

and movements, and by the power of the radiation of the light flashing from his own eyes. Evidently, masking and acting are adaxial constructs, both of which must be seen as complementary principles operating on the same, but somewhat different planes. There, however, remains at all times some important and universal, even if *sub-rosa*, associations between the mask, its wearer, acting, and the actor.

Abstract. — The paper is a general survey of the universal characteristics, attributes, and theatricality of the mask phenomenon, with examples from Africa, America, Europe, and the Far East. On the premise that the mask is an all-purpose charismatic device, imbued with physical, psychological, and metaphysical attributes, the paper argues that the mask is a multi-symbolic and antithetical mechanism for astounding theatrical effects, such as the serious and the farcical, the comic, tragic, and the humorous, the exotic and the commonplace, the metaphysical and the mundane, the picturesque and the bizarre, etc.; or the antithetical effects of alarm-excitement, attraction-repulsion, empathy-alienation, etc. The argument develops through a brief overview of the masking tradition from pre-Greek, Medieval, Commedia dell'arte, and the Court Masques theatres to the modern theatre; thereby showing how the tradition has affected or influenced major theatre practitioners and their theatre concepts, such as Copeau, Brecht, Soyinka, Grotowski, Artaud, Stanislavski, etc. It draws a parallel, for instance, between Stanislavski's magic if and the mask idiom as an important theatrical key to characterization and the actor's complete identification of himself with his role. It also argues that Brecht used the principles of the mask idiom to achieve his "alienation" effects. — On the basis of W.B. Yeats's *On Baile's Stand* and O'Neill's *The Great God Brown*, the paper illustrates how the mask idiom could be used to create the poetic fancy, man's dual personality, and the changes in man's internal and external composition. It further illustrates with the example of Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* how the formalistic use of the mask could become intensely patterned with ritualistic complexity of form, content, structure, and context, such that the drama creates a prismatic complexity of effects on an audience. Even though masking and acting are fundamentally different, they are, nevertheless, essentially the same and complementary — both are role-playing and an embodiment of the double and multiple impulses of the dramatic and theatrical art. The only difference between masking and acting is to be found in the depth of impact each makes on an audience. In addition to acting, the paper also makes a distinction between speech and masking, thus coming to the conclusion that speech is probably the greatest mask of all in the theatre. The study concludes with the awareness that in spite of its extensive universal usage, much is yet to be discovered about the mask, its aesthetic profundity, and its true and proper relationship and significance to acting, the actor, and the theatre.

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