California State University, Northridge

THE USE OF THE MASK IN PRODUCTIONS
OF PINTER

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Drama

by

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF THE MASK IN PRODUCTIONS OF PINTER

by

Blanche Cartier Roberts

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Harold Pinter is a modern playwright who examines the duality which exists in man's nature. Pinter conducts this examination of man's duality using a form and style unparalleled in the work of other playwrights. Because of this singularity of form and style and its application to the expression of duality, Pinter's work is often misunderstood by critics and audience members.

This study was conducted to determine what effect the use of the mask would have upon audience understanding and perception of Harold Pinter's The Lover and The Collection. The mask was employed as a symbolic device to clarify the premise of duality within these plays. It was hoped that once the premise of duality was established, audience members would be better equipped to understand the characters in dual perspective and perceive character relationships.

Study data was gathered through the use of questionnaires which were completed by audience members at the
conclusion of performances. A computer program using the chi-square test was implemented to cross tabulate data and the occurrence of significant difference in audience response was noted.

The study yielded evidence that the mask was responsible for the occurrence of significant difference in audience understanding and perception of performances of Pinter's *The Lover* and *The Collection*. With one exception, in cases where significant difference occurred, the audience was better able to understand the premise of duality and perceive character relationships when masks were used.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Harold Pinter

In 1958, with a play entitled The Room, Harold Pinter began his controversial playwrighting career. Since that time, he has written seventeen plays and at age forty-three is considered to be in the prime of his playwrighting potential. Although critical analysis of Pinter's work has just begun, it is evident that Pinter is a modern playwright with a genius for expressing the duality within man's nature—the contrast which exists between man's outward self presentation and his inner psychological needs and drives.

The theory that such a duality exists in man's nature was first revealed through the work of Sigmund Freud. Freud held that the Id, the instinctive source of pleasure and impulse within man's psyche, was controlled by the Ego, that part of the psyche which experienced environment through the senses. Both the Id and the Ego were subject to yet a third part of the psyche, the Superego. The Superego according to Freud was a product of social regulation and moral teaching and was known to man as his conscience.
Freud's notion that man held inner needs and drives subservient to social and moral expectations was a revelation which challenged such playwrights as Strindberg, Toller, Rice and O'Neill. The result of this challenge was experimentation. Of particular interest to this study is the experimentation done by Eugene O'Neill in using the mask. For O'Neill, the mask provided an avenue of approach to the scrutiny of man's paradoxical duality. In *Strange Interlude*, *Lazarus Laughed*, and *Great God Brown*, O'Neill masked his characters. *Great God Brown* is most explicitly expressive of Freudian theory. In this play O'Neill masked his characters when dialogue proceeded on a socially superficial plane and unmasked them when communication dealt with inner psychological needs or drives. In this manner, O'Neill affected an obvious dissection of man's duality.

From O'Neill's technique of studied character dissection, Harold Pinter moves to a dramatically concomitant expression of man's duality in his plays. Both at once and separately Pinter exposes the Id, Ego and Superego of his characters. This dramatic exposure is not unlike the workings of the basic paradox which Freud projected in relation to man's psyche. Pinter's characters are conflicts of conscious and unconscious drives much as man himself. Pinter achieves this synchronal expression of consciousness and unconsciousness using a form and style unparalleled in the work of any other modern playwright.
**Pinter's form.** Modern dramatic form is attributable to the "well made play" formula. As a guide to form, it suggests a careful exposition of necessary information which might affect action, events or character motivation, a logical progression of events to climax and most often a falling action proceeding from the climax. With few exceptions (Absurdist drama among these) the examination of modern man and his psyche is conducted within the confines of this formula and from the omnipotent perspective of the playwright.

Pinter ignores this formula and places his characters in situations within which they function autonomously in the dimension of immediate conscious and unconscious experience. Pinter's characters exist in the present with no past and, equally, no future. In *The Peopled Wound*, Martin Esslin quotes from John Sherwood's interview with Pinter. In this interview, Pinter contends that characters created by twentieth-century dramatists "don't create themselves as they go along, they are being fixed on stage for one purpose, to speak for the author, who has a point of view to put over."\(^1\) Pinter places his characters in a situation and it is solely within that situation that they function according to the immediacy of the moment. He makes no judgment of the situation nor does he offer moral conclusions. He provides no experiential motivation for his characters and predicts no changes in their futures.
Pinter's characters simply experience a situation in the moment they live for an audience.

**Pinter's style.** This projection of a situational immediacy of experience is most clearly recognized through Pinter's dialogue style. Pinter's dialogue is unique and has prompted critical commentary to grasp at labels in attempting to assign it to a defined dramatic genre. Martin Esslin has argued for the Absurdist in Pinter but has altered that judgment. Walter Kerr hears the voice of the Existentialist. But as Herman Schroll points out in a review of critical commentary on Pinter, "as each term inevitably failed, commentators moved more strongly toward the conception of the 'Pinteresque'."^2

Essentially, the term "Pinteresque" refers to the following elements of dialogue style: a) a rhetoric which includes repetition of ideas; b) the sudden flow of language punctuated by silence; c) the repetition of sounds and words; and, d) the accurate reproduction of everyday conversation. Although Pinter overtly rejects the term, it is useful in establishing a singularity of dialogue style directly attributable to Pinter and unparalleled in the work of any other modern playwright.

The total consequence of the "Pinteresque" is evidenced in the seeming difficulty which plagues Pinter's characters in their efforts to communicate directly and honestly with each other. Although such playwrights as
Strindberg, Chekhov, Brecht and Beckett have written in the "non-communicative" dramatic mode, it is not "non-communication" which we find in Pinter's work. Esslin comments on this point:

Pinter is far from wanting to say that language is incapable of establishing true communication between human beings; he merely draws our attention to the fact that in life human beings rarely make use of language for that purpose.3

Pinter's use of language records the superficial role that language plays in the multi-faceted communications network that exists among men. It is within vocal nuances, repetitions and silences that one discovers the unspoken words and their meanings; the unconscious truth of man's nature.

**Pinter's themes.** As Pinter probes into man's nature, he becomes thematically consistent. John Taylor in his work entitled *Harold Pinter* suggests that there are recurrent themes around which each Pinter play revolves. These themes are "the Room, Menace, Communication, the Family, the Woman, Personality, Perception and Memory."4

The Room is the symbol of safety and security within which Pinter's characters exist only to be confronted by a terrifying Menace from outside that womb-like environment. The Menace is someone or something which threatens in an unknown or undefined manner from a dark vastness which surrounds the Room. The theme of Communication illustrates Pinter's characters attempting to interact with each other, their inability to interact, and sometimes
their rejection of honest interaction. This failure to interact or communicate does not occur because words are insufficient to accomplish interaction or communication but because Pinter's characters are too involved with their own feelings and needs to be approached by one another's problems. The Family is examined as an interactive unit. Each character brings hopes, dreams and experiences to be judged and shared within the unit. The Woman is Pinter's concept of the wife-mother-whore-mistress in the lives of men. This theme portrays the passive and enigmatic role woman plays in life relationships while she dominates situations and men. Personality thematically suggest that one is never what one appears to be to himself or to others for any period of time but changes at frightening speed with the passing of moments. The themes of Perception and Memory encompass each character's view of himself, situations and other characters. These themes project how the character remembers himself and his interaction with other characters in a given situation. Truth is valid here within the perception and memory of each character as he has perceived and remembered himself. Memories are reinforced through bias in perception and therefore truth in its purest sense is impossible to realize.  

These eight themes are evident in varying degrees throughout Pinter's work. One or two may dominate a given play and others may be found within its framework in varying degrees of development.
Pinter and the Mask

Major critics including Esslin, Gilman, Kerr and Taylor are in agreement that Pinter explores man's duality in an innovative manner. The singularity of Pinter's form and style has not only proven to be an innovation but a source of confusion. Because Pinter does not conventionally delineate and define the duality within his characters, his plays are subject to misunderstanding. The commentary included in Schroll's study of Pinter criticism indicates that critical opinion, ranging from accusations of fraud to lavish praise, is riddled with an inability to understand the Pinter play.

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to determine what effect the use of the mask has upon audience understanding and perception of Harold Pinter's The Lover and The Collection. By introducing the mask convention into these Pinter productions, it may be possible to clarify for the audience the basic premise of duality which exists in the plays. If this premise is established, the audience should be better equipped to understand the characters in dual perspective and perceive character relationships which are products of the duality.

Historical use of the mask. The origin of the mask as a theatrical device, is found in the performance of primitive ritual. Through ritual, primitive man sought to
control his environment. The mask became an integral part of ritual as a symbolic tool; man attempted, through the mask, to capture and assume spiritual essences which the masks represented. By donning the mask and performing the ritual, man hoped to introduce manipulative forces greater than his own into his efforts for environmental control.

In Classical Greek theater, the mask enjoyed regular use for practical and aesthetic reasons. Practically, the mask allowed the actor to play many and varied roles within productions, amplified facial expressions and protected the actor from the wrath of vengeful gods who might be offended by the content of performances. Aesthetically, the mask exemplified the exquisite lines of emotion and created exaggerated illusionary effects.

In Western theater, the mask's use continued through Roman and Medieval drama, through Commedia and Restoration theater to the time of Realism. As Realism became firmly entrenched as a dramatic mode, the basic concepts of the form precluded the use of the mask; it was no longer a necessary, expected or desirable convention.

**The mask in modern application.** Prompted by the theories advanced by Sigmund Freud (see page 1), Eugene O'Neill experimented with a modern application for the mask as a symbolic tool in investigating man's duality (Great God Brown). O'Neill not only experimented with the mask in this capacity, but he envisioned the role of the mask
in the future of modern drama. In 1932, twenty-five years prior to Harold Pinter's initial playwrighting effort, O'Neill wrote:

Not masks for all plays, naturally. Obviously, not for plays written in purely realistic terms. But masks for certain types of plays . . . which must inevitably be written in the future. For the use of masks will be discovered to be the freest solution of the modern dramatist's problem as to how . . . he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us.

O'Neill's vision for the mask in modern drama finds possibility for fulfillment in Pinter's work. Used as a modern theatrical convention, the mask displays and defines the duality of man's nature. With the appearance of the first masked character, the audience accepts and understands that a theatrical convention is being used, that the convention symbolizes something, and that through the use of the convention, an abstraction will become clearer to them.

The hypothesis underlying this research suggests that the audience will accept the convention of the mask in its modern application and therefore understand the basic premise of duality in the Pinter play, and further, that with this understanding, the audience will be allowed to more freely examine the relationships which exist between and among characters.

The mask and Pinter's dialogue. The use of the mask may also help to heighten the effect of Pinter's
dialogue style. Pinter's presentation of language as a superficial means of communication as it is employed in daily life may be brought more fully to realization when the face of the actor is covered. As the audience listens without dependence on facial expression for communication it should become apparent that conversation, like the mask, is another medium whereby inner realities become entrapped in the socially acceptable superficiality of self-presentation.

The Lover the The Collection

The Lover and The Collection were originally written for television within two years of one another. Thematically both plays examine the same themes but there is a progression of thematic development which runs from one to the other. For example, both The Lover and The Collection examine Taylor's thematic concept of Woman in Pinter's work. Sarah (The Lover) and Stella (The Collection) complete the cycle of wife-mother-whore-mistress relationships with their respective males. They do so, however, on different levels. Stella conducts her relationship with James in the role of the passive, the enigmatic woman. Sarah participates actively in the assumption of the wife-mother-whore-mistress cycle while explicitly defining these varied roles of woman.

These plays also investigate the need for fantasy within the realities of the marital state. Here again, the
plays deal with this thematic thread from different perspectives. The Collection involves unfulfilled fantasy while The Lover shows fantasy fulfilled. In The Collection, Stella is supposed to have had an affair while away from home at a fashion showing. Whether the affair is fantasy or reality is never stated. The audience must provide the answer on an individual basis as each member responds to the subconscious needs and desires within himself to provide the final judgment concerning her active or passive participation. The audience recognizes, however, Stella's need for fantasy. Sarah (The Lover) leaves no question of her fantasy fulfillment as the audience witnesses her afternoons with her lover and the following evenings with her husband. The audience not only recognizes Sarah's needs for fantasy but sees her fantasy acted out as reality.

Personality is another theme presented in these two plays. The Collection portrays Stella, Bill, James and Harry as characters who attempt to search for the truth in one another while hiding their own inner realities. Because the truth of being and what one is changes on a constant basis as Id, Ego and Superego interact, there can be no absolutes in discovering the truth in other characters or in themselves as characters. In The Lover, Richard and Sarah have recognized the paradox of duality within themselves. They assume two different lifestyles as
husband/wife and lover/mistress as they recognize and attempt to satisfy this duality. However, even within these separate lifestyles, they change, individually, on a constant basis so that there is no status quo at either level.

One of the major reasons for selection of The Collection and The Lover as subject plays in this study is this aspect of thematic continuity and growth. Additionally, both plays deal with situations which revolve around the marital state and man's duality. These thematic and situational qualities, coupled with the appeal the plays have for this researcher as a director, are the reasons The Collection and The Lover are the production vehicles chosen.
CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

The Theater.

The performances of The Collection and The Lover done for this study were presented in the C.S.U.N. Laboratory Theater. The Laboratory Theater is an intimate semi-arena theater with flexible seating arrangements. For productions of The Collection and The Lover seating accommodated approximately seventy audience members.

The Mask

Types of masks. There are several types of masks used in the theater; the full mask which covers the face from hairline to jaw; the cask mask which covers the entire face and head; and the half mask which extends from the forehead to above the upper lip. The size and shape of the mask and the materials from which it is made vary with the needs of any given production.

For the purposes of this study, the half mask was aesthetically and practically suitable. Aesthetically, the full and cask mask tend to create an aura of grandeur and stylization due to their association with Greek and Roman drama. The half mask, originating in Commedia, is
associated with role playing and was therefore found to be more suitable to productions of *The Collection* and *The Lover*.

Practically, the half mask lent itself to projecting Pinter's dialogue. Pinter's dialogue style requires rapid and clipped line delivery punctuated by pauses. The full or cask mask would have interfered with the clarity of rapid and clipped vocalization and possible caused audience confusion during execution of the pauses. The half mask, leaving the jaw exposed, eliminated these problems.

**Use of the mask in production.** Masks used in the theater are either worn or held. For productions of *The Collection* and *The Lover* it was most practical to have them worn. In this manner, the masks did not interfere with the movement and gesturing of the performers.

On nights they were used, the half masks were worn by all characters in *The Collection*. They were worn throughout the play until the final scene when Stella removed hers. In this final scene, James, Stella's husband returned to their flat and asked Stella to confirm what he knew for a certainty—that she had not had an affair. Stella neither confirmed nor denied her affair but smiled enigmatically. If the audience accepted the mask as a symbol of outward self-presentation which hides inner realities, then its use by Stella in this last scene
might have led the audience to believe that she was being coy or untruthful with James. By removing the mask, Stella's inner realities were symbolically revealed as a duality in themselves and the audience should have realized that they could be no more certain about Stella's affair than could James.

In *The Lover*, Richard and Sarah wore masks as husband and wife to emphasize the superficiality of that relationship. They removed the masks in the lover and mistress relationship as they revealed their inner needs and drives. During the final moments of performance, Richard, as he began to incorporate the role of the lover into the role of husband, removed first his mask and then Sarah's. The symbolic implications of these actions should have helped the audience to understand that Richard and Sarah acknowledged a need for fulfillment of their inner needs and drives not only as they were set apart in the lover/mistress relationship but as part of all their relationships.

**Mask construction.** For the purposes of this study, masks were constructed using moistened plaster bandages which, after being applied to the faces of individual performers, dried to the contours of the facial structure. This contouring provided comfort for the wearer and kept the shape of the face as natural as possible. The masks were then painted in pastel colors which suited the
personality of individual characters, and decorated with
cording to accentuate facial lines.

The Questionnaire

The purpose of this study was to determine the
effect the mask's use had upon audience perception and
understanding of productions of The Collection and The
Lover. The questionnaire was the most viable method for
approaching and measuring this kind of audience response.
Since audience understanding and perception was the goal of
measurement, it was necessary to gather responses originat-
ing within the minds of audience members. This had to be
accomplished in a limited period of time (within the
duration of an evening's performance), and in a manner
which interfered as little as possible with audience free-
dom to experience the Pinter plays.

Structure of the questionnaire. The instrument
included fifteen questions: three of a demographic nature,
four dealing with audience understanding of the basic pre-
mise of duality within the plays, six pertaining to
audience perception of character relationships, and two
which measured the impact of dialogue style upon audience
perception. 8

The demographic questions were structured to
elicit simple, factual information:
1. Age range
   - 20 years or younger
   - 21-25
   - 26-35
   - 36-50
   - over 50

2. Marital status
   - married
   - single
   - divorced
   - separated
   - widowed

3. Sex
   - male
   - female

The question of age was structured to include five ranges of life experience and maturity. The questions of marital status and sex provided for all possible responses. The information gathered from these questions was used to determine the effects of age, marital status and sex, or any combination of these factors, on responses to questions dealing with understanding and perception.

Questions dealing with audience understanding of the premise of duality within the plays were:

**The Collection**

1. Stella was unfaithful to James
   - physically
   - emotionally
   - both of the above
   - none of the above
   - undecided
2. Stella's relationship to her kitten expressed
   
   _______ her need to care and be cared for
   _______ her boredom with her lot in life

The Lover

1. The need for the husband/mistress and wife/lover relationships arose out of
   
   _______ Richard and Sarah's dissatisfaction with each other
   _______ the need for fulfillment which a respectable relationship could not supply

2. At the conclusion of the play, Richard and Sarah
   
   _______ integrate the roles of mistress and lover into their marriage
   _______ end all mistress and lover relationships
   _______ undecided

The premise of duality was not overtly stated within these questions but it was implied through the examination of characters and situations. The audience was required to react to characters and situations which expressed duality and make responses based upon their understanding of that duality.

   The six questions designed to measure audience perception of character relationships were:

The Collection

1. As the play progressed, the issue of Stella's infidelity to James
   
   _______ remained highly important
   _______ remained moderately important
   _______ became secondary to a conflict of male egotism between James and Bill
   _______ was obliterated by a conflict of male egotism between James and Bill
2. Through the course of the play, the relationship between James and Bill was

- very friendly
- moderately friendly
- both friendly and unfriendly
- moderately unfriendly
- extremely unfriendly

3. Through the course of the play, the relationship between Harry and Bill evidenced

- great strengthening
- slight strengthening
- no change
- little deterioration
- strong deterioration

4. Through the course of the play, the relationship between Stella and James evidenced

- great strengthening
- slight strengthening
- no change
- little deterioration
- strong deterioration

The Lover

1. The relationship between Max (lover) and Sarah (mistress) was based upon mutually acceptable and honest needs.

- very definitely
- to a moderate degree
- only slightly
- not at all

2. The bongo drums represented an instinctive fulfillment of need in the lover/mistress relationship.

- very definitely
- to a moderate degree
- only slightly
- not at all

These questions were structured to measure differences of degree in audience perception of character relationships.

The degree to which the audience responded to these
relationships should have hypothetically corresponded with audience understanding of duality since it was out of and because of duality that the relationships existed.

Two questions measured the impact of dialogue style:

The Collection

1. Generally, dialogue between characters in the play revealed what these characters were thinking in a manner which was

   ____ consistently honest
   ____ moderately honest
   ____ slightly honest
   ____ mostly dishonest
   ____ consistently dishonest

The Lover

1. At the play's outset, the relationship between Sarah as wife and Richard as husband was based upon a superficial and respectable acceptance of each other.

   ____ very definitely
   ____ to a moderate degree
   ____ only slightly
   ____ not at all

Here again, audience response was measured by difference of degree. The questions were designed to measure the degree to which dialogue was believed and understood by the audience.

Though the questions were divided into categories, it is obvious that, except for the demographic questions, all questions were related to the premise of duality and its acceptance and understanding by the audience.
Distribution of the questionnaire. The simplest method for distributing the questionnaire was to have them placed inside of the programs and handed to each audience member entering the theater prior to performances. Collecting the completed questionnaires was done as audience members left the theater following performances.

Measurement of Results

The chi-square test was used to determine the significance of the differences expressed in the following hypotheses: a) significant difference in audience response to questions pertaining to play performances (hereafter designated variables 10 to 21) will occur between nights masks were used and nights masks were not used, b) significant difference will occur within the subgroups of age, marital status and sex when responses within these subgroups are cross tabulated with responses given to variables 10 to 21 on nights masks were used compared with nights they were not used. For the purposes of this study, .05 was considered to be the acceptable point of significant difference.

Performance Program

The Collection (approximately forty-five minutes in length), was presented first on the bill followed by a fifteen minute intermission before the performance of The Lover (approximately fifty minutes). The plays were
presented in this order to accommodate the thematic development which grows from *The Collection* to *The Lover*.

Masks were used on the first and third nights of performances. Since the run was scheduled for Tuesday through Friday evenings, it was expected that the first two nights, because they were in mid-week, would only draw light attendance. Thursday and Friday nights, nearer to the weekend, were likely to draw heavier attendance. Scheduling use of the masks on staggered evenings of performance compensated for discrepancies which were expected in audience attendance.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Data changes. Four performances of The Collection and The Lover yielded a total of 224 questionnaires. Of that number, 29 were discarded because responses were lacking for one show or the other, rendering comparison impossible (attributed to audience members who came late or left early). The remaining 195 questionnaires were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of a combination of the first and third nights of performance when masks were used, yielding 63 cases. The second group, the second and fourth nights of performance, totaled 132 cases.

To facilitate data tabulation where there proved to be insufficient numbers for comparison within subgroups, the following categories were collapsed: 1) marital status was collapsed to include single (never married) and married (married, divorced, separated, and widowed), and b) age range remained the same except that twenty years or younger and twenty-one to twenty-five were collapsed.

Significant Difference and Understanding of Duality

The Collection. Of the two questions which dealt
with duality in this play, one question produced an area of significant difference within a subgroup tabulation. The question was:

1. Stella was unfaithful to James

| ______ physically           |
| ______ emotionally          |
| ______ both of the above    |
| ______ none of the above    |
| ______ undecided           |

Within the age subgroup of twenty-six to thirty-five years, 84.2 percent responded that Stella was emotionally unfaithful to James when masks were used. When masks were not used, 64.4 percent responded in the same manner. This significant difference showed that audience members in this subgroup were aware of the function of the mask in this production. Audience members here were led apparently to probe beneath the surface of Stella's outward self-presentation to judge her inner realities.

The Lover. Tabulation of data for the two questions which dealt with duality in this play yielded two areas of significant difference in responses made to one of the questions. The question was:

1. The need for the husband/mistress and wife/lover relationships arose out of

| ______ Richard and Sarah's dissatisfaction with each other |
| ______ the need for fulfillment which a respectable relationship could not supply |
Significant difference was found in cross tabulation by nights. On nights the masks were used, 92.1 percent of the audience members responded that the need for the husband/mistress and wife/lover relationships arose out of the need for fulfillment which a respectable relationship could not supply. Only 77.3 percent responded in like manner when masks were not employed.

Significant difference was also found in response to this question within the age subgroup of twenty-six to thirty-five years. When masks were used, 100 percent of the audience members in this subgroup responded to the second answer while on nights masks were not used, 73.3 percent of the audience members responded in the same manner.

In this instance, the mask clarified the aspect of duality for the entire audience on nights when used. More specifically, the mask established the aspect of duality for all audience members within the age subgroup.

**Significant Difference and Perception of Character Relationships**

**The Collection.** There were four questions dealing with relationships in this play. Two of the questions yielded significant difference. The first question was:

1. Through the course of the play, the relationship between James and Bill was ___ very friendly
Seventy-five percent of the audience members in the age subgroup including twenty-five years or younger selected the third response (both friendly and unfriendly) when masks were used. Only 45.3 percent of the audience members in the same subgroup gave this response when masks were not used. The mask established duality and clarified the relationship which existed between James and Bill for this subgroup.

The second question which resulted in significant difference was:

2. Through the course of the play, the relationship between Harry and Bill evidenced

---great strengthening
---slight strengthening
---no change
---little deterioration
---strong deterioration

Audience members in the age subgroup of twenty-five years or younger responded with 46.4 percent of their number to answer five (strong deterioration) when masks were used. When masks were not used, 17 percent of the audience members in this subgroup made the desired response.

In the subgroup of sex another significant difference occurred. Males in this subgroup responded with 38.9 percent to answer number four (little deterioration) when masks were not used and only 16.7 percent made the
same response when masks were used.

Answer number five was the anticipated response. In both these instances, the mask established duality and clarified the relationship between Harry and Bill for these subgroups.

The Lover. Significant difference occurred for this play in the area of relationships in the following question:

1. The relationship between Max (lover) and Sarah (mistress) was based upon mutually acceptable and honest needs.

   ____ very definitely
   ____ to a moderate degree
   ____ only slightly
   ____ not at all

Again, significant difference manifested itself within a subgroup. Fifty percent of the audience members in the age range of thirty-six to fifty indicated response number one (very definitely) when masks were not used but only 20 percent gave the same response when masks were used. Number one was the anticipated response. In this instance, the mask did not clarify the concept of duality or the relationships between the characters for this subgroup.

Significant Difference and Dialogue

The Lover. The area of significant difference was found in the only question dealing with dialogue for
this play. The question was:

1. At the play's outset, the relationship between Sarah as wife and Richard as husband was based upon a superficial and respectable acceptance of each other.

   ___ very definitely
   ___ to a moderate degree
   ___ only slightly
   ___ not at all

When masks were used, the age subgroup of twenty-six to thirty-five years responded with 63.2 percent to answer number one (very definitely) while 46.7 percent of the same subgroup made the same response when masks were not used. In this instance, the mask was instrumental in establishing duality and heightening the effect of dialogue style for this subgroup.

All other tabulations provided for in the test hypothesis yielded no significant difference in audience response to performances: by nights for variables 10 through 16 and variables 18 through 21, by nights and age in the age range over fifty, by marital status, and by nights and sex in female audience members.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Restatement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine what effect use of the mask would have upon audience understanding and perception of Harold Pinter's The Lover and The Collection. The mask was employed as a symbolic device to clarify for the audience the basic premise of duality existing within these plays. It was reasoned that if the premise of duality was established, then the audience would be better equipped to understand the characters in dual perspective and perceive character relationships which were products of the duality.

Specific Conclusions

Clarification of the aspect of duality. When the mask was used in The Collection, the aspect of duality was established and clarified for audience members between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-five. Audience members in this subgroup accepted the mask as a symbol of outward self-presentation and responded that Stella's infidelity was emotional. In making this response, these audience members were led to probe beneath the surface of Stella's
outer self-presentation to examine her inner realities.

Where the mask's use established duality within the character of Stella, its removal in the final scene did not affect the perception of a further duality existing within Stella's inner reality. By responding that Stella was emotionally unfaithful to James, audience members in the twenty-six to thirty-five age range accepted the mask as a broad symbol of duality, and they were unable to recognize a further breakdown in its symbolic use.

The mask was not instrumental in establishing duality in the question dealing with Stella's relationship to her kitten. The audience at all performances was generally able to recognize that this relationship expressed Stella's need to care and be cared for.

In performances of The Lover, the mask established and clarified the aspect of duality for the entire audience and more specifically for audience members between twenty-six and thirty-five years. Here, the audience accepted the masked husband/wife relationship as a symbol of outward self-presentation and the unmasked lover/mistress relationship as symbolic of inner needs and drives. By responding that the need for the husband/mistress and wife/lover relationships arose out of a need for fulfillment which a respectful relationship could not supply, audience members evidenced a recognition of the inner realities which prompted Richard and Sarah to establish these dual relationships.
Removal of the masks during the final moments of The Lover was not a significant factor in helping the audience to understand that Richard and Sarah acknowledged their inner needs and drives as part of and not separate from all of their relationships. For all performances Richard and Sarah's acceptance of their duality was understood by audience members and evidenced by their response that these characters integrated the roles of mistress and lover into their marriage.

**Perception of character relationships.** Audience perception of character relationships was effectively enhanced by the use of the mask in The Collection. When masks were used, audience members to the age of twenty-five perceived the duality which existed within the two most important relationships in this play. First, by responding that the relationship between James and Bill was both friendly and unfriendly, audience members in this age group evidenced an understanding, not only of the duality within that relationship but, further, an understanding of the duality which existed within each of these characters as individuals.

Secondly, this age group was able to perceive the strong deterioration which occurred in the relationship between Harry and Bill when masks were used. In this instance, as well as in the first, these audience members were able to perceive the relationships between the
characters and the underlying duality from which the relationships had sprung.

In *The Collection*, the mask made no significant difference in audience perception of the issue of Stella's infidelity and its declining importance throughout the course of the play. Additionally, the mask was not instrumental in establishing the deterioration of the Stella and James relationship. In both these cases, the audience was able to perceive the duality within these characters and their relationships in all performances.

In productions of *The Lover*, audience members between the ages of thirty-six and fifty responded that the bongo drums very definitely represented an instinctive fulfillment of need in the lover/mistress relationship when masks were not employed. Here, the use of the mask apparently worked in opposition to desired ends since the symbolism of the drums as a representation of inner needs and drives became clearer to these audience members without the use of the mask. However, it is possible that the bongo drums assumed a lesser degree of symbolic importance when masks were used. If the mask was able to establish the duality of the entire relationship between Richard and Sarah, then the drums would have had less impact on audience members as a representation of inner needs and drives.
Dialogue style and audience perception. The impact of dialogue on audience perception was not affected by the use of the mask in performances of The Collection. For all performances the audience was generally able to perceive that the dialogue between characters in the play revealed what the characters were thinking in a manner which was mostly dishonest. Audience members were able to recognize the duality underlying the spoken word in contrast to the hidden thought.

When masks were employed in performances of The Lover, audience members between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-five were able to perceive that at the play's outset, the relationship between Sarah as wife and Richard as husband was very definitely based upon a superficial and respectable acceptance of each other. For this subgroup, the mask heightened dialogue style and helped to establish the superficial role which language played in attempts at honest communication by the characters. These audience members were able to determine that dialogue in this case did not reflect the inner needs and drives of the characters.

General Conclusions

The mask and age ranges. The mask was responsible for the occurrence of significant differences in audience response predominantly within age ranges. For audience members within the age range of twenty-six to thirty-five,
the basic premise of duality within the Pinter plays was established and the impact of dialogue style was heightened. This understanding of duality did not, however, lead these audience members to a better perception of character relationships. Audience members up to the age of twenty-five years appeared better able to perceive character relationships, though no appearance of significant difference could be found in their responses to duality or dialogue style. In the age group over fifty, the mask made no difference in audience understanding and perception of these Pinter productions.

**The mask and nights of performance.** The aspect of duality was clarified and established for the entire audience on nights masks were used. However, no further effect upon audience perception of character relationships or upon the impact of dialogue style was found on those nights.

**The mask and sex.** Male audience members were able to perceive character relationships when masks were used but the mask did not significantly affect their understanding of duality or the impact of dialogue style. Female audience members showed no indication of significant difference in their responses concerning duality, character relationships or impact of dialogue style.
The mask and marital status. Use of the mask provided no areas of significant difference within marital status. This researcher expected that there might be significant difference evidenced here. Since The Lover and The Collection dealt with the marital state and situations inherent within that state, there was reason to assume that responses made by married audience members might have differed from responses made by unmarried audience members in questions concerning understanding and perception of these plays.

Overview of study results. One hundred eight cross tabulative tests were conducted in this study. Out of that number, eight occurrences of significant difference were noted. With one exception, in cases where significant difference occurred, the mask was successful in establishing the concept of duality, aiding in the perception of character relationships and heightening the impact of dialogue style. Additionally, in one hundred seven cases the mask did not adversely affect audience perception and understanding of duality, character relationships and dialogue style within performances of The Lover and The Collection.

Limitations of the Study

Acting. The results of this study may have been affected by the limitations imposed by acting. Generally,
the actors were not trained in the art of acting with the mask. They tended to rely heavily upon facial expression for communication of character intentions and they balked at the use of the mask because they felt unable to express themselves while wearing them. On nights masks were used the actors' morale was low and they felt apprehensive about performances.

The main reason for apprehension on the actors' parts was caused perhaps by audience response. On nights masks were used, audience response was markedly subdued. The audience did not respond openly with loud appreciative laughter to the comic elements within performances but relied more on quiet chuckling as a response. This may have been due to the smaller size of the audiences on the nights masks were used or to the use of the masks themselves. In either case, because the audience did not openly respond, the actors felt that they were not communicating and that they were being confined by the mask.

Any further study using the mask in productions of Pinter plays should include a thorough training for actors in the art of acting with the mask. The subtleties of body language through movement and gesture should be explored and mastered in this training.

**Directing.** This study also included limitations imposed by direction. It was important to the results of the study that the mask and not directorial selections
became the determining factor in the occurrence of significant difference. For this reason, directorial selections were kept as constant as possible for performances using masks and performances not using masks.

Though directorial selections remained constant for use and non-use of the mask within this study, further study made with actors trained in the use of the mask might possibly require direction which precludes this kind of constancy. Assuming that there is an art to acting with a mask which differs from acting without a mask, it follows that directing would need to change to suit the art form being employed.

**Implications for Further Study**

Greater success might be achieved in this kind of study if acting and directing were geared specifically toward the mask's use.

Further study might also be conducted in the area of audience response to the use of the mask. The difference in audience response to performances employing the mask was marked enough in opposition to the nights performances did not employ masks to warrant further investigation.
NOTES


8 A copy of the questionnaire used in this study can be found in the Appendix.

9 Copies of computer runs are available for further study c/o Blanche Roberts, 4357 Vanalden Street, Tarzana, California.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Please take a few moments to answer these questions and return this questionnaire at the end of the performance. Your cooperation will assist in an experimental project for a Master's thesis.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION PRIOR TO PERFORMANCE OF THE COLLECTION BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE BLANK.

1. Age range
   - 20 years or younger
   - 21-25
   - 26-35
   - 36-50
   - Over 50

2. Marital status
   - married
   - single
   - divorced
   - separated
   - widowed

3. Sex
   - male
   - female
PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION FOLLOWING PERFORMANCE OF THE COLLECTION BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE BLANK.

1. Stella was unfaithful to James

   ___ physically
   ___ emotionally
   ___ both of the above
   ___ none of the above
   ___ undecided

2. As the play progressed, the issue of Stella's infidelity to James

   ___ remained highly important
   ___ remained moderately important
   ___ became secondary to a conflict of male egotism between James and Bill
   ___ was obliterated by a conflict of male egotism between James and Bill

3. Through the course of the play, the relationship between James and Bill was

   ___ very friendly
   ___ moderately friendly
   ___ both friendly and unfriendly
   ___ moderately unfriendly
   ___ extremely unfriendly

4. Through the course of the play, the relationship between Harry and Bill evidenced

   ___ great strengthening
   ___ slight strengthening
   ___ no change
   ___ little deterioration
   ___ strong deterioration

5. Through the course of the play, the relationship between Stella and James evidenced

   ___ great strengthening
   ___ slight strengthening
   ___ no change
   ___ little deterioration
   ___ strong deterioration
6. Generally, dialogue between characters in the play revealed what these characters were thinking in a manner which was

___ consistently honest
___ moderately honest
___ slightly honest
___ mostly dishonest
___ consistently dishonest

7. Stella's relationship to her kitten expressed

___ her need to care and be cared for
___ her boredom with her lot in life

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PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION FOLLOWING PERFORMANCE OF THE LOVER by checking the appropriate blank.

1. The need for the husband/mistress and wife/lover relationships arose out of

___ Richard and Sarah's dissatisfaction with each other
___ the need for fulfillment which a respectable relationship could not supply

2. At the conclusion of the play, Richard and Sarah

___ integrate the roles of mistress and lover into their marriage
___ end all mistress and lover relationships
___ undecided

3. At the play's outset, the relationship between Sarah as wife and Richard as husband was based upon a superficial and respectable acceptance of each other.

___ very definitely
___ to a moderate degree
___ only slightly
___ not at all

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PLEASE TURN TO BACK PAGE
4. The relationship between Max (lover) and Sarah (mistress) was based upon mutually acceptable and honest needs.

____ very definitely
____ to a moderate degree
____ only slightly
____ not at all

5. The bongo drums represented an instinctive fulfillment of need in the lover/mistress relationship.

____ very definitely
____ to a moderate degree
____ only slightly
____ not at all