

PART IV: DRAMA

The Commedia dell'arte "phenomenon": Costumes, masks, and stock characters. The social status of actors and theatrical guilds

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ABSTRACT: Although the Dark Ages caused numerous controversies in the fields of science and art, the achievements of this period were truly reflected later on in the cultural progress of the Renaissance. The preference for Christian themes seemed to be implied, with morality being promoted in society due to the defensive role imposed by religion. Regardless of the artistic expression used, the shape of the mask is determined by the function for which it was designed. By amplifying the particularities of expression, the proportions of anatomical details, and the construction of typical, exponential characters of society, moralizing states or attitudes are generated, with a significant impact on the development of European theater. Characterized by improvisation, typical characters, elaborate masks and costumes, Commedia Dell'Arte follows a single direction in character development, leaning towards a series of adjacent aesthetic categories, such as comedy, buffoonery, or ridicule, in which the grotesque and immorality play a constant role (Siriteanu, C., G., 2010, p. 132). The characters are based on human types: the miser, the lover, the servant, the charlatan, the frivolous, the corrupt, the impostor, the prankster, or the pervert, giving rise to characters that remain representative to this day. Zanni, Pantalone, Il Dottore, Il Capitano, etc.

In this way, expressive artistic creations and the richest artistic possibilities cultivated through freedom of expression were exploited. Commedia became a phenomenon throughout the ages. The exaggerated, brightly colored costumes complement the masks with distorted features and embody characters based on identifiable ritual factors. They have evolved through interpretation, being essential elements of the Commedia dell'Arte. These elements of scenography reflect social

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traits and status. They contribute to the immediate recognition of characters and amplify the comic aspect of the performances. Among the techniques used to make masks are the technical means and processes of obtaining the shape, which are specific to sculpture - modeling volumes in clay (or plastic), casting the negative and obtaining the positive - through molding or compression. Commedia dell'Arte had a lasting influence on European theater, inspiring playwrights such as Molière and Carlo Goldoni. Its elements were integrated into opera, ballet, and other forms of theater. Its characters and comic style remain relevant today as they appear in numerous modern performances and adaptations, with contemporary echoes in entertainment and street art.

KEY WORDS : Theater, Commedia dell'Arte, Scenography, masks, typologies, characters

Introduction

Although much has been said about the "Dark Ages," I believe that many of the scientific and artistic achievements of that period were truly reflected later on in the cultural progress of the Renaissance, across many artistic fields. Thomas Aquinas asserts that art is an intellectual virtue, one that is practical rather than speculative in nature. (D'Aquino, Toma, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae*, p.57). In a society where the artist had a clearly defined role—namely, to promote the religious principles that consistently shaped the public sphere—the mystical and moral elements guided both the conception and execution of art (Zahar, 1973, p. 58). Both the social and economic contexts, as well as the cultural one, were influenced by significant military and religious upheavals—the Christian Crusades, punctuated by invasions, the formation of new kingdoms, and the rise of empires. In a world where art and architecture were characterized by Christian themes, morality was promoted in society due to the defensive role imposed by religion. The principles of Scholasticism, faith, and reason guided the education provided at the first universities to be established. The increasingly laborious study of nature, the analysis of plant morphology, and the observation of the anatomy and behavior of animals and humans led to the accumulation of vast knowledge regarding the centralization of humanity's information about ourselves and the environment in which we live. Teratomorphic imagery - the fabulous and fantastical bestiary of the Western and Eastern Middle Ages - developed largely due to the significant influence of exotic elements brought by Eastern and Islamic art. „Its exotic and fabulous nature stems from the world of phantoms and the supernatural, of the unknown or the mysterious, which instills fear” (De Solier, R. 1978, p.17). Applying the principle of distortion and the multiplication of form in the process of metamorphosis, medieval visual artists used the mediums of drawing, painting, and sculpture to depict a multitude of composite elements, which they often rendered as hybridizations of natural forms. Metamorphoses of beings from different realms - avian, ichthyomorphic, reptilian, feline, with anthropomorphic or dendromorphic anatomical features - amplify the mystery and the supernatural and

fantastical elements that permeate the unknown universe of the human subconscious or conscious mind. In the field of artistic inspiration regarding form, the figurative - tangible reality has been carefully analyzed through the observations presented by Victor Simion in his comprehensive study, **Image and Legend: Animal Motifs in Romanian Medieval Art**, a rich body of documentation spanning time, serving both scholarship and the visual arts.

Over the course of human history, people have sometimes wanted to change their appearance, to become someone else. At other times, they have wanted to lose their identity, to hide their face, to escape their pursuers for various reasons, depending on the place, circumstances, or situation. Masks and cross-dressing are ways that can facilitate a change in appearance, along with makeup. Makeup and masks represent forms of metamorphosis, of transforming one's physical appearance - and sometimes even one's inner self, one's identity - without this being permanent or painful. The mask essentially represents the translation of the spirit into matter, the externalization of the inner self, and the representation of character through facial features. The pinnacle of diverse forms of expression was reached in puppet theater, thanks to the manifestation of *animism*¹

A particularly important factor in the transformation of one's appearance, this dual-purpose item can boost self-confidence while also serving as a sensory experience, with colors and makeup styles used to evoke specific feelings and qualities in both the observer and the person wearing the makeup. Since the time of those who gave theater its mature form, placing it at the center of human interest—the ancient Greeks—certain masking techniques have been preserved and refined within the context of the Dionysian festivals along two essential lines: the tragic and the comic. The hymns dedicated to Dionysus, the Greek deity who protected vineyards, orchards, and fields, served as the crucible in which the true cult of what would come to be known as ancient theater developed, in the strictest sense of the term, through the presence of the chorus, costumes, and the wearing of masks. The masks specific to ancient Greek theater expressed a hero's pain, suffering, and inner turmoil, or suggested an expression of cheerfulness, joy, and satisfaction, thereby evoking in the audience feelings of tragedy or comedy. As for the evolved forms of the ancient masks from the folk carnival of the Italian Peninsula, the flourishing period of the Renaissance finds its echoes in theater—the Commedia dell'Arte and its adaptations to the visual arts specific to outdoor entertainment (Paiu, C, 2000, p. 24).

These specific metamorphoses of cultural archetypes have two applications, illustrating: on the one hand, the concrete circumstances of the time and aesthetic categories, and on the other hand, popular sentiments, attitudes, and reactions. In this

¹ Animism – a primitive form of religion in which people believed in spirits and the existence of spirits within objects (plants, waters, etc.); the spiritualization and personification of natural forces and phenomena; a philosophical theory according to which the soul is the primordial cause of vital and intellectual activities, which also attributes a soul to inanimate objects.

context, we could undertake a brief comparative analysis, grouping the correlated aspects within a spatiotemporal framework based on the observations structured thus far and referring to them as archetypal *metamorphoses* (Iașeșen, M.-C., p.158). Typical masks from the Venice Carnival or those specific to the Rio Carnival represent the evolution of archetypal metamorphoses into art performed in public spaces, within the context of theatrical processions staged right on the street. The masks used in Bunraku puppet theater (related to Noh theater in Japan) constitute the archetypal metamorphoses that keep the fire of creation alive to this day, fueled by a strictly observed tradition. Compared to the Venetian mask, the traditional Romanian mask still vividly captures - through the artistic rendering of a specific subject - the qualities or flaws that define a particular character. In highbrow theater, Ion Luca Caragiale's characters can be easily caricatured with the help of masks - as seen in the play *D'ale Carnavalului*. The similarity between novel technical and artistic means of expression and common forms of expression is instructive for the evolution of masks in theater.

Argument

The improvised performance - Commedia dell'Arte, as a theatrical, political, and social form - evolved as a result of the rise of the bourgeoisie and the divisions between social classes, sparking a true revolution in theater. By portraying characters from different social backgrounds - merchants, peasants, and the bourgeoisie - against the backdrop of new relationships that had emerged between classes and social strata, Commedia dell'Arte fostered among the masses the development of certain attitudes and sentiments (ideas and messages conveyed to the audience), sometimes suppressed by the church, among which the following can be identified: a love of national freedom, individuality, and patriotism amplified by certain fears regarding the Spanish conquerors. Among the most enjoyable theatrical productions are those inspired by rustic farces. One of the earliest records of improvised performances featuring masked or cross-dressing actors dates back to 1565. Over time, the text of the commedia dell'arte underwent many interpretations, often resorting to vulgarity, scheming, and intrigue, with comic or tragic situations being borrowed from or inspired by highbrow comedy. „The action was realistic, rooted in urban life, featuring heartfelt love stories set against a complex backdrop of the era's customs and social types” (Berlogea, I. 1981, p.188). Commedia dell'Arte emerged as a counter-movement against the vulgarization of the concept of theater.

Chronology – Periodization

The history of the Venice Carnival dates back to 1162, and the first historical document attesting to the use of masks dates as far back as 1268. The mask was, in fact, an accessory that offered privacy, protection, and the opportunity to shed all inhibitions,

regardless of social status, through cross-dressing. The defining feature of this theatrical genre is the freedom of creative expression, which led to the rediscovery and revival of comic forms of expression through the performance of Attilian farces. Benedetto Croce, in his study **On the Commedia dell'Arte**, emphasizes the schematic nature of the genre, its buffoonish impulse, and the erotic attraction between the male and female actors. Each character has their own identity, and the novelty and unpredictability are the main strengths of this type of script. Built around a single concept—that of the "masked character"—it is always structured around the fact that the actors perform in masks. In the psychological composition of the script and the staging of the text, both from a directorial and a set design perspective, a single direction is always pursued in the character's development, one inclined toward a series of adjacent aesthetic categories, such as the comic, the buffoonish, or the ridiculous, in which the grotesque and immorality play a constant role.

Commedia dell'Arte is a form of theater that emerged in Italy in the 16th century. It is based on improvisation, with Commedia dell'Arte actors drawing inspiration from the gossip of the towns they visited. We know of the existence of a so-called script called a *canovaccio*, but it was nothing more than a broad outline of the narrative thread. The performances were comedic in nature, full of life and movement. The characters were based on human archetypes: *the miser, the lover, the servant*, etc., so *Commedia dell'Arte* gave rise to characters that remain iconic to this day. *Zanni, Pantalone, and Il Dottore* are just a few of the archetypal characters born from this form of theater. In addition to the well-defined character traits for each character, they also wore a specific mask.

Therefore, in the *Commedia dell'Arte*, stock characters were created whose names, actions, and appearances lend a well-defined identity to a specific behavioral category. The character traits I will mention below convincingly determine the physical appearance of each character's portrait in the visual representation of the masks, for each type individually.

Costumes, masks, traditional characters

The characters in the Commedia dell'arte were comic archetypes, each with a well-defined role and specific traits. We follow the tradition of relying on established authors and will define the character of each figure in the Commedia dell'Arte based on documented historical records. Among them were the comic masks, symbolizing: **Arlecchino** (the jester - a good-for-nothing, naive, cheerful); **Pulcinella** - lazy, a rogue, a glutton; **Pantalone** (the miser); **Signor Dottore** (the doctor), **Il Capitano** (the captain - arrogant, brutal); **Brighella** - scheming, clever, cunning, mischievous; **Colombina Franceschina**, and **Carlina** (from the group of maids), **Lelio** and **Florinda**, **Flavio** and **Rosaura** (the couples in love). Except for the lovers, all the other characters wear masks designed to give a realistic portrayal of the archetypes they embody. Although facial

expressions are impossible to convey, the exaggerated, caricatured features of a particular character type can demonstrate the intent of social satire.

Some of the characteristics we will examine in this type of visual art include: an emphasis on the realistic depiction of the archetype to illustrate the concrete circumstances of the time; the caricatured exaggeration of a character's traits (the spectacular aspect); the emphasis on social satire, with the aim of conveying popular sentiments and attitudes toward these types.

I considered that the observations and visual descriptions of the character should be structured on three levels: the first of these is internal, pertaining to the psychological and temperamental aspects of the character type; the second is an intermediate level, serving as an intermediary between the performer and the character on one hand and the audience on the other—the corresponding mask, with the features and particularities of the visual expression chosen according to the character in question (derived from the first level of analysis)—and the third, external level, which can connect with space and time by harmonizing the specific setting, represented by the costume with its elements and accessories. All three levels of analysis can contribute to an adequate clarification of the distinctive stylistics of this artistic genre in the medieval context.

Arlecchino – from Bergamo, in northern Italy, is a complex, elusive character with a wide range of traits, making him difficult to define in a simple characterization. At first, he seems greedy and very naive or incompetent, but he is always up to mischief and will later surprise us with one of the virtues of the spirit: wit. Although he appears lazy, if we look at his actions, we will find that Arlecchino is actually quick-witted and very energetic, cheerful, agile, or nimble, more of a live wire, and eternally in love. **Arlecchino** was actually a cunning and agile servant, always on the lookout for a prank or a way to satisfy his hunger. Arlecchino is one of the most popular characters in the *Commedia dell'Arte*. He plays the role of the faithful servant, but also that of the clown. His mere presence on stage would trigger laughter. At first glance, he may seem simple-minded, interested only in food, but he hides a sharp intelligence. He is very unpredictable, managing to find the most diverse solutions to his own problems or those of his master. His costume is very colorful and full of patches. His mask has a flat nose and features the contours of a devil or a cat. (Ducharte, 1966, p.123).

Arlecchino wore a black mask with a small nose and pronounced wrinkles, expressing cunning and a playful spirit. Arlecchino's mask features the following facial characteristics: arched eyebrows that convey cheerfulness, extending from a narrow forehead with arched brows, small round eyes, a round face, a short, bulbous nose with prominent nostrils. The anatomical features described and combined confirm an expression of joy. **Arlecchino (Harlequin)**: He wore a suit covered in colorful patches, symbolizing his cunning and energetic nature. „The transition from the mask of Zanni to that of Arlecchino can be regarded as a defining moment in the history of the *Commedia*

dell'Arte, as well as in terms of the genre's aesthetic evolution". (Pandolfi, 1971, p.32).

The costume for the character Arlecchino is made of diamond-shaped pieces of fabric in various colors: green, yellow, red, and brown. The pieces that make up his outfit consist of a long, narrow jacket adorned with lace and long, tight pants, cinched with a slightly wider black belt that is allowed to slide down over the hips, first a beret and then a felt hat with a narrow brim.

Pantalone - the old, miserly merchant, who is often tricked by his servants and young lovers. A well-known character, Pantalone is the wealthy old merchant. In some situations, he may be portrayed as poor, but his greed is never absent. The character's original name was Magnifico. It is the name Pantalone that has become famous. However, the exact origin of the name is unknown. Some speculate that it comes from the Venetian saint San Pantalone, while others believe it derives from the term piantaleoni, a name given to merchants who set up stalls in other regions to strengthen Venice's power through trade. His mask emphasizes his nose, which is hooked, and his eyebrows.

II Pantalone – known as Pantalone Di Bisognosi, he represents the Venetian character: an old, miserly merchant, eager for romantic adventures, full of himself, who easily provokes the audience's laughter because he becomes comical in that, despite his advanced age, he falls in love with teenage girls. This is one of the reasons why he is ridiculed and deceived.

Pantalone: His origins are linked to the tradition of elderly characters in comedy. "Pantalone is a Venetian merchant, descended from Euclion in Plautus' **Aulularia**. His name is said to be linked to a real-life character, borrowed for the comedy from Giulio Pasquati of the Gelosi troupe, who was actually named Pantalone, with the addition of De'Bisognosi (Of the Needy) later on." (Mărculescu, O., 1984, p. 18). Eternally in love, he becomes a romantic rival to his son and gets entangled in the schemes woven by the clever and cunning servants, thereby revealing moral elements of the time. He wore a mask with sharp features and a long nose, reflecting his stinginess and old age. Regarding Pantalone's mask, J. Rudlin informs us that it had the following distinctive features: a wrinkled face with an aquiline nose, deep-set eyes, bushy eyebrows, and sometimes a mustache or a pointed beard (beak), all of which gave him a very dynamic profile. He sometimes wears glasses, occasionally round ones, and a sparse mustache. His costume consisted of: „long, tight trousers or red riding breeches, with long red stockings and a short, tight jacket, a long, loose, black cloak with simple straight sleeves, red woolen caps, and yellow Turkish slippers. Pantalone was dressed in red and black, with loose trousers and a waistcoat, suggesting his status as a wealthy and miserly merchant"(Ducharte,1966, p.185).

Dottore – a master of words, as his name suggests—a doctor of law or medicine, a comically pedantic man and a glutton. A native of Bologna, a city long satirized in his day due to the notorious arrogance typical of its inhabitants, he proves to be a pedantic,

sententious, and bitter man. The conservatism of his character leads to a hostile attitude toward young people's love and their desire to marry. The Doctor is a comic character, a native of scholarly Bologna; he is a doctor in name only. In addition to being a physician, he could have been a notary or a lawyer. He is depicted in a black suit and a beret or a doctor's hat. His mask covers only half his face and highlights his bulbous nose. Il Dottore wore a mask with a broad forehead and a round nose, suggesting his academic pretensions and superficiality.

Dottore's mask, unlike those of Pantalone or Il Capitano, covers only the nose and forehead. Its distinctive features include a bulbous nose and a rounded forehead, with arched eyebrows that convey an expression of astonishment. The actors' cheekbones are not covered by the mask, but are painted red, symbolizing the doctor's passion for drink. Il Dottore was the type of pompous and ignorant scholar who flaunts his knowledge without truly understanding the situations.

Dottore's costume consists of a black cape that falls below his ankles. He wears a black cap on his head and black shoes on his feet. His imposing stature, cold and haughty gaze, glasses always perched on his nose, and a book under his arm make this character a true megalomaniac. Il Dottore (The Doctor) wears a long, black robe, a symbol of his erudition and intellectual arrogance. (Ducharte, 1966, p.196).

Il Capitano - who had a string of grandiose, mocking names: Matamoros or Spavento, Firibiribombo, great-grandson of the "glorious Latin" - is portrayed by J. Rudlin as an arrogant, ridiculous, pretentious, and cowardly character. There is hardly a moment when he does not mention that he has won a battle or conquered a woman, and he is bold in words (a braggart or a boastful man) but cowardly in deeds, shying away from any insignificant battle. This character is in fact *„a caricature of the false Spanish-born hero, whose airs of triumph and irresistible conquest were hard for the Italians of the time to bear”* (Zamfirescu, 1958, p. 245).

The mask of the character Capitano featured exaggerated features, with a long, hooked nose, symbolizing his bravado and cowardice. The first masks depicting Il Capitano were skin-colored and had a large, menacing nose. He was also depicted with a hideous, bristly mustache. Capitano was the boastful and cowardly soldier who brags about his heroic deeds but runs away at the first sign of danger.

The warrior's characteristic toughness was emphasized through his facial features, with furrowed brows and flared nostrils. The mask was further complemented by a military-style helmet and a hat adorned with 1–3 peacock feathers. Regarding the captain's costume, it is noted that he wore a colorful cloak or a large velvet coat, blue or green with yellow stripes. He wore massive boots and a military coat with a heroic flair. (Ducharte, 1966, p.225).

Brighella – a fellow townsman of Arlecchino, a character whose name derives from the Italian “briga” = quarrel, he was cunning and scheming, a crafty and opportunistic

servant, malicious and villainous, a thief and an insolent man, a drunkard and a murderer, "a crafty servant, a skilled schemer, or a faithful servant who always watches over his master's interests" (Mărculescu, O., 1984, p.15). His loyalty, whether he was the servant of a respectable nobleman or an executioner, was easily bought, but his tendency toward sentimentality makes him the trusted advisor of lovers. Appearing later than that of Arlecchino (the foolish servant, a nuisance, and a troublemaker), the typical mask of Brighella (the cunning and resourceful servant), the "second Zanni," resembles those of the servants, distinguished by his quick wit and cleverness in absurd situations. His name derives from "briga" (confusion), just as that of Truffaldino, for example, comes from "truffa" (deception)[2]. (Pandolfi, V., pp. 35–36).

Brighella's costume resembles that of a butler, a parody of it. Zanni's peasant blouse transforms into a white livery that reaches mid-thigh, cinched at the waist with a wide leather belt. "Horizontal green stripes adorn the chest and sleeves of the garment, making it resemble a butler's uniform through the vivid contrast of the hues and ornamentation." (Pandolfi, V., p. 36). The bell-shaped cut of the green-and-white trousers hinders movement due to the stiffness at the bottom. The costume generally consisted of "a white tunic, a black sash, wide white or brown trousers, and was later modified to follow the fashion of court liveries; he wears a beret, a white coat and trousers, a cape, all trimmed with green braid, a black belt and mask, and a beard. He speaks in a somewhat more refined manner than Arlecchino and is very skilled in the use of musical instruments" (Mărculescu, O., p.15).

The Pulcinella mask originated in southern Italy, in the Campania region. The character's physical appearance is often likened to that of a rooster. It is believed that the name was given because of his bird-like nose and derives either from the Latin pullus gallinaceus or from an abbreviation of the word pullicino, meaning young chick. Because of his nose, squeaky voice, and clown-like behavior, he is considered a charlatan, a lazybones, a magician, or an acrobat.

Pulcinella was the kind of person in society who was always cowardly, indiscreet, and impertinent - a fool, a glutton, a thief, skilled in the art of currying favor with the powerful and making himself indispensable. By definition lazy and gullible, this character captivates the audience with his unexpected mood swings: ready to curse and rant for no reason, yet at the same time capable of passionate love, of causing trouble, and of acts of generosity. His ideal in life was to do nothing, yet he was willing to do anything to satisfy his eternal hunger: to lie, to steal, and even to be beaten. His moral is simple: to live life philosophizing and, if necessary, to sing from time to time. (Pandolfi, 1971, p.37). Pulcinella embodies the Neapolitan plebeians, the simplest man who occupies the bottom place on the social scale, the man who, although aware of his problems, always manages to come out of them with a smile. In addition to being a faithful servant, he adapts to all trades: baker, innkeeper, farmer, thief, seller of miraculous concoctions.

Supporting characters

Couples of lovers - There is no mention of a specific costume, but the clothing items can be chosen according to the fashion of the time.

The lovers are young, beautiful characters, without masks, who experience love stories filled with obstacles and misunderstandings. There are productions that also make use of masks for these characters. Jewelry will not be missing from the wardrobes of these unmasked female characters, who are always in love. The contrasting makeup, rendered in vivid colors and spread across the entire surface of the portrait, makes the makeup resemble a mask. (Pandolfi, 1971, p.48-49).

Isabela – beautiful, attractive, cultured, well-educated, always fashionable, independent, and determined. She occasionally wears a mask that covers only her eyes. Her costume is made of fine silk with embroidery. This young woman's makeup is very striking, highlighting her femininity.

Colombina - meaning "little dove" is the most typical of the female characters: „a clever and cunning soubrette who appears innocent but is actually mischievous, deeply devoted to her mistress yet betrays her out of a love of gossip. She is a sort of female version of Arlecchino, usually his wife. This female character is strong and alluring, petite and charming, exuding an otherworldly air". (Mărculescu, O. 1984, p.17). Colombina is the character who represents the clever and seductive maid, capable of manipulating everyone around her. The mask is worn occasionally, in the form of spectacles (a Venetian mask), which frame her eyes with a distinctive elegance, further enhanced by her elaborate hairstyle. Colombina's costume consists of an apron covering her dress, a simple bonnet, and a knee-length shirt made of fabric scraps in various colors. As a pair, Colombina's costume must match that of Arlecchino, since she is also known as Arlecchina. Appearing independently from the other characters, Colombina is dressed in black and white or in the French style of a maid.

In her festive attire, "Colombina wears a red costume with blue stripes, sleeves trimmed with white, a white apron, white stockings, and black shoes, as well as a white cap, to which she playfully attaches a red bow. In the 17th century, Colombina was played by Domenico Biancolelli's daughter, Caterina." (Mărculescu, O., 1984, p. 17).

A more nuanced description portrays Colombina as the gossipy, scheming maid, but always for a good cause. The character she embodies is that of an intelligent woman who knows she lives in a man's world, governed by laws made by and for men, yet one she controls through her cunning. Her role was not very well defined, occupying a marginal place in the plot, but her malice and her habit of mocking the sighs of those who fell in love with her were indispensable elements for ensuring the success of the performance.

Zanni or Zani, *Zuan, Zuane, Zuani* - *the dialectical transformation in Northern Italy*

of *Giovanni, Joane, or Giani* (Pandolfi, 1971, p.25). - a grotesque character with a long, pointed, upturned nose, with only a portion of his jaw, wide-eyed, with a heavy gait, slow-witted yet tactful, feeling fallen and abandoned. He is probably not the first character that comes to mind, as his character can be likened to that of Arlecchino, Brighella, or Pulcinella. His name is the diminutive of *Giovanni*. Usually, Zanni is the jester or clown.

Zanni is hunched over, almost grotesque, with a strangely shaped skull—volumetrically speaking, the result of a metamorphosis between bird and man.

Based on my own experiences with the artistic rendering of Commedia dell'Arte masks 'Arte masks, I can affirm that, starting from the standard forms derived from the Renaissance lead mold, contemporary artists will always have multiple options for interpreting human typologies, and the technical possibilities seem inexhaustible thanks to the enormous technological progress offered by the properties of materials, which will also provide a degree of comfort for the actors.

Some of the techniques used to create masks involve methods and processes specific to sculpture - such as modeling volumes in clay (or plastic), casting the negative, and creating the positive - either through molding or compression. Suction or vacuuming using more or less improvised systems increases volume and work speed, but thereby reduces the diversity of the models produced by limiting them to mass production. Coloring is still achieved today using water-based mineral oxides. From a technical standpoint, the renewal of traditional processes has represented an evolution toward refinement and spectacle, in line with the expressiveness provided by materials such as: silicone, epoxy resins, the wide range of cellulose or eco-friendly nitrocellulose lacquers, and paints made from oxides derived from a wide variety of raw materials (natural or artificial). Leather, honey, and cardboard offer skin protection for those who wear them. Strong colors are used, or certain facial features are highlighted or softened. The most commonly used colors are: red, gold, black, white, ochre, and yellow.

Independent of the artistic medium used, in nearly all representations across various civilizations, the form of the mask is determined by the function for which it was intended. Masks themselves represent archetypes within the realm where masking is part of ancient practices. Contemporary animation theater draws upon the mask in the diversity of its forms of expression. By amplifying expressive features, the proportions of certain anatomical details, and the construction of typical, representative characters of society, moralizing states or attitudes are generated.

The Social Status of Actors and Theater Guilds

During the Commedia dell'arte period, actors had an ambiguous social status. Although they were popular and appreciated by the public, they were often viewed with suspicion and contempt by religious and political authorities. Many actors came from modest backgrounds and depended on the patronage of noble patrons or princes to

carry out their work.

Theatrical Guilds

To safeguard their rights and protect their interests, Commedia dell'arte actors organized themselves into theatrical guilds. These functioned as professional guilds, providing financial and legal support to their members. Among the best-known troupes were: Gelosi, Uniti Confidenti, Desiosi, Pedrolino's company, Vittoria's company (Piissimi), Vicenza Armani's company, Alberto Naselli's company (Zan Ganassa), and Diana's company (Ponti), (Pandolfi, V. 1971, p.50), most of them ceased operations relatively quickly, with the author Vito Pandolfi referring to them as temporary ensembles.

The Gelosi troupe was one of the most famous troupes, founded in 1569, which played a major role in popularizing the Commedia dell'arte in Europe; it was active for the longest period of time, nearly half a century.

The Confidenti troupe was another famous troupe, renowned for its sophisticated performances and international tours.

These troupes were often itinerant, traveling from city to city and from court to court, performing in public squares, at noble courts, and in makeshift theaters.

We find influences on dramatic creation in the works of William Shakespeare (A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice), Molière (The Impostures of Scapin), Carlo Goldoni (Servant of Two Masters), Pierre Beaumarchais (The Marriage of Figaro), Carlo Gozzi (The Love of the Three Oranges, Turandot), etc. At the same time, in cinema, Charlie Chaplin, who drew inspiration from the art of commedia dell'arte, borrowed the cane.

Conclusions

The Legacy of the Commedia dell'arte as International Cultural Heritage Commedia dell'arte had a lasting influence on European theater, inspiring playwrights such as Molière and Carlo Goldoni. Very soon, public taste came to prevail, and Commedia dell'arte ended up adapting to it, albeit gradually. It moved from the streets to the courts, where it reached its full development, despite and in defiance of the prevailing trend at those courts, which sought to preserve the plebeian character of the Masks. Its elements were integrated into opera, ballet, and other forms of entertainment, and its characters and comic style remain relevant today, appearing in numerous modern performances and adaptations.

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Masks created at the Set Design Workshop of the "George Enescu" National University of Art– Faculty of Theater, by Lecturer Cosmin-Mihai IATEȘEN, Ph.D., in collaboration with students and Associate Professor Costache Gavril Sireteanu, Ph.D. as described in **Anthology - Commedia dell'Arte**



Arlecchino - 2 versions



Pantalone



The Doctor



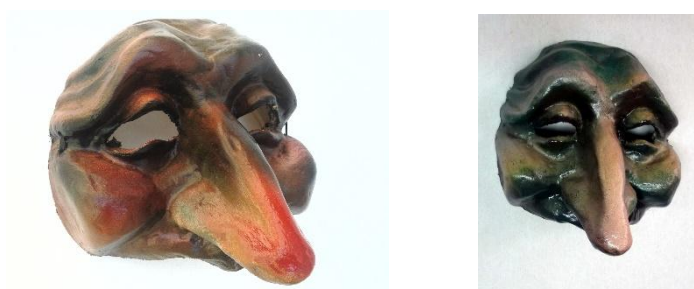
Capitano - Version II – a reinterpretation



Capitano - variant I



Brighella – scenes from the documentary



Pucinella - a reinterpretation



Îndrăgostita



Înrăgostitul



Colombina – Version 1



Colombina – Version 2



Zanni



Zanni – scenes from the documentary



Pulcinella – scenes from the documentary



Arlecchino – scenes from the documentary



Pantalone – scenes from the documentary



Il Dottore – scenes from the documentary



Il Dottore (The Doctor) – scenes from the documentary



COMPANIA DEI GELOSI (Silvio D'Amico, *STORIA DEL TEATRO DRAMMATICO*, vol. II, 1958, fig. nr. 43).

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