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Item Type	Thesis
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**A Practice-Based Exploration of
Mask/Clown and the Development of a
New Pedagogy**

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PhD 2020



A Practice-Based Exploration of Mask/Clown and the
Development of a New Pedagogy

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts,
Humanities and Social Sciences in candidacy for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Irish World Academy of Music and Dance

Limerick, Ireland

September 2020

Simon Thompson

Supervisors: Dr Niamh NicGhabhann, Dr Grant McLay

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Abstract

This thesis explores the development of a creative pedagogy through mask and clown and the possibilities that these methods could present in the education of practitioners across other performance-related disciplines.

In order to undertake this inquiry, the research was focused on my personal experience as a mask and clown performer. This thesis document is an active interrogation of my practice by using an auto-ethnographic approach relating to practice and creative process within the context of devising and teaching. Throughout the thesis, I further reflect on my own solo work and collaborative work through workshops, experiments and performances.

During the process of engaging with this research, a number of new findings and methods have emerged. This new knowledge base has been developed and established upon the existing concepts of play, *complicité*, embodiment and kinetic empathy. These emergent methods have subsequently been compiled to create a robust framework for a new creative pedagogy.

The new methodology, which informs this thesis, follows a structured learning programme through mask and clowning principles incorporating the neutral mask, the equivocal mask, the four temperaments' masks and character masks, which are then interspersed with the application of a red nose.

However, the focus of this pedagogy is not on teaching mask and clown as disciplines, but on how to incorporate elements of mask and clown into a student's existing knowledge base. This pedagogy has been developed to teach, support and mentor students by providing them with the necessary skills to create audience-engaged performances, which are rooted in play, *complicité* and empathy.

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Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	10
Prologue: Setting the Scene.....	11
Introduction.....	11
The catalyst for imagination.....	14
Conclusion.....	21
Video 1.....	21
Chapter 1. The Research, Methods and Theoretical Underpinnings.....	22
Introduction.....	22
Background to this research.....	22
The research question.....	24
Situating self and situating practice.....	25
Arts practice research.....	27
Arts practice methodology.....	35
Auto-ethnography.....	37
Narrative inquiry.....	39
Performance narrative or creation of data through performance.....	40
Interviews with others and with the researcher.....	41
Research Ethics and Principles.....	43
Theoretical underpinnings.....	44
Play and <i>Complicité</i>	44
Empathy, Somatics, kinaesthesia and embodied knowledge.....	46
Performance and practice as research.....	51
Practice.....	54
Conclusion.....	55
Chapter 2. Mask: the Art of Culture, Expression and Transformation.....	57

Introduction	57
Ritual masking	68
Masks in performance: Greek tragedy	77
Commedia dell'arte	83
Contemporary use of mask	90
Conclusion	96
Chapter 3. Play and Learning Through Mask	97
Introduction	97
Play in praxis	103
Mask in praxis	107
Pedagogy and Lecoq	108
Video No. 2 (Performance No. 1)	117
Summary Performance No.1.....	117
Post-show Focus Group	121
Conclusion	123
Chapter 4. Masks and Devising	124
Introduction	124
A creative residency for <i>Lifted Up</i>	124
A place and process for research and creativity	131
The creative space: how the space informed the work.....	132
Initial observations.....	132
The process	133
Breathing: a method to communicate	134
Devising and making meaning through movement.....	136
A sense of inner beauty.....	138
Working collaboratively with masks	145
<i>Altjeringa</i> : a gestural étude	146
Video No. 3.....	146
Finding a shared language.....	147
Keeping the mask alive and audience proximity	151
Soundscape	154
Summary <i>Altjeringa</i>	155
Video 4 (Performance No. 2)	156
Summary <i>Lifted Up</i>	156
Conclusion	162

Chapter 5. Conclusions	164
References	168
Appendix 1. Ethics Information Letter and Consent Form	174
Appendix 2. Transcript of Peer Interviews.....	177
Appendix 3. Daily Timetable	185
Appendix 4. Programme, <i>Lifted Up</i>	187

Figures

Figure P1. Pulcinella in 1700. Maurice Sand (Sand 1962).	16
Figure P2. Mr Punch hand puppet.	18
Figure P3. <i>The Miller's Story</i>.	21
Figure 1.1. Poster images from OTC.	23
Figure 2.1. Makishi masks (Banda 2010).	70
Figure 2.2. Gedi Sanniya (left), demon of boils and skin diseases; Jala Sanniya (middle), demon of cholera and chills; Kora Sanniya (right), demon of lameness and paralysis (Bailey, De Silva 2006).	71
Figure 2.3. Mardi Gras mask, (iStockphoto 2017).	73
Figure 2.4. The Green Man mask	75
Figure 2.5. Wassail Song, Cecil Sharp Manuscript Collection (Sharp 1903).	76
Figure 2.6. Reproduction of a Zeus mask	77
Figure 2.7. Carvings of horsemen on the Frieze of the Parthenon.	81
Figure 2.8. Reproduction chorus mask	82
Figure 2.9. Pantalone (Shutterstock 2018).	86
Figure 2.10. Arlechino (Shutterstock 2018).	88
Figure 2.11. Zanni, Giangurgolo (Shutterstock 2017).	89
Figure 2.12. The architecture of a commedia troupe and characters.	90
Figure 2.13. Mary Wigman's Hexentanz or Witch Dance (Caravaglia 2017).	95
Figure 2.14. <i>A Brave Face</i> by Vamos Theatre (Vamos 2018).	96
Figure 3.1. Definitions of 'play'.	100
Figure 3.2. Finding Play workshop. Girona, Catalonia (2018),	101
Figure 3.3. Interview findings of common principles of play when engaged as a creative method.	105
Figure 3.4. The educational journey, International School of Mime and Theatre. (Lecoq 2000)	108
Figure 3.5. Neutral mask made by Newman Masks.	109
Figure 4.1. <i>Lifted Up</i> work in development. (Birdthistle 2018)	125
Figure 4.2. Various masks used during the devising process.	131
Figure 4.3. Nenagh Arts Centre.	132
Figure 4.4. Equivocal mask.	146

Figure 4.5. Phrases that became associated with the equivocal mask.	153
Figure 4.6. Indigenous dot art. The image is of the rain stick used in the performance and during the devising of <i>Altjeringa</i>.	155

Tables

Table 1.1. The Five Pillars of Essential Criteria for PhD Research	29
Table 1.2. Principles underpinning a PhD award	29
Table 1.3. Arts practice-based competences for doctoral study	30
Table 1.4. Summary of Ehtics Principles	43
Table 2.1. Masks and Masking	66
Table 3.1. Neutral Mask Workshop Structure	118
Table 3.2. Neutral Mask Workshop Focus Group Comments	122
Table 4.1 The Four Temperaments	140
Table 4.2. Lecoq’s Seven Levels of Tension	148
Table 4.3. The Eight Efforts and Their Four Components	150
Table 4.4. <i>Lifted Up</i> Audience Responses from the Post Show Q & A	161
Table A3.1. Example of Daily Timetable	185

Acknowledgements

Dr Niamh NicGhabhann and Dr Grant McLay have supervised this research project with knowledge, insight, generosity and an overwhelming amount of patience. Following on from our meetings, I always felt motivated and ready to face the next challenge. I thank and respect you both immensely. Thank you again.

This research was also kindly supported by the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance through their fee waiver scheme, therefore easing some of the financial burden and pressure of carrying out research when working as an artist. I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues at the Academy for the opportunities to develop my teaching practice.

To all my friends and fellow students at the Academy, thank you for your on going support and engagement. To all the participants and influencers in this research, I am so grateful for your input, contribution and improvement to my knowledge and the outcome of this project.

A special thank you goes to my dear friends and creative inspiration, Professor Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (1950–2018) and Professor Helen Phelan without whom this project would never have become a reality. Your kind and encouraging words have often filled my heart with joy.

To my family and close friends, your love and support have kept me focused and passionate, you have always been there, and I cannot thank you enough. Shona thank you for not being a typical teenager, thank you for just being you. To Eva, the unsung hero of this project, your love, care, understanding, patience and advice has been the foundation, which has supported this research; you are always in my heart.

Simon x

Prologue: Setting the Scene

Introduction

This thesis explores the development of a creative pedagogy through mask and clown and the possibilities that these methods could present in the education of practitioners across other performance-related disciplines. The rationale behind this prologue is to situate the researcher at a point in time nearing the completion of the research inquiry. Using *The Miller's Story* as data, it is possible to observe some of the core concepts, which have been derived from this research through praxis. In particular, the foundational concepts of play, complicité and empathy, which are further discussed at length in the theoretical underpinning's section of this thesis.

In *The Miller's Story* the concepts of play and complicité, demonstrate how through shared experience an audience can become active participants in the game of theatre. Furthermore throughout *The Miller's Story* there is a focus on developing a sense of empathy with the audience. During the twelve-months when this production toured Ireland and the U.K one of my primary objectives was to ensure that an early relationship was established with the audience, a relationship, which was based on trust and respect. This was successfully achieved through the use of storytelling, kinaesthesia and 'safe'¹ game play. In *The Miller's Story* the games were devised to engage and include the audience in active participation often creating moments of uncertainty and possible failure for myself, therefore revealing a sense of honesty and vulnerability. *The Miller's Story* is a hybrid theatre performance, which combines aspects of clown and mask, therefore when reflecting on the clowning elements engaged with during the devising process and the performance, it has been possible to demonstrate the importance and relevance of clowning as one of the core pillars in this research inquiry. However due to the complex nature and diversity, which exists within clowning it would not be possible to carry out a detailed study of clowning at this juncture, therefore within the context of this thesis I have outlined the significant elements of clowning, which have a particular resonance to this inquiry.

¹ Safe game play, for the audience there must never be the fear of ridicule and at all times the audience should be nurtured and cared for.

Clown is a perfect metaphor for the human condition an uncompromising mirror in which to look for a glimpse of the truth. When we observe a clown it becomes possible to see ourselves, our hopes, dreams, fears, and virtues, as well as our flaws and failures. Clowns can show us how we get into trouble without ever meaning or wanting to, sometimes showing us how to stumble onto a beautiful solution for a tricky problem.

I would claim clowning isn't something, which we need to learn it is something that can be discovered within ourselves. Those times when we are curious, playful, or creative, we are in a clown like mode. When we are in a state of wonder or awe, surprise or amazement, this could be considered as clown. Whenever we have hunches, act on impulse, or digress, this to could be considered clown like. In my experience the clown lives in a world of laughter and tears, a world where all our emotions are working symbiotically. The clown is the '*puer aeternus*', the eternal child in all of us, an innocent being who sees things as they really are and not as society or convention decrees. The clown is often the solitary voice who can be counted on to tell us, in the loudest possible means, that the Emperor is indeed not wearing any clothes. Ultimately clown is a truth teller.

Clown exists in the heart of the performer and it is present in the moment, having no past to regret and no future to dread it is the element in all of us that only wants to play, completely free of responsibility and yet is willing and able to try and save the world if necessary. The clown takes everything literally and personally, questioning everything except itself. With the best of intentions and no thought of failure, it leaps naively into danger falling over time and time again yet never failing to get up. Clowning is the embodiment of hope in the face of hopelessness, and possibility in the face of the impossible. It is about the freedom that comes from a state of total, unconditional acceptance of our most authentic self. It offers relief from our self-doubts and fears, opening the door to joy.

These core elements of clowning are subjected to a more detailed investigation in conjunction with my research on the neutral mask, documented in Chapter 3 and further demonstrated in the first of the examined performances. (Video No.2)

Throughout this inquiry, it has become evident that new knowledge is being generated through my devising process and in my teaching. It is this knowledge that has enabled the development of a new creative pedagogy, situating mask and clown as core principles in my process of enabling play. Furthermore, it has emerged that when play is engaged with through a creative approach, the results are typically spontaneous and have a direct connection to the artist creating a mode of performance that has the potential to connect with an audience on a sensory level, through kinetic empathy and complicité.

‘The Keys of Canterbury/Blue Muslin’

Madam I would give you the Keys of Canterbury,

And all the bells in London will ring to make us merry,

If you would be my joy, my sweet and only dear

And walk along with me anywhere

The above lyrics have been used as the opening lines of *The Miller’s Story*, a theatrical performance devised and adapted by Simon Thompson from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (1392). These lyrics were published widely throughout the nineteenth century, and this particular version was from John Woodrich of Thrushelton, a variant of which is printed in Sabine Baring-Gould’s (1834–1924) *Songs of the West* (Baring-Gould 1905, p.44). Song No 22 *Blue Muslin* I first heard it sung by the folk musicians’ Show of Hands on *Arrogance Ignorance and Greed* (Knightley 2009).

During my creative process, a piece of music, a song or a simple rhythm has the potential to spark a new idea. This can lead to a flood of creative impulses, all of which are judiciously noted and captured in a journal. These notes can be in the form of a sketch, a poem, a line of text, a series of movements or maybe one simple gesture. Taking inspiration from these notes, I would typically immerse myself in the studio space and play.

Play is an essential component in my practice, and it forms the central pillar upon which this thesis is established. Throughout my career, play has been a singular

constant factor. My devising process would always question, ‘How do I play, how does an ensemble play?’ Over time, there has been a growing desire to engage more and more with the audience. Now I am asking ‘How does the audience play?’ I am interested to see how far an audience will go when they become engaged and invested in the performance and then subsequently whether that engagement enhances their personal experience of the performance.

Will playing a game generate a sense of *complicité*,² a deeper emotional understanding, a sense of kinetic empathy not just with the performer but with the other audience members as well?

The Miller’s Story is one of the pieces of work, which evolved during the later stages of this doctoral research inquiry; it was devised and developed during 2018. It stands as a good reference for my current practice, as it is a work that was heavily influenced by my research findings. During the creation process, I was often prompted to engage with specific elements of my research in order to create a performance that captures a sense of play for both the audience and the artist.

The catalyst for imagination

The catalyst for the imagination was the song *Keys of Canterbury*. After listening, I became extremely aware that the storytelling of this particular song and it resonated with me. Immediately, my imagination began to picture the person that was singing these slightly bawdy and yet pleading lyrics. The reference to Canterbury in the opening line suggested Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and it was not long before my memory flashed back to my childhood.

I was 12 years old in the school library, giggling at the naughtiness of *The Miller’s Tale*. The language was difficult and hard to follow, but I struggled on, like an intrepid explorer unearthing these gems of medieval ribald humour. I remember buying a copy of the book with my hard-earned pocket money. My father was

² The concept of *complicité* is at one level, a silent communication, an unspoken understanding; it is the catching of another’s eye and then instinctively reacting.

convinced I had become increasingly weird overnight: ‘Had I been hanging out with actors or poets?’ he asked.

Therefore, on this occasion, the next step in the process was to revisit the text of *The Miller’s Tale*. It was over 38 years since I first read Chaucer; leafing the pages, it quickly became apparent that it would be possible to devise a clown adaptation of this tongue-in-cheek comic poem. However, I wanted to approach the story from a slightly different perspective, because when working with clown, it is not solely about retelling the story or getting the easy laughs. For me, clown needs to create a sense of empathy, something relatable. It is about the human condition. Therefore, it was the Miller’s character and his personal story that interested me the most.

From the text, it is possible to quickly deduce that the Miller is a relatively base person, someone who enjoys a more hedonistic approach to life: a drink, good food and something a little debauched. Wow! He is the perfect clown archetype, and when considering archetypes, my first reference point would typically be the traditional half masks and the archetypes that have been established through the legacy of Commedia dell’arte. In Chapter 2 of thesis, *Mask: the Art of Culture, Expression and Transformation* there is a more detailed discussion on the history of Commedia dell’arte, complete with a brief analysis of some of the core archetypes.

One of these commedia dell’arte archetypes is Pulcinella, a principal character from the architecture of Commedia dell’arte scenario writing, and he is often played as a low-status bully (Rudlin 1994, p. 138). Through my experience of performing in commedia dell’arte productions, Pulcinella would certainly be an ideal archetype as the starting point in the characterisation of the Miller in Chaucer’s poem. Coincidentally, Pulcinella was also a miller; he is traditionally depicted as a flour miller from Naples (Rudlin 1994, p. 139). Below is an 18th-century illustration of Pulcinella.



Figure P1. Pulcinella in 1700. Maurice Sand (Sand 1962).

Below³ are notes from my journal dated November 2017. At this point in time, my work on *The Miller's Story* was in its infancy as part of a month-long residency in A Little Room, Waterford.⁴ It was here where the initial phase of devising took place along with a feedback showing of the work in development.

Who is the Miller/Pulcinella?

His name means little chicken, the full name is Pulcinella Cetrulo, cetrulo = stupid. He became Polichinelle in France, Hanswurst in Germany, Petrushka in Russia, and Mr Punch in England

(Rudlin 1994, p. 138).

³ Journal entries to be written in typewriter font, a convention that will be adopted throughout the thesis to highlight that here is verbatim data taken from my notes.

⁴ A Little Room is a space dedicated exclusively to theatre development. It is open to practitioners from Waterford and beyond to come and spend a month developing work in a free and professional space.

Sometimes he's a master and sometimes a servant. This is because he can either be an employer or employee, yet he has no respect for persons either way. He wears a long baggy white blouse, tied around the waist with a leather belt... baggy white trousers and often a white sugar-loaf hat. Pulcinella would represent the poor worker, a man who has very little to lose and therefore sheds the politeness borne of fear common to the higher classes. Traditionally Pulcinella would wear a leather half mask, brown or black with a long, beaked nose, furrowed with wrinkles and a large wart on the forehead. He moves slow and top-heavy, contrasting with the speed of his thought and speech. But can also be slightly acrobatic, his gestures are broad and sparing, he's an excellent mimic.

Typically Pulcinella is either stupid pretending to be clever, or clever pretending to be stupid, either way, he is always pretending and self-centred. He has no more care for human life than that of a flea. He loves food, drink and sex, but will not work for it. He talks about himself in the third person and absolutely cannot keep a secret.

After making these notes,⁵ my instincts were that Pulcinella was definitely the archetype to explore and furthermore, in order to add just a little British eccentricity, why not top him off with a slice of Mr Punch?⁶ The influence of Mr Punch on the characterisation should be evident in the finished presentation.

⁵ In the early stages of this project, I would consistently draw reference and inspiration from a number of publications listed in the references, most notably Ducharte (1966).

⁶ Mr Punch, a Victorian sideshow puppet based on the commedia archetype of Pulcinella. He dominated his wife Judy along with their child. He also terrified those around him; his passions were for sausages and drink.



Figure P2. Mr Punch hand puppet.

In morphing these iconic characters together many hours were spent exploring pure movement; these movements consist of a series of simple actions such as arm or leg extensions, head tilts, standing and sitting, then moving onto more stylised gestures, often moving through the empty space in a neutral mask, sometimes in a Pulcinella mask. The process would be captured on video and then approximately every 30 minutes I would break and watch the footage while trying to recall the sensations within the body. Once satisfied with the physical movements, the mask would be removed, and elements of breath⁷ and voice would be added.

This point in devising the physical character now required a story to tell, a journey to take, so that the Miller could come alive and create a succession of games to entice the audience to play. After a relatively short period of time, I abandoned the idea of retelling the poem in verbatim, in favour of a ‘Priming the Canon’ approach, a phrase adopted by The Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 2015.

⁷ A friend and fellow artist once said to me ‘There is nothing you can’t say with a breath.’

Priming the Canon is a series of commissioned plays for young people, which brings classic Irish characters into the heart of the classroom.

(The Abbey Theatre, 2020)

My aim, however, was not to bring the work into the classroom but to rekindle the passion and interest in Chaucer's classic writing rooted in the English canon, making the work easily accessible and engaging. This could be achieved by creating a previous life for the Miller and situating him within Chaucer's pilgrimage to Canterbury, and by doing so, it gave the freedom to incorporate some of the other characters from the book, in combination with the option of creating a completely new narrative.

After two weeks of the residency, there was a deviation from my established methods of working; instead of writing up a scene and then working it up in a systematic manner, I began to create games for the Miller to play, problems for him to solve, the only premise being that the outcome must be another problem, which then required another solution and so on. This is a method based on improvised play, where the objective is to find the most ridiculous solution to a problem. It has been developed through my professional practice into this research, and it is what I would refer to as 'clown logic'. Clown logic looks for the most ridiculous solution to a problem, and in doing so it inevitably causes another problem or failure. If rational logic was applied to solving these problems, it would quickly lead to an obvious or simple solution, and the game would very quickly end. In my experience and through performance, the application of clown logic helps to keep an audience engaged. I would suggest this is due to there being an element of surprise or intrigue, and the audience is asked to think and observe as nothing is predictable.

In developing these games, the Miller quickly came to life and suggestions for a narrative emerged almost organically. Again, this process was captured on video and in a journal. During the rest periods, I would review the notes and videos in order to commit elements of them to memory both corporeally and cerebrally. This became the method for the next week, both play and failure working in parallel sparking new creative ideas that were imaginative and immediate. In the final week of the residency, the objective was to transform some of these ideas, movements, voices and games into a short showing of the work in progress.

Through documenting this, my intention was to reinforce the importance of the development of play and how it informs my methods. The stepping into an empty space and playing with just a few given circumstances enables a freedom of thought. Playing releases the immediacy, a sense of being in the moment, and the vibrancy that emerges comes from within the artist. The lived experiences of the artist influence and help form the outcome of the games. With this project, the results of the games generated new material that feels authentic and has a connection to the artist and the audience.

Some of the ideas, which were generated are rooted in my past, born from personal experiences, formed in the imagination and then played out and made manifest through my own physical capabilities. In the following journal extract from December 2017, I begin to reflect and comment on the residency and indeed, the outcomes from it.

After the recent month in Waterford, where I finished up by presenting 15 minutes of work in progress for *The Millers Story*, I'm in a state of, well I suppose delight and curiosity is the best way of explaining it. The showing went really well, and the response and feedback were fantastic; the most common feedback was 'It was so natural; it felt like you were telling us a real story. You weren't acting.' Hey come on I was sat there in a smock, tights and silly hat, am I that like the Miller? ... Thinking about it though it is interesting, because yes it felt natural. It wasn't dry or rehearsed, and it wasn't boring or obvious. Was it through the games that were played during the devising process that I have developed a personal connection to the character and the story? The voice and the movements, although not my own, are rooted in myself and echo traces of my life.



Figure P3. *The Miller's Story*.

Conclusion

To conclude, through deep reflection and analysis of *The Miller's Story* it has become evident that clowning and the application of masks form the foundations upon which my practice and creative process's are established. Play, empathy and complicité are core concepts, which inform my methods of devising and teaching. Furthermore, throughout this inquiry, a number of new findings and methods have emerged and developed. The results and findings from this research have now been compiled to create a robust framework for a new creative pedagogy: a pedagogy, which teaches, supports and mentors students from multiple disciplines. The methodology informing this pedagogy follows a structured learning programme through mask and clowning principles. However, the focus of the pedagogy is not on mask and clown as disciplines, but on how to incorporate elements of mask, clown and ultimately play into a student's existing knowledge base. These methods will be further discussed in more detail throughout chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the thesis.

Video 1

Simon Thompson, *The Miller's Story*. Irish World Academy of Music and Dance

Chapter 1. The Research, Methods and Theoretical Underpinnings

Introduction

The following chapter explores my research question in conjunction with the methods and the theoretical underpinnings that have been engaged with during the development of a creative pedagogy through mask and clown. In order to undertake this inquiry, the research has focused on my personal experience as a mask and clown performer. The project will actively analyse my practice of devising new work and the teaching of students by using an auto-ethnographic approach relating to practice and creative process within the context of my training, therefore, further clarifying and examining patterns and methodologies of work that are associated with mask and clown. Throughout the inquiry, I also reflect on solo work and collaborative work through workshops, experiments and performances. A significant outcome from the research has been the creation of two new performances, one a group workshop, the other a solo performance.

Background to this research

In 2007, Orchard Theatre Company (OTC) was established with myself in the role of artistic director. The company was a performance ensemble, which focused on the physical aspect of creating theatre, typically clown, bouffon and mask, which was often integrated with minimal or abstract set design. In the course of developing and mounting the work, the creative and aesthetic decisions required a certain level of skill and imagination on the part of the ensemble. The work (examples below in Figure 1.1) was heavily reliant on gesture and movement, and the mission of the company was to create an ephemeral moment in time where the audience was engaged and became part of a unique shared experience.



Figure 1.1. Poster images from OTC.

However, this combination of professional and creative requirements led to difficulties in recruiting ensemble members who had the desired skill and experience. Traditional actor training had furnished them with a skill set capable of developing characters, stagecraft and working with text and direction. Yet there was, in my opinion, a deficiency in knowledge of the body as a device for storytelling, combined with something of a fear of breaking the fourth wall and actively engaging with the audience. These gaps in skillset, therefore, resulted in considerable amounts of time

being invested in workshops and training with members of the ensemble. Due to this upskilling period, it meant that the OTC could also recruit artists from other disciplines such as dance and circus. Gradually, this series of workshops, which were developed and taught by myself, became documented and more structured and subsequently they formed the foundation of my teaching practice in professional development and third level education.

The research question

In my experiences of working with mask and clown, the education, devising and performance processes are traditionally rooted in physical embodiment, shared experience and play. My research question examines the extent to which these processes can be developed and incorporated within a creative pedagogy, which can serve other performance-related disciplines.

Maiya Murphy⁸ explores the basis of the pedagogy around mask and clown established by Jacques Lecoq (1921–1999), one of the foundational modern teachers of these disciplines. Here, Murphy (2017, p. 326) states the principles on which Lecoq’s pedagogy is established, highlighting the importance of elements such as embodiment and shared experience.

The theatre pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq (1921–1999) is founded on the principle that all physical, psychological, intellectual, and emotional performance registers can be accessed by prioritizing the moving body. Therefore, a Lecoq-based approach is in contrast to dominant principles of psychologically based acting that privilege working through emotion and psychology. While Lecoq pedagogy does not discount these performance registers, normally considered to belong to the ‘internal’ world of the actor, Lecoq’s work reaches them through physical action. Lecoq pedagogy considers it possible to learn how to shape and manage these registers by mastering the moving body as creative theatrical agent.

⁸ Maiya Murphy is assistant professor in the theatre studies programme at the National University of Singapore and has written on Lecoq pedagogy, cognitive science, collective creation, physical theatre approaches and dance. She also makes theatre with her collective, Autopoetics.

As someone who was trained by Lecoq, these ideas have fundamentally informed my own approach. However, as will be documented throughout this thesis, the exploration of my own practice has enabled me to engage with and extend these experiences and embed them into my own creative and pedagogical approaches.

Situating self and situating practice

I was born in Manchester, UK, in 1969. Currently living in Ireland since 2001, I am now residing in Limerick. I am a clown, masked performer and teacher. When I perform as a clown, there is an inner sense of freedom, a freedom to play, a freedom to embrace the ridiculous and share myself with the audience. My experience is one of being present in the moment while striving to develop a common vibration with the audience. There are no taboos and no facets of the human condition that cannot be explored: sadness, sorrow, anger, delight, joy, rage and ecstasy. It is a liberating experience where my innocence and vulnerability are exposed.

As a young child, my grandfather would almost religiously each Christmas, take me to watch Belle Vue Circus, Hyde Road, Manchester. He worked at the showgrounds and would receive complimentary tickets for the family; I can still remember the clown's name, Jacko Fossett (1922–2004).⁹ To my delight, the first circus in which I performed as a clown was Belle Vue. Belle Vue was a traditional circus environment, complete with variety and spectacle acts. In this environment, clowning was considered by the other artists to be a noble craft, handed down via word of mouth, secret books with coded writings and pencil sketches that outlined how props were made and operated to recreate a moment of comedy. The makeup was designed to maximise your facial gestures to benefit the audience who sat in a darkened space, the costume tailored from oversized clothes emphasising the comic body. We never talked of heart and humanity, and we never debated 'what was clown'. We discussed show business, gags and skits. The whole focus was on getting the laugh, and we thought little about connection or shared experience. However, the sad truth was, the

⁹ Jacko Fossett died aged 81; he performed with the great circuses of the post-war era. From 1964 until its closure in 1967, he was with Britain's biggest circus, Bertram Mills. He also worked with Chipperfield's and Billy Smart's, and featured at the Christmas circuses in Belle Vue, Manchester.

skits were often flat, obvious and boring, and the reaction from the audience ranged from a childish giggle to small outbursts of laughter. Yet despite this, I was hooked; there was delight in being childlike, an internal energy, a buzz, which came from performing, wanting to learn more and wanting to improve. In 1987, I began to study at *L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*.

Studying at Lecoq was totally different from working in the circus. The school focused on creativity, exploring the possibilities of the body and the use of the body as a poetic instrument.¹⁰ At the school we trained hard; we studied theatre, biomechanics, Greek tragedy and melodrama, furthermore we explored masks from the neutral through to larval and character masks, half masks and finally the red nose.

One of the pillars of Lecoq's pedagogy, which has significantly informed my practice, was *autocours*. Each Friday, unfinished work would be presented for the staff and students in the *Grand Salle*. At times this felt like a weekly punishment; however, in reality, this was a method for devising and creating new work. The feedback to the students was often brutal and negative; Lecoq used '*via negativa*'¹¹ to control the energy in the room. Sometimes he knew exactly what he wanted the student to do; on other occasions, it was a mechanism to generate urgency and panic, where the students would react in a frenzy quickly experimenting. To Lecoq, this was a game; he disliked the students being comfortable or becoming confident. If a class did not descend into crisis, he would definitely create one. A significant outcome of *autocours* was the development and understanding of *complicité*: the unspoken almost telepathic communication between members of an ensemble. However, it must not stop there. For Lecoq, the audience is also a part of the performance and they should experience a sense of connection with each other and with the performers as they navigate the narrative, the emotions, the highs and the lows. It was through the concept of *complicité* that clown personally exploded into a new dimension.

¹⁰ The poetic body was a method developed by Jacques Lecoq along with the writings of French philosopher Gaston Bachelard on the poetics of imagination. The aim is to create a sense of embodiment whereby the feeling body actively explores the material elements of earth, air, fire and water. These are experienced as poeticising substances, catalysts and conductors for an embodied imagination (Nixon 2015).

¹¹ 'Lecoq worked largely through a form of *via negativa*, an approach which rejects prescription and illustration by example in favour of a search for truth through negation' (Murphy 2019, pp.33-66).

In some respects a long way from Manchester, now over 30 years later, battle-scarred and a little wiser from a whole host of lived experiences, I am now questioning the methods by which I was trained. Is *via negativa* a good thing? Does constant rejection and criticism damage? Is the student conditioned to create work, which satisfies the master as opposed to pushing boundaries and taking risks? Upon reflection and drawing on my personal experience, my initial response would be that students should be nurtured, advised and encouraged to find their own unique potential. Chapter 3 (Analysis of Performance No1), documents in more detail the methods used throughout this inquiry to successfully engage with students.

Therefore, through the arts practice PhD, it will be possible to take an in-depth investigation into my practice and by using the data generated from this inquiry, it will be possible to develop a new creative pedagogy, which situates mask and clown at its core.

The research will draw on my personal experiences as a clown, mask performer and teacher, through an active deep exploration of my own practice. Data will be compiled using auto-ethnographic and ethnographic approaches relevant to my personal experiences and other professionals engaged in the sector. Documentation will include self-reflective and self-observational data in the form of journaling, personal memory data, autobiographical writing, field notes and audio-visual recordings. External data will be compiled through interviews, workshops, reviews, feedback, audio-visual recordings and correspondence. Furthermore, by using this auto-ethnographic approach to explore my practice/creative process in the context of my own training, it will be possible to clarify and analyse patterns and methodologies of work that are linked to mask and clown, therefore, providing opportunities to reflect on solo work and group work through workshops, experiments, devising and performance, which will culminate in the development of a neutral mask workshop, a masked performance and ultimately a new creative pedagogy.

Arts practice research

This section of the thesis considers the implications of practice as research, my understanding of this field of academia and the rationale for choosing it as the most appropriate method through which to conduct my research.

Based on lecture notes from Dr Helen Phelan, Professor at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Since the early 1990s, there has been an on going debate around practice as research. This was initially driven by art and design faculties within universities and subsequently adopted by performance-based educators. (Phelan 2016) Traditionally these types of academies would have been more conservatoire focused with a pedagogical approach rather than that of academic accreditation.

Deiter Lesage, a Belgian writer and philosopher writes in *Practice as Research in the Arts, Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Nelson 2013, p.146) how following the Bologna Declaration of 1999, that European Arts in higher education had an obligation to become 'Academic'. This was of major concern to the Academies in so far as how they should become Academic. They were different from the Universities, the Academies were specialist institutions, which typically taught visual and fine arts, film, drama, or music and this practice was more often than not done through a pedagogical methodology.

In the medieval education system it would have taken six years to achieve a Master of Arts degree; a Bachelor of Arts degree would be awarded after completing the third or fourth year. By 'Arts' the degree was referring to the seven liberal arts, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music theory, grammar, logic, and rhetoric. These were all taught in Latin, both speech and text, and students were expected to be fluent and able to converse and debate intelligently in the language. Therefore it is clear to see that Universities had adopted a theoretical approach to learning, the inclusion of practice could this be seen as an erosion of power, status and even a relaxing of academic rigour. Today's practice-based research methods are a long way removed from those of the past, yet does that make them any less valid?

Therefore when writing in relation to 'doctorateness', the following could be considered as the five pillars of essential criteria for establishing successful and rigorous PhD research (Atkinson and Parry 1997; Dinham and Scott 2001; Philips and Pugh, 1987)

Table 1.1. The Five Pillars of Essential Criteria for PhD Research

Purposive	The identification of an issue or problem worthy and capable of investigation.
Inquisitive	Seeking to acquire new knowledge.
Informed	Conducted from an awareness of previous related research.
Methodical	Planned and carried out in a disciplined manner.
Communicable	Generating and reporting results that are testable and accessible by others.

Robin Nelson, Director of Research, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, makes the following statement in relation to research.

People engage in research from a variety of motives but, ultimately, the rigours of sustained academic research are driven by the desire to address a problem, find things out and establish new insights.

(Nelson 2013, p.3)

Nelson, a strong advocate for PaR offers a model for carrying out and justifying research that utilises three distinct modes of knowing. (Know-how, Know-what and Know-that)

Therefore the ideal outcomes of PaR should display an intellectual diagnostic rigour in the critical reflection on practice, this is done through movement between know-how and know-what and then through discourse between know-what and know-that. The ultimate prize being the best and most effective means possible to articulate what is currently happening in praxis in respect of substantial new discoveries or insights.

(Nelson 2013)

In the 1997 – UK Council of Graduate Education Report, *Practice-Based Doctorates in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design* these key points were made.

Table 1.2. Principles underpinning a PhD award

1	The submitted work makes a recognisable contribution to knowledge and understanding.
2	The student must demonstrate a critical knowledge of the appropriate research methods.
3	The submission is subject to an oral examination.

From this, a list of Arts Practice-based competences for doctoral study were compiled

Table 1.3. Arts practice-based competences for doctoral study

1	Undertake a systematic enquiry, creation or design.
2	Apply methods and techniques appropriate to the subject.
3	Grasp contingent areas of knowledge, context, performance / production.
4	Document the process of origination in a way which is communicable to peers in a permanent and reproducible form.
5	Develop a sustained and logical argument contextualised to relevant discourse.
6	Justify actions and decisions related to process and product.
7	Perform / Produce a work which is valid and original and of high quality.

However the debates not only exist in regards to the ‘Doctorateness’ of practice driven PhD’s but also to what does practice actually contribute to the research. Associate Professor Nithikul Nimkulrat, Ontario College of Art and Design explores this and endeavours to add clarity to the terms practice-based research and practice-led research.

Practice-led research is a fairly provisional term for classifying this recent form of research in art and design that can be conducted by a researcher who herself is a practitioner. This is also known as practice-based research.

(Nimkulrat 2007, p.2)

These two terms have been used rather spontaneously in the field. Although the concurrent use of both terms, has been widely debated during the last 2 decades by art and design scholars (Biggs, 2002; Frayling et al, 1997) and as of yet no clear conclusion has been reached.

The UK Council for Graduate Education report (Frayling et al, 1997) defines practice-based research as thus,

The practice-based doctorate advances knowledge partly by means of practice. An original/creative piece of work is included in the submission for examination. It is distinct in that significant aspects of the claim for doctoral characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work.

(Frayling et al; 1997, p.14)

Practice-based doctoral submissions must include a substantial contextualisation of the creative work. This critical appraisal or analysis not only clarifies the basis of the claim for the originality and location of the original work, it also provides the basis for a judgement as to whether general scholarly requirements are met.

Dr Anke Coumans, Professor at Minerva Art Academy, Hanze UAS, Groningen explains the scope of practice-led research as follows,

Within practice-led research it is the design process moving from problem to solution that is the point of departure for the rhetoric research direction of the thesis. . . . The research direction of an artist/designer--other than the art and design process--is a transparent process in which conscious steps are taken, in which knowledge is used, or knowledge is searched for and articulated in the process. . . . The artist/designer, therefore, must also demonstrate that he [sic] possesses sufficient knowledge to justify the choices he [sic] has made.

(Coumans 2003, pp. 65-66)

According to the above statements, there are two significant distinctions between practice-based and practice-led research. Practice in practice-based research, can be carried out freely for its own sake in order to produce artifacts. This is fairly similar to the general conception of art/design practice. On the contrary, practice in practice-led research is conscious exploration with the knowledge involved in the making of artifacts.

Second, the difference is in the roles of practitioner and researcher. In practice-based research, the practitioner's role may be more dominant than the researcher's role. The emphasis seems to be on practice, since a practitioner-researcher carries out her research solely based on her own practice. In practice-led research, the two roles appear to be equally important, because research becomes an intertwined part of practice. (Nimkulrat 2007, p.2)

An extract from my personal journal,

So many terms and phrases and to be quite honest I'm not sure if my research is practice-based research/practice as

research/arts practice research/practice-led research, is there in fact any difference or is it just semantics. After reading *The Role of Documentation in Practice-Led Research* by Nimkulrat, things seem a little clearer. There appears to be two camps, practice led research and practice based research. Which do I fall into seems to be an important decision at this early stage of my research. My research is looking at my practice of being a clown, with the end goal of developing a creative method for using the tools of mask and clown in the creation of new work. Exploring play and failure as catalysts, also this work must be transferable across disciplines. In the main the focus of my research is myself, my training, how I make new work, how I teach, how I perform, and how do I improve. Somewhat narcissistic! Saying that I also want to workshop with other artists and develop tools and methods of training. I want to create new work for other disciplines to perform (a clown ballet now there's a thought). The data compiled from the research would be rich in ideas and of a very qualitative nature, there is no real hard facts or scientific data it is focused on the artist. At all times I feel the artist is central to the research and it is the output the work that is the foremost. Therefore I'm leaning towards practice based research, yes my practice is the foundation and it is the outcomes or data compiled from my practice that will inform the research. Creating and performance is paramount.

Practice based research is now widely accepted across Europe as an academic form of doctorate research, however the debates have not subsided and there are many bones of contention around the areas of assessment, competence and supervision. Candlin an avid champion of practice based research, contests and challenges the criteria of competence associated with practice based research saying.

How do you produce or examine a PhD? Should the artwork be assessed in relation to contemporary art practice or should it be viewed as a thesis in images? Does the theoretical or intellectual investigation take place in relation to practice, or through the accompanying text? Does the artwork,

like academic research, put forward a hypothesis and demonstrate a mastery of a canon or should the emphasis be placed on technical ability and if so, how is technical ability judged? Should practice based doctoral students be expected to write thesis of the same proficiency as conventional PhD students?

(Candlin 2000)

Stephen John Quaye, Associate Professor in the Student Affairs in Higher Education Programme, Miami University further comments on the methods that can be employed in research, looking more at capturing the creative and moving away from the “neat” traditional forms of accademic writing. Quaye calls this messy writing.

My premise is that research is a political and “messy” terrain riddled with contradictions, choices, compromises and most importantly, self-exploration. Throughout this undertaking, I infuse diary excerpts, poetry, and personal narrative to illustrate my evolving understanding of what counts as research. I advocate for extending what counts to be more inclusive, “radical” and counter- hegemonic in research: by doing so, more students will be able to feel at “home” within and beyond academe, discover and cultivate their voices and become connoisseurs and critics within their respective disciplines.

(Quaye 2007, p.3)

Quaye suggests using multiple writing avenues, traditional and practice orientated journals, newspapers and books for general readers. This approach helps develop a students writing capabilities and also enables students to straddle diverse communities. He also refers to research as,

Ultimately a messy endeavor with competing values, needs and beliefs, the challenge is to find one’s voice, develop it, and creatively use it. Responding to this challenge is a step towards extending what counts as research.

(Quaye 2007, p.10)

In terms of the assesment there are principally three schools of thought, the 100% written submission, the 100% practice submission and the 50/50 written and practice

submission. These vary from institution to institution some believing that it is possible to capture a body of performance work and generate research and new methodologies almost creating what Candlin referred to as a 'Thesis in images' However there is also those who feel there is a difficulty in assessing artwork. Stating although the artwork may demonstrate originality it is very difficult to quantify its intellectual or scholarly worth without having some form of written component to place the performed material or artefact into context. It is clear that practice based research was a challenge for the universities to contend with, so it is no surprise that many institutions require that at least 50% of the final presentation to be text based.

An excerpt from my personal journal:

After a days immersion with Helen and the PhD group, I'm left questioning the methods of assessment, as an artist I like the idea of a purely performance based assessment, maybe because I'm lazy and it seems like an easier route, after all I'm creating new work all the time, I teach on a regular basis. The idea of a 100% written submission is terrifying, trying to convey the ephemeral nature of play, constructing the imagery to do justice to a masked performance. Here at U.L the criteria is of 50% performance and 50% written submission, how do I feel about that? Well on reflection I'm all for it and the reasoning is thus. I want to challenge myself, to develop my writing skills, after all they don't just give doctorates away to everybody. I want the process to be captured and detailed so other students and academics can reference my work. I want mask and clown to cross disciplines and be accredited to something worthy a noble art form. I also would have concerns, if my PhD was solely based on artistic output who would be included in the review panel, after all my work is quite specialised and there is only a few other practitioners many of which would have undergone the same training, a training that I'm contesting and even criticising at times. The written component for me captures the rigour of my process and it makes my research more accessible.

To conclude this section I see my thesis as arts practice based, it would be impossible for the research question to be investigated without the performative elements. The devised and rehearsed pieces will be in their own right epistemological objects that are knowledge generating and show rigour. They will demonstrate mastery of the subject across performance disciplines and will withstand the critical and academic scrutiny. The text strand will further draw a focus on the work, clarifying its intention, explaining the process and making clear commentry on the context of the work.

Arts practice methodology

This section illustrates the methods that I have used for representing and interacting with my practice, introducing techniques such as narrative enquiry and auto-ethnography. In conjunction, this section will furthermore discuss established methods of ethnographic research and data collection that would be commonplace in fieldwork, such as journal writing, audio-visual recording, interviews and conversations, which will subsequently be used in order to engage with my research question.

Taking a narrative approach to inquiry is often a cause for much debate; terms such as ‘narcissistic’, ‘self-absorbed’ and ‘egotistical’ could be used. However, there is clear evidence that a narrative approach to qualitative research is gradually gaining recognition in academia. Through this approach, it is possible to capture data, which represents emotions, imagery and specific moments in time, offering the potential to address ambiguity and complexity.

By using notes and stories, it will become possible to extract a rich source of potential data. Data, which only exists within these personal narratives, enabling the inquiry to focus on new discoveries and conflicts, further highlighting patterns of working, which expose the challenges faced when in the midst of the creative process.

These methods of writing can be observed throughout the thesis in my journal extracts and general note taking. However a more detailed analysis of this element of my practice can be observed in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 documents a 30-day creative residency at Nenagh Arts Centre with a specific focus on the process of devising. It was during this residency period the writing process further proved to be a major

contributor to the creative process. When the words and drawings were committed to the page, the ideas became more tangible and almost embodied. Reflecting on the ideas and actions prompted a deeper analysis, which often generated an abundance of new ideas. By further reflecting on my training, in relation to the devising process, it provoked questions into why were specific decisions made.

Current scholars in the field of reflective writing and creative practice, such as Kene Igweonu et al, make reference to this almost ‘elusive’ knowledge by highlighting that:

Even though theory is embedded in the creative process, it very often remains elusive to the practitioner unless it is teased out using reflection (in this case expressive writing). Hence, our contention that writing can provide a channel for unlocking meaning that would otherwise remain elusive to the creative practitioner.

(Igweonu et al. 2011, p. 228)

Furthermore, they identify that:

Writing ... enables the creative practitioner to engage with their practice in insightful ways that integrate theoretical insights and help to reveal the elusive obvious, which in turn gives life to what is being explored and advances learning/practice.

(Igweonu et al. 2011, p. 225)

Dr Kene Igweonu, Academic Dean at Middlesex University offers an insight into the role of writing within the creative process, which reflects on my personal experience of writing and integrating auto-ethnographic processes into the space of a residency for example. The bringing together of theory and practice contributes to the purposive, inquisitive, informed, methodical, and communicable elements of ‘doctorateness’.

In the writing of journal entries throughout this inquiry, it has become clear that I’m engaging in two or more different registers, these being the generative/creative register and the reflective/auto-ethnographic register. This dual approach to creative and reflective writing, combining both ethnographic and generative methods, has

become an invaluable aspect of my research methodology enabling me to be both creative and reflective, but, more importantly, allowing me to be responsive to my own individual and personal artistic practice, furthermore, generating data around it in a way that informs my current research. This dual approach of writing can be observed in the writing, which documents the process and methods engaged in when devising *The Miller's Story*, *Altjeringa*, *The Neutral Mask Workshop* and *Lifted Up*.

Professor Helen Phelan and Dr Mary Nunan (2018, para.12) discuss the contested nature and role of writing in arts practice research, 'In this way, writing weaves its way into both the artistic process and the reflexive framework of research'. This has certainly been my experience in relation to writing and exploring both research data and the generation of new work. It has become apparent that throughout this research inquiry that I am building a resource, which is specifically valuable in relation to mask and clown by generating a body of data based on my own specific practice.

This data excavates the traces of past training and education, elements of which are particularly rich and valuable because this data does not exist elsewhere. Throughout the research process, there has been an on going personal narrative, which has weaved its way through the writing, and this extremely important data connects the research directly to me, the researcher, via a specific inquiry.

Therefore it is through the process of capturing video and audio, journaling, creating field notes, carrying out interviews and generating personal narrative, it will become possible to link the autobiographical, the emotional and the cultural.

Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write auto-ethnography. Thus, as a method, auto-ethnography is both process and product.

(Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, p. 1)

As a method, auto-ethnography blends autobiography and ethnography.¹² When researchers do ethnography, they study culture, its relational practices, its common values and beliefs, with the objective of helping insiders and outsiders better understand that culture.¹³ However, when researchers do auto-ethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about significant events that stem from or are made possible by being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. Auto-ethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyse experience, but also must consider ways others may experience similar significant events; they must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience. To do this, it may require comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research, interviewing cultural members and examining relevant cultural artefacts.

Professor Heewon Chang, chair of organizational leadership and education at Eastern University, claims that the collecting of self-observational and self-reflective data allows for a useful ‘analysis of personal values and preference’ (Chang 2008). Chang also considers auto-ethnography to be ‘ethnographic participant observation’ (Chang 2008) in which the data is collected from the researcher’s life as opposed to the lives of others.

This self-observational data captures actual behaviours, thoughts and emotions at the time of data collection. Below is an extract from my personal journal commenting on the experience of note taking.

I’m finding making notes and journaling during lectures quite easy and methodical, however, capturing data while directing and teaching I find a near impossibility; the act of stopping to write seems to interrupt my flow or alter the dynamic of the

¹² When writing an autobiography, the author would typically write about the life experiences of the individual. In this process, the author may also interview others, examine photographs, journals and recordings to help with the memory recall. More often than not, autobiographers write about significant events or remembered episodes that have significantly impacted the individual’s life, after which things do not seem quite the same. It is these events or episodes that reveal what is often hidden from the public.

¹³ They do this by becoming observers of that culture, through the taking of field notes, by being part of the happening and through audience engagement with these happenings. An ethnographer may interview people, investigate uses of space and analyze artefacts such as clothing and architecture, books, movies and photographs.

session. This week is even worse, now that I've started to create a new piece of work for myself, it is like I have two voices: the active, fluid and risk-taking voice of creativity, fighting with this serious, almost ponderous and deliberate voice of the writer. Even this note has been written down sometime later, after due consideration and probably some unconscious editing. I'm going to have to think hard and develop a way of documenting my creative process that doesn't cause an interruption or change my stream of thought; this is going to be vital foundation to the success of my research. Other than that I like using the journal as a memory recall device, it is detailed with facts and has rambles like this one. Now off to bed!

Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus.

(Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 20)

Typically there are three common places of narrative inquiry, temporality, sociality, and place, and these, to some extent, define the dimensions of an inquiry and serve as a conceptual framework. Therefore it is possible, by observing these three common places simultaneously, that the researcher can witness the complexity of lived experiences from both inside and outside of the inquiry. Narrative inquiries often begin with asking participants to tell their stories, either in one-to-one situations or in groups through a variety of ways that may include responding to structured interview questions, engaging in conversation or dialogue and through the sharing of stories triggered by items such as photographs or memory boxes. Autobiographical narrative inquiry is closely linked to auto-ethnography, and its value in practice-based research as a method of collating data related to experience should not be overlooked.

Experience is a fundamental aspect of practice-based research. John Dewey (1859–1952) makes a case for his own theories on experience. He claims that experience arises from the interaction of two principles, continuity and interaction. Continuity is

that each experience a person has will influence their future, for better or for worse. Interaction refers to the situational influence on their experience. Dewey also stated that it is important to understand, 'no experience has pre-ordained value' (Dewey 1888). Therefore, what may be a rewarding experience for one person could be a negative experience for another. The value of the experience can only be judged by the effect that experience has on the individual's present and their future.

The following excerpt from my journal highlights my personal fears with regards to entering into the world of academia.

OK! I'm going to UL to start a PhD, I'm extremely anxious and to be honest petrified at the thought of being surrounded by academics, I have a wealth of professional experience and life experience but is that enough?

Performance narrative or creation of data through performance

Mask and clown performance is a physical activity that is dependent on the body to communicate, through movement, gesture and stillness. Therefore, it is possible to pose critical questions connecting to the emotion of the performer, the understanding of theoretical concepts and discovering the self as a site of discovery and as a representation of research through a performance.

Mary Beth Cancienne and Celeste N. Snowber state. 'We are moving researchers' (Cancienne and Snowber 2003, p.237).

Mask and clown is a form of inquiry that is often spontaneous and reacts instantly to the shared experiences that develop in the performance space. Therefore, by capturing data from performance, it will inform the outcomes of the research. In order to collate valuable performance narrative data, the methodology is not just one of capturing the process but also one of questioning, enquiring into the kinaesthesia of the body, assessing the emotions, analysing the tensions, observing the quality of movement, engaging with the artist's presence in the space and ultimately the level of connection established with the audience.

Cancienne and Snowber make a wonderfully poetic claim to the benefit of collecting data from performance:

We access a way of writing from the body, a way in which theory meets practice so that the deep listening to life actually spills over from blood to ink

(Cancienne & Snowber 2003, p. 248)

Interviews with others and with the researcher

The principal informant throughout this research is the researcher. However, due to the nature of the inquiry, it will also be essential to engage with students, other artists, colleagues and friends.

Using a qualitative interview method as a data-collection tool has shown from this inquiry to be a beneficial methodological approach, which can be applied to address a number of research questions. However, qualitative research interviews are preferable when the researcher strives to understand an interviewee's subjective perspective of a phenomenon rather than generating an understanding from a large group of people. Furthermore it is important to consider the ethical dimensions of taking up time from respondents and therefore only include as many participants as needed for the research, namely people who have an insight and experience of the phenomenon in question, whilst maintaining where possible a balance of gender, age, social, and cultural backgrounds.

The importance of preparation on behalf of the interviewer should not be underestimated. Successful interviews start with careful planning, which considers the focus and scope of the research question. Throughout this inquiry interviews were conducted at a time and place of the respondents' convenience, in a comfortable setting, free from any potential disruptions and noise. I would also, further inform the respondents of the expected duration of each interview. Typically for small focus groups this would be 45 minutes or in the case of one to one interviews a maximum of one-hour.

While conducting the peer interviews relating to play in Chapter 3, (Fully transcribed in Appendix 2) I initially made the decision to conduct some test interviews in order to develop my skills prior to embarking on data collection. These test interviews were undertaken with friends and volunteers offering myself the opportunity to explore language, the clarity of the questions, and engage in active listening. Building a

rapport and establishing good communication with the respondents in a qualitative interview situation is important and communication can be established in advance of the interview. As part of the ethical approach to this research it was policy and procedure to write a short summary of the research project, which was then sent to the interviewees prior to the interview as a way of informing them of what to expect and what will be discussed during the interview.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the prime instrument of data collection. Consequently, the interviewer needs to be reflexive, conscious, and aware about how his or her role might impact the conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. In the interview, the interviewer should not be viewed as someone contaminating or biasing the data, but rather as a co-creator of data together with the interviewee, where the interviewer's knowledge may play an important part in contextualising the process.

A risk to good data acquisition, which subsequently emerged during this inquiry, was highlighted due to myself the interviewer being nervous, or having a lack of experience. This resulted in the interviewer filling in the blanks and driving the conversation in a certain direction without being aware of doing so. My experience from the focus group, post performance No1, documented in Chapter 3, demonstrated that the Interviewer needed to talk less and allow for the silence to act as the catalyst, which would then allow the conversation to move forward. Actively listening to the respondent's, means respecting the silence and identifying those silent moments as an opportunity for on-going reflection.

Once the data was collated, the process of data transcription commenced. The most common form of transcription for these interviews was verbatim transcription, which refers to the word-for-word reproduction of verbal data, where the written words are an exact replication of the audio-recorded words. Transcribing data from qualitative interviews is time-consuming. Furthermore, the process yields vast amounts of material, which must be scrutinized and waded through. It is easy to think that transcription is a somewhat straightforward conversion of the spoken word into written word. However it is important to consider pauses, giggles, and other cues offered by the interviewee as markers for important events in the interview. These cues may need to be acknowledged in the transcription process.

A further difficulty with this type of qualitative research is that it very rapidly generates a large amount of data, often leading to hundreds of pages of transcribed text. Therefore, it is essential to think about the analysis of data before conducting all the interviews. The nature of the research question(s) and the method of analysis will determine the depth, quality, and richness of the interviews.

One of the other methods with which I engaged in order to obtain beneficial data from performance 2, (As documented in Chapter 4) was a post-show discussion, (Approximate duration 30 minutes) chaired by Dr Grant McLay. Here the researcher responded directly to questions and comments received from the attending audience. This use of a third party interviewer resulted in a changed dynamic, which brought to light important data that may have been lost by purely using the methods of post show surveys or analysis through self reflection.

Research Ethics and Principles

Throughout this inquiry the researcher adhered to the current framework of regulations and guidelines issued by the University of Limerick, in order to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all the actual and potential research participants.

A summary of the research ethics principles are set out in the table below:

Table 1.4. Summary of Ehtics Principles

1	Preserving participants' privacy and confidentiality
2	Obtaining informed consent before participation
3	Protecting participants' rights to self-determination by allowing and facilitating withdrawal from the research process
4	Considering all research from the participants' standpoint
5	Considering the range of stakeholders who may be affected by the research
6	Identifying and minimising risks to physical, psychological and social wellbeing
7	Providing detailed debriefing to participants as to the outcomes and consequences of the research
8	Demonstrate that the research is sound methodologically
9	Demonstrate the capacity to identify ethics issues and to avoid them arising where possible, through appropriate research design
10	Demonstrate the skill/ training to deal with sensitivities that may arise in the course of the research, or to put in place appropriate supports to safeguard the

	health, welfare, dignity and rights of human participants, animals and researchers in order to minimise risk to participants, researchers, third parties, and to the University itself
11	The use of a ‘gatekeeper’ who will recruit on the researcher’s behalf. Where appropriate and possible. <i>For the purposes of research ethics matters, a gatekeeper is defined as an individual who controls access to information in an organisation/body. A gatekeeper may also serve to protect the interests of research participants and to ensure that they are not under any pressure to participate.</i>
12	Adhere to the University’s Records Management and Retention Policy, its Data Protection Policy, its Data Protection Compliance Regulations, and all other relevant policies, procedures, legislation, and regulations.

For an example of the research ethics information letters and consent forms, which were used for this inquiry. See Appendix 1

Theoretical underpinnings

The third section of this chapter considers my understanding of the key concepts, which shall be engaged with throughout the research. These include play and *complicité* in conjunction with somatics, kinaesthesia and embodied knowledge, concluding with performance and practice as research and practice.

Play and *Complicité*

Play and *complicité* are both key concepts in this research inquiry. In Chapter 3 of this thesis, play will be considered at length, situating it within the overall context of this research project.

The following journal extract was taken from my notes made in response to an interview for Greater Manchester Fringe Festival 2016 and the performance of *Nose Business*, the third part of a clown trilogy I had written.

When I’m clowning, the objective is not to solely entertain or to make a show for the audience. I want to interact with them and be responsive to the signals and impulses they transmit. I’m constantly seeking out games to play in order to ignite the imagination, generate a reaction, to invite a response. Then if they respond and it sends me in a new direction, I will follow. Clowning to me is about inviting participation; it is about playing.

Here Tim Etchells, professor of writing and performance practice at Lancaster University, defines play as:

A state in which meaning is in flux, in which possibility thrives, in which versions multiply, in which confines of what is real are blurred, buckled, broken.

(Etchells 1999, p. 53)

However, due to the complexity of the word ‘play’, the following personal definition will be adopted throughout this thesis:

Play is a series of physical actions, words and responses that are evoked through the participation or engagement with a game. It is through these resulting reactions that it is possible for participants to experience a full range of human emotions and develop a sense of *complicité*. Play exists within the game and a game can only be sustained through play.

It is through my experience and practice, I would suggest, that when playing, an artist must endeavour not only to create fictional worlds through multiple versions of reality, but they must also simultaneously accept the changing realities that exist for the observing audience. By engaging in these multi-layered communications, an artist can develop a complex imaginary world, which is exciting and full of possibilities. Philippe Gaulier (2007) makes reference to the importance of going with the flow of the play. Furthermore, I suggest that when playing it is essential to be receptive, responsive and present. This, in return, creates a sense of shared experience or *complicité*. This word ‘*complicité*’ is a widely established concept for developing a relationship between ensemble members within a theatrical setting. In this state, they can generate a shared understanding or sense of how everyone is responding to the moment and their individual levels of engagement or investment in the performance.

Simon Murray, Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies at Glasgow University describes the complexity and nuance of *complicité* in the following by making reference to the U.K. theatre company *Théâtre de Complicité*:

The spirit or condition of *complicité* has been brought into the cultural foreground by *Théâtre de Complicité*, One imagines that, when founder members of the company left the Lecoq school in the early 1980s

complicité was one of the qualities they most aspired to achieve in their work. To understand the term we need to look beyond a straight dictionary translation into English. The idea of *complicité* takes us into two separate but related territories: the quality of the ensemble, and the nature of the performer-audience relationship. In *Théâtre de Complicité*'s programmes for *The Visit* and *The Three Lives of Lucy Cabrol*, a meaning for the term is offered which seems to capture two of its key qualities. *Complicité* is a 'form of collusion between celebrants' writes Michael Ratcliffe in the programme notes for the *The Three Lives of Lucy Cabrol* in 1994. *Collusion* and *celebrants*: two words which tell us much about *Théâtre de Complicité*'s approach to making theatre and the spirit of Jacques Lecoq. Here, I sense, that *collusion* suggests much more than the anodyne and neutral 'working together' or 'cooperation'. There is something slightly dark and suspicious about the term, implying perhaps a landscape where rules and laws are transgressed, and where boundaries are tested and extended – not for some wicked purpose, but in a spirit of shared, gleeful pleasure: more the camaraderie of rogues and revolutionaries, than the quiet, *self-satisfied* handholding of saints. Hence, the more appropriate *celebrants* rather than the purely descriptive *actors* or *performers*. Here, too, we are led back to Lecoq's fundamental belief in 'the pleasure of play'.

(Murray, 2003 p. 71)

Empathy, Somatics, kinaesthesia and embodied knowledge

Mask and clown both require a considerable awareness of self and of the moving body, especially when striving to achieve the notion of *complicité* but more importantly to develop a sense of shared experience and empathy with an audience.

The term 'empathy' is often used to describe a wide range of sensorial experiences. Generally, empathy is defined as the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. Current scientific research indicates that mirror neurons are a type of cell within the brain that fire when we observe someone performing an action in much the same way as they would when we perform the action ourselves.

In the journal article 'Mirror neurons: how we reflect on behavior', Eric Jaffe makes the following claim that:

Mirror neurons—the tiny neurological structures that fire both when we perceive action and take it, exposing the true social nature of the brain ... mirror neurons might form the basis for empathy, social behaviour, and even language.

(Jaffe 2007, para. 2)

From experience, this physical projection and connection with the audience require from the practitioner an exploration of the moving body rendering the body an almost poetic instrument, a site for storytelling and narrative. To understand in more detail this mind–body awareness, we need to explore the concepts of Somatics and kinaesthesia and how they bring a deeper appreciation of the physical presentation of the body.

Somatics pertains to the body (as distinct from the soul, spirit, or mind), and kinaesthesia or kinaesthetic understanding is an awareness of the position and movement of the parts of the body by means of sensory organs (proprioceptors) in the muscles and joints. Kelly Jean Mullan,¹⁴ York University, explains Somatics with the following:

Somatics is the name given to the field of Western mind-body disciplines, encompassing ways of working with the body that are therapeutic, educational, artistic, and physically expressive. This work encourages our capacity to use inner resources when faced with injuries, illness, or the desire to increase our personal potential.

(Mullan 2012, p. 5)

The origin of Western somatic education is rooted in a philosophical revolt against Cartesian dualism. In the European Gymnastik movement of the late 19th century, for

¹⁴ (2017) Book review, ‘The body has a mind of its own, body, movement and dance in psychotherapy’, *An International Journal for Theory, Research and Practice*.

(2017) ‘Somatics herstories: tracing the educational antecedents of Elsa Gindler, Hade Kallmeyer, and Genevieve Stebbins’. *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*. Intellect Press UK.

(2016) ‘The movement cure: mapping the roots of early Western body-mind methods’, In: *Mindful Movement: The Evolution of the Somatic Arts and Conscious Action*. Ed. Martha Eddy, Intellect Press UK, University of Chicago Press.

example, somatic pioneers Francois Delsarte (1811–1871), Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950) and Bess Mensendieck (1864–1957) sought to replace the reigning ideology of rigour in physical training with a more natural approach based on listening to bodily cues arising from breath, touch, and movement. These three cues are intrinsic to a performer’s sensory understanding and knowledge of their own body. By effectively using breath, touch and movement in performance, it becomes possible to develop a common resonance with an audience resulting in a sense of *complicité* and kinetic empathy.

In 1970, philosopher and Feldenkrais practitioner Thomas Hanna (1928–1990) used the term ‘somatics’ from the Greek word ‘soma’, meaning the body in its wholeness. Advocates valued the unity of mind, body and spirit as fundamental to the human organism and one’s inner, personal narrative and experience as a guide for living. In my current teaching practice, the somatic learning environment typically begins by calming the mind-body in order to focus attention on the body’s sensory stimuli (breath, muscle tension, the body’s contact with the floor, etc.).¹⁵ Such training is designed to free the performer/artist from rigid holding patterns or other constraints that bind thought, feeling and action.¹⁶

Often when working with students who are new to mask, they comment. ‘It doesn’t matter how much I move myself around; I have a tendency to move in the same ways.’ In my experience as a teacher, it is these muscle memories, these postural habits, sensory cues and mental images of their body that can prove to be roadblocks or barriers in the creation of physical characteristics that are truthful to the mask. A somatic approach emphasises sensory awareness over motor action. In the somatic learning context, how one moves is more important than what the movement is.

Just as the mind organizes the rest of the body’s tissues into a life process, sensations to a large degree organize the mind. They do not simply give the

¹⁵ The objective of the somatic learning environment is one of personal exploration, self-acceptance and non-competitiveness. Instead of striving to perform the right or the correct movement, the performer/artist learns to move from an embodied source, fully receptive and responsive to the moment of movement.

¹⁶ The somatic learning context is designed to help the refinement of muscular effort; therefore, the effort felt in a movement is not a measure of the actual work being done, but an expression of the organisation of that effort.

mind material to organize; they are themselves a major organizing principle.

(Johnson 1995, p. 164)

Richard Shusterman, director at the Center for Body, Mind, and Culture, Florida Atlantic University,¹⁷ takes the practice of somatics and develops it into what he terms ‘somaesthetics’. Shusterman first introduced this idea in *Practicing Philosophy* (1997), as a disciplinary framework that critically examines the relationship between the soma, or ‘living, feeling, sentient body’ (Shusterman 2008, p. 1) and philosophical thought, while seeking to change the ways that we think about ourselves and live our lives.

The analytic study of the body’s role in perception, experience, and action and thus in our mental, moral, and social life; the pragmatic study of methodologies to improve our body-mind functioning and thus expand our capacities of self-fashioning; and the practical branch that investigates such pragmatic methods by testing them on our own flesh in concrete experience and practice.

(Shusterman 2008, p. 139)

Shusterman highlights the arrangement of elements that grounds us in the world around us. In the pursuit of the mastery of a craft or a discipline, there should be a willingness to acknowledge the role of the body, combined with a willingness to engage with our own bodies in order understand how experiences can shape self and our discipline through the concept of embodied knowledge,¹⁸ thus allowing the ability to draw from one’s own physical knowledge.

¹⁷ Shusterman held academic appointments in Paris, Berlin and Hiroshima and was awarded senior research Fulbright and NEH fellowships. Authored books include *T.S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism* (Columbia), *Practicing Philosophy* (Routledge), *Performing Live* (Cornell), *Surface and Depth* (Cornell), *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (Blackwell, 2nd ed. Rowman & Littlefield) and most recently *Body Consciousness* (Cambridge).

¹⁸ Embodied knowledge is a type of knowledge where the body knows how to act. A good general example is that of riding a bicycle. Most people know how to ride a bicycle, and we are able to do it without any conscious thought. There is no need to verbalise or represent in the mind all the actions required. The knowledge seems to be imprinted in the body.

The concept of embodied knowledge is derived from the phenomenology of the French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961). In the *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945–1962), he refers to knowing how to touch type.

To know how to touch type is not, then, to know the place of each letter among the keys, nor even to have acquired a conditioned reflex for each one, which is set in motion by the letter as it comes before our eye. If habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an involuntary action, what then is it? It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort.

(Merleau-Ponty 2013, p. 144)

However, in contrast to Merleau-Ponty, mainstream cognitive science, Cartesian mind–body dualism is still dominant, and the embodied nature of this knowledge seems to be overlooked. Raymond Gibbs, professor of psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz identifies that

One of the traditional beliefs in the cognitive science is that intelligent behavior, including the ability to perceive, think, and use language, need not arise from any specific bodily form. Thermostats, computers, robots, and brains in vats may all, under the right circumstances, exhibit sophisticated cognitive skills.

(Gibbs 2006, p. 2)

These ideas in respect to cognitive science are explored further in the work of well-established philosophers, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, where they present the following three statements:

1. The mind is inherently embodied.
2. Thought is mostly unconscious.
3. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical.

Lakoff and Johnston support the first two statements with various findings from cognitive science.

That human reason is a form of animal reason, a reason inextricably tied to our bodies and the peculiarities of our brains ... That our bodies, brains,

and interactions with our environment provide the mostly unconscious basis for our everyday metaphysics, that is our sense of what is real.

(Lakoff 1999, p. 326)

Statement 3 is captured in a summary of their earlier work on metaphor. Lakoff and Johnston establish their criterion for a theory of the embodied mind stating:

There is no such fully autonomous faculty of reason separate from and independent of bodily capacities such as perception and movement. The evidence supports, instead, an evolutionary view, in which reason uses and grows out of bodily capacities.

(Lakoff and Johnston 1999, pp. 326–351)

By exploring play, the students gain confidence in their own creative decision-making and become aware of the many possibilities in which they can engage with an audience. Through Somatics and kinaesthesia, the students establish a deeper understanding of self and their own body as a site of creativity. The importance of embodied knowledge cannot be underestimated. It is the ability to truthfully and subtly carry out a performance, which conveys all the nuance of emotion and reacts in the moment recalling a memory in all its vibrant colours. By animating the beauty of imagery, movement and language, it is these skills I would consider to be paramount for the creation of new work, which generates a sense of empathy. Furthermore, in relation to developing a new creative pedagogy, the concepts highlighted above can be the foundations from which students can acquire the skills and knowledge for creating shared experience and *complicité*.

Performance and practice as research

Dr John Freeman, adjunct professor, University of Notre Dame, Western Australia and senior lecturer in drama, theatre and performance makes a comment on research through performance, highlighting the potential vulnerability of a performance because of its almost ephemeral nature. This is extremely relevant to this inquiry, especially in the context of performing in a moment of flow and improvising. Furthermore, working to develop *complicité* with the audience can, at times, be an

almost organic process of immediately responding to an audience's needs and reactions.

There is no blueprint for successful performance because creative practice thrives in no small part on the accidental. It is in many ways governed by the accidentals. We are dealing with people and perspectives and events that shift over time and these can lead to different types of insights and frustrations to those encountered in library-based work. With practice the sense of purpose is likely to change in an instant, in a moment of despair or inspiration, as can what it is regarded as important outcome-base. This creates something of a problem for PhD research.

(Freeman 2010, p. 160)

However, Richard Schechner, professor emeritus at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, states that 'There is no finality to performance studies, either theoretically or operationally' and that 'anything can be studied as performance'; he also claims that 'values are a function of culture, groups and individuals' (Schechner 2003, p. 1). Furthermore, in direct contrast, Susan Melrose, professor emeritus in the Department of Performing Arts, Middlesex University, has been amazed at the rapidly changing face of university education as the numbers engaging in higher degrees in music, dance, theatre and performing arts have increased (Melrose 2017). Crucially Melrose's understanding of performance and practice is that of disciplinary mastery and experience in performance-making, unlike Schechner, who argues that anything can be studied as performance. As an artist and researcher, both of these discourses have a personal resonance. Firstly, I am in agreement with Melrose that performance should demonstrate mastery and experience in performance-making.

In the UK and Ireland, masking and clown could be considered as a marginalised art forms especially where the performance traditions of masking have been eroded over time and where the mask is typically used as no more than a carnival or Halloween face dressing; to some extent, the connections to the spiritual, ritual and storytelling are all but lost. Clown has also been subjected to this cultural erosion, through my experience as a performer; the popular perceptions of clown are either as a children's entertainer, a badly made-up bumbling fool at the circus or that of a psychopathic murderer from a horror movie.

However, considerable elements of mask and clown lie in tradition and through social interaction between groups of people, such as celebration, worship and pageantry. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, *Mask: the art of culture, expression and transformation* this will be discussed in more detail. Traditionally, clown and mask were not considered high art and are often performed and presented in non-traditional spaces, and it is in these social and less formal contexts where I agree with Schechner in regard to performance.

On reflection of incorporating performance as a method for research and data collection, below is an extract from my personal journal, dated May 2017. This extract simultaneously highlights the importance of demonstrating a mastery of skills and also the importance of connecting with people and communities.

Today I performed at Riverfest in Limerick, I was asked to do three-hours walk-around, this is roving performance often improvised and directly interacting with visitors to the festival, the location was Arthur's Quay Park 'Riverfest Village'. The day was warm and dry and part of the bank holiday weekend, the Great Limerick Run took place today; therefore the attendance was high, and the park was packed with families. I had chosen a contemporary costume, a cross between a security guard and a festival official, the only dramatically clownish items were a spiked helmet and huge shoes. I did wear a small red nose but no makeup. I said hello to visitors and sparked up conversation if it seemed like they wanted to play. I would start to entertain them with small gags, some skill-based routines and maybe a short piece of rehearsed work; the time I would spend with them would correlate to the response received. In the main, the response was excellent with lots of laughter and involvement. At one point in the afternoon, I was entertaining a family sat in the centre of the park at a wooden bench, it was going well, and I was moving towards my finish, a mouth balance of a spinning plate on a stick. As I finished, they applauded, and I packed my suitcase, ready to move on. At this moment a boy aged around seven years came forward and said to me 'you're not

a real clown'. I was shocked, had he not liked the show? I asked, 'why do you say that?' He replied real clowns are rubbish and scary, you were great. I smiled, showed him a quick trick and moved on. This attitude or reaction reinforces my personal views on clown: clown is misunderstood and often not considered to be a specific art form, it is often thought of as no more than a terrible costume and a curly wig.

Practice

Given the range of subjects, the motivations and differences, it is not surprising that there is no singular approach to practice. 'Arrays of human activity' is how Theodore Schatzki (2001) refers to practice; Turner and Dreyfus define elements of practice as 'skills, or tacit knowledge's and presuppositions, that underpin activities' (cited in Schatzki 2001), but what is generally understood by practice theorists is that practices are embodied human activity, 'materially mediated' and 'centrally organized around shared practical understanding' (Schatzki 2001), placing emphasis on the character of the human body and how these types of activities are combined with it. This highlighting of embodiment by practice leads theorists to point towards the conclusion that 'Bodies are activities that are constituted within practices' (Schatzki 2001). 'The body is the meeting point of both the mind and the activity, and also of the individual activity and social manifold' (Schatzki 2001).

Furthermore Estelle Barrett (2007) considers Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) work in *What is an author?* (1969), examining how we might view art not as a product by gaining an understanding of both studio enquiry and evaluation of its outcomes as a philosophical process that moves between established theory and the situated knowledge that emerges through practice.

However, Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) understood practice as self-organising and self-propagating multiples of activity that was combined with his notion of habitus. 'The human body being a point of connection between the individual and the social' (Bourdieu 1977). The theory of habitus has a particular resonance to this research and my practice, the understanding of self and the use of the body's personal store as a mode of creation. This is especially relevant in the way I improvise and respond

directly to an audience; the personal stories and lived experiences come to the foreground and can be observed as truths, vulnerability and beauty. While habitus does have a sense of practical expertise, it is not a conscious expertise; rather, it could be seen as good old-fashioned common sense. It is made up of temperaments that are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable. Habitus is a state of the body and of being, a toolbox of ingrained behavioural tendencies that seem natural. Bourdieu calls this the ‘bodily hexis’, where ‘the body is the site of incorporated history’ (Bourdieu 1984).

Therefore, habitus is purposeful without being questionable; it is transmitted but not actively taught. Bourdieu emphasises the *complicité* of silence between community members in the continuous reproduction of the collective rhythms, or habitus, of the community. Here again, in the notion of *complicité*, I can draw parallels to my own research the idea of *complicité* throughout my training has and still is, an essential element of my practice.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated self and my research methodology and has furthermore introduced key concepts in the development of a creative pedagogy and the creation of two new performances. The chapter has also presented some of the key formative moments that have led towards this exploration of my practice through academia by considering the value of my work and the incumbent processes as research. In terms of this thesis, it is positioned as arts practice based, in which the research question would not be possible to fully investigate without the performance element. The rehearsed, improvised and devised pieces of work are in fact epistemological objects and knowledge-generating in their own right. They demonstrate the methods used to inspire and educate students as well as highlight my personal artistic development. The written element of the submission further illuminates the performance in clarifying its intention, explaining the processes and establishing the precise context of the work. The written section will also document specific outcomes, which were generated through the process of creating work and indeed through disseminating the work. Finally, I feel that the research question is best served using a combination of performance and reflection, literature reviews and academic text production. Ultimately, in collating all the data artistically, creatively and academically, it will be

possible to produce a PhD presentation that substantiates new knowledge and demonstrates mastery and rigour.

Chapter 2. Mask: the Art of Culture, Expression and Transformation

Below is a quote from the late Sir Peter Hall that highlights the potential power of the mask as a liberating device that can generate a freedom of expression by tapping into humanity's most primitive instincts.

Put a mask on a group of actors and, if they do anything at all, they become very primitive. Most can't talk – the words won't come out – or don't want to talk. Others get very aggressive and cry and shout and hit out like small children. The mask does that. We contain in ourselves all that we have been and might be and the mask can take you anywhere – to the feminine side of yourself, the brutal side of yourself, the old side. It is a completely liberating device. That sounds terribly Pseud's Corner but it is true, don't ask me why, it is one of those mysteries. If it is not working, you can see the actor underneath and that's horrible, that's false.

(Brown, *The Independent*, 14.8.96)

Introduction

The rationale of this chapter is to map relevant historical and contextual information in relation to mask and masking. The chapter also situates mask and clown in the context of my research, and it reflects on how masks have contributed to the methods I use to teach and devise new work. In my early training, masks played a significant role and they continue to do so in my on-going professional development, as evidenced in the quote from my journal below. A mask for me facilitates a greater awareness of the body in space, and it is through the mask that sensations can be quickly embodied. In my current practice, there is an on-going process of developing the use of mask and clown as educational tools and catalysts for play, kinetic empathy and complicité.

The following journal entry was written in response to the initial auto-ethnographic enquiries into my practice as I embarked on this inquiry.

Lying in bed at 10.30 pm, I'm contemplating the impending start of a PhD research project that reflects on my practice

and the methodology by which I teach students. Most of the methods I use are as a direct result of my own education and experiences, yet they are not carbon copies of Lecoq exercises, for example, they have evolved and become personal to me. However, the one central element that underpins my teaching is the use of mask as a method for understanding the body and connecting with an audience.

Jacques Lecoq famously referred to the clown nose as the ‘smallest mask in the world’, (Lecoq 2000, p.154) and there are some genres of clowning for example *commedia dell’arte*, which incorporate masking. (*Commedia dell’arte* is further discussed in detail from pg 83 of this chapter) Whereas some other genres of clown apply the mask as a training element, only to later remove it for presentation or performance. As a result, the connection between mask and clown often remains hidden to audiences. However the connection between mask and clown, is a significant element in this inquiry and the complex relationship between the two, can be observed throughout my practice, in particular through my research with the neutral mask. Chapter 3 of the thesis documents an in-depth study of the neutral mask, culminating in an examined workshop for a group of multidisciplinary students.

The relationship between the neutral mask and clown is a combination of parallels and opposites. Neutral mask and clown are parallel in that they both fully exist in the moment, with no past (except experience) and no future (except intention). Therefore it is because of this sense of presence, that they both can truly see what is happening around them. They are typically the first to point out, and act upon, the truth. As previously stated in the prologue of this thesis, ‘Ultimately clown is a truth teller’.

In practice neutral mask and the clown can both display emotions without repressing them or holding onto them. They’re transparent with every impulse of their inner lives, rendering themselves completely visible and accessible to the observer. Both rooted in an absolute self-acceptance, despite their human failings. However the neutral mask and clown are also opposites, an almost seesaw of order and chaos. If the neutral mask embodies economy, then clown embodies excess. I would suggest the neutral mask never questions or comments on anything, yet the clown questions

and comments on everything. Therefore by incorporating both concepts of mask and clown into a new pedagogy it is possible to create a balance, where play and creativity can flourish without being stagnated by the discipline of mask technique or alternatively loosing focus in a whirlwind of clown anarchy.

To further support this I would claim the application of mask promotes patience and openness, teaching the student that every small gesture or movement suggests meaning, taking the focus away from the face and redistributing it to the whole body. This is how mask facilitates the very first steps of playing, by reducing our tendency to overthink, allowing the body, its impulses, sensations and emotions to lead. Masking requires the masker to be fully embodied, in the same way as clown does.

Therefore when combining mask and clown in the development of a new pedagogy, my experience has demonstrated that students learn the skills of listening to and engaging with their bodies as the prime sources for impulse, authenticity, self-trust, presence and flow. Mask and clown brings an increased focus, confidence, and poise to the students who engage with it as a method, subsequently developing both kinetic empathy and complicité between themselves and the audience.

This chapter will now trace the relevant historical contexts of masks exploring the extent to which these connect to my research, providing some contextual information in order to help answer the following questions. How does the mask relate to ritual, performance and audience? How does mask engage with the concept of *complicité*, which combines ritual, performance and audience? I am aware that ‘ritual’, ‘performance’ and ‘audience’ are complex and sometimes contested terms. Therefore, in the context of my research I have chosen to define them as follows, starting with ritual: A religious, sacred or solemn ceremony that consists of a series of performed actions, which form part of a prescribed order, often passed on through tradition, via word of mouth or mimicry.

Catherine Bell (1953–2008) makes the following statements in her description of ritual.

Theoretical descriptions of ritual generally regard it as action and thus automatically distinguish it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols, and myths

(Minister, Bloesch 2019, p.72)

However, it is these very concepts that inspire, create and define the ritual act. Bell clarifies this further here:

Likewise, beliefs, creeds, symbols, and myths emerge as forms of mental content or conceptual blueprints: they direct, inspire, or promote activity, but they themselves are not activities. Ritual, like action, will act out, express, or perform these conceptual orientations.

(Bell 2009, p.19)

To further help in defining what ritual is I shall also refer to Professor Emeritus Ronald Grimes, Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada, and *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (2013), where in the appendix, Grimes references the work of Jan Platvoet with this definition of ritual,

[Ritual is] that ordered sequence of stylized social behavior that may be distinguished from ordinary interaction by its alerting qualities which enable it to focus the attention of its audiences—its congregation as well as a wider public—onto itself and cause them to perceive it as a special event, performed at a special place and/or time, for a special occasion and/or with a special message. It effects this by the use of the appropriate, culturally specific consonant complexes of polysemous core symbols, of which it enacts several redundant transformations by multimedia performance.

(Grimes 2013, p.3)

It is the combination of these two elements, action and performance, which are situated within the ritual, that excite me as a researcher, especially in the context of masking and in the development of a creative pedagogy.

Richard Schechner writes an excellent discourse on the almost impossible-to-separate relationship between ritual and art.

Separating ‘art’ from ‘ritual’ is particularly difficult. I have noted that ritual objects from many cultures are featured in art museums. But consider also religious services with music, singing, dancing, preaching, storytelling, speaking in tongues, and healing. The gospel music heard in African

American churches is closely related to blues, jazz, and rock and roll. Are such services art or ritual?

(Schechner 2012 p.31)

This close relationship between art and ritual becomes even more complex when we consider that the majority of this art is of a performative nature. Schechner also makes the claim that people often attend religious services for enjoyment and social interaction in as much as for spiritual belief. It is this aspect of the ritual, the enjoyment of the social interaction that leads me towards a suitable definition for performance. To conclude this section on ritual, I have used a further reference from Schechner.

Mass was the theatre equivalent to ancient Greek tragedy. More than a few people attend religious services as much for aesthetic pleasure and social interactivity as for reasons of belief. In many cultures, participatory performing is the core of ritual practices. In ancient Athens, the great theatre festivals were ritual, art, sports-like competition, and popular entertainment simultaneously.

(Schechner 2006, p.32)

In relation to this research inquiry, the brief exploration of ritual has highlighted a number of parallels with the practice of masking. The most significant from my understanding would be the need for an audience or participants. Masking has long-established traditions that are rooted in social and ritual events, and this could therefore demonstrate the power of the mask as an object, which communicates, engages with and holds the attention of an audience. An animated mask has the potential to be considered as spiritual, as aesthetically beautiful and as entertainment. However, for an audience to take meaning from the mask, they must observe and engage their imagination and share in the experience.

Performance: An act of communicating or presenting a series of actions, visuals or sounds as a form of aesthetic entertainment for a gathered audience, with the purpose of creating a shared experience and sense of *complicité*.

In the definition of performance above, I am making the assertion that an audience is a specific requirement, yet if an audience is a requirement for performance this raises

the question: what is an audience and what is the function of an audience in relation to the performer and the performance? This is a significant question in terms of the research because as an artist working in mask and clown, one of my core principles is to create audience-engaged work, work that promotes a sense of shared experience and *complicité*. These, however, are topics that require significant investigation and discussion and therefore cannot be covered at this point in the thesis. I will return to them in later chapters. The following paragraph will briefly define audience in the context of my practice.

It is essential that I can relate and communicate with an audience through a variety of media, visuals, and narratives and ultimately through empathy. It is through empathy that I would propose the transformation of an audience takes place, from being simply observers into active participants that can freely engage and relate to the performer and performance. It is this engagement that is a crucial point because this is when an audience sees, feels and understands the performance they themselves begin to compose their own parallel journey to that of the performer. Empathy could be seen as the liberating element that frees the audience from being non-participatory observers. Jacques Rancière, the French philosopher, professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee and former professor of philosophy at the University of Paris, states the following.

Theatre is the place where an action is taken to its conclusion by bodies in motion in front of living bodies that are to be mobilized. The spectator must be removed from the position of observer calmly examining the spectacle offered to her. She must be dispossessed of this illusory mastery, drawn into the magic circle of theatrical action where she will exchange the privilege of rational observer for that of the being in possession of all her vital energies.

(Rancière 2009, p. 3)

It is this communion of artist and observer that helps to define what the role of an audience is in relation to this research.

Audience: A group of people who have gathered to observe a performance, and through active engagement will develop a sense of empathy with the performer and performance.

In order to address the question, how does the mask relate to ritual, performance and audience? A selection of masks and masking will be used as reference. These will be described in chronological order; however, it is important to note that this is not a detailed historical or anthropological record of mask or masking as that would be outside the scope of this thesis. The masks chosen here are closely related to my practice and training, and each form a strong foundation in the knowledge base of how masks are used in performance and education.

As an artist, I am interested in the connection a mask as an artefact can have with the performer and also by its connection to an audience, be it through cultural association, traditional or even sacred and spiritual associations. Through my experience as a mask artist and an audience member at numerous performances, the relationship charges the mask with a type of energy, even before the masker wears or performs in the mask. Hans Belting, Professor Emeritus of Art History and Media Theory at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, describes the particular impact of the mask.

According to Weihe the equation of mask and person, in the modern period, produces the ‘homo duplex’ or to use Emile Durkheim’s terminology: this is ‘the model of a man who unites nature and culture within himself: the self as a role.’

(Belting 2017, p. 6)

While the mask is significant as an artefact in itself, it is important to remember that the mask does require the masker to transform the artefact from a man-made object in leather, carved wood or clay etc. into something that appears to take on a life of its own during performance. This is particularly important in relation to the research, which focuses on the shared experiences of an artist and the audience. Therefore, based on personal experience, masking requires an audience to be present. The wearing of a mask is not a singular activity, and in order for any mask to have meaning and relevance beyond its presence as an object, I would argue that it requires an audience, a minimum of one other to witness the transformation.

It is important to provide some underpinning by considering the origins and etymology of the word ‘mask’ to establish a broad theoretical overview of mask and

masking. The etymology of the word ‘mask’ does indeed provide some useful context for its function in performance.

The origin of the word ‘mask’ is a borrowing from the French, ‘*masque*’.¹⁹ The three points below clearly illustrate the relationship that mask and masking have to performance.

- 1) An image of a face worn by an actor: (classical theatre) a hollow figure of a human head intended both to identify the character represented and to amplify the voice.
- 2) A representation usually carved or sculpted of a human face or animal head originally made for religious or ceremonial purposes.
- 3) A grotesque or comical representation of a face made of pasteboard, plastic, or other material, and worn at carnivals, parties, etc.

To illustrate this further, and to add some context to the origins of the word mask, I shall reference John W. Nutley and Cara McCarthy’s, *Masks: Faces of Culture*, an excellent general reference publication that offers a broad introduction to mask and masking. Here Nunley and McCarty state that the word mask could originate from the Arabic language.

Arabic Maskhara, which means to falsify or transform into an animal, a monster or a freak. In the Middle Kingdom, Egyptians used the word msk to describe leather or second skin, The word most probably entered the Arabic language as msr which for Muslims meant to be Egyptianised or to wear a mask as did the Egyptian people.

(Nunley & McCarty 1999, p.15)

In relation to the research, the phrases ‘to falsify’ and ‘to transform’ and the notion of a ‘second skin’ have some direct connections with characterisation and the animation

¹⁹ Etymology: Middle French, French *masque* (1515 denoting a masked entertainment, 1532 denoting a masked person). Italian *maschera* (1350) mask, further etymology uncertain: perhaps related to post classical Latin *masca* evil spirit, spectre (643 in *Edictus Rothari*, glossing classical Latin *striga*; 8th century, in British sources) which is perhaps ultimately cognate with a group of Romance forms meaning ‘to smear, blacken’; the connection of sense being the daubing of the face to disguise it (Oxford English Dictionary 2018).

of the masks in performance. Using the word ‘mask’ in its most accepted terms, we are referring to an object or an artefact placed over the head or face so that the face is almost entirely concealed.

There are relatively few cultural histories of mask that investigate the mask as a cultural form; however, Hans Belting provides an exploration of mask and face providing a useful perspective to frame this pedagogic exploration of mask and masking. Belting writes: ‘The history of the mask also belongs to the cultural history of the face. The mask has always been used as a medium for the face’ (Belting 2017).

Belting argues that the mask ‘has accompanied the changing interpretations of the face or in some cases even caused them. This even applies to the oldest masks that we know’. Referencing Belting’s art historical perspective, he focuses on the materiality of the mask and notes that ‘They did not merely replicate the face after death in clay and colour but simultaneously produced an image that constituted a representative view of life’ (Belting 2017, p. 6).

Here, Belting makes the direct connection between the mask and the face in both performance and daily life; the face is often a direct means of communication. Therefore, in my research, I would ask how does covering the face with a mask affect the masker’s communication with a potential audience?

Belting references Richard Weihe, Adjunct Professor and Researcher at Accademia Teatro Dimitri, to add further weight to his assertions on the relationship between the mask and the face.

In his book on masks, Richard Weihe examines the ambiguity between face and mask, calling it a ‘paradox.’ In the duality of co-operation or contradiction between face and mask, there emerges a dialectic of showing and concealing that is characteristic of the mask. In cult ritual and theatre of Greek antiquity a ‘prosopic unity’ was produced by equating mask and face (the mask is the face).

(Belting 2017, p. 6)

The word ‘mask’ may also be used as a verb ‘to mask’, and the term ‘masquerade’ can refer to the ritual performances of maskers as well as the theatrical productions

with masked and costumed players. As a public event, the masquerade might include food, music, drama, narration, a stage and other various performance property. However, it is important to remember the mask is a separate artefact that does not bear the total burden of expression; therefore, it is essential to ensure that the mask is placed in the correct context and, in my experience, that context is usually as a pivotal element in some form of ritual or genre/discipline of performance.

The types of masks and masking presented in this chapter are as follows:

Table 2.1. Masks and Masking

Ritual masks	Masks used by Indigenous peoples in rituals and ceremonies, masks used in Pagan traditions, and masks used in Catholic holidays or feast day celebrations
Greek antiquity/classical masks	Mask and its transition from ritual performance to popular theatrical performance, considering how the masks were used and the importance of the mask as a dramatic device
Commedia dell'arte archetype masks	The architecture of how commedia was established and how the central and recurring archetypes influence the scenarios and the various character traits that an actor would embody
Contemporary masks	The mask's contribution to modern theatrical performances and also its ongoing importance in masquerade and festivity

The mask, at its most obvious level, hides the identity of the wearer. However, in some cultures, it could be considered as hiding what must never be seen, such as a spirit or entity from another world, which, by definition, is beyond human sight and comprehension. Therefore, in those circumstances, the mask must not express what that entity is, but rather what it is not. This can be observed in the ritual masquerades from many cultures, and later in this chapter, examples from Africa and Sri Lanka will be considered. Masquerades include special events, ritual ceremonies and spiritual celebrations, and in some societies, they have dedicated areas in which to play out these rituals and narratives. Theatre has typically grown out of these ritual masquerades whose roots are in mythology and religion, and this can be observed through the history and development of classic Greek theatre.

Yet unlike the masks used in masquerades, which are often related to the seasons, religious calendars and the inevitable changes in life cycle, theatrical masks are recognised for their entertainment value more than for their ritual or spiritual significance. When actors assume specific roles, they are usually blocked and

scripted, sometimes the masks are established characters or archetypes, and the use of dramaturgy and narrative become essential in telling the narrative.

Theatre masks can transcend some of the limitations of the human condition and help us play out the deepest images of ourselves. In addition to disguise and transformation by concealing our identity, there is another reason for masking. Masks empower the wearer to reveal or show the hidden and true self, voicing our secret thoughts by exposing our inhibitions or the personality traits that we would ordinarily hide or suppress. In my early training, Lecoq would often quote the following in relation to the personal masks that people wear on a daily basis. ‘There are three masks: the one we think we are, the one we really are, and the one we have in common.’²⁰

Masks are also worn in order to become anonymous, enjoying the pleasure of not being recognised, for example, at a masked ball. The power of this anonymity gives the protection to behave in a contrary manner and maybe break the social rules. This could be likened to the clown who wears a small mask, the red nose. Once wearing the mask, the clown becomes a figure of misrule, a trickster, a truth-teller and a contrary.

However, despite the apparent universality of the mask and the definition of the word ‘mask’, it is noticeable that it does not directly translate into many of the languages that are spoken by those who have established mask traditions. In ancient Greek theatre, for example, the term ‘*prosopon*’ was used to describe a mask, yet to suggest that ‘*prosopon*’ and ‘mask’ are entirely synonymous would be inaccurate; ‘*prosopon*’ is a much more complex term that also hints at the differences in beliefs that existed and still do today in relation to the culture of masks. David Napier, Professor of Medical Anthropology at UCL also comments on the word ‘*prosopon*’: ‘*Prosopon* when properly referred to is a manifestation, a figure, and it is this primary meaning that implies that masks were believed to belong to a much broader class of phenomena than that of just a mere object’ (Napier 1987, p. 8).

²⁰ This quote is from my personal memory, therefore it may not be the exact wording

Therefore, the way that modern societies understand and use the term ‘mask’ it implicitly acknowledges an element of human agency, indeed the majority of people are aware that masking is someone dressing up; however, there are some traditional societies in which the knowledge that someone is articulating the mask from within is seriously denied.

Ritual masking

In some traditional African societies, a generic term ‘*makishi*’ refers to a range of masks and performance rituals of which masking is part, and particularly in Zambia, where secret cults would play an important part in upholding the economic and social values of the community. Françoise Gründ-Khaznadar gives some detailed information regarding these rituals. ‘In both the Makishi and Nyau rituals, masked characters play a dominant part by making their appearance on specific occasions associated with the initiation ceremonies of boys.’ (1981, p.31)

These *makishi* rituals are commonly practised in an area that extends from Zaire in the north to Zimbabwe in the south and includes some parts of Angola and Barotseland, the western province of Zambia. Gründ-Khaznadar explains:

In general, these societies are matriarchal and follow very strict rules of discipline. Women, however, are excluded from the ritual itself; they are allowed to sing or beat time to the dances by stamping the feet or clapping, but they are forbidden to wear masks.

(Gründ-Khaznadar 1981, p. 31)

Before the masked rituals take place, the young boys are taken from the camp and remain completely isolated. The boys undergo special training and follow a very strict diet. Nowadays, this period of seclusion is typically three or four weeks in the months of August or September, between the cool season and sowing time. In the initiation camp, the boys learn history, arts and the moral standards of their culture as well as having practical training.²¹ At the end of this training, the boys would then be

²¹ Hut building, work methods, harvesting techniques, animal breeding, care of stock, hunting techniques, elementary medicine, sculpture, music, dance, speech, etc.

circumcised by the elders of the village. These elders for the most part are also the masters of the initiation camp. The boys leave the camp as soon as the circumcision wound is healed. On the last day of the training, when the boys leave the *Mukanda* (initiation camp), a joyful celebration begins in which the whole village participates. The most important event of the feast is the appearance of the masked dancers. Gründ-Khaznadar states:

The dancers follow a fixed route before showing themselves to the crowds and then make their entrance into the village in a preestablished order. At the beginning of the dance, the masks almost always parade about the village, and, as they do so, the spectators mingle with them, shouting and cheering them on.

(Gründ-Khaznadar 1981, p. 31)

The masks are typically made up of a headpiece, a body costume and, usually, some kind of symbol that helps to distinguish the characters from each other. They represent animals, spirits of the dead or sometimes a specific function that is related to the ritual. The masks have a moral or symbolic significance that is further emphasised by the costume, the dances and the accompanying music and songs. The masks are either carved out of wood or constructed on a frame of branches covered by bark. The costume, which covers the whole body, is also made of bark and is often decorated with animal skins, feathers, grass fibres, etc. Various vegetable dyes are used to colour the masks. The most prevalent colours are red, white and black; an example of this can be observed in Figure 2.1 below.



Figure 2.1. Makishi masks (Banda 2010).

In Sri Lanka, the rituals and performances are very different from those of Zambia, but no less complex. Historically in Sri Lanka, there were two basic cycles of masked performance. In parts of the island, these were known as the *Kolam* and the *Sanni*. *Kolam*, essentially forms of mythic drama or popular theatre in which the characters performing were masked. *Sanni* was associated with rituals and healing, and specifically with the driving out of demons. In the *Cultural Studies* paper, *Sri Lankan Sanni masks: an ancient classification of disease*, Mark S Bailey, specialist registrar in infectious diseases and tropical medicine, writes a very informative paragraph in relation to the *Sanni Yakuma* ritual.

Sri Lanka has a rich culture of theatre called kolam and exorcism called tovil, which make use of actors, exorcists, masks, music, and dance. The Sanni Yakuma is the best known exorcism ritual, in which numerous sanni (disease) demons are portrayed by exorcists wearing elaborate masks.

(Bailey 2006, para.2)

He further details how the masks represent disease demons and their purpose in the ritual.

Occasionally the full complement of 18 possible disease demons is represented in the Daha Ata Sanniya (18 diseases) ritual, but usually a smaller number are used according to which demons are thought to be causing a person's affliction. The exorcism ends with the appearance of an exorcist wearing the mask of the chief demon called Maha Kola (the terrific or all-encompassing one), which usually incorporates miniature representations of the other 18 demons.

(Bailey 2006, para.2)



Figure 2.2. Gedi Sanniya (left), demon of boils and skin diseases; Jala Sanniya (middle), demon of cholera and chills; Kora Sanniya (right), demon of lameness and paralysis (Bailey, De Silva 2006).

By using just these two examples, it is evident that the events, which are the occasion for masquerade, are numerous and they can be found as part of the ceremonies of births, deaths, and with initiation into adulthood. They can occur in the context of changes in status, whether it is a promotion to some higher grade within a social group or in association with such regal acts as accession to kingship. Masquerades can also be performed to mark the various annual and seasonal changes; in some agriculturally based communities, a masquerade is performed in order to help ensure that the crops grow well. Then to celebrate the subsequent successful harvest, a further masquerade is performed in thanks. The religious calendar also provides a further cycle of annual events, which traditionally became the occasion for a masquerade.

The Mardi Gras celebrations can be used as a reference of where the religious calendar, along with its feast days, helped to establish another form of ritual festivity

and masquerade. What is Mardi Gras?²² Mardi Gras is a glorious period of celebration that is filled with rambunctious masquerading filling the streets and culminating in mysterious masked balls. Mardi Gras is celebrated across numerous continents, cities, towns and smaller communities, and despite regional differences and distinctions, the core rituals still exist, that of a masked celebration culminating in a period of excess drinking, eating and debauchery. The traditional purpose of Mardi Gras was for the celebrants to purge their souls of all desires, so they were ready to commit to 40 days of fasting and repentance during the period of Lent.

During the period of Lent, it is possible to witness the strong parallels between the liturgical colours of the Catholic Church and the official colours of Mardi Gras. The colours of Mardi Gras are purple, green and gold, and they decorate the masks and the garlands of beads that are given to celebrants as gifts. In a traditional form of symbolism, the Catholic Church uses certain colours during its services and celebrations on the priest's vestments and the alter coverings, etc. These colour choices are not random or simply decorative; they have specific meaning to the liturgical year or in honour of a special occasion or sacrament Scott writes in *The Catholic Herald*:

What do liturgical colors mean? Colors have been part of the liturgy since the beginning of the Church, according to Father Michael Witczak, associate professor of liturgical studies at Catholic University in Washington. The first person to systematize the Roman Catholic color scheme was Pope Innocent III, pontiff from 1198 to 1216, who named four liturgical colors: white, red, black and green. The current six liturgical colors, which include rose and violet/purple, were codified in 1570 with the promulgation of the Roman Missal after the Council of Trent. Gold and silver are allowed on special occasions.²³

(Scott, 2014, para.5)

²² Mardi Gras is a rowdy secular celebration leading up to the period of Lent, which has been part of the official Catholic Church calendar since the 14th century; it is a season of merriment, which begins on the Epiphany and ends on Fat Tuesday (Shove Tuesday).

²³ Violet/purple symbolizes penance, preparation and sacrifice; white symbolizes purity, joy, light and glory; green symbolizes hope, life and anticipation; rose symbolizes anticipation and rejoicing; red symbolizes blood, fire and passion; and black symbolizes death and mourning.

At Mardi Gras, purple is used to symbolise justice. Faith is represented in the colour green, and this embodies renewal, rebirth and an unwavering trust in god. In the decoration of a Mardi Gras mask, gold signifies power, in Catholicism, gold is often used as a majestic colour that is used in the depictions of god.



Figure 2.3. Mardi Gras mask, (iStockphoto 2017).

This masking furthermore facilitates the potential for the mocking of authority, and the masks can empower participants to express unpopular or illegal opinions and to explore roles that are normally out of reach in their everyday lives. It is therefore common for maskers to assume the identity of those who occupy powerful positions of authority, such as political figures, and the clergy. Men often wear a white mitre with red fringes; this being the traditional Lenten headgear of a Roman Catholic bishop or an abbot. The Mardi Gras mask is a deeply personal item, states Barry Jean Ancelet, head of the Folklore Department at the University of Louisiana.

It reveals the wearer's hopes, societal beliefs or maybe a hidden identity. When wearing the mask it is a time to seek your true face, to look at it and ask the question who do I think I am. There's a whole psychic release when you begin to laugh at yourself.

(Ancelet 1989)

Ancelet also claims that masquerades are an essential ritual in which communities can celebrate together and find their own identity. This is evident in the variations that exist within the framework of Mardi Gras; all these masquerades are rooted in the liturgical tradition of consumption prior to fasting, however, they have been influenced by local traditions, cultures and even economic climates.

Though issued from the same liturgical tradition as its counterparts in New Orleans, Rio de Janeiro, and Nice, the Cajun Mardi Gras differs substantially from them. Rooted in the medieval European *fête de la quêmande*, the course de Mardi Gras is related to other ceremonial begging traditions like Christmas caroling and trick-or-treating in which a procession of revelers travels through the countryside bringing their performance with them to various homes and requesting a gift in exchange. They sing and dance, display their masks and costumes, and play roles ranging from the clown to the outlaw, all activities fueled by the ritualized consumption of alcohol. At the end of the day they return to town to eat the fruits of their labor and to dance in a masked ball, which ends the festive period and ushers in Lent.

(Ancelet 1989)

To conclude this section on ritual masks, one agricultural/seasonal masquerade that is still performed today, despite its Saxon origins, is the wassail celebrations that take place traditionally on the twelfth night of Christmas, with its central character, the Green Man.

In the dark and gloomy evenings of early January, a strange sight can be witnessed up and down the West Country of England. Processions of people carrying pots and pans can be seen flanking a mysterious figure wearing a distinctive green mask. These somewhat magical scenes have graced the streets of England's cider-making counties for centuries. Gordon Randolph Willey (1913–2002) explains how Cecil Sharp (1859–1924), the famous collector of folk songs, was introduced in 1903 to the folksongs of Somerset through his engagement with a wassail ritual. Willey then describes part of the ritual.

The ancient midwinter custom of wassail singing, evidently widespread but waning at the turn of the century, traditionally involved the apple tree wassail and/or the visiting or house to house wassail. The custom is generally held to be Saxon in origin 'wassail' from the Anglo Saxon *wes (be) hal* (whole), hence the salutation or toast 'be of good health' and was normally observed in Somerset on 5th January.

(Willey 1978, pp. 60-65)



Figure 2.4. The Green Man mask

In the early 1990s, I had the privilege of participating in a wassail festival in Taunton, Devon. My memories of the masquerade are as follows. The Green Man, along with the Wassail King/Queen led the parade to a tree, which is believed to be the oldest tree in the orchard. Apple cake was then shared amongst the revellers and whoever found a clove in their cake became the King or Queen for the following year. Wearing a crown of ivy, the King/Queen dipped a piece of toast in some cider, which was then lifted and placed in the boughs of the tree to attract favourable spirits. More cider was poured around the base of the tree, and the evil spirits were scared away with the loud banging of pots and shouting. Then to finish the ritual, the tree is serenaded with a traditional wassailing song of unknown origins (see Figure 2.5 below). The evening concludes with Morris dancing and, on some occasions, a specially written Mummers play. Bonfires are lit to keep away the spirits, and the merry-making ends with lots of cider drinking.

Wassail Song

Was - sail was - sail all o - ver the town The
cup it is white and the ale it is brown The
cup it is made of the good aol-en tree And so is the
ale heat bar - lee For it's your was - sail and it's
our was - - sail Ay a jol - - ly come
to and a jol - - ly was - - sail

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Figure 2.5. Wassail Song, Cecil Sharp Manuscript Collection (Sharp 1903).

Up to this point in the chapter, mask has been referenced in a variety of social contexts; however, the vast majority of the documented material in regard to mask situates the mask as the foundation upon which theatrical performance has become established. This, in my opinion, is due to the mask's long-term association with the tragic and comic theatre of the ancient world.

In Greek/Athenian tragic theatre, it was considered that masks assisted the portrayal of the character in conjunction with the actor by deploying well-established characteristics whose significance was easily interpreted by the audience as a particular human trait. However, in the comic theatre of the 5th century BC, the style of presentation was through relating the mask to an archetype, which allowed the actor more scope to use satire and then create a parody of well-known Athenian personalities.

Drama offered them the objectivity of art and the separation from reality, which in turn allowed them to consider and reflect on the narrative while experiencing it. Typically in Greek tragedy, the bloodiest actions are kept off stage; similarly, the hysterical behaviour of the comic character is contained by the mask, therefore, it

allows the audience to experience passion at such an intensity that they could be taken beyond the point of repulsion.

The screaming naked face is repulsive; however, the face of a mask with the scream behind it is not. The audience does not audibly hear the scream, they read it on the body of the actor; the same is witnessed in riotous laughter as the body changes shape and the mask echoes the emotion or sentiment; the audience should almost see the mask laugh.

The Greek full mask can laugh or cry; it is entirely dependent on what the masker animating it is embodying, and this is subsequently expressed through physicality and reinforced by the dialogue that is spoken. In Greek theatre, the mask acts as a magnifying glass, helping the audience to deeply observe emotion; the mask became a tool for the imagination a metaphor.

Masks in performance: Greek tragedy

Below is a reproduction of a full-face, non-verbal Greek mask in which the fixed expression can be clearly seen.



Figure 2.6. Reproduction of a Zeus mask

To wear a mask changes everything: one's voice, one's movement, one's awareness of self and of other. For the practitioner, to understand the mask is to have an entry point into the historical practice of Greek Acting

(Wiles 2007, p. 2)

The ancient Greek theatre tradition was born out of festivity, and it was at the celebrations of Dionysus that these traditions of performance and plays began to establish themselves in Athens and then further afield. Dionysus was the god of fertility and wine and was latterly considered a patron of the arts; he created vines and spread the craft of viticulture. He also had a dual nature: on the one hand, he brought joy and divine ecstasy; on the other hand, he would bring brutal, blinding rage, thus reflecting the duplicity of the effects of consuming too much wine. It was said that Dionysus and his followers could not be bound in fetters, and this was because Dionysus was the son of Zeus and Semele, and he was the only god with a mortal parent. The festival for Dionysus was held in the spring when the vines would start bearing leaves; it became one of the most important events of the year, and its primary focus was theatre performance. It is often considered that Thespis was the first Greek 'actor' and the originator of tragedy, which literally means 'goat song'.²⁴ The connection may be via *satyric* drama, from which tragedy later developed, in which actors or singers were dressed in goatskins to represent satyrs. But many other theories have been made including a singer who competes for a goat as a prize.

Yet the importance of Thespis is often disputed, and he is sometimes listed as late as 16th in the chronological order of Greek tragedians. In the *Poetics* of Aristotle, it is possible to reference some of the earliest known sources in regard to the origins of Greek theatre, and also gain an insight to a scholar and audience member from the period of classical antiquity. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, Aristotle offers his definition of tragedy; José Angel García Landa, Senior Lecturer in English, University of Zaragoza, comments on this stating:

²⁴ Tragedy, late 14th century 'play or other serious literary work with an unhappy ending' from Old French *tragedie* (14th century), from Latin *tragedia* 'a tragedy' from Greek *tragodia* 'a dramatic poem or play in formal language and having an unhappy resolution' literally 'goat song' from *tragos* 'goat, puck' + *oide* song probably on the model of rhapsodos.

A noteworthy attempt at analysing the features of a literary genre taking into account the system of literature as a whole, which includes other genres which may share some common traits with each other but must be differentiated in a logical way.

(García Landa 2017, p. 15)

Aristotle's definition, from my personal research perspective, still has a value in relation to how contemporary theatre is presented today.

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions, Every tragedy has six constituents, which will determine its quality. They are plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song.

(García Landa 2017, p. 15)

It is my understanding that spectacle refers to the mode of the performance; the diction and music are relative to their mediums and plot, character and thought are connected with the narrative of the drama.

Aristotle also states that tragedy evolved from *dithyrambs*, songs sung in praise of Dionysus at the Dionysia each year. The *dithyrambs* may have begun as frenzied improvisations, but in the 5th century BC, the poet Arion is credited with developing the *dithyramb* into a formalised narrative sung by a chorus. However, Michael Tierney, (1894–1975) Professor of Greek, University College Dublin, contests this in his paper 'Dionysus, the Dithyramb, and the origin of tragedy' (1944) claiming that there are few historical problems as perplexing as the origins of tragedy.

Our positive knowledge on the subject is derived from an enigmatic passage in the Poetics of Aristotle, eked out by a series of tenth hand and frequently bizarre references in the works of certain medieval purveyors of miscellaneous information. Even the exact meaning of the word tragedy itself is uncertain.

(Tierney 1944, p.331)

Furthermore, Tierney suggests that for a quality source on the etymology of tragedy, the work of Dionysius Thrax, the Greek grammarian, should be observed.

It is so called either because the victors got a goat as prize, as meaning 'song for a goat'; or the *a* is to be turned into *u* and it means *trachody*, for the dirge is rougher and more mournful and difficult than laughter-making.

(Tierney 1944, p.331)

However, the evidence relating to the theatre of the 5th century BC tragic playwrights such as Aeschylus (525–455 BC), Sophocles (496–406 BC) and Euripides (484–406 BC) is very limited, and the majority of source material available comes from vase paintings and architecture. Limited though it is, it suggests that the masks were made from light perishable materials, like animal skins, leather, and vellum, and typically they covered more than just the face, being worn over the head like a helmet. The facial characteristics were not exaggerated to the extent of the later Hellenistic and Roman theatre masks; they presented an almost blank expression that was enhanced only by the gaping open mouth through which the actor projected their voice. These masks represented the general characters within the drama such as the beardless youth, a bearded citizen, the king, a woman, or god.

In *Oedipus Tyrannus* (429 BC) by Sophocles, there is a perfect example of the dramatic content necessitating a mask change. At the beginning of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the king is at the height of his powers with fame and fortune yet blind metaphorically to the fact he has just brutally murdered his father and then subsequently bedded his own mother. The play concludes with Oedipus's dreadful self-realisation and shame, which causes him to put out his own eyes the self-mutilation takes place off stage, and when he returns in front of the audience, Oedipus is now masked as a blind beggar. At last able to see what had previously been hidden from him, it is only in these extremes that a change of mask would have been used; it was normal practice that changes of emotional state and circumstance would be expressed by gesture and the precise movements of the head. Very little is known for certain on how the blocking and staging of Greek tragedy took place; however, it may be possible to gain insight through a close investigation of surviving artefacts and decorative architecture, such as the carved horsemen on the frieze of the Parthenon.



Figure 2.7. Carvings of horsemen on the Frieze of the Parthenon.

Here, according to the prevailing conventions of Greek art, human figures in the cavalcade are represented as idealised type: young men of aristocracy, at an age for military service. From one carving to the next, the facial features of the horsemen are similar, if not the same. A variety of mood is shown in the composition through the positions in which the head is held. Thus, some horsemen look straight ahead with an air of self-assurance, others appear more reflective with the face tilted down; a third group twist around and glance anxiously behind. This comparison between the treatment of a face in architectural sculpture and that of the staged mask is particularly relevant when we consider the distance at which the spectator would have viewed both. Whether standing at the foot of a temple or sitting in the auditorium, the important common fact is that the narrative must still be readable if either art form is to succeed.

A mask that featured heavily in both comedy and tragic Greek theatre was that of the chorus. At the beginning of the 5th century, choruses were made up of approximately 50 actors confined to a low-status space we now call the orchestra pit, a circular dance floor in front of the main stage. Through song and movement, the chorus reinforced the narrative being told on the stage. Despite the large numbers of these early choruses, they represented a collective consciousness, or a single body, often wearing identical masks to create a sense of unification and anonymity.

Figure 2.8 below shows Russell Dean's stylised interpretation of the chorus mask; these masks are made from vacuum-formed plastic, which is light and easy to wear. They are an excellent mask for use in workshops and contemporary performance.



Figure 2.8. Reproduction chorus mask

In later years, the chorus was reduced to 12 by the Greek playwright Aeschylus; this was then subsequently raised to 15 by his successor Sophocles. These smaller choruses would now take on a more active role in the storytelling, either by playing a role in the narrative or by representing a collective character such as a group of townsfolk or an army.

In the Greek plays such as *Oedipus Tyrannus* (429 BC), *Antigone*, (441 BC) and *Lysistrata* (411 BC), the chorus functions as a storytelling device by serving as a link between the audience and the piece itself. In some instances, the chorus is in a direct conversation with the characters and actively moves and participates throughout the scene. However, the chorus would typically communicate through song, which is separate from the action of the play. This pulls the audience into the action on another sensory level, and at times, the rhetoric of the chorus alienates the audience, causing them to view events and characters from an outside perspective.

In ancient Greek theatre, along with the chorus, there were only three actors who performed the dialogue in the tragedies at the Dionysia. Therefore, when looking at text for these plays, it is clear that the ancient Greek actor was expected to be able to

present the full spectrum of humanity, from young girls to old men. As a result, the art of ancient acting was possibly centred on a performer's physicality and voice. The almost neutral facial characteristics of the masks may have also been as a direct result of these restrictions in only allowing three speaking actors, as the constant changing of masks would have certainly spoiled the flow and the pace of the production.

The 'three-actor rule' was a restriction that appears to have been rigidly enforced at the Dionysia and not just because later historical sources like Aristotle allude to it, but because the surviving texts of this period show the rule in action. The dramas themselves constitute primary sources of evidence that three actors at most performed all the speaking roles in Greek tragedy, for the simple reason that all such drama, even the surviving fragments, require no more than three speaking personae on stage at one time. Less clear though is why there were only three actors. Presumably, having performers play more than one role was a traditional component of the Greek theatre.

Commedia dell'arte

Commedia dell'arte was a popular form of anarchic street theatre that was performed in Renaissance Italy (circa 15th to 19th century). The performances were comedic with often violent interactions and various athletic, acrobatic movement known as *lazzi*, which was performed by the actors.²⁵ Spring and summer were the seasons for performance and throughout the autumn and winter, new *lazzi* were devised, masks were made or repaired, and costumes mended.

Commedia dell'arte, which means the art of comedy, began in Italy sometime during the 15th century. It was predominantly a masked performance; however, there was a small number of unmasked characters who tended to reflect the more aristocratic or refined elements of society. Each of the masks used in the performance represented a specific archetype in society with whom the audience would be able to associate. Some of the more popular archetypes included Dottoro, Pantalone, Arlecchino, Pulcinella, Brighella, Capitano and the Zannis. The shows were traditionally performed on trestle stages throughout the streets, towns and cities. There was no

²⁵ The actors or troupe of players were traditionally families travelling in a covered wagon from region to region bringing their own unique style of playing to the streets.

formal script as we would recognise today and the dialogue would have been somewhat improvised allowing for daily changes in the details such as the village's name or maybe referencing what was happening politically, etc. The established convention was to learn certain elements of the story; this information is known as the scenarios, and these would outline all the important plot points so the actors could improvise around the story. Dr S. Douglas Olson, Professor in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Minnesota, refers to the scenario writing of Flaminio Scala (1552–1624):

My main source has been the scenarios published by Flaminio Scala (1552–1624) in 1611 (*Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* i.e. *The Theatre of Tales for Performance*). These are the oldest and best preserved scenarios of *commedia dell'arte*, as they alone were collected to be published and not as personal copies of a company or an actor.

(Olson 2017)

Flaminio Scala was an Italian theatre practitioner who travelled with the Accesi Troupe. Another popular scenario writer and theatre practitioner was Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806) whose *Five Tales for the Theatre* is a rare example of a fully written *commedia dell'arte* play in which the characters are given a preface of the story and then actual lines to perform. This was a form that became more prevalent in the late 18th century.

Commedia dell'arte was widely popular among both the upper and lower classes. Although on the surface, *commedia dell'arte* was simply just a form of street entertainment, underneath it was much more than that. *Commedia dell'arte* made significant contributions to the social and cultural framework of Renaissance Italy by re-emphasising social standards, bringing the people of the towns and cities together regardless of class, religion or ethnicity and highlighting the importance of the street as a social and cultural platform.²⁶ Lin Foxhall and Gabriele Neher (2012) explain the significance of place and etiquette in Renaissance Italy.

²⁶ In the 16th century, segregation was a prominent feature of Italian society. There were ghettos for the Jews; the prostitutes and the lower class would live in designated areas of a city, just as the high status and the upper class had their own parts of the city. In conjunction with these divisions, there were also certain standards and

The balcony at that time was a liminal space predominantly used by higher class females. These elite females would not dare to be seen outside of the house and although they were sometimes scrutinized for being on their balcony it was deemed more appropriate than standing in their doorway on the street, that was strictly for the lower class women. ‘Ritiratezza’ was an Italian ideology, that required woman of all ages not to draw attention to oneself and it was considered a desirable trait that a woman would be expected to have. Women were watched carefully while in the public eye and criticized if they lacked this virtue.

(Foxhall and Neher, 2012)

Commedia dell’arte kept true to these social norms, and many performances ensured that women characters were staged depending on their social class. This was particularly relevant to the unmasked female characters. Therefore, a third level of playing was employed above the backdrop curtain or maybe in a staged balcony. In addition to this being a visual spectacle, the use of multiple playing levels on a stage in an outdoor scene may have been more of a reflection on society and cultural practice. The street or public-square was where privileged male characters could emerge; lower-class female characters could appear out of doors as they did in the real world. However, the higher-class female characters were only made visible to the audience through the mechanism of an upper level of staging. This allowed them to interact with actors down below, observe them covertly, exchange amorous looks, give dialogue and listen to serenades. These methods of staging could now also be used for lampooning and to cause controversy. If a female character up on a balcony demonstrated poor *ritiratezza*,²⁷ then those watching would be shocked and would think critically of the character.

Commedia dell’arte was not only a method of re-emphasising and parodying social standards, but it was also about bringing the people together. Mixing on a daily level was not entirely common, especially for the elite and lower class unless they were coming together for a specific purpose. With the arrival of commedia dell’arte, there

expectations for each class and gender to adhere to, and the emergence of Commedia dell’Arte emphasized, exaggerated and parodied these standards.

²⁷ *Ritiratezza* is a form of personal restraint, showing good morals and social standing.

was now a reason for society to interact on the streets: to watch and connect with this new, exciting form of theatre. Commedia dell'arte and its catalogue of stock characters who filled the scenes would have been well known by the Italian people. They could immediately relate, and this was definitely theatre for the people.

I will now briefly take a closer look at three of the principal masked characters that would form the basis of the typical commedia dell'arte troupe. These are Pantalone, Arlecchino and the Zanni.

Below is a graphic representation of the character Pantalone, an ageing merchant, easily recognisable and relatable to a Renaissance audience.



Figure 2.9. Pantalone (Shutterstock 2018).

When referencing the characters of commedia dell'arte, Rudlin gives an excellent insight into the personal temperaments and social status that could be attributed to the principle archetypes.

Pantalone operates on the assumption that everything can be bought and sold, and this turns out to be true, with the exception of loyalty and love. But he also loves money for its own sake and will therefore only part with it when there is no other option. When things do not go his way he quickly

slips into emotional extremes, particularly enraged petty tyranny.
Pantalone is action, not words, in contrast with Il' Dottore.

(Rudlin 1994, p. 94)

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) also made reference to Pantalone in the *Seven Ages of Man* (1599), highlighting the impact of commedia dell'arte on the Elizabethan stage.

The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound.

(Shakespeare 1599)

In the image below, Arlechino has been illustrated adopting some of his typical poses; these would be immediately recognisable to an audience and would therefore quickly establish his character on a noisy outdoor stage. Also, in the image, he is seen holding a slapstick.²⁸

²⁸ A slapstick, a device made of two flat pieces of wood fastened at one end so as to make a loud noise when used by an actor to strike a person.



Figure 2.10. Arlechino (Shutterstock 2018).

Pierre Louis Ducharte (1894–1953) states that Arlechino’s character is:

That of an ignorant valet, fundamentally naïve but nevertheless making every effort to be intelligent, even to the extent of seeming malicious. He is a glutton and a poltroon, but faithful and energetic. Through motives of fear or cupidity he is always ready to undertake any sort of rascality and deceit. He is a chameleon, which takes on every colour. He must excel in impromptu, and the first thing that the public always asks of a new Harlequin is that he be agile, and that he can jump well, dance and turn somersaults.

(Ducharte 1966, p. 133)

While Rudlin tells us that *Arlechino* is:

Never pathetic, he is never the loser, he never just does something. For example, if, in the heat of the moment, his slapstick gets left on the ground, he somersaults to pick it up again. His paradox is that of having a dull mind in an agile body. Since, however, his body does not recognize the inadequacy of the mind, which drives it, he is never short of a solution, the fact that he cannot read, does not hinder him from divulging the contents of a letter. He responds to everything hunger, love and danger in a way that is taken to apocalyptic proportions and then forgotten entirely until the

next time. He has a very stereotypical Latin temperament yet he is never malicious. He is very likely to become disguised later in the action, for example as a priest in order to conduct a mock wedding, or as a Turk, a pilgrim, a rich benefactor, or in cross-dress in order to fulfill a rendezvous.

(Rudlin 1994, p. 70)

The third of these archetypes I am going to consider is, the Zanni. The Zanni is simply the name given to any unnamed character, someone whose actual identity you cannot be bothered to discover. However, 'Zan' can be used as a prefix to a character's name such as Zan Paolo; this would be typical if the role is significant to the scenario and there is a requirement for the audience to build an empathetic relationship with the character.

Zannis are at the bottom of the pecking order, often portrayed as that regrettably eternal unfortunate or the dispossessed immigrant worker. They are, however, the principal contributor to any confusion, and are often used skilfully in games of status. The Zanni talks to the audience directly, in some instances similar to that of the chorus in Greek tragedy and the clown in Elizabethan theatre. The direct address is possible because the Zanni is the most sympathetic character, which treats the audience collectively as one.



Figure 2.11. Zanni, Giangurgolo (Shutterstock 2017).

Below is a simple diagram I have designed showing the architecture of a typical 16th-century commedia dell'arte troupe, showing all the archetypes, their interconnecting relationships and their social status. This diagram is used when teaching commedia dell'arte as it quickly and visually shows the importance of character structure when devising.

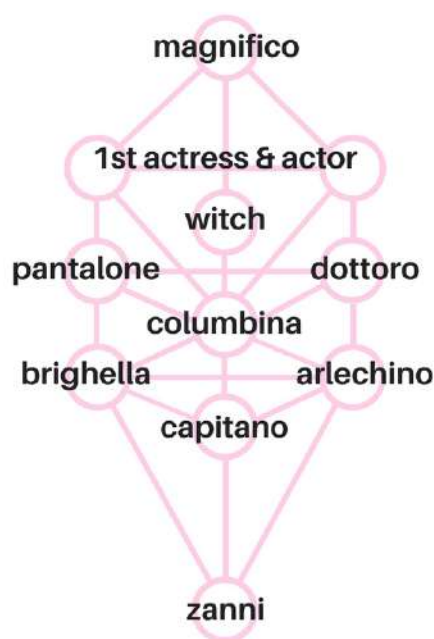


Figure 2.12. The architecture of a commedia troupe and characters.

Finally, commedia dell'arte presented itself as a mirror, a reflection of the social climate of Renaissance Italy commenting on the importance of certain social standards such as *ritiratezza*. As a theatrical art form that was embedded in the streets, it followed the conventions and expectations that the street upheld, yet it did offer the occasional surprise. Commedia dell'arte became a common ground in which many citizens could unite regardless of their social class, religious beliefs or ethnicity, and it was a cultural device that allowed people from all walks of life to connect with each other on a common level. Commedia dell'arte highlighted the important role that the street plays in daily social interaction. This Italian street theatre was not just simply a form of entertainment, but it was a crucial part of life in Renaissance Italy.

Contemporary use of mask

Masks have been incorporated into the theatre work of European contemporary artists from the turn of the 19th century. Alfred Jarry (1873–1907), Pablo Picasso (1891–1973), Oskar Schlemmer (1856–1943), along with artists from the Bauhaus school, as well as Surrealists and Dadaists, have all experimented with theatre forms and masks in some aspect of their work. In the 20th century, many theatre practitioners, such as Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874–1940), Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966) and Jacques Copeau (1879–1949), have attempted to move away from the theatre of naturalism turning to inspiration from traditions such as Japanese Noh theatre and *commedia dell'arte*, both of which feature masks as a principle focus.

Gordon Craig, in the 1910 article 'A note on masks' declares the virtue of using masks as a mechanism for capturing the audience's attention, imagination and soul. 'There is only one actor, nay one man who has the soul of the dramatic poet, and who has ever served, as the true and loyal interpreter of the poet, and this is the marionette' (Walton 1983).

Craig was highly influential and his ideas influenced Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), Jean Cocteau (1893–1963), Jean Genet (1910–1986), Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953), latterly John Arden (1930–2012), Jerzy Grotowski (1932–1999), and also Peter Brook, who personally tried to restore a ritualistic if not an actual religious significance to theatre. Brook (2008, p. 62) comments on these experiments and research, which he carried out in regard to mask, ritual, performance and audience.

We experimented with and came to reject the traditional language of masks and makeup as no longer appropriate. We experimented with silence and duration: we needed an audience so that we could set a silent actor in front of them to see the varying lengths of attention he could command. Then we experimented with ritual in the sense of repetitive patterns. Our aim for each experiment was the same, can the invisible be made visible through the performer's presence?

(Brook 2008, p. 62)

It was Copeau, in his attempts to naturalise the actor, who decided to use mask to liberate actors from their excessive awkwardness.

For Copeau, the mask was an essential tool in improvisation and thus actor training. He saw the mask as means of allowing the individual to hide behind their own reality and thus transform beyond their own inhibitions. The mask became a tool for the actor/performer to explore the psychology of the performance. Within this, the mask was seen as having a dual purpose; as a psychological and physical tool for the performer as well as a visual semiotic for the audience.

(Roy and Strecker 2016, p.7)

However, it was Copeau's development of the noble mask that denotes an important development in actor training. The noble mask was to become the foundation for the development of the neutral mask, which was designed by Amleto Sartori (1915–1962). The neutral mask then becoming synonymous with Lecoq's pedagogy, and furthermore as an essential foundation for this research. Copeau used his training school Vieux-Colombier to further develop his ideas, with the focus being on process as well as product. In his training, the students would focus on certain aspects of technique: breathing, rhythm and physicality. Many of these principles can also be seen in Lecoq's pedagogy.

Lecoq²⁹ and Sartori began to work on reviving the skills and techniques of making traditional leather commedia masks, later on developing the concept of Copeau's noble mask. It is here that Lecoq would ask Sartori to make him *masques neuter*, a neutral mask.

The neutral mask and its application in both Lecoq's pedagogy and my own practice will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3. However, one highly important feature of Lecoq's use of the mask was not so much its visual impact on stage, but how it changed the performer's movement on stage. It was a body-based approach to mask work, rather than a visually led one. Lecoq's pedagogy has been hugely influential for theatre practitioners in Europe. A leading figure in the world of contemporary theatre is John Wright, himself a former student of Lecoq, an internationally renowned teacher, director and the author of *Why is that so funny?*

²⁹ Lecoq, in his early theatre career, worked as the movement director at Teatro Piccolo in Italy. Here he was heavily influenced by the commedia tradition, and at Piccolo he also met his long-term collaborator Amleto Sartori who was a mask maker and sculptor.

(2006). As a founder member of the acclaimed theatre companies Trestle³⁰ and Told by an Idiot, his work with Trestle raised the profile of mask in performance and indeed challenged many of the existing preconceived ideas of how masks were used in theatre.

In the USA, mask work may have traditionally been the preserve of the Indigenous people, yet in the 1960s it slowly made its way into the public arena with the guerrilla theatre movement, typified by groups such as the San Francisco Mime Troupe and Bread and Puppet Theatre. Guerrilla theatre was a form of political art that was intended to spread political ideas such as the ones at the heart of the anti-war movement.

Guerrilla theater was first articulated in 1965 in a manifesto fitfully produced by R.G. Davis, founding director of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. By exhorting his theatrical ensemble to become a Marxian cadre, or at very least a catalyst for social change, Davis committed the Mime Troupe to serve as a Movement vanguard in the nascent Cultural Revolution.

(Doyle 2002, para.4)

Guerrilla theatre established its foundations through R.G. Davis's knowledge of commedia dell'arte, something he became interested in after studying modern dance and mime during the 1950s. The strong elements of parody that are essential to commedia dell'arte would be the perfect way to present a political message to an audience. Here, Professor Michael W. Doyle, Columbia University makes reference to this.

Reviving this comedic form was a stroke of genius on Davis's part. It recuperated the carnivalesque—that fecund bawdiness that Bakhtin delineated in Rabelais—and transposed it to a modern American setting. It

³⁰ Trestle Theatre Co. was established in 1981 and since then they have been making storytelling theatre using predominantly full facemasks. The core ensemble of Sally Cook, Alan Riley and Toby Wilsher met on the BA Performance Arts course at Middlesex Polytechnic. John Wright at that time was their course tutor and he helped to develop the company. At a later point, Joff Chafer joined the ensemble and he increasingly developed their full mask, non-speaking plays in collaboration with mask maker Russell Dean.

differed from previous forms of political theatre both through its intense political engagement, its use of spectacle and its use of nontraditional performance spaces, these spaces were usually public areas in order to reach beyond the typical theatre-going audience. The particulars of each guerrilla theatre group's political agenda varied, though all were anti-government, critical of the war, opposed to the priorities of capitalism, and engaged with Marxist ideas about class.

(Doyle 2002, para.5)

Following on from Davis, it was Peter Schumann, the founder of Bread and Puppet theatre, who made particular use of German carnival masks and indeed Bread and Puppet have subsequently inspired many other practitioners around the world to use masks in their work.³¹

Dancer and choreographer Mary Wigman (1886–1973) also embraced the use of mask in performance from a variety of ritualistic, spiritual, choreographic and aesthetical production perspectives, realising its strength in imagery and also the capability of the mask to reveal much more to the observer than it actually covered. Wigman was opposed radically to the established classical dance values and methods; she was in search of a dance that would accomplish an expressive function of the dancer's soul. Concerned about a close relationship between spirituality and movement, she defended the idea of invisible forces that would give life to dance. It is from this point of view that Wigman somehow manages to recreate a feeling or sensation in her work that is attributed to the ritual dance of ancient societies.

Wigman's pieces are often remembered for their tragic, dark character and could be described as introspective dances that reveal vibrant, vital, excited and passionate inner states of being.

³¹ In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater Co. from Minneapolis; Arm-of-the Sea Theatre from New York State; Snake Theater from California; and Shadow-land Theatre from Toronto.



Figure 2.13. Mary Wigman's Hexentanz or Witch Dance (Caravaglia 2017).

To conclude this brief section on contemporary mask, I would like to highlight the work of Vamos Theatre. Vamos was established in 2006 and are currently one of the UK's leading full-face mask theatre companies. Vamos tour a full-scale mask theatre production throughout the UK annually, as well as performing at festivals and events. Their work sees them actively engaging with school programmes and with the NHS staff, in care homes, with care staff, social workers and the Deaf community. Their characters bring joy, cheek and a sense of playfulness and all these elements are reinforced through the design of the masks. The mask creator and designer is Russell Dean from Strangeface Masks; Russell was also the mask creator for many of the Trestle Theatre Co. early productions. Furthermore, Russell designed and made the mask for my second examined performance, *Lifted Up*. The work, which Vamos present is accessible, humorous, human, and sometimes challenging and it is based on real-life stories; it is this that gives the productions a strong sense of place and identity in society. In their 2018 production of *A Brave Face*, Vamos devised and created the performance from two years of research with ex and current serving soldiers, families and health professionals. *A Brave Face* explores post-traumatic stress, an unseen and often unrecognised injury of war, and the impact it can have on even the closest of families.



Figure 2.14. *A Brave Face* by Vamos Theatre (Vamos 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter has chronologically mapped relevant historical and contextual information in relation to mask and masking, situating masks within the context of my research by reflecting on how masks have contributed to the methods that I use to teach and devise new work. Furthermore, the chapter has defined the key terms of 'ritual', 'performance' and 'audience' in context to this thesis, which are essential for the development of a creative pedagogy.

Chapter 3. Play and Learning Through Mask

Introduction

This chapter situates the use of mask and, in particular, the use of the neutral mask within my own practice and creative processes. Furthermore, this chapter examines my teaching practice and the methods, which have been developing as part of a framework for a new creative pedagogy. It is through these processes of exploration, reflection and drawing from existing practitioners' knowledge and training methods that have made possible the development of a new knowledge base to support this pedagogy. Firstly, this section of the research examines if the mask becomes a catalyst for play, and secondly, inquires if the mask allows the artist to gain an increased understanding of his or her own body and how it moves within play. Therefore, in order to address these questions, it is important to establish a definition of play that is specific to this current research.

Play is a widely researched phenomenon explained by theorists such as Jean Piaget in *Theory of Play* (1962), Mildred Parten Newhall in *Six Stages of Play* (1929) and Vygotsky's theory (1978). Diane E. Papalia and Sally Wendkos Olds (1990) define play as the 'work' of children and identify its importance in the cognitive development of children. A child's tendency towards play or playfulness is linked to creative thinking skills (Lieberman 1965; Wallach 1970; Lieberman 1977) and indicates a disposition towards creativity in later life (Clark, Griffing and Johnson 1989; Schmukler, 1982–3; Russ, Robins and Christiano 1999). This research will define how play has the capacity to unlock creativity and demonstrates the benefits of play as a mode of experiential learning when used in conjunction with a mask. It has been my experience that the practice of play allows participants to reveal their unique creative process. From observations, it allows them to discover why and how things evolve within a framework of rules and provides an opportunity to find less habitual solutions to complex problem-solving.

Play is a dynamic and complex activity, which, according to Vygotsky 1933/1976 represents an interactive social form of embodied imagination. Play simultaneously requires and leads to complex symbolic constructions, behavioral mastery, collaborative protocols, emotional arousal and control, and the production of a group cultural lore.

(Connery et al. 2010, p. 11)

Within this dynamic and complex activity, many children have a curiosity to learn, explore, experiment and engage with the objects around them. However, as we grow older, the level of learning and creation through play can begin to decrease. One of the more traditional techniques employed is the repetition and memorising of information, be it either verbally or through transcription; in the case of learning a new dance, for example, this may be through the repetition of movements or steps. In my professional practice as a facilitator of youth and young adult theatre workshops, play often allows the students to gain confidence by doing the unexpected and to take risks by sharing new ideas with others. It is my observation that as the games³² evolve and become more complex, the students establish their own individual approaches to interacting, allowing them to express themselves imaginatively and in creative ways. These games, therefore, help in developing skills such as flexible thinking, team or group working, a willingness to learn, problem-solving and also the creation of new problems. As a result of these games, the students are allowed to fail without fear of reprisal, and this failure is often the momentum that keeps the game alive or is the trigger for a new game.

Based upon my experience and the findings of this inquiry, failure, while it should not be seen as a separate phase of the creative process, is an indispensable component that promotes continued innovation, revision and critical evaluation. Failure becomes an almost self-propagating phase of the process, and in placing failure in this context, it is possible to understand failure as a resilient growth process instead of a singular negative event. Through failure, students can become empowered to find the

³² The use of the term 'game' as opposed to 'exercises' helps to establish in the student that this is an activity where they should play and find joy in the doing.

authenticity they seek from the creative process. Therefore, taking these ideas into consideration, failure may be seen as a site for discovery and new knowledge.

Louise Peacock, Associate Professor in Drama at DMU,³³ refers to failure as a mechanism for further establishing a connection with the audience by identifying that:

Failure or 'incompetence' is a staple ingredient of clown performance. Clowns demonstrate their inability to complete whatever exploit they have begun. In doing so, they speak to the inner vulnerability of the audience whose members are often bound by social conventions which value success over failure.

(Peacock 2009, p. 24)

In an attempt to source an absolute definition of play, the Oxford English Dictionary (2018) presents five pages of definitions and usages of the word and even then still manages not to exhaust the subject. Figure 3.1 below is a visual representation that illustrates some of the words' many elements.

³³ Peacock has a teaching and research focus on popular performance and the various ways in which comedy functions in both society and performance, especially in clown theatre, commedia dell'arte, slapstick and comedy.



Figure 3.1. Definitions of ‘play’ drawn from the Oxford English Dictionary (2018)

The word ‘play’ appears as a verb, as a noun and as an adjective; it describes action, the lack of action and various attitudes. It can also be used in conjunction with other words, generating an even more surprising assortment of meanings. To ‘play on words’ is to manipulate them, to ‘play off’ is to react to, to ‘play with’ is to join or to manipulate, to ‘play out’ is to follow through and ‘play down’ is to minimise, while to ‘play it cool’ is to chill out.

When physically engaging with the notion of play, the complex nature of its definition combined with all its ambiguity lends itself to modes of exploration, which are without constraint.

Therefore it is possible by engaging with various clowning concepts, to create a workshop environment where students can quickly find their own individual sense of play. Often during these workshops, small groups begin to form and collaborative play evolves almost organically. Through my observations of participants in workshop situations and various groups at play, I have noticed that students become

immersed in the moment. Their conscious thought processes relate primarily to the game being played and furthermore the students' responses are typically a direct result to the emotional reactions brought about by the game being played. This results in a state of high emotion, which is ultimately very engaging to witness as an observer.

In the images below, what can be clearly seen on the participants' faces, is the level of group commitment, engagement, delight and joy. These images were taken during a seven-day residential retreat in Girona, which was organised and developed by myself. The objective of the retreat focused on the use of clowning, games and improvisations as a method for finding and enabling play.



Figure 3.2. Finding Play workshop. Girona, Catalonia (2018)

However working outside a structured framework of rules and objectives can create an environment where the clown often delights in creating chaos, subsequently it comes with its own risks. In this environment play has the potential to give permission to explore the ridiculous and the forbidden. These circumstances require the facilitator/teacher to be critically aware of what's happening to ensure the values and ethics of the group are maintained without detracting from the joy and spontaneity of the moment. This balance of free play and facilitation can be observed in Video 2 from the neutral mask workshop, where the participants are guided through a series of games, structured Laban exercises and improvisations, whilst maintaining a playful and creative environment.

Through my personal experience I would suggest that clowning represents a reversal of the normal order, creating a portal into the world of chaos, which is one of the distinguishing traits, which represent clown. Therefore as in the ritual masking, which

was addressed in Chapter 2 it is possible to demonstrate further, the parallel relationship between mask and clown. It is not surprising that clowning also has strong links to ritual and sacred performance. In certain traditions clowning is an apotropaic (averting evil) ritual, a way of deflecting demonic attention from serious religious activities. In other contexts it serves as an initiatory ordeal in which the initiates must persevere through the jokes and insults hurled at them.

Through these combinations of obscene and sacrilegious actions clowns can punctuate the most solemn of religious ceremonies and serve as a sign for the presence of powerful primordial beings and as a means of social control through the satire of antisocial behaviour. Play has the ability to render chaos acceptable and even enjoyable as long as the core human values remain intact.

This particular aspect of ritualistic clowning and play is illustrated below, in an extract from my personal journal. The following notes were written after the passing of a dear friend, where I was asked to engage with the funeral officiators and the mourners through clowning.

Wow! That was a tough gig. Today I performed at the funeral of a very close friend. Hummmmm! I'm unsure if I would call it performance. I was there in person, in costume and makeup, yet nothing was planned or rehearsed. I simply reacted to the evolving situations outside and within the church, sensing the vibrations in the room whilst trying to become an emotional sponge absorbing the grief around me. Clearly I was a surprise to the majority of the mourners who encountered a strangely dark clown on arrival to the church, most nodded and passed me by, a few stopped for a chat and a few roared with laughter. However there was a small number who found my presence deeply offensive, for some strange reason this made me giggle and I was keen to explore why. The media were delighted with the spectacle, cameras flashed in all directions. The only exception was when the President of Ireland, Michael D arrived suddenly I was hurriedly ushered off into a remote corner by a gun wearing Army officer.

The funeral procession arrived, along with the immediate family and the coffin, I hung back almost waiting in the wings. This was the moment when it suddenly felt real, I was about to perform a ritual for the first time, something unwritten and unplanned yet very mindful this act was fulfilling the last wishes of my friend. Following the coffin up the central passageway of the church, with the mourners watching on, my heart thudded in my chest. I couldn't weep or grieve, I felt totally removed from my own personal feelings. Stopping at the alter rail I touched the lid of the straw coffin, turning to the congregation there was silence. In that moment I inhabited the role of the Psychopomp guiding a soul to the place of the dead. With this newfound energy and sense of purpose it felt like I was now given permission to play and act contrary to the normal behaviours, which society expects.

The above journal extract highlights the ritualistic capacity of clown and the power of human connection through play. However without the make up and the red nose I'm unsure if I would have been able to even consider the task of clowning at such a solemn occasion. Here the red nose certainly functioned as a mask acting as the catalyst for play.

Due to the level of complexity and ambiguity that exists in establishing a definition for play, especially within the context of this research, it became necessary that further qualitative data was collected from other sources.

Play in praxis

One of the methods this research engaged in for acquiring further qualitative data in relation to play was conducting field interviews with five leading practitioners who are currently working in the discipline of mask and clown. The questions were structured to establish a greater understanding of how and why these practitioners engage in various modes of play in their practice.³⁴ The data derived from the

³⁴ A full transcript of the interviews is available in Appendix 1

interviews provided an insight into their creative methods, and it further benefitted this research inquiry with a pool of data that reinforces the powerful nature of play as a creative methodology. Below is an excerpt from an interview (June 2019) that indicates the rich data in the response to the following question, ‘In relation to your practice, how would you define play?’

I have several definitions of ‘play’: My current interest is *commedia dell’arte* dramaturgy, and within this field sit these various, though separate, definitions.

1) ‘Play’ can be a *conceptual* and *philosophical* approach to open-ended *problem solving*, purposed in order to inhabit and occupy the finite amount of stage time and also the linear and predetermined plotline required to create a repeatable performance from a scenario or plot outline. In this definition, the director or dramaturge takes on the responsibility of *ordering and recording* the material generated by the actors, and develops strategies to free the actors from the potentially disabling responsibility of coming up with the ‘best’ ideas all the time. They are left to offer possibilities, insert their own ideas, try many options, and above all surprise the dramaturge.

2) Once the material has been chosen for development by the director or dramaturge, the word ‘play’ sits as a combined meaning of ‘*actioning*’ and ‘*finding the game*’. The actor is encouraged to find what the essential physical actions and *imaginative keys* within each scenic unit or *emotional* transaction that keeps them ‘*alive*’ for each scene. Within the development of a *commedia* scenario, these ‘*games*’ become sequenced and develop into the scenes, allowing the actor to follow a series of games to create meaning for the audience. A scene, within *commedia*, is therefore composed not of sequential learned text, or stage blocking, but short games, all of which allow multiple methods of delivery within a performance, depending on the *relationship with your fellow performers and the responsiveness (and your responses to) of an audience*. The performer ‘plays’ a sequence of games.

3) Play is the heightened sense of *awareness*, often termed ‘*ludic*,’ possessed by an actor in which they find themselves *reacting* in the moment for the *joy* of it, rather than with a Stanislavskian objective or super-objective.

(Interviewee No. 1 2017)

From the above response, a number of key terms have been highlighted and have a significant resonance with my own practice and furthermore demonstrate a mutual understanding and application of play, especially when used in conjunction with creating work, which has a sense of shared experience or *complicité*. Through analysing all the data generated from the interviews, it was possible to extract a number of common core principles that demonstrate significant value in the development of a new creative pedagogy. Figure 3.3 captures the findings of important interview data that clearly illustrate the key principles of play that relate to this research inquiry.



Figure 3.3. Interview findings of common principles of play when engaged as a creative method.

Reflecting on the responses and observations from these current leading practitioners, it is also important to draw on my own training, therefore demonstrating the significant impact of how play has influenced and continues to be integral to my practice.

Peacock (2009) draws our attention to how Lecoq understood and incorporated play into his own pedagogy for actor training, describing why it is so important in his philosophical approach to his teaching practice. Lecoq suggests that the clown, unlike other theatrical performers, has immediate contact with his audience:

He comes to life by playing with the people who are looking at him. Central to this is the concept of *Jeu* – play. The underlying principles of *Jeu* and *Complicité* are both central to the way Lecoq teaches clowns to reach out to an audience.

(Peacock 2009, p. 32)

Lecoq (2002 p. 157) referred to *jeu* as play, which can operate on a number of different levels within the performance. ‘It could be the motor of the performance, driving the actor forward, it could exist between the actors in a scene and it could exist between the actors and the audience.’ He continues by suggesting that in the interaction between a clown and an audience you are not simply ‘A clown for an audience, you play with an audience’ (Lecoq 2002, p. 157).

Therefore, the actor must engage with the audience, allowing them to enter the world of imagination, and a game must be established where the audience needs to be given permission and the freedom to engage and play along. For Lecoq, a clown could only exist when the audience transitions from being the simple observer into an active participant through the element of play.

Dr Simon Murray, senior lecturer in theatre studies at the University of Glasgow,³⁵ identifies that: ‘Play is a dynamic principle, which informs the quality of interaction

³⁵ Murray’s research preoccupations coalesce around two inter-related and overlapping pathways of thought and interest. One of these continues to include the politics and regimes of actor and performer training, the pedagogies of Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier and contemporary performance practices and dramaturgies.

between performers and their audience, but also opens up possibilities for action, which can liberate the actor' (Murray 2002, p. 34).

Furthermore, intrinsically linked to *jeu* is the concept of *complicité*. This, according to Lecoq, is where 'two characters pass, each one meets the other's eye and comes to a stop' (Lecoq 2002, p. 34). The concept of *complicité* is at one level, a silent communication, an unspoken understanding, it is the catching of another's eye and then instinctively reacting. Like *jeu*, *complicité* can occur between the actors on stage and between the actors and the audience. The question is out of *complicité*, does play arise or is it out of play that *complicité* flourishes? I would propose that the relationship between the two is symbiotic: *complicité* leads to play and vice versa.

Mask in praxis

The international teacher, theatre-maker and co-founder of Trestle Theatre Co. and Told by an Idiot, John Wright³⁶ highlights the playful and spontaneous nature of masking. He identifies how it is important to remain open to external influences and triggers, notably the critical skill of listening and responding to the audience. He writes,

Contrary to popular opinion, playing in mask isn't the same as playing a character. When you play a mask in a dramatic situation you're not so much assuming a role as changing the casting. You're too busy coping with the impulses inspired by the mask to remember who you're supposed to be, and it is then that you must 'find the game.'

(Wright 2017, p. 38)

As discussed earlier, working effectively in mask is the ability to respond in the moment while remaining fully embodied. From my observations as a performer and teacher, the moment of engagement with an audience happens when the masker allows the audience into the game and takes them into an imaginary world. If the

³⁶ Wright has worked on a string of productions and projects extending over three decades in Europe, Scandinavia, Asia and the UK. He was granted a Greater London Arts Award for his contribution to professional training. He pioneered the teaching of clown at university level and was one of the first people in the country to offer courses in devising. He is the author of two books, *Why Is That So Funny? A Practical Exploration of Physical Comedy* and *Playing the Mask: Acting Without Bullshit*.

audience enjoys the game and more importantly understands what is involved in the game, they will accept and openly collude with the performer and make the game even more effective and enjoyable.

Pedagogy and Lecoq

The initial weeks at Lecoq start with silent psychological replay and play. The students begin to embark on a journey of physicality and acting performance, shortly after which they would be introduced to the neutral mask. The neutral mask is the central pillar for Lecoq's teaching pedagogy, and he referred to the mask as the starting point for an actor. This allows the body to become a blank page upon which drama could subsequently be inscribed. The illustration below shows the two-year journey that a student would undertake at Lecoq.

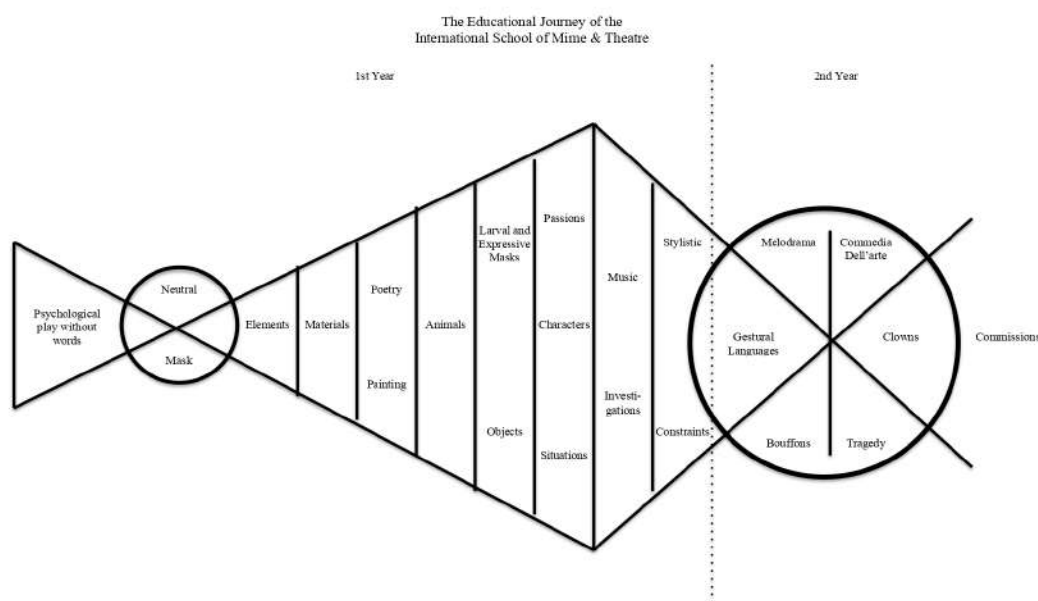


Figure 3.4. The educational journey, International School of Mime and Theatre. (Lecoq 2000)

Building upon Lecoq's pedagogy and through reflecting on my training and current practice, this section of the research investigates the following inquiries: is it possible to establish the neutral mask as a method of creative education for other performance-related disciplines? Secondly, is it possible to incorporate the neutral mask as the

foundation in a new creative pedagogy? Finally, can a neutral mask teach students about self, about embodiment and about being present in the moment? Ultimately, is the neutral mask a catalyst for play and the discovery of self?

It was at the L'École Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq, where I was first introduced to masks for actor training and my first encounter with the neutral mask. Below is an image of the author's own neutral mask, which was manufactured from leather in the style of Amleto Sartori's³⁷ (1915–1962) original design.



Figure 3.5. Neutral mask made by Newman Masks.

The neutral mask has been used throughout my practice as a tool for exploring movement, and furthermore, it is an essential component in my devising methodology. Typical applications would be the enhancing of creative actions and thinking, a process that is focused on a series of games, all of which generate a succession of emotions, sensations and movements that can be embodied and stored as physical memories. Through the evolution of my creative practice, there has been a continuous revisiting of Lecoq's pedagogy with the neutral mask, exploring and

³⁷ Amleto Sartori was an Italian sculptor and poet from Padua most famous for his theatre masks.

trying to establish new methods that increase the knowledge of self and furthermore how to better capture and embody sensation.

As a result of this research into the use of mask in pedagogy and performance, there has been an increased awareness of the variety of learning experiences to which a student may become exposed. These could include what Elizabeth Ellsworth, Professor Emeritus of the School of Media Studies, describes as, ‘the inaccessible through-cognition or awareness events of mind/brain and body’ (Ellsworth 2005, p. 16). Indeed as artist/researcher and teacher, the importance of mining data from bodily sensation, ‘embodiment’, has become apparent, especially when trying to understand and generate new body knowledge. Embodiment is not simply an interesting possibility for knowledge acquisition, nor is it an alternative practice or method. Embodiment is to analyse, celebrate, establish meaning and generate knowledge; we are all bodies, each one of us engaged in varying degrees to our own personal journey of learning and living. In exploring the cultural politics of performance spaces, Professor Elin Diamond^{38,39} suggests that in the temporality of performance practice, participants are constantly negotiating ‘between a doing (a reiteration of norms) and a thing done (discursive conventions that frame our interpretations)’ (Diamond 1996, p. 5). She continues by adding, ‘between someone’s body and the conventions of embodiment, we have access to cultural meanings and critiques’ (Diamond 1996, p. 5).

Poststructuralist theorists consider the body and mind as co-existing in relation to structures, discourses, time, place and other (Ellsworth 2005; Grosz 1994; 1995; O’Loughlin 2006; Pillow 2000). The body, in this case, is corporeal, biological, sensual, social, cultural and ultimately relational. By acknowledging the importance of embodiment through the development of a new pedagogy, I am reflecting and adding to these existing scholarly works, where they ask how we consider pedagogical spaces with bodies as an essential element of practice and analysis.

³⁸ Elin Diamond is a Professor of English and Director of the graduate program in Comparative Literature at Rutgers. Her research and teaching areas include theories of change and social change, new materialisms and media practice, documentary media forms and public pedagogies.

³⁹ Diamond is the author of *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre* (Routledge, 1997); *Pinter’s Comic Play* (Associated University Press, 1985); and the editor of *Performance and Cultural Politics* (Routledge, 1996)

Embodiment, when applied through pedagogical practice, describes a teaching and learning through the acknowledgement of our bodies as whole experiential beings in motion, both inscribed and inscribing subjectivities. That is, the experiential body is both a representation of self, a text, as well as a mode of creation in progress, a tool. In addition, embodiment is a state that is contingent upon the environment and the context of the body or as Ellsworth suggests as being ‘continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them’ (Ellsworth 2005, p. 4).

Within the development of a new pedagogy, bodies can be acknowledged, made visible, and moved to the centre of the learning experience. The body is a method, a subject and a way of making meaning, representing, and performing. This research begins to tighten the focus of its lens on the hypothesis that body movement knowledge can be significantly enhanced through the interaction of the body and the sensorial experiences that are generated within a creative game when experienced through the application of a mask.

Early research with the neutral mask has demonstrated positive results that these types of movement, when linked to an environment/scenario through games and play, can allow the body to adapt cognition to the idiosyncrasies of the situation, therefore, making it relevant and providing a mechanism for the knowledge acquisition, especially in regards to one’s self. These principles of gameplay are enhanced through the addition of frequent short augmented rest periods, partner discussions and side coaching. These give the opportunity to focus the students on perception, emotion and the sensory effects of the game, which then, subsequently establishes a further method for the commitment to memory.

The first time you put on a neutral mask it seems heterogeneous sort of an object that bothers and suffocates you. Gradually however, you begin to feel hidden and you start to do things that you would never normally do.

(Lecoq 2006, p. 105)

However, Lecoq was not the first pedagogue to discover the training potential of the blank mask. It was Jacques Copeau⁴⁰ (1879–1949) who first explored the training potential of a ‘blank’ expressionless mask in 1921. Initially, he used just a stocking or handkerchief over a student’s face to reduce the facial expressions to a minimum. Later this was developed into a more solid and formal mask often termed as the ‘noble mask’ with the help of the sculptor Albert Marque (1872–1939) who used more durable materials such as vellum and leather. Jean Dorcy, a student of Copeau, quotes Marque as saying that ‘a good mask must be neutral; its expression depends on your movements’ (Dorcy, 1961, p. 13).

John Rudlin, author of *Jacques Copeau – Directors in Perspective*, writes that Copeau’s students once reported a new sense of confidence and authority when working with the noble mask.

A power and unknown security – a sort of balance and consciousness of each gesture and oneself.’ ‘The ego subsumed into the identity of the mask, ready, if required, to then select a new ego for portrayal without the interpolation of self-interest and bad habits from the original.

(Rudlin 1986, p. 48)

The use of the noble mask also introduced an element of ritual and transformation into the student’s work, removing the student from their ‘everyday’ world through the design of the mask, the rituals involved in placing the mask on the face and its effect on the student’s physical awareness. Jean Dorcy describes in detail a semi-ritualised process for preparing to work in the mask (Dorcy 1961, pp. 108–109), which was clearly intended to remove the student from the everyday and induce something that was more of a trance-like state in relation to the mask. The noble mask and the rituals involved in its use were, for Copeau, crucial in enabling the actor to experience, and then manipulate, the performative socialisation of the body. Sears Eldredge, Professor Emeritus, Theatre and Dance Department at Macalester College, states that for Copeau, the actor should be plain and uncluttered, ‘bare as the stage; only then could he express himself clearly and simply’ (Eldredge and Huston 1995, p. 121).

⁴⁰ Jacques Copeau, French actor, literary critic, stage director, and dramatic coach who led a reaction against realism in early 20th-century theatre

The noble mask and its physical training methods were to be further invigorated and developed in 1956 with the foundation of the École Jacques Lecoq in Paris and the subsequent development of what we now recognise as the neutral mask. From its beginnings at Copeau's school in Paris and then with Lecoq, the noble/neutral mask has been primarily used as a tool in a student's training, and it is not a mask for performance. The neutral mask is a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing. The mask is used for analysing the quality of the body's action. The mask hides the face, yet reveals the attitudes and intentions, the nuances, the feeling tones that may otherwise be only partially sensed in a person's motion or stillness.

When he carries it, the actor must communicate through his whole person; and the spectator must perceive the expression of the whole person. The effect of the Neutral Mask is to highlight where and when the student is physically blocking. The mask seems to require of the student that 'the body be integrated in a single image

(Eldredge and Huston, 1995, p.127-128)

However, this may only happen intermittently, as students often experience a sense of disorientation and alienation from their actions while wearing a mask. The effect of the mask often heightens the student's sense of vulnerability and scrutiny. Furthermore, the neutral mask is disciplining as well as liberating; its purpose is to integrate the body and present movement as a single image for scrutiny. In doing so, it requires the student to make choices with regard to the presentation and construction of their physical self and into a construction of the self as primarily physical. The process of playing in the neutral mask is invigorating, provocative and informative.

Through my experience as a teacher, it is my understanding that when wearing a neutral mask, the student feels somewhat protected and is therefore enabled to let go of any psychological inhibitions that he/she may have and therefore begins to play. In this situation, the mask acts as a catalyst for play, and playfulness is certainly a method for keeping movement options open.

Jean-Marie Pradier compares the effect of repetitive physical activity to that of a dream state. At first, this appears at odds with play and spontaneity. Yet in reading

Pradier's (1990) theory on the 'neutral' body, it is possible to identify a function of movement training that is, through the efficient alignment of the student's physical resources, to enable and release the imagination and assist in the integration of their faculties. In this way, the student is helped to identify where emotions and experiences are held in the body. Pradier further states that it is the:

Performative aspects of movement training, which play a major part in the integrated development of mind, consciousness, body and movement. Performance illustrates the holistic aspect of human behaviour; the most elaborate types of behaviour always include a component of sensory and motor responses (i.e., body memory, movements involved with language activity, etc.).

(Pradier 1990, p. 88)

However, this kind of play within technique, Ralph Yarrow,⁴¹ Emeritus Professor of Drama and Comparative Literature at the University of East Anglia, argues: 'Is how the body accedes to its own resources, how it discovers that it can be, say, do, understand and transmit, with and to anything and anyone' (Yarrow 1986, p. 12).

At the moment of neutral action, one does not know what one will do next, because anticipation is a mark of personality; one cannot describe how one feels because introspection intrudes on simplicity; one reacts in a sensory way, because when the mind stops defining experience, the senses still function. Economy demands that both motion and rest be unpremeditated. Neutral activity withholds nothing; it is an energized condition, like the moment of inspiration before speech. The neutrality that the mask seeks is an economy of mind and body, evidenced at rest, in motion, and in the relationship between them.

(Eldredge and Huston 1995, p. 123)

⁴¹Yarrow's research and teaching was in European theatre, Indian theatre, South African theatre, consciousness and reception in performance, absurd theatre, performance theory, feminist theatre, improvisation, Modernism and Postmodernism, theatre and development.

At the early stages of working with students in neutral mask, my personal method is to play a series of games that focus on abstract expressive movements, often referred to as ‘pure movement’ in order to help distinguish them from what may be seen as improvised dance. Wendy Allnutt, Guild Hall School of Music and Drama, defines pure movement as follows: ‘Pure movement is technical; it is really the craft of movement. The technique of standing up straight, the technique of walking, the technique of raising your arms, of being relaxed, of not having what we call parasites’ (Allnutt 1999 cited in Evans 2008, p.164).

This initial work is carried out in pairs, one in mask and the other as the observer, the adjuster and provider of feedback. The pairs rest after each game for a short duration and discuss what just happened,⁴² how it felt, what they adjusted and particularly the scale of the adjustments, before changing roles and repeating the game. As an additional note, it is also important that the studio should have no mirrors present, as this reduces the sensorial effects of the game, thus making embodiment more difficult. The students often see these games as movement, which connects the body directly and without interference to their imaginative and emotional impulses. The term ‘pure’ also associates neutral with movement which is uncontaminated by the everyday day-to-day activities or parasites as Allnutt describes them.

The idea of pure movement is not a new one, and it has its own history in 20th-century theatre extending from Stanislavski (1863–1938), for example, where he believed that ‘Extra gestures are the equivalent of trash, dirt, spots’ (Stanislavski 1979, p. 73). In the quote below, Eldredge (1996, p. 53) identifies what he considers to be the six principal characteristics of neutrality. ‘It should have symmetry, be centred, integrated and focused, energised, relaxed, and be about being and not doing.’ He also identifies two further characteristics of the neutral body in motion, ‘Its movement should be economical and co-ordinated’ (Eldredge 1996, p.56). Purity and neutrality of movement can then, in Eldredge’s terms, be measured against the ability to express intention without tension, inhibition, imbalance, awkwardness or excess. The aim is a body, which is balanced, ‘gathered’ physiologically and spatially, the weight and energy related so that the student can react to or follow an

⁴² The rest periods I will refer to as augmented rest, as they serve more function than just relaxation, they help with the embodiment process.

impulse in any direction without a noticeable pause. In my experience, a naïve understanding of neutrality might consider it as an actual and achievable physical state, as if it were an object. However, it would be better to consider the neutral body not as a material reality, but as a way of understanding the body's relationship to the world. This particular awareness reveals itself in practice through a condition of readiness or what Lecoq (2000) called *disponibilité*.⁴³

Through the results and findings of this research, I would claim that the neutral body is not a perfect body. The neutral body is an idiosyncratic neutral body. It is your body without tension with an alignment that is physiologically possible for your body.

The neutral body in its most abstract sense is unattainable; it is literally and metaphorically a 'no-persons-land'. However, neutrality is a methodology for developing an uninhibited flow of impulses and energies within a student. Neutrality is a concept that simultaneously allows an individual student to consider their movement activity from 'inside' (in terms of locating and expressing psychophysical impulses) and from 'outside' (in terms of the economical and efficient performance of physical actions).

Therefore, by disrupting the student's habitual perspective on their body, by provoking changes in how the body is used and in presenting the student with physical games, the objective is to educate the student on how they experience their own body. Neutral mask training offers a student the opportunity to go beyond the normal, to explore and experiment creatively with their physicality or indeed the combined physicality of the ensemble by using this methodology in combination with the games, which allows students to develop and gain an increased knowledge of self. This knowledge permits the student to make more informed decisions based on their own physical and emotional experiences. Furthermore, in the liminal world of the performance space in which the semi-ritualised separation of the student from their everyday self and everyday routines are common practice, the use of neutral mask as a method for multidisciplinary training could be established as the foundation for a

⁴³ A state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive (Lecoq 2000, p. 38).

new creative pedagogy. ‘The Neutral Mask, it helps us discover the space around us, and the rhythm and gravity of things’ (Lecoq 2006, p. 105).

Video No. 2 (Performance No. 1)

Simon Thompson, *Neutral Mask Workshop*. Irish World Academy of Music and Dance.

Summary Performance No.1

The following analysis provides detailed information regarding the research design and structure for performance No.1, in conjunction with a comprehensive documentation of the data generated from the performance.

The over arching objective of this research inquiry was to establish if it is possible to engage in mask and clown concepts to teach, support and mentor students. Providing them with the necessary skills to create audience-engaged performances, which are rooted in play, *complicité* and empathy. Hence it was important to focus the lens of performance No.1 on the pedagogy, which was emerging as a result of the inquiry. Therefore when considering this research element of the inquiry it was subject to a rigorous process of questioning with regards to what new data could be generated from the performance.

Listed below are three main criteria for performance No.1

1. To evaluate and test elements of the new pedagogy, from my own perspective as a teacher and researcher
2. To evaluate the methods, from the perspective of a group of multiple disciplinary participants
3. To evaluate the response and reaction from the perspective of an audience

With performance No. 1 the decision was made that it would be structured in the form of a workshop, with a cohort of students from dance, theatre and music. The purpose of the workshop was to test the methods being developed for engaging play, in conjunction with generating increased awareness of the body through kinaesthesia.

The workshop would take place in the presence of a live audience, enabling the researcher to observe the audience response during the workshop and furthermore to help stimulate the participants. In my experience of working with improvised and play based methods and audience response this acts as a reward, a verification, a stamp of approval. Thus having the effect of reducing anxiety in students along with any concerns they may have relating to publically failing or embracing being ridiculous.

The audience in attendance for performance No.1 included faculty members and students from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Research data was collated through a post-show focus group, consisting of participants and audience members who had engaged in the performance.

The foundation for performance No.1 was the neutral mask, which was further combined with clowning concepts to stimulate play and a series of Laban based games, which were designed to generate greater awareness of the body through basic movement analysis.

The table below, details the overall structure of performance No.1

Table 3.1. Neutral Mask Workshop Structure

1	Introduction to the mask and the objectives of the workshop
2	Social games for establishing play
3	Physical warm-up
4	Examine the mask, the ritual of putting on the mask, walking towards each other, walking around the space, becoming familiar with the sensation of wearing a mask
5	Group somatic work, acknowledging tension in the body, awareness of breath
6	Pairs (In mask), pure movement (standing, walking, running, head tilts and body tilts)
7	Group movement analysis based on three components
8	Individually (in mask) abstract movement, colours
9	Individually (in mask) abstract movement, elements
10	Group (in mask) exploring breath, acknowledging the room, acknowledging the audience, clocking and audience proximity
11	Group (in mask) improvised movement, becoming an ensemble
12	Break
13	Focus group with structured questions: What was your prior knowledge and understanding of masks before taking part in this workshop? As a participant, what were your initial responses to seeing someone wearing

	<p>the neutral mask?</p> <p>The neutral mask has no definable archetype or character, therefore when playing or exploring the mask's potential, how did you approach this?</p> <p>When playing in the mask, did the mask affect your relationship to the space, the other participants and any observers?</p>
14	Open questions and feedback

From my personal experience as a teacher, I would claim that it is important to start each session by putting the workshop into context with a short introduction. In this case presenting the mask along with a brief outline of the aims and objectives helps to establish an early rapport with the students therefore reducing any initial concerns or misgivings they may have.

This element of nurturing and taking good care of students has become an established principle within my practice and furthermore has informed the methods, which have been developed throughout this inquiry to help students acquire new knowledge. This pedagogy aims to empower the student with the confidence to play and make creative choices without being subjected to reprisal or criticism. It is a careful yet playful approach as opposed to the *via negativa* methods employed by Lecoq and Gaulier. This caring, deeply engaged and playful method of teaching can be observed in practice on the video recording of performance No1. However this approach does require the teacher to commit fully to the games and improvisations, by remaining present at all times, actively listening, watching and responding accordingly.

As previously stated the workshops do require a structure or a lesson plan to ensure the learning objectives are achieved, however within this framework there is a need to constantly monitor and adjust, whilst ensuring that the students learning experience remains the main point of focus.

The initial objective of the workshop was to develop a safe space where the students felt comfortable to play. To achieve this a number of simple games were played, these games required no special skills, which created an environment where all of the students had an equal status. In this safe space, laughter very quickly followed as one by one the students failed, made mistakes and became engaged in play for the purpose of *playing* and not for *winning*. This can be observed in the video recording of performance No1 starting at 2:20 running till 16:46. Furthermore at this point in the workshop I had explained to the group that these games are designed to make

them fail, the objective is not about winning or succeeding it is purely about play, having fun and finding joy. Once the group were relaxed and openly engaged in play, the focus moved onto the neutral mask.

When wearing the neutral mask for the first time, some students find the experience a little intense, especially if they are new to masking. Therefore the approach taken in performance No.1 was to limit these initial sensory experiences to a short duration, concentrating on the following, feeling the mask on the face, experiencing breathing through the mask and watching others in the mask. This can be observed at 26:30.

To further promote an increased awareness of the body through kinaesthesia, a modified version of Laban's Movement Analysis and the Eight Efforts was incorporated into the workshop. Using three of the core components '*Space, Time and Weight*' this particular application of L.M.A starts at 32:24 and runs till 46:00, where it is possible to observe concepts of clowning, play, and audience engagement being incorporated into movement analysis. Here the audience is two fold, in the first instance the observing group of fellow students and in the case of performance No. 1 the audience who were also seated in the auditorium.

Early findings from the research indicate that the audience engagement and positive reactions to playing these movement analysis games generate a feeling of confidence in the student, enabling them to further explore the capability of their own bodies. It is these additional emotional responses combined with the kinetic sensations experienced by the student, which subsequently stimulate increased levels of embodiment. In addition to this kinaesthetic knowledge the method further provides a starting point for the development of a universal language between multidisciplinary students in relation to the moving body. A more detailed account of how I apply L.M.A within my practice is discussed in Chapter 4 where it relates to the collaborative devising approach used for *Altjeringa*.

Building upon the previous activities, and the learning from the movement analysis games, the students return to the neutral mask for the remainder of the workshop. Initially working in pairs, which can be observed from 48:39. This method of working in pairs is a significant development in the application of neutral mask for

increasing kinaesthetic knowledge. Especially with students who have no previous experience in the practice and theory relating to affect and embodiment.

Working in pairs' one student wears the neutral mask and the other is unmasked, after each game they rotate and the game is played again. The unmasked student focuses on closely watching and making detailed observations relating to their partner's corporeal geography, providing feedback and offering direction through side coaching. The masked student explores their physical and emotional sensations in response to the feedback. Before rotating roles and playing the game again the students take an augmented rest period of approximately 5-7mins, where the previous activity or game is discussed and both students are given the opportunity to share their sensory experiences. These augmented rests help to further reinforce affect and embodiment and therefore augment the kinaesthetic knowledge being acquired by the student.

To conclude performance No.1, the students participated in a group improvisation, which can be viewed at 1.22:00 till 1.28:00. This improvisation collates all the workshop elements together with the addition of '*keeping the mask alive*' and ensemble playing. The inclusion of the specific mask performance technique, '*keeping the mask alive*' was integrated at this point in the workshop to promote the activity of engaging with an audience, acknowledging them and empowering the audience to become active participants in the game as opposed to being simply passive spectators. Ensemble playing further develops a sense of *complicité*, where students can respond to their fellow ensemble members, by being present in the moment and working in a state of flow.

Post-show Focus Group

To evaluate the participant's response to the methods used in performance No1. Data was extracted from the post-show focus group transcriptions, this data was then analysed and studied in order to highlight any significant outcomes, which could be applicable to this inquiry.

'It is like becoming a different person. Hiding your face, no one knows it is you!' (1.34:00). This quote was an initial response from one of participants in relation to wearing a neutral mask for the first time and it further highlights the transformational

nature of a mask, as previously discussed in Chapter 2. In relation to performance No1 the neutral mask gave the student permission to act or be contrary, and it also generated a feeling of temporarily changing identity. Thus creating a sense of freedom through anonymity, and with this anonymity the student can play without fear, Therefore I would suggest, it is at the point when the student physically puts the mask onto the face that it becomes a catalyst for play.

The response prompted a discussion on the how the student's reacted to observing each other whilst wearing the neutral mask. Some of the feedback included 'Shock ... Unsettling ... The body changes, becomes different ... Transformative becoming someone I don't know' (1:39). Which indicates the reliance, which a neurotypical person places on reading the face for an insight into personal temperaments and emotional status. By removing the face we look more closely at the body in order to interpret this information. Therefore it becomes possible through embodiment and kinaesthetic knowledge to almost generate a sense of kinetic empathy, by using movement and gesture to reinforce the desired narrative for the observer. This is where the body has the capability to become a poetic instrument.

Inquiring about the affects of wearing and playing in the mask generated important data, supporting the positive impact of wearing a mask as a tool for developing awareness of the body. One participant made the following statement: 'I'm not a dancer, I'm a little bit conscious of my body, but when I was wearing the mask, and you were naming the colours it was like, It was like, more of I'm not worried about this part (gestures to the body) how does my body feel and how does my body want to move. I felt my body differently, having the sensation of what's going on inside of it because I'm not worried about my face' (1:41).

Table 3.2 below highlights some further significant comments from the focus group.

Table 3.2. Neutral Mask Workshop Focus Group Comments

Time Stamp	Neutral Mask Workshop
1:42	I was listening inwards; it was a feeling, more than just in my head.
	It makes you extremely attentive to what you are doing with your body.
1:43	I felt totally anonymous.
	When the mask was on, I didn't care who I was.

	It removed any inhibitions, and I was just there.
1:45	You're safe behind the mask, so you can do anything.
	It hides part of you, but it allows you to reveal other parts.
1:46	As I wore the mask, it allowed me to just be there, just moving.
	It is like changing mask normally people wear a mask to be social. But you take that one off to wear this one. It reveals yourself

Conclusion

This chapter has documented the rationale behind the use of the neutral mask as the foundation in a new creative pedagogy wherein the primary objective of the mask, through creative application, is to promote a sense of play, which would furthermore enhance kinaesthetic knowledge through movement and the embodiment of sensation.

Throughout performance No. 1 the methods, which emerged from my practice and this inquiry have been tested and evaluated. The performance further generated a source of rich qualitative data, which supports my inquiry and provides a basis of empirical evidence in support of the neutral mask as a method for multidisciplinary education. On reflection these teaching methods, have a number of notable characteristics, which relate directly to my early training and my current practice as an artist. When I'm teaching it is the student's learning experience, which becomes the main focus, when I'm performing it is the audience's experience, which is the main focus. Therefore it could be considered that these methods being developed for teaching are primarily rooted in my performance practice and it is through play, *complicité* and empathy that the students acquire knowledge and develop their own creative approach through a playful mode of experiential learning. Similar to an audience developing shared experience, *complicité* and empathy from being the active participants in performance.

Chapter 4. Masks and Devising

Introduction

The following chapter explores an auto-ethnographic study into the devising methods used when working with other artists and my own solo projects. This section of the research inquiry further identifies how masks inform and define my own devising processes. In order to address this, I will reflect on two specific projects, *Lifted Up*, which was devised through a creative residency, and *Altjeringa*, which was devised in collaboration with a contemporary dancer from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Furthermore, building upon earlier research, I will reflect and document the developing methods for creating greater awareness and knowledge of one's self and the premise of the 'honest body'. The honest body is the ability to be present in the moment and communicate with a sense of honesty through movement and breath, therefore generating a feeling of empathy within an audience. To conclude this chapter, I will conduct an ethnographic evaluation of *Lifted Up*, analysing audience feedback data, which was captured when the piece was performed as an externally examined component of the thesis.

A creative residency for *Lifted Up*

When using masks in the context of this inquiry, it was essential to create a controlled environment, almost a creative laboratory situation where it would be possible to focus my research without any outside distractions. This would then provide the basis for a structured research inquiry into my devising methods. In January 2019, I engaged in an intensive 30-day artistic residency at Nenagh Arts Centre, County Tipperary, Ireland. The objective of the residency was to focus my research on one specific question: how do masks inform and define my own devising and teaching processes? To give the research some context, there was a specific project in mind, a fully masked performance that would use gesture, light, sound and song to tell a narrative within a period of approximately 30 minutes. What emerged was a work in progress entitled *Lifted Up*.

Lifted Up is a story about a fictional character called Charlie. Charlie is an adult diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but he is high functioning, living a

fairly conventional life, just like someone without a diagnosis. Charlie is subject to sensory overload: the hustle and bustle, the raw sounds of an urban soundscape, the words on a page, all take their toll. However, Charlie has found methods for helping him cope with daily life by finding solace in music and through the care and affection that he lavishes on his pigeons. *Lifted Up* was initially presented as a work in progress at Nenagh Arts Centre with a post-show discussion on the 31st January 2019. The three images below were photographed during the period of devising, and they give a visual insight into the character of Charlie that began to emerge during the creative process.



Figure 4.1. *Lifted Up* work in development. (Birdthistle 2018)

As an avid note-taker and someone who regularly journals, it had been my intention from the start of the residency to use the auto-ethnographic writing methods of jotting, journaling and sketching as the primary tools in the collation of what could be termed as field data. Clandinin and Connelly, two leading researchers who engage with Narrative Enquiry as a method identify the significance of field notes by stating that:

In most of our narrative inquiry work, field notes are the most important way we have of recording the ongoing bits of nothingness that fill our days. These ongoing daily notes full of details and moments of our inquiry lives in the field, are the text out of which we can tell stories.

(Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 104)

By using notes and stories, it became possible to extract the rich data that existed within these personal narratives: new discoveries and conflicts highlighting patterns of working exposing the challenges faced when in the midst of the creative process.

The writing process throughout the residency also proved to be a major contributor to the creative process. When the words and drawings were committed to the page, the ideas became more tangible and almost embodied. Reflecting on the ideas and actions prompted deeper analyses, which often generated an abundance of new ideas. Further reflecting on my training, in relation to the devising process, provoked even more questions of why these specific decisions occurred.

This data excavates traces of past training and education, elements, which are particularly rich and valuable because this data does not exist elsewhere. Throughout this process, which encompassed the 30-day residency, there was an ongoing personal narrative that weaved its way through the writing, and this is extremely important data as it connects the research directly to me, the researcher, via a specific inquiry. Below is an extract from the first entry into my journal from the residency dated January 2019.

I do have a few ideas on where to start, but something to note at this early stage is one of the ideas I plan to explore is very much of a personal nature. It is a subject matter that I'm hugely passionate about, and hopefully, it is that emotional connection, which will lead to new areas of self-discovery and a greater understanding of how I approach the creation of work, especially work that generates a sense of empathy and a connection with the audience.

The above statement puts the emphasis on my creative practice and its associations with personal narrative and the concept of kinetic empathy or the generation of empathy through movement. It has been my experience that the audiences of masked performance and physical/clown theatre often experience a sense of kinetic empathy. Post-show discussions with audiences from a variety of performances have highlighted some repeated comments, which included: 'It felt like we were part of the action on stage; we experienced the same feelings and emotions as the performer'.

Dance choreographer and researcher Ivar Hagendoorn makes the following claim in relation to kinetic empathy. 'Spectators can "internally simulate" movement sensations of "speed, effort, and changing body configuration"' (Hagendoorn 2004, pp. 3–4). This has particular resonance for my practice and indeed for the

development of a new pedagogy, which situates mask as a method for teaching shared experience and empathy. In mask performance and training, the face of the performer is fixed, and all communication to the observer must therefore come directly from the body. Furthermore, philosopher Theodor Lipps, who is noted for his theory regarding aesthetics and the concept of *Einfühlung* (which is defined as projecting oneself onto the object of perception), provides a further source for understanding the concept of kinetic empathy.

Lipps (1851–1914) argued that when observing a body in motion, such as an acrobat, spectators could experience ‘inner mimesis’, where they felt as if they were enacting the actions they were observing (Lipps 1906).

Therefore, I am proposing that through kinetic empathy and the integration of elements from personal narrative and lived experience it may be possible to embody a characterisation that has a real and honest connection to the artist, translating the architecture of the body and presenting a quality that can be observed and sensed by the audience, resulting in an empathetic reaction.

Throughout the residency, I placed no restrictions on myself to write solely about the process. In conjunction with writing, both photographic and video documentation were explored with great effect. There was no hard and fast rule to the jotting process; this was very much an emotional response or reaction. Video was particularly beneficial when the creative process was in ‘flow’ and the prospect of stopping to make a note would stifle the spontaneity of the work. On other occasions, the act of ‘stopping and reflecting’ produced almost lightbulb moments of clarity and inspiration. In terms of journaling, I would try to write typically three times a day, firstly at the start of the day when arriving in the space, then again around lunchtime and finally at the end of each day.

At the initial stage of the residency, one of the first considerations to be explored was why mask and what does mask mean to me. On reflection, some of my earliest performance memories are those of wearing a red nose and performing as a clown. It is my personal perspective and approach, with regards to the ‘red nose’, that it can be indeed considered a mask, albeit a very small one. Like the mask, the red nose fulfils all the attributes that would typically be associated with a mask. The red nose sends

an immediate signal or at least a visual stimulus to those observing; it also functions as a partial face covering. The red nose suggests to the wearer and the audience a particular archetype, and subsequently, the archetype gives permission to the wearer to act or behave in a perceived or expected manner. The red nose can be interpreted as a catalyst for play and creativity, which, like the majority of masks, are designed and created for performance. Laurel Butler, educator, facilitator, performing artist and arts education and social justice consultant based in Los Angeles, CA,⁴⁴ makes a similar claim in relation to the application of the red nose within her practice.

I begin by describing the nose as the smallest mask in the world. Masks, according to improv guru Johnstone, carry within them the uncanny ability to transform the wearer of the mask even to put him or her into a sort of trance or spell. In any case, masks clearly help the wearer to free him- or herself from the inhibitions of the socially constructed self. I impress this upon my students, saying that, once you put on the nose, you are no longer you: you are the clown part of yourself, the silly, ridiculous, curious part of yourself that doesn't care what you look like. Your body will feel different than it usually feels. Your eyes will be much wider, as though you are seeing everything for the very first time.

(Butler 2012, p. 67)

This notion of the preconception of the observer resonates with early memories, and it becomes clear that masks have been closely related to my performance practice from the very beginning. Even now, when I am performing in mask, there is a sense of safety, almost a feeling of protection, which often gives rise to a flood of uninhibited confidence. When stepping into the performance space while wearing a mask, there is an increasing awareness that the audience is ready and waiting. It has been through my observations that when an audience observes the masker entering a performance space, they would often make an involuntary sound, be it an intake of breath or a laugh. The mask has this immediacy; it connects at an instinctive almost

⁴⁴ Butler teaches on the faculty of the Arts Education Program at Loyola Marymount University.

reactionary level with the audience. The challenge for the masker is maintaining that connection with the audience and ultimately developing the connection into a performance in which the audience can engage, or participate to some extent. The journal extract below dated January 2019, is where I asked myself the following question: why mask?

Masks make the observer, watcher or audience look deeper and more closely, this could be due to the lack of communication from the eyes, mouth, face and voice. Therefore, the body must be closely watched to understand the narrative being told and when I say 'narrative' that could be just a singular gesture or movement. The silence can be liberating, allowing the observer the space and freedom to almost colour and tint the performance with aspects of their own imagination. Mask enables and facilitates an audience connection; it almost demands audience engagement.

This liberating effect of the mask demonstrates an ability and power to engage and stimulate both the masker and the observer instantly, amplifying the rationale behind my decision to work with mask during the devising, development and performance of the character Charlie.

In conjunction with the power to instantly connect with an audience, the mask has the inherent ability to help translate the movements of the body into narrative, therefore generating an emotional response within the audience. Piers D. Ibbotson, associate professor, University of Warwick Business School,⁴⁵ carried out a series of experiments detailed in his paper 'Exploring the expression and interpretation of emotions through the use of full-face theatrical masks'. By using a set of eight naïve character masks in conjunction with students, he conducted research to establish whether or not masks can effectively communicate to a group of observers. Here, Ibbotson documents some of the findings from the research:

⁴⁵ In 1990 he became an assistant director with the Royal Shakespeare Company working alongside some of the best directing talent in British theatre. It was this experience, observing the techniques and approaches of directors, working to tight deadlines with dynamic creative groups that began his interest in the transfer of skills from the arts to business.

During the course of the activity the audience seems to experience a whole range of emotional states that are invoked by the unfolding small drama. At times this experience is so intense that the expression painted on the mask seems to change. The angle of the head, the body movements and the context provided by the improvised dialogue, contribute to the phenomenon which evokes an emotional response in the audience that can be unequivocally strong.

(Ibbotson 2020, p. 96)

In documenting my responses to the question. Why Mask? There is a second and equally significant personal aspect, which further prompted my decision to use a mask for this particular research project. This relates to my understanding of ASD, a knowledge base that is constantly evolving on a daily basis, brought about through living with a person on the spectrum. My experience of ASD began through being a parent, guardian and a mentor living with a young child who was diagnosed on the spectrum. Ten years on that child has become an adult, and over that period I have observed and learned from the outside the difficulties and challenges that someone on the spectrum has to negotiate on a daily basis and how they discover ways of coping in an ever-changing and sensory-stimulating environment. As a teacher, prior to this research project, my practice engaged with a number of service providers who offer support to young adults with autism; my involvement was through using masks to create social stories and help with the recognition of facial expressions. It was these experiences gained through teaching, combined with personal experience, which informed aspects of my practice and ultimately led to the devising of a piece of theatre that could create further awareness of ASD in adults. The only caveats, which were imposed on *Lifted Up* were that it must be entertaining, engaging and ultimately generate a sense of empathy from the audience. In the following personal journal extract, I refer to why mask could be applicable for the devising and performance of *Lifted Up*.

In some respects, there's a connection or relationship between the fixed expression of the mask and the almost static and less animated face of a person who demonstrates traits, which are consistent with autism. In my experience, some people living with ASD may find difficulty in displaying

emotions through facial expression. This can also be coupled with a difficulty in reading and understanding the facial expressions of the people they interact with. Therefore, the mask as a theatrical device in this context could suggest to the audience the lack of facial expression; the mask also situates the performer in a physical state with the character.

During the residency, the variety of masks used as part of the creative process generated new data and results. Below is an image of some of the masks used.



Figure 4.2. Various masks used during the devising process.

A place and process for research and creativity

Primarily, the devising and research took place between two spaces. For the majority of the time, this was the main theatre, which consisted of a medium-sized raised stage 9.4×7.3 metres, complete with wings left and right and a backstage area with green room. There were comprehensive lighting and sound specifications and an auditorium with a capacity of 194; the audience sat in tiered seating. The other space was a large dance studio, comprised of mirrored walls, wall bars and Marley flooring (see the images below).



Figure 4.3. Nenagh Arts Centre.

The creative space: how the space informed the work

The theatre quickly became the main creative space for all physical devising and play, whereas the studio was primarily for breakout sessions, writing, drawing, considering logistical issues and hosting meetings with collaborators.

There was an element of practical reasoning combined with creative requirements, which led to the theatre becoming the hub for the majority of the physical work. The stage, defined with black drapes, provided entrances and exits on both sides. Consistency of lighting and no disruption from external or ambient sounds were beneficial when capturing and analysing the process via video recording. The stage at Nenagh Arts Centre is an extremely high raised stage, and this was of immediate concern when working in a mask with limited visibility; therefore, the process of becoming familiar with the space and the positioning of furniture and props was also of paramount concern. The theatre was the ideal space for the devising of *Lifted Up*, as it had no visual disruptions or influences to catch the eye and importantly, no mirrors.

Initial observations

There was a degree of structure imposed on this devising project from the outset. Firstly, the space was a considerable drive from home; this needed to be planned and prior consideration given to what may be required during the course of a day. Access to the Arts Centre was permitted between 10 am and 5 pm and this combined with the 30-day schedule generated a sense of focus and deadline. Although the project would

be continued after the residency, there was an underlying sense of finite time and an awareness of the need to capture as much research data as possible.

Traditionally, my creative process would be a more organic way of working, often spontaneous with extremely long hours. There would be little or no schedule and fixed structure; this would typically result in tiredness and emotional highs and lows, all of which may affect the process and possibly the outcome. The first significant finding during this residency was the beneficial effects of structure and planning not only on the devising process and its outcomes but also on my mental and physical wellbeing. Tension within the body was eased, and there were fewer aches and pains after hours of working. It also became possible to switch off from the creative process, allowing my mind to rest; this resulted in fewer instances of ideas popping into my head and disrupting sleep patterns. These positives prompted the formation of daily timetables,⁴⁶ which gave structure and yet allowed for periods of free play and creativity.

The process

In this research project, the methods explored for the devising of *Lifted Up* are the results of my education, training and the ongoing development of my practice. The methods examined throughout this chapter explore a succession of games, mask types and character development both physically and aesthetically. It is through these methods that it becomes possible to develop an increased awareness of self and the embodied sensations experienced throughout the process. The primary objective of these methods is to equip the artist with the knowledge and skills to create a new work, which engages and connects with an audience on deeper physical and sensory levels.

In *Lifted Up*, the intention was to create a range of reactions or responses, which include empathy, love, joy, sadness, relief, torment and potentially moments of sensory overload. These almost-transgressions of the traditional limits of theatre further stimulated the inquiry into using the body and its kinaesthetic energy as a more comprehensive method of communication. Transmitting a meaning to an

⁴⁶ An example of a daily timetable can be seen in Appendix 2.

audience via movement, intention and reaction, through the transference of kinaesthesia and emotion. This kinaesthetic approach highlights a number of parallels that are firmly established within the discipline of dance. Matthew Reason, senior lecturer in theatre and the head of MA Studies in Creative Practice, York St John University, and Dee Reynolds,⁴⁷ Emeritus Professor at Manchester University, carried out an ethnographic audience response project that focused on watching dance performances. In an article, they provide a quote from Ann Daly that dance is fundamentally a kinaesthetic art, stating that ‘Although it has a visual component, dance is fundamentally a kinaesthetic art – audience experiences of dance can therefore be conceptualized in terms of response to movement. Most prominently in terms of what has been described as kinaesthetic empathy’ (Daly 1992, p. 243 cited in Reason and Reynolds 2010, p. 49).

Reason and Reynolds (2010) became a valuable resource during the residency, often inspiring new questioning and indeed highlighting the importance of a post-show audience discussion in order to capture the valuable and immediate ethnographic data, which is generated through performance.

Breathing: a method to communicate

This section of the chapter will briefly discuss the application of breath as a mode of communication by incorporating kinaesthesia and somatic practice concepts, which I believe to be essential in the process of embodiment and the generation of empathy amongst the audience, especially when performing in a mask.

During the residency, in an attempt to focus my concentration and to relax tension in the small of my back, each morning, I would start with some simple breathing exercises. These would be carried out in the supine position, arms down by the side allowing the breath to move from the chest region down towards the diaphragm. The entry from my journal, as seen below, comments on the benefits of this simple daily routine.

⁴⁷ Whilst working with Stéphane Mallarmé, Reynolds became increasingly interested in his writings on dance, particularly his response to the dancer Loïe Fuller. This led to Reynolds discovery of modern dance and of the women who pioneered it as an art form, and from this she set out to explore rhythm and kinaesthetic imagination in dance.

I've noticed over the last few weeks, due to increased activity, that my back is sore and the muscles seem to be in a state of tension, to the point when I lie on my back, it is painful to leave the legs in a straight position. However, if I bend the knees, this eases the pain. What is really interesting, after a few minutes of diaphragm breathing and allowing the body to relax, my legs would naturally begin to soften and go straight, without any pain in the lower back at all.

After relaxing for a few moments each morning, a series of breathing exercises would be carried out; these exercises would be recorded in order to observe the visible physical effects on the body and furthermore to identify how they could be read by an observer.⁴⁸ The exercises would include shallow breathing, rapid breathing, long, slow breaths along with diaphragm or belly breathing, then inhaling through the nose or the mouth and exhaling through the nose or the mouth, concluding with the holding of one's breath and circular breathing. In conjunction with documenting the physical effects on the body, it was important to document the sensorial effects these breath patterns generated. For example, short, fast breathing would tend to promote a sense of anxiety or nervousness. In relation to masking, the study of breath and its ability to communicate through the body is, in my experience, a core principle in the development of a new creative pedagogy and in the education of students.

A significant finding from the devising process emerged while working in the mask for Charlie. An audience reads the body for information as the face and the mouth are fixed. Consequently, in the process for *Lifted Up*, Charlie's mask had significant restrictions on drawing in fresh breath. During the rehearsals, fresh breath could only be drawn through the chin area and the eyeholes; this resulted in a significant shortness of breath during periods of increased physical movement. This unforeseen physical repercussion made it essential that when playing Charlie that the breathing did not communicate differently to that of the intended narrative.

Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) a French dramatist, poet, essayist, actor and theatre director widely recognised as one of the major figures of 20th-century theatre.

⁴⁸ The focus of the camera needs to be sharp and cropped so that the body fills the full frame; this allows for easy note-taking and clear observation when watching back.

Focused aspects of his work on the actor's body, breath and breathing as a method for communication and embodiment of sensation. Instead of trying to frame it within the needs of the text, he sought to find ways to make it stand out and acquire a presence of its own. Richard Lee Gaffield-Knight, State University of New York at Binghamton, makes the claim that Artaud stated, by using certain tempos of breathing patterns that the actor could 'make use of his emotions like a wrestler makes use of his muscles' (Knight 1993, p. 35). 'It is certain that for every feeling, every mental action, every leap of human emotion there is a corresponding breath which is appropriate to it' (Artaud 1994, p. 134). Artaud further makes the assertion that 'every emotion has organic basis. It is by cultivating his emotion in his body that the actor recharges his voltage' (Artaud 1994, p. 140).

Every physical, mental and psychological vibration affects our breath (Artaud 1994). Artaud identifies that actors can find an inexhaustible source of inspiration within themselves and that the role of the breath is central to this process. Based on the findings from this research, I would propose that each and every change or modulation in our breathing has the ability to create embodied sensations and arouse emotion. If breath can cause and create embodied sensations and emotion within the artist, I would suggest that through training and the application of that knowledge it is possible to communicate narrative and arouse the emotional status of an audience without the need for spoken dialogue.

Devising and making meaning through movement

It is remarkable how possible it is to identify a person from the mechanics and characteristics of their walk. This highlights the, sometimes subconscious, level of non-verbal communication transmitted through observing another person's physical movements. In the physical development of a character to perform, the walk is a critical element, which should be considered during the devising process. Once identified, the walk can define a person's personality and emotional state (Butler 2012). In *Lifted Up*, Charlie's walk was a major factor in how he established his current emotional status with the audience. The walk is a very complex movement, and even the slightest of modification can affect how the observer reads the information that is being presented to them.

The gait is easily the most visible articulation of the mechanizations of the body. In the dynamics of walking, pace, rhythm, size, shape, directionality, and so on one can identify a number of embodied patterns, habits, or socially constructed attitudes that, though unconscious to the performer, both affect and reflect the ways in which one inhabits and engages with the world.

(Butler 2012, p. 65)

When exploring walking during the residency, a game called Isolate or Change was developed. This involved a set of flashcards having a separate body part written on each card. Prior to turning the top card over, I would decide whether to isolate or change the normal function of the body part detailed on the card. Subsequently, when the card was turned over, the game began. The game would physically begin by proceeding to walk around the space in a normal manner; after two full circles, the isolation or change would be introduced. This walking normally creates a reference datum from which a comparative set of data can be generated. The normal walking mode followed by the transition further enhances the sensations within the body, which personally makes the sensations easier to embody and recall. It is through these minor alterations of the body that the corporeal architecture becomes distorted and unnatural, and as a result, the heightened kinaesthetic awareness is increased. Walking and moving through the space and inhabiting these modified bodies creates a variety of sensations and emotions, making it possible to imagine what it might feel like to inhabit the world in a different body.

These games suggest a re-programming of the creative practitioner or student, in which the body's architecture and behaviours are modified by a series of provocations. As the game develops, the objective is to take the physical into the body. By using the same flashcards, however, instead of isolating or changing the body part, this time the card details what part of the body will become the 'centre'.⁴⁹ Through this mode of the game, it is possible to understand how various emotions are generated and developed to the point where they are articulated through the physical architecture of the body.

⁴⁹ Centre, a point to lead from, an energy focus or a driver for the body.

A sense of inner beauty

In his workshops, Philippe Gaulier a Master French Clown and Teacher, would consistently refer to the need for ‘beauty’ and, in particular, with reference to clown. For Gaulier, without beauty, it was not possible to establish empathy or *complicité* with the audience. With *Lifted Up*, the ability to generate a sense of empathy within the audience was one of the primary objectives of the devising process. Hence, there was a requirement for the audience to understand and to some extent, relate to Charlie and his circumstances. This required the character to have a certain element of beauty, not a physical aesthetic but a beauty that comes from a place of reality and honesty. This notion of beauty is something that can be established through my own physicality and my personal connection to the narrative. By exploring these elements, I was able to locate this source of beauty, and by doing so, I was able to present the audience with a visceral and palpable sense of naivety, vulnerability and innocence.

Here, Laura Purcell Gates, founder of the Arts and Social Change research group at Bath Spa University and co-artistic director of UK-based puppetry company Wattle and Daub, comments on Gaulier’s use of the word ‘beauty’ and interviews a workshop student in 2008. Gates questioned his students on their understanding of the term within Gaulier’s pedagogy.

Gaulier repeatedly positioned beauty in opposition to the practice of acting, deriding a performance with such phrases as ‘he is horrible actor, no?’ This led most students with whom I spoke to interpret beauty as that which remains when the masks of socially learned behaviour are stripped away: ‘When I’m beautiful is when I’m really being myself, not acting or pretending.’

(Purcell Gates 2011, p. 233)

This understanding of beauty as not acting or pretending leans towards my earlier comments of honesty and the audience’s perceived sense of realness towards the action or character. From my experience and from the findings of this research, this state typically flourishes when the artist is playing in the moment. It is at that moment of flow when the audience observes a purity of action and the physical parasites or dirt spots are removed. It is this purity or honesty of the body that ultimately helps to establish a sense of empathy within audience. The honest body displays its

vulnerability, and through this perceived honesty, the audience can now relate directly to the performer, sensing their emotions, feelings and thoughts. In the following personal journal extract, I make a comment in relation to being in the moment during the performance of *Lifted Up* at the Irish World Academy.

Reflecting on tonight's exam performance of *Lifted Up*, I'm so pleased and very relieved it is over. The work with Carol on dramaturgy was hugely beneficial, especially the concentrated focus on the section where I conduct *Nimrod*. Tonight that section was joyous; it felt as if I was being supported, almost carried by the sound of the brass. Nothing else clouded my thoughts, my body moved and responded to every beat, my breath was in unison with the melody. Behind the mask, I smiled, my eyes closed, and for those few moments, I was Charlie.

By engaging in this process, I would claim that masks could help students to achieve a state of flow during workshops, devising and performance. This has been further demonstrated through the documentation of performance No 1 and the neutral mask research as detailed in Chapter 3, where the focus of the inquiry into the neutral mask was the acquisition of self-knowledge and the ability to play in the moment.

However, during the residency for *Lifted Up*, the research inquiry was expanded to consider other mask types, which could further benefit the creative process and the notions of affect and embodiment. Therefore contributing to new knowledge for an emergent pedagogy, which relates to physical theatre practice and its intersections with other disciplines.

Throughout the residency, the application of 'The Four Temperaments' masks as an educational and creative method was further developed and integrated into my creative practice as a logical progression from the neutral mask. These masks have proved to be an extremely versatile tool for unlocking and understanding the complexity of our own psychological and physiological composition. Benefitting students when they're searching for greater depth in character, a subtlety and honesty in playing and a focus on detail. The masks are grounded in the human condition and the traits exhibited by the masks exist to some extent in all of us. They are immediate

masks, which generate strong reactions and responses from those observing, in my experience this immediacy often helps to bring the mask alive and maintain its connection with audience.

Consisting of a suite of masks made and designed by Mike Chase the masks are rooted in the concept of the four temperaments (or constitutional body types) choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic and melancholic, which is established upon the ancient philosophy of Hippocrates. Temperament theory is further built upon the concept of the four humours, which suggests that there are four fluids: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile, which may determine one's personality traits.

When using these masks students have the opportunity to emotionally and physically experience these individual perspectives through the corresponding mask, which represents that temperament. This is a method, which further refines and builds on the emotional and sensory concepts of kinaesthesia and embodiment previously established from working with the neutral mask.

In theory each of the four temperaments has a direct connection to a different system in the physical body. Listed in the table below are some of these basic associations, in conjunction with my interpretation of the separate personality traits that could relate to each of the individual temperaments. In addition to this information, there is the inclusion of a colour, the colour element is included here as when I'm work-shopping with students colour is integrated as a primary sensory stimulus. Furthermore the colour's referenced in the table directly correlate to the paint finish of each mask.

Table 4.1 The Four Temperaments

Temperament	Traits	Element	Colour
Choleric	A strong emphasis on the blood and heart system: extroverted, will-oriented people, always striving passionately towards the future.	Fire	Red
Sanguine	An emphasis on the nervous system: flighty, mobile people, with humour and flexibility and a propensity to chaos. An extroverted type, living in the present.	Air	Yellow
Phlegmatic	A predominance of the digestive and glandular systems connected to the movement of water around the body. Conservative and faithful, the phlegmatic can be a good follower. These introverted types live in the present.	Water	Green

Melancholic	Has a tendency to be a very skeletal person, displaying strength through endurance. Usually serious and introspective, living in the past, the melancholic never forgets.	Earth	Blue
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The images below show each of the four masks in isolation. The masks are constructed from a papier-mâché base and are sealed with acrylic paint and varnish, these examples are the author's own.



Figure 4.4. Choleric mask (Birdthistle, 2020)



Figure 4.5. Sanguine mask (Birdthistle 2020)



Figure 4.6. Phlegmatic mask (Birdthistle, 2020)



Figure 4.7. Melancholic mask (Birdthistle, 2020)

The four temperaments can be understood as directions of human expression; each individual has the four within them, but usually one dominates. By developing the temperaments, which are less prominent, the student can become more self-aware and develop more flexibility and choice in how they perform and engage with an audience. The four temperaments are immediately identifiable, and with the use of the masks, they can be accessed with great energy and commitment

The method, which has been developed for using the four temperaments masks, is a result of the findings and knowledge, which has been generated throughout this inquiry and the foundations of the method are established through the following five basic pillars.

- A. The four elements and colours
- B. Interactive body work
- C. Breath and mantra
- D. Mapping of self
- E. Developing of characters

The process flow diagram below illustrates the interconnectivity of these five basic pillars, working towards a greater understanding of self and the application of that knowledge through a creative devising process.

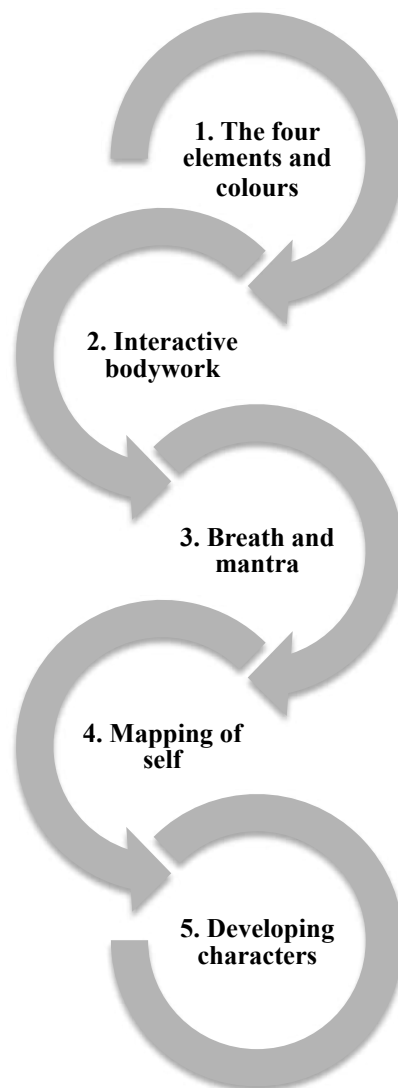


Figure 4.8. A process flow diagram for the four temperament masks.

Working with full-face masks, the emphasis is on taking energy into the body and finding various rhythms, gestures, and emotions. Therefore, through the application of these four masks, it becomes possible to gain a greater understanding of the body's architecture, which is differentiated and augmented by the narrow spectrum of each temperament.

In the following journal extract, from week three of the residency, my concerns focus on refining the characteristics and physicality of Charlie in order to achieve a level of

subtlety and honesty; this was achieved through a concentrated application of the phlegmatic mask. The traits of the phlegmatic are associated with a predominance of the digestive and glandular systems, connected to the movement of water round the body. Typically they are conservative and faithful, the phlegmatic person can be a good follower and these introverted types often live in the present.

One of my biggest concerns or fears with this project is causing offence, not just to those closest to me but also the audience in general. Playing a character with such an emotionally charged condition has the potential to come across as crass or thoughtless. If any negativity is generated amongst the audience, the work falls flat on all fronts. Charlie is a complex character and depending on his emotional state, his modes of communication, movement, and breath all change quite dramatically; Charlie reacts immediately, he lacks the ability to absorb the outside world and its distractions. During the early devising of *Lifted Up*, going back to the four temperaments masks and isolating individual aspects of Charlie's personality in the smallest of detail proved to be the key to subtlety. As the narrative developed, I would ask myself what temperament is coming to the fore and again return to the masks and play, using the sensations generated to create a palette of embodied gesture from which the story of Charlie could then be told.

Working collaboratively with masks

The following section of this chapter will examine the use of mask through the perspective of a collaboratively devised piece, a project influenced by the long history of creation storytelling from the Indigenous people of Australia that explores the meaning of *Altjeringa*.⁵⁰ The performance is a gestural étude that examines the potential of the equivocal mask as a creative device in multidisciplinary training. During this investigation, it was identified that the mask has a metaphysical quality with many facets, suggesting multiple meanings. 'Equivocal' as a word or phrase has

⁵⁰ Indigenous Australian word, which translates as 'The Dreaming'.

the intent to deceive or misguide. Indeed, it suggests a double interpretation or is even deliberately ambiguous.

***Altjeringa*: a gestural étude**

Those who lose dreaming are lost.

A proverb from the Indigenous people of Australia (Tai Woodville 2014, p.1)

Video No. 3

Simon Thompson, *Altjeringa*, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance.

Figure 4.4 is an image of the equivocal mask, which was used for *Altjeringa*. It was designed and manufactured by Mark Pitman, co-director of Garlic Theatre, UK, and a trained mask maker with Donato Sartori (1939–2016). Made from leather, it is hand-tooled onto a wooden form where the result is a physically large yet lightweight and easy-to-wear mask. The mesh, which is inserted into the eyeholes, is fitted to obscure the audience's view of the masker's eyes.



Figure 4.9. Equivocal mask.

The rationale behind obscuring the masker's eyes from the audience is to ensure that the mask is 'kept alive'.⁵¹ In order to maintain the illusion that the mask is alive, it is essential that the eyes behind the mask move with the mask and not independently. For example, if the mask tracks to the right, the eyes should move with it and not move first. Hence, due to the nature of this project, it was decided during the manufacturing process to reduce the complexity of performing in the mask in favour of concentrating the focus onto the study of movement without any unnecessary distractions.

Finding a shared language

As with many arts practice research endeavours, there was no defined endpoint or outcome in mind with *Altjeringa*. The objective was to focus the attention on the body, exploring movements and the effect of the mask on the process of devising. What we did have was approximately 40 hours in which to devise a short showing of work. In the first instance, this was in the context of a mask practitioner and a contemporary dancer working collaboratively in order to understand if the application of a mask was beneficial in the development of a dancer's skillset with relation to audience-engaged performance. Further research generated more inquiry, which resulted in new findings that could be beneficial to the development of a new creative pedagogy.

I was familiar with the dancer engaged in this collaboration from previous projects and also from my teaching at the Irish World Academy. However, we had never undertaken any mask work together. Typically, when I am working collaboratively, my preferred approach is to first, establish a shared language with all the participants engaged in the devising process. The emphasis is to find a common understanding of play. The method to achieve this is through playing games and engaging in simple improvisations. Once the apprehension of failing or being ridiculous has subsided, it then becomes possible to consider these concepts. What is *complicité*, what is empathy, and how can we communicate effectively as a team about movement, gesture, emotion, etc?

⁵¹ A phrase used when the mask is animated and an audience is engaged, a sense or feeling that the mask is alive.

After playing some games and having a general discussion, the dancer and I began to work with the neutral mask in order to develop an understanding of how the dancer's body moved and to generate a confidence in the wearing and playing in the mask.

From these early sessions, a language and method of communication subsequently developed around movement, enabling clear direction and creative discussions to take place. This was achieved through a blending of two well-established principles, namely Lecoq's 'Seven Levels of Tension', which can be seen in the table below and Rudolf Laban's (1879–1958)⁵² Laban movement analysis (LMA). A method typically engaged with for describing, visualising, interpreting and documenting all varieties of human movement.

Table 4.2. Lecoq's Seven Levels of Tension

Level	Term	Brief Description
1	Catatonic	The 'jellyfish'. There is no tension in the body at all. A complete state of relaxation. If you have to move or speak, it is a real effort.
2	Laidback	The 'Californian'. In soap operas, characters live at this level of tension. Everything you say is cool, relaxed, probably lacking in credibility.
3	Neutral	The 'economic'. It is what it is; there is nothing more, nothing less. The right amount. No past or future. You are totally present and aware. It is the state of tension before something happens. You move with no story behind your movement.
4	Alert	The 'farce'. Look at things. Sit down. Stand up. Indecision.
5	Suspense	The 'reactive' (Melodrama). The crisis is about to happen. All the tension is in the body, concentrated between the eyes.
6	Passionate	The 'opera'. The tension has exploded out of the body. Anger, fear, hilarity, despair. It is difficult to control.
7	Tragic	The 'death scene'. Cannot move, petrified. The body is solid tension.

In practice L.M.A focuses upon the four main categories of Body, Shape, Space and Effort and it is the body category, which describes the structural and physical characteristics of the human body. This category is responsible for describing which body parts are moving, which parts are connected and which parts are influenced by others including general statements about body organisation. While the body category

⁵² Rudolf Laban (1879–1958) was born in Austro-Hungary. Laban was a dancer, a choreographer and a dance/movement theoretician. Laban movement analysis, sometimes Laban/Bartenieff movement analysis, is a method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting and documenting human movement.

primarily develops connections within the body and the body/space intent, furthermore the manner in which the body changes shape during movement is further experienced and analysed through the shape category.

Therefore it is important to highlight that all four of the L.M.A categories are intrinsically related, and shape is often the integrating factor for combining the four categories into meaningful movement. Within the shape category there are a number of sub-sections such as shape form, which describes the static shapes, which a body may create, for example: wall-like, ball-like, and pin-like. Where as shape change describes the way the body is interacting with and its relationship between the body and the environment. Within shape change there are three further modes; and it is here that shape flow represents the relationship of the body to itself. Essentially flow is a stream of consciousness expressed through movement, this could be amoebic movement or could be mundane habitual actions, like shrugging, shivering or rubbing an injured shoulder, etc. Directional represents a relationship where the body is directed toward some part of the environment, this can be further divided into spoke-like (punching, pointing, etc.) and arc-like (swinging a tennis racket or painting a fence) where as carving represents a relationship where the body is actively and three-dimensionally interacting with the volume of the environment. Examples could include kneading dough, wringing out a towel, avoiding laser beams or miming the shape of an imaginary object. Shape qualities describe the way the body is changing in an active way towards a point in space. In the simplest form, this describes whether the body is currently growing larger with more extension or becoming smaller with more flexion.

During the devising of 'Altjeringa' the following terms would typically be used to refer to the specific dimensions of spatial orientation 'rising', 'sinking', 'spreading', 'enclosing', 'advancing' and 'retreating'. Finally within the shape category, shape flow support describes the way the torso can change in shape to support movements of the rest of the body. It is often referred to as something that is present or absent.

The space category involves motion in connection with the environment and with spatial patterns, pathways and lines of spatial tension. Laban suggests that there are ways of organising and moving in space that are specifically harmonious in the same sense that music can be harmonious. As with music, space harmony sometimes takes

the form of set scales of movement within geometric forms. These scales can be practised in order to refine the range of movement and reveal individual movement preferences. This category also describes and notes choices, which refer specifically to space, paying attention to the kinesphere. The kinesphere is the area in which the body is moving and how the student acknowledges and responds to it.

Effort, or what Laban described as dynamics, is a system for understanding the more subtle characteristics about the way a movement is actioned with respect to the inner intention. This can be demonstrated for example in the differences between punching someone in anger and reaching for a glass, in terms of body organisation both actions rely on the extension of the arm. Yet the attention to the strength of the movement, the control of the movement and the timing of the movement however are completely different.

When devising ‘Altjeringa’ there was a specific focus on developing the application of Laban’s dynamics or efforts, in order to further the inquiry into the concepts of empathy and *complicité* through movement. This developing knowledge of the body’s dynamics and its ability to clearly communicate intent through movement is an essential component to the research. Hence it was important to understand that the four components, when arranged in specific ways, create eight efforts of movement.

These movements can be summarised in a combination of the following categories; each having two possible elements: ‘space/focus’ (direct or indirect), ‘time’ (quick or sustained), ‘weight’ (heavy or light) and ‘flow’ (bound or free). So, when looking at flow and if the movement is bound, then it is very tight. It is very held like that of an uptight businessman or politician for example, whereas someone who flows freely is the contrary, childlike, always running, always free acting on any impulse that they desire.

The table below illustrates how the four components can be arranged to create the eight efforts: Punch, Slash, Dab, Flick, Press, Wring, Glide and Float.

Table 4.3. The Eight Efforts and Their Four Components

EFFORTS	SPACE/FOCUS	TIME	WEIGHT	FLOW
PUNCH	Direct	Quick	Heavy	Bound

DAB	Direct	Quick	Light	Bound
PRESS	Direct	Sustained	Heavy	Bound
GLIDE	Direct	Sustained	Light	Free
SLASH	Indirect	Quick	Heavy	Free
FLICK	Indirect	Quick	Light	Free
WRING	Indirect	Sustained	Heavy	Bound
FLOAT	Indirect	Sustained	Light	Free

As a result of this inquiry the combination of L.M.A with the Seven States of Tension, has developed a method, which promotes a creative language around play and movement where empathy and *complicité* can be explored through movement. With a common language of play and movement established, it became important to focus on some basic principles of mask technique before moving onto the creative devising process of ‘Altjeringa’.

Without a basic foundation in mask technique there was a risk that the performance wouldn’t translate to the audience. Therefore rendering the mask no more than simply an elaborate face covering, which would add further turbidity to the communication as opposed to helping to clarify it. Even so, with *Altjeringa*, a mastery of technique was not a priority; technique must not overshadow the movement of the body. The objective was that technique would enhance and make the performance more engaging for the audience. Therefore, we began to draw the focus the work (still in neutral mask), onto keeping the mask alive and experimenting with the proximity of the mask in relation to the audience.

Keeping the mask alive and audience proximity

Integral to this research project has been the development of a number of new games for the purpose of teaching mask. Games have a solid theoretical foundation yet still reside in the mode of play, making the process of learning a skill that is both experiential and enjoyable. During the devising process for *Altjeringa*, a game called ‘Compass’ emerged and was specifically designed to teach how to keep the mask alive. In this game, the audience is north and the mask is the pointer of the compass, which is always seeking north. In practice, the masker is asked to locate a fixed point in the room; this is north. Then the masker begins to walk around the room in random patterns turning, twisting, sometimes backwards; once a good flow of movement is established, the masker is asked to find their north and while moving they must

endeavour to focus the mask towards north at all times. The second phase adds a little more complexity; now, the masker is required to imagine a ship's compass, set in a gimbal. This is where the compass stays level and true, no matter how the ship pitches and tosses. The mask subsequently adopts this idea of the gimbal, and the mask must now stay horizontal facing north at all times. Finally, the third phase of the game adds music, which introduces a series of changing rhythms and tempos for the students to explore.

Once we had established the audience as a focus for the mask, it was possible to move onto another element of technique, which was the mask's proximity to the audience. In my experience, the positional relationship of a mask to the audience dramatically affects the response and reaction of that audience. At a distance, the presented image is similar to a wide-angle view the audience takes in the whole setting, good for establishing a scene. As the mask comes closer, the audience's focus tightens. Here, the body and mask become the centre of attention and by coming even closer, the focus shifts again to the shoulders, neck and the head. Too close and nothing can be seen except the mask, leaving the audience with little to read for information. From experience, this lack of communication can also result in a sense of fear or uncertainty being generated within the audience. According to Donald Pollock, a leading anthropologist at Buffalo University, the mask's effect on the observer is such that the mask works as a metaphor or signifier for the spectator to separate the individual performer and distance that perception. This allows an alienation effect that, in turn, allows a suspension of disbelief (Pollock 1995, pp. 581–597). Therefore, it may be that this alienation or unknowing heightens the senses and generates a level of uncertainty. Furthermore, if the mask comes too close to the audience, the sight-lines change; those sat to the left or right may now only see a profile image of the mask. If this occurs, then the illusion is broken, the mask ceases to be alive.

After a period of approximately six hours of workshopping these principles, we moved onto the devising process and the introduction of the equivocal mask. Initially, the devising was a very organic process where we wanted to capture as many creative ideas, suggestions, and impulses as possible. To facilitate this, we used a large studio at the Irish World Academy, complete with a number of dry wipe boards and flip

chart pads. When an idea sprung to mind, it was documented with a felt-tip marker in large characters; in the case of the flip pads, separate pages were temporarily attached to the walls so that they could be seen from any point in the room. Figure 4.5 captures some of this early data, which subsequently influenced the next stages of devising. This method of signposting ideas was quick and responsive while the visual and physical size of these comments in the room allowed the ideas to have a sense of vibrancy and spontaneity. They were not forgotten or overlooked, and as a research tool, this process felt empowering and very democratic.

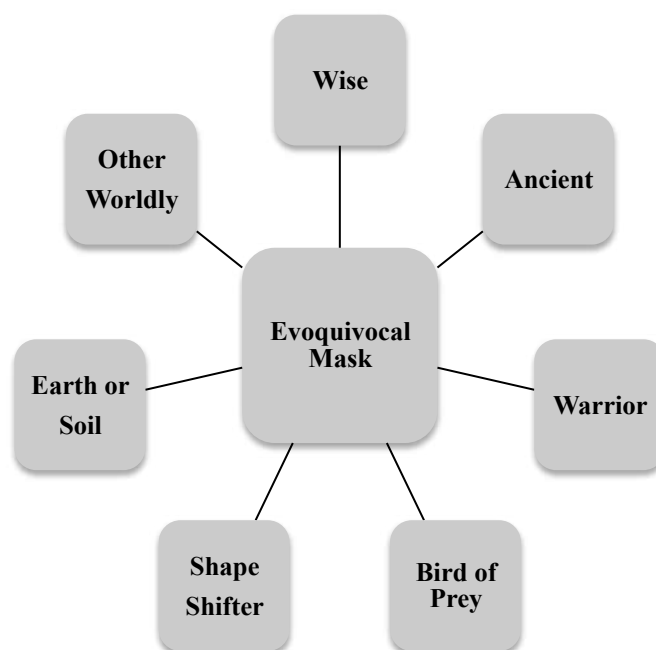


Figure 4.10. Phrases that became associated with the equivocal mask.

From the signposts around the room, we began to play, creating simple narratives and then physicalising them, but if we mutually agreed an idea to be unsuccessful, it was removed from the wall. Often, we would use animal archetypes to initiate the games. A particular favourite of mine was an angry flamingo walking backwards off hot coals. If the game brought us both joy, we would add to its complexity, bringing in possibly multiple fixed points and the audience, which in this case was a video camera. These simple processes very quickly generated some wonderful movement and even more creative discussion.

After three sessions, approximately 20 hours, four archetypes consistently rose to the top; these were the Warrior, the Bird, the Lizard and the Snake, all of which captured

the mask's complexity and power by displaying the body's balance, strength, agility, attack and poise.

Soundscape

In the concluding stages of the devising process, we began to explore sound. This proved to be the catalyst for bringing together the four archetypes allowing a common theme to emerge, which ultimately resulted in an element of dramaturgy or narrative development to take place. In the fourth session of devising *Altjeringa*, I began to introduce various elements of percussion to the partially choreographed movement, bells, shakers, frame drums and clapsticks, looking for rhythms and punctuation we both enjoyed and felt contributed to the work. The results were almost tribal, yet timeless with a sense of belonging, connecting the performance to the ground. It was here we found a common understanding, an almost instinctive way of communicating; we were now working with *complicité*. When I watched the movements, I could sense when to play and what rhythms; the dancer stopped, breathed and moved as if we had rehearsed it a thousand times. Over the next couple of sessions, we added electronic sounds, recordings from the NASA sound library of the planets rotating on their own axis, along with some more percussion and didgeridoo.

The final inspiration came from some indigenous dot art painted onto the side of an instrument that I was using during the recording of the soundscape, commonly known as a rain stick.⁵³ The rich earthy colours and the image of a lizard prompted an investigation into Australian Indigenous stories. Drawing from their Creation Stories, the imagery provided us with the inspiration to combine the elements together, demonstrating the mask and the body's capability to be equivocal and move through a series of form and archetype, while remaining in constant view of an audience.

⁵³ A rain stick is a long, hollow tube partially filled with small pebbles or beans that has small pins or thorns arranged helically on its inside surface. When the stick is upended, the pebbles fall to the other end of the tube, making a sound reminiscent of rain falling.



Figure 4.11. Indigenous dot art. The image is of the rain stick used in the performance and during the devising of *Altjeringa*.

Summary *Altjeringa*

The following summary highlights the key findings and learning outcomes, which were generated during the collaborative devising of *Altjeringa*. Relating to the application of mask and clown as a method for multidisciplinary training, which aims to develop *complicité* and kinetic empathy between an artist and the audience.

It became clear from early observations in order for the mask to work effectively at stimulating *complicité* and kinetic empathy, that there was a need for the dancer to establish some core skills in the presentation of mask for performance. Hence by using the neutral mask from the onset of the project, the dancer was able to experience wearing the mask and became comfortable with the physical restrictions a mask places on the wearer. When the dancer was familiar and confident moving in mask it was possible to work on further modes of presentation, whilst keeping a clear focus on the use of the body.

It was from this initial bodywork, that a shared creative language began to develop, a language for clear and immediate communication, which blended the established concepts of The Seven States of Tension and L.M.A and furthermore by incorporating a playful component into this method ensured that a spontaneity and joy was maintained throughout the creative process.

As the devising process of *Altjeringa* progressed, a further emphasis was placed on narrative development or dramaturgy through improvisation, which helped to generate a wider spectrum of sensory reactions and responses in relation to the various given circumstances. I would suggest that these reactions and responses were amplified through the wearing of a mask and became embodied within the dancer through sensory response and kinaesthesia. This increased level of embodiment resulted in movements, which were more honest, engaging to observe and therefore had the potential to create a deeper sense of kinetic empathy within an audience.

As a creative team we both identified as what could be termed neurotypical and able hearing, and the significance of rhythm, melody and sounds during the creative process of devising *Altjeringa* became important and hugely influential on the process and therefore should not be underestimated. Rhythm was used to maintain order or to create a sense of urgency it further generated an audible punctuation within a physical narrative. The dynamics of melody and sound had the ability to influence the quality of movement, which further served to highlight our emotional and physical connectivity to certain vibrations and frequencies. Furthermore, in the process of *Altjeringa*, the dancer and myself established a more defined and intuitive sense of *complicité* through the use of percussive instrumentation and rhythm.

Video 4 (Performance No. 2)

Simon Thompson, *Lifted Up*. Irish World Academy of Music and Dance.

Summary Lifted Up

This section of the thesis focuses on the performance of *Lifted Up*, by analysing a dataset, which was generated during the residency in Nenagh and the final performance at the Irish World Academy on the 28th November 2019. In this summary I will further consider my experiences from an auto ethnographic perspective while drawing upon the findings from the residency in conjunction with the audience's response from a post-performance discussion, chaired by Dr Grant McLay.

Below is an extract from my personal journal, which was written shortly after the performance and tries to capture some of the post show emotions I was experiencing.

It is 11.15 pm on the 28th November 2019. I'm slumped on the sofa totally exhausted after a hectic four days of working on *Lifted Up*, which culminated in a final performance this evening at the Academy.

The three days of rehearsing with an external dramaturg have really helped to add sensitivity to the performance, by taking a little more time and allowing the emotions and sensations to be processed, as opposed to being mechanical and repetitive in style. The rehearsals also poked me to confront my concerns in relation to embodying the emotions of Charlie. (The not being too obvious or dramatic). At last, there was another person in the room, an outside eye, who responded empathetically and critically to my movements as opposed to the unfeeling video camera. (*Note: Does a live feeling and indeed empathy transmit to an audience via the screen? Later research back on track*).

The performance this evening was an extremely emotional experience, to some extent a different vibe to other shows, and I've done plenty. Some of the emotion stems from the fact this was an externally examined piece of work, and the audience was made up from colleagues and peers. Adding to that was the personal nature of the piece; I not only wanted the audience to fall in love with Charlie, I wanted them to share his joy and pain in a physical sense.

As Charlie entered the performance space, there was the familiar chuckle from an audience member, I stopped and acknowledged the sound in the room, breathed and moved on. I was aware of the audience as they were in my space; no, it was Charlie's space. Now thinking back, during the performance, I'm not sure if I made any decisions in a calculated way. No, they were almost instinctive. Very quickly, I became more and more *interested* in Charlie's daily routines. I wasn't trying to be *interesting*. I wasn't acting. The shift was towards a feeling of honesty, a realness; I allowed my body to move to the sensations that were being generated

at each specific moment. I listened to the room, the sounds of the audience breathing, to the music playing and the silence. I was truly present and in the moment. No other thoughts occupied my mind. All too soon it was over, the time had flashed by and I was standing there, sweating, out of breath and a little dazed, listening to the applause.

I'm delighted with the performance and especially the feedback from the audience. In relation to the Q and A, the conversations generated lots of thought, and my responses were, I think, articulate and clear. I may have made the comment, I feel like an academic at last!

I'll watch the recording of the performance and the Q and A in a week or so, but now I need to find my feet a little, have another pot of tea and get some sleep.

The above journal entry indicates that when in a state of flow there is an element of being removed from unnecessary distractions and thoughts, which allows more space and time for the processing of embodied sensations, such as breath and basic corporeal architecture, which is associated with a character's physicality.

Reflecting on *Lifted Up*, the more I engaged and listened to the room, the easier it was to react and respond to the evolving situations and the given circumstances. In acknowledging the presence of the audience from the first entrance, a communication was established, and the connection or relationship started to build between the performer and the audience. It is from this relationship that play can flourish and *complicité* develops. Once the performer and audience begin to share the experience together, it becomes possible to elicit further empathetic reactions.

Keeping the mask alive maintains that connection with the audience and helps to keep the physical narrative clear. However, in this particular instance, in order to generate empathy, there was a fine line between engaging with the audience sympathetically as opposed to a full-on direct presentation, which may have translated as caricature or something more crass. The subtlety which the character required was achieved through further work the 4 temperaments masks, firstly by mapping myself and then exploring Charlie's character in detail.

Mapping self

The task of mapping is similar to taking a helicopter view of your own personality, almost like looking back at yourself from the separate viewpoints of the four temperaments. The detailed knowledge that transpires is particularly beneficial when a performer wants to be able to share with an audience their most intimate or heartfelt emotions. By allowing the body to be truthful, the performer can strip away aspects of what could be interpreted as a public persona or a mask. It is these human conditions, which form part of the process of building an empathetic relationship with the audience.

During the residency at Nenagh Arts Centre, considerable time was spent reflecting and mapping my own personality. As an experiment, both the public and the private personalities were mapped, and the results clearly showed differences between the two.

Below are graphic representations from my findings. When reading the data, north is to be interpreted as audience facing, these are the traits we want to be seen, and south is those traits that are hidden from view. The radial rings denote the intensity or percentage of each temperament, which in turn makes up the whole; at the centre of the image is the person.

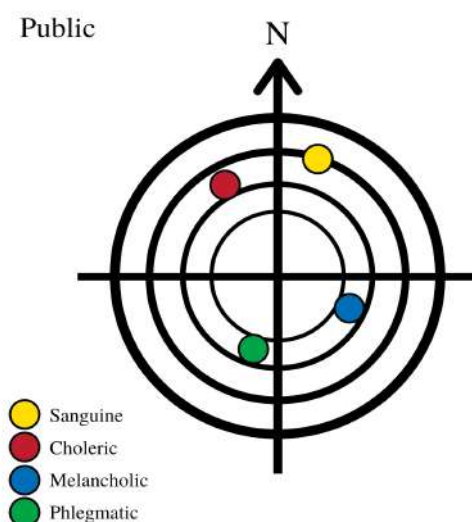


Figure 4.12. Simon Thompson, January 2019, public personality.

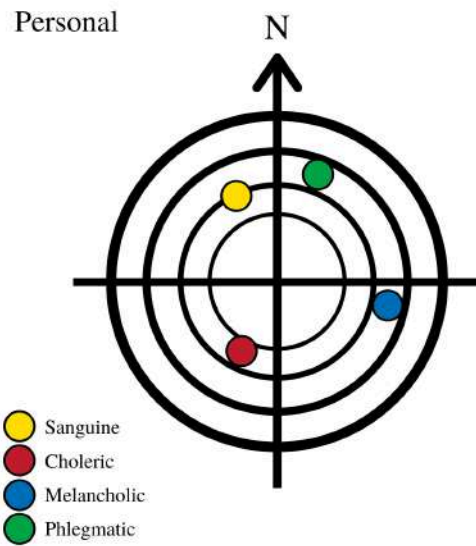


Figure 4.13. Simon Thompson, January 2019, private personality.

In the process of developing Charlie's character, the mapping procedure that was carried out for understanding the self was repeated. This time, however, it is done through the character's perspective. When working with a pre-existing text, a lot of the detail regarding a character's personality is provided, such as how they interact with others, reactions to given circumstances, etc. Collating that essential detail from the text allows the actor to understand the character, and then, from this mapping process, an honesty or truthfulness to the character's physicality can be explored. The mapping provides a set of data points that should be constantly referred to during the creation process. Below is a graphic representation of the mapping of Charlie's personality from *Lifted Up*.

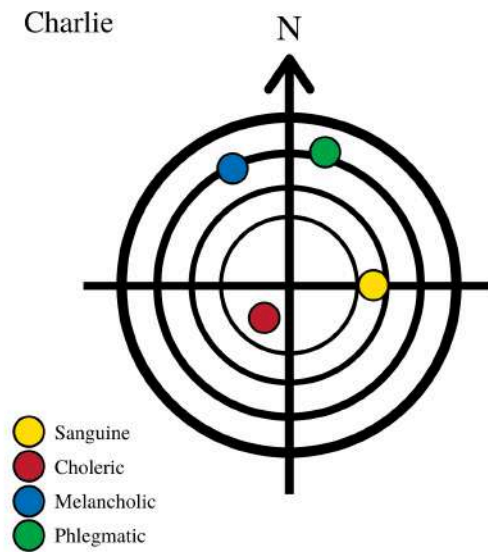


Figure 4.14. Character map for Charlie, January 2019.

To gain further insight into the audience's reaction to *Lifted Up*, the table below details a small selection of data from the transcriptions of the post-performance Q and A session, complete with time stamps.

Table 4.4. *Lifted Up* Audience Responses from the Post Show Q & A

Time Stamp	<i>Lifted Up</i>
20:49	The mask for me kept changing. It was crying, it was happy, it was jubilant, all these different things, but it never changed, the actual physicality of the mask. So for me anyway, you were able to turn that mask into a smile, all these different things. Just through the use of the body, which I find quite amazing.
27:00	Thank you. It was very moving, particularly that moment of the crescendo of the music and the crescendo in your body and I was kind of going with you.
34:10	I found that devastating, but not in a negative way, like it was very moving. But very, very sad, it was like I was with this person.
37:51 39:42	That was beautiful Simon. I was especially moved by the conducting section ... That's why it was so moving. We could feel the freedom.
40:00	Without being sentimental, it really showed the culture of the place.
40:23	I went on a total trip.
43:57	Thank you, that was a very unique experience.

From this sample of data, it becomes possible to extract some findings, which are key to this research and the development of a new creative pedagogy.

The above data primarily suggests that it is possible to develop a kinetic empathy with an audience through the use of mask and movement. I would also claim that this mode of theatrical presentation has the capacity to create a strong physical narrative in, which an audience can become immersed through sensorial experience. Finally, it may also be possible for the audience to be taken on a journey of imagination that is filled with imagery and a sense of place.

Conclusion

In this chapter, my research has focused on the devising methods I currently use when working with other artists and on solo projects. The research has further identified how masks have informed and defined my processes.

Emerging from this research, a number of significant findings have surfaced that directly relate to my research question and specifically to the concepts of *complicité* and kinetic empathy. I would suggest that from the data generated by this research that the foundations for creating kinetic empathy are firmly established via the awareness and knowledge of one's self, both cerebrally and corporally.

Through the neutral mask, it is possible to establish how the body occupies space and moves in a corporeal and anatomical way. The protective nature of the mask allows the wearer to become focused on being present and to disregard any external influences, fears or apprehensions, therefore, establishing the premise of the 'honest body', the ability to be present in the moment and communicate with a sense of honesty through movement and breath, which ultimately results in a sense of empathy.

By engaging with somatic practices and observing how breathing patterns affect the body, the artist can develop a better understanding of how breath communicates and connects with an audience, creating further pathways for *complicité* and empathy.

The four temperaments masks, when applied as a method for education and training, enable the artist to undertake a more detailed study of self by focusing the lens of enquiry on their individual temperaments. The process of playing games and improvising in the masks intensifies the learning experience, and the artist can quickly identify specific traits, emotions and reactions through a physical and

cognitive response to each mask. In my experience, the isolation of each individual temperament creates an intense level of sensory stimulus, which promotes an increased amount of physical perception and embodied sensation. In the case of *Lifted Up*, the phlegmatic mask was repeatedly revisited to refine the very detailed and subtle elements of Charlie's character.

Finally, drawing on this research, my personal experience and the observations of fellow artists and students, I would make the following claim. When creating audience-engaging work, which aims to generate kinetic empathy and *complicité*, the process is multifaceted and reliant on a number of factors. For example, the performer is required to make an immediate connection with the audience, and that connection may develop further, through play or shared experience. Then through the use of their body, the performer may reinforce a specific narrative, generating a shared kinaesthesia or kinetic empathy between themselves and the audience. Therefore, it is when narrative, shared experience, and kinetic empathy are combined through a mode of play that *complicité* is achieved.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

In committing to this doctoral study and writing the above thesis, my objective was to answer the following research inquiry: to what extent can the concepts traditionally associated with mask and clown be developed and incorporated within a creative pedagogy, which could serve other performance-related disciplines?

In order to undertake this inquiry, the research focused on my personal experience as a mask and clown performer and actively analysed my processes of devising new work and teaching. The auto-ethnographic approach applied to this research made it possible to further clarify and examine the patterns and methods of working. This was further combined with the collation of performance research data, from four separate performances. The following two performances, *The Miller's Story* and *Altjeringa*, were individually analysed for research purposes, whereas the neutral mask workshop and *Lifted Up* were generated as specific outcomes from this research project, which have been examined as separate components in the final thesis submission.

This inquiry further situates mask and clown concepts as primary methods for establishing modes of creative play. These methods, which have been compiled into a pedagogy are used to teach, support and mentor students from other performance-related disciplines. By engaging in play, the students learn about *complicité*, the beauty and joy of failure when associated with clowning.

Working with somatic practices and kinaesthesia, the students develop an increased awareness and understanding of self, which ultimately results in a detailed corporeal knowledge, rendering the student capable of creating performances with a sense of kinetic empathy and shared experience. The research design, which informed this inquiry, followed a structured progression through a range of masks and clowning concepts. However, the objective of this inquiry and ultimately the resulting pedagogy is not focused on mask and clown as specific disciplines, but on how to incorporate the concepts of mask, clown and ultimately play into a student's existing knowledge base.

Summary of Core Findings

Clown and mask as concepts are playful and immediate and through their application they can enable a student to develop new skills for increasing engagement with an audience. Throughout this inquiry the established and traditional teaching pedagogies of masters such as LeCoq and Gaulier, have been studied and ultimately challenged. Making way for a more student focused and caring framework, which is built upon experiential learning processes and personal experience. By utilising teaching methods, which are caring, nurturing and through being present and actively engaging with the ensemble games. This further creates a learning environment where it is possible to modulate and adapt to each scenario as well as the individual students needs, whilst remaining cognisant of the lesson plan and desired learning objectives.

Taking augmented rest periods during workshops and devising, gives time for the students to reflect and share the sensations and emotions, which have become manifest from the games and exercises being played. These rest periods further allow the affects, thoughts and sensations to become more deeply embodied for subsequent recall.

The development of a universal language, which incorporates the Seven Levels of Tension with Laban's Movement Analysis, is a key element to the pedagogy and it is used when giving direction to a student or when working through a devising process. It provides clarity and a responsiveness, which allows the student to quickly draw on previous work and embodied sensations through kinaesthesia.

Throughout the Inquiry a progression of masks were established as key pillars within the structure of the pedagogy. These masks included the Neutral, Metaphysical, 4 Temperaments, Character and ultimately the Red Nose. Each mask working as a catalyst for play, creative thinking, self-expression, and confidence, in turn this helped develop the student's awareness of effect and embodiment through kinaesthesia. In conjunction with this corporeal knowledge, the 4 temperaments masks in particular allowed the student's to explore more emotional and character based traits. Where as the clowning concepts and the Red Nose elements often relate to vulnerability, fragility and innocence connecting the student to the more honest and personal aspects of empathy and shared experience.

Empathy can be generated through movement and careful choreography, and in this context choreography is much more than what some postmodern practitioners refer to as the philosophy of creating movement for movement's sake. Here the choreography focuses on the human condition and its relationship with the audience. The choreography can include narrative storytelling and clear dramaturgy the aim is to create a direct physical communication with the audience, which leads to shared kinaesthesia and ultimately empathy. It is a different way of understanding how one inhabits space it is an increased awareness of the body as it moves through space.

Play and *Complicité* are complex and often symbiotic, and it is when the audience has become complicit in the game of theatre or performance that a shared experience starts to develop. Through the honesty, nuance and beauty of movement, the artist has the capacity to elevate this shared experience through kinetic empathy by creating a unique liminal and personal experience for both the artist and the audience.

Applications for further practice and the dissemination of research

The post-research plan for publishing this research and informing policy/practice within the sector whilst maintaining maximum visibility over time is as follows. Publishing journal articles on different elements of the research findings and making presentations at conferences, (Note: When speaking at conferences, I would upload the presentations to www.slideshare.net or www.prezi.com in order to allow other people to find them through simple web searches) by contributing to chapters in books, through blogging about the research and the proactive use of social media platforms such as twitter, which can further raise profile and interest within the academic community.

Where possible, articles and papers would be published in electronic format to ensure that the material is easily accessible and remains in the public domain for as long as possible. By using a Creative Commons Licence this will allow anyone to legally download the reasearch (but not change it) as long as they acknowledge the author. Disseminating my research findings in these ways gives the research a much greater impact, helping other communities and groups to make their own work more efficient and effective through the sharing of the knowledge brought about through my research.

I also intend to further to develop my practice of guest lecturing at Universities and Third Level Institutions, continuing with my relationship at the Irish World Academy through the BA contemporary dance program and other associated MA programs. Finally the medium to slightly longer-term vision would be to write an academic reference publication, detailing the pedagogy in depth for further education applications within the performing arts sector.

Future research opportunities

To investigate how artists and audiences interact and communicate within the digital environment, this has become extremely relevant through increased levels of on-line activity, and emergent technologies such as immersive reality and virtual reality gaming style platforms. Furthermore the online or digital mode of presentation opens up opportunities for a wider audience reach and demographic, no longer is the performance limited by the walls or surrounding space of the playing area. Online presentations can also offer increased accessibility for those with different needs and requirements.

To conclude, further research into the application of mask and clowning concepts, has the potential to demonstrate benefits in a holistic and social setting for the caring community and groups who have different sensory requirements. Future research also has the potential to further medical research, investigations and interventions relating to the possible benefits of play with people who have suffered memory loss or who are diagnosed with early stages dementia.

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Appendix 1. Ethics Information Letter and Consent Form



FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Participant,

This is a practice-based research project that will allow for a creative and innovative approach to the documentation of my work in mask and clown, culminating in the development of a new pedagogy. This pedagogy could then be utilised in multi-disciplinary contexts for the development of creative play by using mask and clown as enabling tools. In this research I will have the opportunity to reflect on solo work and group work through workshops, performance experiments and live performances.

In conjunction with these methodologies I will interview other professionals in the area of clown and mask performance who have established themselves as peers within this sector. I will also engage in focus groups with students who take part in classes that reflect my research findings in order to inform my conclusions.

I would be delighted if you would contribute to this research by agreeing to take part in an interview. It is envisaged that interviews would last no longer than 1 hour. In relation to the location for the interviews this would be at a mutually agreed place that is suitable for the purpose.

You are under no obligation to participate in this research, and can withdraw at any time. If you do wish to participate, I will forward a consent form to you outlining your rights as an interviewee. Given the small nature of the field in mask, clown and buffon, it will not be possible to guarantee anonymity, but if you prefer, I can remove any mention of your name in the published research. If you are unhappy with any of the proceedings you have the right to contact the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science. If you have any concerns in taking part in any element of this research, please contact Research Ethics Committee.

Investigator: SimonThompson, Mobile:00353 86 108 6767

email: 161932292@studentmail.ul.ie

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email: niamh.nicghabhann@ul.ie

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (*quote approval number*). If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact:

Chairperson Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
 AHSS Faculty Office
 University of Limerick
 Tel: +353 61 202286
 Email: FAHSSethics@ul.ie



FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CONSENT FORM

Consent Section:

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in research for the project entitled
“A practice based exploration of mask/clown and the development of new pedagogies”

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (video/audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.

- I understand that, given the small nature of the professional field, it will not be possible to guarantee anonymity within this project. Participants have the right to request that their name be removed from the research if they desire - please indicate below.

	<i>Please tick the appropriate box with an x</i>
<i>I am happy to be identified by name in the research project.</i>	
<i>I want to have my name removed from the research project.</i>	

 Signature of participant

 Date

Appendix 2. Transcript of Peer Interviews

Below is verbatim transcript data compiled from interviews with leading practitioners currently working in mask and clown in relation to the use of play and their current practice.

Q1. In relation to your practice, how would you define ‘play’?

Interviewee 1. I have several definitions of ‘play’: My current interest is commedia dell’arte dramaturgy, and within this field sit these various, though separate, definitions.

‘Play’ can be a conceptual and philosophical approach to open-ended problem solving, purposed in order to inhabit and occupy the finite amount of stage time and also the linear and predetermined plot line required to create a repeatable performance from a scenario or plot outline. In this definition, the director or dramaturge takes on the responsibility of ordering and recording the material generated by the actors, and develops strategies to free the actors from the potentially disabling responsibility of coming up with the ‘best’ ideas all the time. They are left to offer possibilities, insert their own ideas, try many options, and above all surprise the dramaturge.

2) Once the material has been chosen for development by the director or dramaturge, the word ‘play’ sits as a combined meaning of ‘actioning’ and ‘finding the game’. The actor is encouraged to find what the essential physical actions and imaginative keys within each scenic unit or emotional transaction [are] that keeps them ‘alive’ for each scene. Within the development of a commedia scenario, these ‘games’ become sequenced and develop into the scenes, allowing the actor to follow a series of games to create meaning for the audience. A scene, within commedia, is therefore composed not of sequential learned text, or stage blocking, but short games, all of which allow multiple methods of delivery within a performance, depending on the relationship with your fellow performers and the responsiveness (and your responses to) of an audience. The performer ‘plays’ a sequence of games.

3) Play is the heightened sense of awareness, often termed ‘ludic,’ possessed by an actor in which they find themselves reacting in the moment for the joy of it, rather than with a Stanislavskian objective or super-objective.

Interviewee 2. Play plays a very important role in the creation of productions for Garlic Theatre. It defines the way that we put a production together. From the very start of the process, we try and stay open to people’s ideas, no matter how absurd they are. It creates a lot of laughter, and generates new ideas into a new direction.

Interviewee 3. For me, play or playing is a form of joyful, imaginative, creative, learning and sharing form of activity, which is not just commonly done by children or teenagers but as well for adults and it [is a] part of social group activity or by yourself.

So, if I listen to an old radio and would like to know where the sound is coming out, [I] take the radio apart to figure out how it works and put it back together later, but [I] can’t figure out how to put it together again. Then I had FU for a short moment to listen to it ... Then played ‘oh I know it all and can put anything back together’ and had fun trying so, but had to learn ‘this is not how it works’.

Then [I] shared my experience with my friends and get a good laugh out of it and all learn from it just go digital!

Interviewee 4. In performance and creation, [it] starts with a concept, inspiration, idea; then you go into the creation of your piece. A lot of that is play: playing with ideas, movement, etc. One must know how to play and enjoy, be moved emotionally. Because if you are, the audience also has that possibility. Play can also lead to tears as well as laughs. In sculpture, it is playing with the emotions plus several other elements and putting them into the clay, then the mask or clown nose.

Interviewee 5. Play is a kind of controlled anarchy. Rules are defined by the excitements, frustrations and possibly boredoms of the activity. Ideally, play fosters a sense of group and develops trust in a more mercurial form of creativity unbound by logic. Play has to be in real time and, as such, opens up spontaneity, pulling participants from past and future concerns into the present. That is, after all, the only place we can all meet!

Q2. In what methods do you engage with ‘play’ in your practice?

Interviewee 1. 1) By playing games: grandmother’s footsteps; zip, zap, boing; alien greetings; the ‘wow’ game and playing a game ‘for an audience’.

2) Philosophically, by keeping my mind open for ways of telling a story that I hadn’t thought of, and seeing what possibilities the actors can develop. ‘Play’ in terms of dramaturgy, is a collective enterprise.

3) In terms of general actor training, rather than the specific creation of performance, play must be far more open-ended ... though the aim of the ‘leader’ or teacher is always to expand the options and possibilities of the actor, taking them into physical and imaginative responsiveness and out of the world of ideas.

Interviewee 2. At the start of a new production for Garlic Theatre, we may only have a title for the show or have some very vague ideas about what kind of puppets or the style of performance that we would like to achieve in the process. Depending on whose show it is, we have a goal that we always want to try and learn something new and that we have not tried before. The shows at the moment are one-person shows; we have a small team of us which create the productions, and it is [a] very enjoyable process with lots of cake and laughter, surrounded with all kinds of puppets from the puppet theatre, and lots of cardboard to play with. Everyone takes it in turns to get up and play. And of course, the best ideas come from the play and the mistakes.

Interviewee 3. It is one of the most important lessons I teach! Many people think playing is for kids and often are ashamed to show and share their inner child. So I have an exercise, which is ‘In a world upside down what would you do right now?’

For this exercise, I have my students first lying on the floor relaxing; then I ask the question. The students will answer one by one, and then I let them PLAY it out.

This gives them the ‘permission’ to be free and goofy, expanding their minds’ and hearts’ imaginative to the impossible but in our world at the moment it [is] ‘REAL’.

From this point on, I’m able to go back in the class whenever they have a ‘mental block’ and free them up again. Tension creates emotional and physical numbness; in order to free my students up, we start to play and to imagine.

No rules established in this exercise!

Interviewee 4. When writing, it is playing with the ideas, story, words, rhythm; same with performance creation. It is a playing-creating rather than a mental-technical one. One uses technique but it always is a tool, not the creative driver. With mask making it is play with all kinds of elements, like unique strapping to hold on a mask, colouring, design sculpture, finishing techniques that I am playing with, new designed clowns' noses that will fit all kinds of international noses.

Interviewee 5. The mask or puppet is a strong stimulus for play. In themselves, they are lifeless objects, yet they beg us to complete them by giving them life. I find it is important to go with first impressions when exploring mask and puppet and encourage anyone to throw out ideas in whatever form. It is important to remember that though we may think a first impression may be silly or trite, it is developed in many subconscious antechambers before we are conscious of it.

It is important to develop strategies against rationalising too much, as these thoughts are concerned with 'making sense' ... there's plenty of time for that later! To this end we will put masks and puppets under pressure, to push them off balance, whether individually in a hot seating exercise, or in groups improvisations. It is important to make these as physical and irrational as possible. These sessions are often stupidly funny but exhausting. There are more formal methods of play following this line, often drawing from improvisation games.

One of my favourites is 'The Big Lie' in which a group of masks must come up with an enormous lie about which they are questioned (for instance, 'We've just been through a black hole in our own spaceship'). The point is that no one mask should take a lead, each speaking equally when questioned about the experience. The group must also physicalise their answers as much as possible as a group, using the whole performance space. This often works well if points are awarded to the group by the audience, as it adds extra incentive.

'Angel of Death' is another game that sounds cruel but is wonderful for developing audience awareness. Very simply, members of the audience put up their hands when they get bored of what is going on onstage. Having established this rule, send a mask on stage with no other instruction than to keep the audience's hands down.

Another simple game for developing physicality for half masks is to ask the mask to play a scene clearly but only using words that are fruit, vegetables or colours, etc. (I once tried this in a rather expensive public school and watched a girl play a rather stern mask as a headmistress dishing out punishments to her pupils speaking only in what appeared to be a Farrow and Ball colour chart.)

Q3. If you engage with ‘play’ as a method, do you establish rules and objectives?

Interviewee 1. In relation to question 1, as a director, I require my actors to be in a state of play (3) whenever they are on stage. In relation to section 2 of question 1, the limitations I place on how an actor plays relate to the phrasing of the performance we are building, and this manifests itself in the intensity and length of stage time taken over each element in the performance.

In relation to section 1 or question 1, the rules I set are to do with exploring a range of ways to express relationships and emotional transactions between characters, and options in carrying out the ‘action’ required by the drama.

In prolonged rehearsal periods, I may ask the actors to work at different levels of intensity or play depending on both the performers’ stamina and the type of task required. For example, I would ask for a low intensity of play when an actor is required to learn the sequence of games that make up the whole performance.

Interviewee 2. There are no rules, [the] only objective is towards the story we are trying to create.

Interviewee 3. In my second exercise, I use objects, anything the students pick. Then I have them put the object in the circle they stand and have them pick a different object, which they do not put into the circle and they have to come up with usually three to five little stories [in] which they use the object, but not use it like the object is supposed to be used for. For instance, a spoon becomes a teeter-totter (seesaw) to shoot something into space or an eyeglass to look at something and so on. This exercise has rules, and I do establish an objective. I build on the first exercise and then combine the first with the second exercise so that the students are free [to be] imaginative [with] out of the box thinking and creating a little original story which can later be [tied] into their own performance in the future. So I hope to teach them to

create more original material without fear: ‘oh no this is not funny’ more like ‘oh I like to share a story with you’. This is way more liberating for the students and as well for the audience. Playfulness is the key to audience’s enjoyment [and] will be the clowns’ employment!

Interviewee 4. Establishing rules for play restricts the play, and it stops being play and creation. That said, there are the common human rules: don’t hurt someone physical. Don’t cheat. Don’t steal. It hurts your play and cuts off your creativity. [The] play rule is play, create and do not forget to write it down. Then push it onto a higher level of play, refine those elements that you played with a play some more. In performance, play with one goal to achieve in a performance that you need to work on.

Interviewee 5. There is a lot to gain from a well-defined game. The ultimate objective for a show is to want the audience to come and play too. We use a lot of improvisation rules: finding a routine, developing narrative arcs, accept and build, etc. The only really strong rules and objectives are to find what works, what will keep an audience’s interest? Later we may analyse why interest is maintained, and this may provide material, e.g., ‘I didn’t know that lustful mask could show pity, where does that come from?’ or ‘he dances very well for such a fat puppet! Who are his partners?’

Q4. Do you encounter aspects of ‘failure’ as an outcome of ‘play’? If so, how do you embrace it to keep the game alive?

Interviewee 1. A failure, in terms of my work with commedia dramaturgy, is merely an option we no longer need to follow. Finding the opposite of what caused a ‘failure’ often leads to an interesting result. A ‘game’ often dies or fails because it is not being played with sufficient urgency or commitment.

Interviewee 2. Don’t consider anything a failure in the process of creating a new and original show. [It] can only teach you maybe that that’s not the road to go down.

Interviewee 3. I do not experience failure in that sense with my students because everything goes. That being said ... if there is a group game and everybody dies on stage ... game over! So I need to be clear in the beginning of my assignment to lead

them to success. Or if a student experiences some emotional stress, then I have to be sensitive enough (I hope) to recognise it and help them out in [the] form of giving them space and a ‘timeout’ to have conversations of encouragement and bring them back into the game.

I try to be open and try to embrace whatever is coming at me as a teacher to encourage my students and to inspire them, and you never know where an exercise can lead to and be surprised!

Interviewee 4. Failure and success are married. Use failure to achieve success. There is the bullshit philosophy that we must win! If we do not, we have failed. Yes, that is bullshit. Failure is what enables us to play in totally different ways.

Interviewee 5. I think the nature of play is to fail. I put great value on failure as a way of learning and experimenting, finding boundaries and inconsistencies. Play is a way of making failure and risk-safe. I think this approach chimes with something very deep in humans. It strikes me that we would not have evolved into the creatures we are now had we had to learn about life from behind a desk.

To answer the question, keeping the game alive is in the hands of the group and its facilitator. Failure can be a source of humour and new avenues of exploration. However, when it becomes frustrating, it is up to the group or facilitator to change tack, either clearing the atmosphere altogether with a new approach or pushing the group to understand why things are not working.

Q5. Can ‘play’ as a method be utilised as a tool for devising new work, developing *complicité* and establishing levels of empathy?

Interviewee 1. YES, both as preparation for rehearsals, and during rehearsals

Interviewee 2. Our whole process is based around play when devising a new show. The nature of play generally disappears in the last week of rehearsals, as we are trying to remember what to do, where the puppets have to be and if there are words in the show. We generally try and run the show in with some cheap school shows, and discover what works and what doesn’t work, and begin to change these things. The play doesn’t really come back into the show until everything is under our belts and

we know what we are doing automatically and not having to think about what is coming and what has to be where.

Interviewee 3. As I pointed out in my second exercise of object ‘manipulations’, there is so much room for original material as well; it is not just what happens with the object as well how the clown/actor interacts and reacts emotionally with the object and creates that complicity with the audience to draw them in on all levels, all senses, into your story, emotionally, visually, acoustically, [with] touch and even smell. I found that music and creating poetry on stage is magic, and having the audience leave with such full hearts in the end of a show, this is an actor’s/clown’s job.

Interviewee 4. [I] believe I have been speaking to that issue above as well. It is a must to include play in development. If everyone develops without play and joy, what a sorry state that project will be! Without play – why do it?

Interviewee 5. Yes, is the simple answer. Play is a way of exploring the ridiculous, the forbidden, the paradoxical, the grotesque, the hidden, to mention just a few abstract nouns. In other words, it is a rehearsal for going beyond, embracing the ‘other’. Used in the right way it opens up channels of spontaneity beyond the rational mind (which mostly operates under the illusion that rationality is all there is!) and readily engages emotion and empathy. It provides fresh and fuller perspectives on subject matter.

As already touched on, human beings develop through play. Our default setting is to want to join in. *Complicité* is at the heart of play. Perhaps the real question should be, when are we not playing?

Appendix 3. Daily Timetable

Below is an example of a daily timetable that was used during the early part of the residency at Nenagh Arts Centre, January 2019.

Table A3.1. Example of Daily Timetable

Time	Activity	Notes
9.00	Arrive, coffee and chat with staff	Journal entry
9.30	Breathing	Relaxation, listening to the breath and observing its effects on posture and movement; considering how does breath communicate
10.00	Stretches and warm-ups	Releasing tension, getting things moving especially the head, neck and shoulders
10.30	Neutral mask	Connecting with my own physicality, playing with pure movements, tempos and rhythms
11.00	Four temperaments masks/character masks	Playing with given traits, breath, movement, counter mask, blending traits or temperaments and switching between them; improvs and more counter mask
12.00	Reflection and watching video recordings	Journal entry
13.00	Lunch	
13.30	Exploration of ideas	Playing with narratives, sound and light, proximity to the audience, etc.
16.00	Coffee, reflection and watching video recordings	Journal entry

Appendix 4. Programme, *Lifted Up*

The Flying Philosopher

Limerick, Thursday 28th November

Vol. 1, No 1

LIFTED UP

PhD Performance by Simon Thompson

Lifted Up is a performance, which draws inspiration from the story of Charlie Hudson and his famous pigeon 'The King of Rome'. Charlie's story is one of triumph and success, yet despite what people told him he continued to follow his

dreams.

It's this determination to keep going that draws some clear parallels to a personal narrative of my own, one which I've had locked inside for a number of years. The difficulty in sharing this story

has been

the not knowing of how to tell it with respect, compassion and empathy.

Lifted Up reflects upon, and highlights aspects of my own life and the people I share it with. This performance utilises a full-face mask as a



theatrical device, and with the application of the mask I've created a new and totally fictional character, one that inhabits a similar world to that of Charlie Hudson.

The character in this performance is named Bernard he's an adult who has been diagnosed with A.S.D, he's high functioning and lives a fairly conventional life. Sadly Bernard suffers from sensory overload, the hustle and bustle, the raw sounds of an urban sound-scape, the words on a page all take their toll.

Despite this Bernard has developed methods for coping, he finds comfort in his membership of a brass band and through the care and affection he lavishes on his pigeons. Yes! The character is fictional, yet Bernard is rooted in archetype and his subtle nuances take their inspiration from the many talented individuals that have made such a positive impact on the way I now see the world.

Bernard tell's his own unique story, a story that is different to everyone else's, his actions and responses are based on interpretation & my embodiment of those interpretations. Yet I'm confident there will be some

aspects of his physicality and gestures that the audience can relate to and subsequently empathise with.

This performance forms part of the research I'm undertaking for an Arts Practice Doctorate, at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick,

the title of which is: 'A Practice based Exploration of Mask/Clown and the Development of New Pedagogies'.

Following the performance there will be a open discussion, where you can ask questions and provide feedback.

'Lifted Up' at Irish World

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German Rape for Birds	10c. lb.,	7.00 100 lbs.
Vetches for Pigeons	10c. lb.,	6.00 100 lbs.
Peas " "	6c. lb.,	3.00 100 lbs.

Academy of Music and Dance,
28th November 2019 at 7pm in
Theatre 1.

Performed & devised by
Simon Thompson. Dramaturgy
by Carol Walsh. Mask by
Russell Dean. Music by The
Unthanks and Grimethorpe
Colliery Brass Band.
Soundscape by Simon
Thompson. Lighting Design by
Pius McGrath. Creative
Support by Eva Birdthistle.
Kindly supported by Nenagh
Arts Centre and Tipperary

BUT WHY MASK?

The mask is a curious and powerful device and when worn in the presence of an audience it almost demands to be watched. Masks can also have a significant effect on the masker as this quote from Sir Peter Hall illustrates.

"Put a mask on a group of actors and, if they do anything at all, they become very primitive. Most can't talk - the words won't come out - or don't want to talk. Others get very aggressive and cry and shout and hit out like small children. The mask does that. We contain in ourselves all that we have been and might be and the mask can take you anywhere - to the feminine side of yourself, the brutal side of yourself, the old side.

That sounds terribly Pseuds' Corner but it's true, don't ask me why, it's one of those mysteries. If it's not working, you can see the actor underneath and that's horrible, that's false." Sir Peter Hall. (Brown 1996).

To some people a mask can hold sacred properties and in many cultures masks are often utilised in the performance of ritual ceremonies and celebrations. When a masker is wearing a mask they are typically embodying a set of different characteristics from that of their own, be it a deity, a demon or an archetype.

So do masks hide? Or do they uncover the truth that lies within the masker's body? From my research data and observations, early indicators demonstrate that an audience begins to watch the masker's body with a greater level of


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awareness, almost trying to decode the movements and gestures into narrative or meaning.

The face is no longer a reference as it's been obscured by the fixed expression of the mask. Therefore if my intention is to engage the audience in a level of deeper observation, where every small movement carries the same importance as a grand gesture, mask could be the perfect device.

This however is not the only reason that I chose to pursue the use of mask in this performance; throughout my research I've been constantly making inquiry into how an audience engages with a performance and how an artist can develop a sense of empathy with an audience.

By removing the human face and relying primarily on the body I'm asking the question is it possible to develop new methods through choreography or movement in order to enhance or promote a greater feeling of empathy within the audience.

Finally, in the presentation of this piece it was essential that I created a character and accompanying choreography/movement that the audience

could relate to, engage with and feel empathy towards, whilst ensuring that at all times A.S.D was in no way trivialised. Therefore the decision to remove the actor and his voice from the performance was one that was considered at length. Would my face distract the audience? Would I by instinct rely on facial expressions and neglect the body? Is there a danger of causing offence by using a mask? Will the mask become too comical and animated? Would an actor giving dialogue be too prescriptive and restrict the audiences imagination? The answers to

more questions slowly transpired during a creative laboratory process, which took place in January 2019 at Nenagh Arts Centre, Tipperary. In this lab I worked with a neutral mask, various larval masks and the character mask that is currently used in the performance. The methodology I adopted during the process was focused on play and the development of games/ improvisations where movements and narratives emerged organically. It was these organic, natural aspects, which emerged through playing that became the essence of Bernard's

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THE KING OF ROME

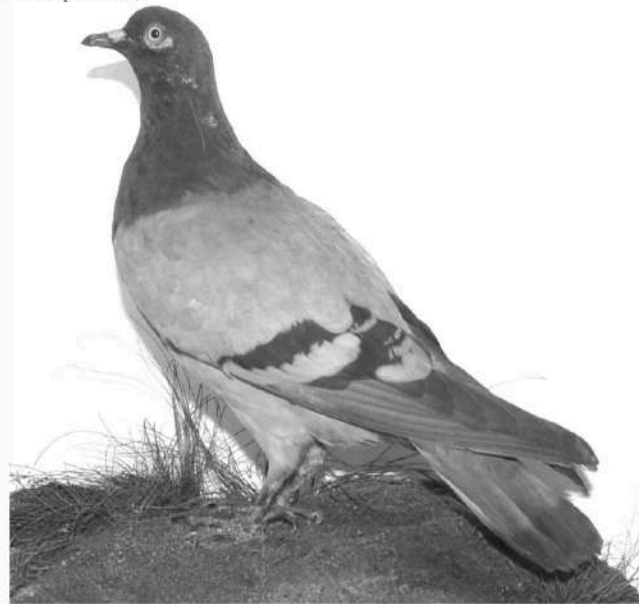
The King of Rome was a racing pigeon that in 1913 won a 1,001-mile (1,611 km) race from Rome, Italy to England. The bird, a Belgian blue cock, with a ring number NU1907DY168 was owned, bred and trained by Mr Charlie Hudson.

Suffering much fatigue, and possessing wonderful staying power to make its way back from Rome to Derby.

The 2 August 1913 edition of The Racing Pigeon reported Mr C. H. Hudson, of Derby, is to be congratulated on having notified an arrival in Rome race Tuesday last. The bird has proved itself capable of great endurance and of suffering much fatigue, and possessing wonderful staying power to make its way back from Rome to Derby. Up till Tuesday evening out of the 1200 birds sent by Belgian fanciers, 62 birds had been notified. The percentage as a rule that get back of birds sent to Rome by Belgian fanciers works out on

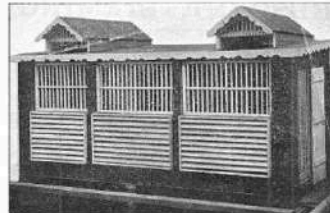
average at 7 per cent, so that there are hopes yet that there will be some more English birds home. At any rate, the distance has been accomplished,

eclipsing all past long-distance records in the United Kingdom. When it was sent to Rome it was rung as NU1907DY168.



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PRINCIPAL PRIZES WON.

New Mills F.C., 1911, Y.B., 2nd and 4th Worcester, 2nd, 7th and 10th Chatterham, 2nd, 8th and 7th Swinton, 6th, 8th, 9th and 11th Bath, 1912, G.B., 10th Worcester, 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 8th Bourne-mouth, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 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'The King of Rome'

In the West End of Derby lives a working man,
He says, "I can't fly but my pigeons can.
And when I set them free,
It's just like part of me
Gets lifted up on shining wings."

Charlie Edson's pigeon loft was down the yard
Of a rented house in Brook Street where life was hard.
But Charlie had a dream,
And in nineteenthirteen
Charlie bred a pigeon that made his dream come true.

There was gonna be a champions' race from Italy.
"Look at the maps, all that land and sea,
Charlie, you'll lose that bird."
But Charlie never heard,
He put it in a basket and sent it off to Rome.

On the day of the big race a storm blew in,
A thousand birds were swept away and never seen again.
"Charlie, we told you so,
Surely by now you know
When you're living in the West End there ain't
many dreams come true."

Yeah, I know, but I had to try,
A man can crawl around or he can learn to fly.
And if you live round here,
The ground seems awful near;
Sometimes I need a lift from victory.

'I was off with my mates for a pint or two
When I saw a wing flash up in the blue.
"Charlie, it's the King of Rome
Come back to his West End home,
Come outside quick, he's perched up on your roof."

"Come on down, your Majesty,
I knew you'd make it back to me.
Come on down, my lovely one,
You made my dream come true.

"In the West End of Derby lives a working man,
He says, "I can't fly but my pigeons can.
And when I set them free,
It's just like part of me
Gets lifted up on shining wings."

Written by Dave Sudbury
Performed by The Unthanks

<p>FIRST PRIZE, BELLE VUE SOLBRON COMPENSATING PISTON Contesting Instruments again on Top</p> <p>The Famous Bentley Colliery Band, winners, say:- "There are no better Instruments made than Boosey's Solbron Compensating Piston Instruments."</p> <p>Try them for yourselves. Write for Samples and all particulars to-</p>		<p>THE BESSON X5 PIANO. Over One Hundred supplied during the past 4 years to leading Musicians.</p> <p><small>HANDSOME CONTEMPLATING A PURCHASE should write for particulars to</small></p> <p>BESSON & CO., LIMITED, 100-102, Euston Road, LONDON, N.W.</p> <p>JOHN PARTINGTON BAND TEACHER AND ADJUDICATOR, & SPECIALITY: BASS TRUMPET FOR ORATORIO, 25, HENRY STREET, BOLTON.</p> <p>A. R. SEDDON TRAINER AND JUDGE OF CONTESTS, 2, WHITAKER ROAD, DERBY.</p>
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T. H. BURTON, WHITE HOUSE, LIVERPOOL,
OLD SWAN

Will Book Orders for a few
**Strong,
 Healthy
 SQUEAKERS**
 during the Breeding Season.



Also for disposal—
Several TRAINED
 —and—
UNTRAINED BIRDS
 at Moderate Prices.

THE WHITE HOUSE, LIVERPOOL, has been established for the purpose of breeding and raising the best of all the various breeds of Pouter, Trumpet, and other fancy birds, and also of training and disposing of them. The birds are bred and reared in the most healthy and comfortable manner, and are always in the hands of a professional breeder and trainer. The birds are sold at moderate prices, and are always in the hands of a professional breeder and trainer. The birds are sold at moderate prices, and are always in the hands of a professional breeder and trainer.

Trumpet Bb

Abide With Me

William Henry Monk

**PHIPPS' World Champion
 'Perfection' Incubator.**

The Palace Champion from 1904 to 1912.
 The Machine for 1913.
 This famous Incubator has won 73 first awards in succession, including five times Dairy Show, seven times Palace, and many others.



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 30 egg £2 14 0
 60 egg 3 7 6
 90 egg 4 8 6
 120 egg 6 17 6
- PANEL TYPE**
 30 egg £2 12 6
 60 egg 3 5 6
 90 egg 4 5 6
 120 egg 7 5 6

And all particulars of my Incubator and Colony House and every article for up-to-date poultry culture.

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ROYAL LOFTS, The Home of Irish Champions.

STRAINS: PURE GITS AND W. C. MOORE.

OLD BIRDS. — Old Crested Green Race: 1st Brough, 2nd Arklow, 3rd and 4th Wexford, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Belfast, 10th, 11th and 12th Drogheda, 13th and 14th Drogheda, 15th and 16th Drogheda, 17th and 18th Drogheda, 19th and 20th Drogheda, 21st and 22nd Drogheda, 23rd and 24th Drogheda, 25th and 26th Drogheda, 27th and 28th Drogheda, 29th and 30th Drogheda, 31st and 32nd Drogheda, 33rd and 34th Drogheda, 35th and 36th Drogheda, 37th and 38th Drogheda, 39th and 40th Drogheda, 41st and 42nd Drogheda, 43rd and 44th Drogheda, 45th and 46th Drogheda, 47th and 48th Drogheda, 49th and 50th Drogheda, 51st and 52nd Drogheda, 53rd and 54th Drogheda, 55th and 56th Drogheda, 57th and 58th Drogheda, 59th and 60th Drogheda, 61st and 62nd Drogheda, 63rd and 64th Drogheda, 65th and 66th Drogheda, 67th and 68th Drogheda, 69th and 70th Drogheda, 71st and 72nd Drogheda, 73rd and 74th Drogheda, 75th and 76th Drogheda, 77th and 78th Drogheda, 79th and 80th Drogheda, 81st and 82nd Drogheda, 83rd and 84th Drogheda, 85th and 86th Drogheda, 87th and 88th Drogheda, 89th and 90th Drogheda, 91st and 92nd Drogheda, 93rd and 94th Drogheda, 95th and 96th Drogheda, 97th and 98th Drogheda, 99th and 100th Drogheda.



Squeakers from 25/- each

NEW BIRDS, NEW SPECIMENS. — New Crested Green Race: 1st Brough, 2nd Arklow, 3rd and 4th Wexford, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Belfast, 10th, 11th and 12th Drogheda, 13th and 14th Drogheda, 15th and 16th Drogheda, 17th and 18th Drogheda, 19th and 20th Drogheda, 21st and 22nd Drogheda, 23rd and 24th Drogheda, 25th and 26th Drogheda, 27th and 28th Drogheda, 29th and 30th Drogheda, 31st and 32nd Drogheda, 33rd and 34th Drogheda, 35th and 36th Drogheda, 37th and 38th Drogheda, 39th and 40th Drogheda, 41st and 42nd Drogheda, 43rd and 44th Drogheda, 45th and 46th Drogheda, 47th and 48th Drogheda, 49th and 50th Drogheda, 51st and 52nd Drogheda, 53rd and 54th Drogheda, 55th and 56th Drogheda, 57th and 58th Drogheda, 59th and 60th Drogheda, 61st and 62nd Drogheda, 63rd and 64th Drogheda, 65th and 66th Drogheda, 67th and 68th Drogheda, 69th and 70th Drogheda, 71st and 72nd Drogheda, 73rd and 74th Drogheda, 75th and 76th Drogheda, 77th and 78th Drogheda, 79th and 80th Drogheda, 81st and 82nd Drogheda, 83rd and 84th Drogheda, 85th and 86th Drogheda, 87th and 88th Drogheda, 89th and 90th Drogheda, 91st and 92nd Drogheda, 93rd and 94th Drogheda, 95th and 96th Drogheda, 97th and 98th Drogheda, 99th and 100th Drogheda.

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MAKING MEANING FROM MOVEMENT

As a researcher, performer and teacher, the importance of mining data from embodiment is essential to my practice, especially when trying to understand and generate new body knowledge. Embodiment isn't simply an interesting possibility for knowledge acquisition, nor is it an alternative practice or method. Embodiment is to analyse, celebrate, establish meaning and knowledge; we are all bodies, each one of us engaged in varying degrees to our own personal journey of learning and living.

In exploring the cultural politics of performance spaces, Elin Diamond suggests that in the temporality of performance practice, participants are constantly negotiating 'between a doing (a re-iteration of norms) and a thing done (discursive conventions that frame our interpretations)' (Diamond 1996: 5). Diamond also goes on to suggest that 'between someone's body and the conventions of embodiment, we have access to cultural meanings and critiques'

Therefore by acknowledging the importance of embodiment through the development of a new pedagogy, I'm reflecting and adding to the existing work of other scholars such as (Ellsworth 2005), (Grosz 1994, 1995), (O'Loughlin 2006), and (Pillow 2000) who are asking how we consider pedagogical spaces with bodies as an essential element of practice and analysis.

These poststructuralist theorists consider the body and mind as co-existing in relation to structures, discourses, time, place, and other. The body in this case is corporeal, biological, sensual, social, cultural, and ultimately relational. Embodiment when applied through pedagogical practice, describes a teaching

acknowledgement of our bodies as whole experiential beings in motion, both inscribed and inscribing subjectivities. That is, the experiential body is both a representation of self (a 'text') as well as a mode of creation in progress (a 'tool'). In addition, embodiment is a state that is contingent upon the environment and the context of the body, 'Continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them' (Ellsworth, 2005: 4).

Therefore within the development of a new pedagogy bodies can be acknowledged, made visible, and moved to the center of the learning experience. The body is a method, a subject and a way of making meaning, representing, and performing.

