MYTH IN CONTEMPORARY MASK PRAXIS:

A Jungian approach to mask making and performance within Lecoq-based actor created theatre

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Declaration of Authorship

I, William M. Pinchin, declare that this thesis is composed by me and that all the work herein is my own, unless explicitly attributed to others. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Abstract

Through the construction of the neutral mask, the renowned teacher Jacques Lecoq (1921 – 1999) shifted conventional hierarchies away from a medium dominated by playwrights and directors, towards an actor created theatre. The aim of this thesis is to address a developing critique of the Lecoq pedagogy: specifically, his monist view of mask as a means of creating a tabula rasa *and his rejection of any form of introspection, by demanding a purely extraverted approach to theatrical creation. It views the masks of Lecoq through a Jungian critical framework, amplifying the "cornerstone" of the pedagogy by linking it with mythic themes, and, in so doing, challenges Lecoq's approach to "neutrality", psychology, and the role of the actor. Through a Practice as Research methodological approach, I have developed a process of mask construction as a means of accessing what Carl Jung referred to as the "personal shadow", asking how the actor creator might playfully approach his or her personal complexes, so avoided by Lecoq, and use them to construct a "new theatre of tomorrow". This research offers significant contributions to the fields of actor created theatre and mask pedagogy, offering an approach that does not hide or strip away the person who creates, but speaks directly of and through that individual. Viewing mask construction through a Jungian critical framework, I argue that masks have a symbolic function that link them directly to myth: they cannot be fully removed from their archetypal core and, therefore, speak to the unconscious psyche. By linking mask to myth, one is able to make theatre that speaks to those personal complexes, while still being accessible to the ensemble and audience. Adopting mask construction as a method of approaching Lecoq-based actor created theatre, this thesis has helped to generate an original piece of devised theatre,* The Marked *(2016), as well as critically examining the potential for the development of an actor's own "personal myth". Ultimately, it re-envisions Lecoq's goal of an actor created theatre, and through a PaR investigation, proposes an alternative paradigm for thinking about, talking about and making theatre from a Lecoq-based mask praxis.*

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Introduction
Mask / Myth in Contemporary Praxis

Throughout this thesis I have circumambulated an understanding of one of man's most ancient tools: the mask. I have sought answers to some fundamental questions: What is a mask? What are the object's functions? And finally, at the centre of my exploration, for what purposes are contemporary theatre practitioners adopting these ancient technologies?

My working definition of the term "mask", itself part of the enquiry, is: a covering that transforms the face, an object that mediates a transformation between "self" and "other". To this developing definition, I offer a hypothesis regarding the object's function: that a mask offers a concrete means of experiencing myth. As a tool, the object places a transcendent being in front of an audience, facilitating a phenomenological encounter with an archetypal image. It brings our heroes and monsters, gods and demons, to life in front of us. By giving a face to some of our greatest hopes and fears, masks testify to their ontological status. This points back to the ancient function of the mask, as described by Claude Levi-Strauss, who argues that masks are living symbols speaking to the reality of the archetypal image, while at the same time allowing for the formation of groups around a set of shared beliefs:

> Imbued with life by its wearer, the mask brings the god to earth, it establishes his reality, mingles him with the society of men; inversely, by masking himself, man testifies to his own social existence, manifests it, classifies it with the aid of symbols. The mask is both the man and something other than the man: it is the mediator *par excellence* between society, on the one hand, and Nature, usually merged with the Supernatural, on the other. (Levi-Strauss 1961: 18)

Sears Eldredge addresses some of the fundamental questions regarding masks, in his introduction to *The Compelling Image: mask improvisation for actor training and performance* (1996), arguing that masks are 'global, but not universal'. Eldredge cites Australian aboriginal tribes that, perhaps uniquely, do not adopt the use of masks; however, he continues, 'the highly developed use of facial and body paint, with feather, cane, and clay embellishments, speaks to a masking complex among these people'. In this way, Eldredge points to mask as an 'archetypal image', though he concedes it 'may have originated independently in different times and places and for different reasons'. Though he resists the universalism of masking, Eldredge asks the question: 'Why have human beings felt a need for masks and masking, unless these objects and activities have been recognized as somehow necessary for survival?' (Eldredge 1996: 3-4).

Eldredge's reference to 'archetypal image' highlights a fundamental element of this research: the mask/myth relationship. The Jungian scholar Andrew Samuels (1986) defines "myth" as a 'story of archetypal encounter' (Samuels 1986: 95). While a more in-depth examination of the term "myth" will follow (see Introduction, p. 23),

utilizing the theories of C.G. Jung, my working definition begins by viewing myths psychologically, as culturally specific stories from collective aspects of the unconscious psyche. The anthropological record indicates that since at least as far back as the Upper-Palaeolithic era[1], masks have offered a medium through which the individual is able to experience a culture's mythological traditions. This thesis takes a mythological view of mask and applies it to contemporary western mask practices, with the re-emergence of the object's use in the twentieth century, as a tool for actor training. It asks the question: what are the myths within contemporary mask praxis?

In a studio in Padua at the end of the 1940s, a French mime and an Italian sculptor crafted an object that has shaped a generation of theatre-makers. In the construction of the neutral mask, Jacques Lecoq and Amleto Sartori fashioned an object that has since come to define a belief system, sculpting a paradigm that governs so many people today in the act of teaching, of theatre making, of collaborative collective creation, and more recently still, of psychological individuation. This thesis argues that the use of mask has led to a contemporary myth that is shared and taught to this day: the heroic act of theatrical creation, resting on the shoulders of the individual performer, who stands alone at the centre of the empty stage: the masked actor becoming the "actor creator".

By adopting a Jungian critical framework, viewing myth as a living source of the collective aspects of the unconscious psyche, my project offers a specific method for articulating myth, and, in so doing, presents a number of important critiques of Lecoq's mask praxis. It examines the complex relationship between an "anti-psychological pedagogy" and its own highly psychological foundation (see Chapter 1). By connecting Lecoq's neutral mask to pre-existing mythological motifs, this thesis "amplifies" the object that forms the symbolic cornerstone of the Lecoq tradition, an archetypal image of Self (see Chapter 2). Having established the link between mask and myth, it explores the practical application of using mask construction as a means of investigating personal narrative and conflict, of better understanding the actor's own "personal myth" (see Chapter 3). The thesis goes on to explore the same process of mask construction working within a group that is far from theatre-making – individuals who have had experiences of homelessness – as a means of developing a new piece of actor created theatre (see Chapter 4). Finally, this thesis returns to mask performance by addressing the challenges that arise in the construction of a personal myth (see Chapter 5).

A critical engagement with the underlying mythology within contemporary mask praxis offers substantial new knowledge in a number of ways. First, in its development of a new understanding of the function of the neutral mask within the pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq, one of the twentieth century's renowned actor trainers, as an object that positions the actor in the role of author; second, in its renewed

[1] Eldredge (1996), citing the anthropologist Harry L. Shapiro, dates the first evidence of masking at roughly 50,000 years ago. Eldredge points to the prehistoric cave painting "the Sorcerer", what appears to be a human figure wearing an animal head. The image was first documented in a drawing by Abbé H. Breuil; however, the exact subject of the cave painting is contested.

understanding of the object's function as a means of generating "self-knowledge" for the actor; and third, as a means of creating a "new theatre for tomorrow" that speaks directly to the individual's underlying psychological complexes, thus re-personalizing a mask pedagogy that has relied on a *tabula rasa* approach.

A Critique: Jacques Lecoq

> *I have prepared you for a theatre which does not exist. Go out and create it.* (Martin 2002: 57)

The theories and techniques of Jacques Lecoq (1921 – 1999), the renowned French mask and mime teacher, made significant contributions to the field of actor training as well as to contemporary theatre making. Lecoq shifted the conventional hierarchies away from a medium dominated by playwrights and directors, towards an actor created theatre. Through his study of mask, and with the help of the renowned mask maker Amleto Sartori, he built upon the ideals of actor training inspired by Jacques Copeau, and yet went further, challenging his students to rebel against the 'tyranny of the text' (Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002: 4) and to build their own 'new theatre for tomorrow' (Murray 2002: 79): a theatre that was dynamic and visual, physical and imaginative. This new theatre required a new actor, an individual who was more than an interpreter of pre-existing texts, but a creator him or her self: what I refer to as "the actor creator". It is to this new positioning of the actor that David Bradby refers in the opening line to his introduction to Lecoq's *Theatre of Movement and Gesture*: 'This actor's centrality to creative theatre is the subject of this book' (Lecoq 2006: xii). Simon Murray (2002) builds on this theme, stating:

> If any one term encapsulates Lecoq's overall goal for his students during the two years they may study with him, it is that of *preparation*: preparing the creative actor. (Murray 2002: 64)

I define the "actor creator" as a performer who takes an authorial position at the centre of the creative act. Lecoq's teaching has inspired many renowned theatre-makers – Simon McBurney and Complicité, Mummenschanz, Julie Taymor, Geoffrey Rush, Ariane Mnouchkine, and Steven Berkoff, to name only a few – whose diversity of theatrical styles and interests speaks directly to Lecoq's ability to foster the personal creativity of those who studied at his school in Paris. Indeed, the influence of Lecoq has spread much further than those that have entered his school at 57 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, in Paris. Today we can see the effects his teachings have had on actor training programmes throughout the UK (the context in which much of this research was conducted), where Lecoq's neutral mask is taught on both the classical model of conservatory actor training programmes, like the one offered at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, as well as at a growing number of

"Lecoq-based" institutions like the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA), which have been emerging throughout the world[2].

Since Lecoq's death a great deal has changed within the context of contemporary theatre-making; in that time, some important critiques have emerged that must be articulated in order to address that changing landscape. Contemporary teachers who continue in his footsteps foster their own praxis by addressing those developments. Having studied Lecoq-based actor created theatre at LISPA, under the direction of Thomas Prattki, I hold one such critique in my own embodied knowledge (see Introduction, p. 19 & Chapter 1, p. 54). In this research I will aim to speak to that critique, and, in so doing, offer my own mask praxis.

This thesis echoes a growing view that, while Lecoq's students are good at "playing", that play often neglects the concerns of actual people. While his students create theatre that is highly physical and/or visual, their work places "playfulness" above their own complex problems. In this way, I present the criticism that the Lecoq pedagogy pushes its students to offer style over substance, more a playful exploration of movement than an interest in the personal struggles that *most* affect the theatre-maker.

Simon Murray's (2002) essay "'Tout Bouge': Jacques Lecoq, modern mime, and the Zero Body", seems to capture this critique. Murray draws on Michael Billington's review of the work of Theatre Complicité in which Billington argues:

> …they have bred in me – and I think some others as well – a kind of counter reaction which is whether the moral content of the theatre is being subordinated to a display of technique … It was sometimes a feeling that technique was actually overlaying content. (Billington in Murray, 2002: 32)

Murray continues by citing a former student who observes: 'If you've done Lecoq, you can probably devise a quite funny and interesting five minutes around how to make a cup of tea…. but there might be some questions posed at the end about the value of the writing' (Murray 2002: 34). In his later text, *Jacques Lecoq* (2003), part of the Routledge Performance Practitioners series, Murray continues with this line of argument, asking the question:

> When, for example, does inventive play around, say, making a cup of tea exceed the intended meanings of the action? At what point does 'inventive play' degenerate into self-conscious cleverness and virtuosity? It is this dimension of play – this *misuse* of play – which has given rise to criticism

[2] In addition to the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA), we can trace Lecoq's influence to a number of important institutions: Ecolé Lassaad in Belgium, Ecolé Philippe Gaulier in France, HELIKOS Scoula Internationale de Creazione Teatrale in Italy, Movement Theatre Studio NYC: Lecoq Technique for the American Actor, The Actors Space in Barcelona, to name only a few. All offer their own adaptations and interpretations of the teachings of Jacques Lecoq. They all deserve further study; as do the recent developments taking place within Ecolé Jacques Lecoq itself.

> which claims that physical theatre sometimes represents a triumph of style or form over substance and meaning. Play can be risky territory in the hands of an undisciplined actor, or indulgent director. (Murray 2003: 68)

Whether when describing the 'misuse of play', or perhaps an over-insistence upon it, it is essential to highlight the relevance of the term within Lecoq's pedagogical system. Lecoq regards play as essential for creation. Murray states: 'For Lecoq, the performer who cannot play can never be a creative actor. An ability to play, in other words, is a necessary condition for creativity' (Murray 2003: 66). Lecoq even goes as far as to state that continuation within the second year of study is based on the student's play: 'the main criterion for selection is the actor's capacity for play' (Lecoq 2000: 97).

Lecoq defines play as arising 'at the point when, aware of the theatrical dimension, the actor can shape an improvisation for spectators, using rhythm, tempo, space, form' (Lecoq 2000: 29). Murray's (2003) analysis of this passage is quite informative:

> Unpacking this definition, we can highlight three concepts in particular: *theatricality*, *improvisation* and *spectators*. Being 'aware of the theatrical dimension' removes play or playfulness from mere pleasurable self-indulgence and provides it with context and purpose. To 'shape an improvisation' suggests territory where the actor has a degree of physical, vocal and spatial freedom to be inventive, rather than being merely a conduit for the director or playwright. Invoking the presence of spectators in this definition reminds the actor that finding that elusive quality of play is crucial – perhaps the most crucial - element in making the transaction between performers and audience effective and engaging … this belief is integral to the teaching of both Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier and to all of their 'disciples'. (Murray 2003: 65)

Here Murray's analysis highlights some important elements of Lecoq's use of the term play; in my view, they draw attention to Lecoq's depersonalization of the performer, his preference for 'theatricality, improvisation and spectators', over the 'self-indulgence' of the performer. This creates a paradox for Murray: a simultaneous need for both engagement and distance. Using the image of a bicycle chain, Murray describes play as 'demanding enough slack to allow for movement and freedom'. Without distance the chain becomes inflexible and doesn't work. 'For the actor, therefore, there has to be a relationship to the character he or she is representing which has a degree of *play* or *distance* in it' (Murray 2003: 68). By equating play with distance, Murray reveals a problem that I will argue lies at the heart of the pedagogy.

It is Lecoq's extraversion, in my own view, that allows for the criticism that his students' work sometimes lacks depth, truth, or complexity. In Chapter 1, I develop the argument that in order to foster a "non-psychological" approach to acting, as a reaction against Stanislavski-based naturalism, Lecoq's teaching rested firmly on the belief that performers must pass through a "neutral point" in which they undergo a

process of depersonalization. Lecoq challenges his students to playfully reflect the dynamics of an 'external world', striving for a distanced neutrality that he argues allows for the 'reflection' of the world. In his seminal text, *The Moving Body: teaching creative theatre* (2000), Lecoq articulates his distrust of introspection and psychology, his need for the depersonalization of the performer:

> In my method of teaching I have always given priority to the external world over the inner experience. In our work the search for self-enlightenment and for spiritual bliss has little attraction. The ego is superfluous. It is more important to observe how beings and objects move, and how they find a reflection in us. We must give priority to the horizontal and the vertical, to whatever exists outside ourselves, however intangible. People discover themselves in relation to their grasp of the external world, and if the student has special qualities, these will show up in the reflection. I do not search for deep sources of creativity in the psychological memories whose 'cry of life mingles with the cry of illusion'. I prefer to see more distance between the actor's own ego and the character performed. This allows the performer to play even better. Actors usually perform badly in plays whose concerns are too close to their own. They adopt a sort of blank voice because they retain part of the text for themselves without being able to hand it on to the public. Neither belief nor identification is enough – one must be able genuinely to play. (Lecoq 2000: 19)

In order to achieve this distance between 'ego and the character performed', Lecoq famously adopted the neutral mask as a means of de-personalization, separating the actor from the character and constructing a non-psychological approach to acting. And yet, how is one to understand his assertion that actors 'perform badly in plays whose concerns are too close to their own'? This statement seems to be in opposition to his overarching goal of an actor created theatre. Is Lecoq really challenging his students to 'go out and create' a theatre that does not address their fundamental concerns, and if so, why create that theatre?

Addressing the critique

By connecting mask to myth, the aim of this thesis is to bring psychology into the Lecoq tradition, in a distanced and therefore playful manner. I argue that a mythological view of mask praxis, a looking back to mythological motifs and archetypal images, will begin to enable the actor creator to access his or her own personal complexes, and use them to build that "new theatre for tomorrow". In addressing this psychological critique, I argue that Lecoq discovered one of the most interesting objects in the second half of the twentieth century's study of actor training: the neutral mask. In uniting the technical mastery that is a well-documented part of the Lecoq tradition with a reinterpretation of the neutral mask enriched by elements of Jung's process of individuation, I hope to develop a better balance between playfulness and an understanding of the dynamics of the psyche.

While audiences are by no means monolithic, I argue that the mask/myth relationship has been continually used to address the most fundamental concerns of both individuals and groups – that this is one of its primary functions (see Chapter 5). By adopting the performer/audience relationship already embedded within the established mask/myth relationship, and applying it to both the Lecoq neutral mask (see Chapter 2), as well as to masks constructed over the course of this thesis (see Chapters 3 & 4), I hope to develop a new means of creating theatre that speaks to both the personal concerns of the maker, as well as to the wider audience in general. In this way, my definition of the actor creator will build on Lecoq's authorial acting, but with acknowledgement of the psychological complexes of the individual who creates.

My central argument is that masks have a symbolic function that links them directly to myth: they cannot be removed from their symbolic function, and, therefore, they speak to the unconscious psyche. A symbolic view of mask, in direct opposition to Lecoq, is a position supported by many scholars within the field of anthropology, theatre practice and psychology (Eliade 1989, Janzing 1998, Kerényi 1948, Jennings and Minde 1993, Landy 1996, Laughlin 1988, Cawson 2012). Through a *Practice as Research* (*PaR*) methodology, this thesis aims to offer the first critique of the Lecoq tradition within the frame of analytical psychology and, through mask construction, a practical means of addressing that critique.

This thesis proposes an examination of mask construction as a means of accessing what Jung referred to as the personal shadow of the individual. I offer a reinterpretation of the mask, not as depersonalized other, but as a projected aspect of the maker: an inner self-portrait. Through elaboration and amplification, I hope to examine these objects as a means of gaining self-knowledge. Building on the teachings of Jacques Lecoq, I open up the possibility of accessing the personal within mask pedagogy. My contribution will be to assist students in the process of building their own "theatre of tomorrow": one that does not hide or strip away the individual who creates it, but instead speaks directly of, through, and about that individual. My mask praxis aims to augment the intention of the playful pedagogy of Lecoq, directing it towards the personal complexes of Jung. Viewed as a prism, this research will offer a new dimension to Lecoq's teaching – work that addresses the concerns of another time/place – but also, simultaneously, offers reflections on the original Lecoq training.

Binding together two interconnected objectives in order to achieve the primary aim of an actor created theatre that addresses the psychological complexes of the individuals who created it, my work proposes a secondary goal of re-evaluating mask praxis. I hypothesize that by connecting mask with its original counterpart, myth, I will be able to offer a link between the personal psychological dynamics of the individual and the external physical dynamics that form the basis of Lecoq's approach; that by connecting mask with myth, one will be able to view mask as a means of exploring personal complexes while also allowing the distance that Lecoq argued is essential for playfulness.

From the onset, it must be understood that my stated intention of articulating a "myth", is not simply as a means of undercutting or discrediting a well-established system. I have chosen the term "myth" for its paradoxical meanings: a fusion between what has been disproven by current science, *and*, at the same time, what speaks to the central organizing principles of the psyche. This will be articulated in greater depth in the section, "Defining Myth" (see Introduction, p. 23). In this way, one can view the "myth" (for example "the myth of the actor creator") as not only the underlying narrative that shapes a set of practices, but also, as the distance to question those same practices. The term "myth" offers a "tension of opposites" that allows for the possibility that both understandings are valid. Indeed, it is through that tension that Jung argues we find symbolic material – 'a living third thing' (Jung 1960: 90) – which acts as the foundation of myth[4].

Research Questions and Thesis Outline

This thesis asks the question: how does the actor creator playfully access his or her personal complexes, so avoided by Lecoq, and use them towards constructing a "new theatre for tomorrow"? How does one make theatre that speaks to those conflicts while still being accessible to the individual, the ensemble, and the audience in general? And, in so doing, how does one re-personalize a pedagogy that traditionally relied on a "blank-slate" or *tabula rasa*[5] approach? In order to address these questions, my research focuses on the tool central to the teachings and theories of Lecoq: the mask.

My analysis of mask has been divided into five chapters. This introduction outlines the major arguments, objectives of the research and a review of the central literature regarding the neutral mask. Chapter 1, "In the Shadow of the Neutral Mask: A Jungian examination of Lecoq-based mask praxis", examines the complex relationship of psychology and psychological acting, within the Lecoq tradition. It offers a Jungian interpretation of neutral mask praxis as a structured means of "active imagination", a journey into the unconscious. In Chapter 2, "A Jungian Amplification of the Neutral Mask", I adopt Jung's method of symbolic interpretation and apply it to the neutral mask, exploring several potential cultural and archetypal associations. Chapter 3, "Sculpting (and staging) a Personal Myth", builds on Jung's use of the paradoxical term "personal myth" by critically engaging with the challenges of creating my own work derived from mask construction. Chapter 4, "*The Marked:* Two case studies, with Cardboard Citizens and St Mango's Broadway, exploring "therapeutic" uses of mask construction towards a new work of actor created theatre", examines the use of mask in differing forms of drama and arts therapy, critically analysing my own *PaR* of mask construction within two workshop series. Finally, Chapter 5, "Dreaming the Myth Onwards: Mask in Performance",

[4] Jung 's Transcendent Function of Opposites, his 'living third thing' (Jung 1960b: 90), will be explored in Chapter 2.

[5] Lecoq describes this *tabula rasa* when he states: 'When a student has experienced this neutral starting point his body will be freed like a blank page, on which drama can be inscribed' (Lecoq 2000: 38).

addresses key questions arising from this research by exploring the performance of a mask within a cultural "nest of meaning".

Contributions to Knowledge

This thesis offers a number of distinct contributions to knowledge:

- It represents the first critical analysis within the existing literature to examine the link between the teachings of Lecoq and the theories of C.G. Jung. In so doing it sheds new light on a mask pedagogy that has been one of the most influential in the twentieth century.

- It critiques the pedagogy's insistence on positioning playfulness over the "concerns" of the actor creator, and, through its *Practice as Research* methodological approach, offers a means of addressing that critique.

- It articulates a new five-step progression within a neutral mask praxis, a journey that seeks to acquire self-knowledge through the encounter with an archetypal image of Self.

- It is the first formal study to recognize the contributions of teachers like Thomas Prattki who have adapted Lecoq's model to include elements of Jungian psychological individuation.

- Arguing that the neutral mask is highly symbolic, it contains the first amplification of the cornerstone of the Lecoq tradition. It draws a connection between the neutral mask and major mythological motifs:

    - *Ex nihilo* creation myths (as demonstrated by the Inuit creation myth of Father Raven), offering potential insights into Lecoq's positioning of the actor creator;

    - The Hindu conception of Ātman and its union with Brahman (as articulated in the Fourth Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad), which establishes a potential means of grounding Lecoq's understanding of mimetic identification;

    - The ideal of anattā, the Buddhist concept of "no-self" (as described in the Satipatthana Sutta), offering a personification of Lecoq's *tabula rasa*;

    - and, finally, the Campbellian Hero's Journey (outlined in his 1949 text, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*), a monomyth that grounds Lecoq's monist mask, instigating a psychological journey of development from general to particular.

    - These conflicting archetypal associations of the neutral mask create a dynamic relationship that, I argue, form the foundation for the object's function within a vibrant contemporary acting pedagogy. Building on an argument by Phillip Zarrilli (2012) that the experience of 'presence' can be viewed as an active state of 'not knowing', (Zarrilli 2012: 147) I argue that these symbolic aspects of the neutral mask pose a series of complex questions to the performer: and demand a state of not knowing.

- This thesis represents the first formal *Practice as Research* PhD to explore mask construction as a means of developing self-knowledge. Its methodological approach highlights the building of masks as a means of shadow projection, enabling the sculptors to develop a better understanding of their own "personal myth".

- By critically engaging with the existing literature on the history and the diversity of practical applications of the use of mask construction as a therapeutic modality, this thesis offers two case studies that evidence this methodological approach while working with two established institutions that offer services to individuals who have experienced homelessness: Cardboard Citizens and St. Mungo's Broadway Recovery College.

- This research outlines an emerging mask praxis that does not hide from personal conflicts, complexes, or neuroses, but rather embraces them and allows them to be the source of theatrical creation.

This thesis will offer a number of distinct contributions to knowledge. As a whole, it represents the first critique of the Lecoq tradition to adopt a psychological critical framework. It highlights the pedagogy's insistence on playfulness over psychological complexity, and, through a *Practice as Research* methodology, offers a specific means of addressing that critique. It represents the first critical text to examine the link between the teachings of Lecoq and the theories of Jung, and therefore sheds new light on a mask pedagogy that has been one of the most influential in the twentieth century. No work to date has examined the connection between Lecoq's ideals of permanencies and Carl Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious, though Lecoq himself is aware of the similarities between his own theory of a universal poetic sense and Jung's concept of a collective unconscious (Lecoq 2000: 168) (See Chapter 1, p. 47-57).

Chapter 1 not only challenges Lecoq's negative view of "psychology", but argues that it is an essential element of the pedagogy. In doing so, I articulate a new five-step progression within neutral mask praxis, a journey that seeks to acquire knowledge of an unconscious landscape within the performer, through an encounter with an archetypal Self. The chapter underscores the contributions of Thomas Prattki, former pedagogical director of the Lecoq school in Paris and founder of LISPA, who has adapted Lecoq's model to include elements of psychological individuation.

Highlighting the symbolic elements within the neutral mask, Chapter 2 contains the first "amplification" of the neutral mask itself, the cornerstone of the Lecoq tradition, linking the object with pre-existing cultural and archetypal associations. It draws a connection between the mask and major mythological motifs: *ex nihilo* creation myths, specifically Marie-Louise von Franz's "Cosmogonic Awakening" as demonstrated in the Inuit tale of Father Raven (von Franz 1995: 29); the Hindu concept of Ātman and its union with Brahman as articulated in the Upanishads (Krause 1925: 81); anattā and the Buddhist ideal of "no-self" as described in the Satipatthana Sutta (Analayo 2003: 4); and finally, the Campbellian hero's journey (outlined in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949)).

In Chapter 3, the thesis becomes the first formal *Practice as Research* PhD to explore mask construction as a means of developing self-knowledge. Its methodology highlights the building of masks as a means of shadow projection, enabling the sculptors to develop a better understanding of their own "personal myth". This research outlines an emerging mask praxis that does not hide from personal conflicts, complexes, or neuroses, but rather embraces them and allows them to be the source of theatrical creation.

In Chapter 4, I explore mask construction as a means of developing a new piece of actor created theatre, *The Marked* (2016), which premiered at the Camden People's Theatre in January. In conjunction with the project, I developed a number of workshop series on mask construction with two institutions that support elements of London's homeless community: Cardboard Citizens and St. Mungo's Broadway Recovery College. As a means of developing a praxis that speaks directly to personal complexes, this chapter examines the use of mask within therapeutic settings.

Finally, Chapter 5 seeks to address questions that have arisen during the course of this research, specifically relating to the performance of a mask. By highlighting the work of Young-Laughlin and Laughlin (1988), who argue that a mask must be viewed from within its cultural "nest" in order to understand its cosmological function, Chapter 5 looks at the construction of various "nests" that surround not only Lecoq's mask series, but also those masks built by actors and non-actors throughout this thesis, as well as the use of mask within Theatre Témoin's performances of *The Marked*.

Methodology

I have adopted the "multi-modal epistemological model of *Practice as Research* (*PaR*)", as described by Robin Nelson, conceived of as a triangle defined by three corners: *Know-How*, *Know-What*, and *Know-That* (Nelson 2013). Within Nelson's triangle, one finds *arts praxis*, or 'theory imbricated within practice' (Nelson 2013: 37). *Know-How* is equated with tacit knowledge or the embodied knowledge of the artist. Nelson describes the *Know-What* as 'tacit knowledge made explicit through critical reflection'. Finally, Nelson's *Know-That* acts as a conceptual framework of

the research. Each of the elements is not an end in and of itself; they work in unison, each axis of the triangle supporting the other two.

My *Know-How*, or tacit knowledge, draws specifically on my training in the Lecoq tradition while studying at the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). It calls upon my experiences as a devising actor who has developed over 20 original works of theatre. It brings to this thesis the hands of a mask maker, and a body that has been influenced by the masks of Lecoq; however, having studied the Lecoq pedagogy at LISPA, I offer an important distance from the master teacher himself. My training, under the direction of Thomas Prattki, represents a developmental leap, a genealogical shift in theoretical framework, combining the Lecoq approach to mask with Prattki's interest in Jung's process of individuation. This critical distinction, the foundation of my own embodied knowledge, offers me a unique positioning from which to address my critique of Lecoq.

My *Know-That*, or conceptual framework, has drawn on three sources: 1) The existing literature dedicated to the work of Lecoq and those contemporary teachers who have been evolving his pedagogical approach to masks. 2) The literature on myth, with special interest in the psychological interpretation of myth offered by C.G. Jung, Joseph Campbell and James Hillman. Jung's method of psychic amplification, the elaboration of symbols generated by what he described as the transcendent function, will ground my analysis of mask. 3) An anthropological study of the mask/myth relationship, exploring the writing of John Emigh, Deborah Bell, David Napier, Charles Laughlin and Jodi Young-Laughlin, and Claude Levi-Strauss.

Finally, my *Know-What*, or 'tacit knowledge made explicit through critical reflection', has involved the making of masks over the course of four years at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. I have been building masks, on my own and in groups, without attempting to recreate a specific mask from any established "classical" or "traditional myth" (i.e. the Greek tragic masks, or the Balinese Barong). Instead I have attempted building masks through a process which Carl Jung described as an "active imagination". This involves beginning the construction procedure from an unconscious place and then moving towards the conscious. The process, outlined in detail in Chapter 3, "Sculpting (and staging) a Personal Myth", critically examines the process I have undertaken in order to develop a mask praxis that addresses the personal complexes of the actor creator.

Adapting Nelson's model of *PaR* towards my own research questions

My multi-modal approach to *PaR* will explore the merging of two methodological lines: Lecoq's study of physical dynamics and a Jungian approach to unconscious material. To do this I am following the Jungian methodological model articulated by Eloisa Penna (2004), which formulates a two-part process of 1) symbol creation and apprehension, through active imagination, followed by 2) symbol analysis and interpretation, through symbolic amplification. This, Penna argues, is the Jungian method of acquiring self-knowledge. My own process will then 3) explore that

knowledge within a performance context. However, through critical engagement with those performances, I return to mask construction with new insights and again begin the process of internal exploration.

Phase I: method of mask construction

I argue that mask construction is itself a means of acquiring knowledge and of rigorously testing theories. Mask construction has become my method of approaching Nelson's *PaR* methodology. While constructing a mask I am challenging theories about what constitutes a mask, what the meaning of a mask may be, and what criteria guide my own mask construction. Within the activity of building a mask, I am confronted with the question: what is the myth behind the object I am making? Masks are derived from, and reflect back, a worldview; specifically, we find that through construction of masks, one is able to form a concrete psychological projection[6]. The mask itself becomes an artifact of a time, a place, a person, and a set of theories or beliefs. This artifact can then be analysed as a concrete element of data. While performance is ethereal, the tangible masks remain as documentation of the event. Within my own approach to PaR, I allow for a widening theoretical framework to deepen my understanding of mask construction. Conversely, through critical reflection, I use the practice to deepen my understanding of the theory. This results in a dialogical relationship, a non-linear movement among theory, practice, and critical reflection.

My research did not set out to be a psychological examination from the onset; indeed, submerged within the "anti-psychological" tradition of Lecoq, I rigorously avoided those aspects of the process. It began simply through a method of mask construction. For the first two years of graduate study I gave myself the task of making one mask each month. At the onset, the research could be defined as "Practice-led-Research"; however, as the theoretical basis broadened I found myself folding Jungian theories into that emerging praxis.

> *Example: When I began my studies I viewed mask construction from a purely Lecoqian perspective, interpreting masks as structured dynamic forces in opposition (pushes and pulls), with no hidden symbolic meaning. The masks I constructed were therefore intended to be dynamic: clean, bold and sharp. My approach to the wearing of a mask was derived from that same thinking, allowing the mask to shape my body and my view of character and movement through physical imbalances. Once formed, however, I critically engaged with these masks: asking what I had really built. Having widened my theoretical framework to include some key concepts from Jungian analysis, I now interpret these same masks as aspects of my personal psyche: a shadow*

[6] Projection refers to the process of constellating unconscious thoughts and feelings on an external object. Identifying projections is thereby a means of understanding unconscious material. Individuation is predicated on the "withdrawal of projections", a removal of the personal shadings which the individual has put on the object.

> *projection. I recognize my own personal conflicts within the conflicts of the masks I build. I see my personal psychodynamics within the physical dynamics of the masks: an amplification of psychodynamics in physical form. This has altered my own approach to mask construction, asking me to go deeper into my unconscious. Where once I was concerned with clarity and simplicity, with boldness, with making a mask that was clean and would "play", my practice has evolved. I allow for more mess. I take greater care not to jump to a conclusion about what I see, to bore deeper: in short, I have been trying to allow for a less conscious approach to my own construction. (Will Pinchin: personal reflection, November 2013)*

This deepening understanding of the relationship among practice, theory, and critical reflection – a process that at times allows practice to lead while at other times rigorously questioning that practice — is in my view the essence of Nelson's model of *PaR* and of arts praxis.

Phase II: applying a Jungian critical framework

Chapter One offers a detailed Jungian examination of Lecoq-based mask praxis. Lecoq was aware of the potential connections between his teaching and the theories of Jung (2000: 168). In this section, I would like to highlight this connection by investigating their shared areas of interest. In this way, I hope to demonstrate that the Lecoq tradition holds a great deal of similarity to the field of Jungian depth psychology. What I am calling a Jungian critical framework in this thesis is an investigation of certain key Lecoqian practices as understood through the lens of particular Jungian theories.

Having embraced some of the theories and methods of classical Jungian psychology, I suggest that my approach to mask construction begins as an "active imagination"[7], a period of time spent without conscious control over the clay[8]. I now view these masks as projected aspects of my personal shadow, each reflecting a part of me that I do not outwardly present to the world. The masks I have produced are not universal, heroic or neutral. They present a study of my own vulnerabilities, and a performance of these masks exposes my own fragilities.

The next step within my research practice was to critically analyse how I interpret and approach my masks (those already removed from the clay mould and painted). Where is the myth? Supported by the theories of Jung, I examined each mask as a

[7] "Active imagination" has been a contentious technique within Jungian circles, proposing questions regarding the degree of variance from Jung's original methodological approach. Barbara Hannah argues that Jung should receive credit for "discovering, not inventing Active Imagination" arguing that "active imagination is a form of meditation which man has used, at least from the dawn of history, if not earlier, as a way of learning to know his God or gods" (Hannah 1981: 3).

[8] I attempt to spend at least three minutes simply moving the clay around. From the chaos of the clay, I begin to locate features (a pair of eyes, or a nose), some sign of life. From there I begin to look for physical dynamics, to clarify the sculpture within (see DVD PowerPoint, slide 6).

symbol and, therefore, an element of psychological data[9]. I have followed Eloisa Penna's analysis of Jungian methodological approach. In "Methodological Perspectives in C.G. Jung's Collected Works" (2004), Penna articulates a two-stage process of symbol apprehension or collection, followed by symbol interpretation. She argues that symbols are developed by the union of ego-consciousness with the unconscious through Jung's "transcendent function". This symbol must then be understood by consciousness, and to do that Jung offers a process of symbol elaboration known as "amplification". The amplification of psychic material is achieved by linking the symbol with pre-existing archetypal material: folktales, literature, art, folklore and finally, mythology.

> The process of elaborating symbols provides knowledge, since, through the process, aspects of the unconscious or existential reality, previously unknown to the ego, become part of the 'ego-consciousness system'. In this way consciousness is amplified, which, in scientific terms is the same as knowledge accumulation, and in analytic psychological terms, is the same as the progress of the individuation process. (Penna 2004: 18)

My hypothesis was that through symbolic elaboration, what Jung referred to as amplification, I could fuse the playfulness of the Lecoqian approach with the personal vulnerabilities associated with these masks. If I could shift my own interpretation towards the mythic, I could fuse the personal with the archetypal, thus creating a symbolic understanding that is both personal and archetypal. I aim to construct a mask praxis that is not only "playful", but also directly addresses the personal complexes of the individuals who create. I argue that these differing viewpoints, an interaction between theory and practice—the theories of Jung interacting with the practices of Lecoq—can be drawn together to make actor created theatre that is not only *by* the actor creator but also *from and about* her/him.

I have adopted the method of symbol amplification. For each mask I collected references from external sources: images of masks used throughout the world that correlate with the same facial features. I studied the stories associated with those pre-existing masks. I link the characters created from clay with mythological figures, fusing personal narrative with that of the mythically amplified material, I recognize that the myths I highlight are culturally specific, and, while I do not aim to whitewash with a universalist brush, these associations have enriched my understanding of each specific mask. The myths associated with each individual mask have textured these objects with a rich sense of meaning, and a deeper understanding. Like Eldredge, I am looking at mythological images in other cultural contexts as a useful *global*

[9] Jung argued that dream symbolism had an important ontological value: the dream was a psychological fact; therefore, a study of dream symbolism was an empirical, scientific endeavour. This has been undercut by some of the more recent phenomenological studies that are being undertaken by post-Jungians like Richard Brooke, James Hillman, and Robert Romanyshyn; who have challenged that scientific empiricism. However, I am adapting Jung's argument by stating that these masks have an ontological value as psychological facts. The study of mask constructed in this way becomes a means of understanding the personal shadow and complexes of the maker.

understanding of the role of masks in performance and its many different associations to my own culture (Lecoq-based mask praxis). In so doing, this brief investigation of the relationship between masks and cultures has caused me to reconsider the relationship between my masks and my culture specifically. In a similar fashion, Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert in "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis" have argued that cross-cultural comparisons help "to enable a strategic way of rethinking the local and context specific through the global, and vice versa" (Lo & Gilbert 2002: 48).

Phase III: Amplification within performance practice

The amplification process resulted in not only self-knowledge but also a merger of the extraverted approach of Lecoq with the introverted exploration of Jung. The final step of my adaptation of Nelson's methodological system has been to critically analyse a process of fusing two opposing critical frameworks. Within the context of regular theatrical performances, I have attempted to place my own masks (interpreted through Jung's symbolic amplification), into performance contexts. I have participated in the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama's annual festival of performance praxis, entitled *Collisions* (2012, 2013, 2014); In Chapter 3, I critically analyse a process of "successive failures" that I have experienced throughout this thesis, in an attempt to stage a "personal myth". Finally, I have developed the masks for a devised production, *The Marked*, heavily influenced through workshops with individuals who have experienced homelessness. The piece toured homeless shelters and hostels throughout 2016 and, with the help of the Wellcome Trust, was a part of that summer's Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Defining myth

Just as a definition of "mask" is essential at the onset of this study, equally, an understanding of the term "myth" is central. In his introduction to *Theories of Mythology* (2005), Eric Csapo argues that to begin with a definition is to begin with a conclusion. He suggests that:

> definition is never the innocent first step in a process of empirical discovery that it is sometimes made to seem: it is rather always the final precipitate of an already elaborate theory. To begin with a definition is therefore in an important sense to begin at the end, and to urge acceptance of a position before presenting the arguments of the evidence. (Csapo 2005:1)

Here Csapo's words echo in many ways my own experience; they underscore the challenges I have faced in writing this thesis, and highlight my own struggle to position myself in and around the term.

Adopting the title "Myth in Contemporary Mask Praxis", it is impossible to ignore the central question: *what is a myth?* Csapo's work attests to the number of divergent

theories, functions, and uses attributed to "myth" within diverse fields of scholarly thought. I am also acutely aware that any answer to the question positions my view of masks within a narrow field that is by no means exhaustive to the breadth and scope of the term. An examination of "myth within contemporary mask praxis", could equally mean a study of the underlying semiotic systems, an exploration of the rituals that grounds a community of devising actors, or the structural basis of the collaborative process. For this thesis, however, I have chosen to adopt a psychological view of myth, building on the theories of Jung.

The term "myth" implies a lie/truth duality. This tension is placed within a historical context by Robert Segal, Jungian scholar and professor of religion, who attributes these contradictory views to a "clear cut divide" between nineteenth and twentieth century understandings of myth. Segal describes how anthropologists like Edward Taylor (1832-1917) and James Frazer (1854-1941) presented an interpretation of myth as a 'primitive counterpart to science', advancing a definition of myth as an out-dated means of understanding natural phenomena. This view, Segal argues, becomes untenable in the face of modern science, and in so doing, advances the definition of myth as a lie or "misrepresentation of the truth" (Segal 2008: 91).

Segal (2008) goes on to describe how myth and science became reconciled in the twentieth century as the emerging science of psychology, led by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, 'recharacterized *myth* as other than a *literal explanation* of the physical world', and began to view myth as means of understanding man himself (Segal 2008: 92). Segal presents the work of Freud and Jung not only in opposition to each other, but more broadly against the nineteenth century view of myth, stating: 'As much as these two differ from each other, both deem the subject matter of myth the human mind and deem the function of myth the experience of that mind' (Segal 2008: 92). The study of myth offered these two men a means of accessing the unconscious psyche that was totally removed from the 'primitive science' of Taylor and Frazer.

This brief contextualization of the term, however, leads back to the original question: what is a "myth"? Jung's (1959) own words not only reject the nineteenth-century view of myth presented by Taylor and Frazer, but also position myth as deriving from the collective aspect of the unconscious psyche. In reaction to this nineteenth-century thought, Jung states, 'The primitive mentality does not *invent* myths, it *experiences* them. Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings, and anything but allegories of physical processes' (Jung 1959: 154). In Jung's volume, *On the Nature of the Psyche* (1960), he continues:

> We can see almost daily in our patients how mythical fantasies arise: they are not thought up, but present themselves as images or chains of ideas that force their way out of the unconscious, and when they are recounted they often have the character of connected episodes resembling mythical dramas. That is how myths arise, and that is the reason why the fantasies from the unconscious have so much in common with primitive myths. But in so far as the myth is nothing but a projection from the unconscious and not a

> conscious invention at all, it is quite understandable that we should everywhere come upon the same myth-motifs, and that myths actually represent typical psychic phenomena. (Jung 1960a: 44)

Applying Jung's understanding of the collective aspects of the psyche, arising as projections of the unconscious and pointing towards shared "myth-motifs", allows me to draw connections to the mask praxis of Jacques Lecoq in a number of important ways. Lecoq's insistence on an international student body evidences his own interest in transcending ties to nationalism and looking for what is universally shared (see Chapter 2, p 63-64). His interest in looking for a "universal language of gesture", in similar fashion, points to the potential links with a collective human psyche.

Finally, in this thesis I aim to challenge Lecoq's *tabula rasa* approach, his search for a new blank page. Jung famously broke with Freud at least in some measure because of this theory, and with it he grounds his view of the collective unconscious. In so doing, Jung was refuting Freud's concept of the *tabula rasa*, that we are born a blank slate and that the unconscious is simply the stockpile of repressed experiences we have had since birth. Jung, in contrast, rejects the idea of the *tabula rasa*, arguing that we hold a shared psychic history with all mankind. This is described by Anthony Stevens (2006), who states: 'he rejected the tabula rasa theory of human psychological development, wholeheartedly embracing the notion that evolutionary pressures had determined the basic structures and function of the human psyche' (Stevens 2006: 74), namely the archetypes that reside within the collective unconscious.

In addition to this, I have chosen a Jungian critical framework for two important reasons derived from my experience with the Lecoq pedagogy and its use of mask. First, this thesis builds upon the training I received at the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA), under the direction of Thomas Prattki. LISPA offers an interesting combination of the Lecoqian pedagogical approach fused with Prattki's own interest in Gestalt therapy and Jung's process of individuation. My interest in a Jungian approach emerged from the fusion of the work of Lecoq and Prattki: it therefore allows me to build on developing praxis at the cutting edge of practical research. A Jungian critical framework allows me to position myself within a developing genealogy.

Second, one of the central arguments of this thesis focuses on a debate within existing interpretations of the neutral mask: asking whether it is a tool dedicated towards the cleansing of the actor, who thereby reflects the dynamics of an external world; or towards a universal and timeless man/woman who lives within each of us. A Jungian critique allows for the possibility of reinterpreting the neutral mask as a means of assisting an internal process of self-exploration, confrontation, and, through that process, theatrical creation. As outlined in Chapter 1, by using the teaching I received from Thomas Prattki I am able to antagonise Lecoq's teaching by viewing his pedagogy through established Jungian theory that will focus on what I argue is Lecoq's shadow: psychology.

Jung's model of the structure of the psyche

While the term "psychology" is colloquially defined as the study of the mind or behaviour, within the tradition of analytic psychology it is viewed quite literally as the study of *psyche* (soul, self or spirit). Carl Jung offers a somewhat tautological definition when in *Psychological Types* (1971) he writes:

> I have been compelled, in my investigations into the structure of the unconscious, to make a conceptual distinction between *soul* and *psyche*. By psyche, I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious. By soul, on the other hand, I understand a clearly demarcated functional complex that can best be described as a 'personality'. (Jung 1971: 425).

In his text, "The Structure of the Psyche" (1927), Jung offers an image of his model of the psyche, which he divides into three parts: consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. This structure is occasionally depicted as a pyramid whose tip represents consciousness, the smallest section of the whole. The diagram then expands downwards through the widening layer of personal unconscious, until, finally, the base and widest layer is perceived as the collective unconscious.

For Jungian phenomenologist Roger Brooke (2015), the term consciousness:

> refers to the range of experience of which a person is aware despite the changing perceptual field from moment to moment; this range of awareness tends to coalesce to provide the individual with a sense of continuity from day to day. This coalescence can be understood as a function of, or perhaps preferably as a reflection of, the ego, or ego-complex. This can be defined as the centre of consciousness, the 'I' that thinks, sees, makes conscious decisions, is concerned with questions of personal identity, and so on. (Brooke 2015: 15)

One of the main intentions of the triangular diagrammatical model is that it suggests the limited scope of consciousness, in comparison with the breadth of the unconscious elements. Like the visible aspect of an iceberg, more sits below the surface than can be seen above.

The personal unconscious, residing directly below consciousness, contains aspects of consciousness that have been forgotten or repressed:

> The personal unconscious consists firstly of all those contents that became unconscious either because they lost their intensity and were forgotten or

> because consciousness was withdrawn from them (repression), and secondly of contents, some of them sense-impressions, which never had sufficient intensity to reach consciousness but have somehow entered the psyche. (Jung 1927: 151)

While many of the ideas surrounding the personal unconscious hold similarities with Sigmund Freud's theory of the unconscious, there are two important aspects that differentiate Jung from Freud: first, the "personal shadow", and second, the "complex".

Jung defines the shadow as 'the thing a person has no wish to be' (Jung 1966: 262); therefore, the shadow becomes "the repository of all the aspects of a person that are unacceptable or distasteful to them" (Casement 2006: 94). The personal shadow may not contain mythic images, nor even archetypal images, but it can often be the bridge to them. The personal shadow, residing between the individual's consciousness and the collective unconscious, becomes the bridge between personal and collective aspects of the unconscious psyche.

Jung describes a complex as 'the image of a certain psychic situation which is strongly accentuated emotionally and is, moreover, incompatible with the habitual attitudes of consciousness' (Jung 1934: 95-96). Samuels (1986) defines a complex as:

> a collection of images and ideas, clustered round a core derived from one or more archetypes, and characterized by a common emotional tone. When they come into play (become 'constellated') complexes contribute to behaviour and are marked by AFFECT whether a person is conscious of them or not. They are particularly useful in the analysis of neurotic symptoms. (Samuels 1986: 34)

It is important to note that the complex seems to reside outside of consciousness, having its own independence. Jung's view of the complex as an emotional cluster, which resides within the personal unconscious and yet contains an archetypal core, allows the individual an access point to archetypal motifs.

Finally, the collective unconscious is the area of the psyche which Jung describes as being inherited. Christopher Hauke (2006) argues that the collective unconscious is actually defined by the fact that it is not derived from the lived experience of the individual. He states:

> The collective unconscious is the part of the psyche that is *not* a personal acquisition and has *not* been acquired through personal experience. Its contents have *never* been in consciousness – they are not repressed or forgotten – and they are *not acquired* but owe their existence to a form of heredity. (Hauke 2006: 66 - 67)

For Jung, the collective unconscious consists of archetypal structures which form the basis of myth:

> The collective unconscious – so far as we can say anything about it at all – appears to consist of mythological motifs or primordial images, for which reason the myths of all nations are its real exponents. In fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious. (Jung 1927: 152)

A Literature and Practice Review

This literature review examines the major voices within the developing discourse on neutral mask praxis. It will outline the key arguments within the existing literature dedicated to the neutral mask, positioning each on a spectrum between introverted and extraverted approaches. First, it explores the mask as a tool for stripping away the interiority of the performer: an object that allows for a distanced objectivity, developing a *tabula rasa*, which eventually permits the construction of character. Secondly, and conversely, it presents the ideal of a universal and timeless man or woman who exists within each of us, allowing for an internal journey of self-confrontation and personal growth. In short, the tension lies between extraverted and introverted interpretations of the mask, a tension that is central to the Lecoq tradition. Finally, by problematizing the spectrum, using the existing literature to evidence how the neutral mask holds a tension of opposites, uniting conscious and unconscious, internal and external, I argue that the mask forms a symbol: a "living third thing" through a process Jung referred to as the transcendent function. This symbolic understanding of the neutral mask is in direct conflict with Lecoq's (2000) assertion that "the neutral mask is not a symbolic mask" (Lecoq 2000: 40), and forms the basis for my critique of Lecoq and of my own mask praxis.

In *The Moving Body*, Lecoq articulates an overtly physical approach to mask. He rejects any psychological or mythological interpretation of his pedagogical cornerstone by boldly asserting: "the neutral mask is not a symbolic mask" (Lecoq 2000: 40). This project, however, argues that the neutral mask inevitably fuses both aspects – external (conscious) with the internal (unconscious) – and in so doing forms a symbol that underlies the whole of Lecoq's pedagogy. The existing literature on Lecoq grapples with this paradox in an awkward fashion. Those who have researched Lecoq find themselves positioned on either end of the spectrum while, tenuously, referencing the opposing understanding.

Creating a spectrum: introversion and extraversion within neutral mask pedagogy

In his doctoral dissertation, *Mask praxis: theories and practices in modern drama* (2004), Malcolm Yates Knight articulates a divide between "active" and "passive" approaches to mask praxis. He argues that:

> modern theatrical mask praxis bifurcates philosophically into two poles: 1. passive retreat into private faces, personifications and projections, inner worlds and dream role-play; and 2. active advance into social life through the public masks of ritual, myth, spectacle, satire and the inherent struggle with real material problems. Theories about the work of modern theatre companies, directors, playwrights and actors can be analysed within the spectrum between these two poles. (Knight 2004: 22)

If we use Knight's spectrum when analysing contemporary critiques of Lecoqian mask pedagogy, we can chart a movement from public to private, from extraversion to introversion. While it is informative that Knight places myth and ritual within the element of "real material problems", I would argue that myth and ritual sit on the liminal axis where both the "passive retreat" and the "active advance" intersect.

It must be stressed that Lecoq was constantly urging his students to focus on external stimuli. His approach to mimesis, collective creation, and personal development or creative growth is based almost exclusively on the study of physical dynamics that, he argued, exist in nature. This thesis will examine three primary sources as central reference points when analysing Lecoq's own theories: *The Moving Body: teaching creative theatre* (2000), *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* (2006), and the 1999 documentary film *The Two Journeys of Jacques Lecoq*. These sources represent the known literature offered directly from Lecoq himself. The seminal work for this thesis is Lecoq's, *The Moving Body* (2000), translated by David Bradby, in which Lecoq offers an in-depth outline of the pedagogical journey presented at his school in Paris.

Lecoq insisted on an overtly extraverted approach to teaching and theatre making, and his use of mask can be seen as supporting Knight's extraverted pole. He adopts the neutral mask as the means of creating a "blank page" or *tabula rasa*. Neutrality, in this way, can point towards the removal of internal conflicts or psychology, in favour of the mimetic representation of the external world, a depersonalization of the body. Sears Eldredge (1978) offers what is arguably the most extraverted analysis of the neutral mask. In his 1978 article, "Actor-Training in the Neutral Mask" – written in collaboration with Hollis W. Huston, and republished in the second edition of Phillip Zarrilli's *Acting (Re)Considered* (2002) – Eldredge outlines in detail Lecoq's methodological approach to the neutral mask. Eldredge avoids the term "universal" completely; his interest is directed wholly towards the removal of personal mannerisms and physical conflicts within the body. He is one of the few practitioners to cite Lecoq as directly using the term *tabula rasa*, and his work could be described as the most concrete example of this argument. Eldredge's essay does not attempt to link the mask with any form of authorship or theatrical creation; the text focuses exclusively on movement analysis.

Joan Sherlie, Founding Artistic Director of Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, has equated neutral mask work to her own study of the Alexander Technique and its approach to physical alignment. Sherlie describes the mask as a "diagnostic tool" for the performer (J. Sherlie, personal communication, December 31, 2012). Both Eldredge and Sherlie account for the mask as a means of removing

the physical conflicts within the performer's body through a form of somatic calibration: neutrality (see Chapter 2, p.65).

Bari Rolfe (1977) is the first to offer the introverted interpretation of the mask. Perhaps it is because Rolfe separates herself from Lecoq through the act of renaming the neutral mask, which she calls 'the universal mask', allowing her a drastic reinterpretation. She argues that the mask relates our own movements to those we share with all mankind:

> The universal mask is an inner one. It represents that which human beings have in common, without the reactions and attitudes with which individuals relate to the world. We start from birth, or before, to cope in our various ways; those ways become our personalities, individual and unique. But at each person's centre remains an inner core of what we share with all humankind – the same senses, physiology, and survival needs… It represents what we all have in common. (Rolfe 1977: 17-18)

Rolfe's text, *Behind the Mask* (1977), offers just the beginning of a larger exploration of mask as means of introspection. She does not relate her ideas to any of the established ends, such as actor created theatre, performing a character, or therapy. Rolfe's "inner core" suggests a Jungian concept of Self, something of great interest to this research; however, hers is large brushstroke theory. Rolfe's writings do not examine this line of thinking or analyse its ramifications.

Rolfe and Eldredge can be seen as presenting most clearly the two opposing poles: an extraverted *tabula rasa* or an introverted universal and timeless man or woman. Between them, we can position most of the existing literature on Lecoq and the neutral mask.

Positioning key arguments

Mira Felner's (1985) exploration of modern mime, *The Apostles of Silence*, positions Lecoq's work within the wider field of French mime. Her text draws comparisons between Lecoq's theories and those of Edward Gordon Craig, Jacques Copeau, and Lecoq's contemporary Etienne Decroux. Felner attempts to link the mimetic tradition with the larger movement of modernism (see Chapter 2, p. 66-69). She offers an important understanding of the neutral mask by going one step further in examining the repercussions of cleansing the body – for Felner the mask also removes time. Her famous statement – 'Gesture precedes knowledge. Gesture precedes thought. Gesture precedes language' – attests to the larger implications of a *tabula rasa* approach (Felner 1985: 150). For Felner, Lecoq's use of mask speaks to a removal of cultural norms and codifications, of anything the actor believes he or she may know or understand. Felner argues that the body and its movements form a universal language of gesture.

Drawing on Felner's writing, Simon Murray (2002), in the chapter "'Tout Bouge': Jacques Lecoq, Modern Mime and 'the Zero Body': A Pedagogy for the Creative Actor", outlines his own theory of 'returning to the Zero Body'. He brings an emphasis on starting with gesture into the arena of actor created theatre by linking neutral mask praxis with authorship. Citing Felner, Murray somewhat derisively associates the mask with contemporary primitivism. He claims:

> In searching for an asocial, acultural gestural language (*mime de fond*) Lecoq implicitly would seem to assign a universal and timeless quality to 'primitive' movement. However, Lecoq is primarily a teacher and someone whose reputation is linked not to theatre productions he has directed or scripts he has written, but to a school. There is little evidence that he advocates a spiritual celebration of the 'primitive' as a source material for the productions created by his students, past or present. (Murray 2002: 28)

In *The Neutral Mask: its origins and its applications to the creative processes of the actor* (2010), Gillian Arrighi draws on the work of cultural anthropologist Victor Turner in examining the liminal underpinnings of the neutral mask. Citing Turner, Arrighi argues in favour of adopting the term "performative liminality", replacing the term "neutral". The mask, for Arrighi, acts as a threshold between the everyday existence of the actor and the act of performance. She argues that the neutral mask presents no "other", no character or role to adopt. She goes on to describe the mask as opening up 'a place between who I am, and who I am becoming' (Arrighi 2010: 40-41). In Arrighi's model we see the mask as the mediating tool, the metaphorical threshold between self and other; however, this other is not an external character, but a transformation of the actor him or herself. Arrighi develops an interesting comparison between the work of Eugenio Barba, in his study of "pre-expressive states", and Lecoq's neutral mask. Arrighi's understanding of performative liminality stands, in my opinion, in the middle of the spectrum within contemporary critiques of Lecoq.

Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow (2016) offer an important perspective on neutral mask praxis in *Improvisation in Drama, Theatre and Performance: History, Practice, Theory,* where they adopt the term "*disponibilité"* as the 'state of armed neutrality from which all movements are equally possible' (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 222). In this way, the term encapsulates the intention of the neutral mask:

> Disponibilité suggests not just a theory but an experiential condition – a way of being which can be sought and found. It is a condition of being centred (in oneself) and balanced, ready to go in any appropriate direction. We might translate it as neutrality, but in English this has unfortunate connotations of asensuality and of being disengaged… In this state the performer is fully inhabiting the world outside and the world within her body… as such it pre-eminently *embodies* the state of existentialism. (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 223)

Frost and Yarrow's work, like Arrighi's, highlights the connection between Lecoq's understanding of neutrality and Barba's pre-expressive states. Ralph Yarrow has

expanded upon these concepts of neutrality in his own study of consciousness. His article, "'Neutral' Consciousness in the Experience of Theatre" (1986), examines Lecoq's understanding of neutrality in several heightened states of consciousness. Quite interesting for this thesis is his discussion of "Unity Consciousness or Vedanta", a subject I explore later (see Chapter 2, p. 72-80).

Ashley Wain's (2005) essay, "Myth, Archetype, and the Neutral Mask: Actor Training and Transformation in light of the work of Joseph Campbell and Stanislav Grof", examines the mythological underpinnings of the neutral mask by associating it with both Joseph Campbell's hero's journey and Stanislav Grof's examination of "hylotropic" and the "holotropic" modes of consciousness. Wain documents the work of his teacher, David Latham, who has explored the mask as access point to heightened states of consciousness.

Some practitioners have adapted the neutral mask for different purposes, exploring the therapeutic aspects of the object. Anthony Shrubsall's (2002) essay, "Jos Houben: Understanding the Neutral Mask", documents the research of one of the Lecoq school's current faculty members, Jos Houben, exploring body image by combining the neutral mask with the Feldenkrais Method. Csilla Przibislawsky (2000), in her PhD dissertation "Authentic neutral mask: a new method of drama therapy", examines the application of the neutral mask within a form of expressive improvisation called "Authentic Movement". Derived from a Jungian critical framework, Przibislawsky's work offers a potential bridge into a Jungian interpretation of the neutral mask.

My own teacher, Thomas Prattki, acting as the pedagogical director of the Lecoq school in Paris between Lecoq's death in 1999 and the founding of his own school in 2003, has adapted Lecoq's teachings to include a Jungian critical framework. Prattki brings his training in somatic bodywork and guided drawing, as well as his study of gestalt psychology, to his teaching at the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). For Prattki, the two-year pedagogical journey encompasses a process of self-discovery and individuation. He rejects the *tabula rasa* interpretation of the mask, exploring the mask as means of accessing the personal conflicts as well as the unconscious terrain of the individual. Where Lecoq avoids psychological interpretation or introspection, Prattki views his institution as 'a centre for the holistic "development of Self"'; LISPA describes itself as a laboratory 'of artistic research, innovation and individuation' (LISPA 2013). While Prattki adopts a similar pedagogical form – the same five masks, twenty movements, student "creation" or *autocours* – the goal of the school is the individuation of the actor creator. Prattki walks the line between therapy and artistic creation (see Chapter 1, p. 54-56). Prattki's teachings and his critique of Lecoq have supported my own view of neutral mask praxis, and are most notably seen in my psychological view of neutral mask praxis outlined in Chapter 1.

It should be noted that almost all of the literature on the use of mask within the Lecoq tradition explores the neutral mask to the exclusion of all others. The most notable exception is the essay "The masks of Jacques Lecoq" by John Wright (2002),

who outlines a developmental journey through the five central masks traditionally offered within the Lecoq pedagogy. Wright's essay represents a critical study to invest somewhat equivalent attention to each of Lecoq's five masks (neutral mask, larval mask, expressive mask, Commedia dell'Arte half masks, and the clown nose). I explore these masks in greater depth in Chapter 5, where I examine not only the companies who adopt Lecoq's masks in performance, but also their psychological sequence in a larger series of development. The overwhelming attention within the existing literature which is directed almost exclusively to the neutral mask, as opposed to the totality of the masks used by Lecoq, becomes particularly relevant when examining the issue of monisms inherent within both the Lecoq tradition and Jung's own critical framework (see Chapter 2, p. 82-83).

Problematizing the spectrum: a symbolic union of opposites

When examining the neutral mask, however, we find that the question of external or internal becomes too narrow a framework for understanding its meaning and function. The mask resists simple categorization. Each theorist or practitioner wrestles with an ambivalent tension that defies an overarching definition.

While Sears Eldredge outlines the *tabula rasa* approach in great detail, he acknowledges that the mask holds a tension of opposites: 'Carrying the mask is internal and external, analytic and holistic. The dichotomies of physical and emotional technique are united in a single experience' (Eldredge and Huston 1978: 27). His analysis begins to tackle the thorny issue of identity and personality which, he argues, is inherent within the mask.

> A neutral organism expends only the energy required by the task at hand. Personalities expend that amount of energy and something else besides; personalities are distinguished from each other by the nature of what they add. Therefore, to be a personality, to be oneself even, is not to be neutral. Yet one cannot avoid being oneself. An actor can hope to perform a neutral action, but he cannot be neutral – neutral is a "fulcrum point that doesn't exist". (Eldredge and Huston 1978:21)

The ambiguity between introverted and extraverted approaches to the mask can be seen in stark terms within the work of Bari Rolfe (1977) who, while arguing for an introverted approach, seems to articulate Simon Murray's "zero body" when analysing neutrality of movement. She suggests the mask implies a "zero" point which enables one to interpret movement: a person who is walking "quickly", she argues, demands a predetermined understanding of what a "neutral" walk means. She goes on to describe how 'if the walker were hurrying to avoid a falling object, then the speed would be necessary (appropriate) and therefore neutral' (Rolfe 1977: 20). In this way Rolfe's inner mask closely resembles the *tabula rasa* of Eldredge, a blank page or fulcrum point which enables one to depersonalize movement.

Simon Murray complicates the matter by exploring the neutral mask in relation to authorship. He separates Lecoq from his contemporary Étienne Decroux, describing

their differing approaches to mime:

> for Lecoq, as we have seen, the body (and its movement) *produce thought* and hence the student of theatre must strive for the 'natural' gesture which is uncorrupted by socialized intention, while for Decroux it is *purpose* which determines movement – the body, in other words, *translates* thought. (Murray 2002: 28)

Murray's assertion, that it is the body that 'produces thought', suggests that it is the body itself that is the object of examination, as opposed to the body as subject exploring external stimuli. We can see in Murray's statement an important element of Lecoq's understanding of mime, not simply as an artistic form of expression, but as a methodological means of analysis, a technique for deriving knowledge. Lecoq suggests that, 'Through teaching I have discovered that the body knows things about which the mind is totally ignorant' (Lecoq 2000: 9). Murray's analysis of Lecoq's approach to authorship here highlights a fundamental premise of Lecoq: the body 'produces thought', and mime is a means of accessing that knowledge latent within the body. Murray takes the assertion a step further, demonstrating the need for a 'natural' body that is 'uncorrupted by socialized intention', allowing for an interpretation of the neutral mask as a means of freeing the individual for a study of that internal knowledge (see Chapter 1, p. 44 & Chapter 5, p. 165).

Arrighi's "performative liminality" seems to sit between the extraverted and introverted interpretations of the mask. Her analysis appears to be a subtle attempt to bridge a growing divide within the literature. Arrighi's model, however, doesn't account for why and how that middle ground happens, or for the implications of that liminal space. My own assessment of the neutral mask, building on Arrighi's model, argues that the neutral mask creates a symbol that underscores the entire Lecoq pedagogy. This symbol is created through the union of opposites, through the transcendent function, holding at odds the extraverted approach to mimetic embodiment and the introverted approach to psychic material. The mask becomes a union of the conscious and unconscious, speaking to the conscious removal of physical off-balances, while at the same time pointing towards an unknown within the individual.

'A living third thing'

In this review of the existing literature and practice surrounding Lecoq's use of the neutral mask, I have attempted to evidence the balancing of opposing viewpoints, and a resistance to simple categorizations. I have positioned key arguments between introverted and extraverted, using Malcolm Yates Knight's bifurcated spectrum; however, I would like to suggest that these opposing viewpoints present a tension of opposites that lies at the heart of Jungian psychology, and his theoretical foundation for the formation of symbolic material. Jung argued:

> The shuttling to-and-fro of arguments and affects represents the transcendent function of opposites. The confrontation of the two positions generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living, third thing – not a logical stillbirth in accordance with the principle *tertium non datur* but a movement out of the suspension between opposites, a giving birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation. The transcendent function manifests itself as a quality of conjoined opposites. (Jung 1960:90)

Building on the diversity of understandings surrounding the neutral mask, the aim of the first half of this thesis, will be to re-contextualize the object and argue that the mask itself is indeed highly symbolic. With the neutral mask, Lecoq presents an archetypal symbol of Self, one that draws a connection to mythological motifs from throughout the world: a connection I will explore in depth in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Indeed, this argument is supported by a recent PhD by M. J. Cawson (2012), *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*. Cawson uses Foucault's historiography of "Self" within mask praxis, and without referencing a critique of Lecoq, he argues that *all* masks form a union of "Self" and "Other" through Jung's transcendent function. Though he presents a chapter on Lecoq's neutral mask, Cawson does not explore the symbolic material within the neutral mask and therefore does not present the specific critique that, contrary to any assertion Lecoq himself may have made, the neutral mask is indeed highly symbolic. A study of the symbolic elements within mask praxis highlights a need for a Jungian approach to symbolic amplification – achieved through association with myth – and thereby links the mask with the psyche of the individual. In explicitly making this argument, and by following in the tradition of my teacher, Thomas Prattki, this research takes a radical view of Barba's pre-expressive states: a journey into the unconscious psyche and the development of the actor creator him or her self.

Chapter 1

In the Shadow of the Neutral Mask:

A Jungian examination of Lecoq-based mask praxis

Personal anecdote

On the morning of July 22, 2013, I was presenting my first significant conference paper at the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), and I was truly petrified. The aim of my paper was to examine the connection between the work of my teacher Thomas Prattki, and the theories of C.G. Jung; to describe the therapeutic elements within Lecoq's conception of the neutral mask, and to compare the teachings at the Lecoq school in Paris to that of the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). My working group, Performance and Consciousness, took a short break just before my scheduled presentation, and while I was setting up the PowerPoint a small woman with dark eyeliner walked into the room. I heard her asking a colleague if she had missed the paper on Jacques Lecoq, to which I responded that I would be speaking next. We had a brief chat and she was very affable. After my somewhat shaky delivery of the presentation I had rehearsed countless times, going slightly too fast in order to pack all I had written into the allotted time, there were 10 minutes for questions. The woman's hand shot up. "This nice young man has painted a picture of Lecoq's house from the side. I will paint a picture of the front door!" She then explained that she had been a student of Lecoq's in the 1960's, and she informed the group that I had misrepresented the master teacher. She attempted to describe the function of the neutral mask, and to talk about her many experiences with Lecoq (which were truly fascinating). As others in the room attempted to ask questions, she either added her own comments, or interjected another question. I had inadvertently stepped on a hornet's nest. What was troubling was that the questions seemed to be trying to affirm that she was the expert in the room and that I needed a lesson in Lecoq's work. At the same time, it seemed as if she was implying that the Lecoq tradition was somehow under attack from me (I had yet to complete my MPhil!). There was real emotion in her voice. The encounter shook me greatly. Looking back, the event has been one of the most informative moments in my research. In the calm that followed I found that I was grateful to that woman. First, the confrontation showed me that names really do matter, that people define themselves by master teachers, and questioning Lecoq would lead to questioning all of those who define themselves with that name. Second, Prattki is decidedly not Lecoq, and for both of their sakes, it is important to make the differences between these two absolutely clear, as I had intended but had not. Finally, and most importantly for this chapter, I learned that any psychological interpretation of the work of Lecoq will be met with a full-on resistance. It is seen as an assault on his legacy, a misunderstanding of the man, against the spirit of the teaching. I had met the psychological shadow. (Will Pinchin: February 2015)

Chapter Overview

Jacques Lecoq's aversion to "psychological" acting, and by extension his disinclination to address the wider field of "psychology", defines much of his pedagogical approach to mask. Throughout this chapter I will argue that "psychology" functions as the largest taboo within the Lecoq technique; or, in Jungian terms, I will aim to demonstrate how psychology itself becomes the unconscious shadow within Lecoq's pedagogical approach. Jung defines the shadow as: 'the thing a person has no wish to be' (Jung 1966: 262), therefore the shadow archetype becomes 'the repository of all the aspects of a person that are unacceptable or distasteful to them' (Casement 2006: 94).

Lecoq's interest was directed towards the study of movement. "Psychology" becomes the primary enemy within his teaching system, something which must be overcome in order to liberate the body of the performer and allow him to "play", while, at the same time, liberating the creative actor from the tyranny of the text. Attempts to examine the teachings of Jacques Lecoq through a psychological critical framework are highly problematic, and, as described in the anecdote above, often met with resistance from within the field of Lecoq-based actor created theatre. In the first half of this chapter, I will demonstrate how the neutral mask becomes the primary means of removing a psychological approach to character, thereby becoming the cornerstone of Lecoq's teaching. In order to assess the view of psychology within the Lecoq tradition, I would like to draw a distinction between: first, a psychological approach to acting (in the tradition of Stanislavski and psychological realism) and second, the psychological development of the student him or her self, viewing the training as a form of psychotherapy. Within the existing literature on Lecoq, we see an aversion to both. I will attempt to articulate those concerns, and set up the challenge for addressing the dynamic relationship between Lecoq and psychology.

In the following section, however, I aim to demonstrate how, as with all aspects of the shadow, those elements that are deemed unacceptable or distasteful are indeed aspects of the individual (or in this instance, the pedagogy). Following Jung's conception of the shadow, I will argue that the pedagogy is indeed highly psychological; that in confronting that shadow, those that continue Lecoq's work will be able to generate substantial new knowledge, both of the mask and its function within the individuation of the actor creator.

In order to do this, I draw a number of comparisons between the theories of Lecoq and Jung: specifically, a connection between Jung's theory of a collective unconscious and Lecoq's understanding of a "universal poetic sense", and both men's view of the Self and movement from general to particular which is the key to both Jung's understanding of the individuation process as well as Lecoq's progression through an extended series of masks, from neutral mask to clown nose. In order to demonstrate this progression, I

> *offer a five part (re)evaluation of neutral mask praxis, viewing the process as a journey into the landscape of an unconscious psyche, and thereby an encounter with an archetypal image of Self.*
>
> *My aim is not to poke around for Lecoq's own personal complexes, but to examine a pedagogy which has an ambivalent, and often paradoxical, relationship to psychology: an interest in fostering a personal journey, while at the same time, a refusal to confront anything that is directly particular or personal to that individual. In highlighting this "shadow" aspect of the Lecoq pedagogy, I argue that the tradition offers a highly psychological approach to devised actor created theatre.*

Towards a non-psychological approach to acting

When examining the view of psychology within Lecoq's approach to character, it will be necessary to draw a distinction between his assault on mind-body dualism, and the classical separation of psyche and soma. As Simon Murray makes clear:

> Lecoq's work is an attack on the dualism espoused by the philosopher, Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650): a position which presupposes a body separate and disconnected from mind and spirit. Like many of the great twentieth-century theatre teachers, Lecoq's pedagogy – almost at every stage – challenges this separation. (Murray 2003: 70)

Lecoq's study of movement and gesture, and with it his mask praxis, may be seen as either an attack on Cartesian dualism, or at the very least, a radical preference of soma above psyche. In addition to this, we can see a devaluation of psychology as part of Lecoq's wider re-evaluation of the job of the actor, moving from an interpretative being to an individual whose prime function is to sit at the centre of the creative process. These two distinctions, in my view, form the basis of Lecoq's critique of psychological acting.

In his book *Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach after Stanislavski,* Phillip Zarilli (2009) examines the evolving role of an actor within a post-dramatic paradigm. He argues that developing modes of dramaturgy have altered actor training to the point where "psychology" is no longer adequate:

> However important psychology has been to shaping the dramaturgy of realist and naturalist plays from the late nineteenth through the twentieth centuries, conventional realist approaches to acting and/or textual analysis may be inadequate or even inappropriate to the realization of the dramaturgy and acting tasks that constitute an actor's performance score in a post-dramatic text or performance. I argue here that the "psychological" is no longer—if it ever was—a paradigm with sufficient explanatory and/or practical power and flexibility to fully inform the complexities of the work of the contemporary actor. (Zarrilli 2009: 7)

Zarrilli borrows the term “psychophysical acting” from Stanislavski’s “*psikhofi zicheskii*” to imply a merging of the Cartesian mind-body dualism inherent within modes of actor training. Zarrilli argues that Stanislavski continually sought to overcome separation of the “psychological” and the “physical”, linking the psychology of Theodule Armand Ribot with his own study of yoga. Zarrilli offers a genealogical lineage of Stanislavski-based actor training, outlining how the system evolved through Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner. He describes how American influences on Stanislavski-based actor training have reinstituted the dualism, by separating physical training from the psychological.

While, in my view, it is hard to argue that the teachings of Jacques Lecoq offered a post-dramatic dramaturgy, his work certainly sought to undercut conventional understandings of the job of the actor as an interpretative artist and, building on Zarrilli’s statement, he can be seen as an influential figure within a larger movement that rejected psychology. Within the Lecoq pedagogy “psychological acting” denotes a non-physical approach that, rightly or wrongly, became associated with Stanislavski and naturalism. Lecoq’s interest was in the study of movement. His objective, the preparation of his students for the creation of "a new theatre for tomorrow", points towards an attack on traditional understandings of theatre, of theatre-making, and most directly on presumptions about the job of the actor. In this way Lecoq’s work can be seen as connecting to a broader frustration with the insufficiencies of “psychological acting”, as evidenced by Zarrilli; leading Lecoq, as I will argue throughout this chapter, toward a non-psychological approach to performance through the use of masks.

> If character becomes identical with personality there is no play. It may be possible for this kind of osmosis to work in the cinema, in psychological close-ups, but theatre performance must be able to make an image carry from stage to spectator. There is a huge difference between actors who express their own lives, and those who can truly be described as players. (Lecoq 2000: 61)

“Psychological acting” becomes a term of derision, describing an approach to theatre from which Lecoq was actively trying to separate himself. He holds a behaviourist view of the term psychology. Referencing the above quotation, Murray highlights Lecoq’s antipathy to emotional identification associated with “early Stanislavskian theories that rest on psychological motivation and emotional identification” with character (Murray 2002: 68).

Psychology implies a theatre dominated by text in which the actor’s primary function is to interpret the behaviour of a character or role. It is associated with the system of Stanislavski or any method of acting which places the actor within the realm of naturalism. One of the chief distinctions within these pedagogies is the difference between the creative actor and the interpretive actor. A large part of Lecoq's assault on psychology is an attack on the traditional view of the actor as an interpretive

being: a student of the psychology of character, the motivations and intentions that underlie the behaviours of a given text.

Lecoq sought to develop actors who could create new work of their own devising. His training placed the performer at the centre of the creative process, an actor who assumes the role of author as well as performer, director and designer. I use the term "actor creator" to describe an actor who sits at the centre of the creative process. Conventional understandings of "psychological acting", as seen in the words of Zarrilli, were insufficient for this new type of performer.

The neutral mask, "neutrality", and non-psychological acting

Lecoq describes the neutral mask as 'the central point of my teaching method' (Lecoq 2000: 36). The neutral mask, according to Sears Eldredge (1978), removes both the interiority of the performer and any form of characterization. The mask is said to be without conflict or need, without past or future. As John Wright (2002) suggests, the "vacuum" created from the mask allows the performer to creatively imagine the space around him.

> There is no conflict in the neutral mask. It is never tired or ill but always in 'a state of equilibrium'. Because there is no conflict in the face, the neutral mask creates conflict in the minds of the audience who, on seeing the mask, sense that something is about to happen. By making no comment or by 'having no story', the neutral mask creates a vacuum that, as an audience, our imagination rushes to fill. (Wright 2002: 76)

It is through the removal of conflict – physical, intellectual, or emotional – that the performer is able to bring the space around him to life, creating images in the imagination of the audience. The performer assumes the centre of the theatrical experience through the body, and begins to create through a study of the movement of that body, and not the psychology of character.

The ideal Lecoq presents to his students through the use of the neutral mask is of a "neutral" being without doubts or fears, cultural conditioning or emotional crisis: without psychology. With this liberation, the neutral mask fosters a process of mimetic *identification*. The student is asked to be transparent to the world around him. One could argue that the fundamental premise of the neutral mask is that as one becomes free of psychology one "naturally" identifies with the dynamic movements of the external world. This is best exhibited in Lecoq's description of "The Fundamental Journey", in which the masked actor travels through a series of environments (sea, forest, mountain, river, desert):

> The image of the natural world summoned up in this exercise is one of calm, neutral, balance. It is not a 'boy scout' world with a practical handbook setting a distance between man and nature. The natural world speaks directly to the neutral state. When I walk through the forest, I *am* the forest.

> At the summit of the mountain I feel as though my feet are in the valley and I myself am the mountain. It enables us to take the first steps towards identification. This 'Fundamental Journey', which is a major theme in my work, prepares students for work on identification of all kinds. (Lecoq 2000: 41)

Citing the development of children, Lecoq argues that there is a way of understanding the world through movement. He suggests that we move and act before we develop theories about that action. The neutral mask, with its removal of psychology and socialization, fosters a method of knowing through embodied engagement: a form of embodied knowledge.

Lecoq presents the theory that the body of the performer holds within it an innate knowledge of the world, one to which socialization and even the lived experience of the individual may limit access. The basis of this theory is that the body acts before it thinks, and that through movement, the body begins to understand its environment. In this way, knowledge is derived *from* the body. Mira Felner presents the argument: 'Gesture precedes knowledge. Gesture precedes thought. Gesture precedes language' (Felner 1985: 150). A gesture, however small, exists in itself and can develop into a form, and from there, into a thought. It is from the gesture that ideas can develop, and therefore Lecoq advocates a form of embodied discovery, and with it, a form of embodied knowledge that is accessed through movement; or, as Simon Murray presents it, 'gesture produces thought'.

The neutral mask acts as a "fulcrum point" that begins the journey of mimetic identifications. Human psychology becomes secondary to the exploration of external dynamics through identifications: the motion of the colour blue, a crumpled plastic bag, a cow grazing. Each aspect is explored through both "Movement Analysis" and "Improvisation": a technical study of the movement as well as an examination of its possible theatrical transpositions. The aim is not to relate to the behaviour of a written character, but to explore the dynamics of natural phenomena, finding the dramatic poetry within movement.

The neutral mask functions as a "fulcrum point", asking the student to temporarily shed their physical habits and their habitual ways of being in the world, launching them towards a study of physical dynamics that Lecoq argued exist in nature, and which encompasses a longer journey of exploration (as well as a wider series of masks). The neutral mask, and with it Lecoq's understanding of "neutrality", allows for the discovery of physical dynamics that encompass the first year of study. It is important to stress at the start, that the mask is a means of pushing the student into a study of dynamics, and yet, it is not those dynamics in and of itself. Although it is through a study of neutrality that one begins the journey, neutrality alone is not the journey.

A non-psychological pedagogy in practice

Even when characters are placed in overtly naturalistic settings, Lecoq challenges his students to look for a non-psychological approach: a game, a rhythm, space, or gesture. In *The Moving Body* he describes an improvisation, entitled "The Psychological Encounter", in which five strangers meet in the waiting room of a very wealthy woman. The guests enter the grand room one by one, and wait for their host to arrive, an event that never happens. We watch the relationships develop until each eventually decides to leave. The scene is an examination of what Lecoq refers to as a "motor" of play. Though the scene is referred to as "psychological", Lecoq does not examine the psychology of any of the characters involved, but instead looks for the "motor" that drives the scene:

> Little by little, the theme is rediscovered by accumulation, but only in its structure. There is no imagery or background given in advance, simply a dramatic motor which can be taken apart and analysed. From this basic structure, we can draw out and demonstrate a number of different sub-themes which can be grouped under the general theme of 'The Person Who…" Reduced to this motor, psychological themes lose their anecdotal elements and reach a status of heightened play. (Lecoq 2000: 33)

The improvisation "The Psychological Encounter", as a training exercise, does not refer to a psychological-based acting techniques, such as Lee Strasberg's "Emotional Recall" or Sanford Meisner's "Repetition". It is a study of the basic structure within a theme, and a non-psychological approach to a psychological encounter. Again, it is important to note that Lecoq sees "play", or in this case 'heightened play', in direct opposition to anything perceived to be anecdotal or psychological.

Towards a non-psychological approach to the development of the actor: creating a space to play

At a school directed towards 'teaching creative theatre', the teacher certainly encounters the personal problems and concerns of students, their psychological complexes and resistances, and yet Lecoq holds a strong stance in rejecting any study of the personal histories or intimate aspects of his students.

> Improvisation sometimes stirs up things that are very intimate, but they belong to the person who performs them. I never ask students to search within themselves for the true memory. I have no wish to enter into their intimate secrets. (Lecoq 2000:31)

Anything personal or anecdotal, whether it is a secret inadvertently stirred up in an improvisation or a personal memory shared openly within creation, is viewed with scepticism. Lecoq takes the position that the personal is detrimental to performance: 'actors usually perform badly in plays whose concerns are too close to their own' (Lecoq 2000: 19). Lecoq goes on to describe the effect of that proximity

on the actor's state of playfulness, and, using Frost and Yarrow's term, the limits it puts on the performer's sense of "*disponibilité"*:

> They adopt a sort of blank voice because they retain part of the text for themselves without being able to hand it on to the public. Neither belief nor identification is enough – one must be able genuinely to play. (Lecoq 2000: 19)

Because of this view, the students are encouraged to avoid personal themes or stories in the belief that they do not offer enough space for playfulness, the key element within creation. It may also be because of Lecoq's interest in group dynamics and collective participation in group construction; a personal narrative is seen to limit that construction. A need for distance, or space for movement, becomes a key component of the Lecoq pedagogy: an essential condition for movement and play.

Personal anecdote: At the start of my second year at LISPA, we were divided into five small groups, or "companies", to begin work on the first of the theatrical territories: melodrama. We were given the challenge of telling the story of a hero. The theme created much debate within each group as to what constituted a hero. At the presentation a week later, a group began telling the story of a young woman who had made the decision to have an abortion. The scene was stopped quickly and the group was asked if the story was personal to a member of the company. The answer came back that it was, and for that reason the group was asked to find another. The teachers expressed a concern that the group as a whole would struggle with the personal aspects of the story, and that the individuals involved would not have sufficient space for play within the creation.

Theatre as therapy

Building on this negative view of psychology, Lecoq clearly rejected any assertion that his pedagogy be linked with therapy. In *The Moving Body*, he states his opinion that theatre must be for an audience and not for the performer. He draws a distinction between "expression", or performance done for the sake of the performer, and an act of "creation," or a performance done for an audience:

> The difference between the act of expression and the act of creation is this: in the act of expression one plays for oneself alone rather than for any spectators. I always look for an actor who 'shines', who develops a space around himself in which the spectators are also present. Many absorb this space into themselves, excluding spectators, and the experience becomes too private. If students feel better after doing the course, that is a bonus, but my aim is not to provide therapy through theatre. In any process of creation the object made no longer belongs to the creator. The aim of this act of creation is to bear fruit which then separates from the tree. (Lecoq 2000: 18)

The metaphor of the fruit describes the process of construction as a form of separation: creation for Lecoq is synonymous with the craftsmanship of sculpting space[10]. With private expression there is no space and therefore no play. Lecoq's insistence that theatrical experience be for the audience and not the performer, an act of public creation and not a private expression, lies at the heart of his pedagogy. It is validated by his reliance on mask, an object that can be seen as positioning the experience of the audience above that of the concealed performer. Masks allowed Lecoq an entirely tangible means to insist upon this hierarchy within performance praxis. They also create a concrete means of distancing performer from character.

A confrontation with the shadow

An examination of Lecoq's Universal Poetic Sense in light of C.G. Jung's theory of The Collective Unconscious

> *We must be architects of the inner life. Outer movements resemble inner movements, they speak the same language. My main fascination is with the poetics of these permanencies, which give birth to writing. (Lecoq 2000: 21)*

While Lecoq takes an overtly negative view of both psychological acting and therapy, his descriptions of his own pedagogical system have much in common with the theories of Jungian depth psychology. As I have argued, the shadow of the Lecoq tradition was psychology itself, and, given that the personal shadow is defined as the rejected aspects of consciousness, an understanding of the psychological elements within the Lecoq tradition offers significant potential for new insight. According to Ann Casement (2006), a confrontation with the shadow is a necessary element of the individuation process. Knowledge of the shadow precedes knowledge of any other element of the unconscious; Casement states that 'no one can gain any insight into themselves or acquire self-knowledge without first tackling their *shadow*' (Casement 2006: 98). I argue that one cannot fully understand the Lecoq pedagogy until one has tackled the "shadow" of the training, that of its psychological foundations. To be clear from the start, a critical examination of the psychological aspects of Lecoq's teaching is only one frame from which to view a highly complex pedagogy. I do not want to limit Lecoq's work to only one parameter, and yet, by examining how psychology situates itself within Lecoq's teaching, I aim to enrich and enliven an important (and complex) aspect of that pedagogy.

Both Lecoq and Jung describe their work directionally, conceiving of their respective studies as a movement downwards. Lecoq adopts the phrase 'the depths of poetry', and he repeatedly writes of an internal search into the 'depths'. A common theme within his writing, and the title of a video documentary about his school, *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq* (1999), is the concept of the two journeys. One journey is horizontal through theatrical conventions, while the other is a vertical movement downwards into a "universal poetic sense":

[10] In Chapter 3, I expand upon this argument by highlighting Marie-Louis von Franz's category of creation mythology: the *deus faber* or creation through craftsmanship (see Chapter 3, p. 89-90).

> Our primary pedagogic journey across the broad, horizontal landscape of dramatic styles (which I call territories) gradually opened the way to a second journey up and down vertical axes, both scaling the heights of different acting levels and exploring the depths of poetry. The dynamics of words, of colours, of passions, and the attempt to discover abstract, essential principles underlying all lived experience, led to the quest for a common denominator. But this quest implies the need for maintaining distance and, if possible a sense of humour: one must never forget that the purpose of the journey is the journey itself. (Lecoq 2000: 13)

This depth which Lecoq feels needs distance and humour is, I would argue, the depth of the unconscious psyche. The journey into a collective "poetry" and his concept of a "universal poetic sense" is in many ways similar to C. G. Jung's view of a collective unconscious. Central to Lecoq's teaching, his desire for an international student body and his use of the neutral mask is a belief in a collective poetry that is universally applicable. One must not conflate the theories of these two men – Lecoq's reference to universal poetry with Jung's collective unconscious – for to do so minimizes important differences like the relevance of symbolism and the nature of the unconscious itself. Still, one can see that Lecoq himself is aware of the potential parallels between his teaching and the theories of Jung. That awareness is referenced in his glossary definition of the universal poetic sense within *The Moving Body*. He states: '… a concept with Jungian resonances, suggesting that all humans share the sense of an abstract dimension, made up of space, lights, materials, sounds which can be found in all of us' (Lecoq 2000: 168). This 'abstract dimension' is described further:

> At the same time we set out on a second journey, down into the depths. It brings us into contact with the essence of life, which I called the *universal poetic sense*. Here we are dealing with an abstract dimension, made of space, lights, colours, materials, sounds which can be found in all of us. They have been laid down in all of us by our various experiences and sensations, by everything that we have seen, heard, touched, tasted. All these things are there inside us, and constitute the common heritage, out of which will spring dynamic vigour and the desire to create. Thus my teaching method has lead to this universal poetic sense in order not to limit itself to life as it is, or as it seems. In this way the students can develop their own creativity. (Lecoq 2000: 46 – 47)

An exploration of the universal poetic sense which 'can be found in all of us', a shared and impersonal heritage, becomes the aim of Lecoq's teachings. It has much in common with Jung's view of the collective unconscious. Jung's conception of the unconscious differs drastically from his mentor and predecessor, Freud, adding a collective aspect to Freud's conception of the unconscious. For Jung, the unconscious was governed by impersonal elements he regards as archetypal:

> My thesis then, is as follows: in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (Jung 1959: 43)

The two quotations seem to differ in one important aspect: while Jung argues that the collective unconscious is inherited, Lecoq suggests that it is made up through a lifetime of experiences. This should by no means suggest that Lecoq viewed his poetic sense to be something personal or anecdotal. Students may have never learned to swim and have never been swept along in the ocean, but that doesn't stop them from experiencing the ocean within Lecoq's notion of the universal poetic sense. As we have seen, for Lecoq, the personal or anecdotal inhibits playfulness; Lecoq believed the poetic must be experienced—we all have oceans within us—but that can be accessed imaginatively through mime. The human body holds *within it* a universal understanding of the 'natural world'; it is an archetypal form of knowledge which has developed throughout our collective history.

> *I am facing the sea, watching it, breathing it. My breath moulds itself to the movement of the waves and gradually the picture shifts as I myself become the sea.* (Lecoq 2000: 43)

Mime as 'a means of producing thought'

It is his unique understanding of mime, and its association to the "universal poetic sense", that separates Lecoq from his contemporaries. Simon Murray (2003) has described how Lecoq's understanding of mime differs from Étienne Decroux. In Murray's view, mime for Lecoq was a means of 'producing thought' and not simply a means of translating it (Murray 2002: 28)[11]. Murray makes an important point in separating these two master teachers and their approaches to mime. I would like to take the point further and suggest that while Decroux uses mime as a method of artistic expression, Lecoq uses it as a methodology for depth analysis. It was through mime, Lecoq's 'common denominator' established with the neutral mask, that Lecoq found a means of approaching his universal poetic sense (Lecoq 2000: 46).

> There is another form of hidden mime, which can be found in all the arts. Every true artist is a mime. Picasso's ability to draw a bull depended on his having found the *essential* Bull in himself, which released the shaping gesture of his hand. He was miming. Painters and sculptors are outstanding mime artists because they share in the same act of embodiment. There is a submerged form of mime which gives rise to different creative acts in all the

[11] See Literature Review

> arts… The mime I love involves an identification with things in order to make them live, even when words are used. (Lecoq 2000: 22)

Lecoq's 'submerged form of mime' points away from mime as a codified gestural language and towards an examination of unconscious material. In this quotation Lecoq characterizes 'the same act of embodiment' across disciplines as one that 'involves identification with things'. Like Lecoq, my investigation examines how this "identification" happens; however, I argue that part of this process of "identification" is psychological. Again, we come to the paradox of psychology. Lecoq demanded a non-psychological approach to theatrical creation. The neutral mask, as we have seen, becomes Lecoq's primary means for identification with "natural" phenomena, and therefore, the mediating tool between the individual and Lecoq's universal poetic sense that resided not only in the external would, but "submerged" inside the performer.

The neutral mask: a journey into the psyche

Much of Lecoq's neutral mask praxis can be seen as the embodiment of a Jungian journey, a voyage into the unknown. In the following section I have outlined that journey, divided this progression into five stages, and, using conventional mask praxis as described by Lecoq and other mask teachers, demonstrate how the neutral mask can be viewed as a journey into the depths of an individual's unconscious psyche. These five stages are:

1. A rupture with the persona
2. Contact with the *mundus imaginalis*
3. Atonement with the archetypal
4. Union of the Self and *The Fundamental Journey*
5. Removal of the mask

In the next section I will outline what I feel to be the key transitions within the teachings of the neutral mask, and place them within a Jungian critical framework to articulate Lecoq's techniques using Jung's model of the psyche, methods for accessing unconscious material, and eventual progression of psychic growth. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate precisely how the mask can be viewed as a means of self-confrontation and individuation.

A rupture with the persona

In his article, *Actor Training in the Neutral Mask*, Sears Eldredge presents his findings from a series of interviews with teachers of the neutral mask. Eldredge describes how the process begins with the most basic of movements:

> The first exercises begin from sleep, the most fundamental of resting states. The study of neutrality starts with simple activities such as standing, walking,

> sitting, or picking up an object, as performed in the mask. (Eldredge and Huston 1978: 22)

For Eldredge, the primary function of the mask is to locate the points of tension, or conflicts, within the body of the performer. The teachers pinpoint the personal characteristics manifested within the body of each performer, taking the form of either physical imbalance (raised shoulders, rotated hips, or locked knees) and specific rhythms of movements (a heavy walk or a frenetic stillness). The mask is a means of locating the specific idiosyncrasies of the performer, and challenging the actor to temporarily discard those personal habits.

It is this phase of the journey that consumes much of Eldredge's analysis of the mask. In his estimation, the mask 'attacks mumble-and-scratch naturalism' (Eldredge and Huston 1978: 27). One can view this as simply another part of Lecoq's larger attack on "psychological acting"; however, I would argue that the mask becomes a means of provoking the performer into temporarily removing her/his personally constructed "persona" or social mask. Andrew Samuels defines the persona:

> The term derives from the Latin word for the mask worn by actors in classical times. Hence, persona refers to the mask or face a person puts on to confront the world. Persona can refer to gender identity, a stage of development (such as adolescence), a social status, a job, or profession. Over a lifetime, many personas will be worn, and several may be combined at any one time. Jung's conception of the persona is of an archetype, meaning in this context that there is an inevitability and ubiquity to persona… Different cultures will establish different criteria for persona, and there will be alteration and evolution over time since the underlying archetypal pattern is susceptible to infinite variation. Sometimes, the persona is referred to as the 'social archetype', involving all the compromises appropriate to living in a community. (Samuels 1986: 107)

The neutral mask is a provocation to temporarily remove one's social mask or persona. It is described as offering no "other", no role or character, but a version of self without social constructions or, to use Murray's term, a "Zero Body" (Murray 2002). The mask becomes a means of challenging students to dissociate with their individual personae, replacing the social mask with a clean start, a *tabula rasa*. The implication underlining the neutral mask praxis seems to be that the student is something more than simply their own socially constructed identity; that the removal of the persona leads to the potential understanding of something which is simultaneously totally "other", themselves, and shared. This has led to Lecoq's famous assertion:

> There are three masks.
> The one we think we are.
> The one we really are.
> And the one we have in common. (Lecoq 2000)

Lecoq's three masks can be seen as offering a movement downward through the three stages of Jung's model of the psyche (see Introduction, p. 26-27): from conscious construction, to the withdrawal of shadow projections, and finally, to the confrontation with unconscious collective aspects within oneself. It is through the removal of the persona that Lecoq begins his study of that "submerged" form of knowledge derived from the body.

Contact with the *space*: the *mundus imaginalis*

In *The Moving Body*, Lecoq describes the first improvisation theme with the neutral mask: to wake, 'as if for the first time'. While the students may have previously encountered basic activities, it seems important that the first theme, the start of the journey, begins from a position of sleep. There is a subtle allusion to the dreamlike reality that the student is entering. The student is asked to wake and to see the world with a calm curiosity and without preconceptions. Lecoq describes the difficulty the students have in their first encounter with the mask:

> Some students have a tendency to first move their hands, then their feet, to discover their own bodies, while all along an extraordinary dimension is being offered to them: *space*. We have to explain that we aren't dealing with ethnology, that it is unimportant to know how many fingers a human being possesses and that it's not worth having a dialogue with one's own body when, much more simply, the world is there to discover. (Lecoq 2000: 39)

The students described by Lecoq seem to be grappling with a monumental shift – a transition in consciousness from the observable reality (the hand in front of them), to the 'extraordinary dimension' that Lecoq describes as 'space'. But the space to which Lecoq alludes is not the rehearsal studio, the seated class of students, or any constructed set or object; the space which opens up is the reality of an "*imaginal*" world, not unlike what Henry Corbin[12] has described as '*mundus imaginalis'* (Corbin 1972: 1). Lecoq waits for his students to imagine, to "see". He asks students to be intrigued by their own imagination, to follow the image, allowing the image to lead them on.

But what is this world that Lecoq argues is 'there to discover'? The neutral mask presents a landscape that is not the same as the unmasked reality of everyday life, but a world that is outside of any geographical environment. In his article "Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imaginal", Corbin draws a distinction between the term "imaginary", which he argues denotes a fiction or fantasy within conventional western contexts and language, and the Latin term "*imaginal*", which Corbin suggests offers an ontological status to the imagined. Corbin argues for the

[12] The writings of Henry Corbin have had a significant influence on the theories of James Hillman and the post-Jungian school of Archetypal Psychology. Corbin's concept of the *Mundus Imaginalis* offered Hillman an important philosophical foundation from which to propose a phenomenological shift in Jungian thought. The influence of Hillman becomes more prominent in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

existence of imaginal worlds by using the writings of the Persian mystic Sohravardi, describes the "*Na-kojd-Abad"*, or literally, 'the land (abâd) of nonwhere (Nâ-Kojâ)'. Corbin partially equates this term with the Greek, "utopia" which he defines as "an abstract concept to denote the absence of any localization" (Corbin 1972: 3). He invites his reader to 'overcome what one might call Western man's 'agnostic reflex'', and to explore the possibility that there exists an "intermediary universe" outside our geographical cosmology, in which the imagination receives ontological value:

> This well-defined ontological status is based on visionary spiritual experiences which Sohravardi holds to be as fully relevant as the observations of Hipparchus or Ptolemy are considered to be relevant for astronomy. Of course, the forms and figures of the *mundus imaginalis* do not subsist in the same manner as the empirical realities of the physical world, otherwise anyone would have the right to perceive them. The authors also noticed that these forms and figures could not subsist in the purely intelligible world, that they had indeed extension and dimension, an "immaterial" materiality compared to the sensible world, but that they also had a corporality and spatiality of their own. (Corbin 1972: 6)

The provocation offered by the neutral mask is to make the invisible visible; it becomes a call to explore the depths of an *imaginal* terrain and to demonstrate the existence of the imagined land. The mask challenges the students not only to allow themselves to imagine, but playfully to exist within the image, and in so doing, to attest to its existence. In my view, the neutral mask offers a medium through which unconscious material is allowed to surface and is given an ontological status.

Lecoq argues that the neutral mask is without past or future, demanding an entirely spontaneous approach to improvisation; the student is simply asked to be open and playful. He argues that the mask places the student in a 'state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive' (Lecoq 2000: 38). When Lecoq suggests that 'beneath every mask, expressive masks or Commedia dell'Arte masks, there is a neutral mask supporting all the others', he is partially referring to a state of open receptivity that attests to the performer's availability to the unconscious image (Lecoq 2000: 36).

It is this availability to the image that Frost and Yarrow term: "*disponibilité*". Resisting the passive connotation of the term, Lecoq favoured an active sense of openness and awareness. Murray uses "*disponibilité*" to mean 'the precondition for play' (Murray 2003: 70), while Frost and Yarrow use the term as a state of awareness:

> Disponibilité sums up in a single term the condition improvisers aspire to. It offers a way of describing an almost intangible and nearly undefinable state of being having at (or in) one's fingertips, and any other part of the body, the capacity to do and say what is appropriate and to have the confidence to make the choice. It's a kind of total awareness, a sense of

> being at one with the context: script, if there be, actors, audience, theatre space, oneself and one's body. (Frost and Yarrow 1990: 223)

Murray, Frost and Yarrow all point to this state of playfulness that is at the heart of the Lecoq tradition: a state of heightened consciousness. This state is reflected in the neutral mask itself, whose most concrete features are wide-open eyes. The student is asked to find a state of openness and receptivity, 'total awareness' or 'being at one with' not the others in the room, but with that *imaginal* world. *Disponibilité* within neutral mask praxis, allows for an improvisational play to occur with that imagined material, to make the invisible visible to those who have yet to see. In so doing, the mask allows the student a structured means of bringing unconscious images into consciousness – both for themselves, and the audience. This dynamic will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Atonement with the archetypal

Within the Lecoq tradition, it is important to make the distinction between a movement that is "descriptive" and one that is mimetically embodied. When one approaches an image with a separation of subject and object, mime can be seen as a language with both sign and signifier. The student may see a mountain and point to it. The performer may attempt to signify to the audience, making a gesture that the mountain is high; however, for Lecoq, the challenge is to reduce the space between subject and object: the student *is* the mountain. Through the use of the neutral mask, Lecoq attempts to remove the perceived separation between the image and the body of the performer. Indeed, as I have argued, the mountain to which Lecoq is referring resides within the body of the student. Knowledge of that mountain happens through a process of embodied discovery described earlier, and is assisted through a complex interaction with the teacher (see Chapter 5). If we look at the standard refrain for Lecoq: 'You see the mountain. You *are* the mountain. We see the mountain reflected in your body', we can perhaps see Simon Murray's emphasis on the body producing thought. With his use of the neutral mask, Lecoq challenges his students to become at one with *imaginal* environments, to form a reconciliation with nature, and in so doing, with the body: 'For in truth nature is our first language. Our bodies remember!' (Lecoq 2000: 45). This atonement with nature remains a studio experience; it is not a nature that is particular to Paris or London; it is an archetypal concept of nature: if we swim in the sea, it is not the Mediterranean or any other locatable body of water, it is the archetypal image of the sea-of-all-seas. The mask becomes a means of exploring an archetypal landscape inside us, challenging the student to be at one with that *imaginal* reality.

Lecoq makes reference to the search for the archetypal (although he prefers the term "permanency"). He states: 'I have always had a strong belief in permanency, in the 'Tree of all trees', the 'Mask of all masks', the balance that sums up perfect harmony' (Lecoq 2000: 20). No work to date has examined the connection between Lecoq's ideals of permanencies and Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious. Lecoq's insistence on an international student body, the search for "universal"

human experiences and his belief in a "universal poetic sense" all point towards a belief in the archetypal. The neutral mask is adopted in order for the students to encounter archetypal images and find the collective within the body, thereby offering the students a methodology of mimetic embodiment with a 'point of reference' from which to create (Lecoq 2000: 38).

Union of the Self and *The Fundamental Journey*

The central archetypal fixed point, evidenced by the neutral mask, is Lecoq's view of Self. As we have seen, the mask presents no role or character, no "other" (Arrighi 2010). The mask is intended to be a version of yourself that has not been shaped by culture or history (Felner 1985, Murray 2002). This suggests an archetypal Self that is both shared and personal. Lecoq's often quoted assertion that 'There are three masks' (see Chapter 1, p. 48), shares a striking resemblance to a Jungian view of the relationship between the ego, the Self, and the collective unconscious, all of which become encompassed in the Jungian model of the Self. The guiding symbol which encompasses all three for Lecoq, is the neutral mask: an archetypal image of Self. This vision is of balance and wholeness, an individual in whom exists a world of extraordinary dimensions.

The Self, for Jung, is the archetypal centre and totality of the psyche, consisting of both the conscious and the unconscious (Colman 2006: 160). The ego, or consciousness, born from the Self in early childhood and developed within the first half of life, creates what Edward Edinger has called the Ego-Self Axis. The process of individuation, or the act of 'bringing the latent self into consciousness', becomes the teleological aim of analytic psychology (Colman 2006: 160).

"The Fundamental Journey", the central theme of the neutral mask, is a solo improvisation in which the performer sets out on an epic adventure. Throughout the course of a day, the man-of-all-men travels through many elements of the natural world, as described in detail by Lecoq:

> 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 ever 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 this 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. (Lecoq 2000: 41)

One can view each element of the journey as having strong symbolic overtones: the ocean, the forest and the mountain all are ripe for symbolic amplification, the world

of dream and myth. Each territory is highly symbolic of the unconscious, and a journey through each landscape suggests a being that is at home in all.

Why is this journey "fundamental" to the Lecoq pedagogy? Unlike conventional notions of drama, there is no conflict in this narrative. The performer is not asked to meet and overcome an antagonist, or wrestle with his own personal fears or history. Indeed, the function of the mask is to reduce any conflict or experience of being off-balance. The challenges that are revealed, however, are those personal challenges particular to the student him or herself. Those personal complexes that are specific to the performer become the source of the theatrical experience.

The underlying dynamic seems to be that there is an emerging self-knowledge through the depersonalized encounter with an archetypal landscape. Norman Taylor, who has renamed the neutral mask the "mask of reference", describes a process of self-discovery aided by the mask as a reference for a future sense of becoming:

> It is *the* reference for everything we want to be, and everything we want to do, in our lives. *The* reference. When you touch this neutral mask, then you have a reference for everything you do. As the great man said once: 'Do like everybody else, and if you are different, Ah! We will see it. In life, you know, a lot of people want to be different, and you have everybody wanting to be different. And they dress differently. And they're all the same! If you try to be different, you are the same as everybody else. But if you touch where we are united, where we are together, then you will see how different we are. Mime is what unites everybody and where nothing is missing. (Taylor 2011: 5:10)

Taylor argues that the mask becomes a means of articulating personal difference, not through the attempt at individuality, but through the search for a deep understanding of Self. Each student sets out on a journey alone; he finds his own way through the progression of landscapes. The journey is entirely the same for all; however, the Fundamental Journey represents a "fulcrum point" that begins not only the study of physical dynamics, but the search for each student's unique path forward. The effects of this will be explored throughout this thesis (most notably in Chapter 2, looking at the symbolic relationship to the neutral mask, the Campbellian Hero's Journey and Jung's process of individuation).

Removal of the mask

The neutral mask holds a symbolic position within the Lecoq pedagogy, representing both the starting point as well as the ultimate goal. It is both an initiation and a teleology: a search for neutrality which involves stripping away the persona, a symbolic manifestation of balance and wholeness that defines an ideal. It is positioned, both practically and theoretically, in the first term of training, and doesn't need to be returned to; the actor has received all he needs from the mask:

the call to adventure, the mimetic methodology of studying the dynamics of the unconscious, and the aim of theatrical creation and wholeness. Once the mask is passed, it can be removed, and the student can move forward with the knowledge that the neutral mask is inside him: a transformative image is locked into place, and a journey of mimetic identification can continue. After the neutral mask has been removed it becomes the central symbolic "transformative image", to borrow the term adopted by Stein (2004), to delineate a powerful metaphor that guides the transformation process for the Lecoq pedagogy itself: towards an individual who has been trained with this object, who is open to the dynamics of the world and who creates physically, who is both the centre and totality of the theatre he produces. Stein writes:

> Transformative images are engaging and even arresting metaphors. To live through the transformational processes they often engender is a special experience. From the moment these images appear, they take possession of one's consciousness and, at least temporarily, change it, sometimes dramatically… If these powerful archetypal images are strong and impressive enough, the whole fabric of a person's life can be transformed. Their effects are not only momentary. Over time they become irreversible. This is because these images reflect psychological content that is emerging in a person's life and give it shape. They are metaphors with profound underlying structural support and meaning. (Stein 2004: 41)

Matthew Cawson evidences the long-term effects of the experience of the neutral mask in the preface to his 2012 thesis. He states:

> Some years later, those students who have stayed in touch still reference these explorations (neutral mask) 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… They appear to connect with something primal and deeply personal, something inexpressible through words. (Cawson 2012: 15).

The following chapter will attempt to engage with the symbolic aspects of the mask through Jung's method of psychological amplification. In essence, it will attempt to understand the power of the mask as a living image, directing the student to find a calm curiosity, to experience the world with their whole body, to live without doubts or fears, to become a person who is at one with her/his surroundings whatever they may be: one who continually searches and creates.

Individuation within contemporary mask praxis

Lecoq's personal distrust of both psychology and mysticism makes a study of the mythological or psychological underpinnings of his methodology problematic; however, the fact that in his writings Lecoq argues that he is sceptical of introspection does not mean that the pedagogy he adopts isn't itself highly

psychological or indeed mystical. Prattki's work at LISPA, combining his study of Jungian psychology within the Lecoq pedagogy, has advanced the understanding of the neutral mask towards the internal landscape of the actor creator him or herself.

The difference between Lecoq and Prattki, in my view, can best be seen in their approaches to the neutral mask. Lecoq conceives of a depersonalized being, "The-Man-of-All-Men", that playfully engages with the external world: 'You see the mountain, you are the mountain'. He goes on to say, 'we see the mountain reflected in your body'. For Prattki, the neutral mask is also a depersonalized being; however, that being confronts a terrain that is highly personal to the internal terrain of the actor: the mountain is inside of you, and to some degree, the mountain reflects you. For Prattki, the neutral mask becomes a mediating tool between the internal and external worlds of the actor creator.

This study of mask, encountering archetypal images and themes, has led me to an examination of myth: this is a world of creation, myth-making or mythopoesis. As Joseph Campbell has argued, myth and psychology are intricately woven together:

> Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream; both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche. But in the dream the forms are quirked by the particular troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind. (Campbell 1993: 14)

One can see how the "Man-of-All-Men" fuses the personal and the universal, the dream with the mythic, facilitating the potential for an exploration of "the third thing": a personal myth (see Chapter 3, p. 90). The process of individuation, described in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, becomes a fusion of opposites: male and female, god and man, time and eternity, self and other. Within actor pedagogy, the performer, in contact with the mask and assuming the principles contained within, undergoes a fusion and is able to remove the mask. It is a process of both literal and metaphorical transformation.

Lecoq presents five central masks throughout the course of his two-year training. The masks are organized as a process of formation and then subtraction: from neutral or universal to larval and then into expressive in the first year, and then from half-mask to clown nose in the second. This transformation mirrors the individuation process, the formation of the ego followed by the process of increasingly revealing the Self along the Ego-Self axis. The neutral mask loses its imbalance and presents a larval mask, a being that does not yet have an understanding of itself. The larval mask transitions into the expressive mask, or full-faced character mask, from innocent naiveté to the fully formed individual who understands his or her role in life. In the second year, the masks are gradually removed: with the Commedia dell'Arte half masks, the full faced expressive masks lose their jaw and are now able to speak. Finally, the clown nose, described as 'the smallest mask in the world', reveals the individual clown of the performer him or her

self (Lecoq 2006: 116). Lecoq's mask series will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 5 (see Chapter 5, p. 166-177).

The developmental progression through the masks of Lecoq mirrors Jung's process of individuation. Jung saw the process of individuation as a lifetime of internal work, a process through which individuals are formed as distinct entities, different from their personal upbringing, societal roles or religious affiliations. He states:

> In general, it is the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated; in particular, it is the development of the psychological *individual* as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology. Individuation, therefore, is a process of *differentiation*, having for its goal the development of the individual personality. (Jung 1971: 448 – 450)

The Lecoq pedagogy begins with universals and moves towards the particular. The clown nose, the smallest mask, is seen as a fully differentiated individual. It represents a two-year journey of development. The exploration of each mask individually takes the same form: a voyage and return. The student adopts the task of bringing the mask to life; he is challenged by the restrictions proposed by the foreign object. Unsure of what is being asked of him, the student moves into a territory of the unknown. In the end, the challenges the student faces are not with the exterior object, but within the performer's own self. Once the mask is brought to life, the fusion has occurred and the mask can be removed. The actor creator has not passed through the masks only to leave them behind: he is the one for whom the masks are alive within – in the words of Jung, "a living third thing".

In his writing, Lecoq briefly alludes to a dual aim within his teaching: theatrical creation and personal development. He saw his institution as having two separate, distinct and far-reaching goals:

> The school's sights are set on art theatre, but theatre education is broader than the theatre itself. In fact my work has always nurtured a dual aim: one part of my interest is focused on theatre, the other on life. I have always tried to educate people to be at ease in both. My hope, perhaps utopian, is for my students to be consummate livers of life and complete artists on stage. (Lecoq 2000:18)

Much of the recent interest in the contributions of Jacques Lecoq, evidenced in my introduction, arises from the wide-ranging individual artists his school has produced (as well as those graduating from institutions around the world who continue his study of theatrical creation through movement and mask). Prattki, in developing Lecoq's methodology, has attempted to fuse Lecoq's dual aims into one: the holistic union of artistic creation within and around the individuation of the actor creator. In this chapter I have presented the argument that psychology itself forms the shadow of the Lecoq pedagogy. His approach to the neutral mask was as a means of challenging the "psychology" of character, and distancing the individual actor from his or her personal complexes. Incumbent on this argument is the understanding

that the shadow elements are indeed rejected elements of one's own consciousness, an aspect of the individual. In this way, I assert that Lecoq's anti-psychological pedagogy is indeed highly psychological.

Summary

In this chapter I have offered the first psychological critique of the Lecoq tradition and its neutral mask praxis, arguing that psychology itself forms the shadow of the Lecoq pedagogy. I have outlined how Lecoq holds an ambivalent relationship to psychology, with a strong aversion to both psychological approaches to acting (continuing in the Stanislavski based acting traditions), as well as to the introversion associated with therapy. Lecoq aimed at creating an overtly non-psychological approach to theatre for which mask became the central tool. The neutral mask, as we have seen, becomes the cornerstone to the Lecoq pedagogy because it could be effectively adapted to strip away the personal complexes of the individual, as well as offer a non-psychological approach to theatrical creation.

Examining the shadow, however, leads to new knowledge of both the mask and the pedagogy itself. The Lecoq tradition holds a great deal of similarity to the field of Jungian depth psychology and the "universal poetic sense". As Lecoq himself saw, it bears a striking resemblance to Jung's conception of a collective aspect to the unconscious psyche. I argue that the neutral mask offers a structured means of encountering archetypal images within the unconscious of the performer. In doing this, I have mapped out a five-layer journey into the unconscious: 1) A rupture with the persona. 2) Contact with the *mundus imaginalis*. 3) Atonement with the archetypal. 4) Union of the Self and "The Fundamental Journey". 5) Removal of the mask. In so doing, this chapter offers the first formal examination of the neutral mask and its connection to Jungian depth psychology. In the following chapter I will continue examining the neutral mask in light of Jung's associative method of psychological amplification, exploring the mask as an image of self and connecting it to pre-existing personal, social and archetypal images.

Chapter 2
A Jungian Amplification of the Neutral Mask

Chapter Overview

In The Moving Body*, Jacques Lecoq states: 'The neutral mask is not a symbolic mask' (Lecoq 2000: 40); however, as I have evidenced within the existing literature, practitioners have strongly debated the object, its function, and interpretation. Whether understood as: "The Universal Mask" (Bari Rolf 1977), "The Mask of Reference" (Norman Taylor 2011), "The Zero Body" (Simon Murray 2003), "Armed Neutrality" (Ralph Yarrow 1986 & Frost and Yarrow 2016) or "Performative Liminality" (Gillian Arrighi 2010), the object itself holds a quality that inspires the imagination, and resists Lecoq's assertion. Matthew J. Cawson (2012) argues that all masks form a union of self and other through the transcendent function, creating what Jung called a "living third thing".*

Using the Jungian method of symbolic amplification, an associative process linking symbols with pre-existing mythological material, in this chapter I examine a potential archetypal basis for neutral mask praxis. Adopting an approach to the amplification process offered by Murray Stein (2010), I explore potential personal, cultural, and finally archetypal associations to the symbolic elements of Lecoq's neutral mask. When viewed culturally, I argue that the mask can be seen as a response to World War II, to developments in French mime and as a personification of modernist/post-modernist ideals, and more broadly, the wave of existentialist thought developing in Paris. The mask can also be viewed as a human embodiment of scientific "neutrality", a tabula rasa *or blank slate, offering the possibility of a scientific study of movement. By drawing a number of archetypal associations with the mask, this research offers significant insight into the object's function within the Lecoq pedagogy. First, I begin by examining a form of* ex nihilo *creation mythology; using Marie-Louise von Franz's "Cosmogonic Awakening", I argue that Lecoq has adopted elements of a creation myth in order to position the actor in the role of creator. Second, examining Hindu images of "Ātman", or the eternal soul, and its union with Brahman, I propose a mythic association with Lecoq's unique approach to mimetic identification. Third, building on the Buddhist critique of the Ātman, found in the concept of anattā or "not self", I offer a mythological personification of Lecoq's* tabula rasa *and draw attention to Lecoq's interest in the removal of conflict. Finally, I examine the neutral mask in light of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, a monomyth grounding Lecoq's monist mask. By viewing Campbell's work in relation to C.G. Jung's understanding of the process of individuation – the movement from general to particular – I argue that the mask points towards a long-term process of differentiation. These conflicting symbolic interpretations of the mask create*

a dynamic relationship that is still vibrant within contemporary acting pedagogy.

In *The Neutral Mask: its origins and its applications to the creative processes of the actor* (2010), Gillian Arrighi places the mask within the context of Eugenio Barba's "pre-expressive states", arguing that the neutral mask opens up 'a place between who I am, and who I am becoming' (Arrighi 2010: 40-41). Citing Victor Turner, Arrighi implicitly places the neutral mask within the framework of ritualized transformation that she calls "performative liminality". Ralph Yarrow's study of the mask in relation to 'neutral modes of consciousness' and "armed neutrality" has, in a similar fashion, connected Lecoq mask praxis with Barba's view of pre-expressive states and a liminal territory. But while the work of Arrighi and Yarrow suggests a doorway into a liminal space, I argue that there is still more to be explored within. If the neutral mask opens 'a place between who I am, and who I am becoming' then one must ask: who does the mask direct you towards becoming? While Lecoq defended his pedagogy by describing the mask as "neutral" and therefore without positioning, this chapter argues that the mask itself points towards a manner of "becoming" that is more positioned than its name might imply.

In the previous chapter I challenged the anti-psychological nature of the Lecoq pedagogy, arguing that neutral mask praxis directs the wearer towards an archetypal understanding of Self and, through a re-visioning of Lecoq's fundamental journey, offers the possibility for the exploration of the internal landscape of the wearer's unconscious psyche. Building upon the analysis of Arrighi and Yarrow, I offer the potential for a radical form of pre-expressive states, one that highlights the psychology of the performer. In light of Arrighi's assertion regarding "the place between who I am, and who I am becoming", this chapter poses the question: what does the neutral mask symbolize?

An amplification of the neutral mask will not only allow me to test my methodological approach to the mask that forms the foundation of the Lecoq pedagogy, thus supporting the general aims of this thesis by linking mask with myth; but, as I will argue, these specific associations will also offer significant insight into the neutral mask's function within the Lecoq pedagogy. First, it will better clarify how the object positions the actor into the role of creator. Second, it will help to clarify the object's function in establishing Lecoq's unique understanding of mimetic identification. Third, it will offer an image of a personified *tabula rasa*, an individual without conflict who sees the world with calm curiosity. Finally, it will point towards a process of differentiation, of movement from the general to the particular that defines the entire two-year pedagogical journey. By exploring the symbolic basis of the Lecoq pedagogy, linking the neutral mask with archetypal material found in myth, I will construct the archetypal foundation to support my own mask praxis as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4.

As demonstrated in my literature review (see Introduction, p. 28-35), the neutral mask holds not only conflicting names, but also contradictory meanings. In Malcolm

Yates Knight's spectrum, one sees how the mask can hold multiple positions along a continuum of introversion and extraversion. I have argued that these opposing viewpoints evidence the symbolic nature of the mask: the fusion of unconscious and conscious.

Sign, symbol, and the transcendent function

In order to begin the process of amplification, it is essential to draw a distinction between sign and symbol, perhaps the most important distinction within the field of Jungian depth psychology. In *Man and His Symbols* (1964), Jung offers an ambiguous definition of "symbol". He states: 'What we call a symbol is a term, a name or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses a specific connotation in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us' (Jung 1964: 3). Jung's understanding goes beyond the conventional use of the term: for Jung, a symbol is derived from the unconscious and therefore by definition partially unknown (or even unknowable). A sign, in contrast, points to something conscious, knowable, and specific.

Jung offered a theory for the construction of symbolic material, derived from a union of opposites. He called this process the "transcendent function", described in his 1916 essay (first published in 1958). Jeffery Miller (2004), in *The Transcendent Function: Jung's Model of Psychological Growth Through Dialogue with the Unconscious*, argues for the importance of the theory, stating that

> Jung eventually came to believe one cannot individuate, that is, cannot become the person he or she is truly meant to be, without conversing with and coming to terms with the unconscious. The transcendent function is the primary means through which that reconciliation is accomplished. (Miller 2004: 3).

The neutral mask holds a number of specific meanings for those who use it in their teaching: a body without conflict, a mask that is "perfectly balanced", calm and efficient, a being who is able to see the world 'as if for the first time', the "man-of-all-men". And yet, there is something more to the mask that captures the imagination and defies our understanding, something that gives the mask a numinous quality. Indeed, it may be a reaction to this quality that made Lecoq resistant to the symbolic interpretations of the mask, stating forcibly: 'The neutral mask is not a symbolic mask. The idea that everyone is alike is both true and totally false. Universality is not the same as uniformity' (Lecoq 2000: 40). This argument, however, further grounds the mask in oppositions like 'true and totally false'; it evidences the ambiguous nature of a mask Lecoq described paradoxically as, 'a fulcrum point that doesn't exist' (Lecoq cited in Eldredge and Huston 1978: 21).

Symbolic Amplification

Jung offered a method of interpretation for symbolic material that he called psychological amplification. By associating personal unconscious material with pre-existing social references and images, usually derived from myth, history or literature, Jung attempted 'to clarify and make ample the metaphorical content of dream symbolism' (Samuels 1986:16). Murray Stein (1982), a Jungian scholar and analyst, outlines a three-part approach to the amplification process: beginning with personal associations, following on to cultural associations, and finally to an exploration of archetypal associations (usually found in myth). For Stein, deriving an understanding from symbolic material is achieved by moving from the personal towards the archetypal, resisting movement in the opposite direction (Stein 1982: 140-141).

Michael V. Adams (2010), in *The Mythological Unconscious*, argues that a movement towards the archetypal should not be seen as a depersonalization of the individual, but paradoxically as offering a greater 'humanization'. He states:

> Amplification demonstrates that a temporal individual condition (perhaps even a psychopathological condition) is merely a personal variation on one of the many collective themes of the eternal "human condition." The individual no longer exists in not so splendid isolation but now exists in affinity with the collective. (Adams 2010: 47)

In an attempt to offer a symbolic amplification for the neutral mask, I will begin at the cultural level and work towards the archetypal. To do that, I offer three possible cultural associative connections that may increase one's understanding of the mask: First, the socio-cultural and historical context of the Europe Lecoq found himself in during 1948, in the direct aftermath of the Second World War; second, the new wave of modernism in Paris during the late 1950's and early 1960's, which saw Lecoq's work within the larger movement of French mime and existentialist thought; and finally, the broader interest in developing a "scientific" study of movement and the calibration of the body.

Cultural Associations and Critical Contexts

Before trying to amplify the symbolic material within the neutral mask, it should be noted that there is a suggestion that in the construction of the neutral mask Lecoq and Sartori were inspired by the figure of *Ko Omote* from Japanese Noh theatre. John Wright (2002) makes this assertion, stating:

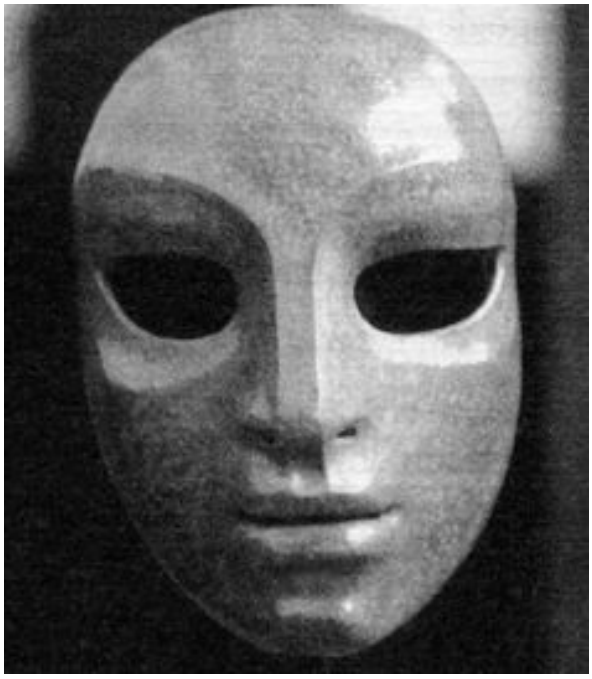
> Sartori's neutral mask appears to be symmetrical, the brows are relaxed and rounded, and the mouth is ready to smile, swear, eat or kiss but is doing none of these things. In making this mask Sartori was inspired by the young girl mask from the Japanese Noh theatre: Ko Omote. In both masks we see a mouth that could be about to smile, kiss or swear but is doing none of these

> things. Both masks capture a facial expression that is on the cusp between equally powerful feelings. (Wright 2002: 76)

In *The Moving Body*, Lecoq describes how he was influenced by Noh theatre, a development beginning in his early work with Jean Dasté. Wright's comparisons between the *Ko Omote* mask and the neutral mask (see Figures 1 and 2), demonstrate a personal association, a cultural connection, and also, the possibility of future archetypal associations. His interest in Noh theatre may speak to specific frustrations Lecoq had within his own culture's theatrical contexts. It may also speak to Lecoq's interest in the creative potentials within Eastern forms of mask, art, and philosophy.

Figure 1 (Left)- Ko Omote mask, Victoria and Albert Museum
Figure 2 (Right) - Sartori Neutral mask





Personal reflection:

I vividly remember my own introduction to the neutral mask. It was in 2004 and my teacher, Thomas Prattki, pulled two masks out of brightly coloured felt bags. They were made from rich brown leather, and fastened with thick black elastic bands. The objects were both alien and majestic; they had the aura of an unknown world. I had heard of them, and read about them, and I think that on some level I came to the school to study this mask most of all. It seemed at the time as if this was the moment the journey would start. I remember a sense of palpable excitement, and a little bit of fear.

Prattki began slowly, with a story about the creation of the mask in the early 1950s and the context that gave rise to the mask. He described it as coming out of a need for the reunification of Europe in the wake of World War II, where, in Prattki's view,

"people had been told a great many untruths about what it meant to be Italian, French, or German…" He suggested that Lecoq had used the mask as a way of looking beyond nationalistic identity, away from what separated people. The mask was viewed as a means of uniting around what is shared. Lecoq argued that if we remove everything, we end up with a body, and that working from the body would be a means of post-nationalist unification. Prattki articulated a hope that the mask could point Lecoq's students towards a unity within a world that had been destroyed by conflict.

One of the most distinguishing elements of the Lecoq pedagogy is its insistence on an international student body. It holds as a principle that we are all united by a study of movement and the physical body: that the movement of the body contains a "universal language". The neutral mask was the instrument for exploration of what transcends cultural or ethnographic identity, in the wake of the horrors of world war. For Prattki the construction of the mask must be viewed within the context of the time that gave rise to it. For him, the story of a French mime artist working with an Italian sculptor, trying to construct an object which would be "without conflict", comes in direct response to the war that had just ended (Pinchin 2004, unpublished personal journal).

Political Climate Post – WWII

> The collective and individual trauma of living through the Second World War, which so obviously shaped the perceptions of those who experienced it, was so often matched by an overwhelming sense of the need for cultural, social and political renewal when the war had ended. (Murray 2003: 15)

As described in *The Moving Body*, Lecoq's introduction to theatre came during the years of German Occupation of France, influenced by Jean-Marie Conty and the performances of Jean-Louis Barrault. It was during the years prior to the liberation of France (1944) that Lecoq began to adapt his training in gymnastics and physical education towards theatrical ends, a training that happened at the *Association Travail et Culture* (TEC). It seems relevant to acknowledge that, hidden in a footnote, he describes how the TEC was an organization heavily influenced by the French Resistance movement (Lecoq 2000: 7). In the period following French liberation, while working in Grenoble, Lecoq encountered Jean Dasté and his wife Marie-Hélène Copeau (daughter of Jacques Copeau); it was Jean Dasté who introduced Lecoq to the use of masks. When Lecoq left Dasté's company in 1947, to travel to Germany, he was already familiar with practices surrounding the "noble" mask of Copeau. He jokingly describes the workshops offered while participating in a French-German cultural exchange:

> I gave my first lecture-demonstrations, using the 'noble' mask to guide both teachers and students towards a discovery of movement and dramatic expressivity. I like to think I helped a little in the 'denazification' of Germany: I tried out a relaxation exercise which consisted of lifting the arm and letting

> it drop. I found that their way of doing the gesture was stiffer and different from ours, so I taught them to loosen up! (Lecoq 2000: 6)

It was through the use of the neutral mask, that Lecoq arguably found his most subversive socio-political statements: that underneath social and cultural distinctions there is a shared body. David Bradby (2002) makes this point strikingly clear by linking the political natures of Lecoq and his friend Dario Fo:

> The strong political charge present in all of Dario Fo's work rests on the same basis as the whole of Lecoq's teaching and outlook on life: it is that all social distinctions between people in society are ways of regimenting and denying the fundamental freedom of the body, which is potentially the same for all men and women in all times and places. (Bradby 2002: 85)

The political parallel Bradby makes between Lecoq and Fo is striking given Fo's reputation for activism, while the political elements of Lecoq's legacy have been widely neglected.

Years later, in 1956 when Lecoq returned to Paris to open his school, he presented an international student body as one of its fundamental tenets. While it is often referred to as "the Lecoq School", the official name of the institution places internationalism at the forefront of its pedagogy: École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq (The Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School). This trend continues to this day, and one can see it reflected in the institutions which Lecoq influenced: The London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA), Dell'arte International, The LASSAAD International Theatre School, and recently, HELIKOS Scoula Internationale de Creazione Teatrale. The neutral mask represents removal of cultural distinction that allows for a liberation of the body. This understanding of the mask can be seen as a radical political statement of the time in which it was created, a political point of view that is central to the pedagogy itself.

In the video documentary *Les deux voyages de Jacques Lecoq* (1999), Lecoq conducted an interview with Dario Fo. Lecoq was insistent that the rules that had applied before the war were no longer relevant; that the cultural landscape had altered, and they were now in a period where they had to begin again, and that "there were no more rules":

> DF: We were children back then. I was 23 and you were 25. So we were really just kids.
>
> JL: We had no idea of the results of what we were doing. We just did it; we just made it up, but we had no idea. We weren't diplomats or strategic about anything.
>
> DF: But there was a very important phenomenon that we were going through at the time. We were living among extraordinary renewal. The world had to be made all over again.

> JL: There were no more rules. There were no more rules. We had to make up the game again – find new rules.
>
> (Lecoq 1999: DVD)

The view that the neutral mask enables one to 'see the world as if for the first time', without conflict, is perhaps partially derived from a historical moment that sought not only to remove the stain of nationalism, but to find a sense of shared humanity: to view the world without the weight of recent history.

The *tabula rasa*, neutrality and an objective science of movement

By naming the mask "neutral", Lecoq can be seen as attempting to place an ancient technology into a contemporary scientific critical framework. The mask becomes a method for gaining a sense of objectivity regarding the body, a tool that magnifies subtle movements that would not be visible without the object. As Sears Eldredge states:

> The neutral mask is a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing. The mask is a tool for analysing the quality of the body's action. The mask hides the face, but reveals the attitudes and intentions, the nuances, the feeling tones, that are otherwise only dimly sensed in a person's motion or stillness. (Eldredge and Huston 1978: 26)

In this way, the mask can be used as a tool for the critical analysis of movement.

On its most basic level, the mask functions as an instrument that allows for the calibration of the performer's body and its movements. Bim Mason (2002) suggests 'I have found that the use of the neutral mask and the study of movement qualities has been indispensable in helping all kinds of students become aware of their characteristic physical habits and limitations' (Mason 2002: 46). Throughout *The Moving Body*, Lecoq uses terms like "economy of movement", "efficiency", "a fulcrum point" and "a fixed point" to describe neutrality. Simon Murray adds a mathematical spin with his term, "the Zero Body" (Murray 2002). Joan Sherlie, Founding Artistic Director of Dell'Arte International, argues that this calibrating effect is equivalent to the study of the Alexander Technique. For Sherlie, the mask offers a process of analysis of physical tension and habitual responses (personal interview, Skype 12/31/12). Norman Taylor's use of the term "Mask of Reference" (Taylor 2011), seems to denote an equivalent calibration; however, for Taylor, the mask is no longer simply an individual's tool, but acts as a communal point of reference within a group.

The neutral mask, as a point of reference, allowed Lecoq to observe the body more clearly, and therefore make what he felt to be an objectively scientific study of movement. One can view the performer's body as data, and with the mask, make critical statements about the movement of that body. The neutral mask allowed

Lecoq the distance to analyse movement and make subjective critiques under the safety of scientific objectivity.

Positioning the neutral mask within the field of modern and post-modern mime, and within existentialist thought

The teaching of Lecoq, and by extension his mask praxis, must be seen within the cultural context of the tradition of French mime. In her book, "Apostles of Silence: The Modern French Mimes", Mira Felner (1985) compares the work of the four artists whose theories have branched out from the teachings of Jacques Copeau: Etienne Decroux, Jean-Louis Barrault, Marcel Marceau, and Jacques Lecoq. In her view, there are two features that unite all four men: first, a need to explore mime as an art in and of itself, and, second, the need to rebel against French literary culture and thereby reject the text. She argues:

> This self-conscious theorizing, this rejection of literal meanings and the literary culture, these two attributes establish modern French mime as a distinctly new phenomenon. They are not haphazard qualities; they relate contemporary mime to the major thrust of modern art. (Felner 1985: 169)

She argues that these four situated themselves within the larger modernist movement, in what she calls "Paris Modern".

For Felner, "modern mime" begins with Decroux and not his teacher Copeau. Perhaps this is due to the latter's interest in the rediscovery of classical texts and not specifically the development of new forms of mime. She states,

> The new mime was born in a formal acting school whose program was based on a well-conceived ideology of the era itself the time of upheaval of the old political order in Europe, the dawn of applied Marxism, the generation of Freud, the moment of modern science, the epoch of relativism. The new mime is a child of the times, the era Barrault calls 'the golden age of aesthetics'. (Felner 1985: 50)

In this way, it is essential to highlight the larger movement of mime developing around Lecoq, a child of the time in which it was born.

It must be stated, however, that Felner's positioning of Copeau as pre-modernist, and Lecoq as modernist, is problematic. Bruce McConachie (2016), in "Jacques Lecoq and the Challenge of Modernist Theatre", argues that Copeau's aim of rediscovering classical texts itself highlights his modernist tendencies, and links the Modernist theatrical tradition with the aesthetic ideas of Immanuel Kant: 'For Kantian Modernists, the theatre could only suggest the higher faculties of practical morality and conceptual reasoning through the disembodied language of the playwright' (McConachie 2016: 36). In direct opposition to Felner, McConachie argues that 'the great architect of theatrical Modernism in France was Jacques

Copeau' (McConachie 2016: 35). For McConachie, Lecoq's work is seen as an attack on the establishment of French modernism, authorship, and embodiment: 'When Lecoq returned to Paris in 1956, he took with him a full set of leather Commedia masks and ideas about acting that would challenge the Modernist French theatrical establishment' (McConachie 2016: 36).

Other writers like Thomas Leabhart, in *Modern and Post-Modern Mime* (1989), place Lecoq's work within the post-modern movement. Simon Murray argues that simple distinctions between modernism and post-modernism are problematic when examining Lecoq's work:

> His withering rejection of the "sclerosis of formalism" and emphasis on "perpetual discovery" suggests – at first sight – that Lecoq had an ambiguous relationship with the conventions of Modernism. His interest in the 'play' of different forms, in the rejection of codification and a certain flexibility and pragmatism in the making of theatre do provide hints of a more postmodern identity. However, with his stress on 'individuality', in his quest for a 'rediscovery of the elemental' and through all the essentialist implication entailed in 'beginning at zero' and of 'movement before thought' Lecoq seems to fit more into a modernist/humanist aesthetic than a postmodern one. It seems that if the debate is framed by the conventions of twentieth-century mime then certainly there is a pluralistic – if not exactly postmodern – quality to Lecoq's thought and practice. (Murray 2002: 41)

It is in the neutral mask that Lecoq projects both his modernist/humanist aesthetic, as well as his rejection of formalism and codifications. One can then ask how the neutral mask of Lecoq differs from the noble mask of Copeau. In *The Moving Body*, Lecoq refers to both masks somewhat interchangeably. In recounting his past experiences with Jean Dasté, he states: 'every actor wore a "noble" mask, which we nowadays call the neutral mask' (Lecoq 2000: 5). Later, in his introduction to his school's use of the neutral mask, he observes, 'We use leather masks made by Amleto Sartori, which go back to the noble mask used by Dasté. The noble mask had something Japanese about it, but the quality it shared with the neutral mask was its calm, lack of particular expression and state of equilibrium' (Lecoq 2000: 38). Is the neutral mask simply a subtle re-branding of Copeau's mask, made by a master craftsman, or does the "neutral" mask offer something different from that of its "noble" counterpart?

In relation to the "noble" mask of Copeau, one finds not only a differing interpretation of the object's function, but a completely different object. The mask of Lecoq presents not just an elimination of identity, but a sharp aesthetic in and of itself. In contrast to the noble mask, the lines of the neutral mask are not dulled or flattened; they are overtly sculpted. Lecoq presents an abstraction, not simply a stripping away of the performer, but also the presentation of an ideal. The neutral mask is not man as he is, or even as he could ever be, but a figure to be imagined. It was this thrust into abstraction that, at least partially, marked the difference

between Copeau and those who followed in his footsteps. Felner highlights this shift when describing Decroux's use of mask:

> Decroux, the first man to conceive of modern abstract mime, freed movement from the vestiges of naturalism by banning all the traditional elements of the theatre of past eras: sets, props, realistic costumes and texts. Only the mask remains for its ability to abstract the actor's individual identity. (Felner 1985: 172)

It was the mask's ability to abstract that made it so prevalent within the Parisian movement of "modern mime". It should be noted that this was later taken further in Carlo Mazzone-Clementi's "Metaphysical mask", also constructed by Sartori, which seeks to further remove Lecoq's gendered humanism.

In addition to Lecoq's perceived challenge to the "Kantian modernism" of Copeau (McConachie 2016), Lecoq's work can be seen within the existentialist current of the 1950s in France. In Paris, Lecoq was surrounded by existentialist and phenomenologist thought. His neutral mask praxis resonates with Jean-Paul Sartre's (1957) understanding of consciousness, radical understanding of freedom, and construction of the self. One can see a resonance between his theories and much of Lecoq's understanding of the neutral mask (see *disponibilité*, and the removal of the persona) in *The transcendence of the ego: an existentialist theory of consciousness,* where Sartre describes consciousness as an 'impersonal spontaneity':

> We may therefore formulate our thesis: transcendental consciousness is an impersonal spontaneity. It determines its existence at each instant, without our being able to conceive anything *before* it. Thus each instant of our conscious life reveals to us a creation *ex nihilo.* Not a new *arrangement,* but a new existence. There is something distressing for each of us, to catch in the act this tireless creation of existence of which *we* are not the creators. At this level man has the impression of ceaselessly escaping from himself, of overflowing himself, of being surprised by riches which are always unexpected. And once more it is an unconscious from which he demands an account of this surpassing of the *me* by consciousness. Indeed, the *me* can do nothing to this spontaneity, for *will is an object which constitutes itself for and by this spontaneity.* (Sartre 1957: 98 - 99)

With the neutral mask Lecoq seems to strip away the 'me' Sartre describes, throwing the individual into a constant state of discovery. One is perhaps reminded of Lecoq's assertion, 'It is more important to observe how beings and objects move, and how they find a reflection in us... People discover themselves in relation to their grasp of the external world' (Lecoq 2000: 19). The neutral mask can therefore be seen, if viewed in accordance with Sartre's understanding of consciousness, as eliminating the Cartesian mind-body dualism and the idealism of "Kantian modernism" in favour of an existentialist and phenomenological exploration of external objects.

Lecoq presents the view that the neutral mask acts as a "fulcrum point", beginning a

journey through a larger series of masks which – as I have argued in Chapter 1 and will return to in Chapter 5 – can be viewed as a process of gradual formation and differentiation. One can see this progression as similar to Sartre's understanding of the self as an unfinished project. William Keith Tims (2007), in "Masks and Sartre's Imaginary: Masked Performance and the Imaging Consciousness", articulates this position: 'Sartre believes that man, lacking in a given essence, is a constantly unfinished project. We imagine what it is we are because we have nothing else to refer to' (Tims 2007: 14). This future-oriented project of the construction of self, combined with the impersonal and spontaneous nature of consciousness, offers a radical freedom for Sartre. Here one can hear echoes of Bradby's earlier link between the thinking of Dario Fo and Lecoq, and his assertion that cultural norms limit the essential freedom of the body. Tims' analysis of the neutral mask implies that the removal of the particulars of culture, history, and psychology represents a confrontation with the 'bad faith' that limits an individual's potential freedom (Tims 2007: 107)

As Murray has observed, there is an ambiguity between the thrusts of modernist and the post-modernist thought within Lecoq's teaching. This tension can be seen most clearly in interpretations of the neutral mask. The mask itself can be viewed as, on the one hand, presenting a Kantian ideal of the essence of a man or woman, while on the other, offering the potential freedom and exploration of consciousness that positions itself within phenomenological and existentialist thought.

Archetypal Associations

> It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counter reaction to those constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back. (Campbell 1993: 7)

In transitioning from potential cultural associations for the neutral mask to wider archetypal associations, I would like to begin with the fact that the neutral mask was constructed in Padua during the years Lecoq worked with Sartori (1948 – 1956). In my own view, it is notable that Joseph Campbell's seminal text, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, was first published in America in 1949. Although these men were working in drastically different locations, it is possible that both were benefiting from and/or contributing to these larger movements in Western thought. While it is outside the scope of this research to examine the question, one is still left wondering whether Campbell was influenced by the same socio-cultural changes that were happening at the time. Campbell's thinking, his interest in not only Jung's understanding of the psyche, but also Hindu and Buddhist teachings, has become a major influence on my own associations. These mythological amplifications may suggest as much about my own complexes as they do about the neutral mask itself.

It is important to begin by stressing that Jung's concept of an archetype is directly derived from the human body, and not from any larger metaphysical vision. Jung stresses that the archetype is a biological function which he relates to basic human

impulses. When drawing parallels between Jung and Lecoq, I would like to begin by pointing out that for both, the archetype, collective unconscious, and universal poetic sense reside in the physical body.

An archetype, for Jung, denotes a universal pattern of thought or imagery that is derived from the collective unconscious. Jung's assertion that archetypes exist *a priori*, before the birth of the individual, grounded his rejection of Freud's *tabula rasa* argument. While the archetype is a universal pattern, the images that present themselves within consciousness are specific to the particular individual or culture; in this way, one must distinguish between an archetype and an archetypal image. The neutral mask cannot be seen as archetypal in and of itself, but manifests as a culturally specific archetypal image.

Having previously drawn upon Lo and Gilbert's argument that cross-cultural comparisons help create 'strategic way[s] of rethinking the local and context-specific through the global and vice-versa', in this section I offer a number of archetypal associations that add specific elements to an understanding of the neutral mask (Lo & Gilbert 2002: 48-49)[13]. Building on Arrighi's assertion that the neutral mask contains no "other", these associations present mythological images of a primordial man or woman, a creator god, or of a universal culture hero. An archetypal understanding of the neutral mask will demonstrate in concrete terms how Lecoq positions the actor in the role of creator, how he forms his mimetic identifications, his personified *tabula rasa*, and finally, his movement from the general to the particular. One sees this in:

- The "Cosmogonic Awakening" of Marie-Louise von Franz (1995) and the awakening of the actor creator *ex nihilo*, as described in the Inuit creation myth of Father Raven. I will argue that Lecoq has adopted elements of a creation myth in order to (re)position the actor in the role of creator.

- The Hindu concept of *Ātman*, or "eternal soul", as described in the Fourth Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Krause 1925: 81). I examine the union of Ātman with Brahman the creator, proposing a mythic association with Lecoq's unique approach to mimetic identification.

- The Buddhist critique of the Ātman, found in the concept of anattā of "not self", as articulated in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Analayo 2003: 4). Building on this critique, I offer a mythological personification of Lecoq's *tabula rasa*, drawing attention to Lecoq's primary description of the neutral mask as that of "calm curiosity", and his interest in the removal of conflict.

- Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey", a monomyth grounding Lecoq's monist mask (Campbell 1993). By viewing Campbell's work in relation to C.G. Jung's understanding of the process of individuation, the movement from general to

[13] (see Introduction, p.23)

particular, I argue that the neutral mask points towards a long-term process of psychological differentiation.

This list is by no means exhaustive. By definition, there are innumerable mythological associations drawing on the symbolic elements of the mask; however, the specific examples I have offered point to fundamental elements within neutral mask pedagogy. By underscoring the relevance of this living symbol, I argue that an archetypal perspective on Lecoq's mask will add to the understanding of existing neutral mask praxis.

The *ex nihilo* Cosmogonic Awakening

Lecoq was concerned with shifting the intention of the performer away from interpretation and towards theatrical creation. To do this, he adopted the neutral mask as a cornerstone, placing the actor (and not the playwright or director) at the centre of the creative act. The first neutral mask theme for Lecoq, as outlined in Chapter 1, is described in *The Moving Body*: to wake and see the world as if for the first time. In the exercise, the masked performer is asked to wake without preconception, past or future, but only with a sense of calm curiosity. We have seen Lecoq suggest that 'all along an extraordinary dimension is being offered to them: space' (Lecoq 2000:39). Lecoq is asking his students to participate within a creation myth, and to bring a world into existence from nothing.

David Leeming (2010) offers five categories of creation myth. The first he describes as *ex nihilo*, focused on 'a supreme deity, existing alone in a pre-creation emptiness or void, who consciously creates an organized universe on his own'. Creation from a single being (or power) who fashions the world out of nothing, he argues, is 'ubiquitous in all parts of the world and is arguably the most common of the five types' (Leeming 2010: 2). He proceeds to list a series of myths from throughout the world that share this connection.

Marie-Louise von Franz (1995) opens her examination of themes within creation mythology, *Creation Myths*, with a version of the *ex nihilo* in a section she describes as "Cosmogonic Awakening". She outlines a North Western Alaskan Inuit tale, 'told by Apatac of the Noatak River', about the creation of the world. In this story, Tulungersaq, or Father Raven, performs the task of world creation out of darkness:

> *Heaven came into existence before the Earth, but it was not older because when it came into existence the Earth was already forming. It had already a firm crust before there was any land and before there was also the first living being about whom we know anything. This being was called Tulungersaq, or Father Raven… He was not an ordinary bird but a holy life-power which was in everything which existed in this world in which we now live. But he, too, began in the shape of a human being and was groping around in the dark, and all his deeds were completely casual until it became manifest to him who he was and what he should do.*

> *He sat crouching in the darkness when he suddenly awoke to consciousness and discovered himself. He did not know where he was or how he had come into being, but he breathed and had life, he lived. Everything around him was in darkness and he could not see anything. With his hands he groped around, touching objects, and his fingers touched clay wherever he expanded them. The earth was clay and everything around him was dead clay. He let his fingers pass over the clay, and then he found his face and he felt that he had a nose and eyes and a mouth and also that he had arms and legs, as we have. He was a human being, a man. (von Franz 1995: 29)*

The story begins with a primordial figure, Father Raven, seen as a man before becoming a bird. The story outlines how he haphazardly creates life while in darkness. As the story progresses Father Raven realizes that he must travel, and he moves from heaven to Earth and continues to create while there. In the process of the story, through the ordeal of creation, Father Raven becomes a large black bird and in so doing creates the world around him. The essential element for von Franz is the fact that Father Raven performs a creation through consciousness, what von Franz terms "Cosmogonic Awakening". She argues: 'In our myth we see the picture of an unconscious creator who creates the world in an in-between way, by discovering it, by becoming conscious of it' (von Franz 1995: 34).

Existing neutral mask praxis follows a similar progression as the "man-of-all-men" 'awakes and sees the world for the first time', and the world comes into existence for the performer (and thereby the audience). As he becomes conscious of images around him he testifies to their existence, bringing them into being. Neutral mask praxis begins with a creation into consciousness: a cosmogonic awakening and a creation from nothing. Lecoq challenges his students to enact elements of a similar creation myth: thereby developing the actor creator.

Personal anecdote: Before my upgrade review I had the pleasure of speaking at a conference at Anglia Ruskin University on "Myth, Fantasy & Fairy Tales", delivering a paper entitled "Mythopoesis in mask construction". I explained my critique of Lecoqian mask praxis, and during the general questioning for the panel I was asked about the shadow within neutral mask praxis. My answer was that the neutral mask exists in darkness, that there is an emptiness that surrounds the mask; the job of the actor is to bring the space around him into light: explore the empty space and through his body, bring it into consciousness. Before knowing it, I had described Father Raven's groping around in the darkness alone.

The Hindu concept of *Ātman*, or "eternal soul", as described in the Fourth Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

In his book, *Mask, Transformation, and Paradox*, anthropologist David Napier (1986) argues that masks are fundamentally a polytheistic technology. For Napier, cultures gravitate towards the adoption of mask because masks embody paradox (Napier

1986: 4). It is the paradoxical understanding of appearance that, he argues, shapes a polytheistic cosmology. Napier compares this mentality with monotheistic attitudes towards appearance and what he describes as 'the problem of *prima facie*'. A monotheistic worldview, for Napier, does not permit the mimetic representation of the deity and, therefore, does not allow for mask. Napier argues that within a monotheistic cosmology, in which both god and truth are singular, man becomes concerned with purity or *prima facie.* For this worldview, mask becomes symbolic of evil or deceit, the object that must be removed to reveal what is true or godly. Within a polytheistic cosmology, however, where truth is complex and paradoxical, masks become a pedagogical tool.

I argue that through the neutral mask Lecoq has constructed a monist adaptation of what has been traditionally a polytheistic technology, supporting his view that there is no other in the neutral mask. Lecoq's assertion that there is a neutral mask underneath all other masks has tamed the rough paganism of the mask, allowing a unity to clean the murky waters of his pedagogy while proposing a distinct (though problematic) teleology: neutrality. Each association I have offered, therefore, embraces that monism. I will conclude the chapter with some further thoughts towards this point, offering a potential critique of the monism I see as inherent within both the Lecoq and Jungian traditions.

This complex fusion of monotheism and polytheism is found in the Advaita Vedanta, or non-dualist form of the Hindu tradition, where many gods are manifestations of a larger force: *Brahman*. While Hinduism in general presents itself as a polytheistic tradition, Advaita Vedanta becomes unified through its concept of *Brahman*, who is a being both transcendent and immanent, and seen as the great creator. The Fourth Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, literally translating into "great wilderness or forest Upaniṣhad", recounts the story of creation from a unitary soul:

> *1. In the beginning this world was Soul (Ātman) alone in the form of a person looking around, he saw nothing else than himself. He said first: 'I am.' Thence arose the name 'I.' Therefore even today, when one is addressed, he says first just 'It is I' and then speaks whatever name he has. Since before all this world he burned up all evils, therefore he is a person. He who knows this, verily, burns up him who desires to be ahead of him.*
>
> *2. He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid. This one then thought to himself: 'Since there is nothing else than myself, of what am I afraid?' Thereupon, verily, his fear departed, for of what should he have been afraid? Assuredly it is from a second that fear arises.*
>
> *3. Verily, he had no delight. Therefore one alone has no delight. He desired a second. He was, indeed, as large as a woman and a man closely embraced. He caused that self to fall into two pieces. Therefrom arose a husband and a wife. Therefore this [is true]: 'Oneself is like a half-fragment,' as Yājñavalkya used to say. Therefore this space is filled by a wife. He copulated with her. There from human beings were produced.*

> *4. And she then bethought herself: 'How now does he copulate with me after he has produced me just from himself? Come, let me hide myself. ' She became a cow. He became a bull. With her he did indeed copulate. Then cattle were born. She became a mare, he a stallion. She became a female ass, he a male ass; with her he copulated, of a truth. Thence were born solid-hoofed animals. She became a she-goat, he a he-goat; she a ewe, he a ram. With her he did verily copulate. Therefrom were born goats and sheep. Thus, indeed, he created all, whatever pairs there are, even down to the ants.*
>
> *5. He knew: 'I, indeed, am this creation, for I emitted it all from myself.' Thence arose creation. Verily, he who has this knowledge comes to be in that creation of his. (Krause 1925: 81)*

Echoes of this creation myth reverberate in Lecoq's understanding of neutral mask praxis. The story centres around a being who looked around and 'saw nothing else than himself'; to this I would suggest that 'Himself' is a Self that can be equated with *Brahman*. The story presents an emerging conflict within dualism: individual self and eternal Self, man and woman, and the subsequent creation of pairs of animals. The story ends with a drastic turn – 'He knew: "I, indeed, am this creation, for I emitted it all from myself." Thence arose creation. Verily, he who has this knowledge comes to be in that creation of his' – suggesting a reconciliation between dualist oppositions.

The neutral mask begins from the image of an undifferentiated man or woman who Lecoq argued was a human without social/cultural/psychological distinctions. The argument followed that the mask presents no other: the "man-of-all-men" and the "woman-of-all-women" are within each of us. In his conception of the "man-of-all-men", Lecoq presents a version of Self that is undifferentiated and impersonal, without conflict, a being that transcends time and space. This concept bears a striking resemblance to the Hindu understanding of Self, as described in the Vedic tradition, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita as the *Ātman*. Portrayed as eternal, neither beginning nor ending, *Ātman* is designated in the Upanishads as the eternal Creator, or *Brahman*, within each living thing (*ayamātmā brahma*). As explained by Jan Feys (1976), 'the sum and substance of the Upanishad teaching… is involved in the equation Ātman=Brahman'… The Ultimate, Brahman, the Upanishads discovers is at the heart of man, his self. Brahman this is Ātman' (Feys 1976: 2).

Joseph Campbell argues that this connection is at the heart of 'mythological thinking'; he borrows a phrase from the *Chandogya Upanishad*, "*Tat Tvam Asi*", which Campbell translates from the Sanskrit as 'thou art that' (Campbell 2001). The sentence encompasses the Advaita Vedanta, or non-dualist approach to the *Ātman*/*Brahman* relationship. This form of Hinduism focuses on the removal of the subject/object relationship. It, in my view, lends clarity to the symbolic meaning of the neutral mask. Though Lecoq would certainly never have asserted that the mask had anything to do with Vedic teachings, practices or cosmology, the mask's primary function is to dissolve the distinction between the performer and the object of

mimetic exploration. Lecoq's concern was with mime, an exploration of physical dynamics through a process he calls "identifications". Mira Felner (1985) captures Lecoq's unique form of mimetic embodiment, when she quotes Lecoq as stating: 'The fire which I see can flame in me. I can know that fire and when I identify with it, and play at being fire I give my fire to the fire' (Felner 1985: 147).

This somewhat obtuse statement offers a prime example of the difficulties of explaining specifically how the neutral mask functions. While I want to be careful to maintain a speculative distance in these associations, one could perhaps find resonances of Lecoq's flame echoed in elements from the Katha Upanishad, where the King of Death explains to the young Nachiketa, 'What is within us is also without. What is without is also within' (Prabhavananda 2002: 11-12): 'The fire which I see can flame in me'. As I have argued in Chapter 1, the teaching of the neutral mask is primarily to make a connection between the performer and the external natural world. That connection highlights Lecoq's assertion that 'outer movements resemble inner movements, they speak the same language' (Lecoq 2000: 21). Simon Murray (2003) argues that, in Lecoq's understanding of authorship, mime was seen as a means of "producing thought" (*mime de début*), and not as a means of translating thought (*mime de fin*). Here mime becomes not simply a language of gesture, but Lecoq's primary method of exploration. Lecoq's mime demanded "identification" with the object of mimesis, as seen in the image of the fire. The difficulty of teaching mime for Lecoq becomes one of removing, not only mind/body dualism (see Chapter 1, p. 38-39), but also subject/object dualism. With his use of identification, of reflecting the dynamics seen in the natural world and through mimetic embodiment, he argues one explores the poetic 'reflection in us' (Lecoq 2000: 19). Lecoq encompasses this belief in a grand statement: 'You can immerse your life in a drop of water and see the whole world!' (Lecoq 2000: 23).

The Buddhist ideal of anattā, or "not self", as articulated in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

When looking for visual associations with the neutral mask, one associative image offers a striking resonance: the image of the Buddha. In the statues and paintings of this figure, one sees an individual who has found all the elements of the neutral mask: calm, balance, freedom from conflict, mindfulness of the body in the present moment. Seated upright in perfect balance, the one differing feature is the inward looking gaze. The "Tathāgata" as the Buddha called himself (varying definitions translate the term to mean either "thus come" or "thus gone") is said to have transcended personal conflicts and thus becomes the embodiment of the noble eight-fold path to enlightenment. The Buddha, as an individual, becomes the symbolic personification of that path.

One can also view the neutral mask as pointing towards the Buddhist conception of *anattā*, or "non-self", as a reaction to the Hindu concept of *Ātman*. The neutral mask offers another associative meaning, found in Buddhist teachings outlined in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, or 'the discourse of the establishing of mindfulness' (Analayo 2003). The mask can be seen as underscoring the debate between a universal Self

and Buddhist discourse around *anattā* or "non-self", which also could be viewed as both the central aim of the Satipaṭṭhāna, and of Lecoq's understanding of mime. Lecoq's mime points towards a process of negation, *via negativa*, challenging his students to work towards the removal of personal association, a release of objects or ideas. Through the mask he presents the image of a personified *tabula rasa*.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta outlines in practical terms the Buddhist view of mindfulness. It begins with a passage from the Buddha: 'Monks, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of dukkha and discontent, for acquiring the true method, for the realization of Nibbana, namely, the four Satipaṭṭhānas' (Analayo 2003: 3).

In the Sutta, the Buddha examines those Four Arousings of Mindfulness, which he categorizes as: The Contemplation of the Body, The Contemplation of Feeling, The Contemplation of Consciousness, and finally, The Contemplation on Mental Objects. The Buddha opens his examination into mindfulness of the body by placing the focus of meditation on the breath. He offers a specific method of analysing breath, long and short, and advocates a method of "training" the breath to be "calm". This beginning with the body, and more specifically, from a state of calm within that body, has decided resonances with neutral mask praxis. "Calm" becomes one of the adjectives most associated with the mask.

For each of the four Arousings of Mindfulness, the Sutta offers a reoccurring mantra that is used many times throughout the relatively short text:

> In this way, in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body internally, or he abides contemplating the body externally, or he abides contemplating the body both internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or he abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body or he abides contemplating the nature of both arising and passing away in the body. Mindfulness that 'there is a body' is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how in regard to the body he abides contemplating the body. (Analayo 2003: 4)

This repetitive refrain, that adapts for each of the "Four Arousings" (Body, Feeling, Consciousness, and Mind Objects) strongly reinforces the Buddhist concept of non-self. The conclusion presented in the Sutta, that there is no eternal unchanging Self, leads to the fundamental principle within Buddhist tradition: clinging to the false idea of Self becomes the cause of suffering.

Underneath all neutral mask praxis is an understanding that the mask emphasises physical imbalances within the body. Before any concepts can be applied, before one talks about seeing the world for the first time, before any "*identifications"* can take place, before one can see the space around the performer, one must remove the basic conflicts within the body. This first step of all neutral mask praxis places the

focus of the individual in and on the body. The aim is to know exactly what your body is doing in the present moment. A teacher may ask if the student is aware of his or her habitual responses, a raised shoulder, locked knees, or collapsed chest. Whether sitting still or standing, climbing up or lying down, the objective is to force the student to become mindful of precisely what the body is doing at all times.

The basic task according to Sears Eldredge (1978) is to purify the body of physical imbalances, time, culture, language, desire, fear, and thought. Simon Murray's "Zero Body" captures something of this idea: the stripping away of anything that is perceived as "mine", "me", or "I". Through this elimination of self, one finds the empty space around the body. It is through the removal of self, creating what John Wright calls a "vacuum" (Wright 2002: 76), that the Lecoq-trained actor creates. According to Wright, after the removal, an image arises in the space around the body. The student observes an arising and a passing away in the impermanence of an improvisation. Theatrical construction, for Lecoq, is an impersonal action. One does not care what happens underneath the mask; the image exists for a short amount of time, then fades away.

A note on construction: one of the terms that has been most often associated with the Lecoq pedagogy is *via negativa* (although the term was never in fact adopted by Lecoq himself). It is derived from Apophatic theology, which sought to locate the divine through the negation of what was not divine. This method of actor training is severe, treating the work of students with cold negation, a legendary element of the Lecoq school. At the weekly performances, the students would dread the almost inevitable: "Thank you!", a sign that one must stop the improvisation or construction, a call to remove the mask. This, however, was a central element of the training: you are not your construction and your construction is not you; you do not own your work; and when your work is assessed it is not you that is assessed. While in other acting techniques it may be considered taboo to tell a fellow actor how to move or say a line, in the Lecoq tradition this ownership is quickly stripped away.

The story of the life of the Buddha, and his discovery of "the middle way", is an act of sitting between the poles of hedonism and self-mortification. The neutral mask is described by John Wright in a similar fashion:

> Bari Rolf, the American mask teacher and former student of Lecoq, has renamed the neutral mask the 'universal mask'. Others have called it a 'blank mask.' Neither of these words captures the delicate balance that Lecoq is trying to articulate. Neutral means: 'occupying a middle position between two extremes'. (Wright 2002: 75)

Lecoq's teaching is built around an object with competing symbolic meanings, a balancing of extremes, *Ātman* and *anattā*, eternal self or non-self.

In Ralph Yarrow's (1986) exploration of consciousness, "'Neutral' Consciousness in the Experience of Theater", he argues that physical and mental states, like the quality of neutrality adopted by Lecoq, are necessary precursors to higher levels of

perceptions. Yarrow quotes Lecoq: 'The neutrality that the mask seeks is an economy of mind and body, evidenced at rest, in motion, and in the relationship between them', suggesting that a calm stillness is a precursor to expanded fields of perception (from Lecoq cited in Eldredge and Huston 1978: 21).

Yarrow creates two categories: category A, which he defines as, 'suspension or extreme refinement of physical activity, suspension of judgment (indifference, neutrality), extension of perceptual boundaries (including sensitivity to language), and consciousness of being conscious (meta-awareness)'. These attributes, he argues, precede characteristics of category B, which he describes as a:

> sense of unity or wholeness (self + work/world, all aspects of work, organic understanding), modification of evaluation of self, potential for creating form (readiness for voluntary acts, awareness of multiple possibilities, spontaneity), and a conjunction of distance and involvements. (Yarrow 1986: 3)

For Yarrow, qualities found in category A act as precursors to category B. Consciousness flows from a sense of calm self-awareness towards heightened states of perception.

Yarrow later outlines several levels of consciousness: from a neutral heightened sense of readiness, to a perception of the underlining forms of all things (equated with 'Plato's archetypes'), and, finally, towards a view of consciousness merging with matter as an 'energy filled void' which Yarrow equates with 'Unity Consciousness or Vedanta'. Yarrow points to the use of masks, specifically in ritual environments, as a means of accessing higher states:

> Ultimately, wearing a mask is not just about primitive mimesis or imitation, but about locating and taking on the energies being mimed – i.e., about learning to function in the same way… This is indeed the aim of neutral-mask training; it also makes clear that the mask is most fundamentally a means of discovering that ability to be *anything* which is at the heart of the "play" instinct and thus of all performance… it is consciousness as the mirror-without-an-image, but able to take on anything. (Yarrow 1986: 5)

Within the neutral mask, one can see the potential for both stillness and movement: a stillness combined with spontaneity, a sense of unity and wholeness, and the conjunction of distance and involvement which, Yarrow argues, form the very definition of higher levels of consciousness. His connection with Vedanta, or unity consciousness, proposes the possibility of viewing the *Atman*/*Brahman* union as the potential for higher states of consciousness derived from the symbolic aspects of the neutral mask. Yarrow offers an understanding of neutrality, and its potential implications for consciousness, that in my view opens up the possibility of greater insights into the practical application of symbolic amplification.

In addition, Yarrow also offers a new term for the state of consciousness implied by the mask, one that embraces the polarity of action and stillness: "armed neutrality". In his collaboration with Anthony Frost, Yarrow states that:

> Japanese swordsmen long ago realized that there is no ideal, preset position in which to stand before a fight. To adopt any one stance reduces the possibilities of all other stances and therefore creates a potentially fatal weakness. The ideal position is 'no position' – a condition of alert or 'armed' neutrality – containing all potential within it… for the improviser, too, balance is that 'armed neutrality', expressed physically as well as imaginatively. (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 149-150)

In citing Japanese swordsmen, I am drawn to the Japanese feudal code known as the "*Bushi* Way". The *bushi*, or *Bushido*, is derived from the Samurai chivalric code that offers a uniquely Japanese perspective on Buddhist teachings. In his book, *The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy*, Yuasa Yasuo (1993) offers an explanation of this martial art form by saying that 'The *bushi* way, like the way of the arts, was profoundly influenced by Buddhist self-cultivation methods, predominantly those of Esoteric and Zen Buddhism' (Yasuo 1993: 30). Yasuo draws on the teaching of Takuan (1573-1645), a Zen monk who presents a position that is very similar to the one which Yarrow describes:

> If one places his mind on the [opponent's] sword, the sword will take hold of his mind. If one places his mind on timing, the timing will, again, take hold of his mind. And if one places his mind on his striking sword, that will take hold of his mind. All this is stagnation of the mind and will result in opening up a weak spot before oneself. (Yasuo 1993: 31)

Yet Yasuo does not focus on the positioning of the body in his analysis; for him the desired aim of training is a state of 'no-mind'. This state is not entirely different from that described by Yarrow in his analysis of neutral consciousness or his understanding of the state of playful *disponibilité* within the Lecoq pedagogy. Another look at the state of "armed neutrality" suggests that one might move past the body, towards a consciousness that releases itself from fixed positions:

> Therefore, practice in the *bushi* way releases one from the mind's tendency to get fixated and captivated by something, and it trains one to achieve a state of freedom of movement without captivation by anything. If one continues training, Takuan claims, it is possible to reach the "rank of no-mind and no-thought. (Yasuo 1993: 31)

In Phillip Zarilli's (2012) chapter entitled, "'…presence…' as a question and emergent possibility", he argues that what is often problematically termed 'presence', is experienced as a series of unfolding questions. He states:

> Too often actors are looking for 'answers,' want closure, or simply try to repeat something that seems to 'work' and is successful. Rather than

> closure, answers, or what seems to work, paradoxically acting should always be considered as a 'question'… phenomenologically actors should situate themselves in the indeterminate position of being 'on the edge' of *not knowing*. (Zarrilli 2012: 147)

Throughout this Chapter I have offered a number of potential divergent amplifications for the symbolic aspects of the neutral mask. Recounting that a symbol is by definition partially unknown or unknowable, I argue that the neutral mask presents a series of questions to the masked performer. The image of the Atman presents the possibility of a higher union with surrounding objects (real or imagninal), while the image of annatta presents an opposing dynamic of release of self, the elimination of mind/ego/self towards a state of conscious awareness.

Yarrow's "armed neutrality" is evocative of an essential aspect of the neutral mask pedagogy: it speaks to a conscious state of heightened active awareness as well as an economy of movement and stillness. I have previously drawn attention to the number of names given to the mask: "The Universal Mask" (Bari Rolf), "The Mask of Reference" (Norman Taylor), "The Zero Body" (Simon Murray), or "Performative Liminality" (Gillian Arrighi). Yarrow's term offers an insightful contribution to the conflicting aspects contained within the mask: forces in dynamic conflict that create an evocative resonance. The neutral mask creates questions which the performer must address in a moment-to-moment state of not knowing. If the neutral mask is "a fulcrum point that does not exist", a point through which the student transitions into a study of dynamics, then Lecoq deliberately presents a highly symbolic mask as a means of creating a state of 'presence' or, in the words of Zarrilli, a state of psychophysical *not knowing* that underscores 'all other masks' that follow in the pedagogy.

Monomask and Monomyth: Lecoq, Campbell and Jung

Joseph Campbell's understanding of the distinction between occidental and oriental mythology is made clear in his analysis of *Ātman* and *anattā* in the East and the biblical story of Job and the myth of Prometheus in the West, during which he states:

> *A thing without fault is not lovable. What you love is precisely the fault. And if you can name the fault in such a way that you can communicate that it is a fault, that is precisely that individual. That is what is lovable in that individual. If you can do that you become, not a mere literary man, but a creative poet. You have recognized the peculiar thing about life, and that is this: that every single person is imperfect. And that it is precisely in his imperfections that he is charming, wonderful, and of value. All of the Buddhas on the other hand are alike. When you see, in a temple in India, particularly the Jain temples where all the illuminated ones are all lined up in a row, they are all exactly identical. They are perfect human beings, they are absolutely cold, they aren't human at all… It is my little thesis: that this wonderful discovery of our little European, western world, of the charm, of*

> *the power in charm of the individual fault, is the great great gift we have to give to the world.* (Campbell 1961)

In this final archetypal association, I leave the Indian philosophic tradition and return to the West. Following Campbell's lead, his 'little thesis' that the great gift of Western thought is the recognition of imperfection, one can see the neutral mask as offering insight into this concept of failure. It evidences how each individual is in fact not neutral, but imperfect and different. This echoes Norman Taylor's assertion that 'if you touch where we are united, where we are together, then you will see how different we are' (Taylor 2011).

In Chapter 1, I outlined in detail Lecoq's use of the "Fundamental Journey", a voyage without conflict that each student must undertake in the first year of study, reflecting particular challenges that she or he faces. I argued that the journey achieved with the neutral mask forms a parallel with Jung's process of individuation. Through the neutral mask, Lecoq offers a version of self that is not "performative", but rather archetypical, primitive, and heroic. The mask asks the wearer to transform into an essential version of himself, one who has no past and, therefore, no fear or conflict, who moves into the unknown without doubt or second thought. The challenge to embody that figure within oneself is a heroic act.

The hero, and the heroic journey, holds an important place within Jungian psychology, symbolic of the process of self-confrontation and psychological growth that Jung referred to as the "process of individuation". Andrew Samuels (1986) describes the importance of the hero:

> The hero is a transitional being, a mana personality… Viewed intrapsychically, he represents the will and capacity to seek and undergo repeated transformations in pursuit of wholeness and meaning. Therefore at times he appears to be the ego; at other times, the self. He is the ego-self axis personified. (Samuels 1986: 66)

Comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell, in his popularized *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), written the same year the neutral mask was created, outlines a Jungian journey of self-confrontation and individuation which he argues unites all major mythic traditions. He describes this voyage and return as a process of becoming 'transparent to the transcendent':

> What myth does for you is to point beyond the phenomenal field towards the transcendent. A mythic figure is like the compass that you used to draw circles and arcs in school, with one leg in the field of time, and the other in the eternal. (Campbell 2004: xvii)

The image of Campbell's compass is apt for the study of mask, demanding that you embody, in the presence of an audience, something ethereal or transcendent. For Campbell, the hero becomes the person through whom one glimpses the eternal, although this eternal is not simply an external power, but something within.

Campbell theorized that all myths are governed by one immutable story. In a similar fashion, Lecoq theorized that the neutral mask is underneath all other masks. Juxtaposing Campbell's theory with Lecoq's view of the neutral mask, one can see Lecoq's pedagogy through a Campbellian lens. Campbell's monomyth and Lecoq's "monomask", present the possibility for a new understanding of the relationship between mask and myth within contemporary praxis: a journey and return into the unconscious of the individual (see Chapter 1, p. 47-56). Campbell's journey presents us with the possibility of taking Lecoq's mask towards an internal journey of self-confrontation and discovery, in line with Jung's concept of individuation.

Moving forward: Monotheistic or Polytheistic, a post-Jungian critique

James Hillman (1981), in his essay, "Psychology: monotheistic or polytheistic", offers a critique of the monotheism that he argues is inherent in Jungian psychology, with its teleological aim of unity and wholeness, as articulated in the process of individuation, and its insistent focus on the hero. Hillman's essay explores the intersection between psychology and theology. Drawing on Jung's assertion that 'the Self is the archetype most important for modern man to understand', Hillman argues that the heightened importance of the Self demonstrates a monotheistic approach to the psyche, something Hillman attributes to Jung's 'Protestant direction'. His essay presents the conflict as follows: 'The question 'monotheism or polytheism' represents the basic ideational conflict in psychology today. Which fantasy governs our view of soul-making and the process of individuation – the many or the one?' (Hillman 1981: 22).

I now ask the question: can one view the neutral mask, not as the mask underneath all other masks, but as one mask amongst many? As I have argued, with the neutral mask, Lecoq has constructed a monist adaptation of what has been traditionally a polytheistic technology. The neutral mask becomes symbolic of a heroic journey of self-realization and individuation: the discovery of unity and wholeness, a position of balance. One can see a pedagogy which is focused on cleanliness, a determined focus on what "works", through a process of *via negativa*, a focus on the removal of anything that clutters: the stage, the body, its movement, and the students' creations themselves. Even the student enrolment is not immune to a stripping away (at the Paris school, it is reduced from approximately 100 to approximately 30 between the first and second years of study). There is a danger in this monism: a desire for cleanliness over complexity.

Hillman argues against monotheistic thinking, a teleology that strives for wholeness and unification. He argues against Jung's assertion that the Self is "the archetype which is most important for modern man to understand", claiming that the self is simply one archetype amongst many, and that the intent of psychology should be located within the archetypal core of each personal complex (Hillman 1981: 109). He asserts that the primacy of the self undervalues the plurality associated with personal complexes, which, Hillman argues, become less significant to the grander goal of unification. Hillman's own Archetypal Psychology favours an exploration of

the archetypal core of each complex, best encompassed, in Hillman's view, within the gods of classical Greek mythology. When describing his own approach, he states:

> It would aim less at gathering them into a unity and more at integrating each fragment according to its own principle, giving each God its due of that portion of consciousness, that symptom, complex, fantasy, which calls for an archetypal background. It would accept the multiplicity of voices, the Babel of the anima and animus, without insisting upon unifying them into one figure, and accepting too the dissolution process into diversity as equal to the coagulation process into unity. The pagan Gods and Goddesses would be restored to their psychological domain. (Hillman 1981: 26-27)

The question becomes: must all symbolic manifestations be unified within the Self, or within one mask (or one progression of masks) for Lecoq? Or can one view an internal approach to mask pedagogy as a differentiation of psychic material into a diverse pantheon, giving in Hillman's words: "each god his due"? Hillman's critique grounds my own mask praxis and my exploration of mask construction, the focus of the following chapters.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that the neutral mask is indeed symbolic, offering an elaboration of that symbolic material through Jung's method of amplification. I have adopted Murray Stein's model, in which the amplification process moves from the personal towards the cultural, and finally to the archetypal. In doing so, I have focused on a number of potential cultural associations with Lecoq's understanding of neutrality, and the mask that sits at the centre of his pedagogy: a reaction to the nationalism of WWII, a transition into the modernist movement of French mime and existentialist thought developing in Paris in the 1950's and 60's, and, finally, a perceived empirical analysis of the body that could be considered "scientific".

Building on these associations, I have outlined a number of key mythological themes that, I argue, allow one to better understand the principles of the Lecoq pedagogy. The first views the mask as offering a "cosmogonic awakening", an *ex nihilo* myth of creation through the development of consciousness. It focuses on the Northwestern Alaskan Inuit story of Father Raven, and directs the actor towards the position of creator. Second, in exploring parallels with the Hindu tradition of Advaita Vedanta, the nondualist approach to the *Ātman*/*Brahman* relationship, the neutral mask points towards a unification of subject and object. Here a parallel can be seen in Lecoq's unique approach to mimetic "identification". I have argued that Lecoq's personified *tabula rasa* holds similarities to the Buddhist critique of that eternal self, *An-atman* or anattā, described as non-self. Finally, I have examined Joseph Campbell's theories of a monomyth, articulated in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), published in the same year as the creation of the neutral mask, that offers a

means of viewing the pedagogic journey as a whole: a movement towards differentiation and individuation.

By mythologizing the neutral mask, I hope to achieve three aims: first, to add context to my critique of Lecoq; second, to show how these amplifications evidence an emerging neutral mask praxis that is imbedded within the Jungian model of individuation (outlined in Chapter 1 and developed by Thomas Prattki at LISPA). And finally, to use these mythological amplifications to form the foundation of my own mask praxis, a praxis that does not strip away the complexes of the individual but seeks to engage with them.

My own critique of Lecoq challenges the monism inherent within the Lecoq tradition. Using the argument presented by James Hillman, who attacked the monism underlining Jung's concept of the Self, I question Lecoq's need for a "mask underneath all other masks". In the following chapters, I will adopt Hillman's critique, outlining my own mask praxis through a process of mask construction as a means of challenging Lecoq. My aim is not to develop a monist purity, but to move towards an understanding of the multiple of beings that compete within the individual.

Chapter 3
Sculpting (and staging) a Personal Myth

> *It is as if these masks have in them our own personal myth.*
> (Workshop Participant, April 2012)

Chapter Overview

This chapter examines the use of mask construction as a means of encountering and giving shape to the personal shadow of the individual as I explore the use of mask construction as a way of generating a "personal myth". In positioning my own mask construction at the centre of this research, I am able to articulate a developing Practice as Research *methodological approach, building directly on the foundation constructed during the previous chapters.*

In order to transition from existing Lecoq-based neutral mask praxis into my own PaR, I will begin by exploring the question: Why invite actors to make their own masks? I will then briefly outline the term "personal myth", and how it relates to my own mask praxis. For the purpose of clarity, I have divided this practice into three distinct parts, representing the major transitions undertaken over my time at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Part 1, "Personal and Collective Masks", explores the process of mask construction undertaken with a group of professional devising actors. Part 2, "My own 'Personal Mask Construction'", examines the evolution of my mask praxis and the process of imbuing a Lecoqian approach to mask with a Jungian critical framework. Part 3, "The Golem", offers a critical reflection on my Collisions 2014 *presentation, an exploration of the symbolic amplification of three central elements of my emerging praxis within a performance context.*

Why invite actors to make their own masks?

At the onset of this thesis I asked:

> How does the actor creator playfully access his or her personal complexes, so avoided by Lecoq, and use them towards constructing a "new theatre for tomorrow"? How does one make theatre that speaks to those conflicts, while still being accessible to the individual, the ensemble and the audience in general? And, in so doing, how does one re-personalize a pedagogy that traditionally relied on a "blank-slate" or *tabula rasa* approach? (see Introduction, p.15)

Building on my previous critique of the Lecoq pedagogy, in which I offer a reinterpretation of neutral mask praxis as a means of addressing the internal landscape of the wearer (see Chapter 1), as well as a symbolic understanding of the neutral mask itself (see Chapter 2), in this chapter, I begin my own *PaR* approach to this enquiry, accessing personal complexes[14] through mask construction.

Lecoq's own relationship to mask construction has been well documented. It was with the help of Amleto Sartori (and later his son Donato) that Jacques Lecoq helped to revitalize one of man's ancient tools for the twentieth-century. John Wright places great weight on the collaboration between Lecoq and Sartori:

> We must not underestimate the importance of this relationship when considering Lecoq's work with masks. In Sartori Lecoq had found a collaborator who was not only a brilliant craftsman but who also had a strong theatrical imagination. By working together through countless drawings and prototypes to the final exploration of a new mask in the studio, Lecoq and Sartori produced masks so specifically designed for their function that they were like precision tools. (Wright 2002: 74)

Wright's focus on the importance of mask construction within the history of the Lecoq pedagogy underscores the need for analysing the construction process, specifically within contemporary critiques of Lecoq. Also, one should note how Wright stresses that the object has been designed to complete a 'function', as a 'precision tool' for actor training.

It should be added that Lecoq did not directly teach mask construction as a course within his school, although students are asked to construct at least one mask during the two-year course. The "Laboratory for Movement Study" (L.E.M.), is offered as a 'department for experimental scenography, exclusively dedicated to the dynamic research of space and rhythm through a structural form' (Lecoq 2015). Run outside of the conventional course, L.E.M. offers students a chance to explore physical dynamics through construction of physical materials. The abstract constructions are both approached and referred to as "masks" (Lecoq 2015).

Before critically analysing my own process and findings, it seems important to address the question: why undergo mask construction with performers, given that the art of mask making is drastically different from the art of performance? If teachers like Prattki are able to address the internal landscape using the neutral mask, why is mask construction necessary? Why not simply adopt those precision tools built by a master craftsman like Sartori?

[14] Samuels (1986) defines a complex as "a collection of images and ideas, clustered round a core derived from one or more archetypes, and characterized by a common emotional tone. When they come into play (become 'constellated') complexes contribute to behaviour and are marked by AFFECT whether a person is conscious of them or not. They are particularly useful in the analysis of neurotic symptoms" (Samuels 1986: 34).

In order to address that question, I return to where this thesis began, with a working definition of mask: 'a covering that transforms the face, an object that mediates a transformation between "self" and "other"' (see Introduction, p. 8). Throughout, I have argued that masks are a means of experiencing myth, itself derived from the unconscious psyche. One can then ask the question: whose myth? The ethno-psychologist, Werner Muensterberger, argues that masks speak directly to emotional needs. He states:

> Rather than mirror nature in a photographic sense, the mask confronts us with a portrait more or less removed from the world of reality. It is a visible expression not merely of a human or animal face but a portrayal of an inner image responding more to the emotional needs of the maker, the wearer, and the community of spectators in general. Considered thus as a spiritual manifestation the mask can be said to symbolize concretely what so frequently must be regarded as transcendental, or, as an observation, not of outer, but of inner nature; an effective bridging of the emotional experience through its visible manifestation. (Muensterberger in Eldredge 1996: 5)

Following on from Muensterberger's assertion, I argue that when I wear the masks that Lecoq designed, I am being confronted by the visible expression of Lecoq's own inner nature. A study of his masks necessarily presents a study of his underlining mythology. On the other hand, the masks I make speak directly to my own emotional needs, my inner nature; they speak to my own myths. Fundamentally, a pedagogy that seeks to address personal complexes must be able to distinguish whose complexes it is addressing: are they the student's, or those of external craftsmen like Lecoq or Sartori?

One hears this argument presented in the words of the mask maker Deborah Bell:

> Whether conducted by the amateur artist facing mental or physical disorders or the professionally recognized artist facing disturbing personal, social, or political issues, the actual process of the creation of a mask challenges ways to both identify and confront disturbances. Successful effort assists with establishing new ways in which to define or express, and ultimately confront the tensions at hand. The expanded perception gained in the act of creation becomes entirely personal and thus original (at some level). This expanded perception offers the potential to encourage profound positive change for the creator. (Bell 2010: 57)

Remembering Lecoq's assertion that 'actors perform badly in plays whose concerns are too close to their own', I present the hypothesis that mask construction offers a method for the student to directly address those concerns, whether, as Bell states, 'personal, social, or political', while doing so in a playful manner (Lecoq 2000: 18). The Personal Mask, seen as an object separate from the performer, offers the necessary space that Lecoq argued was the foundation for play. In this chapter, I will argue that mask construction presents the possibility for confrontation with Jung's personal shadow. While Bell's assertion may seem to speak to the therapeutic

aspects of mask construction – something I will explore in Chapter 4 — it highlights the relevance of mask making for the professional artist, one interested in expressing his or her own "disturbances" in new and creative ways.

I have adapted a method of construction from an exercise undertaken while I was a student at LISPA[15], a manner of working as much as possible from an unconscious mess of clay and without an overtly conscious concept of the mask I was trying to create. This approach can be seen in a video within my DVD Documentation PowerPoint (see DVD PowerPoint, slide 6). I had unknowingly begun a process of unconscious exploration that Jung refers to as "active imagination". The structure of my *Practice as Research*, adapted from Robin Nelson's (2013) epistemological model, is demonstrated here. It allows for a widening critical framework ("Know That") – in this case the developing understanding of Jungian methods of practice — to inform my existing tacit knowledge of mask construction ("Know How"). It is through critical engagement ("Know What") that the tacit knowledge is made explicit. I now understand in greater depth that simple activity I had undertaken years earlier. This does not yet represent new knowledge; however, shifting that deepening understanding, that wider critical framework ("Know That"), back into the process of mask construction, as outlined in the following chapters, will generate significant contributions.

Simon Murray has outlined four key areas within Lecoq's 'preparation' for the actor creator: '[1] Play, *disponibilité* and *complicité*; [2] mime and movement; [3] the quest for neutrality; and [4] understanding the dynamics of space' (Murray 2003: 64) (numbering included is mine). One can view the last, Lecoq's 'understanding [of] the dynamics of space', as an exercise in masking where Lecoq adopted the neutral mask to 'open the space around the performer' and used full-faced expressive masks to sculpt the space between performers. I argue that the act of mask construction presents the possibility for the sculpting of the space *inside* the performer.

Personal anecdote: During my senior year of undergraduate study at Ithaca College, I had the opportunity to work as a teaching assistant to Professor Norm Johnson, who taught Movement for the Stage, a required unit for all sophomore BFA Acting and Musical Theatre majors. Johnson taught mask construction as a major part of the course; it was something he was passionate about, and I found his interest had a large effect on me. Ithaca College had a rigorous review process and a large number of students were removed from the program each term. I remember one such student, who had just been informed that he had been "Discontinued", storming out of Johnson's room. His mask was found in the garbage; it had been crushed. I recall the violence in the act, and remember questioning whether the action had been taken in retaliation against the teacher, an attempt to hurt something that Johnson cared deeply about. Or, had the mask been destroyed as an act against an element of the student himself? To me, it felt as if the destruction of the mask was an act of

[15] Prattki offered personal sessions with his students, in which we worked with clay to approach unconscious material. At that time (2004 – 2006) Prattki's method was not specifically mask construction, but a model of working with clay that I have since adapted to the mask.

negation of the training he had been receiving, an image which he could no longer retain.

Some might suggest that an introverted view of the mask is in opposition to Lecoq's teaching. I argue that it fulfils one of the primary functions of the mask for Lecoq:

> There is a huge difference between actors who express their own lives, and those who can truly be described as players. In achieving this, the mask will have had an important function: the student will have learned to perform something other than themselves, while nevertheless investing themselves deeply in the performance. They have learned not to play *themselves* but to play *using* themselves. In this lies all the ambiguity of the actor's work. (Lecoq 2000: 61)

The use of mask helped to clarify, at least for Lecoq, the "ambiguities" he described, offering him the distance he required. I argue, however, that the act of mask construction allows the performer an ideal method for addressing that distinction: of *using* an aspect of themselves while not overtly playing *themselves*.

This shift from existing neutral mask praxis into my own process of mask construction presents a change in mythology: a move away from von Franz's "Cosmogonic Awakening", as seen in the use of the neutral mask. With mask construction, one sees another of von Franz's categories of creation myth: the *deus faber*. '*Deus faber* is a technical term which characterizes god as the craftsman or artisan who as an architect, carpenter, or smith creates the world on the analogy of some skill or craft' (von Franz 1995: 132). David Leeming's (2010) *Creation Myths of the World* cites a number of *deus faber* myths: among them, the Chinese god, Pangu; the Egyptian creator, Ptah; the Spider Woman or Spider Grandmother in southwestern native North American myths; and the creator in the Rig Veda, described as either a smith or a carpenter (Leeming 2010: 319). For Leeming, clay is a reoccurring theme in creation mythology, a *prima materia* seen throughout the world, connecting us directly to the earth:

> That early myth makers should have chosen clay as the essential building material for world creation is not surprising since in the microcosmic creation that was the dwelling place, clay would have been a basic material. In the case of humans, too, the analogy is apt. Since the Palaeolithic age Homo sapiens have been driven to imitate reality in the form of painting and statues. The obvious material for the latter would have been clay, so it could be presumed that the creator would have begun with clay for the creation of living humans. There is, perhaps, a more subtle reason for the presence of earth-based material in creation myths, and especially in connection with the creation of humans. The supposition that humans were made from clay makes us literally products of the earth, children of Mother Earth herself. (Leeming 2010: 312)

For von Franz, the *deus faber* category of creation mythology points to a culture's disconnection from its own unconscious psyche; the deity is removed from the creation. She argues that the act of artistry, within that context, becomes a means of re-forming a connection with the unconscious creator. Mask construction, and not simply performance, becomes my attempt at reconnecting the performer with their own personal unconscious: it becomes my *PaR* methodological approach for addressing those research questions I proposed at the onset of the thesis.

Towards a "personal myth"

The term "personal myth" is one that is deliberately conscious of its own paradox. First adopted by the Austrian psychoanalyst Ernst Kris (1956) in his essay, "The Personal Myth: A Problem in Psychoanalytic Technique", the term has come under scrutiny throughout the existing literature for a number of reasons. First, a myth is by definition a de-personalized narrative, either understood as a 'story of archetypal encounter'— one which engages Jung's collective unconscious, and, therefore, a non-personal narrative—or viewed as an ancient culturally specific story, derived from an unknown authorship (Samuels 1986: 95). Adding "personal" to "myth" creates what seems like an obvious oxymoron.

The phrase is most widely recognized because of its appearance in the prologue to C.G. Jung's (1961) autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, where Jung articulates the problem of using scientific methods to describe his own story of personal development and his contact with the unconscious psyche. His introductory remarks begin by stating that he is about to tell his "personal myth":

> MY LIFE is a story of the self-realization of the unconscious. Everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation, and the personality too desires to evolve out of its unconscious conditions and to experience itself as a whole. I cannot employ the language of science to trace this process of growth in myself, for I cannot experience myself as a scientific problem. What we are to our inward vision, and what man appears to be *sub specie aeternitatis*, can only be expressed by way of myth. Myth is more individual and expresses life more precisely than does science. Science works with concepts of averages which are far too general to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life. Thus it is that I have now undertaken, in my eighty-third year, to tell my personal myth. I can only make direct statements, only "tell stories." Whether or not the stories are "true" is not the problem. The only question is whether what I tell is my fable, my truth. (Jung 1995: 4)

Jung argues that science cannot encapsulate the subjectivity of a human individual. His assertion, 'what we are to our inward vision… can only be expressed by way of myth', attests to myth's function in developing self-knowledge. His distinction between objective "truth" (for Jung this is science) and the more subjective 'my truth' (myth) leads Jung by necessity towards development of his own "personal myth". It should be noted that although psychologists like Ernst Kris use the concept

in clinical environments in assisting clients, Jung is using it from an autobiographical point of view.

In his article, "Jung's psychology in the light of his 'personal myth'", Petteri Pietikäinen (1999) relates the term to Jung's earlier dissatisfaction with the collective Christian myth. Pietikäinen writes, 'he was haunted by the question of myth, 'myth' in the existential meaning of something by which you live'. Pietikäinen recounts how Jung, in rejecting Christianity, asks of himself the fundamental question, 'What is your myth – the myth by which you live?'; then continues, 'At the time he could not find an answer to this question, and only after some years of 'existential confusion' he did find the answer, the central message was: he had to create his own myth'. In the introduction to his autobiography, Jung offers an answer to his earlier question.

My own use of the phrase comes not from formal academic writing, but from a workshop series I facilitated in the first month of research. I had a group of professional Lecoq-trained devising actors build two sets of masks: the first set was constructed by having each participant work alone on what we came to call a "Personal Mask"; the second was built through a more collaborative process, eventually termed "Collective Masks". After rigorously exploring each mask together in the studio, one participant noted that although the Personal Masks were generally much "worse" (almost all of them were quite abstract, messy, and, because of their lack of depth, often unplayable), they offered something very personal to each individual. One participant noted: "It is as if these masks have in them our own personal myth". It was the first time I had heard the phrase, and I now view it as a major discovery from that exercise. At that point, it was generally agreed that the masks presented something very personal, though in a transposed form.

Richard Pochinko and his assistant Sue Morrison, teachers who specialize in developing their student's own personal clown through a process of mask construction, have also employed the phrase "personal mythology" to describe the aim of their teaching. Pochinko and Morrison define myth as a 'story that is not true but deals with that which is. A story set in an imaginative realm, a realm that is not limited by the constraints of the tangible world… Myths tell us something important. Something we need to know'. They argue that 'mythic distance… makes the knowledge visible and safe' (Coburn and Morrison 2013: 153). A personal mythology, for Pochinko, becomes a series of fictional stories that lead to "profound personal understanding". Pochinko and Morrison's interest, though similar to my own, is categorically different in that it is specifically directed towards the study of clown. Their method, however, offers a real basis for the value that mask construction has in developing an understanding of self through myth.

Another notable objection to the use of the term "personal myth" is that it implies a certain level of agency that is problematic. How are we to understand the assertion that Jung came to: that he had to 'create his own' myth? The statement implies a level of conscious control that is misleading. We can discuss mythopoesis, or myth making, as I did in one of the painful developmental stages of this thesis, but, as my supervisor was quick to point out: if myth is derived from the unconscious psyche,

then it is not consciously made but experienced. Indeed, the assertion that myth is an archetypal encounter precludes the construction of that encounter, only allowing for the realization of it. A "personal myth" in this respect is not about construction, but about becoming aware of the archetypes that govern the individual's psyche. For Lecoq and Jung, that myth may be singular (monist), while for others like Hillman and Pochinko, it may involve many myths.

Personal Myth in Contemporary Mask Praxis

In Pietikäinen's (1999) view, Jung's "personal myth" could be described as a heroic encounter with the unconscious "other", examining the otherness that takes the form of Jung's 'Number 2 personality': the Self. My own emerging praxis (while not my original intention) has become a similar confrontation with those unconscious "others". I have come to see the mask as the tool *par excellence* for exploring that self/other division, for amplifying it into the realm of the mythological. In making a mask, we present in clay, wood or plastic, the image of this other. It is by studying these creations, by engaging with them as a psychological reality, that I hope to develop an understanding of the other within.

As we have seen, Jung describes his need for myth rather than scientific objectivity when attempting to articulate the 'process of growth in myself', using myth as a counterpoint to science. Even as a theatre artist and not a scientist, I am aware of a similar difficulty. In this articulation of my *Practice as Research,* I will attempt to tell the story of a rigorous process of controlled failures, and, through detailed analysis, allow others to engage with my methods and reasoning. Only through critical reflection has this process deepened my understanding and allowed me to bring that new insight back into my research. Jungians often use the term "circumambulation", a walking around, and in many ways that seems appropriate for this narrative of a developing praxis: a story that never exactly answers the question, but moves ever deeper with each attempt.

Part 1: Comparison between "Personal" and "Collective" Masks

March 18, 2012 - Mask construction workshop with professional devising actors trained in the Lecoq tradition
(See DVD PowerPoint, slides 9 – 38)

As my first element of practice, I explored mask construction with a group of LISPA graduates and professional colleagues. Beginning from the premise that knowledge could be attained through the construction of masks, I set to work building. At the early stage of my practice, I had not yet defined a psychological critical framework, as I hadn't been introduced to the theories of Jung. I was very much immersed in the taboo associated with psychology in my training. Because of this, my stated question concerned "ownership" in mask construction. I devised a process of construction that was intended to explore "ownership" in varying degrees, although

my use of the term has since been replaced by the phrase 'a projected aspect of the personal shadow' . "Ownership" was my best way of articulating that concept at the beginning of the thesis.

I asked nine professional devising actors, all trained in the Lecoq tradition, to meet and build masks together. None would have described themselves as "mask-makers" – indeed many were deeply sceptical of their own sculpting abilities. All of the participants were, however, very knowledgeable about masked performance, devising with mask, and had extensive experience with masks as a tool for actor training.

Each participant was given a 5kg block of clay, and a process of mask construction was begun that has continued to be the central framework of my method of building masks throughout the thesis (see Introduction, p. 18-24).

> To understand this process, and before going further, the reader is asked to view a short video clip embedded within the DVD PowerPoint: see slide 6 "Video documentation of sculpting the mould".

This investigation, however, was different in a number of important ways. I was interested in creating a system that could be enacted involving each person, but then re-enacted, requiring each individual to be involved in the construction of every new mask. For this reason, I developed nine tasks to equip the nine participants (See DVD PowerPoint, slides 9 – 11).

- Task: Make a mess of your clay for 2 minutes with eyes closed.
- Question: What facial features can you see?
- What does not correspond to nature, and what needs to change?
- What are the major physical dynamics of the mask?
- Is there an animal underneath?
- What are the emotional dynamics?
- Where is it subtle and where is it bold?
- Can this mask play theatrically?
- What are the major lines of the mask?

The process was defined for the first phase of isolated construction, and then repeated for the second; however, at the latter stage each participant was asked to switch masks for each new construction question. They were asked to attempt to take some "ownership" with each new mask, and honestly attempt to answer the question based on what they believed each mask needed. In this way, every participant had a hand in the construction of each "collectively" made mask, in addition to their own "personal mask".

Figure 3



(DVD PowerPoint, slide 7)

Some initial findings were quite surprising. In the subsequent critical reflection on the process I wrote:

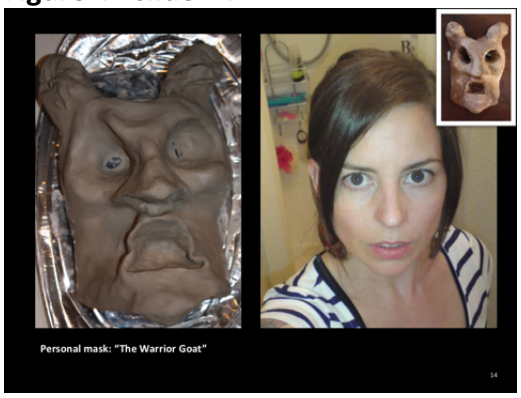
> *The masks built in the collective phase were significantly more developed and defined. Perhaps everyone had improved with practice, was willing to take larger risks, or maybe participants had gained from a sense of what was coming. Whatever the case, the collective masks had made a quantum leap in development. There seemed to be a process of group editing which allowed for large transitions within each step (as opposed to the personal masks that seemed to remain firmly attached to the initial mess impulse): as a result, the "personal masks" tended to be more abstract, less well defined. One participant suggested that perhaps a group of devising artists, drawn to the collaborative, would have a different reaction to that of conventional performers.*
>
> *I had asked each participant if and how they identified with their masks. In relation to the "personal masks", the overall consensus was that there was a strong connection to these masks, while for the "collective masks", nobody felt a sense of identification. To follow up, when asked if they felt a sense of ownership, responses were mixed at best. One suggested that there were very specific elements which they could trace back to their own work on the collectively made masks, but they could only find a few. The consensus seemed to be that there was a general sense of ownership – that these masks were owned by the group but not by any individual.*
>
> *By comparison, the personal masks, though in need of clarification and perhaps more time to develop, posed questions which might be far richer. One participant suggested that when she looked at the collectively made masks it excited the actor inside of her: "these would be fun to play with", "a shiny toy", while the personal masks inspired the creator inside of her, asking*

questions about her own "personal myth". (Will Pinchin: Reflection April 2012)

I later noticed that the sculpted faces seemed to correspond with specific elements of the personalities of the people who constructed them. I turned to Facebook, gathering the profile photographs from each of the participants[16]. I found with each photo, a remarkable resemblance between the images they had chosen to represent themselves, and the mask that they had constructed:

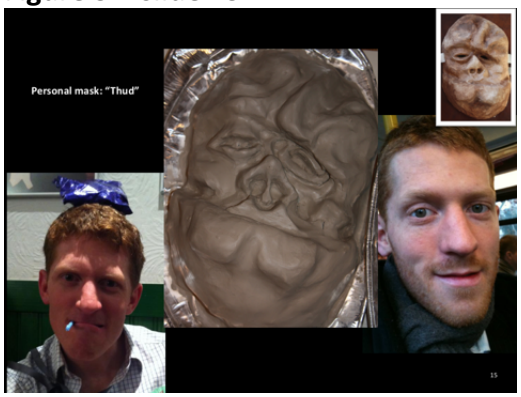
Comparison of Personal Mask and Facebook photos
(see DVD PowerPoint, slides 14 - 22)

Figure 4 - slide 14



Note the intensity of the eyes on both images, the directness of the gaze. Compare the sharp structure of the nose, the formation of the top lip, and the angular contours of the mouth. There is a sense that the mask is in a heightened state of awareness, of shock, while the individual in the photo holds a similar expression.
Participant's country of origin: England

Figure 5 – slide 15



I draw attention to the placement of the lower jaw in the photographs and note that it matches the construction of the mask. The formation of the eyes is somewhat withdrawn, and there is a playful strength within both the mask and the photographs, which show an overt masculinity combined with a gentle softness.
Participant's country of origin: England

[16] Each participant has consented to the use of the Facebook photos.

Figure 6 – slide 16



Note the movement of the face towards the right hand in the photograph. The twist of the participant's jaw follows the twist in the mask's construction. Although perhaps the most abstract, least human mask, it holds a basic movement down and to the side.

Participant's country of origin: Greece

Figure 7 – slide 17



Note that the structure of the smile and the cheekbones match for both the photograph and the mask. One can see a lightness and an overt happiness, yet in the smile a hint of something darker: an aggression that pulls back in the eyes. There is something of the "trickster" in the mask.

Participant's country of origin: USA

Figure 8 – slide 18



Asymmetrical, the mask and the individual's photographs approach at angles. Note the shape of the nose in both.

Participant's country of origin: Spain

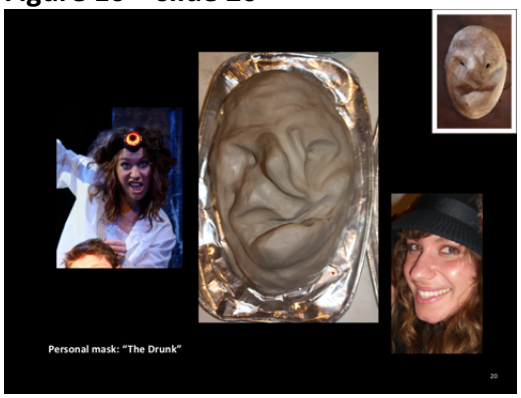
Figure 9 – slide 19



The mouth of the mask forms a direct line that mirrors the mouth in the photograph. The eyes on the black and white photograph hold a similar circular directness.

Participant's country of origin: India

Figure 10 – slide 20



There is a playful fragmentation in both the photograph and the mask. In the photograph on the left the individual is presenting a caricature that corresponds to elements within the mask: mouth opening to the side, asymmetrical eyes, a performance that appears comically sinister.

Participant's country of origin: USA

Figure 11 – slide 21



In the upper left hand photograph, we see the individual elongating her upper lip, and flaring her eyes. Compared with the photograph below, this character is clearly performed, and corresponds to the construction of the mask.

Participant's country of origin: Brazil

Figure 12 – slide 22



Note the shape and predominance of the nose, pursed mouth, and the structure of the upper lip. The eyes in the colour photograph are direct, and the lines from the nose to the chin correspond with those of the mask.

Participant's country of origin: France

The similarities led me to ask the question: what are these personal masks? What do they show us about ourselves, and what can we learn from them? This initial element of practice moved me towards a psychological critical framework, finally leading me to the theories of Jung. Lecoq's distaste for psychology was so embedded within my practice, that it took me over a year to fully examine a Jungian critical framework. To this I would echo an often cited quotation from Edward Edinger (1972): 'Any step in Individuation is experienced as a crime against the collective, whether it be family, party, church, or nation' (Edinger 1972: 26).

While the phenomenon was highlighted in each of the nine personal masks constructed, the image that is most striking to me, that has stayed with me to this day and has most influenced my work, is the combination of one participant and her mask (See DVD PowerPoint, slides 14 & 24, comparison inserted below). The mask itself seems to present a Greek satyr; yet, captured within the expression of this ancient creature was precisely the personal expression of the participant who constructed the mask. The photographs from this early element of my practice have become a central resource of tangible data, allowing me (or anyone who would like to examine these findings) to view them in a number of ways (see DVD PowerPoint, slides 24 - 29). From these initial elements of my practice, I borrow Jung's argument that symbolic imagery appearing in dreams must be viewed as psychological fact. If we agree that the symbolic image can be viewed as data, a study of those images represents an empirical investigation of the unconscious. Any statements made, or hypotheses drawn, are attempts to analyse those masks, to give them validity and ask what they have to offer. I have come to see in that satyr mask a concrete fusion between the personal and the archetypal, a mythological representation of the maker.

(DVD PowerPoint, Comparison of images on slides 14 & 24)

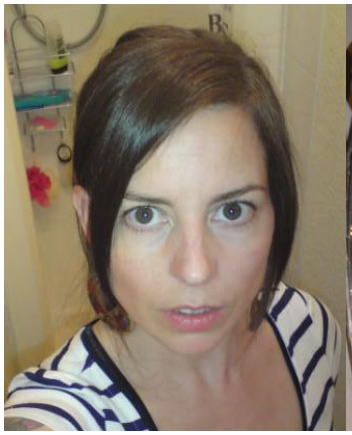


Figure 13
Facebook Photo
Personal Mask



Figure 14
Mask Construction



Figure 15
Amplification: Satyr
Image from *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006)

Two weeks followed in which I finished the *papier mâché*, and did some preliminary amplifications for each mask (although I had yet to encounter either term or

methodological approach), before we all met again in a rehearsal room to explore these masks through movement.

Some participants experienced frustration around the exploration of personal masks. How does one wear a mask of themselves? Isn't that something you put on every day? And, if so, what use is the mask? Participants noted a solipsistic loop. Many felt that an exploration of ourselves through masks was, in a way, something more akin to therapy than theatre making. These questions have become the impetus for the following chapter, in which I explore the practice of mask construction within therapeutic contexts, and as a means of generating devised, actor created theatre.

The same participants who expressed difficulty in wearing their own masks stated a yearning to explore someone else's masks and to see their masks embodied by others. I challenged the group to pick a mask and, with a narrator, tell the story of the character. More often than not, the participants gravitated towards the collectively made masks. The scenes that followed were, by all account, a scholastic exercise. Each pair demonstrated an ability to create a scene that showed off their construction abilities; this was not a deep examination of anything emotional, vulnerable, or for that matter personal. Here we can again see the remnants of Murray's observation regarding the making of a cup of tea.

After the workshop I wrote:

> I do believe that, with more exploration, we will be able to tap into the creative potentials within these masks. The next phase of study (*Collisions 2012*) will look at mask construction as a way of telling personal stories. I hope that through an exploration of these masks we will be able to unlock stories which tell something about ourselves and with that give us a better understanding of how we can work together to build new works of theatre. (see DVD PowerPoint, slides 39 - 47)

Personal Masks: Amplifications

I have undertaken the task of amplifying the symbolic aspects of these masks, but do so with the acknowledgement that I am not a therapist; nor I was I ever in a position to discuss the material with each participant in any depth. The reader must therefore understand that although this information was presented to the participant with great care, *it was articulated as a potential method of understanding aspects of the mask, and not the individual*. The material was never presented as an interpretation of their personal history, nor, indeed of their personal psychological health or wellbeing. The conclusions which I have drawn from the mask that do concern the individual, are my own and were never presented to the participant as aspects of the workshop.

It is my understanding that within a therapeutic context, these associations would be worked out in a collaborative and conversational manner. At no time was that

process possible, and therefore I am more or less isolated in my view of these masks. The associations I have presented below offer potentially more in-depth information regarding my own cultural norms and biases and my own personal complexes than anything about the individual who originally constructed the mask. And yet, a Jungian model posits an objective and impersonal aspect to the psyche; I argue that in offering my personal associations, presenting these interpretations as a view of myself (and not the participant), that one might find traces of that impersonal psyche which is "collective". In this way, a Jungian critical framework is essential to the understanding of this research.

"The Warrior Goat" (Figure 16 – slide 24)



The mask, "The Warrior Goat", was named by the participant during the initial construction exercise, and she was quick to associate her mask with goats and satyrs. I find it interesting that she chose to put the term "Warrior" within the title of the piece. In later personal correspondence she said of the mask: 'I think of the shadow devil side, when I look at it' (personal communication 2017).

In James Hall's (1994) *Illustrated Dictionary of Symbols in Eastern and Western Art*, he writes of the goat:

> Once worshipped as the embodiment of the fertility of flocks, herds and humans; identified with the Sumerian fertility gods, Tammuz and Ningirsu. In Hindu myth, it was a sacrificial animal, it was a mount of Agni. In Greek myth, it was sacred to Zeus/Jupiter and, more generally, symbolised male sexuality; hence in art it is associated with Dionysus/Bacchus and his followers the Satyrs, also Pan who has goat-like features. In Christian art goats represent the damned at the Last Judgment. (Hall 1994: 26)

J.C. Cirlot (1971), in *Dictionary of Symbols,* has a number of different references to

the goat: in his section on the Devil, Cirlot states, 'It takes the form of Baphomet (of the Knights Templars) portrayed as having the head and feet of a he-goat and the bosom and arms of a woman' (Cirlot 1971: 80). Cirlot also points out that the symbol of Dionysos, associated with the uninhibited unleashing of desire, or with the lifting of any inhibition or repression, has been viewed by Jung as a symbol of unconscious urge:

> It signifies the abyss of the 'impassioned dissolution' of each individual, as a result of emotion carried to the extremes of paroxysm and in relation to the urge to escape from time into 'pre-time', characteristic of the orgy; the myth is therefore representative of an unconscious urge. (Cirlot 1971: 82)

Jung refers to the symbolism of the god in *Psychology and Alchemy*, where he states 'Dionysus is the abyss of impassioned dissolution, where all human distinctions are merged in the animal divinity of the primordial psyche – a blissful and terrible experience' (Jung 1953: 90).

Sherry Salman (1986) has done an extensive study of the "Horned God". She argues that:

> The Horned God represents the guardian, healer, and shapeshifter who mediates the world of the objective psyche. He is the elusive, transformative substance of the psyche itself – the adversary (devil or antichrist) and the saviour who, with one hand, protects the Mysteries from destructive influences and, with the other, protects the human psyche from contact with what it cannot bear. Encountering him involves a confrontation with the objective psyche and our own limitations, one of the essential tasks of psychotherapy. (Salman 1986: 7)

It interesting that the differing interpretations of the goat suggest fertility as well as sacrifice, male sexuality as well as demonic power. The image can be seen as a union of opposites: birth and death, man and nature, man and god. One might also link the image of the mask with that of the god Pan[17]; the image points towards something both dark and inviting. The mask seems to present the possibility of future change, the invitation to enter a strange new world. It may also present elements of the animus, the male contra-sexual form, which might account for the "warrior" aspect of the title. Indeed, the Knights Templar are noted as having prayed to this image before battle. As an image of fertility, perhaps the individual must encounter something they are not willing to do in order to allow something to grow. William Stewart (1998) gives an interesting account of the god Pan:

> Pan is symbolic of the twin emotions of fear and desire. He is the representation of the creative force in nature, the connection between the psyche and nature… Pan inhabits the wild, uncivilized places; the

[17] Image taken from the film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006)

> unconscious, untamed parts of the inner world, ruled by impulse and desires. (Stewart 1998: 301-302)

As I have stated previously, this mask represents a strong turning point for my research. Having articulated a connection between the clay mask and the physical appearance of the mask, the mask also presented a clear satyr. The fusion of personal and archetypal achieved within this mask began my own exploration of the unconscious, and of Jungian thought. For me, this satyr figure has led the way to my own encounter with aspects of the unconscious that I was entirely unaware of.

"Thud" (Figure 17 – slide 25)



I was intrigued to explore a possible connection between the image of the Ogre from European myth and folklore and the "*Hannya*" demon mask from Japanese Noh tradition. The ogre is often described as a giant figure who devours human flesh, and is sometimes pictured as having limited intelligence. The *Hannya* mask is of a female demon, born out of being wronged.

David J. Tacey (1997), in *Remaking men: Jung, spirituality and Social Change*, describes the Ogre symbol by connecting it to the Greek god Chronos (Roman: Saturn); in this way he becomes the 'recalcitrant and static ogre who devours his own offspring lest they pose a threat to his hegemonic rule' (Tacey 1997: 2). William Stewart, in the *Dictionary of Images and Symbols in Counseling*, continues with the negative paternal interpretation of the ogre, stating:

> The Ogre seems to be a personification of the archetype 'Terrible Father', the oppressive father who threatens individuality with the mould of conformity. In fairy tales, the ogre is a warning not to disobey, especially one's father. At another level, being devoured, a significant part of the ogre images, is symbolic of the Ego being devoured by the unconscious in the psyche… the psyche, if it is to survive, is in a constant state of change; the old must give way to the new. (Stewart 1998: 290)

Hannya, perhaps the most famous of all the Noh masks, depicts the demon figure of a woman who has fallen in love and then been forsaken. The mask:

> represents a jealous female demon in noh and kyōgen Japanese traditional theater plays and Shinto Kagura ritual dances. The mask has a leering mouth, sharp teeth, metallic eyes and two sharp devil-like horns. The expression of the Hannya mask is at the same time demonic, angry, frightening, dangerous and tormented, sad, heartbreaking, melancholic and sorrowful. She begins as typical female, but when she is betrayed, gets angry and jealous she turns into a demon. (History of Masks 2007)

The figure is able to portray a number of "counter-mask" emotions: rage, jealousy, and sorrow, something I regard as clearly apparent in the "Thud" mask.

Having recently become a father myself, I relate to elements of this amplification that seem to question masculinity. As an ogre figure, it may suggest brutality and a lack of refinement. There may also be a suggestion that an ogre-like need for control and order is consuming the child like aspects of the individual. Having previously articulated the child archetype as a unifying symbol of individuation, this can then be seen as limiting psychological growth. The additional Hannya association, an image of a wronged woman who turns into a demon, may suggest the possibility of a contra-sexual feeling of betrayal or anger within aspects of the anima.

"Niki" or "The Salesman" (Figure 18 – slide 26)



I made this association because of a number of facial pairings: the triangular eyes, the strong nose, and the shape of the smile. I also later noticed the hairline of the amplified mask matches the personal mask, as does the eye-brow shaping. This personal mask was originally created as part of the first mask construction workshop, and then returned months later (Collisions 2012) as part of a *PaR* exploration into personal mask and storytelling. After doing the amplification, I was

surprised to read that the original title of the mask was "The Salesman". Having connected the mask with Alaskan Nunamiut masks constructed from caribou leather, I could find limited information about the mask except from internet sales of the object. Indeed, the mask seems to be largely made for the tourist trade. Yet one such website has highlighted the importance of the masks within the villages from which it is derived:

> The masks are so characteristic of the place that a skin-mask made on a mold by an Alaska native person is often labelled an *Anaktuvuk* mask. The masks are even more closely identified with the village of their origin because they look like the people (though not intentionally like anyone in particular), and because the Nunamiut chose the mask face as the logo of their village corporation. A similar mask face is etched in glass on the welcome sign to the village's Simon Paneak Memorial Museum. (Blackman 2016)

The other element that should be highlighted here is a story told by the participant to accompany the construction process. For "Collisions 2012", Central's festival of performance praxis, I asked participants to write a small story of their mask constructions. The story that came from this mask's creator read:

> *In the ruins of a dreamed utopia, the cascading and corroding remnants of skyscrapers wrenching themselves from the earth and the endless snaking concrete superhighways flowing like rivers in the shadowed valleys left in their wake – there creeps a figure. A shadow. A leering, loping, languid fellow. Niki… Niki casts a casual look over her shoulder and sees who, or rather what, she expected. Rather than break into a run at the sight of something so dangerous, Niki's eyes glance over the landscape, broken glass, oil soaked bits of metal, scraps of newspaper rolling like tumbleweeds...and then, something green jutting from something brown next to something blue. A sprouting shoot bursting from a miraculous bit of clean earth, next to a puddle of iridescent blue water, clean as crystal as if it had just tumbled out of a natural spring.*
>
> *The monster approached, hatred spilling from its many eyes. Its head multiplying. Its arms unfolding, reaching down for Niki's throat.*
>
> *NIKI DANCE BEGINS*
>
> *The trees twitched.*
> *The skies opened up.*
> *The earth trembled.*
>
> *"This is not the last you'll see of me, Niki."*
> *As quickly as it had begun, it ended. All was still. The clock struck 5 and the giants spread their arms, releasing throngs of people into the streets, into rush hour. Niki turned a corner and vanished – nothing but a shadow.*

As an American living in the UK, the mask reminds me of native American art and mythology, pointing to a connection with “home”. The individual who created the mask, herself an American ex-pat, described the mask as a “trickster”. The term “shadow” is used a number of times in the story of Niki: Niki comes out of the “shadowed” valley, and is herself a shadow, and as the story concludes she returns into the shadows. This trickster figure becomes a being that can playfully exist within both the unconscious darkness and light of the city. There is something playful and powerful, able to face the monsters (presumably who have shattered that “utopia”), and Niki appears to be a being that is acquainted with both aspects: the seemingly familiar monster, and the urban environment of which she is also familiar. Niki is of a different order to both the monster and the city, she is a figure that keeps balance between the two. Another major current within the story is the imagery of landscapes: both “natural” and urban. Nature (the unconscious) is reclaiming the desolate urban environment (the conscious life).

“Old Man” (Figure 19 – slide 27)



I was drawn to the very basic facial features on this participant’s mask: the lack of a nose, and the repetition of the circular motif seen in the eyes and the overall shape . I have drawn an association with Neolitic stone masks found in Israel. These masks were constructed approximately 9,000 years ago by early farmers ‘whose immediate ancestors had given up hunting and gathering and settled in the Judean Hills’ (Williams 2014). In response to viewing his mask, and the associations I drew from it, the participant later wrote:

> I see a sense of curiosity, and a wonder born out of naïveté. It is like the mask is saying "Huh?! Is this how the world works? But why? Is this how it's supposed to be? Again, why?". There is a sense of wonder and a hint of disillusionment with the way the society and human relationships work.

> "Why are there such stark inequities? Why are relationships so complex? - driven by selfishness and ego?" I think this continues to be my way of looking at the world as I don't "understand" / "get" the way it is. I think this is what makes me not fit in with the regular world and makes me want to be an artist. Interestingly, I remember reading about the Neolithic stone mask around that time. I don't know if that influenced this mask or just helped bring it out. I also remember wondering whether I sense the world completely or not, because the mask didn't have a nose! (personal communication: July 2017)

The participant's understanding of the mask has much in common with the "larval mask", whose naïve state of wonder with the world has been explored earlier. The mask, and the participant's associations with it, articulate a curiosity in "human relationships", in "the society", and more generally, in what it means to be human. The participant asked the question: "Is this how the world works?".

In *Treasures of the Holy Land: ancient art from the Israel Museum*, published by Muze'on Yiśra'el and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the editors argue that these Neolithic masks are the first representations of masks that take a human form:

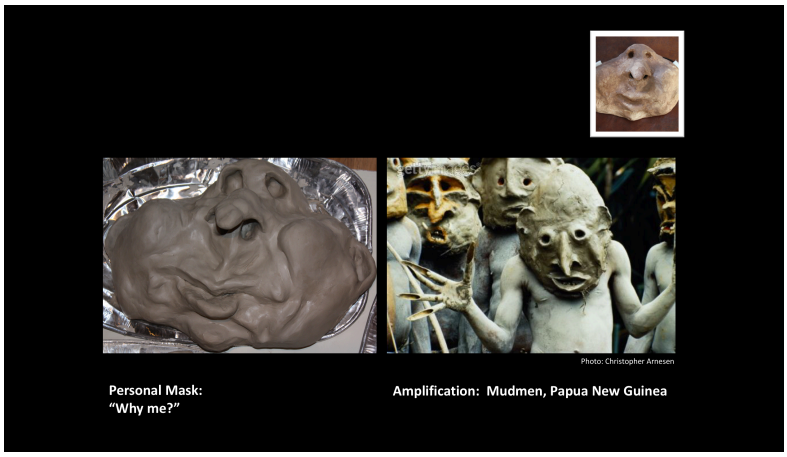
> Human figures wearing animal masks are depicted in Paleolithic cave art in Europe, as well as in Neolithic rock drawings in Africa. But nowhere else is a human mask, as an independent object, found at such an early date. Whether they were placed on the dead or whether they were worn by the living, obviously they had an important place in religious belief and ritual (The Metropolitan Museum of Art 1986: 46).

Debby Hershman, curator of The Israel Museum of Jerusalem's Prehistoric Cultures Department, quoted in an article by A.R. Williams (2014), articulates the theory that the masks were adopted by ancestral cults: 'Many of them look like dead people… In fact, I think they're portraits of specific people—probably important ancestors' whose images were 'powerful symbols' for families who used the masks to claim ownership over land. 'These people had no writing,' Hershman explains. 'Their only connection to the land was through genealogy—your grandfather and great-grandfather lived here, and that means the land is yours.' The article continues by suggesting that the masks have been mostly discovered accidentally: "Few of the masks come from sites excavated by archaeologists, so it's impossible to say for sure how they were used. But Hershman believes they served as more than just practical links to property. 'They had a spiritual dimension too, worn as evocative regalia in rituals associated with ancestor cults' (Williams 2014).

Though a great deal of information about the specific practices surrounding these masks have yet to be understood, these Neolithic stone masks were adopted as a way of understanding the world of human society and community living, of property, and of the relationship between man and the land. In my view this is reflected in the participant's response to his mask. He

also suggested that there were aspects of himself that the masks help to express: 'Working with clay and masks with you… really helped me connect to and express certain emotions that bubbled up from the un- / sub-conscious mind. I am thankful for that' (Personal communication, July 2017).

"Why me?" (Figure 20 – slide 29)



The "Asaro mudmen" hail from the Easter Highlands province of Paupa New Guinea, near the city of Goroka along the Asaro river. Their "*Holosa*" masks are large clay objects, traditionally supported with bamboo and cloth that cover the entire head of the performer. The body is covered with white clay and a loin cloth, while the fingers are fitted with long bamboo extensions. The masks are notable for their grotesque facial features that are often decorated with pig's teeth or tusks. Performances have become a major attraction and are held at annual festival competitions, or "*girituwai*", and for tourist groups throughout the year:

> In very slow motion the grotesque figure gently and deliberately walks forward. The long elongated fingers cackle and move about the air in front of the dancer. It seems flies are being brushed away. There is no singing. No accompanying instrument. Just quietness. Now and again the elongated fingers come together. The numerous dancers (between 5-10 dancers) move up to and around the on-lookers. Children recoil and shrink to hide from the figure. Some cling tightly to their parents as others run away. The Asaro Mudmen amble, meander and drift their way around the space and chase away the nasty, malevolent and wicked. (Australian Museum 2017)

The origin of the mask is of considerable debate, and, although there are a number of stories that have been attributed to its use, the most well-known version centers on the townspeople of Komunive village who were forced to flee their homes after an attack from a neighbouring village. The people took refuge in the Asaro riverbank where they hid until nightfall. The legend states that when they tried to sneak away, entirely covered with mud, they were caught. Their attackers, believing them to be the souls of those they had killed in the battle coming to avenge their deaths, fled in fear. This surprised the villagers, who took back their village. This new psychological

warfare became a tool to exact revenge, and the masks became a form of militarized technology.

The performance is a military advance, armed with bow and arrows. The “dancers” walk slowly, because:

> the legs of the mudman are said to be broken, having the brittleness of postmortem bones. Leaves are held, and used to make swatting movements to scare off imaginary flies attracted by the rotting flesh. The element of revenge is maintained in the threatening manner in which the weapons are held’. (Otto and Verloop 1996: 357)

In, “The Asaro Mudmen: Local Property, Public Culture?”, Ton Otto and Robert J Verloop explore the Mudmen’s history by charting a transition from story to tourist trade and then to pop culture iconography, arguing that the masks hold a problematic history of cultural ownership and appropriation. According to Otto and Verloop, the mudmen have moved into contemporary western culture and can be seen in music videos or in commercials selling Toyota cars: ‘The mudmen have also been adopted by the competitive world of "pop-culture," where the immediate strong impact of images is an important aspect of sales strategies’ (Otto and Verloop 1996: 352). Otto and Verloop go on to suggest that the masks themselves have evolved over time; where masks used to be more menacing ‘but less scary masks are better received by tourists, and now many mud masks show off their beautiful smiles’ (Otto and Verloop 1996: 359).

The symbolic elements of the mask may suggest the embodiment of a ghostly figure. I find it interesting that the mask was originally titled “Why Me?”, perhaps indicating suffering or grief. The legend of the mask’s inception suggests an interesting convergence of opposing emotions: fear and power (both sets of villagers flee in fear, victims and attackers), death and life, victimization and revenge. There may be some symbolism in the clay, as a return to the unconscious. The masks may be viewed as shadow projections in a number of ways, many of which can be seen as an important part of the issue of cultural appropriation cited by Otto and Verloop: to westerner sensibilities these masks can represent a “primitive” savagery. They are eerie and menacing, wild and still, and, as a performance, the emergence of the mudmen from the clay and the forest may symbolize the emergence of the shadow images from the unconscious.

I view this mask as holding weakness or helplessness in opposition to power and domination. The story of the mask suggests a useful connection with the unconscious, a surprising power achieved by time spent in the mud of the river (away from the town or consciousness). It suggests the discovery of a powerful weapon, one that in some versions of the story leads to the slaughter of thousands: a militarization of the unconscious shadow. I might also add that modern understandings of the mask suggest a cheapening of that unconscious power, a commodifying of identity leading to a lack of ownership of oneself.

Part 2: My own "personal mask construction"

Building on the personal associations I had observed in the masks produced by devising colleagues, and as part of my proposed methodology, for the first year and a half of my thesis I set out to sculpt a new mask each month. The aim of this task was to use the mask construction time to test my developing theories and understandings of the object and its function. In an aim to develop my own "mask praxis" I argued that by building a mask, one has specific insight into what the object is and what it does.

Drawing on the workshop experiences I had facilitated with professional devising actors, and with the understanding that a part of the unconscious was projected onto the clay, I felt that I could begin to make the argument that my own masks contained an element of my personal shadow. Borrowing from Jung, I viewed the shadow as that which is unacceptable to ego-consciousness. In this way, the shadow can be closely connected with the unconscious itself, though the shadow tends to point towards those elements that are deemed to be "other".

In my *Collisions 2013* presentation, "Mask-making and Soul-making", I attempted to explore my own masks by fusing my embodied knowledge of the Lecoq pedagogy with my developing understanding of Jungian thought. The masks were analysed in terms of their physical dynamics (underlying pushes and pulls), while at the same-time they were viewed to be projections of my personal shadow and, therefore, elements of my psyche. I constructed short scenes based on five of the masks I had constructed over the first year of study. Cutting the masks down from fishing wires suspended from the rafters, I attempted to bring these elements of my shadow to life (see DVD PowerPoint, slides 71 - 91). In a later critical reflection I wrote:

> *This personalization of the mask I found quite exposing. I felt like I was being observed, not for the mask or the narrative, but for me. I also found it very difficult to construct around my own personal events. I didn't know what the masks were telling me, how to approach them, how to construct character or events. Though I had gained that personalization I was looking for, I had in the process lost the freedom to play that was of central importance to Lecoq's teaching. (Will Pinchin: Reflection January 2013)*

These specific masks, performed in this particular way, were unlike any mask I had ever experienced. No longer were they a means of hiding; they were now direct and overtly revealing. They were statements about myself and my personal weaknesses or complexes. I found the performance of them inhibiting. The process reversed the entire experience Gaston Bachelard (1988) describes as 'the phenomenology of the mask':

> Between the masked person and the mask there is a flux and reflux – two movements reverberating alternately in consciousness. The phenomenology of the mask gives us insights into this process of duplication in a person who

> wants to appear other than he is and ends up revealing himself in and through his dissimulation. (Bachelard 1988: 157)

By starting from the premise that these masks revealed my personal complexes, I had undercut Bachelard's "flux and reflux", revelation through dissimulation. Having articulated a lack of playfulness and a feeling of being publicly exposed, I then sought to look towards myth, as a means of balancing the personal with the collective. In Jung's model of the psyche, he argues that each personal complex, or bundle of emotional energy, contains an archetypal core. Having witnessed how the masks produced by others contained mythological elements – for example, the fusion of the satyr head and the expression of my devising colleague – I began to adopt the Jungian method of psychological amplification using symbolic material derived from myth.

Part 3: *Collisions 2014*: The Golem

Before going further, the reader is asked to view the video clip embedded within the DVD PowerPoint, slide 92, "The Golem".

As part of my *Collisions 2014* presentation, "The Golem", I attempted to offer an amplification of the three central elements of my mask praxis: the symbolic elements within the neutral mask; my method of mask construction, using the legend of the Golem of Prague; and, finally, a central theme I have derived from my own personal masks: the *Puer*/*Senex* relationship.

An amplification of the neutral mask in performance
(See DVD PowerPoint, slides 92 - minute 2:31 to 5:13)

I began the event with an informal introduction to my mask genealogy: a critique of Lecoq and his understanding of the neutral mask, followed by a statement of the fundamental premises of my research. The introduction was underscored through a brief examination of the neutral mask's "Fundamental Journey", performed by Dorie Kinnear. Kinnear offered what I would consider a textbook presentation of the mask as seen through the teachings of Lecoq. We used as the basis of this work a video "el Actor y la Masqara" (Castro 2012: 0:35:40) by the renowned teacher Ana Vazquez de Castro. The performance, however, allowed me to present a contradictory interpretation of the mask. My own demonstration was an attempt to point towards an emerging understanding of the neutral mask as a tool that aids in the process of individuation. As described in Chapter 1, the mask allows for the shedding of the persona, a structured means of active imagination, as well as a symbolic representation of Self that is singular and whole. I argue that the mask offers an archetypal image of Self that becomes the cornerstone of the Lecoq pedagogy. The aim of the introductory section of the presentation was to antagonise Lecoq's assertion 'I do not look for deep sources of creativity in the psychological memories whose 'cry of life mingles with the cry of illusion'' (Lecoq

2000: 19). On the contrary, the neutral mask is that 'deep source of creativity' for Lecoq. The quotation was projected on the screen, and I began by explaining how the event was meant to directly confront Lecoq's "non-psychological" approach to mask.

An amplification of creation from clay: "The Golem of Prague"
(See DVD PowerPoint, slides 92 - minute 5:13 to 17:40)

I then began the process of mask construction while attempting to tell the story of the Golem of Prague. The full text is derived, and adapted from *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* by Nathan Ausubel (1948). Ausubel tells the story of the 16th century Rabbi Yehuda Loew, and his Golem: constructed from clay and alchemically brought to life to dispel rumours of ritualistic murders plaguing the community (Ausubel 1948: 605). It is a story I first heard on a trip to the Czech Republic in 2010 while participating in the Prague Fringe Festival.

The story of the Golem, selected because it referenced a number of elements within my practice, hinges on the construction of a clay being that is drawn into life through a ritualistic incantation. It offers a direct allusion to the biblical narrative of creation, as described in the book of Genesis. Ausubel cites the verses that describe the formation of Adam from clay: 'And he breathed into his mouth the breath of life, and man became a living soul' (Genesis II: VII). The story offers a symbolic amplification of the materials adopted through my own construction process, and the use of clay, which has been a constant throughout this thesis. The act of building in clay has been referenced in a previous *Collisions* presentation (*Collisions 2013*), in which I used the quotation from Genesis as a starting point (see DVD PowerPoint, slides 71 – 91). This incarnation presented a development in my practice; it offered greater specificity to the sculpting process as well as a more complex understanding of the conflict of creation: a *deus faber* mythology.

The story of the Golem brings together three figures: the creator (Rabbi Loew), the creature (the Golem), and God. The Rabbi engages in a process of creation that echoes the biblical story: he assumes the role of god in bringing life to clay. This then becomes a story of psychological inflation, exploring vital questions about the relationship between creator and object of creation. The Golem is a creation myth that positions a mortal man as the protagonist within the creative process. As I use terms like "actor creator" and "actor created theatre", I am driven to the comparison with the rabbi and his Golem. Ausubel tells how the idea of the Golem, as well as the secret alchemical process for bringing the creature to life, was received by Rabbi Loew in the form of a dream. If we view Loew's dream psychologically, we can view the answer to his prayers as coming from the unconscious psyche.

The figure of the Golem represents the dark unconscious shadow of the Rabbi and his community. The Rabbi and his Golem are intricately connected. The two form a set of opposites united into a whole: where the Rabbi is a wise scholar, linguist and

mystic, the Golem is mute and cannot utter a word; where the Rabbi is described as a community leader, the Golem follows at the Rabbi's heels and does only his bidding. Where the Rabbi holds his head high in the community and is summoned to protect the day, the Golem is a shadow figure protecting the night. The Rabbi can be viewed for his many attributes, but he is in desperate need of the Golem. Without the Golem, the accusations will stand. In the end, the story is about a confrontation with the personal and collective shadow.

> It is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow side to him, consisting not just of little weaknesses and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism. The individual seldom knows anything of this; to him, as an individual, it is incredible that he should ever in any circumstances go beyond himself. But let these harmless creatures form a mass, and there emerges a raging monster; and each individual is only one tiny cell in the monster's body, so that for better or worse he must accompany it on its bloody rampages and even assist it to the utmost. Having a dark suspicion of these grim possibilities, man turns a blind eye to the shadow-side of human nature. Blindly he strives against the salutary dogma of original sin, which is yet so prodigiously true. Yes, he even hesitates to admit the conflict of which he is so painfully aware. (Jung 1912: 35)

Here Jung draws a connection between the personal shadow of the individual and the larger cultural shadow. Rabbi Loew was called upon to build his culture's monster out of clay, to use it to solve a larger external problem, the "blood accusation". His story is about a confrontation with that shadow being. For Jung, as for the Rabbi, the process of individuation is a continual confrontation with that demonic dynamism, both the personal and collective monster. The Rabbi in this story is not allowed to turn a blind eye, as Jung suggests man is inclined to do, but he must call upon that figure for the safety of the community.

As I sculpt in clay, I argue that I construct a personification of my shadow: my own Golem (See DVD PowerPoint, slides 92 - minute 6:12). At *Collisions 2014*, the elements of storytelling happened while I faced a 25 kg block of terracotta clay. The clay is a water-based variety, one that moves easily through my fingers. I am acutely aware of the sound of the clay, and of my breathing throughout the process. I attempt to retain my usual construction procedure: making a mess of the clay and then looking for simple facial features within that mess. The act of sculpting is underscored by the story; the bulk of the work being achieved as I describe the three men (Rabbi Loew and his two disciples, Jacob and Isaac) setting to work together at the bank of the river. The construction process is filmed from above and projected on the screen at the side of the playing space. The audience is invited to witness the sculpting process, the creation of my Golem.

In the text, the Golem is brought to life by placing a piece of parchment in his mouth, on which is written the sacred word: truth. While it is a word that brings the creature to life, the creature himself is without words. For Ausubel, the Golem is both mute and able to understand language: 'Although the Golem could not speak,

for the power to speak is God's alone to give, he, nonetheless, understood what the Maharal said to him'. The masks, in a similar fashion, are locked into silence. There is a limitation to them; they cannot express through language, as their mouths do not move.

Silence becomes a major theme of Lecoq's approach to mask training. The first three masks developed within the pedagogical journey (the neutral mask, the larval masks, and the expressive masks) are all full-faced masks, incapable of language. Where other masked traditions adopt a codified language of gesture, Lecoq allows his masks to exist within silence. He argues that the masks force the student to engage with material through the body and through movement. The challenge is to construct scenes that support the silence of the mask, that capture a moment either before any words have been spoken, or after everything that can be said has been said. The Golem, like the masks of Lecoq, is a creature of silent action. He can understand the words that are said, but cannot generate them.

The image of the "attic" has become quite important to me. The Rabbi and his disciples abandon the Golem in the attic of the synagogue, covered with prayer shawls and paper. He is not destroyed in the end; the Rabbi keeps his Golem in case it is needed again. I hung my masks (the *paper* masks), from the lighting cables in the theatre. The image created was intended to promote a feeling of many beings just waiting to be drawn into life again. I have built many masks which remain in my attic. I don't discard them. They act as data for me, but also something more. To destroy them would be an act of destroying an element of myself. The destruction of the mask seems to represent the negation of the shadow, a denial of the darker side within Loew and the community. The figures must be kept to ensure that the balance is held.

A symbolic view of my own "personal masks"
(See DVD PowerPoint, slide 92 - minute 17:41 to 23:32)

Having finished the element of storytelling, I offered my own interpretation of the Golem tale: that the Rabbi learned something of himself from his Golem, seeing an element of his shadow projected in that clay. I was then able to open up the question: what have I learned from my masks? I have created masks with many groups of people. I have attempted to construct and amplify the symbolic elements I see within various groups who have participated in mask construction workshops. Part three was time dedicated to looking at my own masks.

As I have stated in previous presentations of my practice (*Collisions 2013*), I see in my masks a lot of old men. Most of my masks are decidedly human. Others who have built masks with me may create animals, ogres or vampires; my masks tend to be men whose faces have become hardened in old age. They are not heroic, nor are they "neutral"; they are overtly vulnerable. In my critical refection for *Collisions 2013,* I wrote about my previous attempt to merge Lecoq's approach to mask with a

Jungian critical framework, an effort to capture the emotional dynamics contained within each mask:

> *I tried to link the conflicts I had identified within each mask with the emotions and events I was involved with when I built the mask, thereby linking each mask to my own personal experiences.* (Will Pinchin: Reflection February 2014)

Having succeeded in creating a connection between my masks and myself, I then experienced a 'loss of freedom to play', as noted earlier. It was my new aim, in *Collisions 2014,* to search for the freedom articulated within the Lecoq system as 'a space to play'. In this presentation I asked the question: how do I find the necessary "space" while working directly with my own mask constructions, my own personal shadow material? My hypothesis is that myth offers a dual function of distancing the psychological material from the particular individual, while at the same time offering a means of entering that material. Joseph Campbell highlights this dual relationship between myth and dream:

> Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream; both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche. But in the dream the forms are quirked by the particular troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind. (Campbell 2008: 14)

Campbell's assertion that myth offers access to the 'dynamics of the psyche', without the personal or 'particular troubles of the dreamer' echoes Jung's method of psychological amplification. It becomes a means of understanding the symbolic aspect of the psyche, while at the same time depersonalizing the psychic material enough for it to be accessible to the individual.

Most of my masks, with one notable exception, are of elderly men who have stern and furrowed brows. They are weathered faces. The exception, a young boy created on the first day at Central, sticks out in stark contrast to these masks. In *Collisions 2014,* I attempted to bring this dynamic into a theatrical space. It is a contrast described in the archetypal relationship between the *Senex* and *Puer*, the old man and the boy.

Personal reflection (See DVD PowerPoint, slide 92 - minute 18:51 – 23:32):

> *Part of my research has been to look at the old men who have had an influence on me and, as part of my amplification process, to gather photographs of them (what Murray Stein refers to as "personal associations"). Taking a pair of scissors, I cut the fishing line on one of the masks, and I brought it into the playing space.*
>
> *While a slideshow projects images of my grandfathers on the screen behind me, I put on the mask. I shifted the top of my spine forward, creating an arch*

in my back, and my hands became tense. (I remember my Papou's strong hands. He always made sure that he had a firm handshake and as a game he would squeeze our hands as hard as he could. I remember it was something that I was afraid of, and yet loved to play). I slowed my movements down, and attempted to isolate my hands and shoulders. My footsteps became smaller as I found a suit jacket on the side of the space. Once the jacket was on, my hand touched the pocket in which there was a crust of bread in a paper bag. The text of actions was: old man is surprised to find an old crust in pocket. The crust brings his attention to the birds flying overhead; he breaks a piece and throws it to them. The action becomes feeding the birds, which draws him in. A young boy enters (played by Kinnear). He swirls around, engrossed in the image of a jet flying through the air. He sees the birds huddled around, and races through them. The birds take off in a swooping cluster and the boy is happy. He sees another bird on the ground and chases it. The man stops the boy, and attempts to engage him in the activity of feeding the birds. The boy hurls the bread at another bird, and the old man gestures for the boy to slow down. He gives the boy another piece of bread, and this time the boy offers it to the birds. He becomes more and more engrossed in the act of feeding, and the old man offers, piece by piece, more bread to the boy, until soon he hands everything over. The boy acknowledges the gift and continues to feed the birds as he moves offstage. The man is left alone once more. I remove the mask, and look at it, there is an element of my old man in my masks. The event ends with me looking at the "attic" full of faces, a moment of self-reflection.

Amplification: The *Senex* and the *Puer* archetypes

The archetypal child receives critical attention from three important figures within analytic and archetypal psychology. Jung focuses on the archetype extensively in his essay, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype", written in communication with Károly Kerényi (Jung and Kerényi 1985). Von Franz uses the story of *The Little Prince,* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, to describe the difficulty of growing up in her text *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus* (2000). James Hillman, in *Senex & Puer* (2005) and *The Puer Papers* (1979), outlines a confrontation between the old man and the boy. The conflicting understandings of these three analysts have become the foundation for the amplification of the masks I have produced.

In *The Science of Mythology*, Jung outlines the multifaceted aspects of "The Psychology of the Child Archetype". He not only articulates the major tenets of his archetypal theory, and its relationship to mythology, but he also makes a detailed amplification and interpretation of the child archetype in particular. He stresses that any singular interpretation cannot, by definition, fully encompass an archetype:

> Not for a moment dare we succumb to the illusion that an archetype can be finally explained and disposed of. Even the best attempts at explanation are only more or less successful translations into another metaphorical language.

> The most we can do is to *dream the myth onwards* and give it a modern dress. And whatever explanation or interpretation does to it, we do to our own souls as well, with corresponding results for our own well-being. The archetype – let us never forget this – is a psychic organ present in all of us. A bad explanation means a correspondingly bad attitude to this organ, which may thus be injured. (Jung and Kerényi 1985: 94)

Through his analysis of the theme, he comes to what some have referred to as Jung's own personal myth: that the child archetype is symbolic of wholeness and of individuation. For Jung, the symbol holds a unity of past ('personal infantilism'), present ('compensation' for the 'one-sidedness of the consciousness mind'), and future (the potential development of the individual) (Jung and Kerényi 1985: 98). He describes the child as 'the beginning and the end', the 'pre-conscious and the post conscious essence of man'. For Jung, the child is symbolic of a union of opposites, of the psychological potential within the individual, 'smaller than small and bigger than big' (Jung and Kerényi 1985: 91).

In articulating the competing views on the *puer* archetype, one finds differing trajectories of psychological development and, therefore, opposing interpretations of the *senex* archetype. While von Franz outlines a broad psychological problem with transitioning from child to adult, Hillman's revisionist aim is to rediscover the child within. The relationship between the *senex* and the *puer* becomes the major force in the archetypal psychology of Hillman. Unlike von Franz, Hillman takes a positive view of the archetype: the child is a creature of unabashed creativity. While von Franz takes aim at the boy who refuses to grow up (Peter Pan), Hillman sees the *puer* as the means of opening the world to new possibilities and psychological growth:

> Senex is a style of life and thought characterized by a sense of time and history, a concern for order, a love of tradition, and a tendency towards the abstract and the regulated; it is rather heavy in tone and depressive in mood. Puer, in contrast, focuses on the here and now; prefers experiment and adventure; looks to the future; wants to transcend laws and traditions; and is light, airy, idealistic, charming, and ephemeral. It raises the spirits, but it has a habit of crashing down. (Hillman 1990: preface)

With his overwhelming interest in "play", Lecoq could be described as having a strong affinity for the child archetype. He notes that in many languages the word used to describe the activity of children is given to those who perform: they play. Play is the central criterion for advancement into the second year of study at the Lecoq school (Lecoq 2000: 97). Play, the activity of the *puer*, becomes the motor for the entire pedagogic journey.

Mask work, in its most general sense, could be said to embody Hillman's confrontation between the *puer* and *senex*. Fixed and immovable, demanding a spark of life, the mask asks for a sense of youthful vigour and fluidity within its solid structural form. A delicate balance of these dynamic forces pull together the life of

the mask. The object demands order and regulation, but conversely, without playfulness or a sense of the "here and now", it does not live.

As preparation for *Collisions 2014*, I kept a journal. In one entry I describe the fears I have when looking at my own masks, including the fear of losing a sense of playfulness:

> *So why are these old men showing up in my masks? I could say that there is a fear in me that I am losing my playfulness, getting old. My big fear now is that I am proving him right: as we move into our own baggage, we lose our playfulness. We become frozen with self-doubt, and, with personal reflections, we become isolated from the world around us, isolated from our colleagues who are "playing with us". How do they enter into anything we are doing, if we are in our own solitary world? We lose our playfulness. I don't want to prove the old men right! Well, perhaps that is where the old men come in, as an element of fear of the* senex*. Maybe a fear of Lecoq too! (Will Pinchin: Reflective Journal, September 2014)*

This reflection highlights a fear of the *senex*, something I would argue is inherent within the Lecoq tradition. It highlights a fear of the loss of playfulness and a decline into self-doubt, introversion or heaviness – an absence of *disponibilité*. The old man is given a new form in this writing: Lecoq himself. Throughout this research I have run into one old man more than any: the name Lecoq. Though I did not attend his school in Paris, he has become the figurehead of a community in which I find myself. While my intention has always been to challenge the view that playfulness is all that matters in actor created theatre, it is a search for the archetypal old man/young boy relationship that I find resides in me.

Playfulness

This thesis began with a critique of the use of mask within the Lecoq tradition, specifically with its central reliance on "play" and "playfulness". The child and the old man, the *puer* and the *senex*, unknowingly became reoccurring themes within my work. Often participants within my mask construction workshops would suggest that they hadn't done anything like this since they were children, that the tasks of sculpting clay and *papier mâché* reminded them of childhood arts and crafts. The child archetype became a continual theme for my own mask praxis. Without intending it to be, the child ran as a thread throughout my thesis.

Jung's view of the controlling force contained within an archetype may shed some light on why this happened. Jung suggests that a misunderstanding or faulty interpretation of archetypal material can have a negative effect on the individual: 'A bad explanation means a correspondingly bad attitude to this organ, which may thus be injured' (Jung and Kerényi 1985: 94). When faced with the *puer*/*senex* relationship as a reoccurring pattern within my mask constructions, I have had to re-examine my understandings of the importance of play within the Lecoq tradition.

This is not to suggest that I withdraw my critique; indeed, my resolve has only been strengthened. Following Jung's understanding of the child archetype as image of the future-oriented development of the individual, the potential for individuation and wholeness, one can come to a re-examination of the function of "play" within a mask praxis that allows for introspection and for personal growth. I have come to the conclusion that play, the domain of the child, activates an archetype central to Jung's individuation process. The London school of Jungian developmental psychology, the Society of Analytic Psychology (SAP), underscores the importance of play within the development of the child.

The work of D.W. Winnicott (2005) and his concept of "transitional objects" and "transitional phenomena" has had a large impact on the understanding of the psychological importance of play and its wider implications for the arts. Winnicott's demonstration of the importance of play with objects ("transitional objects"), has been noted by theatre-maker and ethnographer John Emigh (1996), whose work links both the theories of Winnicott with the writing of Victor Turner. Turner's book, *From Ritual to Theatre: The human seriousness of play* (1982), points to the importance of liminal aspects within ritual, in opening a "potential space" to play. Emigh argues, by drawing a connection between Winnicott and Turner, that the mask offers an access to 'child-like play', which he argues can be seen in 'patterns underlying often elegantly structured and socially effective adult performances' deriving 'their form and appeal from what seems to be universal childhood strategies for survival and growth' (Emigh 1996: 3).

By beginning with material that is "playful" and, therefore, perceived to be separate from the psychology of the individual, the performer may become open to discover aspects of themselves that they might not otherwise explore. Indeed, through play one is likely to see possibilities that one might not have originally perceived as part of one's wider "concerns", remembering that 'actors usually perform badly in plays whose *concerns* are too close to their own'. In spirit, this activity mirrors a Jungian approach: for here, play becomes a form of abandoning the logical ego consciousness, thus allowing irrational elements to emerge. By placing importance on the body, Lecoq performs a similar progression. This notion of play, combined with the use of the neutral mask requiring thought to be produced through the body, allows new knowledge to form from what might be seen as irrational. Jung would call this the unconscious; Lecoq would suggest that it was the "natural" language of the body.

Summary

This chapter represents the furthest development of my mask praxis: the examination of my own "personal myth" through mask construction. Building on the foundation established during the previous chapters, I have argued that mask construction allows performers a direct means of sculpting the space inside themselves – a tactile means of establishing Lecoq's distinction between playing

themselves and playing *using* themselves. Building on this argument, I have attempted to synthesize the practice of mask making undertaken throughout this thesis both by working in groups with actors and by working alone. In this way, the chapter represents a reflective attempt to understand the journey I have undertaken to develop knowledge from these masks: my own "story of archetypal encounter".

I have outlined my story of psychological exploration through mask construction, demonstrating challenges that I have faced in attempting to balance Lecoq's view of playfulness with my interest in exploring psychological complexes. I demonstrated some important problems I have encountered while engaging with a Jungian method of symbolic amplification, and the challenges of folding self-knowledge back into performance practice.

My *Collisions 2014* presentation, "The Golem", performed at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, places the masks I have constructed over the three years of this thesis into a performance context. It examines the archetypal association of the *puer*/*senex* relationship: the conflict between the old man and the child archetypes, explored in depth by Carl Jung, Marie-Louise von Franz, and James Hillman. I argue that the *puer*/*senex* relationship underscores not only the mask I have built, but also the understanding of playfulness that lies at the heart of the Lecoq pedagogy. The child archetype, with its relationship to the *senex*, can thereby be seen as a major archetypal association that supports Lecoq's understanding of the actor creator. In this way, I have articulated Murray Stein's progression of amplification: a specific personal complex as seen in the old men that emerge from my own mask construction, amplified through the wider lens of the cultural associations with Lecoq, and his concept of playfulness. Finally, my own mask construction draws upon the mythological relationship between the *puer* and the *senex* figures. This dynamic will be at the heart of my developing performance practice, and the subject of any further performance elements.

Chapter 4
The Marked
Two case studies, with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway, exploring "therapeutic" uses of mask construction towards a new work of actor created theatre

Chapter Overview

This chapter critically examines an engagement programme developed for Theatre Témoin while working on a piece of devised actor created theatre. The ensuing production, The Marked*, was based on themes of homelessness and informed by a series of mask construction workshops with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College. It premiered at the Camden People's Theatre in January 2016, and toured a number of homeless shelters and hostels in London throughout the summer before a sell out run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2016.*

Building on the assertion that the act of mask construction presents the possibility for the sculpting of the space inside the performer, this chapter examines the growing use of mask as a therapeutic modality. By critically engaging with a diversity of existing therapeutic practices involving mask construction, this research has not only informed my emerging praxis as outlined in Chapter 3 but has also helped to articulate specific contributions to knowledge.

I have chosen to view these workshops as case studies, not as the direct exploration of the complexes of the actor creator him or her self. The process was a means of testing my methodological approach while working with others, and, therefore, offered me the distance to deepen my understanding of the theories and contexts surrounding my own mask praxis. By critically examining these workshops, however, this chapter represents a significant step forward in the use of mask construction as a methodological approach to the development of new work in actor created theatre.

The Marked through mask construction

Masks have long been tools for experiencing the mythical (Eliade 1989, Janzing 1998, Kerényi 1948, Jennings and Minde 1993). They bring our heroes, monsters, gods and demons to life in front of us, and in so doing, show us our hopes and fears. The construction of a mask allows individuals to project their own myths onto clay, slowly bringing them to life with papier-mâché. To wear and to see the mask being worn by others allows us to learn from, create with, and perhaps, to grow from them.

In this chapter, I critically examine the delivery of two workshop series, adapting my methodological approach to mask construction (see Chapter 3) and applying it to groups of individuals who have had experiences of homelessness. The first workshop was with Cardboard Citizens' Act Now program, described as 'an accredited theatre and employability course for young people aged 16-25 who have been, or who are at risk of homelessness' (Cardboard Citizens 2015). The four-week short course, a collaboration between members of Act Now and the international devising ensemble Theatre Témoin (assisted by students from Queen Mary's Applied Theatre course), oversaw the construction of a set of fifteen original masks. The second workshop series was offered in collaboration with St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College, whose aims are 'providing safe and inclusive learning opportunities for people who are homeless, supporting recovery through involvement in learning' (St Mungo's 2015). St Mungo's offered a seven-week series to explore the material with participants on a drop-in basis.

While in previous chapters I have argued that Lecoq's neutral mask praxis offers the possibility for a highly psychological pedagogical system, in this chapter I will explore the use of mask as a means of psychological investigation by drama and art therapists. The hypothesis has been that by examining the masks produced by participants for archetypal themes and imagery explored through a Jungian process of amplification, placing each participant's mask within a mythological frame, I would be able to approach personal narratives and conflicts in a safe and constructive manner. The workshops represent a vital step forward within a multi-modal *Practice as Research* methodology, merging a Jungian critical framework with the embodied knowledge of a group of devising actors trained in the Lecoq pedagogy. The chapter explores the potential and the pitfalls of accessing personal conflict and narrative through the use of mask construction while working with groups. It should be noted that the core members of Theatre Témoin trained together while at LISPA (2004 - 2006). They were all well aware of my critique of Lecoq's mask praxis and its relationship to psychology. All members of the core company had previously participated in the mask construction workshops I delivered at the start of my thesis, and therefore they all had hands-on experience of the process itself.

Having made the assertion that "the act of mask construction presents the possibility for the sculpting of the space inside the performer" (see Chapter 3, p.88) – and, having previously articulated how performers cited a solipsistic loop 'more akin to therapy than theatre making' (see Chapter 3, p. 99) – I now focus on the use of mask construction within the context of arts therapy in order to better understand that "space inside". As a theatre-maker trained in the "anti-psychological" mask tradition of Jacques Lecoq, one who not only performs, but also builds and designs masks professionally, I ask the question: how is mask, and specifically mask construction, being used differently within therapeutic settings than within the rehearsal room? And, perhaps counterintuitively, what can be adopted from those therapeutic practices to advance an understanding of the use of mask within Lecoq-based theatrical creation? In so doing, I address the overarching question of this thesis: 'How does the actor creator playfully access his or her personal complexes, so

avoided by Lecoq, and use them towards constructing a "new theatre for tomorrow?"' (see Introduction, p. 15).

As an element of my *Practice as Research* methodological approach, adapted from Nelson's epistemological model (see Introduction, p. 18–23), I offer two case studies that highlight significant developments within my own mask praxis. I have been able to test my methods and theoretical framework by critically analysing these workshop series and adapting my own method of mask construction towards a professional production's investigation of themes of homelessness. Through observation and critical engagement, combined with a study of the therapeutic use of masks, I argue that I can articulate a better understanding of how masks function as a means of acquiring self-knowledge. These workshops have allowed me to test my thinking, my methods, and theoretical framework in a number of important ways.

These workshops have:

- demonstrated that this process of mask construction offers potential insights for people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, giving me an important distance from which to critically reflect upon my own praxis.

- allowed me to engage with groups of individuals who were not previously shaped by the Lecoq teaching. By viewing the differences between masks built by individuals who have no experience of mask construction, and those built by actors trained in the Lecoq tradition, I have been better able to articulate the influence Lecoq's teachings has had on my own mask construction.

- challenged me to avoid the cleanliness of the Lecoq pedagogy, previously highlighted in the section, "Moving forward: Monotheistic or Polytheistic, a post-Jungian critique" (see Chapter 2, p. 82-83), where I argue that the Lecoq pedagogy offers a monist need for cleanliness and purity. These sessions allowed for more inclusion of unconscious material – for greater mess – not simply the clarity of physical dynamics. They have, therefore, forced me to reckon with the possibility that while these masks might not be built directly for performance, they may offer more information than if they had been highly crafted precision tools.

- made me reconsider how I apply the amplification process, and where it sits within my own practices. I have shifted my approach from Jung's symbolic amplification, preferring to adopt James Hillman's phrase 'stick with the image' (Hillman 1997: 21). This subtle shift has not removed mythological amplification from my methodological approach, but it has forced me to question how (and where) it sits within my practice.

- tested my understanding of the boundaries between therapy and theatre making, and made me question the elusive lines that separate creative acts

and acts of healing. While the aim was not to adopt therapy, but to better understand how mask construction has been used in therapeutic practices, I have been forced to confront the distinction between "therapy" and the "therapeutic" in very real and practical terms.

- forced me, and Theatre Témoin, to confront questions regarding exactly what our outreach programme was trying to learn: a historical series of events or abstract metaphorical narratives? What kind of "self-knowledge" were we looking for, and how could we use the information we were receiving?

- made me question how one transitions from mask construction into performance, both for the workshop participants and for the actor creator. The theoretical element of this chapter, examining the therapeutic use of mask construction, has forced me to examine the distinction between mask construction and masked performance, still very much a question within my developing praxis.

- challenged my own preconceptions of those who have experienced homelessness and what this community struggles with. It has forced me to withdraw my own projections from these individuals, allowing me to look at them with a clearer lens. The workshops have helped me (and this group of actor creators) to deepen our understanding of the experience of homelessness.

In the following section, before exploring the two case studies, I will examine the history of mask construction praxis as a psychotherapeutic modality, the relationship between "therapy" and the "therapeutic", and its potential relation to devised actor created theatre. This will form the theoretical foundation that underpins both case studies and has informed my own mask praxis.

The history of mask as a psychotherapeutic modality

In 1954, clinical psychologist Penelope P. Pollaczek and speech pathologist Harold D. Homefield examined the use of mask with a small group of children between the ages of 8 and 11 suffering from speech impediments. Their short study examined the hypothesis that the impediment (a stutter) would be reduced when children pretended to be someone else. Their experiment was successful, and their evidence demonstrated that the problems returned after the masks were removed. The work of Pollaczek and Homefield represents the first significant study of the use of mask within a therapeutic setting, and, as I will demonstrate, many others followed.

In his PhD thesis, "An empirical and theoretical investigation into the psychological effects of wearing a mask", Mick Cooper (1999) synthesizes the literature on mask into four general theories: 'The first of these hypothesized effects is that the mask disinhibits its wearer, the second that it transforms its wearer, the third that it facilitates the expression of aspects of the wearer's Self, and the fourth that it brings

about various psychosomatic changes in the wearer's state of being' (Cooper 1999: 18). Cooper's analysis is useful for many reasons, but it should be noted that he focuses exclusively on the effects of *wearing* a mask, not the act of construction. Mask construction may not result in "disinhibiting" effects or psychosomatic changes, but on the other hand, it may work even better to support the hypothesis that the mask 'facilitates the expression of aspects of the wearer's Self'.

The clinical psychologist Hildegund Janzing (1998), in her article "The use of mask in psychotherapy", links the contemporary use of mask in therapeutic settings to ancient ritual, through the mediation of binary oppositions she sees as 'the staging of our fundamental ambiguities' (Janzing 1998: 156). Her analysis attempts to link the fields of anthropology, theatre and therapy, and she outlines the history of mask construction as a psychotherapeutic modality from Pollaczek & Homefield through to F. Bringham (1970), who hypothesized that masks have *always* been used to handle psychological needs. Hilarion Petzold (1975) explored the practical application of masks within a wide variety of therapeutic settings. Petzold may be the first to explore mask construction as a therapeutic tool, putting into practice Bringham's theories.

Some notable names within the history of masked therapy include Laura Sheleen (1979), an American Jungian analyst practicing in France who asked her clients to mould clay masks while working with their eyes shut, a practice close to my method of construction. Sheleen's work heavily influences the German Katharina Somers (1992). Janzing also cites the work of Bruno de Panafieu, who centred on people who have had a history of experiencing psychotic episodes, and the psychoanalyst H. Saigre. Janzing points to the more recent contributions of drama therapist Robert Landy (1986, 1996), art therapists Fryrear and Stephens (1988); one might add the contributions of Cyril Ives (1997).

Mask *construction* has been documented as a method adopted for use with a number of different groups: those suffering from HIV and AIDS (Ives 1997); chronically and terminally ill children (Driessnack 2004); women diagnosed with anorexia nervosa (Fryrear & Stephens 1988); those experiencing psychotic episodes; children with speech impediments (Pollaczek & Homefield 1954), and in the context of family counselling (Landy 1986, Baptiste 1989). In this way, one can see the extent to which the medium of mask construction can be viewed as a highly adaptable mode of psychological exploration. Indeed, it appears as if the client group, more than any other factor, determines the specific uses of the mask. Those practices are as varied as the issues that they are adopted to address.

Drama therapist and scholar Robert Landy, having done extensive work with masks, puppets and make-up, argues that the therapeutic function of the mask is fundamentally to construct a binary opposition:

> Mask work in drama therapy is a literal representation of the notion of the double, the split between individual and archetype, body and spirit, the hidden and the revealed. The mask transforms a person to a persona.

> Though the persona is a type, an idea, it also embodies images charged with feeling. The mask as persona is dialectical, embodying individual and society, dream and reality, myth and autobiography. As such, it is a device of distancing that aids the person in moving towards balance, towards an exploration of the self through the role. (Landy 1986: 145)

Landy's understanding of the function of mask in many ways echoes Janzing's view of mediation, both describing the dialectical nature of the mask. However, while Landy presents a means of separating self and role, Janzing uses the mask as a means of experiencing an 'out-of-the-ordinary space' or a movement into a liminal territory. The distinction between the mask as a dialectical tool for developing a distanced analytical perspective and the mask as a disinhibited means of experiencing something unknown becomes critically important within the discourse on the therapeutic uses of mask. These opposing viewpoints, reinforcing the dialectical nature of mask praxis, may also speak to the two essential elements of the masking process: mask construction, followed by mask performance. The act of construction may offer a useful distance for critical analysis, while the performance of a mask, conversely, may tend towards the experience of a liminal territory. I see the balancing of these opposing forces, previously articulated as the conflict between the *senex* and *puer* archetypes (see Chapter 3, p. 115-117), as an important dialectic within therapeutic mask praxis and a useful means of comparison between the work of varying therapists.

In his book, *Drama Therapy*, Landy groups the use of masks under the heading "projective techniques" (Landy 1986: 135), which he argues allow clients greater distance from the material than psychodrama, by enabling them to project onto an object and, thereby, find a safe means of exploration. Landy cites sociologist Thomas Scheff, who argues that an important balance occurs when an individual is able to play both the actor and observer roles simultaneously and re-experience a problem in his/her life without being overwhelmed by the conscious awareness of it. For Scheff and Landy, distance is a necessary element of catharsis, and is instrumental for therapeutic purposes.

Landy also argues that mask construction offers a 'more powerful use of mask' than the use of pre-made masks. He articulates his own process whereby, through construction of multiple masks, the client is able to interact with differing viewpoints on one subject. For example: outlining one of the techniques he adopts while working within groups, Landy describes a process of constructing three masks that represent three aspects of one client's fiancé (a satiric mask, a heroic mask, and a naturalistic mask). Those masks are then adopted by other members of the group, allowing the client to improvise around elements of her relationship. He describes how reversing the practice, by allowing the client to wear the mask of her fiancé, has a very different effect: 'thus seeing the man's point of view more clearly and exploring the parts of herself that she might have projected onto the man' (Landy 1986: 142-143). Landy's description highlights the mask's ability to help navigate conflicting views of self and other. His use of mask, in the method described above,

functions as a means of exploring personal conflict or self-image from an external vantage point.

In his article, "Using masks as therapeutic aids in family therapy", David A. Baptiste, Jr. (1989), like Landy, describes a process of constructing multiple masks within family units, 'one [mask] of each family member and two of themselves', in order to approach group conflicts. Clients are encouraged to express their own preconceptions about their family through the construction process. The masks enable the family to articulate their feelings, while at the same time offering a means of exploring alternative viewpoints by assuming differing roles. For Baptiste, the mask allows others to assume differing positions within the family unit (for example, the mother wears the mask of the father). In one instance, an unmasked figure recounts a difficulty he or she has had, while the other (masked) members of the family re-enact the event: 'Other members deal with the problem as they perceived how the person who they have become, via the mask, reacted to the situation. The unmasked member does not participate in the role-play. He/she remains a spectator but is free to make corrections to the on-going action if he/she feels that the information is incorrect' (Baptiste 1989: 52). This allows the family a means of observation and expression within the moment of conflict.

Cyril Ives (1997), in the chapter "The Mask of Self", examines the use of mask construction while working with clients infected with Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Ives examined the use of mask to explore personal and cultural stigmas associated with the illness, and accounts for the mask as a "transitional object", citing the work of developmental psychologist D.W. Winnicott, as many have done before (Emigh 1996, Jennings and Minde 1993, Bell 2001, Knight 2004). Ives adopts an interesting practice surrounding the use of masks, asking participants to interview their own masks. For Ives, the aim is to keep the illusion of separation between the mask and maker alive, while at the same time observing, 'it is clear, however, that it is often many parts of their own personality which are being referred to in their responses and comments'. Here a process of witnessing this interaction is important, because it enables the participant to have a more objective view of the mask. Describing how many have negative judgments of their own masks that do not reflect the response of the greater group, Ives writes: 'Again in the processing, the expectation of how the mask would be and how it became were quite different, and the observations of the other group members enabled her to see parts of herself which were otherwise hidden away' (Ives 1997: 78).

All three practitioners here described, Landy, Baptiste, and Ives, propose a behaviourist view to the mask construction/performance relationship, using the masks to address specific patterns of behaviour adopted by the individual or the group. Their masks allow for critical analysis of that behaviour, while also assisting the improvisational elements around the mask. One may ask: is the behaviour being analysed coming from the creation of the mask, or is it the result of the behaviour that emerges during role play in mask? Or both? While some therapists attest to the mask's ancient functions, citing its liminal underpinnings, Landy, Baptiste and Ives

have stripped away any form of myth. While examining their work, I was struck by how intentional the making of each mask appeared to be. For these therapists, the meaning of each mask was overtly conscious, asking clients to construct a mask of a specific person – your fiancé, your father, yourself - and the focus of these three practitioners seemed to be mainly drawn to the wearing of the object, rather than to the construction process itself.

A note on method: like many drama therapists and art therapists, Landy, Ives, and Baptiste have chosen to make masks using a method of plaster bandages, applied directly to the face. The masks produced are replicas of their own faces, decorated with paints and other objects. It should be noted that Lecoq insisted masks be built at a larger size than the performer's face (and in the rare occurrence smaller). This is something Lecoq deemed essential if the mask was going to "play". My process of mask construction allows for that increased size, and is an attempt to merge these existing critical frameworks. I would also suggest that masks built directly on the face overtly imply a connection to the individual, while masks built from external clay begin from a state of distance.

"Therapy" versus "Therapeutic"

In order to address the intentions of mask construction, it is important to note the distinction between "*therapy*" and the "*therapeutic"*, as underscored by Robert Landy. Landy compares the intention of a number of theatre-makers 'who attempt to realize therapeutic goals through drama/theatre work' (Landy 1986: 40). He contrasts the work of "sensitive" theatre makers with therapeutic intentions, and drama therapists engaged directly in therapy. He cites Eleanor Irwin, a drama therapist from the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Centre, who defines therapy as 'a specific form of intervention, to bring about intrapsychic, interpersonal, or behavioural change'. Irwin goes on to define the therapeutic as 'any experience which helps an individual to feel a greater sense of competence' (Irwin in Landy 1989: 40). Landy argues that therapy must 'evaluate outcome in terms of the well-being of the client, rather than the success of the product':

> Therapy can be defined, then, in terms of the training and aims of the therapist, the expectations of the client, and the interaction of the therapist and client in moving towards healthy functioning. Many disabled individuals undoubtedly realize therapeutic benefits by participating in drama/theatre groups led by sensitive individuals. However, these therapeutic benefits, the raw substance of the creative process, are often secondary to the prime task of making theatre and are not consciously understood by the leaders, nor fully integrated by the actors. The drama therapist aims to make explicit that part of the creative process which is implicitly healing and to translate it into specific concepts and practices. (Landy 1986: 40)

While Landy and Irwin may seem to patronize the non-therapists, there are those mask makers, working within therapeutic contexts as understood by Landy, whose

work does not fulfil his definition of therapy. It is important to stress that, while those of us working within Theatre Témoin are theatre-makers and not therapists, the company is by no means alone in its interests in crafting masks with at-risk or vulnerable communities.

Deborah Bell (2010), author of *Mask Makers and Their Craft*, highlights a number of mask makers who have built masks within the "therapeutic" model or in an attempt to blur the line between therapy, the therapeutic, and the pedagogical. As noted in Chapter 3 (see Chapter 3, p. 87) she writes: 'Whether conducted by the amateur artist facing mental or physical disorders or the professionally recognized artist facing disturbing personal, social, or political issues, the actual process of the creation of a mask challenges ways to both identify and confront disturbances' (Bell 2010: 57). Bell's observation challenges Landy's distinction in a fundamental way. Her analysis suggests that mask construction, whether undertaken by the professional artist or the client, demands confrontation with basic human 'disturbances', and offers a medium for enacting change. For many artists like Bell, as I shall aim to demonstrate in the following pages, the dialectic between the use of mask for "therapeutic" theatrical ends and its use in direct therapy oversimplifies a complex problem.

Actor trainers who adopt mask construction as a "therapeutic" modality

LISPA is currently offering a secondary course, "Integral Movement and Performance Practice", that runs adjacent to its core curriculum. The Integral Movement course is designed as 'a unique training program which combines the art and craft of physical theatre and devised performance, movement and performance based approaches to self development, and the acquisition of skills needed to create a framework for artistic and personal growth' (LISPA 2015). As previously described, Thomas Prattki has adapted the Lecoq pedagogy to include a focus on a Jungian process of individuation. Not only does Prattki redefine the neutral mask (see Chapter 1), his teaching seeks to examine Jung's concept of the personal shadow as a source for dramatic creation through mask construction.

Charlie Blowers and Jose Parra collaborate to form "Moving Pieces", a physical theatre company that describes itself as a 'unique arts in health organization which has pioneered an integrated and highly creative approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing' (Moving Pieces 2015). They write: 'Our model draws on the relationship between the body, movement, expressive arts and life experiences. Our work is informed by a variety of performance, artistic and psychotherapeutic practices including new and emergent ideas relating to neuroscience'. Blowers, a clinical psychotherapist specializing in trauma, offers an eight-week workshop in mask construction entitled "Stories from the Body"[18]. Participants construct masks

[18] In June 2012, Blowers offered an abridged version of the workshop, entitled "Pathways to Creativity", that I was able to attend. Participants were invited to sculpt a "mask" in clay (the constructions were generally quite abstract, and, perhaps due to time restrictions, remained in their clay form).

and engage with theatrical construction from 'polarities that the masks reveal'. Blowers has collaborated with Prattki, working as a guest teacher for LISPA's inaugural year of Integral Movement and Performance Practice.

The work of Richard Pochinko (1946 – 1989) represents another approach to mask construction as a means of generating self-knowledge. Pochinko was a graduate of the Lecoq school in Paris, and his insights into clown represent a fusion between the European clown tradition and Canadian First Nation mythology. In *Clown Through Mask*, Sue Morrison and Veronica Coburn (2013) outline Pochinko's approach to clown through the construction of six masks. Pochinko describes his work as a quest for self-knowledge, in which each mask is given directional coordinates (North, South, East, West, upper and lower). Pochinko adopts a reoccurring refrain to encompass his approach, derived from native American mythology: 'if we ever faced all directions of ourselves at once we could only laugh at the beauty of our own ridiculousness' (Pochinko in Coburn and Morrison 2013: 14).

Morrison's students' constructions seem remarkably basic; most are made entirely with the maker's eyes shut. Their aim is not aesthetic but psychological:

> The making of the masks is not a visual art project. The process is not one of external aesthetics. The function of the masks is articulation, of that which we might not want to articulate, of that which we might be afraid to articulate, or find difficult to articulate. We might not ever be aware that something is there to be articulated. (Coburn and Morrison 2013: 154)

Most interesting for this thesis, Pochinko and Morrison are among those practitioners who adopt the term "myth" in relation to their mask praxis, stating that 'myths tell us something important. Something we need to know'. Morrison argues 'mythic distance… makes the knowledge visible and safe' (Coburn and Morrison 2013: 153). Both Pochinko and Morrison go a step further, however, and suggest the possibility of building "personal myth", as was discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 3, p. 90-92). Pochinko, like Blowers and Prattki, resists the simple binary of theatre education and dramatherapy.

Two Case Studies: Mask Construction with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College



Figure 21 – Participant's Personal Mask "Garuna Sultana"

Garuna Sultana

> *On the edge of town there is a house that stands on a hill, a deserted house covered in cobwebs that the wind blows through. The windows are broken. And that is where Garuna lives. She was a lively person. There was a guy that fell in love with her, and he used to come to her window and sing: "Gaaaaaaaarruuuuuuuuna Suuultana!" They lived in this beautiful house with beige walls, with everything placed. They held parties that everyone wanted to be at. But there was a secret that Garuna kept from the world. And that was that her husband became this vicious, ugly, tusked creature. He turned into a beast, he would drink and be abusive. And so Garuna spent this time trying to keep this beast under control. Initially he turned only a few times a year, but as time goes on he turns more and more often. Gradually they stopped going out, stopped having parties. They didn't go out. And eventually he started changing five times a week…*
> (Workshop Participant)

For the remainder of this chapter I will critically examine two workshop series, a developing process of mask construction in collaboration with two well-established companies that work with London's homeless populations: Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College.

Case Study #1: Cardboard Citizens Act Now

Artistic Director and founder of Theatre Témoin, Ailin Conant, one of the participants in my earlier experiments with collaborative mask making, suggested that we run a weekly workshop series with Cardboard Citizens Act Now program, entitled "Mask Performance and Construction". The course was meant to be an exploration of construction techniques over a short four-session period. During that limited time,

we managed to build a set of 15 full-faced expressive masks, as well as to explore mask performance techniques, adopting a few of Lecoq's own pedagogical masks: Larval and full-faced Expressive masks. Supervising the process was Cardboard Citizens' Director of Projects, Tony McBride, who attended each session and oversaw the series.

> Act Now is Cardboard Citizens' innovative performing arts programme for young people aged 16-25 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or who have experience of homelessness. This is an opportunity to work with a professional artistic team to learn theatre skills including acting, directing, devising, script writing and more in a relaxed, welcoming and friendly environment. Workshops aim to build participants' confidence and social skills, and are free and open access. Travel expenses are provided. (Cardboard Citizens 2015)

Between March 17 2014 and April 7 2014, Theatre Témoin acted as the professional artistic team within the context of Cardboard Citizens' Act Now program. Cardboard Citizens as an organization has a well-established reputation for its use of Forum theatre techniques developed by Augusto Boal, where participants explore personal narrative through theatrical creation. Since 1991, Cardboard Citizens has been producing new work based on the themes of homelessness, and there is a large social engagement element to their work. On their website they described themselves as: 'A creative hub for excluded people, our workshops, training, support and progression grow confidence, community and skills' (Cardboard Citizens 2015).

The participants in our sessions had a very mixed range of experience; some informed us that they had been involved in the programme for an extended period of time, while others were there for the first time. When asked if they had any history with mask making or performance, some said that they had built masks when they were children; no one suggested that they had extensive experience with either. Indeed, there was a sense (perhaps it was only my impression) that mask making was a far cry from the typical Act Now sessions.

Day 1 (mask construction)

Personal reflection:

> *I was honestly scared walking into the room. I didn't know what to expect, and felt as if the people who were going to be taking this course were totally OTHER. They had experiences that seemed foreign to me, and as I prepared for the session I imagined the worst. I remember worrying about my bag, and if my camera would be safe. Not knowing if I would have to break up fights, or if there would be drugs in the room or knives.*

Looking back, I am shocked by my preconceptions of these people – in my mind they represented the "not me": I projected out Jung's analysis of the shadow as being everything that is not you onto this group of youngsters.

Our process of mask construction followed the same overall procedure described in the previous chapter (see Chapter 3, p. 93): each participant was given a 5k block of clay and a board on which to work. We asked each participant to shut his/her eyes, and for one minute just make a mess of the clay. This time was shortened, from two minutes in my own practice and with performers, to accommodate the needs of the group. The intention was to work largely from unconscious material, a form of Jungian active imagination, and not from a conscious image or a classical mask.

It became strikingly clear how difficult some found the task of closing their eyes and playing with clay. I had to ask repeatedly for participants to keep their eyes shut. Upon greater critical reflection, I believe that we had yet to develop a level of trust sufficient for this task. Asking a vulnerable population to work with their eyes shut, was a challenge that some had yet to commit to undertake. Having run the workshop repeatedly with both teenagers and adults, I have found that teens find this more challenging than their elder counterparts. For others, the act of moving the clay was quite challenging, exerting a lot of effort and emotion into a block that remained flat. I have witnessed this response from a number of individuals, both from non-performers as well as performers, although the number of people who struggled was considerably higher within these specific workshop series. In my view, the challenge of moving the clay (and the sense of frustration that comes from not being able to move the clay) can bring out a sense of panic. This, combined with the challenge of keeping one's eyes closed has, in very small number of instances, created an unhealthy response causing me to ask participants to open their eyes and stop.

After a minute of mess making, participants were asked to open their eyes and to examine their clay. We asked each participant to try and look for a facial feature (a nose, an eye or a smile). Many suggested immediately that they saw a face already within their clay, and they were now allowed to "clarify" or bring out that face. Our only stipulation was that they try not to impose an idea on what was already there, but to allow the mask to develop. We worked for approximately an hour giving instructions on what constitutes a "good" mask within a Lecoqian view: dynamic forces in opposition or "pushes and pulls", emotional dynamics, strong profiles and angles. Once the sculpting process was finished, we used aluminium foil and plaster bandages to create the mask over the clay mould. (I chose to use plaster bandages for this workshop series, because we had very limited time.)

Personal observation:

> *There was a distinct difference between the masks built by the participants from* Act Now *and those built by other groups who had done the process previously. The masks built at this session were generally more abstract. When earlier I had built masks with professional actors trained in the Lecoq*

> *tradition, they tended to be human faces (see Chapter 3, p. 91-97). The masks that the Lecoq trained actors built were "better" masks, in that they would be more likely to live on stage; there was, however, less variation. The masks built by* Act Now *participants existed on a more symbolic level. When I later showed images of these masks to colleagues from LISPA, their reaction was "none of them will play". This became a moment of strong critique, both of my work as a workshop facilitator, and for my own research praxis as a whole. Was I interested in building masks that could "play" on the stage, or was I interested in delving into symbolic material that perhaps wouldn't "play"? Did I have to sacrifice one for the other, or was there a way in which both could exist together? For the moment, I decided to allow the masks to be symbolic first, and then work towards theatrical clarity.*

This phenomenon is similar to one highlighted by von Franz, who describes how active imagination with artists should be done through a medium that is not the speciality of the individual. Speaking about the need for error within creation mythology, she argues that through error the unconscious is constellated, allowing for new discovery. 'This is why when we let an analysand do active imagination and he is a painter, we generally advise him not to paint but to write, and if he is a writer then to paint, because where one is incapable and therefore helpless, and therefore unconscious, it is much more likely that such accidents happen' (von Franz 1995:36). We can see in these two groups, one that had significant mask training and the other without any formal understanding of mask, a clear difference: while the actors made clear faces, the workshop participants constructed things that might better be called "creatures". Those that did create human faces did not worry about the technical aspects associated with wearing the masks and therefore allowed for extreme features, while the masks built by the actors were much more controlled.

My own personal experience of mask construction through this methodological approach highlights this dilemma: a difficulty in allowing the mask to form from the unconscious mess, without falling back on the ingrained tradition that prioritized "play" above all else. Lecoq offers some insight into his understanding of which masks "play", when he describes his students' "festival of masks":

> When we hold our 'festival of masks' each student builds a mask which we test out together. In this initial phase I ask the students not to wear their own masks. It is better for them to start by trying out those made by others, so they can retain a certain distance from their own creation and see their mask in motion, from the outside. Some of the masks they come up with are very beautiful, but that is not enough. A good theatre mask must be able to change its expression according to the movements of the actor's body. My objective is for them to construct a mask which genuinely *moves*. (Lecoq 2000: 54-55)

One can see a connection between Lecoq's search for 'a mask which genuinely *moves*' and his definition of "play": in both instances, there is need for distance. Simon Murray's analysis of "play" and his three broad categories, "*theatricality*,

improvisation and *spectators*", did not suit the needs of my research at this moment: "play" was overtaken by a need for better analysis of the symbolic material within each mask, and by my own interest in these participants (Murray 2003: 65).

Day 2 and 3 (masked performance techniques)

At the start of each session, we undertook an element of construction (a layer of plaster bandages, the removal of clay, or a coat of paint), followed by the engagement with an element of mask performance technique. Depending on the difficulty of the construction task, the team would arrange time accordingly.

Personal observation:

> *The task of applying plaster or papier mâché is a real opportunity to learn about the participant. Not only is it a moment where participants start to talk freely, with a repeatable task at hand, but, perhaps more interestingly, their approach to the task itself becomes very clear. Plaster bandages are delicate; they demand a certain amount of diligence and attention to detail. Each strip must be treated gently, and, in an attempt to cover the entire mould somewhat evenly, one must have a method. It became quite clear that some participants approached the task in ways that were more effective than others. I challenged the participants to start at the top and work down in a structured manner, so that the surface area was covered equally; I found that it was challenging for many to follow that procedure. We noticed that many of their masks had large holes, which they missed (and which we attempted to fill in after the end of class). Conversely, a few participants found that they could not accept that their mask was done; they seemed to obsess about the details, piling more and more plaster onto the object. For many, the gentle process of laying down the plaster was a real challenge.*

Each day, after the construction was finished, we would move on to an element of mask performance using the pedagogical masks of Lecoq (Larval and Expressive). These masks were chosen largely because we considered them to be the most enjoyable and closest to conventional performance. We spoke about bringing in the neutral mask, but at the time, considered it to be too large a topic for the length of the series (a decision I later regretted). Each session we introduced some basic performance techniques: sculpting the performer's body to match the dynamic of the mask, jumping back and forth from mask to counter-mask, finding the furthest angle to which each mask could turn before the edges of the mask would destroy the image. The participants seemed to absorb and really enjoy many elements of masked performance.

This was, however, not what we had come to explore with them. While the sessions were enjoyable and productive by all accounts – from the written evaluations of participants and staff – we became frustrated with the restrictions established by our training. For example, when we proposed that the participants come up with

ideas for scenes that they would like to construct, we ran into the problems outlined in my critique of Lecoq. It is easier to "play" with scenes and concepts that are far from personal. Students proposed themes: a character reacting painfully to the realization that they had just eaten a "dodgy taco", reminiscent of Murray's critique of the Lecoq student's ability to construct a piece of theatre about making a cup of tea (see Introduction, p. 11). This created an improvisation that the participants found comical; however, asking them to devise scenes based on something personal proved a massive challenge. In many ways, the pre-made masks seemed to become a hindrance to the work we had hoped to be doing. This was in sharp contrast to the masks built by the participants themselves, which challenged them with something entirely personal.

Day 4 (final session) - amplification

While we waited for the plaster to dry, and between our weekly sessions, I explored a process of symbolic amplification for each mask. As we saw in Chapter 2, amplification is a Jungian method of interpreting unconscious symbolic material. By associating personal unconscious images with pre-existing social references, usually derived from myth, Jung attempted 'to clarify and make ample the metaphorical content of dream symbolism' (Samuels 1986:16). Andrew Samuels argues that the Jungian method of amplification allows the client to derive meaning from symbolic material through a process of distancing:

> Just as the analyst waits for associations to the dream imagery to reach its personal meanings, so, by amplification, the analyst enables the patient to reach beyond the personal content to the wider implications of her or his material. Thereby, the patient feels less alone and can locate their personal neurosis within humanity's general suffering and generativity. (Samuels 2005)

In this attempt at applying Jung's interpretative method, my aim was to link each mask with pre-existing social, historical or mythological references. Wherever possible I would try to give the participant two options: first, to associate the mask with a figure within contemporary culture, and second, to associate it with pre-existing masks within the anthropological record. We had already asked the participants to name the figures they saw in the masks, and to situate them in a fictional environment. The intention of the amplification was to elaborate and deepen their original stories, and to provoke them with personalized mythological themes. We encouraged the students to focus their attention on the figure that inspired them most, in an attempt to allow images and themes into the narratives around the stories they were creating. These can be seen in the supporting documentation (See DVD PowerPoint, slides 93-101).

Amplifications – ACT NOW

Having previously argued that the associations to these masks represent elements of my own thinking, and therefore speak to my own unconscious (see Chapter 3, p. 99). I would like to repeat: given the workshop setting there was limited time to discuss each individual's personal associations to their own masks, therefore the interpretation I offer here is my own view and doesn't reflect the maker. I would also like to point out that, as I was working with vulnerable people, I did my best to keep these amplifications as objective and impersonal as possible. At no point did we attempt to offer therapeutic assistance to the participants, or to challenge them on their personal complexes. In this way, the Témoin team offered potential themes to enliven and enrich their exploration of the masks. Those themes have been included at the end of each amplification and are presented in italics.

Amplification: Rangda (Bali) (Figure 22 - Slide 95)



I was drawn to the long tongue, the pointed teeth, and the addition of hair on the mask that the practitioner created. These elements suggested the Rangda mask from Bali, noted as being the "witch" or the "widow". In his essay, "Rangda: archetype in action in Balinese dance-drama", Stephen Snow (1983) describes the legend of the fearsome creature.

> Rangda, in the story, is first known as Mahendradatta, a Javanese princess who married the Balinese raja, Dharmodayana. Ereangga is their son. In the legend, Dharmodayana banishes Mahendradatta to the forest because he suspects her of practicing witchcraft. Dharmodyana then dies and Mahendradatta becomes a widow (a rangda). She gathers a band of pupils about her and trains them in the arts of Black Magic. She seeks revenge on her son's kingdom because none of the noblemen will marry her daughter as they fear she too may be a witch. Rangda… sends a plague to kill the people. She goes into cemeteries and digs up the corpses, drinking their blood and bedecking herself with their entrails. (Snow 1983: 273)

Judy Slattum (2011), in *Balinese Masks: Spirits of an Ancient Drama* argues that mask achieved its dark connotations because of its associations with the Hindu practice of '*suttee'*:

> The name Rangda comes from the Javanese word rondo, meaning "widow." The stigma that was traditionally attached to the word originated with the Hindu practice of *suttee*, which required that a wife immolate herself on the burning funeral pyre of her husband. Wives of the Balinese raja sometimes sacrificed themselves at cremation ceremonies from at least the 1400s until 1895, when the practice was outlawed by the Dutch colonialists… Any widow who ignored this practice was despised and feared by society, which believed she has absorbed the strength and power of her dead husband, and according to an important performer of Rangda in Bali today, any woman who has been widowed three times is believed to have accumulated enough power to perform black magic. (Slattum 2011: 84-85)

Building on the association with *suttee*, Snow notes the danger associated with a widow: 'Thus, a widow has no right to exist, as she should have been burned with her husband's corpse; she is the wife of a spirit and therefore dangerous. Danger, darkness, and death all go hand-in-hand with Rangda' (Snow 1983: 274). Snow notes the similarities between the image of Randa and that of the Hundi Goddess Kali, highlighting the long tongue and sharp fangs, the negative aspects of the Cosmic Mother archetype, sometimes referred to as the "Devouring Mother". Slattum shares Snow's view of the Rangda:

> This mask represents the archetypal angry widow, a fierce, blood thirsty cannibal who delights in causing terror and strife. An expert in black magic and a symbol of fear, she is the Queen of Leyak who rules over the practitioners. Her movements encompass all of the mannerisms that are considered rough and crude in Balinese culture: the loud, rasping voice, wild, erratic gestures, and leaping gait. The characteristic posture of the Rangda includes stiff, extended arms with outstretched, vibrating fingers displaying six-inch-long fingernails and hairy knuckles. (Slattum 2011: 88)

I found the association of the mask with Rangda, and therefore with the Hindu practice of *suttee*, notable. The participant had suggested that the mask looked like a vampire. In the image of the "widow" we can see someone who is living but within the tradition should be dead and is, therefore, excluded from society. It should also be noted that the Rangda is never destroyed; throughout her many encounters with the Barrong she is never defeated – instead, a new balance is discovered.

We gave the participant the provocation to explore the theme of isolation, and the anger that comes from being excluded. How does it feel to be denied your own existence? How does that happen, and what is the result?

Amplification: Quetzalcoatl Mask, "Mosaic Serpent Mask of Quetzalcoatl/Tlaloc" (Mexico) (Figure 23 - Slide 96)



I have linked this mask with one held in the British Museum, "Mosaic Serpent Mask of Quetzalcoatl/Tlaloc", linking the two Aztec gods: Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc. I drew the connection because of the overall shape of the mask, its distinctive lower jaw and hollow eye.

> This mask is believed to represent Quetzalcoatl or the Rain God Tlaloc; both are associated with serpents. The mask is formed of two intertwined and looped serpents worked in contrasting colors of turquoise mosaic; one in green and one in blue that twist across the face and around the eyes, blending over the nose. Turquoise mosaic feathers hang on both sides of the eye sockets. (British Museum 2017)

The museum citation goes on to suggest that the intertwining of snakes portrayed in the masks may suggest copulation and procreation, and, therefore, that this mask can be seen as a fertility symbol. The linking of blue and green may also suggest an agricultural rebirth: 'On the mask's forehead an engraved mosaic tile in the shape of a bivalve shell may symbolize water, while the large green mosaic tile on the opposite snake perhaps represents vegetation, both aspects associated with Tlaloc' (British Museum, 2017).

In their book, *Masks of the Spirit: Image and Metaphor in Mesoamerica*, Peter T. Markman and Roberta H. Markman account for the symbolism of the snake image within Aztec culture:

> It is important to remember that all of these symbolic uses of the serpent to suggest renewal through a series of metaphors related to the emergence of life from within the womb, the seed, or the dead skin exist within a mythological tradition that uses the mask as a metaphorical means of emphasizing inner/outer, spirit/matter oppositions at every turn. Within

> such a tradition, it is no surprise to find the snake playing a vital symbolic role. (Markman and Markman 1989: 31)

It should be noted that the participant originally gave the mask the title: "Horsemen of the Apocalypse". While I temporarily discounted this information while drawing associations with other masks, these resonances might suggest broader apocalyptic links. William Stewart's *Dictionary of Images and Symbols in Counselling* suggests that 'the snake was once thought to be immortal because it sheds its skin, and as such it is symbolic of death and resurrection' (Stewart 1998: 348). Markman and Markman reaffirm this view by highlighting the use of snakes along the pyramids at Teotihuacan Ciudadela and Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor: 'Just as the pyramid stairway joins earth to heaven and the temple doorway links the surface of the heart of the earth, so the serpent symbolizes man's ability, through mythic art and ritual, to move from the surface of the earth to these spiritual realms, the ultimate source of his life on earth' (Markman and Markman 1989: 31).

Markman and Markman suggest that this type of mosaic mask would have been adopted for funerary rites for leaders or kings. 'The mask was clearly a means of preserving the transcendental affinity of the deceased with the cosmic forces he expressed as the living ruler. Quoting a Nahuatl poem, they suggest that the mask marks the symbolic release of the god within the ruler:

> For this reason the ancient one said,
> he who has died, he becomes a god.
> They said: "He became a god there,"
> which means that he died.
> (Markman and Markman 1989: 95)

We gave the participant the provocation to explore the theme of resurrection and re-birth. What does it take to 'shed your skin', or to be released or reborn?

Amplification: Transformation Mask (American/Canadian, Pacific Northwest) (Figure 24 - Slide 97)



I associated this mask with the transformation masks of the Canadian Pacific Northwest, because of the downward shape of the lower jaw in opposition to the elongated vertical thrust of the mask, and the particular formation of the eyes. The mask the practitioner created seemed similar to that of the spirit (human) face hidden within the larger animal mask.

The citation given by the Canadian Museum of History notes the importance of the transformation masks, and their effect in performance. Observing a similar image to the one presented above, they note the importance of the eagle and 'supernatural being in human form':

> One of Canada's great national treasures, this North-west Coast mask can be transformed from the outer image of an eagle to the inner image of a supernatural being in human form. This is accomplished by pulling an elaborate set of cords attached to hinged panels that extend to form a corona. At the moment of transformation, the performer turned his back to the audience to conceal the action and heighten the mystery. The flickering light of the fire around which he danced further enhanced the dramatic effect. The ghostlike faces painted on the corona probably represent the souls of the owner's family in the underworld awaiting rebirth. Their incarnation was controlled by the supernatural being, whose face was revealed only during these secret winter ceremonies. (Canadian Museum of History 2017)

Within the first nation tribes of the Pacific Northwest, we can see the use of mask as a means of revealing the spirit within the animal. As noted by Robert Bruce Inverarity (1950), in *Art of the Northwest Coast Indians*:

> The Aida, Tilingit, Kwakiutl, and other tribes had one conception in common: men, animals, trees, plants, and every growing thing were habitations for spirits. The belief that animals had immortal spirits was particularly important, for animals were thought to have supernatural powers which might be used to harm or to benefit man. (Inverarity 1950: 29)

We gave the participant the provocation to explore the theme of transformation, and asked her if this could involve an animal. What does one have to undergo in order to become something entirely new?

Amplification: Greek Tragic Mask (Greece) (Figure 25 - Slide 98)



Within the mask constructed by the participant, I was drawn to the expression of a scream. The large mouth and large eyes reminded me of Greek tragic masks. Rush Rehm (2016), in *Understanding Greek Tragic Theatre*, argues that the tragic masks create a dynamic paradox by forcing both the audience and the characters to 'face what they would rather not':

> In Greek tragedy, both characters and spectators must face what they would rather not, a paradox epitomized by the unflinching stare of the actor's mask. It is hard to imagine a character looking into the terror and instability of tragedy *without* the shield of a mask, for in real life we instinctively would close our eyes. The mask confronts the audience as well, far more powerfully than the naked eye in that large outdoor theatre. The wide-eyed gaze of the tragic mask does not scatter or divide, but focuses and encompasses, compelling the attention of the entire theatre. Paradoxically, by forcing its gaze out, the tragic mask draws the audience in, for each spectator projects his or her reactions onto its face." (Rehm 2016: 45)

Notably, as Claude Calame (1995) contends in *The Craft of Poetic Speech in Ancient Greece*, the Greek tragic masks were generally not used to identify or delineate particular characters, but to point towards larger groups:

> The Greek tragic mask was not used in any way to identify someone with a name. With rare exceptions, it does not signify individuals or stage personae but corresponds only to formal classes limited to indicating sex and age. The few pictures representing masks that have come down to us from the fifth century B.C. confirm this observation. (Calame 1995: 102)

Colleen Chaston (2010) echoes this view in her book, *Tragic Props and Cognitive Function: Aspects of the Function of Images in Thinking*: 'The tragic mask is a prime example of visual metaphor in its representation of both a particular character and, more generally, suffering humanity' (Chaston 2010: 11).

In this way, the mask can be seen as forcing the performer and the audience to face a 'non-personal' type of tragedy, or a tragedy which transcends the struggles of the individual.

We gave the participant the provocation to explore the theme of tragedy. We asked him to tell us the story of the tragedy which this mask has witnessed, and to see if that tragedy could tell the story of a larger group.

Amplification: Tsurimanako, Noh Mask (Japan) (Figure 26 - Slide 99)



The Tsurimanako mask comes from the Japanese tradition of Noh Theatre, and is categorized as a "fierce god". The mask is often adopted as a means of representing the "God of Thunder". The mask is often compared to its more famous counterpart: Otobide.

> The tobide is an imposing deity mask with bulging eyes and wide, open 'ah-shaped' mouth. The entire surface of this broad featured Otobide ('large tobide') is painted gold; the expression of the open mouth is probably modelled after the face type described as having 'the appearance of Kan no Shojo spitting out a pomegranate seed'. This mask is suitable for such deities such as Zao Gongen visiting Mount Arashi, or the deity Wake-Ikazuchi of the Kamo shrine, who was believed to cause the thunder that signaled the arrival of a prosperous year. (Udaka 2010: 201)

Stephen E. Marvin (2010) argues that the Tsurimanako 'is especially suited to the role of the thunder god. As noted in Menton-ki primarily actors of the Konparu and other simo-gakari troupes wore Tsurimanako. It has not appeared frequently on the stage in modern times, probably because of its unusual visage' (Marvin 2010: 113).

Stewart articulates the importance of thunder, saying that the thunderbolt

> is heavenly fire, an active force, terrible and dynamic. The flash of lightning is symbolic of spiritual illumination, and as such is linked with Aries, the first sign of the Zodiac, and spring, the creative energy bringing heavy rains that

> fertilize the earth and germinate the seed. Lightning is like the sudden flashes of intuition and deep insight that illuminate the night world of the unconscious for a brief moment, when everything seems clear as day. The thunderbolt is an emblem of sovereignty, and expresses the ideas of power and speed. (Stewart 1989: 367)

Cirlot (1971) highlights Jung's interest in the symbolic importance of gold, an element that defines the Tsurimanako mask:

> Jung quotes the delightful explanation offered by the alchemist Michael Maier in *De Circulo Physico Quadrato* to the effect that the sun, by virtue of millions of journeys round the earth (or conversely) has spun threads of gold all round it. Gold is the image of solar light and hence of the divine intelligence. If the heart is the image of the sun in man, in the earth it is gold. Consequently, gold is symbolic of all that is superior, the glorified or 'fourth state' after the first three stages of black (standing for sin and penitence), white (remission and innocence) and red (sublimation and passion). Everything golden or made of gold tends to pass on this quality of superiority to its utilitarian function. … Gold is also the essential element in the symbolism of the hidden or elusive treasure which is an illustration of the fruits of the spirit and of supreme illumination. (Cirlot 1971: 120)

Building on the alchemical understanding of gold, and the image of the Tsurimanako mask, I asked the participant to explore how an individual becomes gold.

Amplification: Deer/Stag mask (Figure 27 - Slide 100)



For this one mask, I did not start by choosing to associate the sculpture with a pre-existing mask, but I found images of deer.

William Stewart argues that the stag is 'linked with the Tree of Life, as its antlers resemble branches. It also symbolizes regeneration, because it sheds its antlers every year and grows new ones' (Stewart 1989: 357). Stewart's understanding may be derived in part from Cirlot, who holds a similar understanding of the Stag as connecting to the Tree of Life and of regeneration. Yet Cirlot adds:

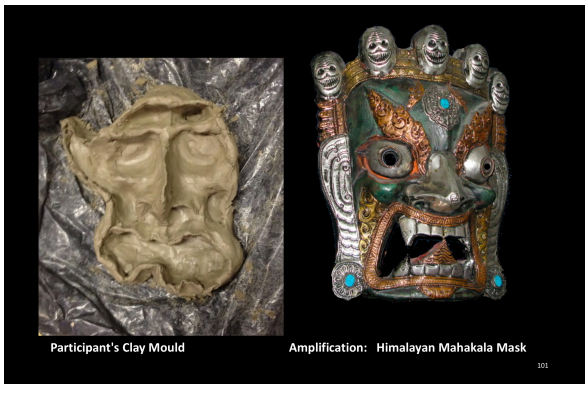
> In the West, during the Middle Ages, the way of solitude and purity was often symbolized by the stag, which actually appears in some emblems with a crucifix between its horns (thus providing the last link in the chain of relationships: tree/cross/ horns) (4). It has also been considered as a symbol of elevation (20). The Greeks and Romans perceived certain 'mystical' gifts in the stag, which they exaggerated through psychic projection. (Cirlot 1971: 309)

Hope B. Werness's (2006) *Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in World Art*, examines the diverse meanings of the deer and the stag. She points to the importance of the deer in the hunt across a number of cultures. She cites the Greek Goddess, Artemis, who not only hunts deer but also protects them. She recounts the story of young prince Acteon who is said to have seen the goddess bathing, after which Artemis turns the prince into a stag and then sets her dogs to kill him. Werness notes that the deer, in Celtic mythology, were believed to be fairies or ancient divinities. The Maya 'connected deer with the young moon goddess, who fled her attackers on the back of a deer… it is likely that the Maya identified both goddess and deer with the cyclical changes of nature and with fertility and rebirth' (Werness 2006: 129).

Having moved from the animal, I have also added the drawing "The Sorcerer" by Henri Breuil, which pictures a cave painting found in France, dated approximately 12,000 BCE. The figure, depicting a shaman wearing the head of a stag, is said to be one of the first examples we have of the wearing of masks (Eldredge 1996: 4).

Building on the theme of the deer, and its symbolic importance in the hunt, I asked the participant to explore in her story what it felt like to be the hunted.

Amplification: Himalayan Mahakala Mask (Tibet) (Figure 28 - Slide 101)



My association with this mask came mostly from the open jaw, the angle of the nose, and of the intense expression of the eyes. The participants mask seems to present the image of a monster (or monster-like creature) who either roars to

frighten others or roars because he is frightened himself. The structure of the mask suggested a possible association with a Himalayan Mahakala mask.

The Mahakala mask is usually made from wood, and adorned with a crown of five skulls that signify victory over the "'five emotional illusions', and the third eye is believed to signify wisdom and omniscience. Although a wrathful God, Mahakala is considered to be a "protector deity" or "guardian"'. This idea is explored in Rob Linrothe's essay "Protection, Benefaction, and Transformation", in *Demonic Divine: Himalayan Art and Beyond*, where Linrothe highlights a paradox between wrath and compassion:

> One of the most conceptually sophisticated, visually dynamic, and varied aspects of Himalayan art is its treatment of wrathful deities… At the heart of the concept of the "demonic divine" is an intriguing paradox… This paradox is that compassion can take a terrifying form. As one Tibetan explained it, "Although certain meditational deities are wrathful, their wrath is but a manifestation of compassion." Put differently, what appears as our worst nightmare actually embodies our deepest potential. (Linrothe 2004: 4).

In *Warriors of the Himalayas: Rediscovering the Arms and Armor of Tibet*, Donald J. LaRocca testifies to the deity's central importance within Tibetan culture and history:

> From the earliest period when protector deities were worshipped in monasteries of Tibet, the deity Mahakala… was the principal protector deity. From his Tibetan name *mgon po* (literally, guardian), the term gonkhang (*mgon Khang*) was derived, literally meaning "house of Mahakala" or "house of the guardian". This became the term for all temples of protector deities. Mahakala is still respected as the oldest deity in Tibet and is considered an emanation of Avalokiteshara, the deity of compassion." (LaRocca 2006: 47)

LaRocca goes on to cite a prayer to Mahakala:

> Please get up, please get up from the sphere of reality. Although you [Mahakala] do not move from the state of the pure sphere of reality, you have shown your wrathful body in order to subdue the wicked ones. I [the practitioner] invite the great deity Mahakala. To the blessed Black One, please come, the god who conquers the enemies of yogis, please come, to the Vidyadhara guardians, please come, to the Black Field Protector, please come. (LaRocca 2006: 47-48)

Keeping Linrothe's paradox in mind, we focused on the dynamic forces that appear to be in opposition – wrath and compassion – and I asked the participant to explore that opposition in her story.

A Critical Reflection – Cardboard Citizens

The amplifications I offer must be viewed as partially my own subjective interpretation of the participants' creations. Andrew Samuels has argued that

> Amplification needs to be discussed in the context of current debates about interpretation: it is best located as part of a hermeneutical approach rather than a causal - positivist one. Recently, the concept has been extended so as to cover much more of the field of interpretation than Jung intended. (Samuels 2005)

Unlike Lecoq, I do not argue that I am a "neutral point"; it is quite apparent that I was projecting my own symbolism onto the masks. I do not doubt that my connection with mythological material was coloured by my own experience, expertise, time, and upbringing. This potential bias was relayed to the participants throughout the sessions. It is my hope that the amplifications offered a wide enough breadth of possibilities to enable them to connect with aspects of the material provided, without forcing them to accept my interpretation of their masks.

Although we were able to discover a great deal about the masks themselves, and the students seemed to be quite interested in the amplifications provided, the use of myth in this context did not have its desired effect. The amplifications were much more of an academic endeavour than a collaborative exploration. In my view, the proposed associations were more of an attempt to shock the participants, and there was a degree of personal ego associated with the task. The connection between the participants and the mythological material I offered was not clear, and the relationship between the individual and the mask itself was not explored in depth.

One possible reason for this sense of frustration was that everything happened very quickly. The four sessions ended just as the research was getting interesting, and in our haste to get some tangible "knowledge" we attempted to do too much. The fictional narratives we had been working on did not have time to develop before we started asking them about how the masks reflected elements of their experiences. The participant's responses were a little confused and, while some told us a great deal about their own personal narrative (usually during construction time, or over breaks), often these narratives were not connected with the mask. My assumption was that their previous experiences with Forum Theatre, a group that had done extensive worked with Cardboard Citizens, had affected their responses: they were good at telling their stories. Some participants closed down as soon as it became about a personal reflection. It was obvious that although we had done a lot of preparation, we hadn't set the tempo correctly, nor had we developed a sense of trust.

A number of large questions arose concerning what to do with the information provided from the amplification process: how do the archetypal images I gathered relate to each individual? How do I fold that knowledge back into our mask practice? How does knowledge of the symbolic elements within a mask alter an

approach to the performance of that mask? It seemed unsatisfactory to simply propose connections and yet not have a means of pulling those connections together. The amplifications remained simply an intellectual idea, not an effective means of engagement between the participant and facilitators.

Another important criticism that emerged was that the balance of power was lopsided throughout this workshop series. Reflecting back on the process, I realized that I had come into the room in the position of "expert" trying to offer knowledge (even regarding their own personal masks), when I had hoped to come in as the researcher looking for information. My frustration with the amplification process reflects this dynamic. The ideal I sought was not to tell them what their mask might mean, but to ask them what their masks meant to them, and then use the archetypal images to enrich their stories. Future workshops, I decided, must address this power imbalance.

There also seemed to be a great deal of confusion within the team of facilitators about exactly what kind of information we were looking for. Were we trying to get at biographical details, or something more abstract or metaphorical? Success seemed unattainable if we were looking at gathering hard autobiographical data about specific events in the participants' lives. We might have greater success if we simply sat them down and asked a few questions; there did, however, seem to be a great deal of possibility for looking at something more symbolic. Fortunately, because of the positive feedback received from Cardboard Citizens, St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College offered us an opportunity to improve our approach.

Case Study #2: St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College

The Recovery College offered me seven sessions, almost twice the construction time as we had had with Cardboard Citizens. Matthew Burstein, Recovery College Administrator and our contact point within the College, warned that attendance was highly variable within the institution, and although there was a strong response to the course from the prospectus, we should expect large swings in numbers. He suggested that repeated attendance throughout the course was rare.

In order to avoid slipping into amplification too quickly and thereby repeating the problems encountered in the Cardboard Citizens workshops, I decided to heed the words of James Hillman, and "stick with the image" (Hillman 1997: 21).

> For instance, a black snake comes in a dream, a great big black snake, and you can spend a whole hour with this black snake talking about the devouring mother, talking about anxiety, talking about the repressed sexuality, talking about the natural mind, all those interpretive moves that people make, and what is left, what is vitally important, is what this snake is doing, this crawling huge black snake that's walking into your life… and the moment you've defined the snake, you've interpreted it, you've lost the snake, you've

> stopped it… The task of analysis is to keep the snake there… (Hillman 1990: 74)

The aim of our second venture into mask construction was to keep the snake there. We consciously decided to spend more time with our initial images: character, location, and action. With the luxury of a seven-week process, we were able to develop stronger relationships with participants, and they were able to form a relationship with their own masks. On the first day, after we constructed the clay moulds using a similar procedure, I peppered them with small questions about their mask: Who is this figure? What is it doing? What is its name? Where does it live? What does it do with its time? Each session, as we spent time adding layers of *papier mâché* or painting, the stories got more complex and richer (see DVD PowerPoint, slides 102 - 110).

Each week, once every mask had received a fresh coat of paper or paint and the stories had been told, I would introduce a new mask from the Lecoq tradition. Beginning with the neutral mask, we explored four of the five major pedagogical masks; however, my aim in this workshop was by no means to teach the Lecoq technique. I decided to present the masks as a progression of development: the neutral mask took form and became the larval mask, while the expressive masks had solidified into something concrete and the clown nose was still further defined, requiring self-knowledge of the wearer. As articulated in Chapter 2, the masks of Lecoq can be viewed as a symbolic progression towards solidification, and, thereby, a process of self-discovery. It was that journey I pushed, more than any specific performance skill or technique. Interpreted in this way, the progression of the masks of Lecoq echoed the development of the participant's personal mask, highlighting a formation process and reflecting a journey of development[19].

On our final day, participants reflected on their experiences of mask construction. An overwhelming response was that the course had offered a moment of relaxed reflection. The staff at the College suggested that our enrolment numbers had been significantly higher than the average, and that it was relatively rare to see students participate in all or even most of the sessions.

St Mungo's Broadway: a critical reflection

Drawing on Robert Landy's distinction between therapy and the therapeutic, problematic though it might be, makes clear that nothing in our mask construction workshops could be called "therapy". Our training was as theatre-makers; the participants' expectations were to learn about masks and mask construction, and our intention was in no way focused on 'moving towards healthy functioning' (Landy 1986: 40). We were simply using mask construction as a means of trying to understand the struggles that these participants face in their lives.

[19] More information regarding Lecoq's extended mask sequence viewed as a process of development will be focused upon in the final chapter (see Chapter 5, p. 166-177).

Within this set of workshops, my frustrations with the amplification process led to some interesting discoveries. Working with images that come from the developing story and not only the mask itself has represented a major developmental step. This new freedom has allowed for a more dynamic relationship between the practitioners and myself. Following Hillman's mantra to 'stick with the image' has drastically increased the effectiveness of the amplification process, and led to a wealth of fascinating stories.

I am not suggesting that we were totally successful in our endeavour to learn about issues of homelessness; the stories the participants created were more fairy-tale than biography. We certainly did not get the information we expected: at no time did anyone mention rough sleeping, begging, or any of the images commonly associated with homelessness. Even those that came closest to our associations failed to address the day to day struggles of life within that environment. Indeed, in feedback forms, participants suggested that the major strength of the workshop was that it allowed them respite from major issues in their lives. Had we inadvertently fostered a dis-engagement with the very themes that we sought to better understand?

I would argue to the contrary: the stories that we developed within these workshops offer insight into some of the central conflicts within these individuals' lives. These short stories, the "personal myths" the participants constructed around their masks, allowed them the distance to play, while at the same time touching themes that were clearly personal. It is my view that the mask created a sense of safety for everyone involved to share elements of their own story. The stories that they created, and the amplifications we proposed, led Effie Makepeace, the Program Delivery Manager at Cardboard Citizens and a constant presence within our workshops, to describe the process as 'building a fairy tale of their lives[20] (Personal communication).

Further Analysis of the Workshop Series

The non-actors who took part in the workshop series offer a potential sensitivity to the psychological effect of wearing a mask that the performers – perhaps because of their training – had lost. I noted that the masks built by non-actors were more abstract than those built by actors, which were uniformly human. This may derive from the fact that training has established norms regarding how one 'enters into' a mask and understands its meaning and function. Working with non-actors offered a very interesting vantage point from which to examine the unique challenge of performing in a "personal mask" (a challenge that I previously observed in Chapter

[20] Here it is interesting to note Makepeace's use of the term "fairy tale". Fairy tales are seen as being distinct from myth within a Jungian framework because they address the personal complex, whereas myth, a story of archetypal encounter, focuses on the archetypal image.

3). In a recent interview, one participant from St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College noted the dilemma of embodying the "other within" found in her mask:

> I remember being really disturbed by one of the questions that you asked me in that final part… You said, and I hadn't really considered it – yes, it's a mask so I'm going to become that person. Whereas I'd kinda thought of him as "over there". And that really disturbed me, having to become that person… It is interesting with the "other" thing. Because, you're a demon, you're "other". I think that that is a really interesting exercise in terms of the nature of humanity and how we relate to one another. That demonizing somebody, or a group, or identifying someone as evil, for whatever reasons, even if there are good reasons. Saying I'm here and you're there. It makes it really hard… how do you ever make the whole whole if you are always at odds with something? And if you never identify that part of yourself… By doing that kind of work, by making that mask of this person I had like no respect for, really demonized, really thought like "you're a bastard". Now it is like, you've got to put that mask on, and I'm like "WHAT?!" That was a challenge. (Personal communication)

This participant's statement demonstrates the potential articulation of a shadow projection within her character: 'the thing a person has no wish to be' (Jung 1966: 262). The challenge of embodying the character she has created for her mask points towards an element that is central to this research: the potential psychological value through the confrontation with the "other within". The participant's additional association between her act of projection and the larger nature of humanity, her examination of how to classify the "other", is reminiscent of Jung's view of the larger collective shadow and could have been cut from pages of his *Undiscovered Self* (2002).

I found it interesting to hear that the participant had such a strong emotional response to the character she had created, a character that I had viewed as quite comedic, overtly normative, and highly repressed. The storyline followed an individual who lived in the suburbs, worked in an office cubicle, and secretly collected butterflies as a hobby (pinning each one down in large binders). The climax of the story involved a swarm of butterflies lifting the man away. The butterfly is a highly symbolic image of transformation, noted by William Stewart as 'an emblem of the soul and of the unconscious attraction towards the light. It is a symbol of life: in ancient art, the Angel of Death was depicted as a winged foot crushing a butterfly… In Greek *psyche* means both "soul" and "butterfly"' (Stewart 1998: 80). In my judgment, the participant's story speaks to an individual pinning down her own soul, slowly and painfully undergoing a metamorphosis within the confines of her work, until that soul erupts and pulls her away.

The challenge for the participant to embody her mask stands in clear contrast with the apparent freedom she found to explore through the construction of a narrative. The same individual suggested that the construction of the story offered her 'freedom' within other aspects of her life:

> Exploring a story that is not bounded by what is possible or not possible, by what has happened or not happened, by who you know or don't know, when none of those boundaries exist you can kind of explore. By being able to allow yourself your character to fly, or do whatever you want it to do. It can give freedom to some other part of your life. (Personal communication)

Some other participants found the construction of a narrative challenging. For this participant, the construction was of a being that could 'do whatever you want it to do', while for others the characters within their stories presented more difficulties. In a later workshop series, delivered in a hostel (a task that presented a number of challenges, as it meant that participants were often considerably less far along in their journey of recovery) I had an experience which highlighted the potential difficulties and danger:

> Personal anecdote:
>
> *As I was delivering a construction workshop in a hostel, a young woman entered and asked if she could participate. As it was well into the workshop series, and there was no clay to start a new mask, I offered her a choice of the masks that were not being worked on, this was the typical procedure when individuals entered late in the series. She chose to work on the mask that I had made, one of my usual "senex" men. This young woman then looked at the face for a quite a while without touching the mask. After noticing that she wasn't starting, I casually asked her the standard question: "Who is this person?" What I received was anything but typical for me – "He is a sexual predator; I don't like him." "He used to be strong and terrifying, but now he's old and sick and worthless". She asked if I could take the mask away, which I did, placing the object on the floor outside of the room. The participant stayed with us, talking socially with the other participants, and yet she seemed very agitated by the experience. As the session went on I became increasingly concerned about her wellbeing. So, I asked the woman if she would like to destroy the mask. I told her that some of the literature on masks talks about the object becoming a personified vessel for evil spirits, which, if destroyed, removes or releases that energy. She seemed quite excited by the proposition, and the group gathered on the sidewalk outside the hostel and cheered as she stomped on the mask. We made a little ritual of the act. I am not sure if destroying the mask helped her*[21]*, and yet the participant came to the other three weeks of workshops; she asked to try and build another mask and she took that one to completion (a beautiful young woman with long black and white hair, and rich blue skin). After the last session, she came to see* The Marked *and spoke to the cast about her own experiences as well as her views on the production. While on the first day her movements were erratic and her responses seemed emotional, by the end of*

[21] The event described was immediately reported to the staff of the hostel, who agreed to monitor the individual. They assured me that her support officer and therapist would be made aware of the event. They also informed me that she was currently working with arts therapists.

> *the sessions, she seemed much more grounded and calm. This is not to say that the destruction of the mask caused that change, only to note that the change occurred.*

From my perspective, this event spoke to the potential danger contained within these masks, and the heightened stakes within each moment of work with a vulnerable population. The relative safety of St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College and Cardboard Citizens, where participants travelled to an organization with very definite structures, was not present when working in hostels.

Yet as an object it exists outside of the individual, the mask offers some safety: it can be held in the hand or dropped on the floor, revered or smashed. The event described above is distinct and has only happened once to my knowledge. The more typical responses articulated in the feedback forms included: 'Found a release in me. To become the mask character without being judged or laughed at, while enjoying a really good laugh together about the whole experience' (St Mungo's feedback). Others have gone as far as to say that the workshops were a means of avoiding real life: 'It helped me to relax and not deal with real life for a bit and forget things – enjoyable' (St Mungo's feedback). One of the staff at St Mungo's who participated in the workshops reflected later in a recorded interview:

> It was interesting in relation to general mental health as well. And the kind of, the wildness of some of the stories (laugh). Because it allowed something to be present in the room that otherwise wouldn't have a comfortable presence, without it being something that would become something that would have to do with some medical definition or some label, or something that would be too, you know, the expectation of giving up too much of yourself. So, it didn't have any of that. It allowed playfulness to enter into realms of the discussion around mental health without having to say this is my individual story. I liked that. There were some really wild characters in there. (Personal communication)

One year later… *The Marked*
(see DVD PowerPoint, slides 111 - 117).

Personal reflection:

> *Theatre Témoin and I return to Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College with the first draft of our new piece:* The Marked*, significantly informed by the workshop series. Two of the workshop participants joined the team as paid Creative Consultants. They spent time with the company developing the central themes of the show, outlining the journey of the protagonist, and refining the dialogue. The help that they have offered has been of great importance to the piece, and they have agreed to be involved until its completion. In addition, three other workshop*

> *participants offered their assistance by coming to an earlier scratch showing and giving significant feedback on the developing piece.*

Our relationship with both Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College has become more developed over the past four years. I have run two additional workshops, one with each company, and the methodology has advanced significantly. In the two most recent series, the participants developed their own stories into tableau images, then, using those images and some storytelling, began to place their masks into a theatrical context.

In the time since our first workshop series at Cardboard Citizens, *The Marked* has now grown into a full-scale production. The title of the piece came directly from a participant during the Act Now program, who saw the work as pertaining to both the social stigma associated with homelessness, as well as to the lingering effects of trauma (something she saw as an element of her experience). The piece is performed in full-faced expressive masks that I have constructed using elements of participants' masks as inspiration. The production toured shelters and hostels in the summer before going to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2016 (see Chapter 5). Having received a Wellcome Trust "People Award", the production has worked to develop greater engagement with the homeless community, exploring myth in relation to personal narrative and trauma (see DVD PowerPoint, slides 111 - 117).

Summary

In this chapter I have critically examined two workshop series, undertaken with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway that used mask construction as a means of addressing personal conflicts and themes of homelessness. I have also briefly outlined the history of mask within therapeutic practices since 1954. I have argued that the binary distinction between the "therapeutic" and "therapy", defined by Robert Landy, is perhaps too narrow to account for the diversity of practices within this varied field. To evidence this, I have highlighted a number of practitioners whose work sits within that binary distinction, whose praxis, through mask construction, examines the points of contact between creative acts and the acts of therapy.

These workshops have presented a number of significant contributions to my developing mask praxis. By offering me the critical distance to reflect on my methodological approach to both construction and the amplification process; by examining the boundaries between "therapy" and the "therapeutic" (both on a theoretical level and within the workshops themselves); and by making explicit the scale to which Lecoq's masks have influenced my constructions, these case studies have allowed me to challenge my own mask praxis. These case studies have also challenged my preconceptions regarding those individuals who participated in the construction process, forcing me to confront the projections I place on those who have had experiences of homelessness. In this way, the workshops have offered an ideal means to test my developing praxis, to challenge my theoretical framework, my

methods and evolving practice. By working closely with others, I have learned a great deal about how much I project onto my own masks.

The ensuing production, *The Marked*, is the direct result of these workshop series. The production has toured homeless shelters and hostels, before participating in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2016. Together with a substantial grant from the Wellcome Trust, this production has not only achieved many of the classical markers of theatrical success, but also demonstrated a new process of theatre making. It represents an actor created theatre that has adopted the use of mask construction as a method of developing a professional production and speaks to the personal complexes we encountered during a collaboration with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College.

Chapter 5:

Dreaming the Myth Onwards

Mask in performance

Chapter Overview

In this chapter I examine the use of mask in performance, in terms of its application within Lecoq-based neutral mask practic and the extended series of pedagogical masks that follow within the tradition, as well as with those "Personal Masks" constructed throughout this thesis. In doing so, I endeavour to better understand the process of embodiment required for mask performance: the complex dynamics involved in the student/teacher relationship, the activation of those archetypal elements amplified within each mask, and, finally, the theatrical application of these mythological tools.

This chapter begins with a brief examination of the initial pedagogical encounter with the neutral mask. I explore the experience of wearing a mask, and the psychological effect of masking (Cooper 1999), by highlighting conflicting interpretations of that initial moment within the existing literature (Cawson 2012, Turner 1981). In so doing, I offer a theoretical examination of the use of mask by drawing on the writing of John Emigh (1996), who uses the theories of D.W. Winnicott to argue that masks create a space to explore internal and external realities. Applying two theoretical models from anthropologists Charles Laughlin and Jodi Young-Laughlin (1988), who have explored the mask's function within the context of alternative cosmological "nests", I highlight the mask's ability to 'verify and vivify' the cultural "mythopoeia" within the Lecoq pedagogy. Having formed a mythological basis, I re-examine Lecoq's understanding of neutrality as experienced through the neutral mask, and relate it to the larger two-year journey through Lecoq's extended mask sequence, exploring the importance of each pedagogical mask (larval, expressive, commedia, and clown) within a larger process of individuation, while highlighting the work of practitioners who have adopted these masks within performance. The chapter closes with an analysis of the performance of a "personal myth", exploring Theatre Témoin's production The Marked*, and critically engaging with the problems I have faced when isolating the "personal" within my own mask praxis.*

Having thus far focused my praxis exclusively on mask construction, followed by the amplification of symbolic material through mythological association, I will now explore how masks become embodied within the context of a performance. In so doing, I hope to better understand how the actor creator can experience a mask's mythological function. This chapter explores the question: how might one step into these masks, experience these myths, and wear them as agents of personal and/or collective realities? In what ways do the satyrs, gods, ghosts and other beings seen

in the masks I have helped to create engage with contemporary experience? I aim to offer further analysis of some of the findings in this thesis as a whole, adding depth and addressing some important questions that have arisen in this work.

My *Practice as Research* methodological approach has allowed mask construction to lead my method of exploration. In this chapter I will return to a theoretical model (Nelson's "Know That"), but with the aim of examining mask performance with the new insights derived from both mask construction and from a deeper exploration of Jungian psychology. The aim of the chapter becomes the continuation of a methodological approach, a movement onwards from the construction of masks – by myself, by actors, and by non-actors – into the embodiment of those masks. In this way, the chapter builds on Jung's assertion that 'the most we can do is dream the myth onwards and give it a modern dress', to explore the myths within contemporary mask *performance* (Jung and Kerényi 1985: 90).

The initial encounter

In order to better understand the experience of wearing a mask, I will explore the initial encounter with the neutral mask from a number of vantage points beginning from my own experience as both a student of Thomas Prattki and as a teacher who works with the object and has observed many students undertake the task. I will then critically examine my own experience using the analysis of Craig Turner (1981), and Matthew J. Cawson (2012).

I was able to witness the first moment of contact with the neutral mask by participating in a workshop entitled "Devising Theatre", part of the International Mime Festival 2012 hosted by Thomas Prattki at LISPA. As a former student and researcher, I was allowed to take part in a two-day workshop offered for prospective students as an introduction to the LISPA pedagogy and Prattki's approach to the neutral mask. Although I had encountered the mask in my graduate training, it had been six years since I had left the school, and I had not put on the mask in that time. For many of the other participants, the exercise described below was their initial encounter with the neutral mask.

> Personal Reflection:
>
> *Prattki began by showing the group the mask and asking for our first impressions; this led to a brief discussion of the history and context of the mask (see Chapter 2). Prattki then outlined (verbally) an introductory exercise: a group of approximately seven of us were to each take a mask and to find a space on our own, to experience the mask individually. We were told that we should turn our backs on the audience and put on the masks. When we were ready, we were to turn around, face the audience, and simply be. The objective: experience the mask itself, just to see what it is like, and "do nothing". We were told that it would only last a few moments, but afterwards we would be asked to describe our experience in a single word.*

> *The audience (the other workshop participants) would then be given a chance to briefly state their observations. As I was a returning student, interested in witnessing the event, I delayed my turn as long as possible.*
>
> *I took a mask and a space on my own. We were balanced in long alleyways in order to allow the arranged audience of students (and Prattki) to see everyone. Like the others, I turned my back to the audience and put on the mask. I distinctly remember feeling it against my skin, hearing my breath as it warmed the leather. Smelling the leather. As a PhD candidate, I was aware that I had done a great deal of reading about the mask, but as I turned to face the assembled audience all of that seemed to vanish in an instant and I was left with a very material problem: what was I "supposed to do"? I had arrogantly approached the task and now was going to be caught out. I then looked and saw the students seated on the floor around Prattki. I recall smiling a little underneath the mask; there was a sense that they couldn't see me smile. That smile, I believe, allowed me to breathe a little. It helped me to calm myself, and eventually I felt quite happy, energized. As the experience went on, I remember feeling an excitement build, the space between my fingers grow, along with an awareness of the gap between my elbows and the sides of my body. After a few moments, Prattki asked us to turn and take the masks off. My answer to his question, my experience summed up in a word, was "joy".*

As a teacher who has since adopted the same exercise, I have experienced the event from the other side of the teacher/student relationship and have seen a variety of differing responses. Indeed, as the account described above makes clear, the experience was not my primary contact with the mask and therefore may be quite different from those who wore the mask for the first time. Observing the exercise, one often sees minor physical adjustments, fidgets that quiet over time. Since the improvisation demands stillness, many students struggle with what they are supposed to do: how to stand, where to look. Others appear totally content to simply be just where they are. They look out, and there is a freedom and excitement in their breath. Still others move in another direction, as tension creeps in and their bodies seem to become all but paralyzed. Indeed, as many in the class observing from the outside note, the "neutrality" of the mask, while suggesting a shared underlying universality, in practice highlights the very particular differences between students.

Craig Turner (1981), in his article "Body Image Stress in Neutral Mask Work", emphasises the mask's ability to highlight conflicts for the audience and teacher: 'A startling thing about this work is how the mask strengthens our perceptions of an actor's personal body habits. We never see the body so clearly as when the actor is masked because we are denied facial signals we usually rely upon' (Turner 1981: 38). This idea, that the mask functions as an instrument to show the body, has been noted in most of the existing literature on neutral mask praxis (Lecoq 2000; Eldredge and Huston 1978; Rolfe 1977; Felner 1985; Arrighi 2010; Murray 2002).

Turner, however, writing in the journal *Arts in Psychotherapy*, describes a psycho-physical phenomenon he calls "body image stress", highlighting the body within the *experience* of the performer:

> For many students, the initial analysis results in profound personal changes, particularly in body image and self-awareness. Many feel that denial of their face suddenly changes not only what the audience sees, but also how they themselves feel about their own bodies. The body becomes clumsy, the breathing laboured, balance unsteady and concentration less focused. Experienced actors who are not particularly self-conscious suddenly develop an excessive awareness of the audience that seems to paralyze them. Some find it difficult to perform even simple tasks; others lose energy and spontaneity while wearing the mask. I believe that the body image of these performers undergoes enough stress to cause a severe break in normal perceptions. (Turner 1981: 38)

Turner goes on to underscore three areas of "body image stress": first, a heightened sense of the performer's breathing patterns, usually begun through contact with the mask itself; second, a 'displacement of body feeling' described as being similar to 'stage fright', where the performer's mind focuses on those habitual patterns; and, finally, 'internal disruption' or a confusion regarding the performer's own body, often taking the form of a strong sense of isolation, a physical sense of heaviness, and even loss of balance. In Turner's analysis, "body image stress" can be seen in most performers to varying degrees; it is usually something that is overcome leading to more liberating aspects of neutral mask work.

Matthew J. Cawson (2012), in the introduction to his PhD thesis "The Mask and the Self", outlines his approach to the neutral mask in an entirely different way. Cawson adds music to the initial encounter, asking his students to 'wake and see the world as if for the first time', but in so doing, to 'respond intuitively to the music, the space, each other, and their own bodies, exploring this new environment in which they find themselves' (Cawson 2012: 15). The students' experiences are relayed back to the group in discussions after the exercise, and in Cawson's view, those experiences are always 'profound'. Cawson suggests that the students seem to fall into two opposing categories: those who experience a sense of 'freedom and liberation', a discovery of self – and those who feel as if they have been 'possessed' by something other than themselves; those in the second group recount experiencing a temporary loss of self. Here he states, 'this group agrees totally with the maxim *you do not wear the mask, the mask wears you'* (Cawson 2012: 15).

Here, Cawson's writing points towards aspects of mask praxis relating to the act of possession, trance or visitation that are sometimes highlighted in anthropological studies; or, most notably within the field of actor training, what Keith Johnstone (1989) calls a "controlled trance" or "possession". Johnstone, in his chapter "Mask and Trance", argues that when wearing a mask 'one is inhabited by a spirit' (Johnstone 1989: 143); he then goes on to explore the use of masks in actor training, comparing the work to 'priests' in 'possession cults'. It is an element of mask praxis

that Lecoq seems to avoid[22].

In *Masked Performance: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre*, John Emigh (1996) addresses the question of "visitation" within actor training from an anthropological perspective, exploring the uses of mask from differing cultural contexts. Emigh offers a continuum from 'me' to 'not me', borrowing from D.W. Winnicott's understanding of the importance of transitional objects within the development of a child's understanding of 'what is "me" and what is "not me"'. Emigh goes on to place performance within a number of settings: 'This continuum would begin with the experience of performing within everyday life, continue through the experiences of being visited or possessed by a spiritual entity other than one's self while in a performance situation':

	Performance in Everyday life	Pretending	Acting in character	Visitation	
"me"	----------+	----------+	----------+	----------+	---------"not me"

(Emigh 1996: 22)

Emigh's continuum, and his theoretical grounding of mask praxis within the psychological theories of Winnicott, forms the basis for his understanding of a diverse set of rituals derived from a number of distinct cultural backgrounds. Yet within neutral mask praxis specifically, with an understanding that the mask 'presents no other', this view of 'me' and 'not me' becomes problematic.

Cawson's description, however, presents questions as to what his students understand to have possessed them. Having only a theoretical perspective on trance states, I would offer the hypothesis that the act of wearing a mask could be used as a controlled medium through which to activate the personal complexes of the individual. Thereby, through a form of 'visitation' the performer may encounter aspects of their unconscious that could rightly be described as 'not me', an entirely different aspect of themselves than the every-day ego consciousness. Lecoq's position that there is no other in the neutral mask, and that the neutral mask is underneath all other masks, resists this exploration of alternative aspects of the individual. It is this view which, I have argued, form the monist understanding of both mask and self examined in Chapter 3. A study of the activation of complexes through the use of mask, however, can perhaps clarify Lecoq's ambiguous description of the function of a mask (previously cited in Chapter 3, p. 80): 'They have learned not to play *themselves* but to play *using* themselves' (Lecoq 2000: 61). It is an aspect of mask praxis that I feel warrants further study, and one which I hope to develop going forward.

[22] Johnstone states: "One famous French teacher of the Mask – who won't approve of this essay – divides the students immediately into those who can work Masks and those who can't" (Johnstone 1989: 173). Here, Johnstone's allusion to a "French teacher" leads me to the belief that he is referring to Lecoq, and his assessment that the teacher "won't approve of this essay", points, in my view, to Lecoq's distrust of Johnstone's use of trance states or possession (nor his glorification of the mask with a capital 'M').

I agree strongly with Turner's observation that the neutral mask heightens the performer's sense of his or her own body, specifically as regards breath and 'body image', and while I have yet to fully experience a sense of loss of self or possession by an otherness derived from the mask, I can attest to the idea that wearing the mask is a profound experience which relates directly to an understanding of self and other. In Chapter 2, I built on an argument by Phillip Zarilli that a state of 'presence' is derived through an actor's experience of *not knowing.* Zarilli argues that the act of questioning through performance is directly associated with an understanding of 'presence' (Zarrilli 2012: 147). I have argued that the diversity of symbolic aspects of the neutral mask creates a number of questions for the performer. In my own experience of the neutral mask, one can see the moment where a state of unknowing overtook me, causing a temporary moment of stress or panic activated by substantial questions proposed by the mask.

For both Cawson and Turner the first moment of wearing the mask has a striking psychological effect, and yet the rationale for what that effect may be is decidedly different for each. For Turner it offers a means of inhibiting its wearer, while Cawson suggests that the mask transforms the wearer. Mick Cooper (1999) explores the theoretical aspects of this divide in great detail in his PhD thesis, "An empirical and theoretical investigation into the psychological effects of wearing a mask". Cooper articulates the diverse theories offered by practitioners who adopt the use of masks. In Cooper's model, these theories broadly divide along the basic lines evidenced by Turner and Cawson: the mask acts as a means of disinhibiting (or through 'psycho-somatic changes', inhibiting the wearer), and the mask acts as a medium through which the wearer undergoes a transformation.

In all of the differing descriptions and analyses of the initial encounter with the neutral mask, one can see the vital importance of the teacher in mediating the students' experience. In the exercise proposed by Prattki, a "possession" from the mask would seem improbable due to the nature of the initial provocation; however, given the correct circumstances defined by the teacher, as Cawson suggests, a form of possession might be entirely plausible. The teacher, the other performers on the stage, and indeed the audience all affect the experience. This view is highlighted by Frost and Yarrow, who suggest that 'ultimately, the "trance" or power to change is not in the *mask*: it derives from the conjunction of mask, actor and audience. The wearer responds to stimuli both from the mask and from teachers and/or audience: what is involved is a dynamic process of co-creation' (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 194).

My own experience of the neutral mask attests to that 'dynamic process', and any future pedagogy must engage with a wider understanding of 'co-creation', including the internal processes of the performer with the external object of the mask, the provocations from the teacher and the teacher/student relationship, and the involvement of the audience. In my view this 'dynamic process of co-creation', the experience of these objects and the stories one tells to understand that experience highlight one of the initial questions of this thesis: what are the myths within contemporary mask praxis?

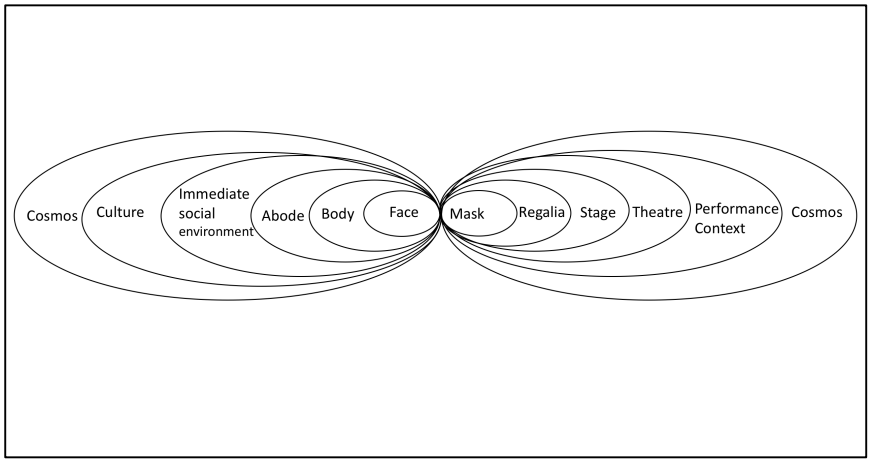
“Faces of the Cosmos”

One study of this ‘dynamic process of co-creation’ is undertaken in the collaboration between professor of neuroanthropology Charles Laughlin and movement teacher and professional clown, Jodi Young-Laughlin (1988). Their essay in the *Journal of Ritual Studies*, “How Masks Work, or Masks Work How?”, analyses the use of mask by breaking it down into three words: “masks” (the object within culture), “work” (the experience of the mask phenomenologically), and “how” (the effect of the mask neurologically). They begin their study by attempting to place masks ‘within their physical, cultural and cosmological context in order to view them as participating in a greater, ever-changing symbolic process’ (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 59). Their analysis of the experience of wearing a mask and their placement of the mask within a cultural cosmology accounting for a mythological perspective offers a method of examining the use of mask within the culture of Lecoq pedagogy.

Arguing that masks allow for ‘multiple realities’ – daily and extra-daily, sacred and profane, real time and ‘the binding of time’ – Young-Laughlin and Laughlin state that one finds symmetrical “nests” of meaning, moving out in paired concentric circles (See Figure 29). They chart a progression from the mask/face nexus that expands outward to the every-day “body” of the performer and its equivalent circle encompassing the “regalia” of theatrical costume. From there they move to progressively wider circles, and finally to the widest vision of the culture’s “cosmology”. This fulfils the primary function of the mask: as the means of experiencing myth. Young-Laughlin and Laughlin write, ‘The work of a mask is essentially this: to bring transcendent experience to mundane awareness’ (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 65). They argue that masks exist within a “nest” of meaning, and cannot be viewed outside of that “nest”.

> The work of the mask then is to serve as an intentional object nested within concentric aureoles and networks of symbols that point outward from the body to the cosmos. In a sense, masks are faces of the cosmos. As a symbolic transformation of the face, a mask draws and centers the gaze of both actors and audience, while the rest of the theatrical accoutrements form a mandala-like symbolic context. The mask becomes the predominant figure and the theatrical accoutrements, the ground of perception. Within the context of performance this “mandala” is a living, moving, unfolding unity of symbolic expression. (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 70)

Figure 29 "The Context of Face and Mask" (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 62)



This movement from the mask/face nexus outward can be seen in writing on the use of mask in Lecoq based pedagogy. David Gaines, Lecoq graduate and Co-founder of the renowned mask company Moving Picture Mime Show, writes:

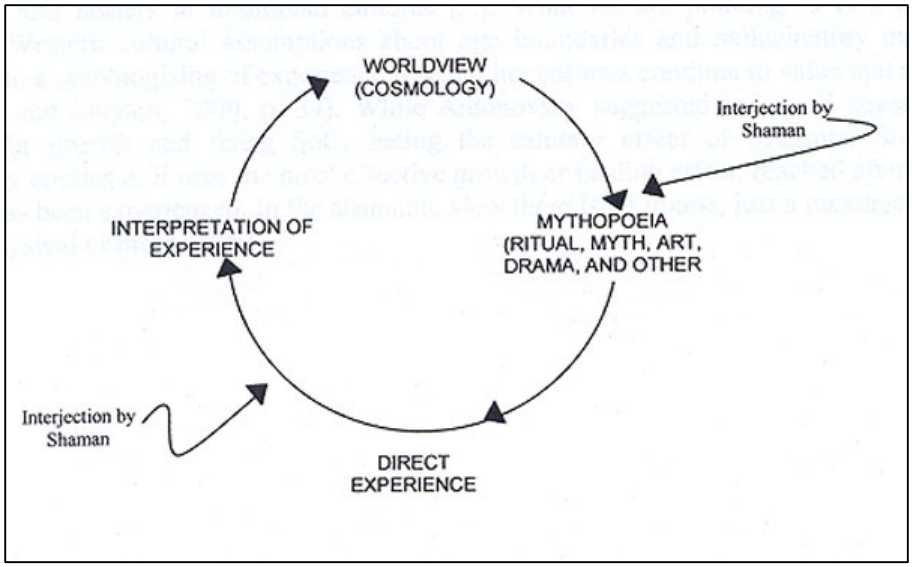
> The theatrical term "the mask" can refer to the actual mask that the actor is wearing on their head, as well as a living being (mask and actor's body beneath it) that is experienced by the audience as a living being on stage… In some writing, the later meaning of the term is capitalized, but that seems to connote an unnecessary "Sacredness". (Gaines 2016: 135)

Gaines's assertion that the movement from mask to body, and then from body to performance experience, is well understood within the pedagogy, as is his additional observation linking the mask with 'Sacredness' (even as he remarks that it is 'unnecessary'). Indeed, Gaines himself suggests that there may be larger meanings of the mask. He notes that the training in the first year of Lecoq study fosters a 'heightened dramatic impact' contained in the mask. He goes on to say that in the second year of training, 'the students attempt to achieve "that dramatic level of the mask" in various historically significant styles of theatre, including Greek tragedy, melodrama, "pantomime blanche", Commedia dell'Arte, clown and *bouffon'*. All of these, if we are to understand Gaines's argument, are extended forms of masking.

To express the phenomenological aspects of mask performance (or how masks "work"), Young-Laughlin and Laughlin offer another model for understanding the importance of masks within a 'cycle of meaning' (see Figure 30). We see a circular progression, again a 'dynamic process of co-creation', from pre-existing "Cosmology", to the "Mythopoeia" as experienced through the performance in a mask. Here the myth is enacted, allowing for the "experience" of the myth by the performer as well as the community-at-large. That performance is then analysed by an individual with "shamanic" authority, who offers an "interpretation" of the event. Young-Laughlin and Laughlin argue that the interpretation is almost always in line with existing cosmology. From there, the cycle is repeated in a ritualised form. In this way, the mask can be seen as a pedagogical tool: 'Masking is an extreme form of

metamorphosis that may be used to initiate an individual into the mysteries of the cosmos and thereby render the initiate fundamentally changed' (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 74).

Figure 30 "The Cycle of Meaning" (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 67)



"How Masks Work, or Masks Work How" within Neutral Mask Praxis

Both diagrammatical models, the "Cycle of Meaning" and the cultural "nest" described as "The Contexts of Face and Mask", can be applied to the pedagogical use of mask. Young-Laughlin and Laughlin's view of the cosmological and mythological functions of masks as objects that help to 'verify and vivify' existing cosmology parallel my own understanding of the use of mask within the Lecoq tradition and form an interesting model for how the object functions as a pedagogical tool.

Drawing a connection from the mask/face nexus, the student of the neutral mask attempts to offer a body that suits the object (calm, in balance, without conflict). The daily body is asked to become the extra-daily body. Within the Lecoq tradition, one is asked to wear blacks while working on the neutral mask, which become the regalia of the community. If a student were to dress otherwise, the neutral mask would no longer be within its proper nest of meaning; just as to place the event outside the rehearsal studio would undermine the experience. The neutral mask asks for a neutral body and an empty stage.

As described in detail in Chapter 1, there is an extra-daily "imaginal" reality that exists outside of the studio and indeed outside of time, without past or future (see Chapter 1, p. 49-51). The student is initiated into a cosmology of physical dynamics, where the movement within colours and shapes is discovered: "*tout bouge*". Within an anthropological model, Young-Laughlin and Laughlin state: 'The experience that is transformed by masking within the context of drama is for an actor that of his or her position and meaning within the cosmic arena' (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988:

66). Applied to Lecoqian praxis, the performer alters his or her position through the use of the neutral mask, becoming an individual who experiences those physical dynamics, present yet unseen, and who is able to demonstrate those yet unseen dynamics to an audience. Through initiation in the neutral mask, the performer is compelled to take the position of actor creator.

This repositioning informs the student/teacher relationship experienced in the Lecoq pedagogy. The mask allows for the performance of the "mythopeia" within improvisation; this takes the form of the embodiment of the "man-of-all-men" or the "woman-of-all-women" experienced by both the performer and those students watching. An interpretation of the experience is offered by a teacher, performing the role of shaman. That teacher, often a former student, offers an essential element of the cycle: taking the student's experience of mythic images, analysing them, and forming a conclusion that reinforces the cosmology.

Indeed, each teacher who adopts a mask for pedagogical purposes presents a subtly different masked cosmology. As I speak of the 'myths within contemporary mask praxis', I refer in part to those subtle differences in the "nests" each teacher creates around their masks. The world view Lecoq presents is different from that of his pupil Thomas Prattki, even as the mask they adopt remains the same. Those differences between the two teachers have been outlined at length in Chapter 1, and they speak to differing approaches to both the cycle of meaning, as well as the larger cultural nest. While for Lecoq, the neutral mask becomes the fulcrum that pushes the student towards the study of dynamic forces that he argues exist in nature, Prattki offers an imaginal journey into the unconscious psyche (see Chapter 1, p. 47-57).

As I have previously noted, anthropologist John Emigh relates the use of masks within ritual and theatrical contexts to the theories of developmental psychologist D.W. Winnicott. By linking the mask to Winnicott's theory of "transitional objects" or "transitional states", Emigh proposes that the mask creates an 'intermediate area' allowing for states of play. In Winnicott's words, the introduction of play through the use of transitional objects helps to create

> an intermediate area of *experiencing*, to which inner reality and eternal life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated. (Winnicott 2005: 3)

This view of the mask offers the potential for linking three essential elements of this thesis: the internal psychological dynamics of the wearer (the personal shadow and complexes of the individual), the external images viewed by the teacher and the audience (a cultural "nest"), and the fundamental state of play (*disponibilité*) that Lecoq felt was paramount for theatrical creation. Indeed, Winnicott's view of the importance of play to negotiate inner and outer realities can be seen in the various understandings of neutral mask praxis: Lecoq's more external view, for example, and I have argued, Prattki's view favouring the internal. In reality, the masked terrain

contains a union of both. This fusion of inner and outer, understood by Winnicott as a transitional phenomenon, is a territory which I described as "imaginal" in Chapter 1. The pedagogical mask can be seen as facilitating an imaginal journey by acting as a "transitional object" and allowing for an 'intermediate area of experiencing' that 'interrelates' inner and outer realities.

Neutrality, "the mirror-without-an-image"

It must be clearly stated that the neutral mask acts as the starting point to the pedagogical journey, and is not its end destination. Lecoq described the neutral mask as a "fulcrum point", a concrete means of pivoting away from the individual's pre-existing psycho-physical-socio-cultural norms (Lecoq 2000: 36). The movement towards "neutrality", therefore, allows a means of accessing externalized dynamics. It cannot be overstated that neutrality is a methodological approach, not an end result: 'The neutral mask is a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing' (Lecoq in Eldredge and Huston 1978: 26). The pedagogical journey exists in the study of natural phenomena (light, colour, materials, music, paintings, poetry, plants and animals) which are explored after the neutral mask is removed. Even as his masked improvisations speak to the theme of the journey, the mask is not intended to be the destination, or even the journey itself. The "fulcrum" acts as a leverage point towards a progression of masks, from the larval masks to the clown nose, that runs throughout the two-year pedagogy.

Another key objective of the neutral mask is an acute awareness of the body of the performer (this can be evidenced in Turner's understanding of "Body Image Stress", cited above). That, from a sense of extreme stillness, movement begins: movement is derived from stillness. From an initial impulse, a movement will begin to take a form, and from there, a thought. It is a process of development that starts from the body and moves to the conscious mind. Here one finds Felner's statement that 'gesture precedes thought' and Murray's assertion that the body 'produces thought' (Felner 1985: 150)(Murray 2002: 28): the premise that we act before we think. Neutrality offers the possibility of an embodied knowledge.

From a Jungian perspective, the neutral mask and accompanying black regalia essentially "de-individuates" its wearer. The aim at the start of the journey, is to neutralize the particular aspects of the individual. Embodied knowledge offers the student a separation from overly conscious forms of creation. By placing the physical impulses at the genesis of creation, and not rational ego consciousness, the neutral mask offers a method of theatrical exploration that moves from the unconscious body towards greater and greater consciousness. Lecoq's view of neutrality is an attempt to confront pre-existing theoretical formulations that may restrict access to that embodied knowledge.

Artistically, one can see the mask and the concept of "neutrality", as tools for challenging implicit understandings of performance:

> Every time an actor performs, he or she implicitly enacts a "theory" of acting – a set of assumptions about the conventions and style which guide his or her performance, the structure of actions which he or she performs, the shape that those actions take… and the relationship to the audience. Informing these assumptions are culture-specific assumptions about the body-mind relationship, the nature of the "self", the emotions/feelings, and performance context. (Zarrilli 2002: 4)

The neutral mask attempts to offer a controlled means of temporarily stripping away those daily patterns and deeply ingrained habits – as well as the theoretical and critical frames that shape them – which may limit a student's access to embodied knowledge. A number of theoretical and critical frameworks can be used to highlight what the student may be asked to strip away: in Freudian terms, this might mean the abandonment of repressed material; in Pierre Bourdieu's sociological frame this might be seen as the stripping of an individual's "habitus". From the vantage point of cultural semiotics, one might suggest that students leave behind Roland Barthes' cultural "mythologies"; or, as Phillip Zarrilli suggests, any "implicit" theories of acting. The cleansing of any of these would be viewed as highly suspect within each respective field, and, as I have argued, the neutral mask in itself harbours a very particular "theory" of acting. Indeed, Lecoq's use of the neutral mask sits within a very particular cultural and cosmological "nest", as do all of the masks that Lecoq adopts along his pedagogical journey. Yet Lecoq seeks to undercut broad theoretical arguments, consistently placing his focus back on the empirical materiality of the body and with it a rigorous study of movement.

The extended series of masks/The extended series of "nests"

When Lecoq suggests that the neutral mask acts as a "fulcrum point", he follows this by saying, 'it is a fulcrum point which does not exist' (Lecoq in Eldredge and Huston 1978: 21). Lecoq also suggests that 'of course there is no such thing as absolute and universal neutrality, it is only a temptation' (Lecoq 2000: 20). It is this 'does not exist', this 'temptation', that speaks to the mythos underlining the pedagogy and is evidenced in my amplifications of the mask in Chapter 2, it becomes a symbolic void which underlines a sense of unknowing "presence". It must be noted that those archetypal associations, whether *Ātman* or *anattā*, Cosmogonic Creator or Campbellian Hero, exist within that fulcrum point *prior* to the study of the dynamics of forms.

Lecoq's 'fulcrum point that does not exist' begins a journey of particularization. From the universality of the neutral mask, one moves towards the clown nose in a movement towards the personal creativity of the actor-creator – from de-individuation towards individuation. Carl Jung believed the process of individuation to be the driving force behind life and behind the compensating unconscious, a path which was universal to all. The process of formation offered by Lecoq, symbolically accessed through the extended series of masks, offers the potential for a universal journey from the de-individuated "other" to the individuated self. Sears Eldredge

describes this pedagogical journey as a movement upwards, and here one is reminded of Jung's three-part outline of the psyche (see Introduction, p. 26-27):

> After experiencing the neutral mask, he moves on to expressive masks, to the speaking masks of commedia, and finally to the clown nose and the discovery of his personal clown. Beneath these masks, however, is the state of near neutrality: in a sense, the actor wears the neutral mask beneath every other mask and every other character. Lecoq likens the neutral masks to "the bottom of the sea" whereas "the expressive mask is like waves" (Eldredge and Huston 1978: 28).

Throughout the two-year course, we see a series of masks that form a process of development, solidification, and removal. From neutral mask, we transition into larval masks, then full-faced expressive masks (sometimes referred to as "character masks"). In the second year of study, Lecoq offers the introduction of Commedia dell'Arte half masks, and the clown nose. It is a journey that echoes the life-long path of consciousness along the ego-self axis: the formation of the ego consciousness from the unconscious self, and then the eventual turning of ego consciousness back towards the self (see Chapter 1, p. 55).

Having argued that Lecoq has constructed a particular "nest" in which he situations his own cosmology, and having also noted that Prattki's nest differs from that of Lecoq, I would now like to look at the extended mask sequence (or extended series of nests). This thesis has undertaken a *PaR* model of mask construction, one that sought to highlight aspects of the maker's personal shadow, and from there to amplify the symbolic elements within the mask (and developing story) in a process described as developing a "personal myth" (see Chapter 3). I view my praxis as stepping further back from where the Lecoq pedagogy begins: to the act of mask construction. While Lecoq had the assistance of Amleto Sartori, offering pre-built "precision tools", my work begins with the act of construction itself. Yet in the act of building a mask, one comes in contact with the journey of formation that echoes the series described in the section blow.

When looking towards a future pedagogical praxis, what I will describe as building a new "nest", I would like to bring together the divergent lines of mask construction and movement. I view the development of each personal mask through the Lecoqian mask series, and by merging greater embodiment with amplification, I hope to help future participants to move from mask construction to performance, building out the larger "nests" that sits around their own masks.

Larval Masks

The larval masks entered the Lecoq pedagogy in the early 1960's, and are unpainted Swiss carnival masks. The masks are traditionally large, white, and consist of very basic facial features such as a large nose, a huge lower jaw, or a simple beak-like shape. Lecoq suggests that there are two aspects of larval mask praxis: the first,

somewhat 'caricatured' or 'cartoon' characterisations, and the second, the construction of alien creatures or fantastical beings (Lecoq 2000: 59).

John Wright (2002) emphasizes the character aspect of these masks and their movement towards becoming: 'Its plain white form suggests a face whose features are just about to come into being. They are called larval masks because they suggest a face covered in larvae which makes us begin to reconstruct the hidden features'. Wright goes on to suggests that 'Larval also derives from a Latin word meaning ghost or spirit' (Wright 2002: 78). For Wright, the function of these masks is to present a childlike naiveté, arguing that they have an 'insatiable appetite for play' While the neutral mask discovers the world for the first time, with the larval mask 'we see no perspective of learning about the world here. The larval mask discovers the world but does not make sense of it. Like very small children, they blunder into things and what they don't understand they make up' (Wright 2002: 79). For Wright, these childlike characters play games and construct a world where 'nothing is what it appears to be and anything is possible'.[23]

Frost and Yarrow (2016) suggest a more psychological element to Lecoq's larval mask work:

> Larval masks are abstract forms. A subcategory of expressive masks, naïve and non-human yet evoking psychic and emotional states, they lead, like the neutral mask, to a kind of precognitive situation where physical gesture precedes emotion and both precede conceptualization. (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 190)

Frost and Yarrow make a very interesting association with larval mask in the work of Geese Theatre. Geese Theatre has a 30-year tradition of working within the UK criminal justice system, adopting a variety of masks and masked improvisational techniques. One such exercise involves the use of a set of masks that are generalized into specific types, the masks are called: "So Cool", "The Mouth", "The Fist", "The Brick Wall", "Goodie-goodie", "Poor Me", "The Joker" and "The Rescuer" (Geese Theatre 2017). For Frost and Yarrow, these masks 'tend to inflect a "single characteristic" more aggressively as a statement of defiance or projection… what performers are being invited to explore is how they experience their own bodies responding to the suggestions – emotional and physical – implied by the mask' (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 191).

[23] One of the most striking features of larval masks is their eyes. While the masks are often very large, their eyes are small. In most of the masks used at LISPA there are no eye-holes at all. The actors are asked to work without the use of sight. This throws the performer into an extreme sense of unknowing. They are forced to listen to any stimuli that may enter (primarily the small reactions of the audience watching). With the neutral mask (an object built with large eye holes) one is asked to see, and to 'make the invisible visible'; with the larval mask, the performers often find themselves dancing in the dark. This brings with it an awareness of the world around, not simply through the visual field, but from the entire body.

By connecting the larval masks of Lecoq to those of Geese Theatre, Frost and Yarrow seem to be opening up the possibility that there are very specific psychological "types" within these highly defined "larval" masks.

Perhaps the most famous use of these masks, and a primary example of the more fantastical aspect of the larval masks, comes from the Swiss company Mummenschanz. The company has received huge critical acclaim over the last 40 years, creating abstract performances that are completely silent. Their work speaks to an imaginative, dream-like, surreal sensibility. Perhaps their most famous image, that of a large hand, becomes captivating not for its logical meaning but as something that suggests an aspect of the unconscious. The New York Times reviewer Richard Eder wrote a piece entitled, "Masked Marvels" in which he describes one of their dream-like worlds:

> The three—two young Swiss men and a young Italian woman—have turned the stage of the tiny Bijou Theater into a cockeyed, black-lighted aquarium. Alternately lyrical, comic, melancholy and crass, they move in it like tropical fish. They flow and burp—visually, that is; they make no sound—from one solemn and hilarious transformation to the next. (Eder 1977)

The company adopts a phrase: 'Play + Mask = Mummenschanz' (Murray 2003: 121). They play with images, allowing a level of understanding outside of the overtly analytical conscious mind from what appears to be a pre-linguistic state. Eder speaks to his daughter's captivation, and his own inability to stop grinning. According to Simon Murray, Mummenschanz attempts to adopt a 'universal language' of play; they argue that 'an instinct – or a disposition – for play is a phenomenon that exists across different cultures' (Murray 2003: 123). In this way, the larval mask can be seen as following within the tradition, and the perceived universality, of the neutral mask.

As the work of companies like Mummenschanz, Moving Picture Mime Show, Geese Theatre and the early work of Trestle Theatre demonstrate, larval masks can offer a rich medium of artistic expression in and of themselves. Yet, as the name "*larval*" suggest, there is an aspect of developmental growth implied within the mask, indicating a metamorphosis that is yet to come; the mask can therefore be viewed as offering an important transitional stage within a process of formation. This can be evidenced in mask construction. Indeed, the fact that the masks have yet to be painted implies this further development. As a mask-maker, I have found the "larval" stage of development an essential aspect of the formation process – the stage when one jumps from clay sculptures as pure dynamics (the push/pulls within a mess of clay) and starts to see the sculpture as a creature.

When looking at the masks made by the students of Richard Pochenko, one sees that there is a real attempt to allow them to exist as pre-formed beings; they are not art pieces in any shape or form (Coburn 2013: 336–341). They are given the time to "not work", and so I would suggest that these are quintessentially larval masks. They exist within Lecoq's model of development and within Prattki's understanding of

individuation as an early step, naive and unconscious; they don't know yet who they are. They are very basic masks that seem to look as if a child had made them. Pochinko's work points to the value of that "larval" stage of development, allowing the student an exploration of psychological material, giving this stage of development time and care. In Chapter 3, I have argued that the personal masks tended to be less defined then those collectively made masks; while in chapter 4, I observe that those masks made by non-actors tended to be less human (and more symbolic) than those masks built by performers. I highlight von Franz's view that one often is able to access the unconscious through artistic mediums that the individual feels less comfortable working within. As I have argued earlier (see Chapter 2, p. 81-83), Lecoq has an aversion to any mess that clutters or distracts, a need for clarity that often undercuts those ideas that exist within the larval stage of development. Yet, in work like that of Richard Pochenko, one can see a real benefit to exploring the potential richness within this chaotic phase: lingering in a psychological stage of unknowing that allows for future development.

> ***Building a new "nest":***
> *Within the latent state of the clay one finds a sense of potential, a precursor to form or content. As a medium, the clay is symbolic of a time before creation. The clay addresses the unconscious, seeking to activate and enliven it. When I ask a group of workshop participants to shut their eyes, attempt to clear their heads, to breathe, and to make a mess, I am encouraging them to create chaos in clay. From there, I am able to help articulate dynamic forces in opposition, pushes and pulls within the structure. Going forward within a future praxis, I want to facilitate an embodied exploration of those dynamics. I want my students to experience them, to mime them (in the Lecoqian sense of the word). This is the territory of abstract forms associated with the neutral mask. Once the first features are addressed, once I ask them to locate a facial feature in the clay, we have moved into the field of larval masks. In future practice, I want to encourage students to embody those basic creatures at this early stage of development, to bring them to life. Can you take the facial feature that you see in the mask, and imitate it with your own face? Is there a sound that goes along with this creature? Is there a breath? As you change your face, what does that do to the rest of your body? Is the masked creature small or big? Does it look down at you or up? Does it approach through the side, or face the world directly? How does it move through the space? Can it articulate basic emotions or states, and can you feel them in yourself?*

Full-Faced Expressive Masks (Character Masks)

If larval masks represent a process of transformation an as yet unfinished being, the expressive masks (or full-faced character masks) represent the completion of a process of formation: the development of an intact ego and functioning persona.

Paradoxically, the immobility of the mask demands flexibility. It is not enough to be frozen in a steadfast disposition; the mask must be adaptable. Where larval masks present a simple sketch, the expressive masks carry complex emotional dynamics. Gaines highlights this when he writes:

> In order for a mask to live for more than a brief period on stage, it must be able to change. In life, things – particularly living things – change in response to their surrounding events. So for each mask, the actor must (with the help of colleagues) "discover" the mask – find the emotional attitudes it can convey, and how it can move between them. (Gaines 2016: 139)

The formation of the ego does not mean a fixed, rigid persona, but a flexibility within the 'surrounding events' in which individuals find themselves.

John Wright articulates this change in emotional attitude, between mask and counter-mask, as the underlying 'game' which 'transcends type': 'The game of playing the expressive mask becomes more intense with the introduction of the *counter-mask*. In playing "the idiot" as "the intellectual'" we begin to expose a humanity in the mask and to transcend type'. Wright goes on to say that

> it is an idea that opens up a much wider game for the actor that goes beyond the immutable expression of the mask to a fascinating world of dramatic tensions…. Through the counter-mask it becomes clear that the effective mask is capable of the whole range of human feelings and that the challenge is to find the appropriate dramatic context to trigger the game. (Wright 2002: 78)

Jumping from one mask to another and the playing of multiple parts becomes a major theme in professional productions that adopt the use of masks. Companies like FootsBarn Traveling Theatre, Trestle Theatre, and more recently, Theatre Ad Infinitum, StrangeFace, Kulunka Theatre, Vamos Theatre, and Familie Flöz have toured expressive masked performances extensively throughout the world. These companies are aided by the reduction in cast size afforded by masking, as well as by the elimination of spoken language which allows expressive mask performance to transcend cultural divides.

There were a significant number of productions performing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the summer of 2016 that adopted full-faced expressive masks. This increase in the use of expressive masks was highlighted by The Guardian's theatre critic, Lyn Gardner, whose blog explored the work of three companies: Familie Flöz, Vamos Theatre, and my own Theatre Témoin. In her essay, "'It magnifies the acting, good and bad': the art and alchemy of mask theatre", published just before the opening of the festival, she cites a number of the theories regarding expressive mask performance and what they offer within a performance context, even as she writes, 'to be honest, I feel about mask theatre the way I feel about smoked mackerel: I'd never choose it from a menu, but when it's served I often think I should have it more often' (Gardner 2016).

Vamos and Familie Flöz both present entirely silent productions. They work with full-faced expressive masks, and their work emphasizes the details of the subtle moments that speak to larger concerns. The masks in both *Finding Joy* and *Teatro Delusio* offer an opposition to Young-Laughlin and Laughlin's observation that the 'work of a mask is… to bring transcendent experience to mundane awareness' (Young-Laughlin and Laughlin 1988: 65); rather, these productions could be seen as bringing mundane experience to transcendent significance. The mask becomes a tool to 'frame' the smallest of moments (Eldredge 1996). It pushes mundane existence toward poetry; in the words of David Gaines, 'The use of mask in theatre is like the use of poetry in language. It operates on another level than realism, a level at which each element takes on a greater significance, and, when successful, is therefore the richer for it' (Gaines 2016: 136).

Rachel Savage, Artistic Director of Vamos, says of masked performance: 'The mask doesn't hide anything. In fact it magnifies what the actor is doing, good and bad. It requires performers who are skilled at detail and gentleness. You can't blast the performance out, you have to learn to draw an audience in. It requires real delicacy' (Savage in Gardner 2017). Within this heightened significance of mundane experience, I am reminded of Murray's "cup of tea", cited as a central criticism at the start of this thesis. I am also struck, however, by Savage's emphasis on gentleness and delicacy, even when left with questions about the significance of those actions and their poetic value for the actor creator.

> ***Building a new "nest":***
> *As participants sculpt and define the characteristics of the face in greater detail, as they will it to become more and more human, we begin to ask questions of the mask's history: What is its name? Where does it live? How old is he or she? This is the territory of the expressive mask, which asks to become a person. The maker can now begin to walk as the clay person might, to look at the world through his or her eyes. The masks begin to have an age to them; they begin to know who they are and where they have come from. As we isolate the stories, drawn from the lines of the face, we extend our understanding of the basic drives and motors within these masks. Through performance, we can position the mask in a very particular environment, working from the mask/face nexus outwards to the world in which the character finds him or herself and the conflicts he or she experiences.*

Commedia dell'Arte half masks

In the second year of study, the students are asked to explore the territory of the Commedia dell'Arte, and the *comédie humaine*. The inspiration is said to have come from Lecoq's eight-year residence in Padua (1948-1956), where Lecoq was introduced to the theatrical territory: 'I was born twice. The first time was in Paris, at my birth. The second time was in Padua, when I was born to theatre' (Lecoq in Fusetti 2016: 142). Indeed, it was this time in Padua where he began his

collaboration with Amleto Sartori, who is credited with the rediscovery of the Italian method of constructing leather masks (Lecoq 2000: 4). Commedia masks are defined by their sharp extended features, and for their removal of the bottom jaw, which allows the performer to speak. 'This is the moment in the course where the word meets the gesture and "the scream seeks the sign". In other words, the actor must find the appropriate voice for the physicality of the mask' (Wright 2002: 79).

Within the journey of the five masks, the expressive masks have already achieved their full formation. With the commedia half masks, Lecoq's masks begin to be reduced in size; the journey is one of formation and then removal. And yet, with this removal we do not diminish the power or scale of the performance – indeed, the performance style becomes heightened still further. From the poetry of mundane activity found in the expressive masks, the Commedia masks move into the theatrical territory of huge desire and emotion. 'Fifteen minutes under the Mask of Arleccino can seem like hours of relentless pressure. When the mask is removed it can take an hour or two to "come down" from the high induced by intense physical and mental demands' (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 187). It is a theatrical territory that stretches every sinew of the actor's body and improvisational technique.

While in the territory of Commedia, one comes in contact with competing ideas: the playing of type, stereotype and archetype. Lecoq is distrustful of the historic aspects of the territory, which he argues have become a cliché. In order to escape the historicised Commedia, he re-defines the territory as 'the human comedy':

> Sadly, over the course of time, a so-called "Italian" style of performance, which is nothing but clichés, has begun to spread. Young actors have often done short courses in Commedia and the playing has become lifeless. The very name Commedia began to irk me. For these reasons I have been led to turn the problem inside out, to discover what lies beneath, that is to say *la comédie humaine* (the human comedy). From this point on, using a much broader field of reference, we have discovered our creative freedom. (Lecoq 2000: 113)

Interestingly, to begin his search for 'what lies beneath', Lecoq asks his students to construct half masks. Perhaps through the act of mask construction he found a means of challenging the clichéd stereotypes within the historic understanding of the territory. Indeed, a return to mask construction may have helped Lecoq's own process of 'turning the problem inside out'. John Wright describes how Lecoq and Sartori approached typical characters associated within their mask construction, citing a connection between these characters and animals: 'In their research into Commedia masks Sartori and Lecoq evolved masks with a clear animal motif such as a dog or a cat Arlecchino or a cockerel Capitain or a hen Punchinello' (Wright 2002: 79). Wright's statement proposes a minor form of amplification, the association with symbolic material: the dog or cat, the cockerel and the hen.

For Lecoq, the human comedy is derived from the dynamics of fundamental human desires, which he views as universal, appearing across cultural divides and throughout time.

> Theatre people have often dreamed of recreating a contemporary Commedia dell'Arte, hoping to renew the archetypes by inserting them into contemporary society of politics. This has always seemed to me to be a dubious undertaking because, historically, the social relations of the commedia are immutable. There are masters and there are servants, but the idea is not to change society. It is to shed light on human nature through its comedy, made up of the deceptions and compromises which are indispensable to the survival of the characters. Harlequin does not go on strike: he comes to an arrangement. Pantalone never goes bankrupt, despite his claims. The commedia belongs to every time and every place as long as there are masters and servants which are essential to it. These timeless elements of the human comedy interest me for the way they can enable the students, who are of course "contemporary", to invent a new theatre of their own time. (Lecoq 2000: 116)

Lecoq's assertion that the characters of commedia are 'immutable', and that the contemporary student, through a study of those timeless themes, can 'invent a new theatre of their own time', seems to resonate with Jung's statement that 'the most we can do is dream the myth onwards and give it a modern dress'.

Giovanni Fusetti, a former teacher at LISPA, writing in *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq*, takes Lecoq's assertion that the characters are "archetypes" one step further and directly connects the theatrical territory with the theory of archetypes proposed by C.G Jung. He points to Pantalone, and evidences how the archetypal figure resides outside of particular cultural forms: 'Pantalone is a Wall Street banker, an Italian shopkeeper in Rome, and estate agent in London. She is the cashier of the boulangerie in Paris, a Tarot reader on a late-night TV show, a rich donor at a charity event in Boston' (Fusetti 2016: 146). Fusetti cites the work of James Hillman and his polytheistic view of the psyche, as well as his own training in Gestalt therapy, saying, 'Theatre has a phenomenal potential in this process of integrating archetypes: the actor is by nature a "shapeshifter", and play is a very powerful and fun way to get in touch with different parts of the human soul' (Fusetti 2016: 148). He later goes on to suggest that 'the profoundly healing power of humour emerges from and through the depth of the archetypes and the play of types' (Fusetti 2016: 149). Fusetti's connection between this masked theatrical territory and the potentially therapeutic aspects of this territory – Lecoq's assertion that there is depth to the study of 'what lies beneath' the clichéd forms of Commedia dell'Arte – points to an archetypal understanding of performance practice. These archetypes hold within them a potential power, rising above that of everyday mundane existence, a power adaptable for both performance and therapeutic practices.

Building a new "nest":
When one provokes the participants to address the animalistic elements within their clay constructions, one is reminded of the Commedia dell'Arte half masks. Having associated the Commedia with large human desires, we can now ask the practitioners: What do these people want most of all in the world? What do they live for? How far would they go to get what they want? It is at this phase of development where amplification becomes its most useful, by locating the mythological within the construction process. By offering these participants a range of themes drawn from the largest of stories, I attempt to amplify those desires and push them towards the scale of Commedia. In the personal clay sculptures, one finds archetypal forms and the beginnings of a "personal myth". As we embody those satyrs and ogres, gods and demons, we situate them in an ever expanding "nest" of meaning. Throughout the performance, the participant is able to verify and vivify their own mythopoeia, and with the help of a facilitator, we attempt to construct a larger cosmology around the image.

The Clown Nose

For John Wright, the clown nose is the 'final and most important mask in Lecoq's training', allowing for the discovery of a "personal clown", a 'point of psychic nakedness'; he argues that 'to study the clown is to study yourself' (Wright 2002: 80). Wright goes on to cite Lecoq as suggesting that the 'red nose becomes a "tiny neutral mask for the clown"' (Lecoq in Wright 2002: 79-80). From the standpoint of mask construction, it is interesting that the clown nose, like the neutral mask before it, is singular; while there are a wide-range of larval masks, expressive masks, and commedia half masks, there is only one clown nose, and it represents a bookend with the neutral mask. Simon Murray calls the clown nose the 'antithesis' of the neutral mask (Murray 2002: 73); Lecoq himself emphasises this antithesis when he states 'for months on end I have been asking the students to observe the world and allow it to be reflected in them. With the clown, I ask them to be themselves as profoundly as they possibly can, and to observe the effect they produce on the world, that is to say their audience' (Lecoq 2000: 159).

Many writers attest to the psychological aspect of an encounter with one's personal clown. Frost and Yarrow link this with a potential Jungian understanding of the "shadow": 'Here one confronts and confesses by sharing what one normally represses: brings out one's "shadow", as it were, and lets it dance in the light' (Frost and Yarrow 2016: 191). In the introduction and history to his work, Lecoq describes how clowns entered the pedagogy in 1962: 'By exploring the domain of the ridiculous and the comic, I discovered the search for the clown within oneself, which was to liberate the actor from himself' (Lecoq 2000: 9). Later he writes:

> The clown needs no conflicts because he is in a permanent state of conflict, notably with himself. This phenomenon demands care and attention from the teacher so as to avoid pseudo-psychoanalytic interpretations of the

> difficult psychological process the actors have to undergo… I like this work to be undertaken at the end of the course because you can only be a clown when you have built up an experience of life. In the circus tradition, the clowns are usually drawn from among the older artists. The young ones are working on such exploits as tightrope walking, trapeze or balancing acts which the older ones can no longer manage, so they become clowns, expressing their maturity, their wisdom! (Lecoq 2000: 159)

There are two notable elements within Lecoq's analysis that are worth exploring further: first, the overt acknowledgement of the 'difficult psychological process' of the clown as theatrical territory and the potential proximity between actor training and psychotherapy; and second, the view Lecoq holds that the clown should develop in the later stages of both training and life, which resonates with Jungian models of the process of individuation, seen as a time where the ego turns inward.

> ***Building a new "nest":***
> *The most challenging element while engaging in a process of mask construction, is to address aspects of the individual's shadow. This reflexive turn, from the creation and performance of the "other" to the recognition of the other as an aspect of the individual him of herself, takes time and is the most difficult for me. It touches the field of Clowning, where the individual is asked to "playfully" face him or herself. Although, as Lecoq suggests, this reflexive turn 'demands care and attention from the teacher so as to avoid pseudo-psychoanalytic interpretations of the difficult psychological process the actors have to undergo'* (*Lecoq 2000: 159*). *In my experience, both the performers and the non-performers who have undertaken the process of mask construction were aware of the personal connections by the end of the series. Although it was left unsaid, that connection became apparent and was an element of discussion within the group. The question, moving forward, is how to acknowledge that reflexive turn. I would like to believe that the workshops offered participants greater clarity, while helping individuals to articulate aspects of their own lives in a playful and distanced manner. At no time were participants encouraged to disclose aspects of their personal history, to tell me the "truth" regarding anything "personal" or "psychological", yet they told me stories which I have argued are deeply symbolic of the personal and psychological challenges that they faced.*

While I have cited the names of many theatre companies who have adopted the use of masks within their performances, it must be strongly stated that within the Lecoq tradition masks are viewed as pedagogical tools. The aim of the teaching is not intended as a narrowly defined performance technique or territory, but as a means of something larger: the development of the actor creator. As I argued in Chapter 1, once the lessons adopted through wearing the mask are finished, the mask remains within the body of the individual. The actor creator holds both an embodied knowledge and a symbolic understanding of the mask; the performer is one for whom the masks are alive within: in the words of Jung, 'a living third thing' (see Chapter 1, p. 56). This larger mask sequence is symbolic of a journey of formation

and individuation, and viewed in this way, suggests a process which leads to the observation from John Wright that 'the Lecoq school produces artists as diverse as the people themselves' (Wright 2002: 81).

The Marked in performance

Over the past three years I have visited over one hundred hostels, homeless shelters, and food banks; to this date I have completed 8 mask construction series throughout London (each series consisting of 4 to 8 workshops). Following on from there, Theatre Témoin has completed a national tour of *The Marked* in addition to our developmental tour of homeless shelters in London and our run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. When touring to different venues each night, mask construction workshops became impossible, so we decided to offer workshop in the performance of Lecoq's first three masks (neutral, larval and expressive). Workshops were given alongside 20 tickets to people who had experiences of homelessness for each and every performance. Engagement with homeless populations has become an essential element of the touring structure, and this has led to post-show sessions where diverse audiences discuss the material in an in-depth manner. By engaging with individuals with the lived experience of homelessness for each and every performance, Theatre Temoin has constructed our own "nest" around our mask construction and performance.

Susan Mansfield, reviewer for The Scotsman at the Fringe Festival, observed: 'One presence that's hard to miss on the streets of Edinburgh this summer are the homeless' (Mansfiled 2016). She noted that several theatre makers at the festival that summer were addressing the issue of homelessness in their work, citing the work of Theatre Témoin as well as *One Day Moko,* by Portable Union; *Unseen*, written and performed by Ashley McLean; *The Rooster Rebellion* by Anthony L Moriani; and *Doubting Thomas* by Fusion Theatre. Mansfield also observes the problematic position of exploring an issue like homelessness in the theatre, stating:

> There is a dramatic potential in being one crisis away from catastrophe, but what does it mean to be in a predominantly middle-class audience, watching middle-class theatre-makers putting on a show about people who could never afford to see it? Are we being voyeurs, assuming that this won't happen to us? (Mansfield 2016)

While Mansfield was perhaps unaware that Theatre Témoin had invited a significant number of the hostels and food banks in Edinburgh, and that we had arranged for a large number of complimentary tickets for individuals who had had experiences of homelessness, her larger question regarding the potential for voyeurism within the theme is important and has been a point of critical reflection for the company throughout both the workshop series as well as the devising process.

Having developed the production with the support of Cardboard Citizens through a workshop series with ACT NOW (as well as a second series of workshops with their

adult members); by hosting a preview performance of our production for their staff and members; and by offering their feedback on the work and their expertise as theatre makers and as individuals who have experienced homelessness, this well-established company has been a hugely influential part of the development of *The Marked*. In their own work, Cardboard Citizens addresses the concern posed by Mansfield head on, by hiring (and training) people who have had the experience of homelessness. The company's founder, Artistic Director Adrian Jackson, was one of the original translators of the writing of Brazilian theatre-maker, Augusto Boal. Boal's (2000) *Theatre of the Oppressed* and subsequent Forum Theatre techniques lie at the heart of their methodological approach. Their stories are often based on autobiographical accounts, and there is a sense of authenticity to their work that comes from working with people who have personal histories of the lived experience of homelessness. Through their use of Forum Theatre techniques, they aim to undercut the didactic aspects of theatrical events by challenging their audience members to stop the performances and propose alternative actions of characters within the productions. Cardboard Citizens is dedicated to increasing *agency* and combating modes of oppression, not only for those individuals who have experienced homelessness, but the audience in general.

Theatre Témoin debated using performers who had experienced homelessness, and yet, the unique challenge of performing in mask (and with puppets, which were also part of the production), as well as our own doubts surrounding our own capacity to offer support, made us question the idea. In an interview in The Stage, Jackson explores the ethics of working with vulnerable populations:

> Very few have sufficient acting ability from the start to do the job that is required at the professional level we demand. So for many it is a long journey, during which we get them involved in community projects and slowly raise the bar until we feel they are ready to do a big, professional tour, like Benefit… The demands are intense. The last thing I want is to put pressure on people who can't take it. We need to be sure they are in a good place because acting is a surprisingly hard game. You have to be realistic about where people are in their lives. (Jackson in Smurthwaite 2016)

Témoin decided that, realistically, we were not in a position to support and foster those intense demands. However, we worked extensively throughout the process of development with one participant from Act Now, who kindly took us to one of Cardboard Citizens' productions: *Benefit*.

The *PaR* methodological approach we adopted for our exploration of the themes within the piece is clearly reflected within the artistic practice that Theatre Témoin produced in performance. Our approach to the construction of a professional piece of theatre explored through a process of mask construction is itself unique. Examining the existing literature on mask performance, I know of no other company that has adopted this practice, and it represents a concrete contribution to existing knowledge. While perhaps not entirely innovative within the field of masked *performance*, our approach to the *development* of *The Marked,* using both masks

and mask construction, represents an innovative practice: one that sought to highlight aspects of the unconscious psyche. By focusing on the personal shadow of individuals who have had experiences of homelessness through mask construction, by then amplifying those aspects through myth, and by attempting to construct a "nest" in which to situate that mask through storytelling, we have attempted to uncover larger "contemporary myths". Using both mask construction and performance, we have explored the experience of homelessness today through an association with mythology, and in so doing, we have attempted to 'dream the myth onwards and give it a modern dress'.

The stories we heard while participants sculpted and *papier mâchéd* their masks in our workshops are present in our protagonist, a young boy named Jack, and his confrontation with aspects of his unconscious. Our work with myth, the amplifications of those masks during the construction process, directly relates to our use of the mask within the context of the performance. In mask construction, we attempted to explore the unconscious, and then, in performance we staged the conflict between conscious and unconscious.

The process of mask construction has influenced the performance in a number of important ways. Building on the theoretical model proposed by Young-Laughlin and Laughlin (1988) and their view that masks allow for the delineation of alternate realities, *The Marked* can be viewed as proposing a merging of the masked extra-daily (unconscious) reality with Jack's daily (conscious) unmasked reality. Through the masks, we witness the extra-daily reality, which consists of a transposition of memories of aspects of his mother and the traumatic events that led to his becoming homeless. The masks offer an alternate cosmology: one where pigeons talk, where a potion turns Jack's mother into a witch, and where demons hide at every turn. This alternate reality moves into the realm of dreamlike symbol, in which the particulars of lived history become transformed and transposed. It is an altered cosmology, more akin to fairy-tale and myth than psychological realism. This masked world inflicts itself into Jack's daily life. This is, however, by no means new to the world of mask practice; indeed, here the masks perform their mythological function.

From our original exploration of mask construction drawing on therapeutic understandings of the function and value of mask (see Chapter 4), Theatre Témoin has devised a piece of masked theatre that explores homelessness as it relates specifically to mental health. Our story dealt with a reality outside the visible field. The masks enabled the company to "verify and vivify" those elements of Jack's unconscious that haunt his daily life, to give his complexes a personified form.

As we have toured throughout the UK, Theatre Témoin has been able to have detailed discussions on mental health within the homeless sector. We have been able to use the performance as a means of talking about the unseen crises that are often overlooked. Rachel Savage, the artistic director of Vamos Theatre (CITY), speaking to Lyn Gardner on the value of masks in theatre, says 'one of its greatest currencies is its ability to give voice to the unheard and the unspoken (Gardner

2016). As a performative tool, masks in *The Marked* not only draw attention to those individuals who are often 'unheard', but also attempt to give a 'voice' (and perhaps a face) to those very real crises that exist inside of these individuals.

A "Healing Fiction"

In her review of the Marked, Mansfield drew attention to our engagement programme:

> Theatre Témoin have researched *The Marked* by working with homeless charities in London, and presented the show in ten homeless hostels prior to coming to Edinburgh. Using their signature technique of combining acting with masks and puppetry, they follow Jack, a young rough-sleeper, pregnant Sophie and her belligerent boyfriend Pete as their lives brush against one another in the savage world they are forced to inhabit. The near-wordless style means the plot has to avoid too much complexity, but the production's strength is in the powerful visual world it creates. Masks and puppets create layers of symbolism to show us Jack's backstory and internal landscape. Ironically, the resolution (if such is possible for Jack) comes in a stripping away of the symbolism, and an acceptance of his own humanity and the fallible humanity of others. (Mansfield 2016)

As I examine those internal crises portrayed in the production, I find it worthwhile to reflect critically on a major point of crisis within the development of the piece. As the company constructed the narrative arc of *The Marked,* we struggled a great deal with the overarching plot structure. The process forced us to question our view of the progression of the protagonist, and, in my view, it highlighted essential differences in our understandings of psychological development, the process of individuation, and, of vital importance to this research, the return to the 'personal'.

In James Hillman's (1983) *Healing Fiction*, he outlines three basic narratives that guide the therapeutic practices of Freud, Jung, and Adler. For Hillman, the Freudian argument demonstrates the need for discovery of the repressed elements of the unconscious, which Hillman compares to the 'detective novel' where the therapist plays the part of the investigator trying to piece together a past crime. Applied to *The Marked*, as the story unfolds, Jack becomes aware of repressed material that begin to surface due to the death of his mother. Through the story, Jack learns of the traumas brought about by his mother and, having become conscious of the repressed material, is able to heal. In the centre of the stage hangs a large frame of shattered glass whose lines continue on throughout the set, meant to signify the shattering of a past reality and the repression of trauma. The piece, in this way, explores the shards of Jack's memories and his attempt to bring together past events as they cut into present action.

The 'fiction' that Hillman attributes to Jung takes the form of a 'heroic journey'. The hero in *The Marked* is thrown into a world of demons and monsters, and the masks

attest to their existence. The heroic journey is a confrontation with those very real beings that assert themselves into his life. For Jack, this is most notably seen in the archetypal image of the witch. The conflict embraced in the story is a confrontation with the negative aspects of the mother archetype. Sophie, a woman whom he meets while living on the streets, constellates Jack's anima, and he tries to return her lost scarf. As he encounters Pete, her boyfriend, Sophie takes on the projected image of the mother, both as the goddess and the witch, and, as the piece progresses, he must confront that mother complex and remove that projection from Sophie. This removal was observed by Mansfield as the 'stripping away of symbolism'. The audience is aware that the character of Sophie is underneath the figure of the mother, as well as the witch. It reflects an overlaying of projected material: the removal of the witch mask at the end of the play reveals the Sophie character, and signifies a realization of the projection.

The conflicting narrative lines seen in *The Marked*, the Freudian 'detective' and the Jungian 'hero', suggest a tension that has underlined much of this thesis: the placement of the "personal" within the aims of my mask praxis. In Chapter 4, I argued that the mask construction workshops present questions about precisely what information we were interested in gaining from the research (historic or symbolic). I admit that an element of this work held something of a detective novel approach to psychology and the "personal". The aims were to create a masked pedagogy that highlighted aspects of the "personal shadow" or "personal complexes" of the individual. Yet upon critical reflection, I have harboured the belief that the research would in some way return to a performative exploration of the personal history of the individual, a return to an autobiographical account. In my own mask performance, I see this issue arise. In Chapter 3, one can see within my examination of the senex/puer relationship that I focus on the family relationships that are central to my understanding of those terms (my father and grandfathers), returning to the old men that have shaped my life.

Members of Theatre Témoin working on *The Marked*, although it was not our lived experience, invested aspects of ourselves into the piece; conversely, each member of the creative team discovered aspects of ourselves in those masks built by individuals whose personal stories were deemed to be as different from our own as possible. At the start of the workshops (described in Chapter 4), I wrote that the participants appear to be "other". And yet, the process of mask construction (and subsequent amplifications) has had a startling humanizing and empathetic effect. It has taken personal themes that might appear to be isolating for the individual and has broadened them out to something accessible, not only to the individual who first created them, but to me and the Theatre Témoin team as well. Working within a Jungian critical framework has allowed us to explore elements of psychology outside simply the personal frame – isolating aspects of a collective psychology that connects the individual with themes that transcend personal histories. I began this thesis by proposing an exploration of a mask praxis that sought to uncover vulnerabilities within the unconscious of the actor creator. I conclude it with a piece of theatre that aims to connect with a very vulnerable population: to verify and vivify

aspects of their unconscious minds, and in so doing, to address a larger 'contemporary myth' within our performances of *The Marked.*

Conclusion

Anthropologist David Napier (1986) presents the argument that masks embody paradox, and that through paradox, masks testify to life's ambiguities and allow for categorical change. Napier's view is similar to clinical psychologist Hildegund Janzing's assertion that masks allow for 'the staging of our fundamental ambiguities' (Janzing 1998: 156). From the conception of this thesis, I have been circumambulating an "ambiguity" within Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy, a central paradox that I feel underscores his teaching: Lecoq removes the psychological, distancing performers from their personal complexes, while at the same time asking them to create a "new theatre for tomorrow" that places the actor in the centre of theatrical creation. Through the use of the mask, Lecoq seeks to remove the personal from his teachings; and yet, he erected a banner at his school that read: "Don't do what I do, do what you do!" (Murray 2003: 45). The implication of Lecoq's proclamation, in my view, is that it presents an ideal congruent with Carl Jung's process of individuation. His students must find their own way.

My first general contribution to knowledge, explored throughout the first half of this thesis (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), was to make the psychological elements within existing Lecoq-based teaching explicit. Of course Lecoq's rejection of psychology may itself be seen as a metaphorical 'mask': an anti-psychological positioning that afforded him that space to play, to take what was useful and to discard what was not. Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology of this "mask" presents the teaching itself as a means of self 'revelation through dissimulation' (Baschelard 1988: 157): to the world, Lecoq presents the stark assertion, 'I do not search for deep sources of creativity in the psychological memories whose cry of life mingles with the cry of illusion' (Lecoq 2000: 19); and yet, this statement conceals his belief in a universal poetic sense that lies *within* all of us, itself a 'deep source of creativity'. It was through the revitalization of the mask, Napier's symbol of paradox and one of man's oldest tools, that Lecoq found his symbolic means of accessing that psychological terrain.

In the first step towards the development of my own mask praxis, outlined in Chapter 1, I offer a radical reinterpretation of the neutral mask by viewing it through a Jungian critical framework. I argue that the theory underpinning much of the Lecoq tradition holds a great deal in common with Jungian depth psychology. Lecoq is aware of this connection, stating in his glossary definition of the Universal Poetic Sense, 'a concept with Jungian resonances, suggesting that all humans share the sense of an abstract dimension, made up of space, lights, materials, sounds which can be found in all of us' (Lecoq 2000: 168). In this first text to critically compare Lecoq's universal poetic sense with that of Carl Jung's collective unconscious, I outline how the neutral mask offers a structured approach to Jung's active imagination and thereby a means of encountering archetypal images within the unconscious of the performer. Adapting the classical model of Lecoq's praxis, I have articulated a new introspective journey through a five step progression within a neutral mask praxis that seeks self-knowledge: 1) A rupture with the persona. 2)

Contact with the *mundus imaginalis*. 3) Atonement with the archetypal. 4) Union of the Self and The Fundamental Journey. 5) Removal of the mask. In highlighting the teaching of Thomas Prattki, I have argued that the Jungian understanding of the process of individuation can also be seen as the basis of neutral mask praxis (see Chapter 1, p. 54-56). Building on Prattki's teachings, I offer the first formal text to highlight Prattki's contributions to the Lecoq pedagogy, as well as the first to make explicit the link between the neutral mask and Jung's process of individuation.

Building on this understanding in Chapter 2, I challenge Lecoq's assertion that the neutral mask is 'not a symbolic mask'. In adopting Jung's method of symbolic interpretation, a process of symbol elaboration called amplification, I assert that the mask offered Lecoq a symbol that grounded his pedagogy: a reaction to the nationalism of WWII, a transition into the modernist movement of French mime, and a perceived analysis of movement that could be considered "scientific". I maintain that the mask offers an archetypal image of a unified Self, and in so doing, offer four mythological associations that I argue support existing neutral mask praxis:

- The Cosmogonic Awakening of Marie-Louise von Franz, and the awakening of the actor creator *ex nihilo*, as associated with the Inuit creation myth of Father Raven. I argue that Lecoq has adopted elements of a creation myth in order to (re)position the actor in the role of creator.

- The Hindu concept of *Ātman*, or "eternal soul", as described in the Fourth Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. I examine the union of *Ātman* with Brahman the creator. In this way, I propose a mythic association with Lecoq's unique approach to mimetic identification.

- Building on the Buddhist critique of the *Ātman*, found in the concept of *anattā* of "not self" as articulated in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, I offer a mythological personification of Lecoq's *tabula rasa*. In so doing, I draw attention to Lecoq's primary description of the neutral mask, that of 'calm curiosity', and his interest in the removal of conflict.

- Finally, I examine the neutral mask in light of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, a monomyth grounding Lecoq's monist mask. By viewing Campbell's work in relation to C.G. Jung's understanding of the process of individuation, the movement from general to particular, I argue that the neutral mask points towards a long-term process of psychological differentiation.

These amplifications are not exhaustive; they do, however, speak to the diversity of meanings within the object, placing the mask in a mythological frame and attesting to its symbolic nature. Through a symbolic view of the mask, I offer new understanding as to the object's function within the pedagogy and to the actor creator.

While the first aim of this thesis has been to make the psychological elements within the Lecoq tradition explicit, integrating elements of the shadow back into the pedagogy, the second aim, explored in the second half of my thesis, has been to take that psychological understanding of mask still deeper through my own mask construction. In building a mask, as I have argued, I am able to reverse Bachelard's phenomenology of the mask, his process of 'duplication in a person who wants to appear other than he is and ends up revealing himself in and through his dissimulation' (Bachelard 1988: 157). The masks I have constructed do not allow me to appear other than I am, and thereby reveal elements of myself; on the contrary, these masks directly express aspects of myself, and do not hide. Armed with this understanding of Lecoq, supported by the work of therapists such as F. Bringham, Robert Landy, and Hildegund Janzing, who have argued that masks have *always* been used for psychological purposes, my *PaR* examines mask construction as a way of directly accessing Jung's unconscious shadow.

Chapter 3 offers a direct inquiry into *my own* mask praxis, the examination of my own "personal myth". Building on the foundation constructed during the previous chapters, I have attempted to synthesize the practice of mask construction undertaken throughout this thesis by working in groups with actors and non-actors, and by making masks alone. I examine the question: Why invite actors to make masks? In this way, this chapter represents the first critical analysis of a Lecoq trained actor using mask construction as a means of examining what Jung referred to as the personal shadow. It is a reflective attempt to articulate the journey I have undertaken, to develop knowledge from these masks - my stories of archetypal encounter. I have chosen to use the term "personal myth", not because of its use within any formal text (although there are many who have adopted the phrase), but because it was used to describe the masks built on the first attempt at group construction over four years ago (March 18, 2012). Throughout this thesis, from the first construction day with groups of professional devising actors, to workshops with individuals who have experienced homelessness, to my ongoing personal mask construction, I have been attempting to better understand the symbolic elements of these masks. By focusing on the "others" presented within our masks, this thesis demonstrates a new method by which we are better able to understand elements of ourselves. The study of these "others" within, an examination of the archetypal forces that govern the unconscious psyche, can offer an alternative approach to Lecoq's ideal of generating a "new theatre for tomorrow".

In critically analysing two workshop series with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway Recovery College, Chapter 4 represents an important step in my research: an exploration of mask construction with two organizations that have a long history of working with London's homeless community. These workshop series allowed me to test my developing praxis, to challenge my theoretical framework, methods and evolving practice in several ways: by offering essential critical distance to reflect on this praxis, by highlighting the influence Lecoq has had on my construction process, and perhaps most importantly, by challenging the preconceptions or stereotypes that I have projected onto these individuals. Working closely with participants within these programs, I have learned a great deal about how much the sculptor

projects onto the masks he or she builds. The subsequent production, *The Marked*, has demonstrated that one can use this methodology and achieve a number of the classical markers of theatrical success: the production has been supported by a grant from the Wellcome Trust, opened at the Camden People's Theatre, toured homeless shelters and hostels throughout the year before culminating in a sell out run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Through this methodological approach to mask construction, I argue that Theatre Témoin has developed a masked production that does not hide from, but embraces the creative potential of the personal complex.

This thesis has outlined my developing story of psychological exploration, demonstrating challenges that I have faced in attempting to balance Lecoq's view of playfulness with my interest in exploring the psychological. Because of the personal nature of this work, placing the performer at the centre of a study of the unconscious psyche, I have argued that this research demands a *Practice as Research* methodology. Conversely, it should be noted that this specific method of mask construction is not limited to the masks I have built on my own; the benefits extend beyond my personal masks, as evidenced in my workshop series with Cardboard Citizens and St Mungo's Broadway.

Shaped by some of the most influential thinkers on the use and function of mask (Eliade 1989, Janzing 1998, Kerényi 1948, Jennings and Minde 1993), I have argued that masks have long been tools for experiencing the mythical, bringing our heroes, monsters, gods and demons to life in front of us. I have argued that in the construction of a mask, one is allowed to project his or her own "myths" onto clay, bringing them to life. I have demonstrated how we can use those "personal myths", studying the heroes and monsters contained within them to create theatre, and, perhaps, to grow. Ultimately, this thesis re-envisions Lecoq's goal of an actor created theatre, and through a *Practice as Research* investigation, proposes an alternative paradigm for thinking about, talking about and making theatre from a Lecoq-based mask praxis.

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Figure 30
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