for “self-fashioning” in the sense explored by Greenblatt (pp.45-46 above). *Epimeleia hautou*, or ‘care of the self’ had yet to take on the inherently dissimulative protection of the self that Christian cosmology, and its demand for a renunciation of the self, would necessitate (see Foucault, *HS* 250; cf. p.45 above).

### ***Vernant and The Tragic Consciousness***

The above account of the classical self is not as utopian as it first appears. The deep linguistic ambiguity of the word *prosōpon* highlights a wider issue of conflict. Vernant identifies ‘the tragic consciousness’ as stemming from the ambiguity of language, therefore of men and laws, both human and divine, which gives rise to a universe in conflict (43), echoing the Nietzschean sentiment that “words are also masks” (*BGE* §289). Consequently, the self as a nexus of civic and divine ‘realities’ was by no means harmonious. The laws of the burgeoning, democratic *polis* resulted in an increased awareness of the self as a separate, legal unit, and the laws of the *polis* and those of divine Justice (or *Dikē*) were not always wholly compatible. This tragic consciousness can be exemplified by the tragic mask as “that border zone where human actions are hinged together with the divine powers, where—unknown to the agent—they derive their true meaning by becoming an integral part of an order that is beyond man and that eludes him” (Vernant, 47). Tragedy appears, according to Vernant, “when the human and the divine levels are sufficiently distinct for them to be opposed while still appearing to be inseparable” (27).

This is, of course, not a universally accepted opinion. Edward Monroe Harris, for example, in *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens*, argues that the laws of the

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<sup>86</sup> See W. K. C. Guthrie’s *A History of Greek Philosophy: From Parmenides to Democritus*, pp.254-55 3n, for an account of Empedocles’ adherence to the Orphic tradition.



*polis* were thought to be equivalent to the laws of the gods, even authored by them (51-52), and no such tensions existed. Vernant's formulation is not as incompatible with this as it may at first seem; even if the laws were authored by the gods, the ambiguity of language itself opens up the rupture in the possible interpretation.

PART 2: TO WHAT EFFECT WAS THE MASK USED IN *THE BACCHAE*, AND HOW CAN THIS INFORM OUR READING OF THE PLAY?

In this section I will address the two key masks, those of Dionysus and of Pentheus, and will limit myself to what I consider to be the key question surrounding each. In the case of Dionysus, I will address the question of whether or not the mask is smiling, as this, it is my contention, significantly impacts upon the meaning of the play, and is central to the question of the relationship between the spectator and the mask of Dionysus. In the case of Pentheus, I will concentrate on the posthumous appearance of his disembodied *prosōpon* in the hands of his mother, Agave, as once again, the implications of this scene can potentially reveal a great deal about the nature and status of the mask, and the way the spectator viewed theatrical 'reality' within the performance praxis of the classical episteme.

***The Mask of Dionysus:***

In a development of Charles Segal's ideas of metatheatricality in *Dionysiac Poetics*,<sup>87</sup> Francis M. Dunn presents the entrance of Dionysus as a complex interplay of theatrical illusions. The shifting in and out of characters suggested by Calame is shown to be inadequate to deal with the double illusion offered by the mask of Dionysus in the disguise of his own priest:

In this case, however, the actor projects the persona of someone projecting a persona, thereby inviting us to accept one illusion (this is a dramatic character, not an actor) but not another (this is not the young man, but a god). The prologue thus makes us aware of the separate levels of meaning that must be confused in order to create dramatic character. (Dunn 8)

This draws attention to the fact that the mask represents a deeper, more potent meaning than the mere representation of a theatrical character (9). Vernant observes that "the mask disguises him as much as it proclaims its identity" (382). The metatheatricality of the mask of Dionysus underscores the various levels of meaning within many of Pentheus and Dionysus'

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<sup>87</sup> Segal defines metatragedy as the "self-conscious reflection by the dramatist on the theatricality and illusion-inducing power of his own work, on the range and limits of the truth that the dramatic fiction can convey," which are "the paradoxes of Dionysus [...] his liminal status, his place *between*—between truth and delusion, sanity and madness, divinity and bestiality, civilisation and the wild, order and chaos" (216).

exchanges (explored below). The mask simultaneously *is* Dionysus, a *representation* of Dionysus, and the *disguise* of Dionysus, as well as the theatrical persona of the actor (Dunn 9). In other words, it is simultaneously an illusion, an illusion of an illusion, and a manifest reality.

### **The Smiling Mask?**

It is within this complex interplay of illusions that I wish to address the question of the mask itself, and the smile that many claim to adorn it. The presumption was first made by Dodds in his 1960 translation (Wiles, *Mask* 221), and strongly endorsed by Helene Foley in 1980, since when the presumption seems to have passed into common “fact.” Simon Goldhill makes this presumption in 2008 in an article for the National Theatre of Scotland, in which he states “we know the mask has a smile on it throughout the play” (“Notes on the Text”). For Colleen Chaston, the smiling mask provides the central object for chapter three of her book *Tragic Props and Cognitive Function* (2010). In this study, the mask of Dionysus is scarcely ever referred to without the qualifying adjective “smiling.” Chaston questions Foley’s interpretation of the effect that the smiling mask may have on the spectator, but never the presumption of the smile itself, which becomes the focus of meaning within the play (182). The smiling mask, or “central prop” (187), functions as a double with Pentheus in a manner reminiscent of the comedy and tragedy masks that form the traditional symbol of theatre, which, disregarding the anachronism, would work only if Pentheus’ mask likewise broke the convention of neutrality and provided the opposite image to the smile in order to provide Chaston’s image of “the doubling of god and man and the paradoxical pairing of delight and suffering” (232). This “doubling” marks out Pentheus as doomed, as “the man whose very likeness to the god marks his vulnerability” (222). As such, Chaston appears to argue for contradictory things, similarity and opposition, or “two sides of the same coin” (*ibid.*), which appears to be a sort of imagistic sleight of hand evoking the comic-tragic masks in order to argue two things at once, namely the likeness and non-likeness of their respective masks.

However, rather than explore this in detail, it is more beneficial to tackle the source of the presumption and examine the evidence on which it stands. Foley, in “The Masque of Dionysus,” states quite bluntly: “We know the mask of Dionysus was smiling (439, 1021)” (108). This ‘knowledge’ forms a central part in her otherwise highly insightful article (and of subsequent interpretations). Wiles traces this presumption back to Dodd’s 1960 translation, and points out that the sole evidence for this presumption rests upon a single word, *gelan* (*gelōn* in line 439, *prosōpo gelōnti* in 1021), which, he points out, means ‘laughing’ rather

than ‘smiling’ (*Mask* 221). Dodds also refers to line 380 (Dodds 131), which describes Dionysus’ “office” as “to join in dances, to laugh (*gelasai*) with the flute, and to bring an end to cares, whenever the delight of the grape comes to the feast of the gods.” This ‘smile,’ or rather laugh, is entirely context dependent and not a state of perpetual being (if such a thing as perpetual laughter could ever be tolerable).

Wiles also observes that Dionysus is described as having a “wine-coloured cheek” (line 439), yet Pentheus describes his white skin twenty lines later, demonstrating the lack of stability in the god’s features (*Mask* 222). We have two potentially opposing images of Dionysus based on the text, one as a rosy-cheeked, laughing god, the other as a white-skinned, effeminate youth, which are somewhat incompatible. If we examine the textual evidence further, we see that Dionysus’ “laugh” and “wine-coloured cheek” (439) is related by the servant to Pentheus, and refers to the off-stage moment of his capture. The servant relates: “He did not turn pale or change the wine-dark complexion of his cheek, but laughed and allowed us to bind him and lead him away.” This clearly tells us that he laughed (*past tense*) at a particular circumstance. The use of the past tense directly precludes the possibility of perpetuity. The reference to Dionysus’ white skin, which is not associated with laughter, is a direct observation of the present, on-stage priest. Likewise, the second reference to which Wiles points takes the form of a Choral prayer, and refers to the fantasy image of a wish made in Dionysus’ absence: “Go, Bacchus, with [laughing] face throw a deadly noose around the hunter of the Bacchae” (1021). One again, the laughter is coupled with a specific intent, or circumstance. The deduction of a smiling mask suggests not only a misinterpretation of the word *gelan*, but that, even if the word were *not* misinterpreted, its presumed continuity throughout the play would imply a state of intolerable, perpetual laughter (which would perhaps over-emphasise the theme of madness to an absurd degree).

Based upon this evidence, which amounts to linguistic misinterpretation and deictic error, it seems to me entirely implausible to conclude that the mask was smiling. It therefore becomes incumbent upon me to examine the performative implications of this misinterpretation—which has slipped from the realm of linguistic error into common fact—and the implications upon the meaning(s) of the play itself.

### **The Smiling Mask in Performance**

The smiling mask is proffered by Foley as the means of differentiating Pentheus from Dionysus. It is the smile that, according to Foley, conventionally indicates the stranger’s divinity. She claims that “the audience sees by his mask that the stranger is a god, but

Pentheus has no such theatrical cues by which to recognize him” (128). Foley presumes, or rather speculates, upon a convention by which the audience would recognise the mask as a god. She says the smiling mask was “probably a convention for deities—or for Dionysus alone—whose significance no playwright before Euripides—in so far as we know—took the opportunity to call our attention to” (127). She offers no evidence for this ‘probability’ other than the logically incongruous, circular argument of her own interpretation of the ‘fact’ of the smiling mask.

Dionysus thus enters the play poorly disguised as human in the fashion of Homeric gods or the testing god of folk-tale. His mask is not (and perhaps this is true of his costume as well), by the conventions of Greek tragedy, human. Therefore, simply by his costume he manifests his godhead, his unhumanness to the audience. (128)

This suggests that the costume alone would be enough to signify divinity, thus undermining her own argument. That aside, if we indulge this speculation as a genuine convention, we can see how the contrary case would enhance the theatricality and shift the meaning of the play. If the mask is indeed smiling, the visual emphasis is placed upon Pentheus’ blindness, which presumes exact equivalence between the visual and the verbal elements of the plot—the *opsis* would be merely illustrative rather than enriching the play by adding any levels of additional meaning. This blindness would be one shared by the Bacchantes, who likewise do not see through his disguise. If the spectators are the only ones to see the ‘true’ mask of Dionysus, their safe position as observers is confirmed; in other words, they may remain at a safe and superior distance.

If, on the other hand, as I suggest, the mask were not smiling, the emphasis would be shifted from Pentheus’ inability to see what is clearly an ‘unhumanly’ costumed and smiling god onto the spectators’ own similar inability to see the god, which implicates them in the play; it places them in a position comparable to the similarly blind Pentheus. A continually visible smile would suggest the spectators’ superior position to Pentheus, as Foley acknowledges (131), whereas the opposite would imply equivalence. Even though the spectator knows the stranger is Dionysus, he or she still cannot *see* it. By casting the spectators in a position equivalent to Pentheus, the terror of the tragedy is set up; they are placed in a position similar to Pentheus at least on the visual level, but are learning, unlike Pentheus, from their own experience that appearances may be deceptive—one of the central themes of the play. From a Nietzschean perspective, Dionysus—the god of vanishing boundaries and deindividuation—would be better represented by a mask similar to the other

characters rather than by a smiling mask, which would somewhat perversely differentiate the god of non-differentiation.

### **Dionysus: Humanity versus Inhumanity**

In addition to the question of superiority to Pentheus, there is the question of their relationship with the god. If the spectators were privy to Dionysus' way of seeing, signalled by the smiling mask, I suggest that the tragic *opsis* would be diminished. The emphasis would be on the disproportionality of the punishment visited upon Pentheus and the royal family, perhaps concluding that the god with whom they had colluded had gone too far. However, this collusion would itself be problematized by the smiling mask. The smiling mask would not have possessed the affective power of the neutral mask identified above—at no point would the *human* aspect of Dionysus—as son of Semele—be apparent. As such, whenever Dionysus looked at or referred to his mother's tomb, which Chaston suggests would take the form of the *thymelē* [225]),<sup>88</sup> the smile would conversely reinforce his inhumanity, thus reinforcing the spectator's alienation from him. The 'neutral' expression of classical aesthetics would create a far more sophisticated relationship.

In short, if the mask were smiling, the spectator takes a superior position to Pentheus, but also a distanced one from Dionysus, reducing the affective capacity of the play altogether. If, on the other hand, Dionysus were not smiling, a degree of empathy for both Pentheus and Dionysus would be promoted, making for a far more sophisticated, layered and affective play. Moreover, if we accept Segal's analysis of Dionysus as a projection screen (89), such a function is, as has been discussed, facilitated by the aesthetics of neutrality. It is my contention that a smiling mask would reduce the efficacy and affective potential of the play on practically every level.

### **Dionysus Revealed**

I suggest that the possibility of a change of mask and/or costume for the final scene in which Dionysus is 'revealed' would not necessarily be problematic, though I will argue it that a change of mask is unlikely. Dunn proposes that Dionysus' revelation in the epilogue is through the same mask but different costume (8-9). Foley rejects any change whatsoever on the grounds that a mask and costume change in Greek tragedy was a "rarity" on the basis of potentially confusing the audience (131). This rejection seems especially odd given Foley's case that Euripides was a poet who liked to break conventions (107), and one may speculate

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<sup>88</sup> See Wiles' *Tragedy in Athens*, pp.66-72 for a discussion of the problematic identification of the *thymelē*, from which Chaston takes her lead.

as to whether Oedipus changed mask after his blinding, or if Clytemnestra required a change of mask when she appeared as a ghost in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, potentially suggesting a "rarity" that had been around for some time. Moreover, though the original manuscript is missing the section in which Dionysus makes his re-entrance, revealed as the god, it is not unreasonable to presume that he clearly announces his identity to the grieving Cadmus and Agave, thereby countering any potential for confusion over his identity.

Foley argues for the superior position of the spectator in relation to Pentheus, which is lost at the end of the play when the "smiling mask now represents a divinity to both characters and audience" (131). This argument is not theatrically coherent; if the spectator could always see the smiling god, and continues to do so (132), there can be no loss of status in comparison to the butchered Pentheus; they continue to "see" in a way that marks their superiority. Moreover, there is no revelation. On the other hand, if the spectator witnesses a revelation (which is a feature of initiation to Dionysiac mysteries<sup>89</sup> [Burkert 95-96; Vernant 386-87]), and can now see the divinity, the affective power and the resulting release of emotion stems directly from the fact that, like Pentheus, they are finally witnesses to divine truth, but, unlike Pentheus, they have survived. The latter, I contend, would provide a far more theatrically powerful experience.

### ***The Mask of Pentheus***

Given that the mask of Pentheus is somewhat less controversial, I will concentrate not on its appearance, but on its function when no longer worn by the actor, when carried as a bloody trophy from the mountains into Thebes atop a thyrsos by the possessed Agave (a fact that most critics seem to agree on, see Rehm, *Tragic Mask* 40). This scene is rich in meaning, and is textually anticipated, in fact directly called for, by the Bacchantes in response to Pentheus' incarceration of the god. This serves to set up and to emphasise the disturbing dual symbolism of the climax.

The destruction of Pentheus' palace provides an illusion on two levels. Firstly, it may seem to be a Dionysiac hallucination experienced by the frenzied Bacchantes in direct response to their prayers to this god of theatrical enchantment (see Segal *Poetics* 219, n6). Secondly, it fools the audience into imagining this was Dionysus' interpretation and answer to their prayer. The earthquake follows a plea from the Bacchantes to Dionysus to "Come, shaking your gold-faced thyrsos, Lord, down from Olympos, and put a stop to the insolence

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<sup>89</sup> For a discussion of the contested relationship between cultic practices and theatrical representation, see Barbara Kowalzig's "'And Now the World shall Dance!'" in Csapo and Miller's *The Origins of Theatre in Ancient Greece and Beyond*, pp. 221-54. Kowalzig takes the approach of perceiving tragedy as a choral ritual.

of a murderous man” (552-56, Seaford’s translation). The word for ‘gold-faced’ is *chrysōpa*, a plural form of *chrysōpos*, meaning more literally ‘with golden eyes’; it is the same *ōp* we find in *prosōpon*, but instead of *pros-* meaning ‘before,’ we have *chrys-* meaning ‘gold.’ The fact that Euripides uses the plural form suggests that he wishes to emphasize the golden *eyes*, evoking the central theme of *seeing*, rather than the singular golden ‘face,’ or, as others, such as T. A. Buckley would have it, merely a “golden thyrsos.”<sup>90</sup> Euripides describes things as ‘golden’ twice elsewhere within the text (ll. 98, 372), and uses not *chrysōpos* but *chryseos* each time, suggesting that his choice of *chrysōpos* has specific meaning. That a thyrsos should have a golden face, or more accurately, golden eyes, suggests that a golden *prosōpon* is fixed to it—the mask and the thyrsos were definitive emblems of the god, and the image of the mask fixed to a pole was a specific totem of Dionysian worship (Wiles, *Mask* 213-19; Kerényi 281-84; Rehm, *Tragic Theatre* 13)—so the Dionysian imagery used in the prayer for vengeance is directly and chillingly answered by Agave’s possessed descent from the mountain with such a symbol in her hands (1141, 1277). Agave impales the head on her thyrsos, so the *chrysōpos* becomes literal. That Agave’s Dionysiac possession leads her to mistake her son’s head with that of a lion cub reinforces the goldenness of the *prosōpon*. In these terms, the Bacchantes’ prayer is answered in a spectacularly direct and gruesome way. The mask is the central image of both Dionysus and his brutal revenge. It also completes the stranger’s promise that the city of Thebes will witness his epiphany (61, see Vernant 408). Moreover, the fact that this brutality is prayed for by the Bacchantes, and executed by his own maenadic mother, shifts the cruelty and brutality from an external god to a potential aspect of the self, to a latent savagery within. This is consistent with the Orphic tradition in which Dionysus is an essential aspect of the self. In fact, the dismemberment of Pentheus is startlingly reminiscent of the dismemberment of Orpheus, founder of the Dionysian mysteries, who was torn apart by the Maenads for his impiety when he later renounced the god (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Bk XI, ll.1-66).

### **The Performance Praxis**

When Agave tragically appears on the stage with the head of Pentheus, the question arises as to what the audience saw: did they view the mask as a symbolic object, or are they ‘possessed’ by the story to the extent that they see the severed head of Pentheus?

Rehm observes that the actor who played Pentheus would also most likely have played Agave, and that his previous costume as a maenad would not need to be changed

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<sup>90</sup> Buckley translates *chrysōpa* not as “gold-eyed,” but as simply “golden.”

when portraying his mother—only the mask would be changed, with his old one carried back onto the stage as the severed head (*Space* 210). This is suggestive of the permeability represented by Dionysus and the Dionysian, which Rehm suggests runs counter to the neatness of structuralist classifications, such as self-other, wild-civilised, male-female, sanity-madness, Asian-Greek, horizontal-vertical (211; cf. Segal 30-31, Vernant 398-99). This permeability, or blurring of boundaries is one that, I would like to suggest, is applicable to the question of how the audience saw the *prosōpon* of the dead king. The question of whether the audience saw a mask as the symbol of Pentheus' murder, or as the actual head of Pentheus, is in many ways a redundant, or anachronistic question, especially considering the lack of differentiation in the word *prosōpon* (there are no linguistic boundaries to be blurred).

To explain this further, we begin by addressing the nature of the actor's relationship to the character. Modern theories of acting in many ways stem from, and often react against, Diderot's *The Paradox of Acting*, which demands "an unmoved and disinterested onlooker" (37) inside the actor, a sort of dual consciousness or Chekovian "higher ego" acting as observer that is separate from the part being played (Chamberlain 22, 48). This was written around 1777 (around the same time Kant was writing *Critique of Pure Reason*). Modern debates about the tragic actor are often locked within this suspiciously modern epistemological framework (see, for example, Lada-Richards' "The Subjectivity of Greek Performance" 395). These debates, however, spring from a relatively modern concept of the self that is in some important ways not applicable to the Greek actor. The debate hinges upon a notion of an individual who is self-contained and defined by boundaries that did not exist in the Greek notion of self. In order to address the issue of whether the actor 'became' the character, whether he was possessed by Dionysus, or whether he consciously portrayed a fiction, we must bypass modern conceptions of acting and consider instead the 'self' that performed the role. As we have seen, the self was not the individual 'man' of post-Kantian times, but a porous and unbounded entity whose being, or *ousia*, was a blend of self and other rather than a stable or contained thing. Greek identity was not defined by an internal set of private thoughts, motivations and feelings but the sum of external, public actions. When considered from this perspective, Diderot's paradox evaporates and the nature of the debate changes—the *ousia* of *autos* and *allos*, in this case the self/mask/(written) character, combined to create the *ousia* of Pentheus. The quick change from Pentheus to the grieving Agave does not negate the completeness of the transformation. We must be careful of imposing a modern concept of individual identity upon a system of thought for which that concept did not exist. Likewise, the clear distinction between illusion and reality, between



belief and disbelief, are modern dichotomies that we perhaps too readily impose upon our reading of Greek tragedy. Dionysus himself, I would suggest, provides the answer within the play: the choice is not between belief or disbelief, or between illusion and reality, but between different modes of seeing, both of which were open to the Greeks, though tragically not to Pentheus. The dichotomous approach, perhaps exacerbated by structuralist readings such as those of Segal, may indeed be useful tools to help to decode the *Bacchae* for our modern understanding, but we must exercise a degree of caution in presuming the Greek episteme functioned according to the same, or even comparable, dichotomies (see Rehm, *Space* 211). What the Greeks witnessed on the stage was, I suggest, a version of reality that did not require a suspension of disbelief in the modern sense, but a different mode of seeing, a mode of seeing that was not rooted inside a modern, bound sense of an individual(ist) seer. The *ousia* of Pentheus is the blend of actor and mask, thus the *prosōpon* is the dismembered head of Pentheus, and requires no suspension of disbelief. Here we are reminded of Laughlin and Laughlin's findings: "In most intact cosmological belief systems experience of the world is considered relative to the domain in which it occurs, and that domain is located in a cosmos of multiple realities. For people in such societies there is not a single world of experience but several" (66, see pp.112-13 above).

Moreover, the true source of horror is not so much the gory depiction of a severed head, as it may be for modern audiences, but the unfathomable magnitude of Agave's acts and the *pathos* of her eventual realisation (see Goldhill, *Tragedy* 261). The appearance of the *prosōpon* mounted on a thyrsos is a traditional symbol of Dionysus (see Chaston 226), shown here in its most bloody and violently destructive form, and exploiting the power of symbolism to horrific effect. Wiles also suggests a similar symbol of Dionysus be mounted in the centre of the orchestra to serve as a continual reminder of the god's presence, thus providing a focus for the chorus in his absence, and helping to dissolve the spatial boundaries of here and there, for example, Cithaeron and Thebes (Wiles, *Tragedy* 173). This is clearly only speculation, but would certainly serve to make the symbolism of Agave's tragic quarry more stark. Furthermore, the dramatic potency of the following lines (1296-97) would be greatly increased if Agave held in her hands the clear symbol of the god:

*Agave:* Dionysus destroyed us—now I understand.

*Cadmus:* Being insulted with insolence, for you did not consider him a god.

Chaston concurs, suggesting that the image was made more shocking as the "allusion and overlay of ritual emphasise the close relation of the religious and the tragic in this play" (227).

With regards to the religious/ritual aspect of the play, rather than engage in the debate as to the ritual *content* of tragedy, what is important here is the ritual context of the event (see Wiles, *Introduction* 31-32). In other words, in order to appreciate the full potential impact of the scene, it is important to consider not only the visual aspects of the symbolism, but the phenomenality of being present in the theatre of Dionysus. When one considers the experience of the ritualised event, the severed head of Pentheus would have combined with the pungent smell of slaughtered animals that must have lingered from the sacrifices that accompanied the event (see Wiles, *Introduction* 58-59). The symbolism of the mask would have combined with the sensory reality of the smell of blood sacrifice in such a way as to bring home the bloody viscerality of the situation depicted in front of them. We may speculate that the head of Pentheus, himself a ritual sacrifice to Dionysus (explicitly identified as such by Cadmus, line 1246), amidst the stench of various other ritual sacrifices to Dionysus, held aloft upon a thyrsos—a parodic symbol of Dionysus—produced a highly potent experience that likewise transcends the question of whether the audience saw the mask as a representation or an actual head (modern theatre practitioners may well call this type of experience “total theatre”). The phenomenality of the situation operated on the visceral and the symbolic level at the same time. On this level, the full horror and fear created went beyond the anachronistic question of the suspension of disbelief—the experience was a mixture of theatrical, ritual, mythological and physical realities, realities which may coincide in ways somewhat alien to modern thinking.

***Conclusions: To what effect was the mask used in *The Bacchae*, and how can this inform our reading of the play?***

I would conclude that the mask’s symbolic<sup>91</sup> function within classical tragedy enhances the emotional responses of the spectator rather than counters them. The modernist suggestion that the mask works on the Brechtian level of alienation epitomises a particularly intellectual, *semiotic* interpretation that belongs specifically to the modern episteme, with its unconventionality of masks in the theatre and its altogether different concept of selfhood. Within a culture for which theatre was inconceivable without the mask (Rehm, *Tragic Theatre* 39), to presume alienation is a presentist perspective. The fear, pity and *katharsis* suggested by Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449b25f), plus the probably apocryphal tales of the extreme reactions to the dramatic entrance of Aeschylus’ Erinyes in which “children expired and fetuses miscarried” (Sewell-Rutter 81, n13), testify to the emotionally affective power of the

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<sup>91</sup> In the Jungian sense of the word, meaning possessing archetypal power, or numinosity.

mask within the conventions of Greek tragedy. Socrates' description of the sculptor's art as revealing the soul is testament to the revelatory rather than signifying power of sculpture. Furthermore, the alienating account of the mask is entirely at odds with Aristotle's notion of *synaisthēsis*, which involves collective perception and a blending of identities. As Wiles notes (contra Goldhill and Vernant), "rationalistic spectators do not function collectively or cohesively. The Athenians were devotees of debate in the law court and the assembly, not to mention philosophical schools, but they were no less remarkable for their ability to act en masse" (*Citizenship* 30). *Synaisthēsis*, the shared perspective of the collective, deindividuated mass is not a phenomenon given to analytics. The analytic interpretation is one that separates text from (phenomenal) context, and, from a phenomenological perspective, forms a mediated interpretation of the lived event: such analysis may well be a part of the overall experience, but is applied *after* the immediate experience is already past; it can never be equivalent with the experience itself. Upon this basis, I conclude the affective power of the mask to be an essential aspect of the tragic mask in performance.

### ***The Mask as Divine Element***

The universal potential for Dionysiac possession, even for those such as Pentheus who reject the god, suggests something of the Dionysian within, which itself suggests an Orphic view of the self as having a partially divine, specifically Dionysian, origin. This is visually represented by the *prosōpon* as both index of identity and symbol of Dionysus, perhaps nowhere more dramatically than in the visual equivalence of the murdered Pentheus and traditional Dionysian symbolism.

Agave's infanticidal cargo threatens the further horror of cannibalism, echoing the devouring of Dionysus by the Titans, which is evoked by the symbolic equivalence of Pentheus' *prosōpon* upon the thyrsos, intended as the main course at the Theban feast (1184, 1242). There is a clear doubling of Pentheus and Dionysus. This doubling is visually confirmed by the conventions of the tragic mask, which primarily delineates age and gender. The similarity of the masks of Pentheus and of Dionysus facilitates the blurring of the boundaries of identity, especially when their statuses reverse as Pentheus is feminised and robed by the god. It is on this issue that I take issue with Vernant, who also presumes a smiling mask (383), and suggests that the smile of the god is how the audience may distinguish between the two who are "the same age, the same appearance, and similarly attired" (395)—there is nothing to suggest that Dionysus is dressed as a woman, and so again the justification for the smiling mask disappears. As the priest of the cult, Dionysus would

have no need for disguise—he is not forbidden to witness their secret rites (see 393, 400-1). The similarity between them would, in my opinion, be combated by the difference in their costume, not their mask. The physiognomic similarity would be at its most powerful when the *prosōpon* of Pentheus is fixed to the thyrsos (the symbol of Dionysus). The *smiling* mask, on the other hand, would only serve to dampen this, highlighting instead the *difference* between Dionysus and his symbol, the mask. The similar physiognomies would demonstrate that Pentheus, in death, becomes Dionysus, who in turn *is* the mask. This would suggest, as Dunn suspects, a change of costume but not of mask for the final revelation.

From the perspective of metatheatricality, Dionysus' status as the god of theatre is ingeniously played out within *The Bacchae*: all his 'tricks' and powers are innately theatrical<sup>92</sup>—they reside firmly in the realm of *opsis*—from the illusion of the burning palace<sup>93</sup> to the costuming of Pentheus as the sacrificial offering. The complex visual symbolism of the mask is the locus of the blurring of boundaries between god, man and beast, between man and woman, and between illusion and reality. The relative androgyny of a neutral mask, especially that of an unbearded youth, would make Pentheus' feminising more convincing, which would be compounded by the effeminate features of Dionysus' mask. As such, Dionysus' power does not reside behind the mask, but in the mask, which both conceals and reveals. Furthermore, he cannot be perceived except in the mask, a mask he must adopt in order to be able to be seen, whether this be in the human form of the priest, the bestial form of the bull (*Bacchae* 618, 920), or the divine mask of Dionysus itself. In other words, the mask is the object in which he may be visually and physically manifest. Dionysus is not *behind* the mask; he *is* the mask.

Dionysus' revelation at the end of the play consists of not one but two revelations. The first is through his symbol: Pentheus' *prosōpon* fixed to the thyrsos of his blissfully possessed mother. The second is Dionysus' entrance without the disguise of the priest, and his revelation as the director of this metatragedy to the grieving Cadmus and Agave (Segal 236-37). The true revelation exists neither in one or the other, but in the combination, the dual aspect—the creative and the destructive—of this most dangerous of masks.

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<sup>92</sup> See Segal's *Poetics*, ch. 7: "Metatragedy: Art, Illusion, Imitation," pp.215-71, esp. p.255, and Helen Foley's "The Masque of Dionysus," p.110, for accounts of Dionysus as the theatrical director of the *Bacchae*'s 'play-within-a-play.' Cf. Francis M. Dunn's "Metatheatre and Metaphysics in Two Late Greek Tragedies" for the suggestion that the metatheatricality is in fact more complex than Segal suggests, involving more subtle levels of illusion and non-illusion, esp. pp.8-9.

<sup>93</sup> See Segal, pp. 218-23, for an argument in favour of the palace's destruction as illusion; see p.219 n7 for a summary of alternative arguments in favour of stage effects. In support of the illusion, Vernant points out that this is the only time the Lydian chorus are referred to as *maenads* (line 601) rather than *bacchantes*, emphasising their madness (405).

PART 3: WHAT ARE THE PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF  
SELFHOOD?

*The Fundamental Duality of Self*

The Platonist self, or *ousia*, is the meeting place of *autos* and *heteros*, or self and other, and I will begin by addressing the essential otherness of Dionysus. From a psychological perspective, Dionysus is comparable to Freud's *das Es*, or *It*, and as such is both an essential part of the Self and definitively other. In Jungian terms he would epitomise the unknown and polymorphous unconscious drives lurking beneath the surface—the violence of the Shadow, the femininity of the anima, the masculinity of the animus and the primordial unity of the syzygy (Jung & Kerényi 81), and the nobility and the bestiality of the wild-man. Dionysus, as an archetypal figure, is as real as he is mythological. Jung asserts:

[T]he archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy. It represents or personifies certain instinctive data of the dark, primitive psyche, the real but invisible roots of consciousness. (Jung & Kerényi 94)

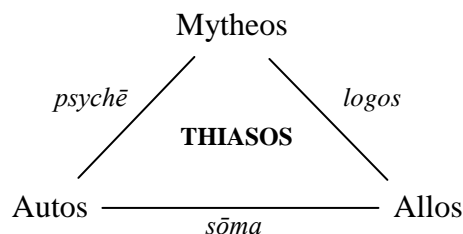
But to equate Dionysus with a single archetype would be both misleading and reductive. For Jung, Dionysus, rather than being a single archetype, is the realm of the emotional and of the unconscious in general, whilst the Apollonian is the realm of the rational and the conscious (especially if we accept the Nietzschean-Jungian proposal that dreams are imagistic elements of the unconscious spilling into our consciousness). According to Huskinson, “Jung understands any confrontation with the unconscious as an encounter with Dionysus, [...] the unconscious is a compensating aspect of the psyche that can be both creative and destructive” (204). The Apollonian is comparable to the conscious, individual—or individuated—self, whilst the Dionysian is the primordial and formless collective unconscious, of which the physical, conscious self is an Apollonian manifestation. Consequently, in the transition from unconscious to consciousness, from formless to formal, a fundamental transformation must take place, from the ultimately unknowable Dionysian to the Apollonian.

This suggestion highlights another paradoxical aspect of the mask: Dionysus, as has been argued, *is* the mask, yet the mask, as sculptural form, is definitively Apollonian; the interdependence of being is nowhere more evident than in the mask. This confirms the philosophical proposition of the necessity of a third thing, as symbol, for the union of opposites. The symbol rests on the cusp of consciousness and the unconscious, hence its numinosity. The collective Dionysian unconscious enters our individual consciousness only

through the individuated Apolline, *external* image. Straight away, in the very notion of Dionysus appearing ‘in person(a),’ we encounter a fundamental duality in the very fact of his manifestation: a philosophical impasse physically reconciled in the mask (or Mask). In Kantian terms, the physical reality of the phenomenal *thing* is its Apollonian form, but the ultimate unknowability of the *thing-in-itself* is its Dionysian *noumena*. This echoes Plato’s view that “embodied persons are images of disembodied ideals” (Gerson 262). This leads to the Heraclitean proposition that, in the Nietzschean schema, Apollo both *is*, and *is not*, Dionysus.

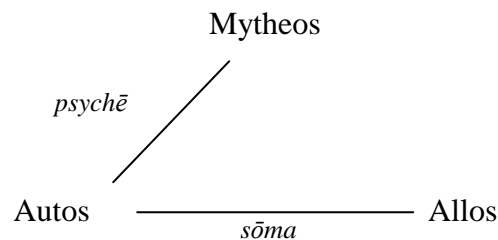
### *The Tragic Division of Self*

The equivalence of external identity and the mask in the Greek word *prosōpon* highlights the unified duality of Greek selfhood. The self, like the mask, is a phenomenon that exists on the threshold of outer and inner, a being midway between the bestial and the divine in a cosmos more typified by a continuum than by strict division. Plato’s formulation of the self as *ousia*, a processual blend of *autos* and *heteros*, whose embodied form is the image of disembodied ideals, is a clear indication of this. Furthermore, if we place the self in the lived cosmological environment of *polis* and divine, we encounter a key aspect of Greek reflexive selfhood, which I will illustrate in diagrammatic form. The mythic realm of the gods will be termed the *mytheos*, comparable with Freud’s *It*, and Jung’s collective unconscious; the human realm of the *polis* will be termed the *allos* (other), comparable with Freud’s *Over-I*, and Jung’s collective consciousness; and the individual self will be termed the *autos*, comparable with both Freud and Jung’s notion of the ego. By making these comparisons to modern psychoanalytic classifications, we can clearly see the extent to which Greek selfhood was *external* in comparison to modern selfhood. Moreover, within this system, the relationships between the three—the aspect of reflexivity—are key. I will return to this model in the succeeding chapters in order to chart the shifting state of the self.



The connection of all three is the self in a state of *thiasos*, of communal being. The connection between the *autos* and the divine *mytheos* is the soul, or *psychē*, whereas the

connection with other people, or *polis*, is through physical interaction of the body, or *sōma*. It is my contention, in accordance with Vernant's theory, that the connection between the *polis* and the divine, or *allos* and *mytheos*, was, before the tragic consciousness arose, an unruptured *logos*—a union of divine and state law and stability of language. This is not to suggest a pre-tragic golden age—the pre-tragic age was that of the tyrants; the collective to which I refer was not some idealistic commune but itself a repressive system with its own problems.<sup>94</sup> However, during the classical age, as is exemplified by *The Bacchae*, we see a newly emerging conflict between the *polis* and the divine, which Vernant identifies as the root of the tragic consciousness. Here, we see a rupture between two key aspects of the reflexive Self:



This is textually evident in *The Bacchae*; the ambiguity of language is played out to the fullest. Dionysus' means of speaking is essentially characterised by its ambiguity. Dionysus' apparent deception of Pentheus never entails untruth, merely an alternative perspective to which Pentheus is blind, leaving him to hear what he wishes to hear. The powerless audience remains aware of the terrible truth, paralysed by the Dionysian spell of theatrical codes. The duality of Dionysus' words echoes the duality of his nature, and is starkly demonstrated by the visual metaphor of seeing double—itsself an aspect of Dionysiac initiation<sup>95</sup>—the two suns and the two cities that Pentheus sees whilst under his spell. He also sees Dionysus in the form of a bull; his vision now allowing him to see Dionysus' animal form as well as human, but still not his divinity (918-22). The cruellest irony of all, and, for me, the most disturbing and chilling moment of their exchange, comes in Dionysus' promise that Pentheus will be carried home in his mother's arms, and Pentheus' oblivious response of girlish enchantment (967-68). Nietzsche's words seem particularly apt to describe Dionysus' dealings with Pentheus:

<sup>94</sup> For an account of the workings of tyranny, see James F. McGlew's *Tyranny and Political Culture in Ancient Greece*.

<sup>95</sup> See Seaford's notes on this (p.223-24) for an account of the initiatory practices of cultic initiation rituals in which mirrors were used to disorientate the initiand at Orphic and Dionysiac mysteries. Likewise, Pentheus' transvestism has similar initiatory implications (Seaford 222; Segal 377).

“Every philosophy also conceals a philosophy; every opinion is also a lurking place, every word is also a mask” (*BGE* § 289).

The self, as a result of this rupture in the divine/civic *logos*—the reflexive connection with elements that were no longer reflexive of each other—becomes tragically divided, and I propose that *thiasos* is replaced by its legal—but importantly not phenomenal—equivalent: democracy, and the advent of the legal citizen, or *politēs*. It is my contention that an epistemology that gave birth to democracy, as a system of *quantitative* categorisation in which individuals become quantifiable units in a mathematical, legal system, becomes incompatible with the *mytheos* as a system of *qualitative* categorisation in which individuals are part of a certain class of being (such as mortal, hero, god, divine, etc.; Athenian democracy was, of course, not without its class structure, and it is not my intention to argue otherwise). Legal identity, based on a system such as democracy, as opposed to mythic identity, is at the heart of the rupture which is, for Vernant, the tragic consciousness. Tragedy, I propose, is not the *result* of democracy, but a symptom of the same epistemic shift that saw the advent of both. Indeed, some classicists suggest that Tragedy emerged in the pre-democratic period, the age of the Tyrants, and so to suggest that tragedy is a *result* of democracy and citizenship would be too dangerous a claim (Wiles, *Citizenship* 23).

I propose that, through the advent of the citizen, *thiasos* became a dynamic, ritual event, most notably in the City Dionysia, rather than a normative state of being, an exception rather than the rule. It is my contention that tragedy itself was symptomatic of a loss of *thiasos*. It is perhaps in its context of the practical realisation of Aristotelian *synaisthēsis* that theatre, as a practice, functions; the shared perception of a *thiasos* is achieved. The exploration of the tensions between the *polis* and *Dikē*, or divine justice, remains a matter of textual instability (*ibid.*). Tragedy explored the space it occupied, a space opened up by the cosmological rupture of the tragic consciousness. It is from this perspective that I suggest that the sacred, tragic mask—as a technology of self—offered the possibility of phenomenal unity, not only of the individual citizen, but of the *polis*. As Rush Rehm argues, “by forcing its gaze out, the tragic mask draws the audience in, for each spectator projects his or her imagination into its surface” (*Tragic Theatre* 40). This shared perception, or *synaisthēsis*, was an experience of unity, or *thiasos*.

Just as the hearth was the domain of the family and the private self, the law courts and *agora* the domain of the *polis* and civic identity, and the temple the domain of the gods, the



theatre functioned as the essential meeting place of all three.<sup>96</sup> The tragic hero, the embodiment of the tragic consciousness, becomes the problematic meeting place of the human and the divine (Dionysus), the divine aspect symbolised by the sacred mask. Pentheus, a symbol of law in opposition to the god, visually embodies the impossibility of this situation by means of the mask, the sacred symbol of the Dionysian aspect of the Orphic self. The visual unity of Pentheus and the divine renders his rejection of the divine absurd, a rejection of a fundamental aspect of his own self, in which tragedy becomes inevitable. It must be said that this division is one of duty, of external actions: Dionysus' demand is that Pentheus acknowledge his divinity and allow his rites to be performed. At no point does Dionysus demand *belief*. Thus the divisions within the classical self remain fundamentally external.

### *Dionysus and the Retreat and Return of the Origin*

Barbara Kowalzig, arguing in favour of the ritual aspect of theatre, argues that “theatrical and ritual time and space are merged into one and the same thing by the chorus turning Dionysiac over the course of the play; they become atemporal, a central criterion for “ritual” being ritual” (245; cf. Rehm, *Tragic Theatre* 79). Whilst the chorus has not been a focus of this study, the *atemporality* of the theatrical event is significant. For Kowalzig, an important point is the equivalence of the Chorus with Dionysus, or the Dionysiac spirit, who, in the Orphic tradition, is man's divine progenitor. She sees in chorality, and in choral dancing, an essential bonding function; Aristotle likewise uses chorality as a metaphor for social order (Wiles, *Citizenship* 24). The chorus' cohesive identity is no doubt facilitated by their masks. Thus, in Kowalzig's interpretation, we find in the dramatic event the chorus' mediating function between the phenomenal temporality of the here and now and that of the mythic past.

This atemporality is equally well summed up by Foucault's definition of the ‘retreat and return of the origin,’ as that which “introduces into [‘man’s] experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master; it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the centre of the duration of things” (*OT* 331). It is my contention that this aspect of the analytic of finitude is present, and resolved, in the theatrical experience of Greek tragedy. The *thiasos* of the theatrical event, facilitated, as I have argued, by the mask, represents an original encounter, not with a historical origin of the human animal, but with a shared sense of human belonging originating in a shared perception of phenomenal essence—something

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<sup>96</sup> See Wiles' *Tragedy in Athens*, pp.71-72 for a discussion of the *thymelē* and its associations with the hearth.

which Foucault claims to be genealogically illusory (p.83 above), but which is phenomenally present in the *thiasos* of the atemporal masked drama.

***Conclusion to Part 3: The philosophical function of the tragic mask***

Such theatrical paradoxes are untenable in the everyday reality of the modern episteme, yet are an ever-present factor of the Foucauldian existential crisis. This suggests that modernity may be characterised by an intrinsic theatricality that creates within it certain paradoxes that the philosopher finds troubling. Perhaps ‘man’ as *representation* signifies his existence as more equivalent to a part played than an embodied reality. Perhaps the “self-fashioning” of the Renaissance and the subsequent descent into individualism—within a specifically rationalistic, post-Enlightenment episteme—cuts ‘man’ off from the communitarian nature of humanity and the mythologies that bind it.

Dionysus, as the compensating unconscious, would seem to offer a potential remedy. He has the power to bring about the transformations in Pentheus due to the fact that he is not any single archetype, but is the very domain of the deindividuated unconscious, a conglomerate of archetypes and drives, any of which can be called upon or activated, in their positive or negative aspect, at any time. The mask of Dionysus, whilst necessary to give him form, can reveal him in only a single aspect; it cannot possibly reveal the god in all his aspects, any more than a man may reveal all his character traits at a single moment. Whilst the human face may be considered the “real” thing, the mask directly infers the mysteries behind, and whilst those mysteries may well remain hidden, the fact that there *are* mysteries is revealed by the presence of the mask. Moreover, the Nietzschean-Jungian union of opposing forces—drives and archetypes in their positive and negative aspects simultaneously—is far better expressed through the relative balance and neutrality of the traditional tragic mask than the allegedly “smiling” mask of Foley *et al.*

Just as, in the Orphic tradition, man is part mortal (*sōma*) and part divine (*psychē*, which *is* Dionysus [p.35 above]), so the theatrical mask is part physical and part divine—an aspect or manifestation of the mask god, Dionysus. Within this context, it becomes clear why the mask was sacred, and necessary within the theatre of Dionysus. The human face, as flesh—descended from the devourers of Dionysus, the Titans—was replaced by the sacred mask, which gave the actor an Orphic unity: rather than the mixture of the sacred (Dionysian *psychē*) and the profane (Titanic *sōma*), the mask offered a unity of the Dionysian: the profane *prosōpon* replaced by the sacred. This may offer another explanation for the phenomenon of “melting.”

If we accept 1) the psychoanalytic assertion that the divine is a projection of the unconscious (chapter 3), and 2) Vernant's diagnosis of the tragic consciousness as the divergence of man's duties into the often incompatible domains of the legal (*polis*) and the divine (*Dikē*), we may conclude that Tragedy marks the historical rupture that created the subject as divided being, which can be characterised by Foucault's Retreat and Return of the Origin—a moment of crisis in mythic reciprocity. Tragedy marks the loss of existential unity, a unity now possible only through the mask. However, this rupture was still experienced predominantly externally—both the divine and the legal were still concerned with externality, with rituals and taboos, and with legal obligations and prohibitions, rather than private thoughts and internal motivations, as would be the case under the rule of Christendom.

In line with Laughlin & Laughlin's hypothesis, the mask offers the possibility of an external encounter with the collective psyche in its symbolic manifestation, one that becomes enmeshed into a common plane of shared mythic reality rather than the artificial entertainment or psychological curiosity that is a feature of much modern theatre—theatre that leaves the 'self' untouched and isolated within his or her own isolated reality. This perspective may offer us an insight into the true extent and power of Aristotle's notion of *synaisthēsis* as more than just a temporary collective phenomenon, but as contact with a profound common plane of mythic reality that defines collective identity, not just within the 'real' here and now, but within the mythological and cosmological, pan-temporal plane of humanity. Such an encounter could not be achieved by the idiosyncratic features of the individual actor; it can only be reached through the deindividuating, universalising features of the mask, employed in this case as a technology of self—a technology that allowed the various 'selves' of Athens to unite in a singular *thiasos*. This merging of self and other in communal identity is an essential aspect of Dionysus, the archetypal other, and essential to the proper functioning of the *polis*. Within the context of Athenian tragedy, the mask offers us a clear insight into how the apparent paradox of Dionysian ecstasy and *thiasos* finds itself at the heart of a civilised society.

Finally, I conclude, developing Vernant's formulation, that the rupture in the self that produced the tragic consciousness was a rupture in the *logos*, a growing awareness of the fundamental ambiguity of language which tore asunder the connection between *Dikē* and the law of the *polis*. This rupture resulted in the end of normative *thiasos*, which the mask at the dramatic festivals was able to bridge, temporarily, during the classical age of tragedy, whilst simultaneously addressing the very gulf that it bridged. The mask itself was to continue for centuries, but by the fourth century, the tragic mask was becoming more stylised and

idiosyncratic (Csapo and Slater 72-77). This suggests that the function of the mask, and perhaps by inference, the function of theatre itself, had shifted. The tragic consciousness of the classical age had given way to Hellenistic sensibilities—the tragic chorus, so central to classical tragedy, became relatively defunct. By the middle of the fourth century, the *choroi* appear to have consisted chiefly of professional singers rather than the citizenry, and by the third century they had disappeared altogether (Pickard-Cambridge 91, 283-84). In 386, the City Dionysia instituted a contest for ‘old’ revived plays (Easterling, “From Repertoire to Canon” 213), which is likewise testament to the shifting nature of the Hellenic theatre and the establishment of a revivalist tradition. The tragic mask was born at an important historical moment, and its survival as a theatrical *tradition* must be distinguished from its initial *form*, and, I contend, *function*, which shifted considerably after the death of the classical age. Its initial function was the mediation of the *polis* and the divine, a third thing that facilitated the union with two fundamental powers that were beginning to drift, as Vernant notes, into potentially opposite directions (26).

## CHAPTER 7: THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

This chapter will examine the evolving phenomenon of the commedia dell'arte, and more specifically the mask of Arlecchino, or Harlequin. The methodology will be to trace the origins of the commedia half-mask and its cultural context, and to examine some of the key figures to have played the character, up to what is often considered the death of the commedia dell'arte around 1750. I will then briefly look at the fate of Harlequin post-1750 within the context of the Enlightenment, which was to herald the death of the mask, and the modernist revival of the mask and the Harlequin/Arlecchino figure, asking what philosophical and historical factors were at play.

The reason for focusing on Arlecchino is that this figure would seem to be the most popular and enduring mask of the commedia, and as such, it is important to ask why: what is it about this figure that has endured since at least the late sixteenth century into the present day? And what can our relationship with this particular mask reveal about our historical selves? I will therefore focus this investigation around the following questions:

1. How do mask practices reflect the concept of selfhood during the heyday of commedia?
2. What does the enduring popularity of Harlequin say about the nature of the Self, both individually and culturally?
3. What are the implications of the loss of the Mask for the modern Self?

It is also worth acknowledging before we begin that the term "commedia dell'arte" is somewhat anachronistic; it did not have this title in its own time, and was something applied posthumously, possibly by Carlo Goldoni.

This chapter will be split into five parts, followed by a conclusion. Part 1 will look at the cultural, religious, and political context, and explore the origins of commedia and its classical and/or carnival ancestry. Part 2 will look at the half-mask as object, including the etymology of the word *maschera*. The third part will explore the history and development of Arlecchino as a case study, looking at the key players to have performed this role, primarily by means of textual and pictorial representations, tracing the rise and fall of the commedia dell'arte, and the death of the mask as theatrical convention. Part 4 will explore the survival of Arlecchino as Harlequin. Part 5 will attempt to answer the key questions identified above using the methodological approaches of Nietzsche, Jung, and Foucault. The conclusion will seek to widen this into a more general cultural context, suggesting what the implications are upon the shifting concept of historical selfhood.

### *An Age of Dissimulation*

To begin with, it is worth recapitulating some of the more relevant debates about selfhood in the sixteenth century, particularly the notion of “Renaissance Self-Fashioning” (see chapter 2). Stephen Greenblatt identifies the self as becoming a constructed, social artefact around the time of the Reformation. However, Greenblatt focuses on the phenomenon of self-fashioning in England, but there is ample evidence elsewhere, particularly in Italy, the very heart of the Renaissance and the birthplace of commedia, and in France, where it was to find its most notable success. Moreover, the label “Renaissance” perhaps covers too broad a range, and so the Mannerist and Baroque periods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provide us with a more useful focus.

According to James H. Johnson, in *Venice Incognito*, the sixteenth century was widely categorised by contemporary, and mostly Roman Catholic, writers as an “Age of Dissimulation” (86-101). The French essayist, Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) wrote: “The truth of these days is not that which really is, but what every man persuades another man to believe [...] men form and fashion themselves to it as to an exercise of honour; for dissimulation is one of the most notable qualities of this age” (*Essays* Bk. II, ch. XVIII); “innocence itself could not [...] negotiate without dissimulation” (Bk III, ch. I). Italian Friar Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623), wrote: “In other centuries, hypocrisy was not uncommon, but in this one it pervades everything” (qtd. in Johnson 87); “I am compelled to wear a mask. Perhaps there is no one in Italy who can survive without one” (*ibid.*). This new necessity for dissimulation arises out of the Reformation, or, more specifically, the Catholic Church’s reaction against it. In 1542, Pope Paul III established The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition in order to combat Lutheran/Protestant heresy, which was to inflict the same horrors that had been part of the infamous Spanish Inquisition (founded in 1478 and aimed at *conversos*, or Jewish and Muslim converts) on ordinary Catholics. In 1545 (the year that the first professional commedia troupe is recorded), the Council of Trent established the tenets of the Counter Reformation. That same year saw the Massacre of Mérindol in which 3000 Waldensians were slaughtered as heretics in Provence under the leadership of papists Jean Maynier d’Oppède and Antoine Escalin des Aimars.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> This massacre was not officially part of the Inquisition, but was entirely in line with the Counter Reformation strategy established at the Council of Trent.

Thus this ‘age of dissimulation’ may be more properly characterised as an age of *religious* dissimulation.

This dissimulative aspect of masking was to last for some considerable time. By the time of the eighteenth century, the mask, particularly in Venice, had become less an item of theatrical or carnival costume, and more a standard item of everyday apparel (Johnson 47). It had acquired quite a different meaning and function than was evident with the ancient Greeks.

#### PART 1. THE CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

In 1360, a Dominican Friar, John de Bromyard, spoke out against theatrical masks:

[T]here are two kinds of men who wear masks, that is, actors and robbers. For those who perform in those plays called in the vulgar tongue *miracles* employ masks, beneath which the players are disguised; in the same way demons, whose sport is to destroy souls and ensnare them through sin, employ masks [...]. (qtd. in Tydeman 260)

According to Twycross and Carpenter the only consistently masked characters within medieval theatre were devils (201), though there was little consistency within the masks themselves beyond two highly significant features: 1) they were nearly always black (202), and 2) they nearly always sported “large and conspicuous warts” (205),<sup>98</sup> which became two key elements of Arlecchino. The warts themselves are significant. Napier addresses the common occurrence of warts or bumps on the forehead in various mask traditions, suggesting that the wart may be a remnant of the “third eye” of ancient pagan masks (135-87). Fo likewise speculates the wart to be either the third eye, or the remnants of “the broken horn of the Devil” (*Tricks* 23); Donato Sartori suggests that the wart comes from horned carnival devil masks: the actors avoided ecclesiastical condemnation by cutting them off, leaving a small bump or scar (Bell 87-88). Whichever is true, it appears the origins are daemonic. Moreover, the hypothetical third eye, which Napier argues to be apotropaic in nature, is testament to the power of the mask’s gaze.

The mask has a long history in European carnival,<sup>99</sup> and a significant amount of carnival iconography reveals the prevalence of animal masks.<sup>100</sup> Important amongst this

<sup>98</sup>Cf. Allardyce Nicoll’s *Masks Mimes and Miracles*, p.191-3. esp. fig. 130 (p.193).

<sup>99</sup> See James H. Johnson for a general overview. Johnson claims the earliest reference to masking in Venice is in 1268, when the Great Council made it a crime to wear a mask and throw eggs (54).

iconography are the illuminations which appear in the fourteenth century French poem *Roman de Fauvel*, attributed to Gervais du Bus,<sup>101</sup> which portrays a multitude of carnival revellers in both animal and devil masks, to which I will return below.

The Catholic Church had its own views on the matter. The notorious fifteenth century treatise on witchcraft, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Latin for “Hammer of the Witches”) of 1487, whose chief author was Inquisitor and Dominican Friar Heinrich Kramer, likens carnival practices to witchcraft:

And now bad Christians imitate these corruptions, turning them to lasciviousness when they run about at the time of Carnival with masks and jests and other superstitions. Similarly witches use these revelries of the devil for their own advantage, and work their spells about the time of the New Year in respect of the Divine Offices and Worship; as on S.Andrew’s Day and at Christmas. (207)

The *Malleus* was not an official Roman Catholic document and was not universally accepted, but it did serve to collect and reinforce commonplace superstitions about the phenomenon of witchcraft, and became a commonly used handbook for witch-finders.<sup>102</sup> Montague Summers, translator of *Malleus*, also points out that Saint Theodore, in *Liber Poenitentialis* (c.669AD), expressly forbids masking in book XXXVIII (207n). Likewise, in *Geography of Witchcraft*, Summers identifies an edict against masking in the 578 (or 585) Council of Auxerre, which states: “It is forbidden to masquerade as a bull-calf or a stag on the first of January or to distribute devilish charms, but if gifts are to be given on that day let them be bestowed as on other days” (71). The prospect of transformation is deeply anathema to Christian doctrine; only God may justly transform what he has made. This is still in evidence much later; *Traité contre les masques* by Catholic Jean Savaron (1608) asserts that the Devil invented masques, and that evidence of this can be found in the fact that the Latin *larva* means both mask and demon (3). The diabolical associations of the mask were not universal opinion, and were refuted by Claude Noiroit in 1609 (*L’Origine des masques* 41-42).

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<sup>100</sup> See for example figures 102, 103, 115 in Nicoll’s *Masks*. The illuminations by the Flemish workshop of Jehan de Grise to *The Romance of Alexander* (1338-44) likewise present us with various examples of carnival masking. (Oxford Bodleian library, MS 264. See for example fols. 21v, 43v, 117v, 181v). 54v is interesting due to its depiction of a puppet theatre in which a male puppet, wielding a club, appears about to beat the female in a scenario highly reminiscent of Punch & Judy (Punch being a descendent of Pulcinella).

<sup>101</sup> *Roman de Fauvel*, ms.B.N. fr.146 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. See Bent Holm’s “The Hellequin Figure in Medieval Custom” pp.111-2, 116-7 (figs 4 and 5).

<sup>102</sup> For further discussion of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, see Christopher S. Mackay’s introduction to his translation, *The Hammer of the Witches*. Whilst Mackay’s translation is more up to date than Montague Summers’, I have used Summers’ translation in this instance as Mackay does not use the word “masks” in the extract cited, preferring to translate the word *larvis* (p.262 in Latin text) as ‘costumes’ (p.318 in Mackay’s translation). ‘Masks’ (p.207 in Summers’ text) is a more accurate translation of *larvis*, from *larva*.



By the time commedia troupes had been established, warnings against diabolical masking resounded once more in England. In 1596, writer, playwright and Catholic Convert Thomas Lodge warned:

[...] here marcheth forth SCURILITIE, (as untoward a Devill as any of the rest) the first time he lookt out of Italy into England, it was in the habite of a Zani: This is an onely fellow for making faces, shewing lascivious gestures, singing like the Great Organ pipe in Poules, counterfaiting any deformitie you can devise, and perfect in the most unchristian abominations of Priapisme. (Lodge 88)

Such views were not confined to religious commentators. By the time of commedia, the association with witches was still evident, with *istrioni* (actors) being mistaken for *stregoni* (witches); in certain rural parts of Italy, the locals believed the *comici* could summon rain and storms (Tessari 27). Another account relates that a performer died at the beginning of a play, but his body was immediately possessed by a demon who performed in his stead (*ibid.*).

However, whilst there are clearly fears and superstitions regarding the practices of masking, what remains unclear is whether the commedia dell'arte was born of a classical or carnival tradition. In order to question this, the complex relationship between carnival and theatre must be explored further.

### ***The Cultural Context: Classical and Folk Traditions***

According to Katritzky the distinction between actors, beggars, charlatans and *buffoni* was anything but clear, and she refutes Richards & Richards' claim that they were only distantly related, arguing instead that "Mountebanks and *comici* did not simply overlap through a superficial coincidence in their choice of costumes and stock characters," but the "depiction of these costumes and types in conjunction with mountebanks was because they could stage full length plays of the *commedia dell'arte* types" ("Mountebanks" 106). Whilst the genuine separation between mountebanks and professional troupes was eventually realised, their early relationships were deeply intertwined. Those who performed the commedia in Italian piazzas would have learned their craft from market squares and folk traditions rather than from any classical source.

Much is made of the role of improvisation within the commedia form, but the relationship with classical literature is not to be overlooked. Henke states that at the heart of commedia dell'arte "was the structural tension between the linear, well-constructed plot based on a literary model and the centrifugal improvisations of the stand-up performer" whereby the "actors used literature as a raw material for improvisation" (1). Alongside

acrobatics, *lazzi* and other pre-prepared tools was a store of speeches the actors could dip into when the situation required (12). The plot structures were initially based upon the “agon” between servant and master, but after the introduction of the actress they began to centre around a love-interest based upon the more literary *commedia erudita* (Wiles, *Menander* 122). This was particularly in evidence after the 1530s (Henke 13), and “would be characterised by complex cross-vectors of intention and obstruction” in an essentially binary structure (14, cf. Fava 76-77).

The speech was not that of everyday, but from “specific literary and cultural codes of the kind that could have been found in Renaissance commonplace books” (Henke 15). The speech of the *innamorati* was the most poetic, spoken in a Tuscan dialect and concerned with romance, philosophy and poetry, calling upon such classical figures as Plato and Boccaccio (46-47), which contrasted with the Venetian Pantalone, the Bolognese Dottore, and the Bergamask of the vulgar *zanni*. A few extant speeches, known as *generici*, offer clues as to their nature, for example, those of Stefanello Bottarga (an early Pantalone) contain “poems, dialogues, scenes, proverbs, and prologues that probably represented [his] actual stage repertoire” (44). The prologues were organised thematically on typical Renaissance themes like “age,” “jealousy,” and “solitude” (44-45). The visuality of the characters reflected this. The beautiful *innamorati* and their grotesque masked counterparts were typical of the classical idealism and the “grotesque realism” of the sort Bakhtin celebrates: “Two types of imagery reflecting the conception of the world would meet here at a crossroads; one of them ascends to the folk culture of humour, while the other is the bourgeois conception of the atomised being” (24).

### *Commedia as Synthesis*

It appears that there exists no functional dichotomy between classical or literary traditions and improvisation, between Renaissance aesthetics and grotesque realism, or between “aulic and Petrarchan decorum” (Henke 45) and base vulgarity. The aesthetic of the grotesque was one of unifying morphology and exaggeration in which natural dichotomies no longer function, yet existed itself as part of an aesthetic dichotomy with classical idealism. This dichotomy found its synthesis in the *commedia dell’arte*.

The masks of the classical tradition would also appear to be an influence on the *commedia*. John Symonds, in his introduction to Gozzi’s *Memoirs*, tells us that at the end of the fifteenth century, it was traditional to “crown” courtly festivals with recitations from Terence and Plautus. Unlike the *commedia erudita*, these performances obeyed the

“decorative instinct of the Renaissance, they set these jewels of classical antiquity in arabesques of the richest and most fantastic workmanship” which included “allegorical masques” (26). In other words, such festivals celebrated the theatre of antiquity as though it was the jewel of their neoclassical aesthetic, the arabesques were masques, musical interludes and pantomimes. Symonds concludes that it was out of these courtly festivals that the *commedia dell’arte* grew. This explanation, of course, ignores the carnival and piazza traditions identified above, which is perhaps fitting for the memoirs of an aristocrat, but it serves to highlight the impossibility of identifying any singular origin of the form. In support of Symonds’ account, Allardyce Nicoll provides pictorial evidence of masked medieval mimes and masked performances of Terence (*Masks* 153ff), which, whilst depicting full face masks, show characteristics that will be recognisable in the masks the *commedia dell’arte*.

However, whilst the *commedia* would appear to be something of a melting pot of influences, when viewed from the perspective of the mask, the pagan aspect—considered by contemporary commentators as satanic—remains. Tommaso Garzoni, one of the most important commentators of the day, claimed in a publication of 1605 that the “first mask ever worn was, without doubt, that of the serpent’s face worn by the dark angel to persuade Eve to commit the first sin” (Tessari 27, my translation).

### ***Carnival and Theatre***

The *commedia* represents an aggregate of styles, combining carnival masks and the folk culture of the piazza with the classical canon, poetry, philosophy, and the *commedia erudita*, just as the performances were a fusion of literary and improvised traditions (given the censorship of the authorities and the edicts of the Church, improvisation is far more difficult to censor than a script).

The stylistic fusion that typifies the *commedia* is arguably the practical result of the commercial coexistence of mountebanks and *comici* on the same trestle stages at the same time. The prevalence of *commedia* masks and costumes at carnival time renders the relationship between *commedia* and carnival highly complex, and it is difficult to say for certain that carnival goers took these costumes from *commedia*, or that the *comici* took their costumes from a carnival tradition. Certainly, by 1579, the *zanni* costume was an established convention during the Venetian carnival, as is evidenced by Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria’s diary entry for 27<sup>th</sup> January 1579, which states: “After the meal we played ball in a chamber, then we put on our *zanni* costumes and rode to the street called the Giovecca” (qtd. in Katritzky, *Art* 95). The materialist explanation would suggest a more symbiotic evolution: the

need for the mountebanks and actors to be instantly recognised would suggest that they wished to create a joyous and rapturous mood by their very appearance in order to attract customers, which may suggest they took their liveries from existing carnival and theatrical traditions rather than attempt to create a whole new form, but modified them in order to stand out and create their own unique identity for commercial rather than aesthetic reasons—a form of proto-brand-recognition.

### ***The Spread of Commedia: A Universal Comedy?***

Whilst the central focus of this chapter is the mask of Arlecchino rather than the *commedia dell'arte per se*, it is worth addressing the spread of *commedia* as it serves to highlight two contrasting approaches to the historiography of the mask, before proceeding to examine the object. There are two key explanations widely given for the spread of *commedia*: 1) socio-political, and 2) archetypal. Before I outline the two positions, it is perhaps more interesting at this stage to identify who argues for which explanation and why; those who favour the former tend to be those who argue from a more scholarly, historiographical position, whereas those who argue for the latter tend to be from the perspective of the practitioner. I would suggest that the former take their position perhaps because the notion of the archetype is too nebulous compared to the identifiable ‘facts’ of historical, political and economic circumstance. The latter are more concerned with the efficacy of their technique and craft in affecting the human being and are perhaps less concerned with historiography. An example of this can be seen through the reinvention of the leather mask by Amleto Sartori. Sartori was not concerned with reproducing replicas of historical masks, rather his meticulous research was geared towards the techniques of making the leather mask, but with making masks that are consonant with contemporary sensibilities (this will be discussed in greater detail below). As such, the question of historical accuracy raises the question of fact versus authenticity: a historically accurate replica of the original Arlecchino mask (if such a thing were possible) may well satisfy the demands of facticity, but set within a culture whose sensibilities have changed, the mask would lose its efficacy, numinosity, or authenticity. Conversely, Sartori’s masks favour authenticity over facticity. As such, when it comes to the mask, the historiographical and the archetypal approaches provide only single perspectives on a more complex question. These distinctions are by no means exclusive or absolute, but they do point to a difference in perspective in the possible approaches to the issue. The Marxist director Giorgio Strehler had need to recourse to entirely non-materialistic explanations when it came to explaining the power of the mask (see p.199 below). It is my position that both the

materialist (socio-economic) and the essentialist (archetypal) approaches provide fertile ground that would benefit from being explored together. I will briefly outline the different approaches, both of which will be extended throughout the course of the chapter.

The commedia dell'arte had spread via travelling troupes from the 1570s onwards, and can be documented in Spain, the Netherlands, France and England within that decade (Katritzsky, *Art* 44). The simple reason for its initial spread was socio-economic—the troupes needed to eat. Moreover, the relatively cosmopolitan nature of commedia characters rendered it consonant with the cosmopolitan nature of the merchant classes of mainland Europe, perhaps most evident in Antwerp (Ferrone 7-8, 24-30). The political climate was dominated by trade and by business dealings between nobility and merchants, and was, as a result, somewhat volatile. Ferrone speculates that the popularity of commedia troupes, particularly those sponsored by Luigi Gonganza, Duke of Nevers, may well have served political ends beyond a penchant for their particular brand of humour. Ferrone claims the Martinellis' company's visit to Antwerp in 1576 may not have been for entertainment reasons alone, but as part of a commercial effort on behalf of Italian merchants to maintain good relations within a volatile world of shifting borders, and particularly to sustain a diplomatic Franco-Mantuan relationship (30). In fact, within such a cosmopolitan yet volatile world, the popularity of the *Comédie Italienne* may have been a form of cultural currency, much like French fashion (29).

Whilst Ferrone describes the socio-political factors that created such willing hosts to the troupes, Tessari addresses the issue from the perspective of the performers, arguing that an economic imperative drove the evolution and spread of commedia, its need for novelty providing the drive to break with tradition and introduce the first women onto the stage. He also identifies the economic imperatives that drove women of humble birth to seek escape by joining a travelling troupe (20-22). As such, a variety of social, economic and political factors set the ideal stage to accommodate the proliferation of commedia, which would certainly help to explain its diffusion, but not its reception or longevity. For this, there must have been something much more enduring.

Contemporary commedia practitioners, Antonio Fava and Antonio Venturino, both argue for the archetypal nature of the characters. Fava asserts that the four fixed types<sup>103</sup> of the Commedia dell'Arte are all archetypes (34). Antonio Venturino, former student of Ferruccio Soleri and Dario Fo, says: “Before we learn language, before we learn culture,

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<sup>103</sup> For Fava, these are the *vecchi*, *innamorati*, *zanni*, and *il Capitano*. Cf. Goldoni's four types: Pantalone, *il Dottore*, Brighella and Arlecchino (312).

before we learn to be different, we are all the same. This is what the commedia speaks to” (personal interview).

The carnivalesque, chaotic inversion of hierarchy and the succeeding return to normality, the young triumphing over the old (Bakhtin 24-25) and the ultimate union of a young man and woman accord with universal patterns, which were embellished by the individual actors and troupes (Fischer-Lichte 130-33; cf. Fava 58-60). Such patterns are, of course, to be found within the classical as well as the carnival tradition, and so this structural element does not favour either as immediate or sole progenitor; these structures are archetypal.

Furthermore, each mask represents particular drives, which are the basic impulses that define each mask (Rudlin, *Commedia* 67-157). For example, Pantalone is driven primarily by his desires for money and sex. The *zanni* are primarily driven by hunger. The *innamorati*, driven by nobler ideals of love and aesthetic beauty are, in many ways, mock-Renaissance types in binary opposition to the base, masked characters. That each character is identifiable by his or her human-animal drive, and that each tends to be foiled by his or her own folly, renders each character essentially and recognisably human. Whilst each character lacks psychological complexity, each is nonetheless an instantly recognisable aspect of human psychology, all operating within the sphere of carnival-ritual, which renders these ‘reduced’ characters not so much reductive as essentialised, existing in a grotesque, carnivalesque world where the scatological realities of the *zanni* and noble ideals of the *innamorati* naturally coexist.

It may be argued that the spread of commedia dell’arte and its popularity and longevity are two separate phenomena. The initial spread may well have been almost entirely due to economic and political reasons, but this does not account for their immense popularity and longevity, which I contend must be due to something more fundamentally human. This aspect is, I suggest, the archetypal nature of its masks and structure.

## PART 2: THE MASK AS OBJECT

The word mask, or *maschera*, has a meaning quite unlike the Greek *prosōpon*, and its etymology is unclear. James H. Johnson claims it comes from the Latin root *mascus*, *masca*, which is traceable to pre-Indo-European sources in Italy’s Piedmontese and Ligurian

dialects,<sup>104</sup> where the word meant literally ‘soot’ or ‘smut,’ but its more common use referred to witches (56). In the twelfth century, Gervase of Tilbury linked the words for mask, witch, and lamia: “They say *lamias*, or in common parlance *mascas*, and *stri[g]as* in the Gallic language... are burdensome nocturnal apparitions that upset the humors and trouble the souls of those sleeping” (*ibid.*). Whilst the etymology may be disputed, the supernatural, daemonic associations remain consistent, demonstrating the shift from positive representations of identity and the face, as were present in the Greek *prosōpon*, towards something with much less honest associations.

### ***The Second Skin***

Two key differences between tragic masks and *commedia* masks were 1) the latter were half masks, and 2) they were made of leather. Unlike the linen that was probably used in the construction of the tragic mask, the use of animal hide makes the mask more like a second skin. The wearing of leather may be seen as the reanimation of the skin of the dead, and the wearing of leather on the face, in place of the face, is a potentially powerful thing. If one couples this with the animalistic features of the mask, the links between specific masks and their primal, animal drives become much more evidently primitive and animistic. Unlike the sacred and ephemeral linen tragic masks, these skin masks—made for endurance rather than ritual dedication—retain something of a far more primal nature, more materially related to the animal masks of early shamanism.<sup>105</sup> The fact that leather would, like a glove or a shoe, mould itself to the face reinforces this notion of the second skin; the relationship with the mask is intensely personal. Fo speaks of a “mythical, magical” sensation when removing the mask:

A singular sensation afflicts you when you take off the mask—this, at least, is my reaction—the fear that part of your face has remained stuck to it, or the fear that the face has gone with the mask. When you remove the mask after having it on for two or three hours, you have the impression of annihilating yourself. (*Tricks* 26)

The relationship here is not with the Gods, but with the self. This contrasts with accounts of the tragic mask. For example, Greg Hicks’ account of wearing and taking off the mask is strikingly different:

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<sup>104</sup> See John Picton’s “What’s in a Mask?” for a different argument (claiming Arabic origin), an argument rejected by Cesare Poppi (151, 16n).

<sup>105</sup> See Fo, *Tricks of the Trade*, pp.18-19 (“Cave Men in Masks”) for his interesting but not unproblematic account of the 15,000 year old cave painting at the Trois-Frères cave in France (referred to as “des *deux frères*” by Fo), which appears to depict a man dressed in the skin and antlers of a stag (which Fo identifies as a goat). See also *Shamanism: A Cross-Cultural Study of Beliefs and Practices* by Gary Edson, esp. pp.97-98.

I go in. There is my archetype, there's my character, there's my performance in front of me—on that shelf, or wherever he's sitting. I put this on and I'm no longer me. I'm serving the archetype, I'm actually serving the mask, the mask is leading me on... Yes of course I have to be skilled in this and that, but actually its taking me, my soul, on. At the end of the evening, when I take it off, it's over. It's finished. It's a clean psychological break. (qtd. in Wiles, *Mask* 172)

The archetypal reference is interesting, but the significant aspect at this moment is the 'clean break' of the tragic mask as opposed to the self-annihilation experienced in the commedia mask. I would argue that this is a result of two things: 1) the fit—the tragic mask that covers the whole head is generally a much looser fit; and more importantly 2) the material—the linen mask of classical tragedy is vegetal, unlike the leather commedia mask which is literally made of skin, introducing a level of symbiotic, material organicity with the object. This is a stark indication of the need for a good commedia mask to be made of leather; most practitioners feel that no such connection is possible with neoprene or other synthetic materials.<sup>106</sup>

### ***The Half Mask***

An aspect of the commedia mask that must be addressed is that it exists not as a complete covering of the actor's face, but in creative tension with it: the mutable and the fixed, the living and the dead, the archetypal and the individual, the grotesque unity of incongruence. Whether this became an aesthetic choice or a practical consideration that allowed the actor to speak, the tensions remain. When it is considered that the classical masks of antiquity were most often full-face masks,<sup>107</sup> yet still allowed—even aided—the actor's vocalisation, the half-mask as enabling speech would seem a dubious claim. That the half mask seems to have become common in carnival at the same time as the advent of commedia reinforces the links between them, and between the grotesque and the carnivalesque (Katritzky, *Art* 227).<sup>108</sup> The grotesque element of *incompleteness* that Bakhtin identifies is perhaps nowhere more theatrically evident than in the half mask. The tendency is to show two faces (or bodies) rather than one: "From one body a new body always emerges in some form or other. [...] [It] is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects" (26-27). In the half mask, we see the actor emerging from the

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<sup>106</sup> See Fava, pp.15-16, for a discussion of the merits and demerits of various materials for making and using the commedia mask.

<sup>107</sup> For an exception to this, see Wiles, *The Masks of Menander*, pp.142, 244.

<sup>108</sup> See Twycross & Carpenter, p.89, plate 5, for a detail of Bruegel's *The Fight of Carnival and Lent* (1559).



mask, a living flux emerging from the fixity of death, the human emerging from the animal, the civilised from the primitive, not separate from it, yet at the same time not quite identical. It is a “phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming” (24). The transformation identified in the previous chapter is modified here, not into an ancestral or mythical identity, but into flux and transformation *as process*, the very essence of the grotesque (40).

### PART 3: CASE STUDY: ARLECCHINO TO 1750

#### *The Origins of the Name*

Much has been written about the origins of the name Arlecchino, not least by Otto Driesen, whose 1904 study into the history of Harlequin reveals a long prehistory of Hellequin as a demonic figure in popular folklore. The earliest known written reference is from the twelfth century *Historiae ecclesiasticae libri XIII* by the Norman monk, Ordericus Vitalis, in which a French monk, Gauchelin, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1091, encounters an infernal band of damned souls, known commonly as the Wilde Horde, which he recognised as the “family of Herlichin” (Johnson 61-62). Similar references occur throughout the medieval period up until Arlecchino of the commedia,<sup>109</sup> including a thirteenth century poem by Bourdet whereby Hellequin becomes known as “*Hellequin le Roi*,” king of a hellish band who rise from the underworld and create chaos before returning to Hell, which Bent Holm equates directly with carnival revels (108). *Hellequin le Roi* also appears in Adam de la Halle’s play, *Jeu de la Feuillée*, c.1260 (109), but the most significant of Hellequin’s appearances for our purposes are in Dante’s *Inferno* and *Roman de Fauvel*, attributed to Gervais du Bus.

In *Roman de Fauvel*, we encounter a carnival *charivari* of motley peasants wearing bearded masks, clattering kitchen utensils, and singing diabolical songs. It is said of their leader “Je crois c’était Hellequin / et toutes les autres sa maisnie,” “I think it was Hellequin / and all the others his maisnie” (Holm 111). Holm details how *Hellequin le Roi* not only becomes associated with carnival and the hunt (110), but how the iconography regularly depicts him as a sort of psychopompos (113).

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<sup>109</sup> For a fuller account, see Robert Lima’s *Stages of Evil*, pp.47-82, “The Masks of Harlequin: Daemonic Antecedents of the Commedia dell’Arte Character”; cf. Otto Driesen’s *Der Ursprung des Harlekin: Ein kulturgeschichtliches Problem*.

In Dante's *Inferno*, we encounter Alichino (canto 21, line 118), and again Alichin (canto 22, line 112).<sup>110</sup> This episode in the *Inferno* is perhaps the most farcical of the whole comedy, in which attempts to capture Dante and Virgil are thwarted by the incompetence of Alichin, at first fooled by Libicocco, then plunged into the boiling tar after a farcical struggle with Calcabrina. The credulous, incompetent and farcical Alichino is a curious mix of the demonic, carnival figure of northern European folklore and the bumbling *zanni* of the commedia. The illustrations to *Inferno* by Priamo della Quercia, c.1444-50 (fig. 2 below), depict interesting features that will be shown to have interesting similarities with the Arlecchino mask.



Figure 2: from Priamo della Quercia's illustrations to Dante's *Inferno*, c.1450.

<sup>110</sup> Dario Fo erroneously reports this as Ellechino (*Tricks* 46), an error replicated by Rudlin (*Commedia* 76), which suggests a certain caution may be needed from these sources.

### *The Codification of the Mask*

It would seem that the first mask of the evolving commedia to have a fixed costume and name was Pantalone (Pandolfi 297-98), who was generally countered not by a specific character, but by the *zanni* type—a word that had become part of the language by the 1520s (158). Whilst various specific *zanni* were to emerge, Arlecchino was by far the most complex and protean. Antonio Fava objects to the “Arlecchino Superstar” figure; arguing that he was first and foremost a *zanni*, moreover, a second *zanni*, “no different from Tabacchino, Frittellino, Traccagnino, [...] or any of the others” (47). But we must take into consideration the fact that Fava is Neapolitan, moreover he was trained as a Pulcinella, which we may speculate influences his objections against the “superstar” status of this character from the northern tradition. To claim he was “no different” to the other *zanni* seems to contradict the evidence; Arlecchino, as I hope to show, was a very distinctive character, and Martinelli’s trickery (see below) suggests a level of intelligence beyond the typical second *zanni*. Nevertheless, the distinctly terrestrial, non-daemonic aspect of Arlecchino cannot be ignored if one is to paint an accurate picture; Ferrone’s description of the dirty, dishevelled, sub-



Figure 3: from *Compositions de rhétorique de Mr Don Arlequin* by Tristano Martinelli. Lyons, 1601.

human *zanni* as the object of ridicule is a useful reminder of his corporeality (vii).<sup>111</sup>

It seems the introduction of the non-masked actress onto the stage—and the resulting necessity to establish the binary with a non-masked male counterpart—precipitated the growth of the commedia to include an increasing number of characters, masked and non-masked, which provided a codifying force on the *zanni*, not generic types but ‘individual’ masks costumed according to their master’s livery (Katritzky, *Art* 95). Therefore, if precipitated by the introduction of the actress, thought to have happened in the early 1560s (86), the underlying driving force was the economic imperative identified by Tessari.

<sup>111</sup> See Katritzky, *The Art of Commedia* (189-91) for a description of the generic *zanni*.

### *The Mask of Arlecchino*



Figure 4: Photograph of 17th Century Arlecchino Mask and Matrix. Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra National de Paris, Archives.

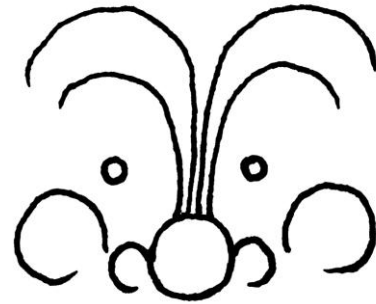


Figure 5: Sketch of the centrifugal 'energy lines' of Arlecchino's mask

The common features of the early Arlecchino masks (see figures 3-5) would seem to revolve around a certain explosive energy pulsing from the central point (as it would appear on the face)—the nose. As I have tried to illustrate (fig.5), the nose itself is round, with two round nostrils either side, whence two circular convex cheeks seem to spiral out. Above the nose, the two high eyebrows seem to leap out, fountain-like, to arch over his circular eyes, giving the whole mask a centrifugal energy, an explosive force suggesting that the mask may dart away in any direction under a force of its own generation (cf. Wiles, *Menander* 125). This mask cannot be still, nor indeed can it be bound to the earth—the acrobatic energy, the ethereal, aerial acrobatics of the saltimbanc, are written into its contours.

The wart adds another circular structure, simultaneously intimating its demonic ancestry. The chin strap or beard—like those described in *Roman de Fauvel*—produces an unnaturally wide mouth (see Driesen 174-76), emphasising not only the garrulous nature of Arlecchino, but also the appetitive urges along with the demonic iconographic associations (cf. fig.2). This is a mask that can say anything and potentially devour anything. The acrobatic unpredictability, the appetitive drives and the demonic sense of danger are all encapsulated within the sculptural detail of the object itself.

*Tristano Martinelli (1557-1630)*

Figure 6: *Commedia dell'Arte à la cour de Charles IX*. 1572-77. Oil on Canvas. Musée Baron Gérard.

The earliest known picture that shows an apparent Arlecchino figure hangs in the Musée Baron Gérard in Bayeux, Normandy (fig. 6, above; 'Arlecchino' is highlighted by the red circle). Its painter and date are unknown, though various suggestions have been made, the first being either Paul or Frans Pourbus in 1572 (Duchartre 84; Nicoll, *Mask* 270-71). It is generally presumed to be set at the court of Charles IX, who died in 1574, suggesting it could have been painted no later than this (Nicoll 271). Charles Sterling rejected the suggestion it was painted by Pourbus, and argued instead it was by a pupil of Frans Floris of the Flemish school, but accepted the date must be before 1574 (Ferrone 24). The difficulty with this dating is that it would place Tristano Martinelli in Paris three years before he went there in 1577 (Katritzky, *Art* 103), which has led to the suggestion that he was not the creator, and

that it was in fact Alberto Naselli, known as Zan Ganassa (Duchartre 86). Ferrone argues that it does not depict the court of Charles IX, but instead a collection of merchants, not in France but Antwerp, the cosmopolitan nature of the French fashion and the Italian garden being a symbol of political diplomacy in the volatile atmosphere of the time. He points out that the number of those in costume, eight men and three women, reflects exactly the composition of Drusiano Martinelli's company who visited Antwerp for fourteen months up to October 1577. He concludes that this picture could indeed be the earliest depiction of a nineteen year old Tristano Martinelli dressed as a prototype of what would become Arlecchino (24-30).

Another interesting feature of this painting is that it depicts a half mask. Later representations of Arlecchino would feature a strap or beard round the chin, in line with the generic early *zanni*, creating the impression of a full-face mask. However, if we take the Bayeux painting as an authentic representation of a nascent Arlecchino, we see that it is strapless, so we may deduce from this that the mask was indeed a half mask, to which the beard was later added.

The *Recueil Fossard* woodcuts, dated almost ten years later, show Martinelli in his late twenties, whereas the *Compositions de Rhetorique* (Duchartre 340ff), dated 1601, more than ten years later again, show him in his forties. The differences between the three representations can be explained by the natural ageing process (see Katritzky, *Art* 231-32). There is also clear development in the livery, from the random shaped patches of the *Recueil Fossard* to more geometric ones in *Compositions*. The mask also changes. In the *Fossard* prints, the facial hair clearly belongs to the actor, whereas by the time of *Compositions*, the nature and arrangement of the whiskers suggest they belong to the mask. By this time we can also see the characteristic contours becoming evident. It is tempting to think that, in these three depictions, we see a clear development and maturation of Arlecchino. There seems no firm reason to doubt that Martinelli was the creator.

Martinelli seems to have been the first commedia actor to become completely associated with his mask. By the late 1580s he was signing his name as Arlecchino, and he was afforded the licence of the stage fool in real life. Nicoll details the extraordinary liberties he was allowed when dealing with Royalty (*Masks* 279). It seems the identity of Martinelli and that of Arlecchino became enmeshed (Henke 173). Rudlin suggests that the “‘great’ Commedia actors tended in fact to ‘become’ their masks, and their biographies often became inextricably intermingled with the characteristics of their Mask (*Commedia* 36).

### Daemonic Associations

As well as the tradition of the Bergamo peasant, which Martinelli was already beginning to move away from—he did not perform with the Bergamask dialect (Henke 154)—Martinelli also seems aware of the daemonic associations of his chosen name. In 1585, a French actor published *Histoire plaisante de Faicts et Gestes de Harlequin Commedien Italien* (Ferrone 89), in which the actor attacks Harlequin and indirectly accuses Martinelli of being the pimp of Mme Cardine, “a famous Parisian bawd” (Henke 155). Martinelli was to reply swiftly with a comic monologue entitled *Response di gestes de Arlequin au poete fils de Madame Cardine, en Langue Arlequine, en façon de prologue, par Luy Mesme: de sa descente aux Enfers et du retour d’iceluy* (Ferrone 91), in which Arlequin accompanies the poet through the underworld in a manner not unlike Dante and Virgil in the *Inferno* (see Fo, *Tricks* 7), impressing Pluto with his tricks and skills along the way. As they emerge victoriously, Arlequin utters the lines:

Mais Arlequin le Roi commande à l’Acheron  
 Il exchelle les cieux, il fausse leur perron,  
 Il est duc des esprits de la bande infernale.  
 (But Harlequin the King commands in Acheron  
 He ascends to the heavens, he forges the steps,  
 He is duke of the spirits of the infernal band.)

This is significant because it demonstrates familiarity with the folklore. The phrase “*Arlequin le Roi*” as head of the “*bande infernale*” shows identification with the demonic Hellequin identified above. Whether or not Martinelli first encountered the name in Paris, as Dante himself may well have done whilst studying at the Sorbonne (Johnson 64), his decision to name his ‘creation’ *Arlecchino*, or *Arlequin*, seems to have been made with a full understanding of the infernal associations. The equivalence of *Arlecchino* and the French Hellequin was clear to the French from the start, demonstrated by the fact that Henry IV and Madame de Sevigné referred to him by his French name (Driesen 15). What is more, the infernal associations of the Hellequin figure is very apparent in medieval French theatre, where the entrance to Hell, or hell-mouth, was known as the “*chape de Herlequin*” (Driesen 73).

The sinister, bestial, and demonic nature of the mask, with its residual horn/third eye, reinforces these infernal associations. It may even be the case that Martinelli’s decision to create this character from the folkloric tradition was commercial, a gesture of cross-cultural identity in the manner suggested by Ferrone in regard to the Bayeux painting, as well as a

means of ‘branding’ that was part of the early mountebank-*buffone* piazza tradition, identified by Henke through the *contraffare*,<sup>112</sup> which Henke suggests were a feature of Martinelli’s performance (53-54). It may even be worth speculating that the integration of the *buffone-contraffare* piazza tradition is part of the reason the second *zanni* are never central to the *commedia* plot, but an additional feature of buffoonish virtuosity.

We may conclude that Arlecchino was born of a great many traditions. Martinelli’s genius was to create a character from that which already existed, an aggregate of the folkloric devil, the medieval jester and Lord of Misrule,<sup>113</sup> the piazza *buffone*, and the embodiment of the carnivalesque, *commedia* spirit. The folkloric *Hellequin le Roi*’s motif of ‘the hunt’ even appears in the Scala scenario, appropriately entitled *The Hunt*, in which, though not the leader of the cast, Arlecchino is the first to appear on the stage in his ridiculous hunting attire and making the appropriate chaotic din in accordance with the charivari, which renders him the leader of the hunt (276). Within the subsequent plot, the hunt bears no other function than to remove the numerous *vecchi* from the situation for a time so that the usual intrigues among the younger characters may develop, which may seem an unduly elaborate plot device unless viewed in the light of an established tradition.

We may also conclude at this stage that Arlecchino was not simply a second *zanni* like any other, but that he was distinctive from the start, including a level of trickery and intelligence, or at least *consciousness*—which we may discern from Martinelli’s writing—not generally associated with the second *zanni*. Nevertheless, his place within the hierarchy remains essentially that of a second *zanni*.

Now that the background, birth, and the conditions surrounding that birth, have been explored, we must identify some key developments in the iconographic and textual representations of Arlecchino.

### ***Domenico Biancolelli (1636-88)***

Probably the earliest extant Arlecchino mask lies in the Musée de l’Opéra in Paris (fig. 4), the hair of which Rudlin speculates is the “vestigial remains of primitive animal disguise” (*Commedia* 38), thought to be of the seventeenth century (Driesen 172), and, as such, would be akin to the one worn by the next great Arlecchino, Domenico Biancolelli. Biancolelli’s

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<sup>112</sup> Henke defines *contraffare* as “solo or dual prosaic impersonations of social types, comedic characters, animals, and children. [...] an ephemeral and impressionistic character sketch [...] rather than a sustained portrayal” (52).

<sup>113</sup> For an account of the role of the Jester or Lord of Misrule in an English context, see Stow’s *Survey of London* of 1598, p.37; cf. *The Mediaeval Stage* by Edmund Kerchever Chambers, esp. Vol 1, pp.180, 390-419.





Figure 7: Coeure, Sebastien. *Dominique*. Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Hand coloured engraving. Harry Beard Collection

addition to Arlecchino, now settled into France as Arlequin,<sup>114</sup> is important. He seems to have modified Arlecchino's personality under the influence of Domenico Locatelli's Trivelino, making him more witty (Niklaus 75-76; Scott 81-82). But more importantly, the traditional haphazard motley, which showed his lowly status, became standardised into a geometrical pattern (fig 7), reflecting not the base, slapdash second *zanni*, but a more sophisticated and aesthetic figure. In addition to this, Henke notes that Biancolelli's performance style was remarkable for its meticulous, stylized pantomimic detail (232). Scott details how his extensive and intricate performance notes demonstrate that pure improvisation was no longer a defining characteristic, if

it ever had been (151). In fact, according to a letter written by Martinelli, even by 1614 pre-prepared 'improvisation' may have overtaken "the kind of free-wheeling oral composition of which Arlecchino was master" (Henke 173).

The commedia was becoming more formalised, something very different from that of the Italian piazzas. This should perhaps be no surprise: the skills required for playing in a piazza would be immensely different from those required in a more formal indoor setting; the quick mind of the improviser is no longer as essential in a far more controlled environment, before a more bourgeois audience. This must be qualified by pointing out that Parisian baroque theatre was still much less formal than by today's expectations (Scott 165). Under these more formal, controlled conditions, the ability to plan and devise becomes more beneficial than the ability to respond. In such an environment, it is no wonder the earthy, chaotic motley should change and become more in line with the ordered aesthetics of its

<sup>114</sup> See Virginia Scott's *The Commedia dell'Arte in Paris 1644—1697* for a fuller account of the establishment of the *Comédie Italienne* at the Palais Royale, the Hôtel de Guénégard and, later, the Hôtel de Bourgoigne.

surroundings; indeed, everything about the performance would need to become much more slick, polished, and—just as the actors had long argued—professional. The Bergamask peasant of the original *zanni*, so relevant to Italian piazzas a century before, was meaningless to mid-seventeenth century Paris. Moreover, as well as using *canovacci*, the characters, particularly Arlequin, were beginning to appear in an increasing number of scripted plays.<sup>115</sup>

Arlequin's protean nature is perhaps best exemplified in *Les metamorphoses d'Arlequin* (1669), and *Arlequin Protée* (1684). In 1671, Arlequin became airborne: *Arlequin callet enchanté, singe et Margot la pie* saw Arlequin transform into a magpie and fly off the stage (Scott 95, 171). Arlecchino had always been on the verge of taking off in some acrobatic stunt or other; the new stage machinery saw this reach a natural conclusion. The motif of the *nekyia* and the encounter with Cerberus and Pluto, witnessed in 1585, would also reappear more consistently.



Figure 8: Bonnard, Jean Baptiste. *Arlequin Protée, ou Aduocat d'un Cler du Chastelet; contre le chien du Docteur*. 1684

The mask itself does not seem to change significantly. A calendar-almanac of 1684, depicting *Arlequin Protée*, shows the mask with its characteristic high eyebrow arches above two small circular eyes, concave cheeks, the bearded chin strap, and the trademark wart (fig. 8, left). It also suggests that the hair does not continue to fully frame the face. We may speculate that this is an artistic interpretation as, at the time of Thomassin in the early eighteenth century (below), the hair is present. The mask shows clear continuity. There are also tantalising similarities with the wide-mouthed Alichin

and his fellow devils as depicted by Priamo della Quercia in his illustrations for Dante's *Inferno*, canto XXII (fig. 2).

<sup>115</sup>See, for example, Gherardi's *Le Théâtre Italien*, 1694 and 1700, in six volumes, in which Arlequin appears in nearly every single play. See Scott, chapter 12, for a discussion of the controversies surrounding Gherardi's publication.

*Evaristo Gherardi (1663-1701)*

Figure 9: *Evaristo Gherardi faisant le personnage d'Arlequin*. 1710. Paris, chez J. Mariette. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

After the death of Biancolelli in 1688, Gherardi was Biancolelli's permanent replacement, and evidently presided over far less harmonious times in the company than his predecessor.<sup>116</sup> Virginia Scott describes Gherardi's Arlequin as having "no center, no set of defining characteristics" (387), and claims that he even tried to discard the mask on two occasions. Gherardi himself said "Arlequin has no marked character; he is whatever one wishes him to be" (qtd. in Cope 3). However, given the state of the *Comédie Italienne* at this point, the problem with Gherardi seems to be a problem with the commedia in general. Pantalone had appeared only twice in the repertory since 1668 (Scott 121). The theatre being performed at the time of their final years in the Hôtel de Bourgogne was becoming

increasingly a theatre of the playwright rather than of the actor (387), concerned with French comedies of manners (357ff) and spectacle rather than the vital *commedia all'improvviso*. Gherardi's Arlequin says to Colombine, in *Arlequin misantrope* (1696): "We are good little fellows, we do our somesaults gracefully, we sigh tenderly over a pretty little wench like you, we speak eloquently [...]" (qtd. in Scott 381). The new, balletic (fig.9 above), "good," "graceful," "tender," and "eloquent" Arlequin in neat, geometric livery is a far cry from the Bergamask *zanni*.

In terms of the iconography, perhaps the most revealing is a posthumous portrait of Gherardi, probably of around 1710-11, whose mask can be clearly seen (fig.9). From this, we can see the hair of the moustache, though unfortunately it disappears under the hat, and so we cannot say for sure that the hair continues to frame the face. Nor can we see the wart.

<sup>116</sup> See Clark *et al*, pp. see 321-23 for documents of disputes, including those surrounding Gherardi's publication of *Le Theatre Italien*. Cf. Scott, pp.311ff.

However, we can see the typical sculptural features identified above. We can also note the balletic posture—Biancolelli was himself a ballet dancer (Scott 107).

Apart from the occasional flashes of the old Arlecchino, it would seem that the only thing remaining is the mask and, along with it, the persistent infernal associations, most strikingly in *La Descent de Mezzetin Aux Enfers* (Gherardi vol.2, 247-78), and *Les Intrigues d'Arlequin aux Champs Elisées* (385-514). *La Descent* was written and performed shortly after the death of Biancolelli, when Angelo Constantini briefly performed the role, for which he retained his own character name (Mezzetin) but performed in the mask and costume of Arlequin (Scott 311), so we can safely conclude that a more appropriate title would be *La Descent d'Arlequin aux Enfers*, reminiscent of Martinelli's *Arlequin le Roi's* nekylia a century earlier. In fact, in the supplement to volume two, we do indeed find an appended scene entitled "*La Descent d'Arlequin aux Enfers*" (108-15). In the preface to *Les Intrigues*, written as a "*Lettre de Cardan, ecrits des Champs Elisées à Monsieur \* \* \**," Pluto introduces Harlequin as "un petit homme qui luy étoit venu depuis quelque temps de l'autre monde, & qui seul valoit une Comédie" ("a little man who visited some time ago from the other world, and who alone is worth a whole Comedy" [396, my translation]). This line is intriguing as it refers to previous jaunts by Harlequin to the underworld, either of *La Descent*, which also features Pluto, or perhaps even that of Martinelli's *Response*.



Figure 10: Bust portrait of actor Thomassin (Tomaso Visentini). 1750-90. Etching. British Museum.

### ***Early Eighteenth Century Depictions***

Tomaso Visentini (1683-1739), known as Thomassin, was the next great Harlequin.

Thomassin, according to Nicoll, further refines Arlequin's acrobatic agility, making it more delicate (*Harlequin* 24), and Oreglia claims he conferred upon the mask "an exquisite pathos" (62; cf. Niklaus 109). In a posthumous portrait, the mask itself can be seen to be the same mask as we have encountered previously (fig. 9), the face framed by hair, the high, double eyebrow, circular concave cheeks, and the wart is clearly visible.



Figure 11: Watteau, Jean-Antoine. *Harlequin and Colombine*. 1716-18. Oil on oak panel. Wallace Collection.

Perhaps just as interesting for the iconography of Arlequin of this time are the paintings by Jean-Antoine Watteau, particularly *Harlequin and Colombine* (1716-18, fig. 11 above), who were by now replacing the *innamorati* as the love intrigue in the theatres. In this picture, Arlequin's face is difficult to make out in the shadow, and his hand moves somewhat threateningly towards Colombine in what could never be described as a romantic gesture. Colombine looks decidedly uncomfortable and leans away from him. The wide, demonic mouth is grinning maniacally, which gives the painting a distinctly sinister feel, rendering Arlequin something akin to a daemon lover. Unlike many other theatrical depictions of a graceful, balletic Arlequin, Watteau's have a certain stooped, almost simian quality to them, and his face tends to be somehow partially obscured, whether shaded by his hat, or partially

blocked by a torch (*Love in the Italian Theatre*, 1714), which creates a certain enigmatic aura, as though what is being depicted has an unfathomable identity beyond a sense of the daemonic. Watteau's Harlequins are not in an obviously theatrical setting, suggesting a more carnival, fairground, or masquerade, inspiration. However, before this particularly demonic Arlequin, Watteau had been painting others in which the mask tended to be brown instead of black. The figure painted by Watteau in 1707, *Harlequin, Emperor on the Moon*, bears clear resemblance to his friend Claude Gillot's *Scene from Master Andrew's Tomb* of 1707, with a similarly squat and stooped Arlequin, and in which, unlike Watteau's, the boards of the stage clearly signify the theatrical setting. Not only do both these masks appear brown, but both evidently lack the hair of the eyebrows that frame the face on the traditional theatrical mask. It is significant that these paintings were painted during a time of exile from Paris for the Italian actors, who, banished by Louis XIV in 1697, would not return until 1716. Niklaus tells us that the only Harlequins the pair were likely to encounter during the time of the Italians' exile were at the fairs, where they would be played by French fairground showmen instead of the Italians (86-92), and who thought nothing of using the Italian's repertory (89). It is around 1716-18, after the return of the Italians, that Watteau produces his most demonic, black Harlequin mask, not unlike the one in Thomassin's portrait.

### ***Goldoni, Sacchi, and Truffaldino***

The next important manifestation of Arlequin was Truffaldino, this time back in Italy and played by Sacchi, the Arlecchino of Carlo Goldoni, the man often credited with bringing the curtain down on the ailing commedia. The crowning glory of the Sacchi-Goldoni relationship was *The Servant of Two Masters*, which Goldoni wrote in response to Sacchi's request (Goldoni, *Memoirs* 238). However, Goldoni's mission was to reform the theatre and to rid it of the mask, which he saw as an impediment "which conceals the physiognomy and prevents a sensible actor from displaying the passion which he feels in his countenance" (200):

The mask must always be very prejudicial to the action of the performer either in joy or sorrow; [...] he can never convey by the countenance, which is the interpreter of the heart, the different passions with which he is inwardly agitated. [...]. The actor must, in our days, possess a soul; and the soul under a mask is like a fire under ashes. (314)<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Cf. Craig's statement: "the mask is the only right medium of portraying the expressions of the soul," p.7 (see p.121 above)

Nonetheless, Goldoni uses Masks from the commedia in *Servant of Two Masters*, but fundamentally alters their characters: Pantalone is no longer the grasping, lecherous *vecchio* but a concerned and bourgeois father;<sup>118</sup> *Il Dottore* is reformed from the gluttonous, garrulous object of ridicule of his former self; Brighella is no longer the cruel and conniving *primo zanni* but a decent, even helpful character; and Truffaldino, alias Arlecchino, according to Rudlin, “is not the Arlecchino of Martinelli (1595) or Biancolelli (1627 [*sic*] on), because he was refined of his brutishness, offensiveness and obscenity” (*Commedia* 198-99). However, it seems apparent that Rudlin has a distinct preference for the purely improvised form (if such a form ever existed), and so a *scripted* Truffaldino-Arlecchino is anathema to his preferred model. Contrary to Rudlin, Cope argues that Truffaldino was “an Arlecchino from a daemonic past, a past in which he represented pure ego as appetite, a past whose presence will reveal the appetitive nature of the present, dramatic continuities uncovering the continuity beneath the forms of society” (119). Whichever is true, it seems relatively unproblematic to suggest that, of all the masks, Truffaldino was the one to retain the closest links with his original character.

I am following Strehler’s lead in presuming equivalence between Truffaldino and Arlecchino. The Arlecchino we are familiar with today is directly developed from Strehler, Sartori and Moretti’s reinvention of the form, and so the two are certainly equivalent in today’s theatre. This seems to be historically well justified. According to Goldoni, Arlecchino is one of the four essential masks of the commedia, along with Pantalone, Brighella and *Il Dottore* (*Memoirs* 312); the other three all appear in *Servant of Two Masters*, so it seems not unreasonable to presume that Arlecchino represented the fourth. Moreover, Goldoni speaks of Sacchi on several occasions as “le fameux Arlequin” (for example *Mémoires* 253, 265), and so the Truffaldino-Arlecchino equivalence seems relatively secure.

Goldoni’s ultimately successful attempts to reform theatre were bitterly opposed by Count Carlo Gozzi,<sup>119</sup> who was attempting to reinvigorate and infuse the commedia with elements of the fantastical (*Memoirs* 109, 148). But such elements had been part of commedia repertoires since Scala’s publication, and the Italian troupes in Paris regularly included mythological burlesques, *nekyias*, and even Aesop’s *Fables*, and so his intended revolution was perhaps not quite so radical as he may have thought. The mythical was part of

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<sup>118</sup> For an account of the change in the character of Pantalone from misanthrope to decent, Venetian citizen, see Kennard’s *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, pp.315-18; cf. Fischer-Lichte 138.

<sup>119</sup> For an account of the differences between Gozzi and Goldoni, see the introduction by J. A. Symonds to *The Memoirs of Count Carlo Gozzi*, pp.86-112; cf. Kennard’s *Goldoni and the Venice of his Time*, pp.186-94; cf. James H. Johnson’s *Venice Incognito*, pp.154-66.

a tradition that Gozzi tried to protect, but he was swimming against the tide of the Enlightenment, not suited to the fantastical, mythical or burlesque in the same way that the Baroque sensibilities of Parisian decadence had been, or the grotesque realism of the Renaissance and the *maniera*. The mask was rapidly falling out of fashion as a performance device. To understand why, it is important to examine the philosophical climate of the day.

### ***The Enlightenment, Physiognomy, and the Death of the Mask***

The Enlightenment may be seen as an attempt to demythologise and demystify the world by means of its ‘mathematisation,’ reducing all quantifiable phenomena to their numeric equivalents. Mathematical formulae were sought rather than mythologies, metaphysics and superstitions (Adorno & Horkheimer 7). As such, it was—just like the mythologies it replaced—an abstraction of the world, only by numerical rather than mythical equivalence, replacing one abstract system with another. Driving this endeavour was a fear of the unknown (16); that anything should remain hidden or mysterious was intolerable to the new thinking. Consequently, the mask was no less anathema to Enlightenment philosophy than it was to Christianity. The Enlightenment rejection of “enchantment” (18) as irrational, and by Christianity as heretical, “places the pure image in contrast to animate existence” (19), a distinction functionally refused by the mask, which not only combines image, animation, and enchantment, but whose very essence may be argued to be the active mixture of these very elements. We find the mask in functional and philosophical opposition to Enlightenment rationalism. The mask was therefore rejected by both elements in the Enlightenment dialectic of reason and Christianity. Significantly, the Inquisition was also by this time in steep decline (Bethencourt 416).

The quest for certainty, reason and rationality that was at the heart of the Enlightenment placed the means by which we acquire knowledge, and what it is truly possible to know, at the heart of the philosophical endeavour, sparking fresh interest in the subjective nature of knowledge in relation to experience. Influential thinkers such as David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau heralded a new subjective focus for philosophical enquiry that was to see the dawn of individualism (particularly with Rousseau’s *Confessions*) and the emphasis on exposure, to which the phenomenon of mask was anathema (pp.28-31 above).

### **Physiognomy**

In 1698 appeared a study of physiognomy by the artist Charles LeBrun in which he provided a key to human emotions and their concordant expressions, primarily for use within works of art, but that soon became enormously influential and popular elsewhere (Heyl 121). The idea



that a face could be read was not just an aesthetic notion, but one that spread into everyday life to the extent that conduct books were published on the matter, including one from 1760 instructing:

[...] it is now-a-days considered as a sign of rusticity and ignorance to allow the countenance to be an index of the mind, or to express those particular passions with which it is affected. A certain unmeaning uniformity of face is now studied and practiced, or rather to have such an absolute command over our features, as to be able, on occasion, to assume any appearance. (qtd. in Heyl 124)

The importance of reading the face even extended to the Old Bailey: a specially lighted mirror was installed above the defendant in order to allow the face to be scrutinised (Heyl 123; cf. Emsley, Hitchcock, Shoemaker). Figure 12 (below) from the *Newgate Calendar* depicts John ‘Sixteen String Jack’ Rann, a famous highwayman executed in 1774, in the dock with the mirror suspended above his head, showing that mirrors were in use by this time.



Figure 12:  
Rann on his  
trial before  
Judge Henry  
Fielding.  
1828. *The  
Newgate  
Calendar*.  
Vol 4, p.14.

We can begin to appreciate the importance being put onto the readability of the individual physiognomy in both life and theatre. The extract from the conduct book of 1760 also instructs how the face itself ought to be trained to use as a mask. It is in this context that we should view Goldoni’s rejection of the mask “which conceals the physiognomy and prevents a sensible actor from displaying the passion which he feels in his countenance.” The

aristocratic Gozzi was stuck in a previous era; even in his last will, Gozzi railed against the new philosophy that was destroying the old order of things (Kennard 189). This new philosophy, the materialist, naturalist and bourgeois approach, with the focus on the individual self, the limits of knowledge and the nature of subjective experience rendered the mask redundant. There was also a clearly political dimension at work in Gozzi's aesthetic agenda: Gozzi belonged to the old aristocratic order of things that was being overthrown by the emerging bourgeoisie, of which Goldoni was a member.

#### PART 4: ARLECCHINO'S AFTERLIFE

##### *The English Pantomime and the Harlequinade*

Whilst the mask all but disappeared as a theatrical convention in Europe, accompanied by the lingering death throes of a scarcely recognisable commedia dell'arte, Harlequin refused to disappear, and continued for more than a century in the pantomime harlequinade and beyond. In fact, Harlequin was the only masked figure to be regularly found on the stage, and remained one of the most popular. Just as Hellequin predated the commedia, so he was to outlive it. He would be joined by Pantalone, but Pantalone, now Pantaloon, had lost his mask.

##### **John Rich (1692-1761)**

The direct influence of the Parisian-Italian model is perfectly clear through the names of the characters and the plays. John Rich's innovation and standardisation of the pantomime form (below), with his silent Harlequin (Mayer 4), was essentially developing the Anglicised Italian (itself already 'Frenchified') tradition. It seems John Rich had indeed taken the tradition from Paris according to the *Memoirs* of a near-contemporary actor-manager, Tate Wilkinson (1739-1803). Rich's nickname, 'Lun,' "had been the name of the famous man who represented Harlequin at Paris" (153). The Parisians who played the commedia at the Fairs of St. Germain during the time of the Italians' banishment were the Alard brothers, Bertrand, Dolet and De la Place (Niklaus 90), who, due to various political wranglings, were forced to play their roles silently and resorted to pure mime, with the occasional use of scrolls where language was absolutely needed (96). Moreover, another Parisian Harlequin, Francisque Moylin, was personally known to Rich and appeared in London with his company, *La Retour de la Foire*, in 1718. It may be that the name "Lun," identified by Wilkinson as being taken from the Parisian Harlequin, is directly from Moylin, especially when it is considered that the phonetics of a South-east England "Lun" and a Parisian "Lin" would sound remarkably

similar. Immediately prior to Rich's first appearance as Harlequin, he had engaged Moylin's niece and nephew to dance *Two Pulchanellos* and *Two Harlequins and Dame Ragonde* at his theatre at the Lincoln's Inn Fields on 18 October 1716 (Burnim *et al.* 181). Either way, it would seem that dance and the notion of a silent Harlequin were perfectly natural to John Rich; dance, in the form of the ballet, and pantomime were inextricably linked, as indeed dance and commedia had been in the productions of Biancolelli's and Gherardi's company.

Niklaus identifies in John Rich's pantomimes, with their harlequinades, the basic structure of the pantomime form that would set the standard—though it would become more elaborate—for well over one hundred years (141). This protean, balletic Harlequin of the pantomime, with his “magic bat” developed from the *bataccio*, or slap-stick, renders Harlequin a sort of magician, a mercurial trickster associated with transformation. He may have been silent for John Rich, but later texts show he did not remain silent (see below). The physical, mimetic prowess of John Rich remains a prominent feature of the Harlequin, as contemporary accounts demonstrate:

1 Sep 1753 [...] they may say what they will of the Hero of *Drury Lane* [Garrick]; he only imitates Men, whereas the *Covent-Garden Chief* [Rich] converts himself into a wild Beast, a Bird, or a Serpent with a long Tail and what not. (Murphy 291-92)

Again, Rich's “gesticulation was so perfectly expressive of his meaning, that every motion of his hand or head, or any part of his body, was a kind of dumb eloquence that was readily understood by the audience” (Davies 237). David Garrick wrote of him, after his death:

But why a speaking Harlequin? 'tis wrong,  
 The wits will say, to give a fool a tongue!  
 When Lun appear'd, with matchless art and whim,  
 He gave pow'r of speech to ev'ry limb;  
 Tho mask'd and mute, convey'd his quick intent,  
 And told in frolic gestures all he meant –  
 But now the motley coat and sword of wood  
 Requires a tongue to make them understood. (qtd. in Wilkinson 153)

That John Rich maintained his connections with the Italian Comedians in Paris, much later when staging pantomimes, is also clear from another entry in the *Gray's Inn Journal* by its editor, Arthur Murphy:

[19 May 1753] The Management of the Theatres has ever been my principal Care, and I have now the Satisfaction to inform you, that Mr. *Rich's* Negotiations with the

*Harlequin of the Italian Comedy in Paris* (for which Purpose he is gone thither) have been attended with the greatest Success. (203)

The Harlequin of Paris was by this time Carlo Antonio Bertinazzi, or Carlin, who had the role from 1742 until his retirement. Unfortunately Murphy has nothing more to say about this negotiation, and so we are left with speculation.

The Harlequin of the pantomime was a magician, associated inextricably with magic and transformation. The old motif of the nekylia remains present. In the preface to *Merlin, or the Devil of Stonehenge* (1734), Lewis Theobald states, linking the demon-born Merlin with Harlequin: “Custom, in *pantomimes*, has made it a sort of necessity, in order to give Tricks some Air of Probability, that Harlequin should be a Piece of a Magician” (qtd. in Martinez 160). This is reinforced in Theobald’s *Harlequin sorcerer: with the Loves of Pluto and Proserpine*, performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden, in which Harlequin again meets his old friend Pluto in the familiar haunt of the Underworld, once more bringing cheer into their joyless world, making his entrance by flight (8). The sheer brevity of the published play is testament to how much dancing and stage business Harlequin had.

The ‘magic’ employed by Rich appears to have been so self-evidently theatrical illusion and trickery that Daniel Defoe seized upon it as a means to counter superstitious belief in such things as sorcery and necromancy in his *A System of Magick* (1826):

Your modern *Harlequins*, especially so exquisitely contriv’d, and so perfectly well perform’d as those of late by Mr. *Rich* [...] have gone farther to expose and run down the Magick I am speaking of [...] Mr. *Rich* shows you what foolish things you are just now doing; [...] what your Ancestors did before you, and what still worse things the Ages to come are likely to do after you. (Preface)

The silent, but entirely magical trickster of John Rich had by this point lost all trace of the wild, bestial Bergamask peasant. Apparently when not performing acrobatics or dances, he would stand in one of five conventional positions, or attitudes, representing Admiration, Defiance, Determination, Flirtation, or Thought (Stott 108), attitudes which are clearly not characteristic of the *zanni*, and which were to become increasingly formalised as time went on. The anarchic, chaotic spirit of the *lazzi* had given way to the grace of balletics and mime. “Hunger would seem to be ignored; violence, cruelty, greed, callousness, indifference, folly all but concealed behind jollity, splendour and plenty” (Mayer 2). The iconography shows development, or rather degeneration, of the mask itself—there is no consistency in the depiction of Rich’s mask; at times it appears to be a full face mask, at others it remains a half mask, which renders the iconography somewhat unreliable. The chin strap is noticeably

absent from all depictions that I have seen; the wide, demonic mouth of the Arlequin loses its impact when the character is silent. Based on this, combined with the iconography, we may speculate that the chin strap, as well as the specific features of the mask, becomes less meaningful about this time.

Charles Dibden's *The Mirror, or Harlequin Everywhere* was performed at Covent Garden in 1779 with 'Mr W. Bates' in the role of Harlequin, and was to see a speaking Harlequin once more descend to Hell and return victorious. The iconography from this point onwards shows no sign of the defining features, but instead a variety of black face coverings with no consistent or distinctive physiognomy, sometimes being little more than what we now call a domino mask (see fig 13). Harlequin was more an acrobat and dancer than a primal force or appetitive *zanni*. The comic element was to be reintroduced by Joseph Grimaldi's invention of Joey the Clown, leading Jackson I. Cope to speculate that the archetypal spirit had transmigrated (13).

Harlequin became stripped of his bestial, demonic mask and primal drives, but continued to exist mainly as an aesthetic figure in circuses and ballets. While the Harlequin tradition, of sorts, continued, it was fundamentally altered: the mask had lost its key characteristics, even disappeared in many cases; the costume had become increasingly elaborate and ornate, and the spirit of what had been Arlecchino all-but obliterated (perhaps transmigrated into the clown).



Figure 13: Photograph of Harold Chapin's Harlequin mask. pre-1911. V&A.

### ***Arlecchino Reborn: Marcello Moretti, Amleto Sartori, and Giorgio Strehler***

In the first half of the twentieth century, with the advent of modernism, there came a renewed interest in the mask (see chapter 5). As part of this renewed interest, the spectre of the commedia dell'arte once more became an object of fascination. Whilst practitioners conducted various investigations into the performative potential of the mask, it was perhaps Giorgio Strehler who did more than anyone else to construct the modern concept of the commedia dell'arte. His chosen text was Goldoni's *Servant of two Masters*—a not unproblematic choice due to reasons explored above, and it suggests that the form we have today is filtered through a particularly Goldonian perspective. By choosing the bourgeois Goldoni, we are left with a distinctly materialist form of commedia, perhaps informed by

Strehler's own Marxist views (see Hirst 14-15), though stylistically he was aiming for a pre-Goldonian commedia (42). The Arlecchino of today, whilst probably closer to the original Bergamask *zanni* than the 'Frenchified' version of the late *Comédie Italienne*, is still mediated through the bourgeois, intellectual explorations of Strehler and the Enlightenment sensibilities of Goldoni, and as such perhaps lacks something of his original brutishness.

The reinvention of the commedia mask is largely down to Amleto Sartori, who was introduced to Strehler by Jacques Lecoq. By the time of his endeavour in 1951 (Sartori 9), the tradition of the leather mask was long since dead. Sartori's extensive research into the techniques and appearances of these masks demonstrate this was not the continuation of a tradition, but something of a combination of archaeological excavation and creative invention. Though masks in general were still occasionally used, the leather mask of the commedia was long since gone. It seems that, as Harlequin lost his bestial, wild-man nature, he also lost his animal skin.

Sartori's aim was not to produce a faithful replica of the early mask, but a reinterpretation (Sartori 10), taking into account practical considerations as well as the shift in sensibilities in the intervening centuries. It is interesting that Sartori's reinvention of Arlecchino's mask did not include the hair, concentrating instead on shape. The ones made for Moretti were initially based on a bull, a cat, and a fox

(11). Sartori's *Arlecchino Gatto* (fig 14) reinterprets but, importantly, retains the centrifugal lines. The chinstrap is also retained. Images of Strehler's two Arlecchinos, Marcello Moretti and Ferruccio Soleri, show that a black, hairless mask with chinstraps was favoured in his productions, though the chinstrap was not part of the mask, as the battered mask of Soleri, now lying in the Museo Internazionale della Maschera Amleto e Donato Sartori, shows. Its battered state is a testament to the deep connection Soleri had with his mask, and in viewing it, one gets a sense that there remains something of Soleri, something essential, in the mask.

The rediscovery of the leather mask was largely driven by Moretti himself, who could not perform in the masks he was initially given. It was through experimentation with various types that he discovered the immense expressivity of the leather commedia mask, and the freedoms and possibilities opened up by such an apparent restriction (Hirst 43). Strehler noted:



Figure 14: "Arlecchino Gatto, mask by the Sartoris." 1980. The Amleto and Donato Sartori International Mask Museum, Abano Terme.

[...] behind the mask, Marcello, who was shy (like all actors and he more than most), was able to release a new life, an imaginative power which was in no way “realistic” but securely anchored his own down-to-earth inner self, and carry through that process of rediscovery and enrichment which I myself was undertaking from my own point of view into the problem of *commedia dell’arte*, which seemed to have been miraculously reborn before our very eyes. (qtd. in Hirst 43)

Thus, whatever the criticisms may be about the form of *commedia* that was being invented, the essential philosophy of ‘an actors’ theatre rather than a playwrights’ theatre’ was certainly there during the rebirth of the *commedia* mask. According to Strehler, success only came when Moretti “let himself be ‘conquered’ by the mask” (*ibid.*). The mask was then able to help Moretti connect with a creative force, something primal within himself that simultaneously conveyed a sense of authenticity and universality; something evidently denied, even unknown, to Moretti in the mask’s absence. In these experiments, Strehler identifies the demonic, saying in *Per un teatro umano*: “The mask is a mysterious and terrible instrument... it brings us to the very threshold of theatrical mystery, demons are reborn through these immutable, immobile, static faces” (171, qtd. in Hirst 42-43). Based upon these enquiries, in which “demons are reborn” through the actor’s “inner self,” there seems to be an inextricable link between the self and the daemonic, a link evidently bridged by the mask. This is particularly striking considering the surprising, even contradictory, nature of such words coming from the mouth of the Marxist Strehler, whose materialistic political views would not ordinarily seem to admit the possibility of the daemonic.

#### PART 5: THE SELF THROUGH MASKS, SHADOWS, AND TECHNOLOGIES:

After exploring the birth and evolution of Arlecchino, we must evaluate the evidence and see what conclusions may be reached. In order to do this, I will address each of the initial three questions in turn. It is firstly important to acknowledge that the rebirth of the mask still occupies a relatively esoteric place within popular theatre; the mask remains largely absent.

##### **1. How do attitudes to the mask reflect the concept of Selfhood during the heyday of *commedia*?**

Given the intellectual context established by Greenblatt’s ‘Renaissance self-fashioning’ in an ‘age of dissimulation,’ it would appear beneficial to evaluate the evidence from a Foucauldian perspective, particularly Foucault’s “technologies of the self,” introduced in

chapter four. From this perspective, I shall treat the self as a socio-historical construct, and then proceed to balance this against Jung's archetypal theories in order to see what illumination may be gained.

### Technologies of the Self & The Scold's Bridle



Figure 15: Photograph of a Scold's Bridle.

One of the key technologies of domination (see p.85-86 above) identified by Foucault as being used by the Church in order to train and dominate the individual self *as body* is the practice of *exomologesis*, “a ritual of recognizing oneself as a sinner and a penitent” (“Technologies” 41). The ritual involves the self-disclosure of a state of sin, the wearing of hair shirts and ashes, self-mortification, and the prostration in front of the priest and congregation and kissing the brethren's knees. “*Exomologesis* is not a verbal behaviour but the dramatic recognition of one's status as a penitent” (*ibid.*).

The visual, performative aspect of theatricalised penitence is perhaps nowhere better demonstrated than in the Scold's Bridle (Heyl, 115ff), first recorded in Scotland in 1567,<sup>120</sup> a torturous mask-object symbolic of the ‘technology of domination’ (see fig. 15). Masks used in order to conceal, such as those used in masquerades, provide an interesting binary opposition. The Scold's bridle and the carnival mask represent two opposing uses of mask, the former as a technology of power, described by Foucault as that which “determine[s] the conduct of individuals and submit[s] them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject,” the latter as a technology of self, “which permit[s] individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls [...] so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.” (18). Whilst the carnival mask may hardly be said to pertain to purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality, it can be said to help the wearer temporarily transform themselves in order to attain happiness, or at least freedom.

<sup>120</sup> “Scold's Bridle” at ScienceMuseum.org.



Against this background, the mask as a technology of the self becomes potentially subversive. It represents joyous celebration, “the violation of natural boundaries [...], the playful element of life” (Bakhtin 40). As Wiles says: “The anarchic inversion of normal moral behaviour within the world of play was indisseverable from the inversion of everyday conduct permitted under the rules of carnival” (*Menander* 124). If *exomologesis* and ritual penance are not only the renunciation of sin, but of self (Foucault, “Technologies” 35), the mask functions in the Nietzschean sense of protection, of liberating and celebrating the self, rejecting the merciless and ultimately self-destructive (43) exposure demanded by technologies of power, if only for a time. The technologies of self versus domination can be polarised as follows:

<b>Tech. of Self</b>	<b>Tech. of Domination</b>
Masking	Exomologesis (e.g. Scold’s bridle)
Protection	Exposure
(Trans)mutability/metamorphosis	Fixity/death (i.e. martyrdom/sacrifice)
Carnality	Corporeal mortification & renunciation
Physical rebirth	Spiritual rebirth
Satanic/daemonic	Godly/pious
Nature, chaos	Law and order
Drives and instincts	Civic duty, social contract

These binaries are perhaps nowhere better encapsulated than in the mask of Arlecchino, the demonic in the face of the religious, the anarchic in the face of established order. He represents the basic drives, the hunger and the struggle for survival that are at the heart of the human instinct. His irrepressible spirit in the face of hardship and adversity, and his irreverent and anarchic nature were characteristics celebrated and enjoyed by nobles and common folk alike. The binary nature of commedia helped to give it its vitality, but, based on the table above, Arlecchino’s very essence, itself of inherently dual nature, was in binary opposition to the prevailing order, thus rendering him perfectly placed to have an existence outside of the commedia. But such a level of irreverence was permissible only through the mask; one wonders what the consequences would have been had Martinelli’s irreverent letters to members of the French nobility been signed with his own name rather than that of the Mask. Moreover, the blurring of the identities of Martinelli and his ‘creation’ suggests not only the fluidity of identity, but the implicit understanding of theatrical performance in everyday

life.<sup>121</sup> It seems that the Mask, whilst on the one hand symbolising absolute otherness and pure theatricality, was allowed to venture into the realms of reality much further and with far more audacity than would be tolerated by any non-masked character. As a technology of the self, the mask obliterated distinctions between carnival and theatre, between actor and role, between social classes, and, ultimately, between fantasy and reality.

On the other hand, the commedia mask imposes very strict rules on the performer. To be a successful Arlecchino, one must think and move like Arlecchino; the mask imposes a certain way of being. In this, the mask may well act more like a Scold's bridal than it would initially seem in that it functions, in some ways, as a technology of power, controlling the body, its thought processes and impulses. Once again, we find at the heart of the mask a fundamental paradox, an apparently irreconcilable duality that is nonetheless reconciled by the unity of the Mask. If we recall the phenomenon of neuroplasticity (p.93 above), the more practiced an actor gets in these physical and mental acts, the more 'internalised' the mask becomes: the brain rewires itself to be automatic in these acts. As a technology of the self, and of domination, the mask exerts such power that the body, on a neurological level, becomes the Mask to the extent that clear differentiation is no longer possible. The freedoms afforded by the Mask are framed by the very clear limitations and demands it imposes. The creative freedom and demonic new life experienced by Moretti were encountered only after submission to the mask.

Attitudes to the mask during the heyday of commedia reflected an instinctual understanding and acceptance of the performative nature of the self and the resulting fluidity of identity, something fiercely rejected by the Church. The carnival spirit was embodied by the commedia, and more particularly, by Arlecchino himself. The implicit understanding of the need for the mask, within the carnival context, would also seem to suggest an implicit understanding of the self as intrinsically transgressive, or, in Foucault's own (admittedly uncharacteristic) words, an awareness of "the universal nature of transgression" ("Transgression" 50). As such, the mask, as a technology of the self, functions as a technology of transgression, rendering the concepts of self and of transgression functionally equivalent (cf. p.71 above). This arguably lies behind Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria's decision to dress as a *zanni* in the 1597 carnival (p.171 above). By inference, the necessity for masks

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<sup>121</sup> For a discussion on the performative nature of Martinelli's letter writing and their links with the oral tradition, see Henke, pp.167-72.

within society—not just theatre—would also suggest an intrinsically repressive culture outside of the mask tradition.<sup>122</sup>

Foucault's technologies of the self, combined with the "universal nature of transgression," once more present us with a problem: if there are technologies that construct selfhood, what is it that deploys these technologies? There must be something behind the technologies, a deeper 'self.' Once again I will turn to Nietzsche and his attitude to the self-as-consciousness. Nietzsche argues that consciousness is not the "sensorium" or "supreme court" of our being, but "only a means of communication: it is evolved through social intercourse and with a view to the interests of social intercourse [...] It is not the directing agent, but an organ of the directing agent" (*WP* §524, p.284). This "organ," which is the ego-consciousness, is merely a channel of unconscious drives and "causal relations which are entirely withheld from us" (*ibid.*). The causal relations that are perceived by the ego-consciousness are *a posteriori* fictions, "knowledges" that are constructed in order to gain a sense of mastery or power over our narrative environment. Consciousness is functional. Nonetheless, in the Nietzschean schema, it remains secondary to an unknowable other, a "higher court" that rules over it (*ibid.*). Nietzsche presents us with a consciousness that is ultimately discursive, but this discursive self is a mere organ of a deeper self. If we accept the necessity for a deeper self as operator, then the mask, as a technology of this deeper self, is something worn not by the everyday discursive consciousness, but by the deeper self *instead* of the everyday discursive consciousness, perhaps the 'recalcitrant will' (p.82 above). The constructed self is bypassed. Foucault does not provide the methodological tools to access this deeper self; for these I will return to Jung.

## ***2. What does the enduring popularity of Harlequin say about the nature of the Self, both individually and culturally?***

From the above analysis, the answer would seem to be that the transgressive, carnivalesque nature of Harlequin typifies the transgressive, recalcitrant aspect of the self. However, there must be more to it—many characters may be said to be transgressive without having acquired the popularity of Arlecchino. In order to address this, I will examine what 'universal' elements can be identified within him, and how these relate to the world in which he exists. It is important to recognise the significant changes in the Hellequin-Arlecchino-Arlequin-

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<sup>122</sup> See, for example, Bethencourt's *The Inquisition* for an example of the repressive nature of European life. Cf. pp.168-69 above for an account of an age of religious dissimulation.

Harlequin mask, and question the cultural significance of this. The different spellings of the name will be used to denote different stages of the mask's evolution. Hellequin will refer to the pre-commedia folklore demon; Arlecchino will refer to the Italian tradition, particularly that of Martinelli; Arlequin will refer to the Parisian brand from Biancolelli onwards, and Harlequin to the post-commedia, post-Enlightenment tradition, particularly, but not exclusively, to the English pantomime.

### **Arlecchino and the Wild-Man**

The *zanni* tradition represents an almost subhuman underclass of brutes, but Arlecchino was to bring to this lampoon of the migrant peasant an element of the demonic. Rosalba Gasparro describes the early Arlecchino as the “*homme sauvage*” of folklore and the collective imagination, originally associated with death and shadows, but transforming by an “explosion of carnival laughter” into “a harbinger of spring buds [...] and primal fertility” (315, my translation). For Gasparro, Arlecchino is an “archetype that floats in a ‘ritual’ space” (317) of theatre. Robert Lima, in *Stages of Evil: Occultism in Western Theater and Drama*, also identifies Arlecchino with the wild-man archetype, identifying clues in the patches of the motley. He quotes Richard Bernheimer's study, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, who claims:

More frequent than the replacement of the furs by feathers was the use of close-fitting tights and bodices covered with little bits of coloured rags or flax to simulate tufts [...] The wild men who performed their revels in Basel in 1435 wore green and red tufts; [...] [T]he sartorial tradition of the wild man and his daemonic relatives and associates was inherited by the Harlequin of the modern stage [...] [T]hese rags were systematized into interlocking triangular or lozenge-shaped patches [...]. (Bernheimer 83-84; Lima 63-65)

Jackson I. Cope likewise identifies Arlecchino as the wild-man. Moreover, he associates the early Arlecchino mask with bears and apes (71-72), whose likeness is a feature of wild-man iconography. Wiles identifies the early French Arlequin with the “noble savage, a creature comprising only emotion, with no admixture of reason” (*Menander* 125). The appetitive Arlecchino, even in the bourgeois *Servant of Two Masters*, still has the primal drives and, as Cope points out, distinctly pagan—or at least un-Christian—associations: the duality of Truffaldino's nature, referred to in the title, probably alludes to Matthew 6:24, which states: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (121).

## The Trickster

The Arlequin of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century France, along with the Harlequin of the English Pantomime, appears as a much more magical, protean and mercurial figure, which one might say is much more akin to the Trickster than the wild-man (see Gasparro 319). However, the wild-man, in the Jungian model, is not explicitly identified as an archetype as of itself, but a being whose characteristics form one aspect of the Trickster's essentially "dual nature" (*CW9a* ¶456, 255), both bestial and divine; the bestial element of the Trickster adheres to the figure of the wild-man, and forms, importantly, a central aspect of both the personal and cultural shadow.<sup>123</sup> The archetype itself, according to Jung, is the pre-condition or empty potential of a particular instinct or pattern of behaviour; it is constellated (or activated) in a compensatory role as an *archetypal image*, or *symbol*, which is most often in personified form, the presence of which is symptomatic of a lack of balance. The Shadow archetype consists of all the elements rejected by the conscious ego, and is therefore a negative of the ego, a definitively 'other' aspect of the Self. The Trickster, as the most common manifestation of the Shadow, represents that which we culturally reject as part of our collective consciousness. As such, the appearance of the Trickster would be the manifestation of those elements of human nature that the collective rejects, or refuses to see in itself.

If we examine the nature of the Trickster archetype, what we see is not the morphology of Arlecchino from the wild-man to the Trickster, but that the two are not separable; one is an aspect of the other. The wild-man is the bestial aspect of the dual-natured Trickster, which is not a fixed being, but a *cycle* that incorporates "crude primitivity" and "the reflection of an earlier, rudimentary stage of consciousness" (Jung *CW9a* ¶467).

The animism of Arlecchino, whose "psyche [...] has hardly left the animal level,"<sup>124</sup> is another aspect of the Trickster, which Fava describes as follows: "If Zanni moves an object, for example, a rolled up ball of paper, the object is moved by Zanni only when he touches it. However, once it starts rolling on its own, the object takes a will of its own" (64).

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<sup>123</sup>See Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure," *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (*CW9a*), pp.255-72 for a full description of the Trickster; cf. Jung's (*et al*) *Man and his Symbols*, p.149, for a clear link between the symbolism of the wild and the Trickster as symbols of transcendence.

<sup>124</sup> Jung, *CW9a* ¶465. Jung is referring explicitly to the characters of "Italian theatricals" and of Callot's engravings here, though he doesn't specifically name Arlecchino. Elsewhere, he refers to Harlequin as "an ancient chthonic god," and relates him to the trickster character in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, "that 'motley fellow,' like a buffoon' in Zarathustra, who jumped over the unsuspecting rope-dancer [...] and thereby brought about his death" ("Picasso" 140).

This corresponds exactly with the description by Jung of the Trickster in relation to the individual and cultural self:

[The subject] then speaks of [...] the mischievousness of the object. Here the trickster is represented by counter-tendencies in the unconscious, and in certain cases by a sort of puerile and inferior character [...]. I have, I think, found a suitable designation for this character-component when I called it the *shadow*. On the civilised level, it is regarded as a personal ‘gaffe,’ ‘slip,’ ‘faux pas,’ etc., which are then chalked up as defects of the conscious personality. We are no longer aware that in carnival customs and the like there are remnants of a collective shadow figure which prove that the personal shadow is in part descended from a numinous collective figure. (CW9a ¶469)

This collective figure corresponds with the aggregate nature of Arlecchino identified above.

Jung goes further: “A collective personification like the trickster is the product of an aggregate of individuals and is welcomed by each individual as something known to him, which would not be the case if it were just an individual outgrowth” (¶468). The collective, unconscious element “may even be personified and incarnated” (¶478). Such was the birth of Martinelli’s Arlecchino.

The lack of differentiated consciousness typified by the primitive aspect of the Trickster, motivated only by drives and emotions is the earthy, subhuman element of the *zanni*, which, when combined with the ethereal, aerial acrobatics of the saltimbanc, all embody the essence of the Arlecchino-Trickster. “He is a forerunner of the saviour, and like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness” (¶472). This proto- and often anti-religious aspect is reflected in the fact that the Trickster often has a “compensatory relation to the ‘saint’” (¶458), which is evident throughout his demonic history, but perhaps nowhere so textually apparent as in the *Servant of Two Masters* contra *Matthew* 6:24. This play also demonstrates Arlecchino’s capacity for calculation, something that marks him as different to a normal, generic second *zanni*. His capacity for trickery can be identified in his early days when, in 1601, Martinelli as Arlecchino tricks King Henry IV of France out of his throne and assumes it himself (see Henke 161). This is based on anecdotal evidence, and of course may not be true, but the ‘ring of truth’ that Henke identifies within the story is testament to the trickster aspect of the original Arlecchino.

Jung, who was of course deeply learned in the European tradition, offers an account of the Trickster that provides us with a perfect description of Arlecchino, right down to the Trickster’s plays on gender and masculinity: “Even his sex is optional despite its phallic

qualities: he can turn himself into a woman and bear children” (CW9a ¶472). Occasions of Arlecchino cross-dressing are in themselves not enough to suggest this connection—cross-dressing is something of a motif in theatre (see *The Bacchae*, for example). However, an eighteenth century Dutch scenario, entitled *The Marvellous Malady of Harlequin* (Duchartre 55ff), gives a pictorial account, three scenes of which are “Harlequin is delivered of three boys, but only one survives” (fig.16), “The young mother Harlequin, aided by Piro, gives the child its first bath,” and “Harlequin gives suck to the child. Mezzetin gives good counsel” (fig.17). These scenes starkly demonstrate Harlequin’s maternal transformation.



Figure 16: Xavery, G. J. “Harlequin is delivered of three boys, but only one survives.” Eighteenth century. *The Marvellous Malady of Harlequin*



Figure 17: Xavery, G. J. “Harlequin gives suck to the child. Mezzetin gives good counsel.” Eighteenth century. *The Marvellous Malady of Harlequin*

### The Duality of the Trickster

For Jung, the Trickster has a “dual nature,” is “half animal, half divine,” and “buffoon-like” (CW9a ¶456). He has “on occasion, described himself as a soul in hell” (¶457), which we have already seen from Martinelli’s first known writing as Arlecchino onwards. In fact, Jung sees the *nekyia* as the symbolic journey into the unconscious, which invariably must start with the Shadow (“Picasso” 139-40), which is the realm of the Trickster.

In Jungian terms, Arlecchino earned such a warm place in people’s hearts “because secretly it participates in the observer’s psyche and appears as its reflection, though it is not recognised as such. [...] The trickster is a collective shadow figure, a summation of all the inferior traits of character in individuals” (CW9a ¶484). It is through Arlecchino that we, consciously or unconsciously, recognise and learn to love our own ultimate folly, which accounts for “the secret attraction and fascination this has for the conscious mind” (¶475).

The change in Arlecchino to Arlequin represents not a change in the archetypal nature of the figure, but the culturally specific manifestation of that archetype. The Trickster is an evolving, cyclic archetype, he is characterised as “the gradual civilizing, i.e., assimilation, of a primitive daemonic figure who was originally autonomous and even capable of causing possession” (¶475). What we witness are different aspects of the same protean Trickster, a continuity perhaps less apparent than the change. However, the mask provides us with the visual continuity of the same primal figure, the ‘gradual civilizing’ is reflected in the changing costume and the evolving, yet identifiably contiguous mask; the mask itself changes with time like a living face. The warmth felt towards, and the instinctive recognition of, Arlecchino-Trickster, despite the sinister and frightening, daemonic mask, points to a primal darkness beneath the veneer of civilisation, a latent cruelty such as identified by Artaud,<sup>125</sup> just as it lurks beneath the anarchic gaiety of the commedia dell’arte, and arguably most forms of comedy. The demonic aspect of Arlecchino, which has been shown to be present from birth, has been continually evident in his ethereal nature, and particularly evident in his regular jaunts to the Underworld and his relationship with Pluto.

The mask provides the link to this bestial aspect, which in itself, according to the experiments of Sartori, Moretti, and Strehler, opens up a world of freedom, of vital life force and of daemonic, creative energy. The Mask of Arlecchino speaks of a universal aspect of humanity, only crueller, more bestial, and far less noble than that addressed by tragedy. As Robert Lima claims: “The masks of Harlequin are manifestations of the primal elements of human nature itself” (76). Within my own delineations of the phases of Harlequin, I would suggest that the former three (Hellequin, Arlecchino and Arlequin) are the “manifestations of the primal elements of human nature itself,” whereas Harlequin will come to represent a less numinous phase in which Arlecchino the archetypal image, or *symbol*, becomes Harlequin the *signifier*. This can be traced in the mask itself: the domino mask of the English pantomime was no longer a symbol that contained the demonic, archetypal energy in the contours of its sculpted, animal-skin face, but was an empty and blank signifier of the character of Harlequin, made of card or fabric, thus losing its ability to function as a second skin. The Harlequin of the English pantomime therefore became a sign of a symbol rather than the symbol itself.

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<sup>125</sup> See Artaud’s *The Theatre and its Double*, esp. “Theatre and Cruelty,” pp.64-67.



### 3. *What are the implications of the loss of the Mask for the modern Self?*

Even though the mask as a convention disappeared from the stage, it remained present on the *popular* stage in the figure of Harlequin. However, the authentic leather mask of Arlecchino did not. The mask survived for a while as a sign alone, not as the embodied spirit of the Trickster, but as the refined, balletic magician. Despite the genius and popularity of John Rich, it appears that the fundamental duality of the trickster, as described above, was likewise in decline. Consequently, Rich's Harlequin cannot be said to be an archetypal image in the same way as Martinelli's Arlecchino; instead we are left with the sparks of the dying embers of the Trickster's *élan vital*. Thereafter, Harlequin degenerated into the role of mere narrative utility, an abstract, empty symbol (Gasparro 315), a foil to the new darling of the stage—the clown. The loss of the distinctive leather physiognomy in favour of a relatively featureless black mask signals the loss the mask's numinosity, a fatal shift from symbol to signifier, even a mere tool for concealment. I propose that the essence of the dual-natured Arlecchino deserted the Harlequin along with the leather mask.

This is not to say that archetypes *per se* are exclusively synonymous with, or dependent upon, masks; Cope's argument for the wild-man's transmigration into Joey the Clown in the beginning of the nineteenth century remains a distinct possibility and warrants further investigation. However, it is not my intention to trace the survival or otherwise of a particular archetype through various incarnations; it is to identify the numinosity of a specific mask. It is my contention that the essence of Arlecchino, his particular duality of the daemonic and the earthy, resides in the Mask. A performer who adopts the physical and personal characteristics of Arlecchino for performance, but who does so without the mask, performs what may be described as a *sign* of Arlecchino, something similar to or suggestive of, but that cannot be said to be Arlecchino himself. The performer remains the individual performer. Likewise, a face-covering that is not the sculpted leather face of Arlecchino is not Arlecchino, but a mere signifier. Arlecchino-Trickster's duality is embodied by the fixed contours of the leather mask and plasticity of the human face.

The mask of the harlequinade became the blank domino mask of Harold Chapin's Harlequin (fig 13), a mask of pseudo-disguise (the aesthetics of the Arlecchino mask worked in relation to other masks, without which, a simple black domino mask would naturally seem more aesthetically congruous). The essence of Arlecchino dissipates and vanishes behind a mask no longer intended to embody, reveal, or even to conceal (it still serves as a means of identification); instead, the mask merely signifies—it becomes a Foucauldian technology of self-construction. Thus, in dealing with the disappearance of the archetype from the mask, we

shift from a Self as conglomerate of archetypes to a self as historically constructed. It is on the latter level that Jung's use of the word *persona* may be said to be equivalent with the mask; it becomes a façade, a signifier rather than an embodied essence. The distinction highlights the difference between mask as *object* and mask as *metaphor*, between the Mask as archetypal *symbol* and the persona as *signifier*, or representation of the individual: The transition results in the loss of the physical mask.

The Enlightenment's demand for exposure, naturalism and psychologism rejected the mask; the new bourgeois sensibilities that were prevailing in the aesthetic realm favoured the exposed face, 'the interpreter of the heart.' The demand for total self-exposure, driven by both the Church and the new philosophy, would, in the Nietzschean sense, not only be a source of shame, but also a source of danger. Echoing Nietzsche's famous dictum "Every profound spirit needs a mask," Foucault observes "Self-revelation is at the same time self-destruction" ("Technologies" 43). Along with the loss of the mask and the increased focus on 'exposure,' the self, arguably through necessity, began to acquire new levels of artifice and aestheticisation. From as early as 1760, conduct manuals had been instructing the reader to create a dissimulative mask of one's own face, signalling a march towards the aesthetic construction of the self. By the time of the Dandyism of the *fin de siècle* decadents, exemplified by Huysman's *À Rebours* (1884), the self was considered as potentially a distinctly and entirely artificial construct, a work of art in itself (cf. Wilde 15).<sup>126</sup> 'Man' becomes a post-Kantian representation whose essence vanishes.

Just as we saw the phenomenon of "melting" in the vase paintings of ancient Greece at the advent of the theatrical mask, so at its death we see the distinction blurring once more, but in the inverse way: the mask no longer becomes the face, now the face becomes the mask. The theatrical mask was no longer needed to conceal the individual, whose selfhood retreated into the interior, leaving the exteriority as a functional, dissimulative, and protective Nietzschean life-mask (or Jungian persona) where it was once the locus of selfhood. The mask became redundant.

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<sup>126</sup> For a discussion of Wilde's aesthetic self-invention, see Shelton Waldrep's *The Aesthetics of Self-Invention: Oscar Wilde to David Bowie*, esp. pp.xi-xxi of the introduction.

## CONCLUSION

The birth of Arlecchino appears to be the conglomeration of various popular phenomena, a fusion of the burgeoning commedia dell'arte and the Hellequin of European folklore. His mask, as symbol, had a very distinctive design that embodied the demonic aspect (through the hair and the wart) and its essential energy through its centrifugal contours. Together, these produced the numinosity of the mask (see p.69 above). The archetype's duality is embodied by the fixed half-mask and the mobile human face. As such, Arlecchino was different from birth—the bestial, wild-man second *zanni* fused with folkloric demons and the archetypal energy of the Trickster, each of which is representative of the darker side of humanity, the brutality and demonic force that lies beneath the veneer of civilisation. Arlecchino represented the other in a culturally specific way: brutishness in the face of civilisation, the demonic in the face of the religious, the grotesque in the face of Renaissance idealism. His paradoxical nature embodied a fundamental dualism: the unconscious, bestial stupidity and appetite of the wild-man combined with the wiliness of the Trickster; the ethereal, acrobatic sprite with the earthy Bergamo peasant; the anarchic, overwhelming 'spirit' of carnival with his fixed, lowly place in the social hierarchy. Arlecchino in many ways represents the impossible; he would say the unsayable, do the undoable, and (one must presume) think the unthinkable, which is the very nature of the Shadow. His popularity was due to his absolute, liberating otherness, an otherness that is a fundamental part of the Self. In other words, Arlecchino, as a historical moment, was the embodiment of the shadow of the collective psyche.

***The Death of the Mask and the Birth of 'Man'***

The decline of the mask as theatrical convention corresponds with the Enlightenment. The migration of Harlequin to the English pantomime marks the end of the Trickster's archetypal duality: the earthy and the demonic, the bestial and the divine. The culturally specific moment of Arlecchino was over. The mask of Harlequin was conspicuous due to its anomalous nature, but the commedia dell'arte, despite its final death-throes in Paris and London, was over. John Rich died in 1761, and, whilst Harlequin continued, the anarchic trickster had all but disappeared. The practitioner Antonio Fava dates the final death of the commedia dell'arte shortly after Goldoni's reforms, citing the French Revolution (1789-99)

as the historical full stop (57).<sup>127</sup> In London, the mantle of Arlecchino was taken up by the non-masked<sup>128</sup> Joey the Clown in 1805. The figure of the Harlequin remained but he, like the mask, was a mere ghost of his former self; he had become void of numinosity, signified by a mask intended to conceal rather than to reveal.

Significantly, the death of the mask corresponds with what Foucault describes as the birth of post-Kantian ‘man’ (*Critique of Pure Reason* was published in 1781), characterised by the epistemic paradoxes of the analytic of finitude. It seems more than mere accident that the birth of ‘man’ as representation and the death of the mask should coincide in this way, and suggests that there is something about modern epistemic ‘man’ in particular that is incompatible with the mask. In order to identify what this may be, it is worth recalling the three paradoxes of Foucauldian ‘man’ as defined by the post-Kantian analytic of finitude (pp.78-81 above). They are the ‘Empirico-Transcendental Doublet,’ the ‘*Cogito* and the Unthought,’ and the ‘Retreat and Return of the Origin.’ Key aspects of the ‘retreat and return of the origin’ were explored in the previous chapter in relation to the tragic mask. It is my contention that there are key aspects of the *cogito* and the unthought in the mask of Arlecchino. For example, Foucault states:

Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the *episteme* without thought at the same time discovering, both in itself and outside itself, at its borders yet also in its very warp and woof, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught. (OT 326)

Furthermore, he claims that “modern thought is advancing towards that region where man’s Other must become the same as himself” (328). I would argue that Arlecchino, in some key respects, represents the unthought. The unconscious, of which both the Shadow and the unthought are a part, represents the ‘other’ in both Jung’s and Foucault’s respective schemata. Whilst they may not be directly conceptually equivalent, they are functionally compatible, and lead to the same conclusions. The primary difference lies in Foucault’s rejection of psychoanalytic theory and methodology on ideological grounds. However, both the Jungian Shadow and the Foucauldian unthought deal, at base level, with the paradoxical nature of the self-other ‘doublet’ in which the other is both within and without. The Mask, as

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<sup>127</sup> Fava does not divulge his sources and, as a practitioner rather than historian, we may speculate that the choice of the French Revolution is its suitably monumental status rather than any specific data.

<sup>128</sup> Grimaldi’s clown wore makeup, but no mask. The iconic red nose of the clown—the smallest of masks (Lecoq, *Body* 154)—was an aspect of the Counter-Auguste clown invented by Albert Fratellini in the 1920s (Peacock 19).

discussed in chapter 5, embodies this paradox—it facilitates an encounter with the other within the confines of the self, a “region where man’s Other [becomes] the same as himself”—a paradox now embodied by Foucauldian ‘man’ *as representation*. In this respect, ‘man’ is equivalent to the mask (not the Mask), rendering the object superfluous, and the human operator conceptually obsolete.

### ***The Trickster as Philosopher?***

It is conceivable that the epistemic problem that Foucault identifies is demonstrated by his own writing in that there is no space for human nature. Human nature, in the Foucauldian episteme, is buried under a mountain of theories, locked epistemologically into a system of representation rather than *being* or *becoming*. In the Jungian scheme, this would suggest an over-identification with the culturally constructed persona at the expense of somatic ‘reality.’ This raises some uncomfortable questions:

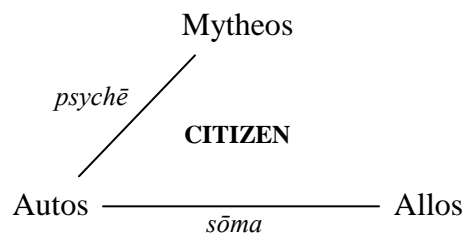
Can the place of the Trickster, as an aspect of the cultural shadow, be argued to have been usurped by the anthropologist and philosopher? On a somatic, essentialist level, it could be said to be the profoundest absurdity to imagine ourselves as barely existing other than as products of the language that speaks us. Is the tendency towards linguistic inversion and philosophic trickery reminiscent of the verbal acrobatics and strategies of the Trickster himself? Have we been fooled by contemporary discourse to the extent that we begin to doubt our own existence, to question our own being (Foucault, *OT* 322)? This may be considered to be the absolute opposite of what we might term common sense. Perhaps the intellectual challenge to go beyond the Cartesian *cogito* has led us to the absurdity of trying to undermine both the “I think” and the “I am.” If so, we should perhaps join with Foucault in the epistemic hope of the ‘end of man,’ a being so undermined by his own existential paradoxes that he becomes not an embodied, sentient being but a curiosity in his own jar. This would suggest that the Shadow aspect is no longer manifest as an external symbol, but is constellated as a complex in which the modern episteme—or collective consciousness—finds itself at a philosophical impasse.

As Foucault himself says, the ‘end of man’ will see the coming of the *Übermensch* (*OT* 322) and “the return of masks” (386). This, it is my contention, is because ‘man’ is a mask—over-identified with the persona, itself a Nietzschean protection-screen that we hardly even know is there (*BGE* §40). The Self is almost impenetrable beneath it. The modern episteme is itself a collective mask. More than this, I would suggest that it may be the mask of the Trickster.

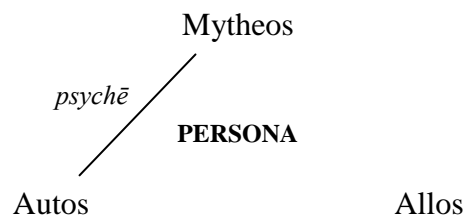
### *The Diagrammatic model*

If we recall the diagram from the previous chapter, in which we witnessed a rupture in the reflexive model of the self between the *allos* and *mytheos*, we can chart the further rupturing of selfhood encountered here.

We begin with the phenomenon of self-fashioning, which, I have argued was the result of an Inquisitorial imperative, in which the fundamental rupture between inner and outer occurred. Private belief became the focus not only of identity, but of one's right to live. Thus, the model of selfhood (below) identified at the birth of the tragic consciousness experienced a further rupture.



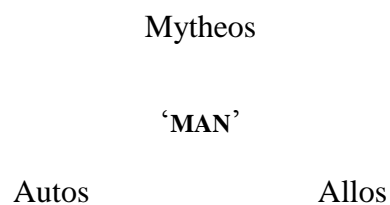
This further rupture occurred between self and other (whilst democracy was relatively short-lived as a means of governance, the rupture experienced at its birth would remain epistemic, and the self as legal unit remained a reality):



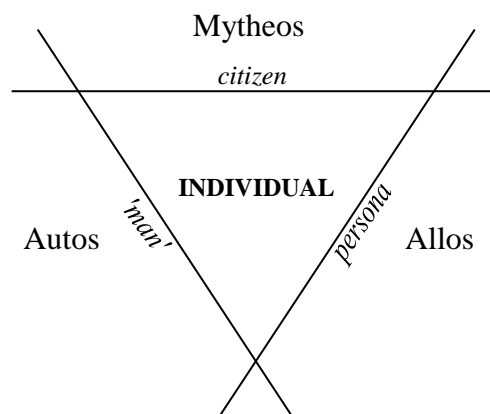
As the body-mind split, philosophically reified by the *cogito*, becomes entrenched, we see the body (*sōma*) rejected as the great demonic other, and instead become a persona, a necessarily duplicitous, or self-fashioned, façade, which represents a fundamental split between self and other as reflexive being. Along with the rejection of the body, the Platonic *ousia* effectively disintegrates. As such, the ground for self as representation, as per Foucault, was laid.

Finally, with the Enlightenment and the subsequent 'death of god,' the connection between *autos* and *mytheos* was severed, which I propose to be the third stage of the crisis of the triadic, reflexive self. This was the moment in which self-as-representation was fully

realised. As the connection with the *mytheos* was dissolved, so was the possibility of transcendence, and ‘man’ was left with his categorical self alone—itsself undermined by the rejection of the body. In other words, this was the moment when man became a representation, or mask. The self as persona(e) becomes ‘man’—that which is identified as Foucault as the modern, epistemic ‘man’ of the post-Kantian analytic of finitude (below). Historically, this occurs alongside the final death throes of the Inquisition: Napoleon abolished the Inquisition in 1808, though it was later reinstated in severely weakened form; the last execution took place in 1826, and the Spanish Inquisition was abolished permanently in 1834. The waning Holy Roman Church finally lost temporal power in 1870 (Bethencourt 416ff). It is also the time that sees the death of the mask.



Within this model, what formerly were reflexive connections became fundamental divisions, which is, more properly, expressed by the following:



In the first instance, the severance between the *polis* and the *mytheos* saw the birth of the *citizen*: man’s civic duties opened up a schism between the collective and the realm of the divine. Secondly, the rejection of the body as demonic acted as a barrier between self and other—the body becomes a dissimulative façade or *persona*, signifying a barrier rather than a means of connection between them. Finally, the personal connection with the *mytheos* was epistemologically severed by the death of god and the advent of post-Kantian ‘*man*,’ itself opening up a schism between the newborn ‘individual’ and the mythic realm of the divine—

‘man’ becomes a representation not only to others, but to himself. Thus we see the initial triadic model inverted, with the nascent *individual* characterised by his isolation: to himself he is ‘man,’ an alienated representation; to others he is his persona; and to the *mytheos* he is a good citizen (or indeed a bad citizen, but nonetheless, he is judged according to the vagaries of civic, temporal law and values). The self becomes empty and isolated, and the ‘individual’ is created. As John Jeffries Martin observes in *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*, the term *individualism* first appeared in French in 1821 (8-9).

This lack of reciprocity results in a fundamental schism: the psyche turns inwards resulting in the growth of interiority, rendering the self a façade, representation, or mask. An analysis of what has been lost in terms of external reflexivity can, I propose, be traced through the mask, if approached from the archetypal status of compensation:

1. The tragic mask appeared at the moment of the loss of *thiasos*, the impossible ‘retreat and return of the origin’ of universal being whose existence was ruptured by the legal ambiguity of language. This marks a fundamental instability of the (lost) *logos*, the search for which lies at the heart of the drive for meaning, or will to truth (and whose scientific endeavour continues to unearth fundamental conflict and ambiguity, such as the incompatibility of quantum and Newtonian reality). This is accompanied by the advent of the citizen.
2. Arlecchino and Arlequin, as manifestations of the Trickster cycle, represent an archetypal compensation of the crisis of the body (*sōma*) brought about by Christian dogma and its rejection of the satanic flesh. This tension is typified by his appetitive, wild-man aspect—a carnivalesque manifestation of the folklore devil, *Hellequin le Roi*—and his enchanting, “all-powerful wizard” aspect identified by Meyerhold, who argues that this paradoxical nature achieves unity in the mask (131). This crisis of the body lays the foundations for the philosophical Cartesian duality of the *Cogito*; the body-soul dualism in which the body becomes part of a satanic other. This is accompanied by the appearance of the phenomenon of self-fashioning, which I equate with the dissimulative persona.
3. The loss of the mask, which is the age of Harlequin (an age which heralds the mask’s functional transformation from symbol to sign—the real loss being of that of numinosity), heralds the completion of the empirico-transcendental doublet and the birth of ‘man’ (and the death of god) not as a sudden event or rupture, but as the culmination of a series of epistemic, existential ruptures. As Rabinow and Dreyfus summarise: “Modernity begins with the incredible and ultimately



unworkable idea of a being who is sovereign precisely by virtue of being enslaved, a being whose finitude allows him to take the place of god” (30). This is a stage in which the *psychē*—as connection with *mytheos*—is replaced by individual ‘man.’ In these terms, my own formulation of the soul is directly at odds with Nietzsche’s (and Foucault’s); for Nietzsche, the soul is a symptom of the rupture between instinct and self. For me, it is the connection between the self and the *mytheos*.

In this context, ‘man’ becomes a mask in a less affective way than persona: the persona at least is an archetypal aspect of the self; ‘man’ leaves the realm of the archetypal and becomes instead part of a system of signification—a self less numinous. The descent from *thiasos* to ‘man’ is therefore a gradual loss of the numinosity of the self. Conversely, we see in the mask more than just a theatrical device, we see a technology of the self, the need to protect and to affect transformations upon the self at specific moments of historical, epistemic crisis. The mask, in other words, has implications far beyond the stage. The death of various mask forms suggests not the death of mask *per se*, but an epistemic shift which renders a particular mask no longer culturally relevant except as a nostalgic or historical curiosity. Masks, in other words, live in their specific ages and have a specific cultural function that is identifiable through a philosophical approach. With this in mind, it is my argument that we ought to see the theatrical mask not as curiosity for the purposes of entertainment alone, but to understand that it harbours within it the spirit of the age, and the essence of the potential power of theatre—the power to unite and to liberate in a way that the individual performer cannot.

### ***The Rebirth of the Mask***

The post-1900, post-Nietzschean world of modernism saw a renewed interest in the mask. Nietzsche had recognised the necessity of the *mytheos*, the loss of which—through the death of god—created a nihilistic gap. The rejection of realism seen in almost all art forms found an ideal primitive, theatrical “technology” in the mask. Furthermore, if the dying embers of the Enlightenment still illuminated late nineteenth century thinking, they were further dimmed by primal fears sparked by Darwin and regression fears, and encounters with the ‘dark’ continent. Two horrific World Wars reminded us of our Dionysian, bestial nature, of the brutality beneath the veneer of civilisation. Perhaps as much an expression of post-war, nostalgic revivalism as of post-Nietzschean modernity, one of the resurrected ‘masks’ is that of Arlecchino; the newly designed masks of Sartori once again appear to embody something of the spirit of the demonic *zanni*. However, modern theatre conventions and the relatively

“specialist” nature of modern commedia suggests that popular culture still rejects the mask. Or perhaps it rejects masks of the past—commedia is, it may be argued, a dead form, a revivalist myth with which Strehler *et al* attempted to reconnect: Foucault’s heralded “return of the mask” may well be on the horizon, but as yet it remains there, signalling an imminent return, waiting for more favourable conditions. Moreover, the “return” of masks, I contend, does not suggest revivalism, the reinvention of particular historical masks, but requires a new form that speaks to the spirit and anxieties of *this* age.

To summarise, it seems that the interiorisation of selfhood became so extreme that the exterior became pure façade, a façade so impenetrable that the self became isolated and lost in an epistemic melange of untenable paradoxes, cut off from meaning and companionship, denied mythic identification, and stranded in the nihilism of an absurd and meaningless universe whose only equivalence was the cold indifference of science and mathematical formulae; a façade so impenetrable that a new psychoanalytic science would be needed in order to try to dissect it. Could the mask, in its essential rather than dissimulative form, be used as a means of bypassing it, of helping us to rediscover what lies behind the construct, of accessing our own shared humanity beneath the isolating social construct of individuality and difference? The mask, true to its paradoxical nature, may offer a remedy to self-alienation.

## CHAPTER 8: THE NEUTRAL MASK

This chapter will examine the neutral mask, focusing on the theories and practices of Jacques Lecoq. The intention is to examine the neutral mask in the light of the conclusions reached in the previous chapters in order to examine the relative philosophical and practical issues. The chapter will be split into two sections. Part 1 will look at the neutral mask as an object, questioning the aesthetics of neutrality and asking whether a truly ‘neutral’ mask can exist. I will then proceed to look at the neutral mask in practice within the specific context of Jacques Lecoq’s actor training, identifying some of the key exercises. Part 2 will widen the discussion by looking at the philosophical context and implications of the neutral mask, exploring issues of self and other, neutrality and emptiness, the question of gender, and the mask’s relationship with time. I will conclude once more by exploring ways in which the practical and philosophical issues encountered reflect the phenomenon of modern selfhood.

## PART 1: THE NEUTRAL MASK: THE AESTHETIC AND PRACTICAL CONTEXT

The *masque neutre* was developed by Lecoq as an actor training tool, following on from the tradition of Copeau’s *masque noble* (pp.119-22 above). There are, of course, important differences and areas of departure between the two. John Wright tells us that Lecoq was seeking to explore movement as the creative root of theatre, whereas Copeau was looking more towards the complete renovation of the theatre of his day, and to investigate the very essence of acting. Lecoq is focused more on devising new theatre forms than the realisation of text. As such, whilst Copeau was undeniably a great influence on Lecoq, Wright suggests that his creative partnership with Amleto Sartori was perhaps the greatest influence (Chamberlain and Yarrow 74). The fact that it was Lecoq who introduced Sartori to Strehler (Lecoq was teaching at Strehler’s Piccolo theatre at the time, and had already worked with Strehler on commedia masks), led Lecoq to the ironic comment “Commedia was a major French export” (*ibid.*). As a mask practitioner and co-founder of Trestle Theatre Company, it is perhaps no great surprise that Wright should consider the influence of the great mask-maker as more significant than that of Copeau. Nevertheless, whichever was the greater influence, Wright’s claim highlights the danger of considering Lecoq’s explorations as a mere continuance of Copeau’s (via Dasté). In order to avoid this trap, as well as identifying Copeau’s *masque noble* as a forerunner, I will examine the object designed by Sartori in detail, focusing on the object, and then the practical exercises that accompany it.

***The Aesthetics of Neutrality: the Problem of Design, Gender and Ethnicity***

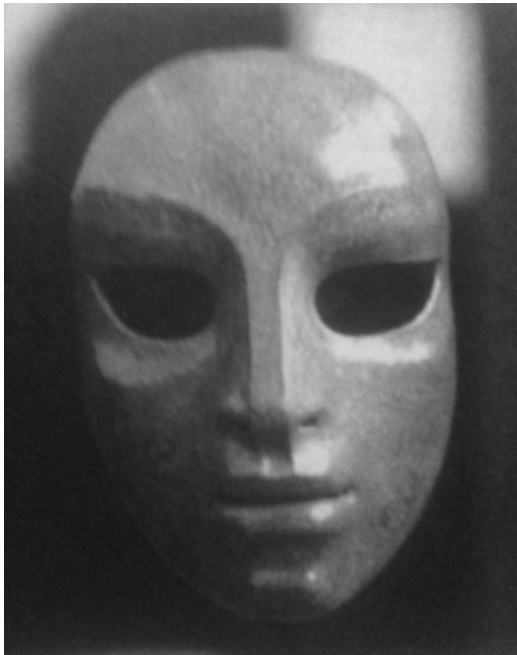


Figure 18: Photograph of the neutral mask created by Amleto Sartori for Jacques Lecoq.

In examining Lecoq's neutral mask as object, it immediately becomes obvious that the concept of neutrality is itself somewhat problematic. The aesthetics of neutrality are interesting, raising questions of the design, gender and ethnicity of the mask, which are distinct questions to those encountered in chapter 6 in relation to the 'neutrality' of the tragic mask. The neutral mask conceived by Lecoq was designed and constructed by himself and Amleto Sartori, which were developed from the 'noble' masks used by his teacher, Jean Dasté, and his teacher before him, Jacques Copeau. Whilst inspiration was taken from the Japanese Noh mask, particularly the young girl mask of *Ko omote* (Chamberlain and Yarrow 76),

it remains a culturally inescapable fact that the 'neutral' mask is the creation of white European males; the interpretation of neutrality is located firmly within a particular ethnographic, gender-specific tradition. It is also true that mask practice, theatrical or ritual, is historically an almost exclusively male tradition, regardless of its ethnicity. One has to wonder, for example, how a neutral mask conceived and designed by a black African woman would compare to that of Lecoq and Sartori. Furthermore, the noble mask of Copeau and Dasté which informed Lecoq's neutral mask "had something Japanese about it" (Lecoq, *Body* 38). As David Wiles observes, the neutral mask of Lecoq "is in many respects a 1950s interpretation of a classical face, owing something to Matisse and Picasso. [...] The continuous curve joining nose to brow creates a Grecian profile, and the half open mouth is classical in concept, though the full lips echo the Gallic features of Lecoq himself" (*Mask* 69). The colour of the mask tends to be a rich, organic brown, perhaps to complement the European features in an attempt to achieve a sort of racial neutrality; a neutral mask with the pale skin of a northern European would not be so ethnically neutral.

The issue of gender is another significant factor. Lecoq's neutral masks have a male and female version (*Movement* 105). Lecoq tells us:

There are those who would like to see it as neither man nor woman. They have to be sent back to physical observation: men and women are not identical. [...] The idea

that everyone is alike is both true and totally false. Universality is not the same as uniformity. (*Body* 40)

Eldredge and Huston, in “Actor Training in the Neutral Mask,” tell us that neutral masks are generally designed in pairs, male and female, because “male and female bodies have different centers of gravity, [so] the masks that will be carried by them must also be different.” (142). There tends to be a difference in size between the male and the female neutral mask. However, the neutral mask does not aim at explicit gender; it does not aim at an ideal masculinity or femininity, but in its quest for neutrality it inevitably veers instead towards androgyny. As such, there is the presumption of an underlying common denominator of human nature that precedes gender, but which is manifest in an inescapably gender-specific way on the physical level, mirroring the way archetypal images are manifest in culturally specific ways. Consequently, the fact that there are differences means that a distinction must be drawn between neutrality and homogeneity, or in Lecoq’s words, universality and uniformity. The mask does not aim to force a physical uniformity on each of its wearers; it allows differences whilst at the same time emphasising universals.

With regards to the design of the mask, the neutral mask is not an attempt at a homogenised face. In fact, “a neutral mask should not adhere closely to the face” (Lecoq, *Body* 38); there must be a physical distance between it and the face as well as an aesthetic one. A realistic face would be too close to the sort of psychologism that the mask aims to bypass: a ‘neutral’ expression on a real human face still provokes psychological reading. The neutrality of the tragic mask, illustrated by the cinematic explorations of Kuleshov (p.141 above) differs from that of the neutral mask in this important respect. The neutral mask, for Lecoq, must be very clearly a mask; it does (or should) not function as a screen onto which the observer projects their own emotions—it is not intended for public performance. This raises another problem; the lack of adherence to the human face means that the mask must be very evidently designed. Just as the Lecoq-Sartori mask has echoes of Lecoq’s own features, so all neutral masks must contain something of their designer-maker. In fact, it can be claimed that the neutral mask does not exist except as in idea, of which Lecoq’s *masque neutre* is merely a form, albeit the most well-known. As Eldredge and Huston observe:

The personality of the maskmaker threatens the neutrality of the mask. One must devote many trials and experiments to the research of neutrality. [Richard] Hayes-Marshall has redesigned his neutral masks seven times. “There is no such thing as a neutral mask,” he says, “it has to be designed by somebody.” (142)

The problem of neutrality, it seems, is that it is relative, not absolute. Total neutrality would seem to be impossible; any attempt would always be culturally and, just as importantly, historically located.

### ***The Mask in Action***

Lecoq says that the neutral mask “opens up the actor to the space around him. It puts him in a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive” (*Body* 38). He tells us:

The neutral mask, which had originally allowed you to feel hidden, now exposes you. The mask that you wear in everyday life is gone, devoid of any purpose. [...] The neutral mask is a sort of common denominator for both men and women (there is a male mask, and also a different corresponding female one). It unites us as living things and we can all see ourselves in it. (*Movement* 105)

The philosophical implications of this will be examined in part 2. For now it is important to identify some of the key neutral mask exercises Lecoq devised in order to explore this state of universal humanity. Of the various exercises developed at the *Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*, I will identify three of the most significant.

### **The Awakening**

*In a state of repose, lying on the ground, I ask the students to ‘wake up for the first time’. Once the mask is awake, what can it do? How can it move? (Lecoq, Body 40)*

Lecoq details how exploring their environment is more important than entering into a dialogue with the body: “we aren’t dealing with ethnology” (*ibid.*). The Mask’s lack of history means that everything that happens to the Mask does so for the first time.

This awakening is a sort of rite of passage, an introduction into the world of the Mask which is radically different to the world of the everyday self. The self emerges from this rite of passage opened up to the possibilities of the mask. The associations with birth are clear; the Mask must first awaken into the world: the first archetypal step upon the journey of life is birth, indeed it is perhaps the only experience we may say for absolute certain that everyone on the planet has in common.

### **The Farewell**

*A very dear friend goes on board a boat for a long journey to the other side of the world. The assumption is that you will never see him again. As the boat is leaving, you rush onto the jetty at the mouth of the harbour in order to wave him a last farewell. (41)*

Again, this exercise is aimed at achieving a universal awareness, one that has been, if not experienced directly, at the very least potentially experienced vicariously or imaginatively by all. The purpose of this is to find the truth of the goodbye, the pure movement that encapsulates the loss of a ‘second self.’ “I am part of someone else, we have the same body, a body shared by two people” (*ibid.*), highlighting the unity of the two. This exercise stresses the shared nature of humanity, the Aristotelian notion of others as *heteroi autoi* (pp.26, 37-38 above), which further opens up the actor to the possibilities of the neutral mask as a universalising tool.

### **The Fundamental Journey**

*At daybreak you emerge from the sea; in the distance you can see a forest and you set out towards it. You cross a sandy beach and then you enter the forest. You move through trees and vegetation which grow every more densely as you search for a way out. Suddenly, without warning, you come out of the forest and find yourself facing a mountain. You ‘absorb’ the image of the mountain, then you begin to climb, from the first gentle slopes to the rocks and the vertical cliff face which tests your climbing skills. Once you reach the summit, a vast panorama opens up: a river runs through a valley and then there is a plain and finally, in the distance, a desert. You come down the mountain, cross the stream, walk through the plain, then into the desert, and finally the sun sets. (42)*

This exercise is followed by a repeat of the journey, but in extreme weather conditions. Lecoq tells us that “When I walk through the forest, I *am* the forest. At the summit of the mountain [...] I myself am the mountain” (42). Lecoq’s associations are with nature, not with mythology,<sup>129</sup> but the trope of the journey is nonetheless an archetypal mythical motif, comparable to the rite of passage, complete with obstacles and the encounter with a strange new world and fantastic forces. The journey is also reminiscent of the metaphorical ‘journey of life,’ beginning with the first unsteady steps from an aquatic realm, through various struggles, until finally coming to rest at sunset. Within this journey, the Mask *becomes* the landscape it encounters rather than offers resistance (the neutral Mask does not resist), which demands two key elements: the first is the emptying of the ego by means of the acceptance and appropriation of the other, in this case in the form of Nature, into the self-environment system (or *Dasein*) of the Mask; the second is that, in the encounter, when one *becomes* the

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<sup>129</sup> For an account of a mythical as opposed to natural approach to the neutral mask, see Ashley Wain’s account of Australian mask teacher David Latham in “Myth, Archetype and the Neutral Mask.”

Mask, hence the tree, the mountain, the landscape, etc., the self is fundamentally transformed into the other. There is no persona, no ego, just an emptiness that is filled with the poetic potential of its environment. This is physically manifest by the way that the environment shapes the body and defines its movements. The body becomes the poetic expression of the imagined environment.

Other exercises include identification and physicalisation of natural elements, such as the sea, the wind, trees, or fire. He moves onto colours of the rainbow, and then to music, poetry and paintings, opening up the actor to what he calls “the universal poetic awareness,” which is “the essence of life” (47). In these exercises, once again the body absorbs and expresses its poetic environment. Lecoq develops this with music, whereby the body not only expresses the music and lets it flow through it, but learns to play with the music, understands if the music is pushing or pulling it or if it is pushing or pulling the music. The aim is to develop “a state of mutual belonging, [...] to create a relationship of play” (53). This encourages a playful relationship based upon a sympathetic and symbiotic relationship with the environment, in which the distinction between the self and other dissolves.

The neutral mask takes the actor on a journey of self-discovery, a journey in which change is evident; that journey is, vitally, by means of negation of the ego (or more properly, the persona). Moreover, it is a means of training the body, of awakening it to itself, and of imprinting it with an aesthetic means of theatrical expression. The phenomenon of neuroplasticity again comes to mind when Lecoq speaks of “the traces that remain inscribed in each actor, circuits laid down in the body” (46), which, in a distinct and identifiable way, demonstrates that the self, as body, has indeed changed. On this level, Lecoq’s concluding—and characteristically poetic—statement is not a piece of empty or romanticised rhetoric, but a physical reality: “As actors they will not retain these masks. They will venture out on their own creative paths, but the masks will have left their marks and their spirit” (163).

### ***Taking off the Mask***

Training in the neutral mask allows the actor to step into a poetic world in which the common denominators of human nature are expressed, in which aspects of universal human nature is encountered. The return from this world—which is no less real for its being imagined—brings back into the mundane world of the studio a changed being, a being with access to the universal.

When the actor takes off the mask, if he has worn it well, his face is relaxed. I hardly need to watch what he does; it is enough to observe his face to know if he wore it



truthfully. The mask will have drawn something from him, divesting him of artifice. His face will be beautiful, free. Once he has achieved this freedom, the mask can be removed with no fear of falling back on artificial gestures. The neutral mask, in the end, un.masks. (39)

The self is visibly changed. This visible change when having removed the mask is in marked contrast to the “clean psychological break” of the tragic mask as related by Greg Hicks, and to the self-annihilation of the commedia mask as related by Dario Fo (p.176 above). This time, rather than discarding entirely, or fusing completely, a sort of peace is achieved through an encounter with the universal poetic awareness, the essence of balance. The mask as object is removed with ease, but something essential has been drawn out. An interesting factor here is that both the commedia mask and Lecoq’s *masque neutre* are made of leather, yet the latter does not function as a second skin. The practical reason could well be that the neutral mask constructed in such a way as to not come into direct contact with the skin; a certain distance between the mask and the face must be kept (Lecoq, *Body* 38). This differs from the close-fitting commedia mask in which the two skins are in direct contact. Furthermore, the neutral mask is intended to cover the face, whereas the half-mask fuses with the face to form a single entity.

## PART 2: THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

Whilst masking of the face was initially a strategy to ‘loosen up’ the performer, its benefits went far beyond the loss of inhibitions. Practitioners of the neutral mask identify within the Mask an almost mythical world in which the self and other merge into a single entity—a being of universal poetic awareness, a creative fusion of self and environment in which time itself may operate on a different level (Lecoq, *Body* 39). “It allows him to watch, to hear, to feel, to touch elementary things with the freshness of beginnings” (38). This has parallels with a sort of trance or possession-like state, which Dasté describes as the “discovery of a mysterious world” (Copeau 237). If we recall Foucault’s *Cogito* and the Unthought in which the fundamental paradox lies in the blurring of self and other, which approaches a region in which “man’s Other must become the same as himself,” what we see in the neutral mask is that very region in which self and other unite.

However, whilst the neutral mask is designed for balance and calm, it should also be noted that this is not universally the case the first time it is encountered. In my own explorations with students, I have witnessed some quite extreme reactions to the mask,

occasionally to the extent of a refusal to put it on. Some students report initially negative feelings of fear and aggression, or relate a sense of being “taken over” by something (in contrast to those who report a sense of liberation). As Lecoq acknowledges, the mask can produce some very intense reactions; “some people feel they are suffocating and cannot bear it on their face; others (rarer cases) tear it off” (39). This initially negative reaction is something that should not be ignored, or dismissed as an initial balking at the claustrophobic nature of having something on the face. The neutral mask, which is traditionally kept slightly away from direct contact with the face by small pieces of sponge (38) does very little to restrict breathing or vision. Furthermore, those who find the act of donning a mask distressing are often comfortable with putting other things on the face, including blindfolds. There must therefore be something about the initial encounter with the mask that is of significance enough to produce such extreme reactions. Viewed from a Jungian perspective, I would suggest that these derive from the connotations of death inherent in the mask—in this case, the death of the persona, the suffocating of the self, the fear of emptiness or the unknown, and the potential encounter with the Shadow and the “unprecedented uncertainty” that lies beyond, which is the first port of call in any journey of Self-discovery (p.70 above). This is comparable with Sue Jennings’s use of the mask in Drama therapy as a means of confronting the “self that is dangerous” (*ibid.*). This leads back to the archetypal journey, or rite of passage, which is, as we have seen, a key aspect of Lecoq’s training.

### ***Neutrality and Emptiness***

Work with the neutral mask seeks to reconnect us with our impulses, to discover their poetry in the body and to train the body in accordance with “the universal poetic awareness.” The key to allowing the clear flow of impulse is neutrality, for it is in neutrality that we may encounter emptiness. Emptiness is not the same as nothing, which does not exist. Even in space, which we consider to be a vacuum (yet Nature famously abhors), ‘nothing’ is in fact a vast space fizzing with photons, neutrinos, and matter and antimatter popping in and out of existence.<sup>130</sup> Emptiness, in this context, is the precondition of being, it exists as potential rather than some inert and dead lack of being. It is in this respect that we see a key difference between the neutrality of the *mask neutre* and the tragic mask: the eyes of the neutral mask are empty, waiting to be filled with whatever its environment brings to it. The eyes of the

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<sup>130</sup> See Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, for an account of how particles and antiparticles momentarily pop into existence before instantly annihilating each other, which form the basis for his theory of what became known as ‘Hawking radiation’ emitted by black holes.

tragic mask, which is replete with its own history, are painted in, and as such it brings its own story along with its gaze.

For Copeau, neutrality was the starting point of both theatre and actor (Eldredge & Huston 140). This neutrality is equivalent to readiness, the dynamic emptiness of pure potential. Copeau describes it thus: “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” (140). The neutral mask’s function is to help the actor to achieve that state, not to rid the actor of all identity. Lecoq describes the experience of the neutral mask as follows:

You take on the neutral mask as you might take on a character, with the difference that here there is no character, only neutral generic being. A character experiences conflict, has a history, a past, a context, passions. On the contrary, a neutral mask puts the actor in a state of perfect balance and economy of movement. Its moves have a truthfulness, its gestures and actions are economical. (*Body* 38)

The fact that Lecoq’s first emphasis is on the environment is significant. Lecoq is one of the few Western practitioners who place the emphasis on the actor *in the space*, focusing on the exterior environment rather than the internal psyche, suggesting a phenomenological understanding of the self comparable with Heidegger’s *Dasein*. The mask demands externality. The performer automatically exists as part of the space, not separate from it, and so the ‘exo-spection’ is as profound and meaningful as any introspective approach. The neutral mask, “when placed on the face, should enable one to experience the state of neutrality prior to action, a state of receptiveness to everything around us, with no inner conflict” (*Body* 36). It covers, hence eradicates, the individual persona; it represents a sort of death of self. The purpose is to replace the ego with emptiness. Whilst Lecoq does not speak of the neutral mask in explicitly philosophical terms, and in fact expressly rejects the “mystic or philosophic dimension” (*Body* 40), his description of the neutral mask is nonetheless remarkable for its echo of the Zen state of *mushin*, or ‘no-mindedness,’ which “is a prerequisite for total concentration in the arts like acting and swordsmanship” (Wiles *Mask* 165).

The creative self is an empty self, or rather one that is filled with pregnant emptiness. The motif of self-negation as inherent in the process of self-realisation is significant, and it suggests that the self of everyday life, rather than the realised Self, is an experience of distractions, the biggest of which is the ego (in its contemporary negative sense of self-conceit, which is more properly akin to the Jungian persona). The creative state must be a

state in which the persona, with all its distractions, is bypassed in order to allow in the emptiness. In this respect, the ritual aspect of mask and possession has much in common with the creative state of the neutral mask: both are states in which the self becomes a receptacle or channel through which archetypes and ideas may flow.

If we recall Plutarch and the notion of the narrative self (p.27 above), the neutral mask is the erasure of the narrative self, which is written into the body and its movement. It seeks to help distinguish between the pure somatic self and the narratively inscribed self and its attitudes by essentialising movement through the erasure of discourse.

### ***The Mask and Universality***

As Etienne Decroux notes, the mask, rather than hiding, reveals the hidden, essential personality of the wearer (Copeau 141); as Lecoq celebrates, the “neutral mask puts one in touch with what belongs to everyone” (*Body* 41). The ‘white noise’ of arbitrary and unnecessary movement is what the mask is meant to eliminate, and to place the performer into a position of readiness, to essentialise and purify movement into its most basic and universal form.

This basis of universality which underlies Lecoq’s explorations into the neutral mask is one that presumes such a thing as human nature. Moreover, he locates this universality in the knowing, poetic body. This corresponds with Jung’s idea of archetypes as biological images of instincts, as empty potential models of specific behaviour patterns manifest as symbols, often personified. Both presume an inner world of universal humanity expressed through behaviour patterns, behaviours that are activated by particular archetypal (emotional or environmental) situations. This infers a level of transcendental experience that is common to all, ostensibly externally given, programmed within us, perhaps written into our DNA. The lived experience of the body transcends the individual body and is constituted, at least in part, by that which transcends, which is the universal. The bypassing of the individual persona and the going beyond the individual ego paradoxically locates the empirical within the transcendental. That such an encounter with the universal is facilitated by the mask has significant philosophical implications in the Foucauldian schema: it represents the empirico-transcendental doublet. The mask allows us to be both I and not-I, both self and other, both subject and object simultaneously without the existential crisis of the analytic of finitude. The return to the body and the encounter with the universal aspect of humanity through reconnection with our impulses rather than our analytical faculties offers the experience of unity. In other words, the existential gulf is bridged, the untenable paradox phenomenally

resolved. The mask operates as the ‘third thing,’ the symbol that allows the union of opposites.

### ***The Mask and Gender***

The physical difference between the male and the female mask allows for the differences in impulses the performer receives in a specifically gendered body, but in a way that precedes language. As Ralph Yarrow observes, this is reminiscent of Luce Irigaray’s *Ce sexe qui n’est pas un* (*This sex which is not [yet] one*) (Chamberlain and Yarrow 111). In other words, viewed from this perspective, the neutral mask offers the possibility of Irigaray’s sex which is not yet one, or more specifically, which is not yet linguistically codified. It is the self gendered physically in terms of somatic impulses, but that has not yet entered into the narrative of gender roles; it inhabits a world in which such concepts as mother and father, breadwinner and homemaker are not defined, a world in which cultural codes of masculinity and femininity are not imposed. In Jungian terms, I suggest this would tend towards the syzygy (p.71 above), to which I will return below.

Another important feature this highlights is the role of language in Lacanian discourse. For Lacan: “There isn’t the slightest prediscursive reality, for the very fine reason that what constitutes a collectivity—what I called men, women, and children—means nothing qua prediscursive reality. Men, women, and children are but signifiers” (*Seminars XX*, 33). Likewise for Foucault, the self is the construct of culturally determined discourse. The neutral mask runs entirely contrary to this position; as an ideal, it seeks to exist outside of this discourse as a means of discovering not only the sex which is not yet one, but the prediscursive self that is not yet linguistically constructed. In Jungian terms, this constructed, discursive self would be called the persona, highlighting an important complementarity between Lecoq’s and Jung’s purview. We encounter the primacy of image and impulse over language. The neutral mask seeks to explicitly bypass the persona and access a deeper self that is *physically* unique and gendered, but not yet *culturally* or discursively inscribed by these factors.

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. (Lecoq, qtd by John Wright in Chamberlain and Yarrow 78)

It is one in which both male and female bodies are experienced and (re)presented differently, but in which the cultural (or linguistic) boundaries are eroded. As John Wright observes, the

neutral mask seeks to reveal the individual with all our personal traits, strains and conflicts removed; I would suggest that one may add to this the cultural impositions of gender roles. Lecoq states that the neutral mask occupies “a middle position between two extremes” (Chamberlain and Yarrow 75)—culturally and linguistically inscribed gender roles may be seen as two of these extremes.

### *The Mask in Time*

Lecoq claims “Beneath every mask [...] there is a neutral mask” (Lecoq, *Body* 38). The neutral mask has no character, no story, no attitudes, no history or future; it exists only in the moment, guided by impulse alone. “It is the basic mask that drives our understanding of all the other masks. It is through the neutral mask that we are able to wear other masks. It has no particular expression or characteristic, it doesn’t laugh or cry, nor is it sad or happy” (*Movement* 105). This mask, whilst chronologically completing this study of the western theatrical mask, in many ways precedes the other two. This exemplifies the fact that the neutral mask—the mask which resides beneath every mask—has a unique relationship with time that is radically different from our own every day, linear experience.

This becomes more apparent when we consider the phenomenal aspect of familiarity with the neutral mask: an actor who trains in the mask inevitably reacts differently later in the process than in the first encounter. This highlights another potential paradox in that the neutral mask (and the neutral state aimed at) has no *history*, yet familiarity with this state is what allows the actor to develop “the universal poetic awareness.” Thus we see the neutral mask which exists outside of linear time, in a perpetual present void of history or future, coexisting with the actor, who has both a history and future *with the mask*. The mask has no origin or history, it *is* an origin, and will always be an origin, an origin that is perpetually present, yet paradoxically exists historically in the actor, and whose origin remains perpetually in the future. It allows the actor “to touch elementary things with the freshness of beginnings” (38). A paradoxical aspect of Lecoq’s *masque neutre*’s lack of history is the fact that the object itself is clearly historically and, importantly, aesthetically located (see p.220 above) in the 1950s. The fact that it continues to be used today, though the Sartori-Lecoq design is only one of many, suggests that the neutral mask as an ideal continues to be relevant and useful today, though our concept of neutrality has historically shifted. Once again, this confronts us with the suggestion that the neutral mask is a culturally and historically *relative* ideal rather than an achievable phenomenon. The paradox of historically located timelessness is to be found in the historical object of the *masque neutre*.

Once again we are reminded of Foucault's analytic of finitude, this time the third doublet of the 'retreat and return of the origin.' To recall, the crisis of Foucauldian 'man' is that he "belong[s] to a time that has neither the same standards of measurement nor the same foundations as him" (*OT* 330.). It highlights the impossibility of temporal equivalence: man cannot be contemporaneous with himself (332). The "original in man" is that which "introduces into his experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master; it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the centre of the duration of things" (331, cited above). Again the neutral mask exemplifies this paradox, but in a harmonious balance rather than in an existential crisis. The mask once more functions as the 'third thing' through which a union of opposites is possible—a third thing in the Jungian sense of being external rather than the internal, Nietzschean sense. The mask as external object produces balance, whereas the internality of the psychological 'mask' or persona produces conflict.

## CONCLUSION

### *The Neutral Mask and the Hero Archetype*

Copeau's noble mask was conceptually descended from the ideal nobility of the tragic hero, and its passage to Lecoq, through Dasté, is clear. Lecoq himself avoided mysticism and philosophy, though it is possible to trace qualities of the tragic hero from Copeau's *masque noble* directly into the *masque neutre* of Lecoq. I will here highlight some interesting parallels between the neutral mask and its related exercises and the key features of the hero archetype in order to illustrate the potential power of the mask and to suggest a Jungian analysis of the process. However, before pursuing this, a distinction between the 'heroes' of Greek tragedy and the hero archetype I will argue is encountered in the neutral mask must be made.

Firstly, the concept of the tragic hero is in many ways something of a misnomer, and does not seem to fit with the Jungian model (described below). In fact, whilst we speak of the "tragic hero" as a matter of course, the word *herōs* does not appear anywhere in the extant tragedies<sup>131</sup> to refer to the protagonist, whereas the word *tyrannos*, or one of its cognates,

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<sup>131</sup> The word perhaps most often translated as "hero" is *anēr* (Aeschylus' *Persians* 647; Sophocles' *Ajax* 955 and *Philoctetes* 726; and Euripides' *Heracles* 1416). However, *anēr* translates, in its most heroic interpretation, more like "courageous man" or "a man in the prime of his life," not "hero" in the Homeric sense.

appears over 170 times (Seaford, “From Ritual to Drama, 393). It would, Seaford argues, be more proper to speak of the tragic tyrant than the tragic hero, if we follow more direct translation.<sup>132</sup> Secondly, the neutral mask is almost diametrically opposed to the mask of the tragic tyrant in many fundamental respects, of which I will highlight eight: 1) the neutral mask is not intended for public performance, 2) the neutral mask is not sacred, 3) it resists nothing, 4) it does not exert or impose its will, 5) it is silent, 6) it does not have a (hi)story, 7) it does not represent a ‘character,’ and 8) there can be no conflict in the neutral mask. What the two do have in common is status, or power. The neutral mask, for Lecoq pupil John Wright, is the most powerful of all masks, and the state of neutrality is the most powerful of all states (“School for Masks,” cf. *Why is that so Funny* 108). However, here again there are important differences: the tragic ‘hero’ must undergo a loss or transformation of his or her power, which is illusory; conversely, there is no hubris in the neutral mask. A tragic ‘hero’ could not, I suggest, be played in a neutral mask. It is with this important distinction in mind that I will proceed to explore the parallels between the neutral mask and the archetype of the Jungian hero.

The hero archetype is an archetype of the Self, a Self who has overcome, or is overcoming, his own undifferentiated unconscious (Jung, *Collected Papers* 435-6). This overcoming may take the form of a confrontation with a monster and/or a quest or journey from which the Hero must return triumphantly (*CW12* 333-39). However, the hero is also associated with sacrificial death, from which he may or may not resurrect. The self-sacrifice of the Hero is his ultimate tragedy. It is possible to draw direct comparisons between Jungian analysis and Lecoq’s practice, though Lecoq himself did not speak in Jungian terms, and the language I will use is a Jungian interpretation Lecoq’s Fundamental Journey. This journey is indeed fundamental: the initial emergence from the undifferentiated consciousness of the sea, the first unsteady footsteps on the beach, the struggles to overcome various terrains—the shadowy forest and the ascent of the mountain, which precedes the descent to the plain and the final rest in the desert sunset.<sup>133</sup> This journey is a rite of passage. The journey of self-discovery in the neutral mask is a process by which one casts aside the self (as persona) and emerges with the serene nobility of the selfless Hero, a process by which one confronts aspects of the unconscious self in the hope of emerging victoriously, fundamentally changed,

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<sup>132</sup> Tyrant meant specifically one who had seized power, and was not the *exclusively* negative or judgemental word it is today. For the difficulties of finding an adequate translation, see Maurice Pope’s “Addressing Oedipus.”

<sup>133</sup> Compare Jungian archetypal theorist, Joseph Campbell’s theory of the ‘monomyth’ which represents the fundamental archetypal journey of the Hero (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p.30), and which bears striking resemblance to Lecoq’s formulation.



and more in tune with the universal poetics of life. The Hero rejects the self-conceit of the persona and opens himself up in order to confront and master the unconscious. Lecoq's journey begins with an emergence from the sea, which I suggest represents unconscious, primordial birth, and which is a common motif of the Hero's plight (Jung, *Papers* 436). The whole journey is akin to the process of individuation, which represents not just self-discovery, but importantly, self-mastery. This process involves a symbolic death of the old, non-individuated self and the birth of a new self. Jung explains:

And because individuation is an heroic and often tragic task, the most difficult of all, it involves suffering, a passion of the ego: the ordinary, empirical man we once were is burdened with the fate of losing himself in a greater dimension and being robbed of his fancied freedom of will. He suffers, so to speak, from the violence done to him by the self. (*CW11* ¶233)

The Jungian process of individuation can be painful and frightening. It is here that I suggest that the mask operates on its most protective level, protecting the self from the violence done to it by itself.

The Hero, more specifically, represents the personified libido in the Jungian sense of a psychic energy or drive. In Nietzschean terms, this equates with the will to power which, in this context, is a will to self-mastery. The hero archetype is typically activated when the self has a need to overcome an obstacle, be it practical or emotional; it symbolises the psychic energy and drive to overcome and master. As such, I contend, using Jung's rather than Lecoq's terminology, Lecoq's use of the neutral mask to overcome the persona (as the conceit of the ego) in order to confront a more universal, shared humanity, is entirely logical. The elements of the collective unconscious that are confronted are thus mastered and brought into the conscious realm of the ego-consciousness under the protective symbol of the serene mask.

In short, the neutral mask bypasses the persona and facilitates an encounter with elements of the collective unconscious. It provides the symbolic 'third thing' through which a union of opposites in a creative, dynamic tension may occur. The relative androgyny of the neutral mask exemplifies the ideal of the archetypal syzygy, a union of contrasexual types reminiscent of the "superhuman" ideal of the mother before the infant became aware of gender differences (*CW9a* ¶138); the neutral mask occupies "a middle position between two extremes" (Lecoq, qtd. in Chamberlain and Yarrow 75). The androgynous, bisexual, or perhaps *pre*-sexual, syzygy represents a harmonious union of opposites *par excellence*: this is not to say that differences are absent, but that commonality and complementarity precede

division (universality is not the same as uniformity). To recall Antonio Venturino's words (cited above): "Before we learn language, before we learn culture, before we learn to be different, we are all the same." I would qualify this by suggesting that this "sameness" refers not to uniformity but to universality, to the shared emptiness of as-yet-formless potential, which is the very essence of the Jungian archetype.

### *The Neutral Mask and the Analytic of Finitude*

The neutral mask—and potentially all masks, if we accept Lecoq's assertion that the neutral mask lies beneath every mask—both embodies and dissolves each of the paradoxes Foucault identifies as the crisis of modernity: the self as irreconcilable doublet of self and other, of empirical and transcendental knowledge, and a nexus of incompatible temporalities.

However, such crises are paradoxes of discourse, which are not applicable to the neutral mask, which exists as a prediscursive ideal. Such paradoxes not only dissolve in the (neutral) mask, but no longer make sense—the neutral mask is fundamentally the mask of balance, not of conflict. As Ralph Yarrow observes:

You can only enter the possibility of a different symbolic system if you get out of the one you are in and understand its arbitrariness [...]. That, most fundamentally, is the function of neutrality and is a hazardous business and it may not, in fact almost certainly will not, 'make sense' to those who only think in the old one. (Chamberlain and Yarrow 112)

The mask exists as the "third thing" needed in order for a union of opposites to take place. The neutral mask is the harmony between extremes. In a mask workshop led by John Wright, the phrase proffered to encapsulate the state of neutrality is "I'm absolutely fine." This phrase is intended to convey not only the lack of conflict, but to emphasise a degree of power over passivity whilst accepting that the neutral mask does not resist any external impulse. This state of power—and for Wright, the state of neutrality has the highest status—is reminiscent of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*: power is not conceived of as the imposition of the will, but the lack of resistance and the unconflicted acceptance of all external impulses, the acceptance that all impulses originate elsewhere than in the consciousness of the ego, or the discursive "I." It is, in other words, a return to origins, an acceptance and continuation of externally originating impulses in which the self is a channel through which they flow. It is in this aspect that we may be said to come to 'know' our origins, if, as Yarrow suggested, we take on a different perspective and understanding of what it means to 'know'—not as archaeological or factual knowledge of origins, but through experiencing them as impulses

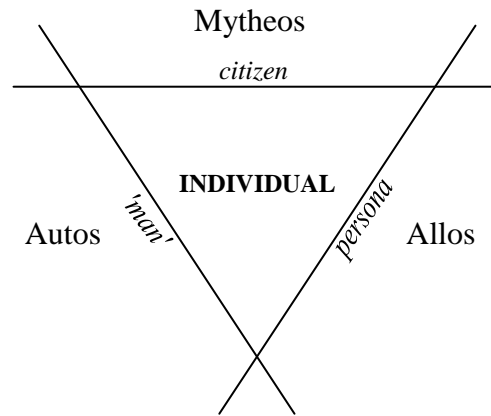
with ourselves as their conduits. It is through the surrender of the illusion of autonomy and individual (as originator of) will that the acceptance and celebration of will in the abstract—that of the *mytheos*—leads to the experience of ourselves as manifestations of this will.

However, the exclusively Nietzschean model suggests an internal third thing, which we might identify with the Jungian persona, the protective mask that man wears all his life, whether he knows it or not (*BGE* §40). This internalised ‘mask,’ which we confuse with the self, leads Foucault to the conclusion that exteriority is no longer possible, and so the Nietzschean model in fact reinforces the philosophical impasse and existential crisis that Foucault identifies as ‘the birth of man,’ a phenomenon that coincides with the death of the mask. It is my contention that the persona exists within the domain of discourse; it is the self of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Foucauldian constructivism. The Self of Jungian analysis and Lecoq’s *masque neutre* is something deeper and more primal, concerned with impulse and life-forces rather than discourse and syntax. The mask as *external* third thing demands an exteriorisation of the self that Foucault considers impossible in the post-Kantian episteme. The neutral mask bypasses the persona and draws the deeper Self to the surface, allowing for its harmonious union in an external symbol, granting access to a more profound, collective Self of shared humanity, a universal poetic awareness, something inaccessible in the Foucauldian view of modernity.

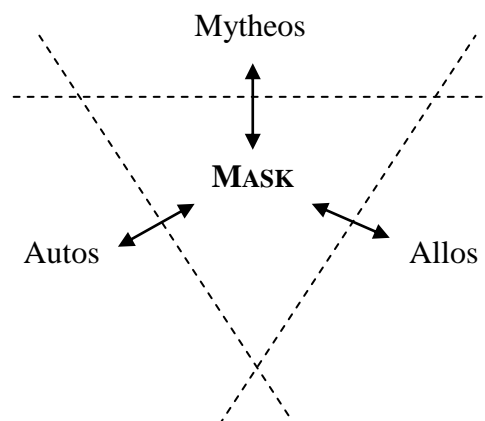
I have argued that the condition of ‘being’ the discursive mask, or persona, is phenomenally equivalent to the apparent impasse of the analytic of finitude. That this has come to represent the condition of modern ‘man’ suggests that he has indeed become a signifying mask, or representation; in Jungian terms, he has over-identified with the persona, or rather a series of personae constructed and dictated by ever-increasing and accelerating pressures of modern life.<sup>134</sup> The Hero is constellated at times of becoming, it symbolises individuation and the death of the former epistemic, or Foucauldian ‘man,’ arrived at at the end of the previous chapter, and represented as follows (note that the barriers signify representations—citizen, persona, ‘man’—rather than aspects of essential being):

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<sup>134</sup> For an excellent critique of the increasing pace of commercially driven life and the nefarious effects of market forces on the prospect of identity, see Bauman’s *Liquid Life*, esp. p.9;



The neutral mask, I suggest, has the potential to see the completion this cycle and to herald a new phase in the development of the self, to symbolise the death of ‘man.’ By reconnecting with the body through impulse and pre-linguistic understanding, by reconnecting with the *mytheos* by the active engagement with the world of the imagination, and by reconnecting with the other via an appreciation of universal, somatic humanity, or, in Lecoq’s terms, a universal poetic awareness, the barriers that isolated the individual and placed the self in the realm of categorical representation are potentially dissolved.



### ***The Cosmic Impulse and the Mask as Hero***

That the neutral mask should be the mask invented in the age of modernity is no coincidence. It grew from the need to reconnect with humanity, to short-circuit the existential malaise of modern ‘man,’ a malaise perhaps distilled in the naturalistic theatre (in which the individual is a psychological curiosity) that the champions of the mask sought to reject. Practitioners such as Copeau, Craig, Meyerhold, Artaud, Grotowski and Lecoq sought in the theatre means to bypass this malady, to recreate a mythic world of shared humanity and the ideal of deeper “truth.” This rejection of Enlightenment rationality seeks instead a way to speak to the human being not as a scientific or material unit, but to bypass the mathematically quantifiable world

and speak to us as the vessels of primal impulses, mythologies and shared archetypes in all their grotesque and beautiful forms.

The genealogical connection, if not formal, with the heroic tragic mask (through Copeau's noble mask) signals the return of the origin: a connection with the mythic, heroic and universal Self. The physical differences signal the impossibility of such a return in physical, or more accurately *concrete* form—forms themselves are historically located, and whilst they may be symbols of an archetype, they are never the archetype itself. Moreover, the neutral mask exists as an ideal, but cannot be realised in form. The flow of impulses, on the other hand, with which the neutral mask seeks to connect through the *èlan vital*, the absolute openness and readiness, the *mushin* of Zen Buddhism, is, in the Nietzschean view, the flow of the universal will to power. To say whether this has ever been truly achieved is impossible, but to say it is not achievable is not. What we are faced with, irrespective of the problems of the aesthetics of neutrality, is a possibility. Like the *Übermensch*, it remains the potential towards which we may strive, an individuated consciousness of pure being, a being in truly harmonious balance between extremes. If there were such a thing as prime mover, this unique example of *causa sui*, or self-causation, posits the self as a link in an endless linear chain of causality whose existence we experience as impulse. If we accept Nietzsche's rejection of the possibility of *causa sui* and the necessary doctrine of eternal recurrence, we encounter instead a circular causality, but this again is experienced directly through the impulse. To use a modern scientific analogy, impulses may be considered ripples of energy from the originary shockwaves of the Big Bang—we experience our cosmic origins through the electrical energy of somatic impulses, even if we cannot isolate them as archaeological facts or historical moments. *Élan*, in these terms, is not only the state of absolute readiness found in the neutral mask, but also the experience of being truly alive in the moment, in the world, and with the origin. According to John Wright, a sense of *èlan* (as the state of being just about to 'do,' the fleeting moment immediately prior to the impulse being translated into action), is the single most essential quality that defines a good mask ("School for Masks"). The mask personifies not the character (or lack of) as such, but the impulse, or *èlan*, behind it.

The emphasis the mask places on the body as the conduit of such impulses potentially phenomenally unifies the empirico-transcendental doublet, and the encounter with the unconscious, or unthought, has the potential to reconnect with the *mytheos* of the collective unconscious. Within Foucauldian 'man's isolated position, the neutral mask allows the self to take on the role of the archetypal hero, to somatically reconnect with the environment and

spiritually reconnect with the world of *mytheos*, with our origins, and to once more become reflexive—fundamentally connected on a meaningful, spiritual and somatic level of universal humanity. In short, in becoming a mask, it takes the mask to show us how to be human again.

## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Put simply, I suggest the following conclusion, consisting of four sequential—and to an extent, cyclical—statements:

1. The mask facilitates the union of opposites.
2. In moments of crisis/rupture, which may be seen in the Jungian scheme as imbalance, specific theatrical masks have emerged in the compensatory role of archetypal symbol.
3. Three significant epistemic ruptures in the development of the self as subject can be characterised by elements of the analytic of finitude, not as a single moment of rupture, but as the culmination of historical crises.
4. The analytic of finitude can be characterised as the epistemic rupturing of the phenomenal unity found in the Mask, and is exemplified by the death of the mask (which I equate with both Nietzsche's 'death of god' and Foucault's post-Kantian 'end of man').

Moreover, the mask can be considered as representing an aspect of the mythic other, or *mytheos*, and operates through the body. It unites self and other (spectator) via the mutually constitutive gaze, reintroducing the fundamental element of reciprocity between all three elements, resulting in the unity of the Mask, which, I propose, is equivalent with a fundamental aspect of the Self, stripped of the artifice of the persona and reconnected with reciprocal impulses that are themselves 'the returns of origins.'

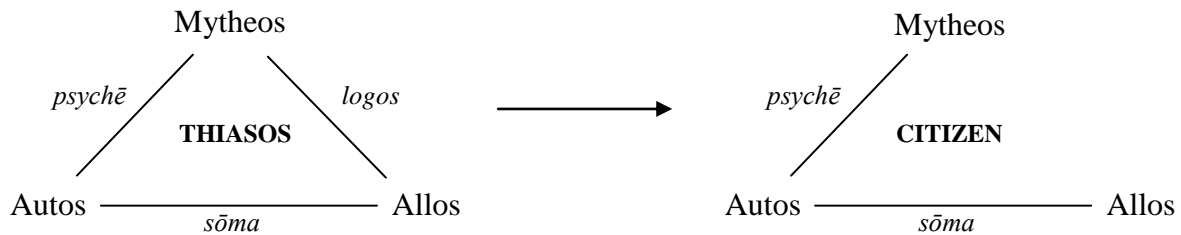
Historically, the mask provides us with a functional opposition to the Christian formulation of free-will as the *internal* third thing in the *battle* of opposites—namely body and soul—in which one aspect (body) is subjugated. The mask combats this by providing an *external* third thing; it negates the concept of individual free-will and celebrates the body as a locus of impulse, reciprocity and alterity, which is why the mask demands the submission of the performer's will. I contend that this, perhaps more than the heretical concept of transformation, provides the underlying philosophical reason that the mask is incompatible with Roman Catholic doctrine.

### ***The Diagrammatic Representation***

I will here recapitulate the development of the modern subject from the perspective of my central hypothesis, which ends in the hope of a cyclic completion and rebirth of the Self. The triadic structure of Autos, Allos and Mytheos can be interpreted as self, other, and collective

unconscious, which are the three essential components of the Self. The elements of *sōma*, *psychē*, and *logos* may be compared to the more normal body, soul and mind, which in this model are functions of relationships, or channels of reciprocity. The ruptures I have identified may be seen as breakdowns in reciprocity—necessary connections that form the whole Self.

*Rupture 1: (The Retreat and Return of the Origin)*



The above represents the split in the tragic consciousness, which I propose is a disappearance of *thiasos* (through the destabilisation of a unifying *logos*), and its replacement by the advent of the citizen, a legal unit rather than a member of the collective *thiasos*, bound to a legal system whose existence exposed the crisis of linguistic ambiguity—the laws may have been considered to be authored by the gods, but the problem of language and interpretation opened up a schism between the community and the divine, resulting in a loss of collective identity with the *mytheos*.

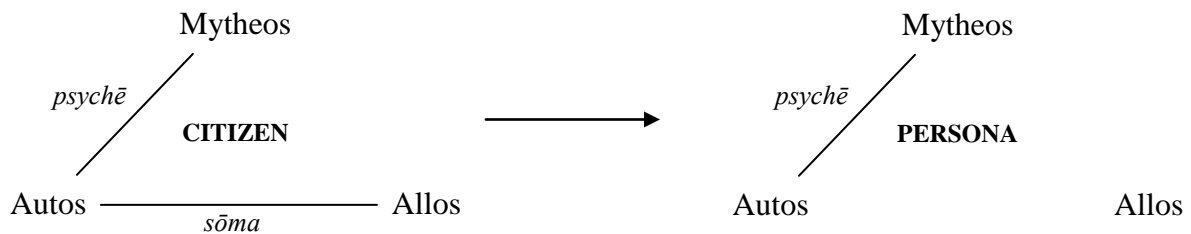
This represented a rupture between the *polis* and its origins, the realm of the ancestral. The self remained within the mythic realm on one level (the Dionysiac aspect of the *psychē*), but also as part of a collective whose mythic reciprocity was disrupted. This is comparable to Foucault's paradox of the 'retreat and return of the origin.' Such a rupture created an untenable position for the self, torn between forces with whom it was both equivalent, yet which were not equivalent with each other: a logical impossibility of  $A = B$ , and  $A = C$ , but  $C \neq B$ .

*Rupture 2: (The Cogito and the Unthought)*

The next stage saw the breakdown in the body as reciprocal channel of self and other, the body itself rejected as the demonic other. This rupture, the result of Inquisitorial imperative, resulted in the body becoming a necessary façade, a physical object rejected vehemently by the self-as-soul, and reconstructed as a (dis)simulation. The citizen gave way to the persona. The philosophical culmination of this environment was the separation of mind and body in

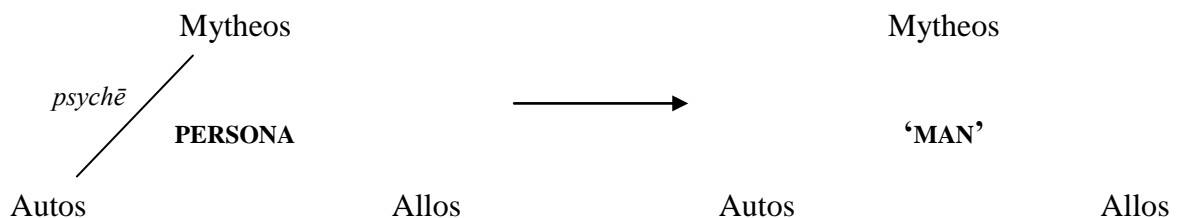


the Cartesian *cogito*. This was compensated by the commedia dell'arte and the physical, earthy domain of the mask, combined with the metaphysical, devilish realm of Arlecchino, whose folkloric progenitor was the demonic Hellequin—the demonic being the domain of the flesh.



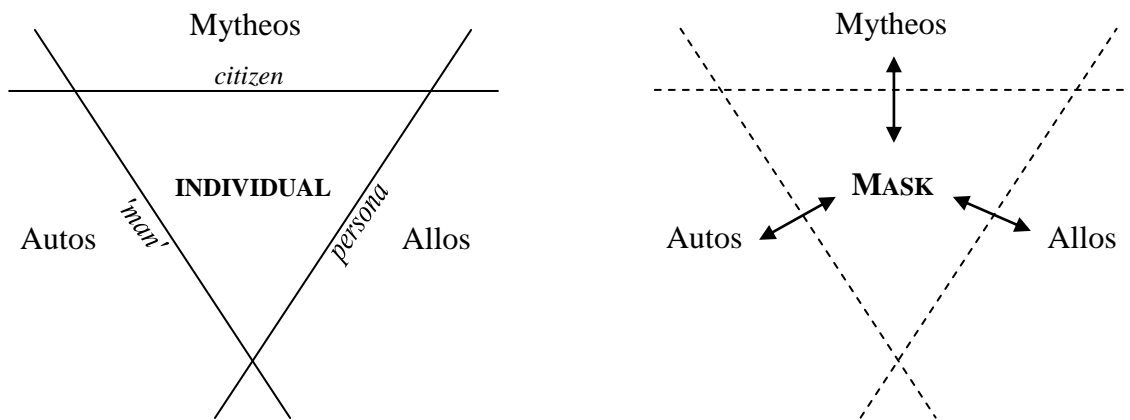
*Rupture 3: (The Empirico-Transcendental Doublet)*

This was followed by the necessary death of God—necessary because of the untenability of the Christian rejection of the flesh and the philosophical divide with the body—and the birth of ‘man,’ which saw the final rupture occur between the self and the *mytheos*, the reciprocal soul broke down, rendering ‘man’ a mere sign of man within a system of categorisation of his own making. Thus ‘man’ became disconnected and isolated, the increasing interiority a necessary result of the lack of external connections, or meaningful reciprocity.



The new model of self (*below left*) is one of division, defined by the finitude of which it is a condition, the limits of which are defined by representational, discursive roles of citizen, persona, and ‘man,’ within the post-Kantian episteme. It is the end result of a series of fundamental epistemic ruptures, an interior individual isolated by those divisions that ruptured its reciprocity. I will complete this by suggesting that the space created between the self and its constitutive parts, now defined by external barriers rather than reciprocal connectivity—the empty space of the isolated individual whose Self is epistemically precluded by the paradoxes of the analytic of finitude—is a space that can be filled by the

Mask (*below, right*), which, by filling the void, may potentially dissolve boundaries, or finitudes, and allow the Self back into a space of reciprocity.



### ***'Man' as displacement of the Psychē***

The soul, or *psychē*, in my scheme is not an eternal, indestructible or divine element of self in the Christian mode, but a channel of knowing and understanding the world that is not dependent on logic or science. It is one that experiences meaning in beauty, aesthetics, rhythms and music, nobility, etc. It is that aspect of Keats that proclaimed “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know” (“Ode on a Grecian Urn”). It is the part of the self whose meaning lies in myth. It is to be considered, like the intellect, a vital means of understanding; it is a) a perspective, and b) an aspect of the body (cf. Yarrow, p.229 above).

In the Nietzschean scheme, perhaps we can overcome a quest for absolute knowing and meaning (will to truth) and embark instead on a quest for being. Meaning would take care of itself through the knowledges acquired through the body, of which the soul and the intellect are a part. In this sense, my argument hangs somewhere between nihilism and utopianism, but I would argue that both are perspectives; charges of nihilism originate in the quest for (a specific type of) meaning over being, i.e. the epistemic perspective of ‘man.’ In Nietzsche’s scheme, *meaning* may be found in the deed, not the doer.

Epistemic ruptures and shifts are accompanied by archetypal compensations, creating new masks for mythic heroes and villains, but on ever diminishing stages as the ruptures within the state of mythic, unified Man—whose symbol of unity is the mask—degenerates into the state of ‘man,’ whose birth corresponded not only with the death of god, but with the death of the mask. This is because ‘man’ *is* a mask, an impotent mask: not an affective

symbol, but a degenerated *sign* of man onto which he continues to project his own search for meaning—a scientific ordering of nature in a system that can never equal or represent the human experience—instead of letting nature (as symbol) project its meanings onto *him*, meanings taken from his own physical being, the body, meanings that pass through the electricity of impulses from both within and, through the gaze, without. ‘Man,’ as *representation* of man, is not fuelled and affirmed by the gaze, but judged by it, made into a socially compliant member of society instead of a life-affirming expression of a mythic universal “I.”

### ***Mask, Thiasos, and the Creative Gaze***

The judgemental gaze (p.29 above) of ‘man’ can be overpowered by the mutually creative gaze of *synaisthēsis*. Through the mask, we co-create the communal theatrical experience via means of the dynamic gaze. Through the mask, in its fixity, in our perceiving—or projecting—and interpreting emotional expression and intentionality, we become co-authors of the drama, filling in the spaces visually, intellectually and emotionally, often unconsciously, but nonetheless actively. The Mask engages with our shared unconscious and our shared consciousness simultaneously in a powerfully affective way. As such, we can see double—we can see what the visual, external reality feeds us, and what the unconscious feeds us to complete the creative act; we collectively create the unity within ourselves. When the mask is symbolic of some shared, archetypal essence, we project from a shared emotional store and common cultural mythology onto a shared visual symbol of the collective Self. Our active participation in the mutually creative act produces a sense of *communitas*.

The mask “works” when one succumbs to it entirely rather than standing outside of it as a knowing self (as in the Brechtian sense) imposing meaning. The mask commands, but only if the wearer lets it. Furthermore, the physical training of the body for, say, Arlecchino, means a conscious imposition of will onto the body. Once that training becomes automatic, it is no longer a case of imposition, but the surrendering of the will to the Mask. The degrees by which this surrender may become possession depends, I suggest, on the degrees to which the conscious self remains co-present.

The Mask is the wearer’s surrendering of the conscious will to the mask, which is an aspect of the unconscious Self: a surrendering of (the will of) the self to the Self; a union of opposites—the conscious and the unconscious self. In the Nietzschean-Zarathustrian scheme, the lion must surrender his will entirely in order to become child; it is the lion’s “I will” that must succumb to the “thou shalt” of the dragon (a symbol of the ultimate barrier to self-

overcoming: untamed will and the need to dominate, see *TSZ* 17). It is in the surrendering of the will that one ceases to become a slave to one's drives, which he equates with the lion's predatory instinct, and becomes the "child" that says "yea" to all; it is the acceptance of everything from the *creative* position of mastery, which is not the passive yea-saying of the dominated herd, but an active affirmation of life. In the Jungian scheme, one must surrender the self to become the Self. In the Foucauldian scheme, 'man' must die to give birth to Man.

This suggests rebirth, which Jung describes as "an affirmation that must be counted among the primordial affirmations of mankind" (*CW9a* §207), and equates with Zarathustra's "Noontide Vision," which is a rebirth into Nature. It is the emergence of the body from behind the caul of representation. In the 'fundamental journey' of the neutral mask, we see a symbolic death of the discursive, culturally inscribed self and the succumbing of the ego, or individual will, to the neutral mask, which is the will of the universal "I." It is a rebirth into nature and oneness with the world in which one physically says "yea" to the environment that both constitutes the self, and that one creates in one's imagination.

### ***The Return of Masks***

Masks offer us a direct link with alternative, atemporal, mythic realities. In a world typified by psychologism and individualism, the mask provides an antidote. The implications of a culture that rejects masks except as dead wall-hangings or museum curiosities are worrying. It is my contention that, with a greater understanding of the power of the mask—an object that has been with us since the dawn of civilisation—we may begin to explore the possibilities of a masked theatre that extends beyond novelty and pure entertainment and begins to speak to that aspect of human nature that transcends the psychological. The conclusions reached by Meyerhold and Copeau would seem to offer exciting, yet nearly a hundred years later, still unrealised possibilities. Practitioners such as Peter Hall, John Wright, Keith Johnstone and Michael Chase continue to explore the possibilities of masked theatre with comparatively limited success. The mask, it would seem, has yet to find its true theatrical form. Perhaps the wrong emphasis is placed on the mask tradition of cultures—historical as well as geographical—that are incompatible with our own, including such forms as the *commedia dell'arte*. Our respect for the masks of history and of other cultures ought to teach us more than particular techniques, it should teach us that imitation is not its purpose. For example, the form of *commedia dell'arte* taught by the likes of maestros Antonio Fava and Antonio Venturino refers to an imagined and *fixed* form of *commedia* that in all likelihood never existed. This fixity of form is anathema to the true and vital spirit of

commedia. Antonio Venturino states, quite rightly, that the true spirit of *commedia dell'arte* is the human spirit, that it transcends language barriers and reveals the universal in man (personal interview). However, I would argue that in order for this to be realised, both its form and content must also reflect that spirit, which, whilst it may in essence be universal, is—true to the nature of the archetype—manifest according to its culturally specific context, otherwise it risks being a museum piece or curiosity of relevance only to the student of theatre. I suggest that what we can learn from this historical and philosophical exploration is that the mask exists at its most potent as the living symbol of its time, as a healing, compensatory device in response to its specific conditions. We must not confuse essence with manifestation.

In the relatively closed and esoteric space of the rehearsal room, the essential theatrical mask born to this age of individualism is the neutral mask—a compensatory archetype of non-individuality, the selflessness of the potential hero seeking *individuation* (which is philosophically incompatible with the isolationism and persona-centred falsity of *individualism*). The use of the neutral mask by Jacques Lecoq paved the way for new and exciting developments in the theatre, ones that continue to blossom and evolve today. Perhaps this is the mask's biggest immediate influence on contemporary theatre—its place in actor training. However, it is my contention that the mask still has an important part to play on the stage as well in the rehearsal room. Only we have yet to find its form. This leaves us not with answers, but with questions:

If traditional masking is derived from a particular cultural cosmology, is it any wonder that the mask of the current, technological age is the neutral mask? A mask of complete emptiness, with all the swirling demons of our own isolation hidden behind it; a void with no mythology to impress upon its features. The mask remains for society at large an alien object, a curiosity or *objet d'art*, an empty face with nothing to share, nothing to express, and nothing to say.

Or does it, as I suggest, present us with a gateway, an escape, a portal to a mythical land of archetypes and ancestors, of gods and monsters, of the collective unconscious and a shared humanity? Does its first tentative steps from a sea of pre-existence signal the potential for a new, fundamental, and heroic journey ahead of us? And will we heed the call? Does its silence prepare the way for meaning, heal the wounds opened by the ambiguity of language that brought about the first tragic rupture in the unity of western consciousness? Does it herald a new dawn, creating the necessary silence before “the explosion of man's face in laughter, and the return of masks?”

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