



The Power of Mask:
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE AS A DESIGN
METAPHOR FOR MULTIUSER
VIRTUAL WORLDS



The Power of Mask:
Commedia dell'Arte As a Design
Metaphor for Multiuser
Virtual Worlds

© Mika Tuomola, Coronet Interactive Oy 1998

Imaginary avatar world images in the body of the text by Christer Nuutinen

Abstract:

The research subject of this paper is to discuss how *Commedia dell'Arte* (CdA) may be used as a design metaphor for Multiuser Virtual Worlds (MVWs) and specially for those constructed with Fujitsu's WorldsAway 2.x (WA) technology. Introduction gives an overview of the beginning ideas and the general findings of the research, as well as connects CdA and MVWs with other forms of masked representation world wide. In many aspects, CdA is found a universal way of representation and thus suitable for the global, networked media of MVWs. The claim may be further studied through notes in references. An explanatory introduction to CdA is followed by a detailed account on the possibilities of transforming practices and ideas from the non-improvised and improvised elements of CdA characters, staging, scenarios and themes to MVWs. The account will concentrate on using CdA mimics and masks in WA body animation and avatar head design. In conclusion, CdA is found a resourceful design metaphor for MVWs with high potential to capture and maintain customer loyalty.

"The primitive notion, usually developed among normative circles, of some linear development forward will be done away with. It will be found out that any truly relevant step forward is always accompanied with returning to primeval beginning, or more correctly, with renewal of the beginning. It is possible to move forward only by recollection, not by oblivion." (Baktin, 1979)

Contents

- I. Introduction

- II. Commedia dell'Arte to Start with
 - II.1. Essentials
 - II.2. Characters
 - II.3. Stage and Music
 - II.4. Rules Create Drama

- III. Commedia dell'Arte in Multiuser Virtual World Design and Management
 - III.1. Avatar Design
 - III.1.1. Body Language and Types
General Rules - Focus! - Zanni the Animal - Pantalone the Miser and the Witch - Isabella the Divine Beauty - Arlecchino the Youth - Il Dottore the Plump Academic - Il Capitano the Noble Boaster
 - III.1.2. Masks as Heads
General Rules - Pantalone - Il Capitano - Il Cavaliere - Colombina - Isabella - Il Dottore - Arrlechino - Brighella - Zanni
 - III.1.3. Contrast Creates Drama
 - III.2. Object / Property Design
 - III.2.1. Symbolism
 - III.2.2. Encouraging Improvisation

III.3. Staging Space

III.3.1. Implications of Staging

III.3.2. Spaces beyond Commedia dell'Arte

III.4. Event / Scenario Design and Management

III.4.1. Overall Structure of Representation

III.4.2. Structure of Scenario

III.4.3. Scenarios for Community

III.5. Themes

III.6. Improvisation – Anything Goes

IV. Conclusion

References

Images

Appendix: Conversations in Dreamscape

I. Introduction

My first intuition to look into *Commedia dell'Arte* (CdA) – a five hundred years old improvisational form of street theatre, the origins of which date back to primitive cultures – as a design metaphor for Multiuser Virtual Worlds (MVWs) was inspired by dramaturge Esko Salervo. Salervo concludes his research paper on CdA¹ with three aspects of "this farting adult play requiring high professional skills" that challenge current linear media.

1. CdA is theatre in open interaction with its environment. It doesn't try to regulate the environment from above, but rather develops according to its audience. The movement is from bottom to top: everyday human life and absurd accidents stand in the beginning rather than ceremonies given from above.
2. CdA shows that there can be theatre without the domination of prewritten text. CdA has developed an alternative of its own that uses well functional elements many times (*chiusetti*) and poorly functional elements only by accident.
3. CdA's history reminds us that a form of representation that does not maintain a relationship with the surrounding reality, will die.

All three aspects are apt in the case of MVWs, of course. Virtual world develops in interaction with inhabiting community, produces its text in real time improvisations and will die if it loses a meaningful relationship with the surrounding reality. The final point is very essential. Theatre, film, MVW and other media are never separate from what virtual inhabitants call the Real World (RW) or Real Life (RL). In order to remain attractive to audience, media must always maintain a living relationship with the actual reality surrounding the customers every day. This reality consists of variety of thoughts, activities and incidents that change constantly on the scales of private/public, family/society, practical/theoretical, current/historic, mundane/spiritual, philosophical/political and so on.

¹ Salervo.

Man must be offered a possibility to place him/herself on all these changing scales, unless we want to create something that will reach audiences only for a short period time.²

After preliminary research, three more practical reasons for looking into CdA as a design metaphor for MVWs, and particularly for Fujitsu's WorldsAway 2.x (WA) technology, introduced themselves to me.

1. It looked like the fundamental elements of CdA, predefined masks and limited improvisation, were the fundamental elements of MVWs, the customers of which improvise technology restricted real time communications with configurable avatars.
2. CdA makes the masks alive by very simple rules of character movements, mimics, and the performances can occur even with ten different accents or languages.³ Also WA allows a simple set of avatar body movements in order to animate customer "masks", and its MVWs are designed for the global, multilingual medium of Internet.
3. Most importantly, I suspected that the practices of CdA as an old, long evolved form of interactive entertainment might provide us with valuable ideas and practices in designing functional, highly entertaining and audience capturing MVWs. Why try to rediscover the wheel, as we have its drawings provided by the ancient engineers of interactive representation? Only the building materials have changed in time.

² For instance, Disney's World War II propaganda animations and the Medieval research on how many angels can dance at the end of a pin would hardly capture today's audience by themselves merely. These works were created for particular need in time and wanted to address only possible patriots (the 1st case) and academics (the 2nd case). In order for these contents to become interesting today and to a bigger audience, we would need to put them in a larger context that moves towards all scales of being human. For example, the Disney propaganda and Medieval theories could be presented as a part of a comic/tragic story/world, which presents human worlds of ideas that have been chattered. Such a story/world would put our everyday thinking on war and what reality is like in question and help us to reflect on them. What purposes today's propaganda serves? Is there something silly in our general view of the world that will chatter soon? What do I teach my children? As this sort of larger context of being questioning human in the middle of changing times has been provided, for instance, in Shakespeare's plays, they still can reach modern audiences as stories. Also the past world becomes alive to us again.

In my experience in Dreamscape, one of the WorldsAway 2.x MVWs, similar contexts have been missed by many visitors, who have been looking for more than mere playing around inside the world. For example, please see Appendix: Conversations in Dreamscape, 1. On Estrangement and Community Spirit. Prior to the conversation, existentialist philosophy had become a subject of discussion because it was necessary in order to solve a very practical question between few community members. Sartre's ideas were suddenly a part of every day life and made it richer than before. This sort of conversations can be encouraged already in the original, still to be inhabited design of MVW by providing the subjects within the environment.

³ For instance, CdA teacher Luciano Brogi has directed a performance with seven languages at the Central Park of New York in 1978. Audience captured the story easily. See the Brogi video recording.

During my CdA literature, image archive and field research these expectations have been fulfilled beyond my first intuition. Studying CdA's historic background and currently known practices has also lead me to psychological and neurological studies on human perception, as well as to anthropological and sociological perspectives that all provide us with tools for understanding why CdA has evolved to what it is and why it still has a strong influence to the way modern media communicate. These tools have connected European CdA with the Noh theatre of Japan, the Topeng theatre of Bali, the Hindu iconography and performance of India, the American film imagery, postmodern theatre and more.

CdA seems to provide the tools for a very universal way to communicate with people through masked performances, what MVWs are really all about. Even during the last century of passive television and theatre – which I believe to have been merely an interim period between interactive theatre and interactive mass medium⁴ – CdA's representational solutions have been used by Moliere, Shakespeare, Chaplin and today's soap operas and comedies.⁵ How is this possible from an old form of theatre born among the riff-raff of the Italian market squares? Because CdA was born from people to people. In order to entertain the international audiences of Venice, Rome and Bologna, it had to find a universal language familiar to people already from their birth and even from the animal origins of human culture. During CdA's centuries long practice of success and failure with various audiences, it was forced to dig into the place, where the very notion of playful communication is first born in human mind. The notion seems to be astoundingly similar all over the globe, as far as the similarities between the independently born forms of masked performance indicate.⁶

In the market places of the past centuries – and of today – CdA and its different forms had to capture and maintain audience attention in the middle of a lot of other information provided by salesmen, charlatans, beggars, public speakers, other entertainers and all sorts of people (see Image 5). Today's web entertainment and commerce trying to attract and keep customers during the 24 hour rush hour of the "information superhighway" is much in the same position than was CdA on the market squares. In order to survive, a CdA group had to be able to address all the social classes present on the market square and, in time, actually evolved into a small community in itself: the CdA stock of characters, their desires and relationships, as well as the plot lines etc. started to reflect the society in whole. Expectedly,

⁴ Beardon & Tuomola, p. 19.

⁵ Green & Swan.

⁶ Emigh.

the web entertainment has started to do the same in the form of MVWs. To me, the old recipes of CdA have proved themselves handy in the situation. Let this paper be a brief introduction to the cook book of the pioneers of communal, interactive entertainment.

N O T E : Each time I'm writing about the CdA elements on the left side of the following list of "ingredients", I strongly suggest the reader to reflect on replacing them with the MVW and WA terms on the right side of the same list.

character, actor	avatar, player, virtual actor/human, icon
movement, mimicry	(WA body) animation, gestures, expressions
mask	(WA) head, avatar
property, prop	object, tool
stage, staging	locale, world/environment
scene, scenario	event, incident

II. C o m m e d i a d e l l ' A r t e t o S t a r t w i t h

Around 1500-1600, CdA had the greatest influence in Italy and France, but disseminated all over Europe as far as Great Britain, Russia, Czechoslovakia and Scandinavia (see Image 7). It adjusted to local circumstances without compromising in essentials, and the national variations contributed to its universality. Thus it is no wonder that we still find characteristics of CdA in modern media, as discussed in introduction.

The essentials of CdA can also be found in almost any form of ritual and entertainment rising from the people themselves, whether we refer to the masked celebration of the communal past of the "Mudmen" of Makehuku,⁷ to the rules of costume and behavior in funerals and weddings, or to the "nethics" and the masked identities of virtual community events. Mihail Baktin would say that this is the case because all these events originate from the same source of human folklore, play and carnival. *"...there's no division between performers and observers... At the time of carnival one can live only according to its own rules." "In this sense, carnival wasn't a form of artistic theatre, but like life's own real (but temporary) form. It wasn't only acted out, but actually almost lived out (during the carnival)." "So, in carnival the play itself becomes life for a while."*⁸ Ideally, the same transformation takes its place always in MVWs.

II.1. E s s e n t i a l s

The popular essentials of CdA include the set of predefined rules for improvisation (*Commedia all Improvisa*) and the use of the same masked characters through all sorts of

⁷ Emigh, pp.7-14.

⁸ Baktin (1995), pp. 9-10.

stories and scenarios (*Commedia delle Maschere*). CdA scenario only included the list of roles and properties, as well as a summary of entrances, actions and exits. CdA actor then improvised according to general rules, his mask and the summary. In improvisation, actor also used parts of performance often inherited from the older actors of his character. The parts consisted, for example, of *lazzi*, astonishing sight-gags like acrobatics, and of *battute* and *conceiti*, eloquent phrases and longer speeches that were used when confessing one's love, giving a mock speech on philosophy and so on.⁹

The CdA mask/character rules stated the characters' appearance, body language and nature. Appearances and masks could be mixed up with other characters' body language sometimes in order to present a character trying to mimic another character (see Images 14-16 & 21-23). This sort of mixing might have resulted the many character variations from the basic CdA characters (see Images 17-18).

II.2. Characters

CdA was based only on about ten of stock characters. *“The basic characters were the same whatever the plot, just as John Wayne or Groucho Marx or the battling lovers played by Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn were the same from one movie to the next. A small number of actors (usually no more than seven) were able to perform a large repertoire of plays, ranging from farces to heavy melodramas, even though none of the plays had a written script. They did so by developing predictable formulas of interaction that gave shape to their improvisations.”*¹⁰

The most important servant characters were dynamic, but stupid *Zanni*; rude and shrewd, yet playful and credulous *Arlecchino*; unscrupulous and intelligent *Brighella*; as well as emotional and simple *Pedrolino*. Among the old men (*vecchi*) one found the senile, but very

⁹ In MVWs, actor must be considered as customer, of course. MVW designers provide him with the set of masks (avatars), properties (objects, spaces to use) and rules (gesture language, terms of service etc.), as MVW managers bring in scenarios, the day to day vision, theme and activities. User learns from the old community members additional tricks (like shorthand phrases of communication and how to make money in the world).

¹⁰ Murray.

virile miser *Pantalone*, as well as the plump man of letters *Il Dottore*, who often faked his level of learning. Another fake was the pompous, but easily frightened soldier *Il Capitano*.¹¹

The lover *Inamorato*, always handsome and in love, was always needed if other characters didn't bring the element of love in. His narcissism could be compared to the egotism of constantly talking, hump-packed *Pulcinella*. The often unmasked women of CdA were either the loving beloved ones like *Isabella* or the practical servant women, like *Colombina* and *Franceschina*. Most of the CdA characters will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter on avatar design, as far as I have been able to find them useful for the purposes of MVW avatar representation and action design.

II.3. Stage and Music

The CdA stage scenery (*canavaccio*) was simple and put the emphasis on the characters and their relationships. The stage was usually a platform with a painted canvas behind. The canvas most commonly presented a city landscape with houses, thus easily merging with the market square scenery, but it could also present completely imaginary landscapes for the purposes of a fantasy play.

Entertaining music played an essential part in the CdA performances. A performance often started with music, had love serenades and comic dances in the middle, and ended up with an easy-to-catch tune that would remain in audience's mind even after their departure. The music lured people to see the performance on the market square, kept their attention by focusing into the themes of the performance and sent them home happily recollecting what had happened.

¹¹ Salervo, pp. 4-5. Please find more on the CdA characters from Rudlin, pp. 67-159, and Salervo, pp. 22-58.

II.4. Rules Create Drama

CdA was much like a chess game. It created interesting, dramatic situations not because the "game" was written beforehand, but because the rules of representation were predefined and clear. Each character, like each chess piece, could only do certain things. They could only use certain masks, mimics, passages and properties.

In order to create dramatic and fast to run MVWs, similar limitations are necessary in the design of avatars, their properties (WA objects) and environment (WA locales). The following chapters will investigate the specifics of the rules CdA suggests us to use.

III. C o m m e d i a d e l l ' A r t e i n M u l t i u s e r V i r t u a l W o r l d D e s i g n a n d M a n a g e m e n t

"Is it possible? Can a Drama which holds the stage for two centuries be created without the assistance of the literary man? It can. Then if it can be created once it can be created twice? It can." (Edward Gordon Craig)¹²

III.1. A v a t a r D e s i g n

Doug: *"I split my mind. I'm getting better at it. I can see myself as being two or three or more... RL is just one more window."*¹³ According to Sherry Turkle, role playing character serves psychological needs man has. As the needs change, characters change. Constructing a virtual being to represent oneself is work in constant progress. Trusting Turkle, a good variety of MVW avatars is a necessity, if we want to serve the varying needs customers have.¹⁴ CdA can provide us with the variety formed throughout the centuries.

¹² Rudlin, p. 3.

¹³ Turkle, p. 13.

¹⁴ Turkle further describes an incidence, where many people online thought that she, a prominent sociologist studying virtual identity, was conducting interviews about the psychology of MUDs (MultiUser Domains/Dungeons) with avatar name Dr. Sherry. She wasn't, so she started to follow this character impersonating her. Wondering the character's constant, inhuman level of activity, it dawned to her that the avatar might not be a person at all. It actually might be a bot programmed to interview people [Turkle, pp. 15-16].

A believable bot character is easier to create in virtual world than it is to build a believable robot in real world, because in virtual world man meets machine with its conditions. He accepts the technology and design restricted environment for his communication, meets other men with these restrictions and thus it can become nearly impossible to recognize artificial beings from real ones. This can be a powerful tool, as designing a MVW with both artificial and real characters.

"I find correct, in fact, the idea proposed by some scholars, of calling this genre, instead of *Commedia dell'Arte*, more specifically 'comedy of comedians' or 'of actors'. The entire theatrical transaction rests on their shoulders: the actor as historian and author, stage manager, storyteller, director," Dario Fo writes.¹⁵ Like CdA, MVW always ends up to be the work of its actors/customers, the inhabiting community. Thus the most important single design issue is the user's representation in virtual world. Customer ambitions are channeled through his avatar to drive the action in the world. What sort of channels do we offer to her/him?

As reading the CdA character mimics and masks descriptions of the following chapters, one should in no way think that certain body mimics and a certain mask should be thought only as a unified whole. *Arlecchino* body mimics have been attached to a variety of masks, like those of *Il Capitano* (see Image 21) and *Pantalone* (see Images 15-16). *Il Capitano* masks have been portrayed with *Zanni* mimics (Images 22-23). CdA works too have been combining standard face features with standard body gestures, like WA does, producing characters of new type.

III.1.1. B o d y L a n g u a g e a n d T y p e s

After introducing general rules of CdA for the use of avatar animation, I will suggest six specific WA avatar bodies based on the CdA body types and gestures. The body types are to be considered as beginning ideas to be developed further with an animating visual designer.

G e n e r a l R u l e s

A CdA character movement rule states simply that any speaking character will always face audience, as any character wanting to give speaking turn to someone – or that someone takes the floor – will turn the mask towards the speaking character in order to focus attention to him. To some extent, I've seen this rule taking place in Dreamscape. This occurs specially in situations, in which an avatar has said something that other avatars want further explanation to. If the avatar does not continue, however, the reaction of other avatars looks very comic, indeed, as they turn back faces forward and continue from that. The speaker became speechless. The same also occurs in CdA improvisations when an actor expected to continue is not up to an improvisation.

¹⁵ Rudlin, p. 15.

The CdA rule works both in focusing attention and in creating emotion conveying character staging. The rule can further be used in MVW by originally designing avatars so that their profiles focus attention clearly to either sides, where other speakers usually are. For example, *Pantalone* avatar body would exaggeratedly lean its head towards both sides, *Il Capitano* would face the sides with his nose up, as *Arlecchino* avatar would just bend his ear and move his gaze towards different sides, while still facing customers by their screens (Imagine him walking that way! lol¹⁶). The sight of the profiles would need to vary, naturally, depending on the mood of an avatar, so the nature of listening (suspecting, appreciative, pompous, etc.) would become clear.

Another rule requires that the characters never drop their hands below the waist. By poses and gestures, hands provide constant information on the character's intentions and emotions. The rule may be further understood by taking a look into current neurological studies on human perception. For a reason or another, the cortex of man processing his/her verbal communication provides most attention to what hands are signaling.¹⁷ About 30% of our cortex is processing hand movements. Another 30% goes to processing mouth and tongue movement, while the rest of face (eyes included!) receives only about 10% of our cortex processing abilities. The remaining 30% of our attention is given to the rest of the body.¹⁸

Provided with this information, it is no longer wonder that CdA's practice of success and failure ended up with powerful hand gestures and revealed only mouth and eyes from behind the mask. In designing animated avatars, we naturally should thus follow the ways of CdA. Perhaps it is the poor range of the hand and mouth gestures in the current WA worlds that keeps the customers communicating matters – and even emotions! – mainly with text.

¹⁶ MVW general purpose shorthand expression meaning "laughing out loud." For a good list of further shorthand expressions, please see Damer, p. 498, IMHO.

¹⁷ Minna Tarkka, Professor at the Medialab of Helsinki University of Art and Design, once suggested to me that the reason might be found by looking into the very first thing that separated man from other animals: man used her/his hands to create tools and art. Hands were probably the very first way of signaling abstractions to others. Hand signs may have been the very first words and letters.

¹⁸ For a good figure of the processing percentages of cortex and for more on representation and perception, please see Emigh, pp. 60-74. Emigh also presents other forms of masked performance that exaggerate hands and mouth. Finding them worldwide, he succeeds to show that the findings of neurology really show up in the ways men create representations.

F o c u s !

In a rehearsal of Luciano Brogi's CdA group, as a young actor rehearsed *Il Capitano* with *maestro* Luciano,¹⁹ I realized the meaning of focusing body gestures in order to carry emotions clearly. The young actor Luka, having his learning mainly in the mainstream of psychological, reality imitating acting, would not comprehend nor accept the way of CdA's simple yet subtle representation of a character. On video, as Luciano and Luka rehearse *Il Capitano* side by side, you can clearly see that Luka's way of increasing inner emotion is not the key for opening the character. As you look at Luciano beside him, you see that the physical gestures of focusing attention first on one step, then to another, then to hands, audience, the right leg etc. really convey the character's emotions more powerfully. The well considered focus of movement can have much stronger impact than the mere increasing of gestures along with the strength of emotion.

This is very encouraging to us as designing avatar gestures and movements for MVWs. Merely focusing the points of attention clearly, in the line of the long practices of CdA, we can breath life into avatar, though it has not the quality of actual presence of man. The Balinese Topeng performers do the same than their CdA colleagues: simple character movements and their relationships towards each other define character emotions. "*Topeng is not 'like life,' either; but watching a Topeng performance is a great deal 'like living,' and living very well, with all senses alert, an awakened sense of humor, an appreciation of those who have gone before, and a heightened sense of the consequences and potential of human actions.*"²⁰ So it is possible – and currently a necessity – for the avatar technology restricted MVWs to focus on simple, yet powerful, avatar gesture and movement design rather than to complex and bandwidth consuming reality imitation.

The illusion of presence may be made even stronger by using effect sounds. For example, Bruce Damer believes this simple addition communicates a much wider bandwidth of human emotion and culture.²¹ Indeed, nearly in all forms of body movement oriented representation

¹⁹ Tuomola, a video clip from the first attended rehearsal.

²⁰ Emigh, p. 191.

²¹ Damer, p. 356.

– like CdA, Topeng, Noh, Hindu performance and dance – the movement and gestures are given further emphasis by music and sound.²²

Z a n n i t h e A n i m a l
(male/muscular female)



The *Zanni* body (see Images 22-23) is very muscular. The first impression might be an ape or a tough heavy music guitarist. Movements are dynamic and exaggerated, the body constantly moving independent of the head. Hands are always moving and sometimes are in very strange, nervous locations.

Zanni has a lowered center of gravity, standing with an arched back with its knees bent and apart and the feet splayed. The support knee is bent with the other leg extended, toe pointed. It changes feet repeatedly while standing. The elbows are bent and the arms half lifted. When bored or sad, another arm supports head, while the other supports the head supporting arm.

²² The *Natyasastra*, a Sanskrit manual of acting written and compiled between 450 BC and 200 AD, outlines two approaches to performance. One is *lokadharmi* (the path of nature/the world) and the other *natyadharmi* (the path of art/dance). Lokadharmi stresses conversational dialogue and familiar movement, as natyadharmi stresses music, dance, poetry and song [Emigh, pp. 27-28]. As it is impossible with the web technology in hand to replicate daily life reality, I believe our way with MVWs must be that of natyadharmi. Having chosen the way, let us use all its potential including the sound and music.

Zanni walks differently depending on its moods. When sad, foot changes each time it takes small steps forward. The shoulders are down and elbows forward. The knees come high off the ground and to the side. Two-time rhythm with even beats makes the head peck like a chicken without bobbing up and down. When on plain mood, the chest comes forward causing a curved lumbar. The steps are long, foot's not changing and the arms curve, alternately front and back, and make a scything motion. Happy *Zanni* makes a swift movement on the toes with the center of gravity shifting from side to side. Back's straight and hands rest on the belt. Angry *Zanni* marches with shoulders moving up and down in two times, but the feet do three beats.

Lazzo (the sight-gag): Double-clicking causes *Zanni* to explode into pieces that move back to the same pile and form the whole *Zanni* body again.

P a n t a l o n e t h e M i s e r a n d t h e W i t c h
(male/female)



In contrast to the young, rebellious and fast moving *Zanni*, the *Pantalone* body (see Image 14) is slow and old, back bending (other way compared to *Zanni*), though the hands are very much alive. The hands move constantly, except when *Pantalone* is angry and keeps them behind his back holding each other. *Pantalone* can be compared to a bird, chicken, turkey or parrot depending on the mood.

Lazzo: Double-clicking causes the *Pantalone* body to fly as it spreads its arms and ropes.

Isabella the Divine Beauty

(female)



The *Isabella* body (see Images 6 and 9) presents the perfect female beauty in the world. In contrast to the animal movements of *Zanni* and the elderly slowness of *Pantalone*, *Isabella* is air that moves lightly and gestures delicately. Her poses are dramatic: back of the hand against the forehead when sad, hands framing the smile on the face and so on. The body seems to know that everyone is following its movements. When angry, *Isabella* crosses its arms in front of the beautiful bosom knowing with dignity what the gesture is hiding from the miserable world.

Lazzo: Double-clicking will make *Isabella* to powder herself so that there rises a big white cloud over everything.



Arlecchino the Youth

(male/female)



In the drawings made of CdA characters, we can recognize *Arlecchino* (images 24-27) portraying many other members of the CdA stock of characters. In one image this descendant of the *Zanni* figure is *Il Capitano* (see Image 21), in another *Pantalone*. As *Il Capitano*, the playful character is revealed by wearing a pot in the head and the breast plate on the back, not to speak of the costume. As *Pantalone*, he's always revealed by his pose. The *Arlecchino* body can be very versatile as an avatar.

Slim, quick and restless, the body creates an atmosphere of unexpectedness and may appear even a bit scary. It moves like the animal *Zanni* body, but with more balletic gestures. *Arlecchino* is like a cat or a fox. There's no back bending, but merely the hips are held a bit back, as *Arlecchino* keeps hands on it listening intently whomever is in its focus. While standing, the feet change weight regularly but not fast.

Walks are dance like and we can see the body as a brisk, young woman or man. All the body animations are very exaggerated (think of *Arlecchino*'s jump as out of the screen with the feet bottoms against each other in comparison to *Pantalone*'s comic centimeter jump). In comparison to *Isabella*, *Arlecchino* is more playful, a joker, though attractive and young.

Lazzo: By double-clicking, the body performs a neat dance, in the end of which "hangs" itself from the neck and draws itself up in the air, then descends to normal position.

Il Dottore the Plump Academic

(male/female)



Unlike *Arlecchino*, the *Il Dottore* body (see Image 8) is slow and heavy in movement, so it doesn't appear scary but just funny. It reminds me of the Panda headed stocky lady avatar, who organizes the "Musical Chairs" game at Dreamscape's Club Caribbean. Our first impression of plump figures, whether jovial or angry, always seems to be that they are harmless because they cannot move too fast. One rarely sees a plump devil/demon figure portrayed in human cultures; that sort of devil could never catch our souls.

Il Dottore is BIG. Its weight is on heels, belly forward, hands gesturing in front, hardly reaching around the belly. It reminds a big pig when sad or angry, and a fat lizard when happy. Steps are small and slow in normal walk, but when happy, the body tries to run faster with small jumps and in danger of falling.

In relationship to all the other bodies (*Zanni*, *Pantalone*, *Isabella*, *Arlecchino*, *Il Capitano*), *Il Dottore* is unique due to the big size and movement caused by it. While the animalism of *Zanni*, the youthfulness of *Arlecchino* and the ropes of *Pantalone* make their genders versatile, *Il Dottore*'s gender can be both as we cannot see whether the body has breasts or just too much fat in it. The head changes the gender as in the case of other mixed genres.

Lazzo: Holds his breath and grows like a balloon, floats in the air for a while.

Il Capitano the Noble Boaster

(male)



The *Il Capitano* body (see Images 19-20) reveals its inner personality by simply changing gestures from those of pride and vanity (chin up, delicate hand gesture) to those of cowardice and bitterness (sneaking away, lowering the pose, frowning). By varying these few body movements it becomes clear to spectator that the man is a boaster, if the user of this avatar reveals all the aspects. Using a suitable head and only graceful, noble gestures, *Il Capitano* becomes *Il Cavaliere*, a handsome soldier prince.

The *Il Capitano* body walks with the heels coming down first, majestically, if happy or angry, but when sad or plain, it shrinks and sneaks. It's like a handsome dog that tries to take over, but escapes if it doesn't succeed. When standing, the body is always like frozen (majestically or out of fear).

Il Capitano is a delicious avatar body to have, if wanting to provoke conversations in MVW by arrogant gestures united to text speech. The debate can simultaneously be developed into a comic scene, as *Il Capitano* withdraws with his opinions and boasts again, of course.

In comparison to other bodies, *Il Capitano* brings into the world the pompousness no one else has. Body language is based on the shoulders being mainly back and the spine straight. Only the *Isabella* female body has similar gestures and movements and needs this versatile avatar male body to enrich the overall animation design on the screen (and to pay attention to female beauty).

Lazzo: The body falls down (for fainting or dying) like a log, crawls like a worm and gets up. (In comparison on the screen, imagine *Zanni* exploding, *Pantalone* flying, *Isabella* in the powder cloud, *Arlecchino* hanging himself up to the air and *Il Dottore* swelling and floating.)



III.1.2. M a s k s a s H e a d s

Thinking of the power of expression the CdA masks have, Edward Braun writes that *“through the mask the spectator sees every person who bears the merest resemblance to the character.”* Being able to achieve this, the caricatured masks are ideal to avatar worlds as they make themselves easy to feel familiar with and assimilate with.

Animal mimicry is at the source of many, if not all, CdA masks. It is interesting that the animal masks are also very popular in the current WA world Dreamscape. In CdA the aristocracy, the Lovers like *Isabella* and *Il Cavaliere*, mainly appear unmasked, *“paradoxically revealing the artificiality and immaturity of their existence”*²³ in relationship to the other masks. This is a very interesting contrast and should be hired as designing avatars for MVWs. Animals may have more fun than people.

After introducing general rules for MVW avatar head design suggested by CdA masks, I present nine avatar heads based on the CdA masks to begin with. Their principles may be used for different variations, some already suggested in this paper. For the reasons of human

²³ Rudlin, p. 39.

perception discussed earlier in the general rules for body language, all the heads have very expressive mouths around which the main part of hand animations takes place.

General Rules

For a CdA mask the most important general rule is that it has a "stare." This means that mask must have the capability of clearly showing the focus points of attention discussed in the chapter on body language. The mask/head must stare at whatever is the focus: customer by the screen, fellow avatar, an object. In order to achieve this actors must "live up" to the mask, realize its limited focus points and make the best out of them. The stare must naturally be created already in design phase, or it cannot become animated and lived up to.

A CdA actor must imagine that his mask has only one eye situated at the end of the nose in order to achieve the stare. An avatar animator must think the same and pull the animated avatar from its nose in order to achieve the biggest effect for focusing. *"The neck has to become alive in a manner that is rarely demanded of it in the three dimensional world... In Commedia mask work the body is often required to be doing something different, working contrapuntally or even paradoxically."* *"The shoulders are part of the trunk, of the body and its intentions, not of the neck and the gaze of the mask."*²⁴ This is the case also in the very heart of WA code, and should be used to its full potential as designing avatar heads and bodies. The relationships of the head and body movements make avatars truly alive and different from each other.

Another CdA rule for the masks states that the "little mask," one eye and the nose, should always be visible to the spectator, otherwise the gaze and the mask dies. This suggests to us that even when the body turns its back to the spectator, the head must always maintain its gaze in order to be in contact with the customer by the screen and other avatars. This manner of design encourages communication and drama in contrast to passivity and closing oneself away from action taking place in MVW.

Further, the CdA actors' hands should never touch the mask because they are the only uncostumed, unmade-up part of the body. Even the unmasked actors of CdA always have a very strong, exaggerated make-up. *"The natural should not come into contact with the grotesque, the polychromatic with the monochrome."*²⁵ The final rule for the masks reminds

²⁴ Rudlin, pp. 40-41.

²⁵ Rudlin, p. 42.

us of the "organic whole" of the overall MVW design. If we mix two dimensional animations with three dimensional views, video and photos with drawings, voice with text and so on, we must design carefully their surface of contact/separation. They must enrich each other like do the fluent hand gestures and the inorganic masks of CdA, not weaken each others' power of expression by too close a contact.



P a n t a l o n e

The head has a long, hooked nose, bushy eyebrows and pointed beard that juts forward as if to meet the nose coming down (see Image 14). The face is very wrinkled with deep rings around the eyes (see the stare in Image 2). The chin almost seems to drop as the mouth opens to express different emotions. Head variations can result birds and long chinned scandalmongers.

With the *Pantalone* body the head looks like that of a banker. With the *Zanni* body the avatar brings in mind Darwin. The head combined to the *Il Capitano* body reminds a dirty old man, as the *Arlecchino* body gives a lunatic impression. With *Il Dottore* body the head looks very small, resulting an impression of extreme lack of intelligence. The *Isabella* body would naturally result an old drag queen.

I l C a p i t a n o

The head has a long, phallic nose that seems to always be in exact ninety degree angle compared to the square face (see Image 23, the second character from left). Mouth sides are usually very strongly downward, only "smiling" brings them up resulting a direct line as a mouth (see Image 19). High forehead and hawk like gaze give a strong militaristic impression. The head is always serious, seems to know everything exactly and is never wrong. Variations can produce long muzzled dogs, a bulldog, a peacock and women's prison guards.

The *Il Capitano* body results a general, the *Pantalone* body a mad scientist, the *Arlecchino* body a nerd, the *Il Dottore* body a scholar and the *Zanni* body an underworld being.

I l C a v a l i e r e

The head has strong, handsome features that on certain expressions appear a bit arrogant and on certain expressions flirting and courteous (see Image 20). This is a prince's head. The mouth is sensual, the cheekbones high, the eyes striking. Variations can produce a horse, a panther and other human heads varying in expressions (from vanity to warmhearted good looks).

The *Il Capitano* body results a count, the *Arlecchino* body a relaxed, handsome youth, the *Il Dottore* body a vain king and the *Zanni* body a doll faced heavy rock star.

C o l o m b i n a

The head is very pretty in a girlish way (see Images 27 and 10). Teasing expressions convey impression that the person is constantly thinking of something amusing about other people. The little, pointed Scarlett nose tells about determination. The eyes are wide and impressive, the mouth usually tightly closed with different smiles, but one expression results the mouth shouting wide open, as another makes it laugh enormously. Variations may produce a dove, a cat and children like heads.

The *Isabella* body results a flirting, temperamental young woman, the *Il Capitano* body a "boy girl", the *Pantalone* body a silly witch, the *Arlecchino* body a wild brat and the *Il Dottore* body a jovial lady.

I s a b e l l a

The head IS the absolute female beauty with very royal expressions (see Images 6 and 9). The eyelids are usually drowsy and divine, but smiling results wide open almond eyes that shine tenderness and warmth. The mouth is full, the nose aristocratic. Variations could produce different kinds of beauties (from carnal to unearthly) and beautiful animals that vary from wild cats to soft undulates.

The *Isabella* body results a divine beauty queen, the *Il Capitano* body Marlene Dietrich on the battle field, the *Pantalone* body Snowwhite's stepmother, the *Arlecchino* body a high school

beauty, the *Zanni* body a ferry of some sort and the *Il Dottore* body an old film star (with overweight) that has just gone through plastic surgery.

I l D o t t o r e

The head is as plump as is the *Il Dottore* body. The eyes are small and deep inside the skin. Due to the big proportions of the head, the nose looks small as well. It's like a round little button. The mouth is the only big element on the face and constantly open. With some expressions it seems to do so because *Il Dottore* is out of breath, with other expressions because *Il Dottore* is speaking without a pause.

A legend states that the *Il Dottore* CdA half mask (covering only forehead and nose, see Image 8) was born out of a birth mark that an actor, who used to portray the character, had. Yet another legend tells that the idea "was taken from a wine stain which disfigured the countenance of a jurist-consult of those times." Variations of the head could thus result a disfigured "Hunchback of Notre Dame"²⁶ face or a jovial cook who has had a bit too much wine. Other variations may be a pumpkin, a pig, a hippopotamus and a moon face.

The *Il Dottore* body attached to the head would produce a *grandissimo* man, the *Il Capitano* body a big headed dictator, the *Pantalone* body the Hunchback, the *Arlecchino* body a Halloween pumpkin creature and the *Isabella* body Count Harkonnen of the "Dune" novel after operation.²⁷

A r l e c c h i n o

The faun like head has a low forehead with wart, small round eyes (see Images 24 and 25). The nose is pointed like *Colombina*'s, but bigger. The heads are of the same teasing and determined type. The cheek bones are strong but low in the face, resulting a stare for the small eyes that are active and investigative.

The expressions are playful and childlike. When *Arlecchino* is serious and thinks, he looks like a little boy concentrating hard on a math homework. When he's happy, his face is bright with the eyes as open as possible and the mouth in a huge grin.

²⁶ Hugo (1996).

²⁷ Herbert.

The *Arlecchino* mask has had many variations in CdA. It has been portrayed reminding a cat, a fox and a bull. The eyes have changed their shape from round to almond. The same changes and animals can be used in the avatar head variations resulting different types of faun like people and animals.

The *Arlecchino* body would produce a clown like young man, the *Il Capitano* body a mock soldier, the *Pantalone* body Yoda of "Star Wars",²⁸ the *Il Dottore* body a friendly giant and the *Zanni* body a faun or a gnome.

B r i g h e l l a

The eyes are round and intensive, as if constantly being suspicious. The hook nose points the places of attention sharply. The lips are thick and shameless, constantly seeming to taste something. In one expression the tongue licks them. The expressions are cynical, mawkish and flattering giving the head an offensive, swaggering air. Brighella is a charlatan and takes his pleasure in whatever benefits him at the expense of others. Variations of the head would result scheming, brutal faces, Thenardiers of "Les Miserables",²⁹ a calculating rat and a shrewd chicken.

The *Zanni* body would produce a representative of the scum of the earth, the *Il Capitano* body a skillful charlatan, the *Pantalone* body the cruel merchant of Venice,³⁰ the *Arlecchino* body a fast moving salesman of used cars and the *Isabella* body (with the female version of the head) a *femme fatale* literally.

Z a n n i

The nose of the head is huge, resulting an animal looking face that viewed from the side looks like a big bird. The whole area between the eyes and the mouth is nose. In all the expressions the head knits its brows. *Zanni* is constantly trying to discover why he is having the emotions he has. To put it straight, *Zanni* is incredibly stupid. Variations of the head result an emu or human heads with noses of different sizes. The longer the nose, more stupid the head. It's like the nose would take space from the brains.

²⁸ Kasdan.

²⁹ Hugo (1992).

³⁰ Shakespeare.

Attached to the head, the *Zanni* body would produce an animal like simpleton, the *Il Capitano* body a pompous fool, the *Pantalone* body a vulture like wizard, the *Arlecchino* body a parrot like jester and the *Isabella* body a masquerade costumed avatar.



III.1.3. Contrast Creates Drama

John Rudlin suggests that the *Zanni* mask discussed in the previous chapter is one of the most ancient ones in CdA. The original performance of "jesters" played *Commedia degli Zanni* that was developed in contrast between these servant figures and the master oppressor figure of *Pantalone*. "Subsequently they went to in search of other Masks in order to evolve complex comedic improvisations."³¹

As developing a *Zanni* figure (WA's avatar body and heads) for today's MVW, it should be interesting to think over what has been the *Zanni* figure of virtual communities. From what kind of an avatar all other avatars have originated from? Around which basic representation of a net user the other representations have been born around? Has it been the sideways viewed Emotion Types³² of chat groups? ; -) Are the avatar representations still engaged to this first representation – as, for example, the expression signs of the WA interface would

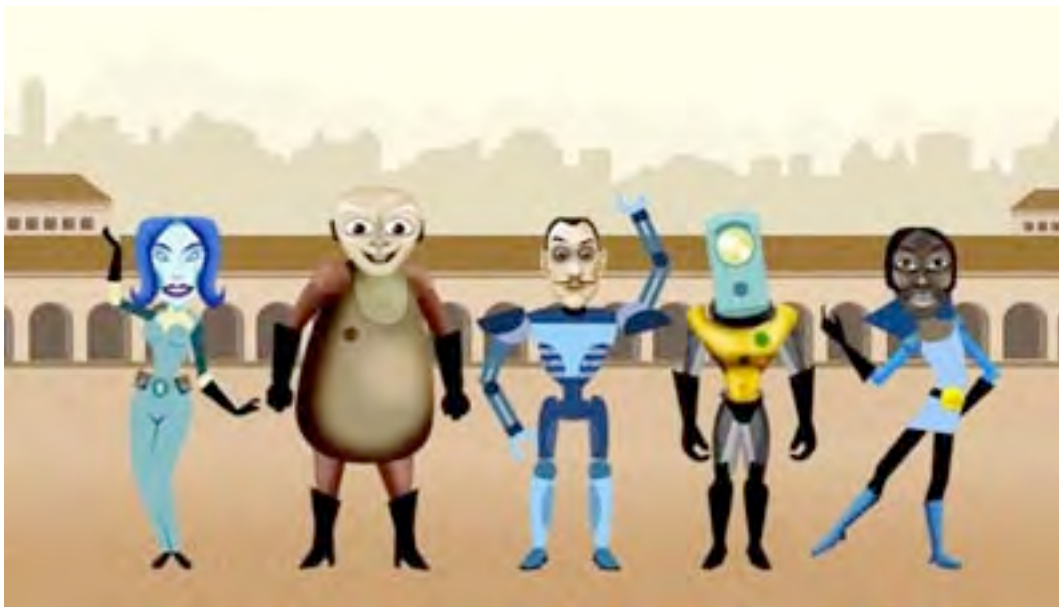
³¹ Rudlin, p. 33.

³² For a good list of these "social emoticons," please see Damer, p. 498.

suggest – or have they developed something creating a dramatic contrast to the smiley, sad, angry, shocked etc. Emotion Type faces? : -o If we can find the *Zanni* of Internet and would follow the development of CdA, we should start building up the other characters in contrast to the original representational figure in order to achieve the most interesting dramatic results.

@>->-

The Emotion Type is a very limited way of expressing oneself, but so are the movements and expressions of *Zanni* and other CdA characters. The level of gesture refinement should not be considered the major goal, but how different masks/heads and sets of body mimics/gestures relate to each other. This is the most important lesson of CdA and should be kept in mind constantly as designing avatars to MVW customers.



III.2. Object/Property Design

CdA performers, as nearly all the performing artists throughout the ages, used a variety of properties in order to add to the show. In theatrical sense, property is any object used by performer. This allows us to think of the WA objects (wending machines, items that one can buy from them etc.) as properties used by avatars.

In CdA, only certain properties were usable to certain characters as the properties indicated character statuses and put them in a social and dramatic relationship with each other. Similar tendency can be seen in the current WA worlds as well. The wealth of an avatar can be seen from the objects it owns. A rare trophy item can show that the avatar has won a contest or a quest. Communicating status and achievements seems to be important in virtual community. It makes customers feel that they have a special avatar, drives them to achievements like wealth and thus keeps them involved in the world.³³

III.2.1. S y m b o l i s m

CdA also hired strong symbolism in its use of properties. The wooden blades used by *Arlecchino*, *Il Capitano*, *Pantalone* and others were often used to show their level of erection. *Franceschina* could talk and demonstrate how she stirs – stirs, stirs, stirs – the soup when cooking, as actually telling to the adult audiences about her ways of love making.³⁴ Similar symbolism can also be found from the drawings that have described CdA performances (see Image 6). This was, of course, necessary at the times of the severe censorship practiced by the Catholic church.

A variety of symbolic meanings for objects might be interesting in MVWs as well. Can we invent symbols that grow to have community strengthening contents behind them?

III.2.2. E n c o u r a g i n g I m p r o v i s a t i o n

Further, objects thought as properties can inspire wonderful improvisations in the world. Imagine a flour box that would paint avatar's face white, if he opens it, and the following passage from Francesco Valentini's description of the last three days of Carnival in Rome in 1826.

"Turn now to this Abbataccio, a book under his arm, who with the assistance of other masks has just seized upon a peasant, who has come to see the Roman Carnival, and who certainly never expected to become an actor in this farce: 'You are my debtor', he bellows at him,

³³ In the current WA economy, for example, an avatar couldn't buy a Rolls Royce unless spending a lot of time in the world.

³⁴ Tuomola, a video clip from the rehearsal of Luciano Brogi's CdA group.

'these last two years, these last two centuries. Your grandfather, great-grandfather, great-greatgrandfather, or, if you prefer it, your archi-great devil of a father, who was my man of affairs, wrote me a bill of exchange. Don't you believe it? Do you deny the patent truth? I am going to show you it to you.' With that he opens his book, which turns out to be nothing but a flour box, blows into it, and thus almost blinds the poor peasant, who was gaping at him. The peasant attempts to depart, but at this moment a Doctor, an Apothecary and some Matassins insist upon offering him their services. 'He has turned pale,' cries one, pointing to his flour-covered face, 'he's about to die.' He gets away at last and darts around a corner of the street...''³⁵

The Roman Carnival of CdA characters was very much like stand-up comedy involving the audience. At the moment of writing this, I'm actually founding a stand-up comedy group in the WA world Dreamscape. I have two wonderful avatars, Trashka and Lady J, involved with it.³⁶ To see them perform is really something. They use Dreamscape properties (objects like flowers, trees, fences, pets, heads etc.) to express emotion, to block a view to some other avatar, to create a stage and, generally, to have innocent and very highly audience appreciated fun with other avatars. By providing avatars with inspiring properties – like sunshades, lanterns, different local weathers (rain, thunder clouds, etc.), trick boxes, wigs, bird cages and other strange objects as hats etc. – we create a fair ground for self-implemented improvisations by virtual community members.

III.3. Staging Space

The stages of CdA were simple, like are the locales of WA. According to Reid Hoffman, a former director of Fujitsu's WA technology, the two most important evolutions and capacities of virtual communities are their casual environments and visual overlay.³⁷ For original CdA staging these were also important elements. The stage had to be easy to put up by the performance group and easy to approach by the audience. Thus the visual overlay usually was a square platform with a familiar background painting of a city house that could be

³⁵ Rudlin, pp. 29-31.

³⁶ Please see Appendix: Conversations in Dreamscape, 3. Birth of Theatre Group with Mother and Bride.

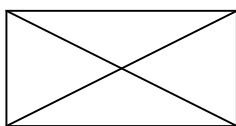
³⁷ Damer, p. 448-449.

inhabited by a multitude of CdA characters. Current WA locales look much the same as did the CdA stages. They are also easy to put up by the world creators, if including only little interactivity.³⁸

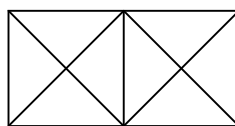


As locating characters on the square platform with the classical CdA manner, *maestro* Luciano Brogi crosses the stage with two diagonals per each character, creating a kind of chess board for the CdA characters. The process goes as the following figure shows.

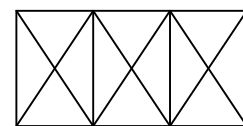
one character



two characters



three characters



The meeting points of the diagonals are where the characters are located to. Center place is given to character that is wanted to have the strongest influence to audience. *"I don't know why, but when there's more than one center on the entire stage, the right side makes a character stronger,"* says Brogi as he refers to a scene with, for example, two or four actors.

³⁸ Knowles.

It is interesting that this traditional two dimensional view of a stage with some depth reminds so much the "two and half dimensional"³⁹ world of WA technology. On the narrow platform spaces of CdA performed on the market squares, there really wasn't any depth, just as there isn't one in WA worlds. The most important matter was the visibility of characters and their two dimensional location in relationship to each other on the platform. The situation is same in the WA worlds. If an avatar is covered in the two and half dimensional world, he really disappears from the "stage."

III.3.1. Implications of Staging

Learning from CdA, the world managers and event designers should pay attention to their and their "staff's" location in the spaces they appear in. Do they want to give the floor to other community members or is it necessary to have the floor for themselves? Also, the coordinates into which avatars are designed to move to as entering a locale in MVW becomes important considering the psychological influence Brogi talks about. Do we want avatars to become a center of attention as they enter a space (visible on the screens of other customers) or should they just sneak in relatively unnoticed? The first alternative would provide support for constantly changing situations in the world, as the latter would enhance the continuity of the ongoing activity as a newcomer enters the space. With the means of technology in hand, can we locate avatars automatically, as Brogi does, according to their number in the space, so attention would be directed to everyone relatively equally?

Current WA worlds use two automatic ways of entering a locale. 1) By walking, avatar enters the middle of any side of the square floor of the locale. Depending on his direction of coming, avatar appears in profile in the left or right sides of the screen, face forward in the back middle or face turned away in the front middle.

The last way of entering is really the worst: avatar usually covers other avatars in uncommunicative manner. In the second last case, he usually is covered by the others. In the first two cases, avatar pushes away any avatar reserving the side space at the moment, which produces an interesting "give me room!" effect. A frequent, understanding "Pushy person!" joke in the Dreamscape WA world shows that though people understand they have not been pushed by choice, it still has a certain psychological effect.

³⁹ Some sense of depth is created by perspective images, but as objects are moved in perspective, there really doesn't happen any change in size.

2) By deghosting, becoming avatar from the ghost mode of just watching others, avatar enters face forward the front middle of locale, the most attention gathering place. So the "grand entre" is automated in the WA world. Using this way of entering, customers can also define themselves the place into which they want to deghost.

In creating the spirit of community, the ways of taking space we provide to customers are central. For example, we may not want to make the newcomers of community feel that they are being pushed around. The CdA staging of characters, that varies in order to keep the performance constantly interesting, seems to suggest to us that there should be differently automated ways of entering to different spaces and for different avatars. As CdA changes character staging by time, MVWs can do it by space.⁴⁰

For the sake of casual environments, we must build up MVW stages that are easy to approach and that call for participation with the kind of means described above. They also should be visually attractive and interesting, offering an "additional value" to what reality is about – like do the exaggerated features of CdA masks. This calls for design that is familiar to people from their everyday life or from the media they are following.

III.3.2. Spaces beyond Commedia dell'Arte

Due to the physical limitations CdA groups had in their days, there is not much beyond the character staging practices that we can learn from the CdA stages. Today, and specially in virtual worlds, we have much broader possibilities.

For example, design based on film montage may also be easy to approach for large MVW customer segments nowadays.⁴¹ With WA, however, its use could only be limited, as the technology is incapable of changing viewpoints, as well as of resizing and cutting the visual representations of avatars. Currently, I can see really only two ways of using film montage in WA:

- 1) By "cutting" from the world to URLs that present, for example, the first person viewpoint of a chosen avatar in a voice conversational space.

⁴⁰ Tuomola, "Daisy's...". Making the space to convey rhythm usually conveyed by changes in time in linear media was also used in our "Daisy" production.

- 2) By "cutting" into microworlds inside the avatar macroworld. As the size of an avatar cannot change, we can change the proportions of a locale and create an illusion that the avatar has become very small (or very big). This might be used to some educational purposes as well.

Yet there are also other ranges of possibilities in creating spaces that are both provocative to imaginations and serve well in enhancing activity in virtual community. The WA worlds have already introduced the objects that can all be used to decorate and even form completely new kind of spaces. This has started the virtual space design competitions in communities. There are also the teleporters, wending machines, virtual swings and interactive wine yards. Imagine further, for example, Speakers' Platforms that can be activated to make the speaker fall down or disappear to another location, enabling other avatars' demonstration of criticism towards the speaker.

Possibilities of MVW space design go far beyond the possibilities our CdA colleagues had. But that's a discussion to be continued elsewhere than in this paper.



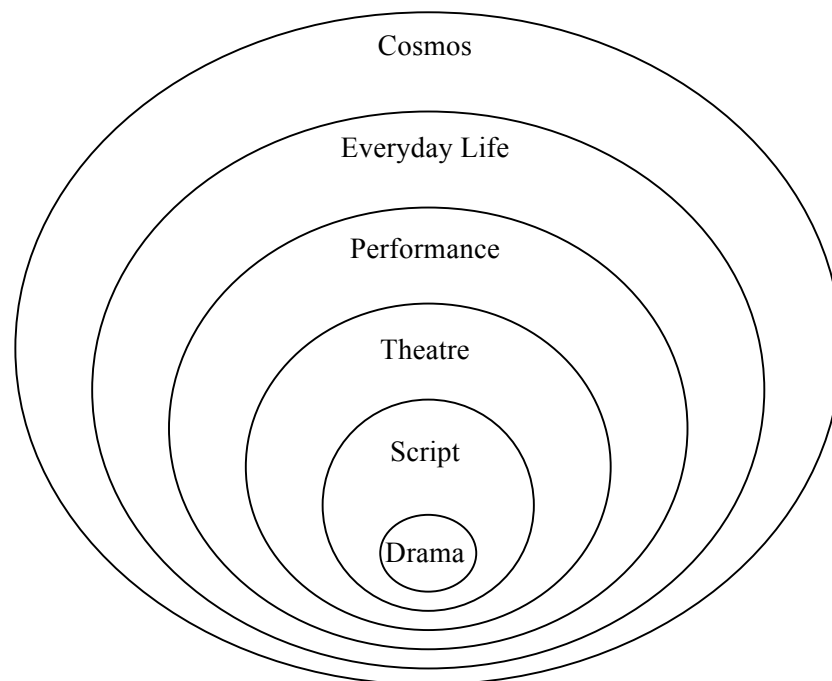
⁴¹ Tuomola , "*Daisy's...*" (1998).

III.4. Event / Scenario Design and Management

In MVWs the CdA scenarios – the general scripts for the characters’ entrances, actions and exits – can be seen as the world manager’s day to day vision of themes and activities taking place in the world. In order to properly introduce the scenarios to the community, it is useful to have an overall view of how communal performances and events function. Before going into the specifics of MVW scenario design suggested by CdA, I provide a view to this overall structure by Richard Schechner.

III.4.1. Overall Structure of Representation

In theatre and performance, Richard Schechner proposes the following model of the nested domains of drama, script, theatre, performance, everyday life and cosmos.

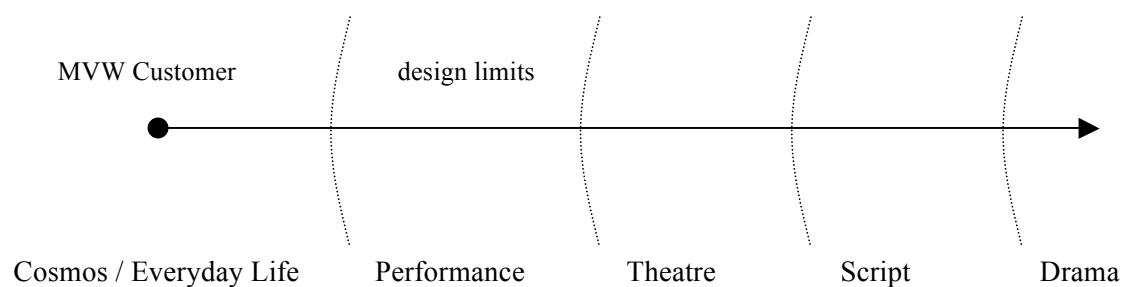


Schechner summarizes the identities of his domains as they apply to the most familiar Western procedures of theatrical representation: *“Drama is what the writer writes; the script is the interior map of a particular production; the theatre is the specific set of gestures performed by the performers in any given performance; the performance is the whole event, including audience and performers.”* Outside of these spheres of activity, embracing

performance, are everyday life and cosmos that provide performers and audience with context, common language and subjects for a shared event.⁴²

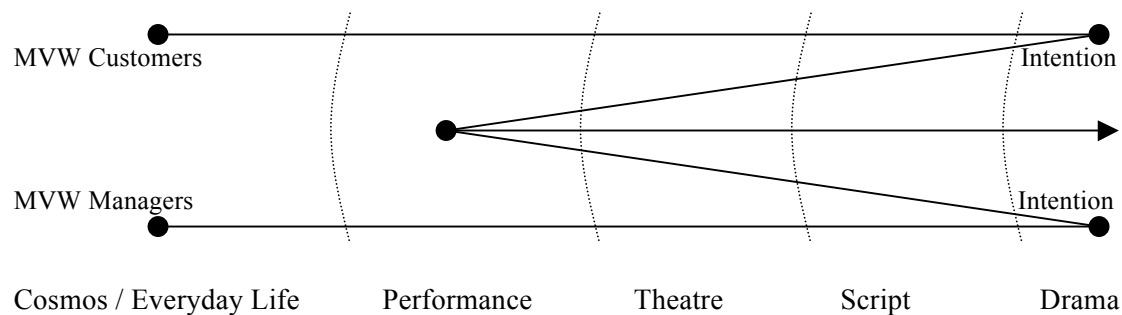
Today's media (written works, television, film, theatre, even multimedia) typically start from the middle and work towards the outer domains. A work is first written (play, multimedia content script), then organized for a production phase (stage direction, multimedia production script), rehearsed and experimented with (test audiences, prototype testing) and finally disseminated to a public (piece of theatre, CD-ROM), who receive the work as a part of their everyday life and decide on its success and failure based on how the work is capable of addressing them and their emotional needs.

CdA, among other improvisational and communal performances, does not function as the mainstream modern media. Neither does MVW. Drama cannot be written beforehand. It occurs real time based on the rules set for the performance. The flow of design is thus first setting up a space for performance. The CdA actors, as avatars, then create the theatre, the script and the drama of it. Customers enter from the real world to the sphere of performance and then – anything goes inside the design limits.



As each customer, among world managers, creates drama inside the limits of design, the final outcome is a world in which all these intentions suggest themselves to each other in the place of performance. The final overall drama gets written second by second by all actors, like in CdA.

⁴² Emigh, pp. 172-192. Considering Schechner's model from technological perspective, it is also interesting. Already now programs are sending just plans and abstractions (drama, script and theatre) through Internet and constructing them on the receiving computer from the pieces provided previously, thus saving transmission time. Some of WA's programming philosophy is based on this kind of thinking, and in future we'll be seeing it more and more in networked system design.



In order to have some control over the process, world managers may be provided with additional power over the design limitations, as is most often the case in the current MVWs. However, world managers' biggest power over the process is not forceful by nature. It is to know how to design effective scenarios/events that bring into the world the drama they want to introduce. In learning to know the tricks of the trade, CdA's structural strategy may prove helpful.

III.4.2. Structure of Scenario

Though CdA was improvised on the basis of its representational rules, one should not underestimate the underlying work usually done by *maestro*, the leading actor, who designed the scenarios that were acted out. World managers and active avatars are much in the same position than *maestros* of CdA. They need to design the suggested activities well in order to carry them through successfully in virtual community.

In CdA, each scenario included always a 1) proposition, 2) development and 3) solution. The practice was the same in the Japanese Noh theatre that used the principles of *Jo* (introduction), *Ha* (breaking; exposition) and *Kyu* (rapid; denouement).⁴³ The smallest actions (like *lazzi* and *congetti*) were designed in the same manner in order to provide constant possibilities for other characters to enter without spoiling the drama: each solution provided a place for an entrance.⁴⁴

Verbal repetitions of previous scenarios were often practiced between acts (also divided in three) to inform newcomers in the audience. Also each act began with a musical piece or

⁴³ Rudlin, p. 54.

⁴⁴ Rudlin, pp. 51-55.

something else entertaining and capturing in order to bring new people into watching the performance. A world manager should, with consideration, use similar repetitions and attractions as more avatars enter to listen to her/his scenario proposition.

The three part scenario may be used in MVWs, for example, by providing customer with a tempting proposition on the very first step as entering the world. The task would be designed to teach the world and how to function in it, to put customer in contact with other avatars, as well as would give extra wealth to him. After these developments, there should be a clear reward of learning and additional wealth. The challenge of the scenario would be making the process of learning the world, its interface, rules and customs entertaining. Learning these limits by fun will attract customers to stay, as it at the same time leads them to the sources of having even better time as learning the possibilities and necessities provided by design limitations.

Proposition should be an attraction, development the fulfillment and solution a reason to say 'yes' to the MVW in hand and the next proposition.

III.4.3. Scenarios for Community

In his memoirs, the playwright Carlo Goldoni speaks of Buonafede Vitali, a market square mountebank, who sold his drugs with the aid of four CdA masks: *Pantalone*, *Il Dottore*, *Brighella* and *Arlecchino*.⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, he was using four avatars in order to accomplish a task of selling his goods to the audience. In MVWs it should also be interesting to think of scenarios, in which customer must use many avatars in order to accomplish a task.

On the other hand, in order to create community spirit with dramatic potential, some tasks should require cooperation of different avatars reaching each for individual benefit. As representing nearly all the social classes and forces and their different selfish intentions, CdA succeeded in this way creating powerful, satirical content on politics.

NAU SolSySim, the first MultiUser Domain for learning and living, demonstrated back in 1990 that the sort of political world events can also function as a very advanced social

⁴⁵ Rudlin, p.27.

simulation in learning how to manage human affairs.⁴⁶ The concept of edutainment, entertaining way of learning, could be tried out to its full potential with similar scenarios.

III.5. Themes

The basic plot lines and scenarios of CdA were really turning around three or four goals: love, money, vengeance and food.⁴⁷ Nearly the entire society was portrayed by eight to nine characters. There was *Pantalone* representing the power of money, *Il Capitano* military and *Il Dottore* law and academic world. The nobility presented chased after love and revenge, while the servants and the charlatans were after money and food. Only church and religion as social factors were lacking.

Today's soap opera and other entertainment turns around the same themes as well and, not surprisingly, usually doesn't take a part in the discussion over people's belief systems. Perhaps that's why "Dallas" can be popular even in India and Africa.

CdA usually presented the same universal battle again and again. The conflict was always between the old and the new, very often between young lovers (nobility, or servants like *Arlecchino* and *Colombina*) and the old forces of society (*Pantalone*, *Il Dottore*, *Il Capitano*). The same battle and the change from old to new we witness constantly in all forms of drama and ritual, as well as in our own lives.

Love, money (tokens) and the change have also become central in the social WA worlds. Moving to new phases in virtual life is constant there. People have ceremonies of joining societies, they get married, change apartments, possessions and their virtual identities. The events that born from virtual community itself are those familiar to us already from the beginning of human ceremonies acted out during transitional events such as birth, death, initiation, marriage, and seasonal change.⁴⁸ Virtual life in itself is transitional by nature, a shift from one reality to another.

⁴⁶ Damer, p. 520. See also Reed Riner's SolSys page at <http://www.nau.edu/anthro/solsys>.

⁴⁷ Rudlin, p. 53.

⁴⁸ Emigh.

The celebration of change is in the very core of community. As developing further the overall themes of the transitional world of virtual community, it should be noted, however, that "...rest or a break in work cannot become a celebration in itself merely. In order to be celebrations, they must be connected with something from another sphere of existence, from spiritual-ideological sphere. They need a sanction that does not come from the world of facilities and necessities, but from the world of higher aims of human existence, in other words, from the world of ideals. Without it there can be no celebration."⁴⁹

III.5. Improvisation – Anything Goes

"Anything is permitted: the customary hierarchies vanish, along with all social, sex, caste, and trade distinctions. Men disguise themselves as women, gentlemen as slaves, the poor as rich." (Octavio Paz)⁵⁰

As the rules for improvisation were clear and the basic premises accepted, it was time for the CdA group to go with the subject (*Andare a soggetto*). All the material, the masks, costumes and properties, had to be at arm's length (*Commedia a braccia*), so the actors could concentrate on the spontaneous flow of improvisation rather than on looking for necessary objects. It was time for *Commedia all'improvvisa*. Anything was allowed to happen inside the premises.

The improvisation was made more fluent by few practices, which may be used to enrich communication in MVWs as well. In addition to the ready rehearsed *lazzi* (sight-gags), there were also memorized passages like *battute* (stock repartees) and *concetti* (stock speeches). Monologues were also stock, taken from *repertorio* or *zibaldone* (gag-book) kept by the actor for each character.

As *lazzi* can be implemented into MVW character animations, a management system for stock speeches and gags can also be provided to customer. The current WA worlds have shown that the sort of system would be highly appreciated, as the customers themselves have started

⁴⁹ Bakhtin (1995), p. 10.

⁵⁰ Rudlin, p. 13.

to create the kind of programs that insert text files into their WA communication bars.⁵¹ For the world designers and managers such a tool would be efficient as well, as they can drive action in the world also by providing customers with ready made passages according to the themes of MVW or an event. The text based world design and management tool would allow much faster execution of new ideas on written level.

For the world managers involved with the organized chaos of MVW improvisation as they lead customers' way according to the themes of the world, Maurice Sand's thoughts on what can go wrong with improvisation may prove useful in the end:

*"The strange thing is that, when you begin to improvise, far from having nothing to say, you find yourself overflowing with dialogue and make scenes last too long as a result. The hidden danger in this genre is to sacrifice the development of the basic idea to incidents which stem from it. You must also be very alert... to the possibility of having to sacrifice what you were going to say as a result of something your partner has said, and also to revitalise the action when you sense him flagging; to bring the scene to back to its objective when the others are wandering off the point and stick it to yourself when your imagination is trying to persuade you to go off into dreamland."*⁵²

⁵¹ See, for instance, the Text Macro Program at <http://www.btinternet.com/~btgh/waplugins.htm> – the Worldsaway 2 Macro Program.

⁵² Rudlin.

IV. Conclusion

Man always comes up with an explanation, theory or a world of ideas that justifies what she/he has done and does in life. By nature, we aim towards unity between our actions and thinking of the world. Thus our actions and activities in the world – whether real or virtual – formulate the world to us, change constantly our vision of it. As building up MVWs, it is an imperative to recognize this and understand that what ever the world encourages/discourages its inhabitants to do or from doing, will formulate the final idea of the community. It becomes a necessity to provide MVW with a limited, carefully designed set of possible and necessary actions. Action formulates the world, as it formulates drama.⁵³

The interaction between virtual and real worlds is constant. Virtual community's actions also influence the real world and the actual running of MVW service. Community will express its feelings and requirements and is thus an essential part in developing the service. For example, the USFujitsu flat rate decision for the current WA customers originated from its virtual communities. On the other hand, the decision also reflected the general drive of telecommunications services in the real world.

So MVW design and its set of possible actions given to customers influence the way they concretely want to change the nature of the service. Thus the service provider needs to think over its interests of change and development in the MVW's future already as the world is under design. For example, soon customers may not enter MVWs only through wired computer units. They'll enter through mobile computers/phones even just for a five minute conversation and fun of their interest. This brings a challenge for today's MVW service designers wanting to address the future target groups as well.

CdA and communal performance all over the world show us that it is possible to unite a multitude of human activities within MVW.⁵⁴ The spectators of CdA did their shopping,

⁵³ Aristotle.

⁵⁴ Emigh, pp. 22-23.

played cards and listened to the public announcements at the same time and in the same place, where the CdA performance took place. This suggests to us that MVW can be a social world as well as a gaming world⁵⁵ at the same time – and much more.

CdA offers us a set of rules for MVW customer representation. The rules' past success was due to their capability of providing a form that attracted a multitude of different customer segments from the riff-raff of the streets to the highest courts in Europe. Demand for the interactive form was great and thus performance groups could make a very nice living with it. CdA spread all over Europe not because it was established art, but because it was a good product concept for a multitude of contents that varied depending on the culture and the country. It is my belief that the same concept can be revitalized in the development of MVWs now, after the nearly three hundred year interim period of passive media.

In this paper, I have aimed to take my first steps in continuing the interrupted development of *Commedia dell'Arte* and applying it to the current places of interactive performance, Multiuser Virtual Worlds. There is a lot of catching up to do, but let us not despair.

*“...any truly relevant step forward is always accompanied with returning to primeval beginning, or more correctly, with renewal of the beginning. It is possible to move forward only by recollection, not by oblivion.”*⁵⁶



⁵⁵ In a WA production, collaboration with gaming worlds could be considered. Imagine the dangerous fighting game world Quake's clan meetings in a WA world that would function as a negotiation space. Shoot and socialize. The WA world would provide the fighters with similar avatars they have in the gaming world. As a social world, it would be a safe place for them to meet. (Should assassination be made possible there?)

⁵⁶ Bakhtin (1979).

References

Aristotle (1997). *Poetics*. Dover Publications.

Baktin, Mihail (1995). *Francois Rabelais: Keskiajan ja renessanssin nauru [Francois Rabelais: The Laughter of Medieval and Renaissance]*. Kustannus Oy Taifuuni.

Baktin, Mihail (1979). *Kirjallisuuden ja estetiikan ongelmia [Problems of Literature and Aesthetics]*. From Salervo (1984).

Beardon, Colin & Tuomola, Mika (1998). "Multimedia Learning for the Theatre" in the *InterELIA* journal Issue Three, Winter 1997/98 (p. 17-22). European League of Institutes of the Arts – ELIA.

Brogi, Luciano (1978). Video recording of his students' Commedia dell'Arte performance in the Central Park of New York.

Emigh, John (1996). *Masked Performance: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Green, Martin & Swan, John (1986). *The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination*. Macmillan Publishing Company.

Herbert, Frank (1984). *Dune*. Putnam Publishing Group.

Hugo, Victor (1996). *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing.

Hugo, Victor (1992). *Les Miserables*. Modern Library.

Kasdan, Lawrence [Editor] (1997). *The Art of Return of the Jedi. Art of Star Wars Series, No 6.* Del Rey.

Knowles, Sheryl (1998). *The Ten Commandments of Creating Art for WorldsAway Worlds.* Unpublished, available from USFujitsu/ICL as a training material for the WorldsAway 2.x world builders.

Murray, Janet H. (1997). *Hamlet on the Holodeck. The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace.* The MIT Press.

Rudlin, John (1994). *Commedia dell'Arte: An Actor's Handbook.* Routledge.

Salervo, Esko (1984). *Commedia dell'Arte.* Unpublished, available from the Finnish Central Library of Theatre & Dance.

Shakespeare (1992). *The Merchant of Venice.* Macmillan Press.

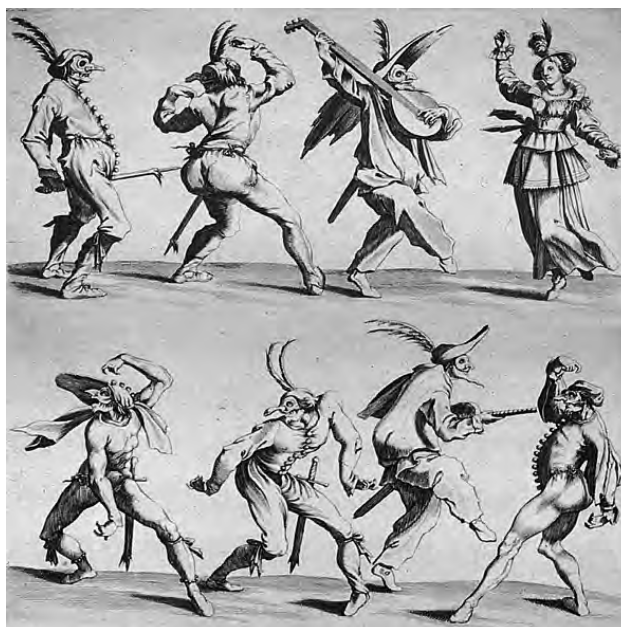
Tuomola, Mika (1998). Digital video recordings of the rehearsals of Luciano Brogi's *Commedia dell'Arte* group at IALS, Istituto Addestramento Lavoratori dello Spettacolo, Rome in July 26-31. (Expectedly, available only for the html version.)

Tuomola, Mika (1998). "Daisy's Amazing Discoveries: Part II - Learning from Interactive Drama" in the *Digital Creativity* journal Vol. 9, No. 3, pp.137-152. Swets & Zeitlinger.

Turkle, Sherry (1997). *Life On the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet.* Touchstone.

I m a g e s

The images from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century are from the collections of SIAE Biblioteca del Burcardo, photographed by Luciano Brogi and digitally edited by Mika Tuomola.





Images 1-4 show old carnival characters in masks. A certain level of surrealism has been applied as presenting the characters by drawing. Reality imitation would have been too limiting when trying to capture the *feeling* of a character. In drawings, as well as in performing, the exaggerated bending of backs brings the most expressive body parts, head and hands, close to each other. The means should also be hired as designing avatars for MVWs.









According to some scholars, Commedia dell'Arte originated from the market squares, where charlatans started performing and using masks in order to attract buyers for their products (usually no good medication of some sort). In time, the selling performance became more important than the actual product, and people were glad to buy the pills just in order to see the show. An early version of a theatre ticket was created. Could an avatar world service jokingly offer a "cure" to people's "real world" problems in its marketing?



In the age of powerful church and strict morals, Commedia dell'Arte hired symbolism in order to convey secret messages to audiences. Here Pantalone holds a flower on his waist as the symbol of penis and the nature of his passions towards Cornelia. The scheming lady, however, is flirting with Arlecchino as offering her "fruitful branch" to Zanni, who obviously cares more for the wine the tavern keeper is offering. In the bottom middle, one can see the consequences symbolised by a rabbit: a bunch of babies will come out of this drama. Symbolism and secret meanings can bring more complexity and fun to MVWs as well.



Commedia dell'Arte reached also Scandinavia back in the seventeenth century. The French drawing describes a performance in Stockholm. Zanni has dressed up as a woman in order to gain entrance to the servant woman's room. The master Bouclan (revealed by his clothes and penis the Pantalone character of Commedia dell'Arte) is after them.

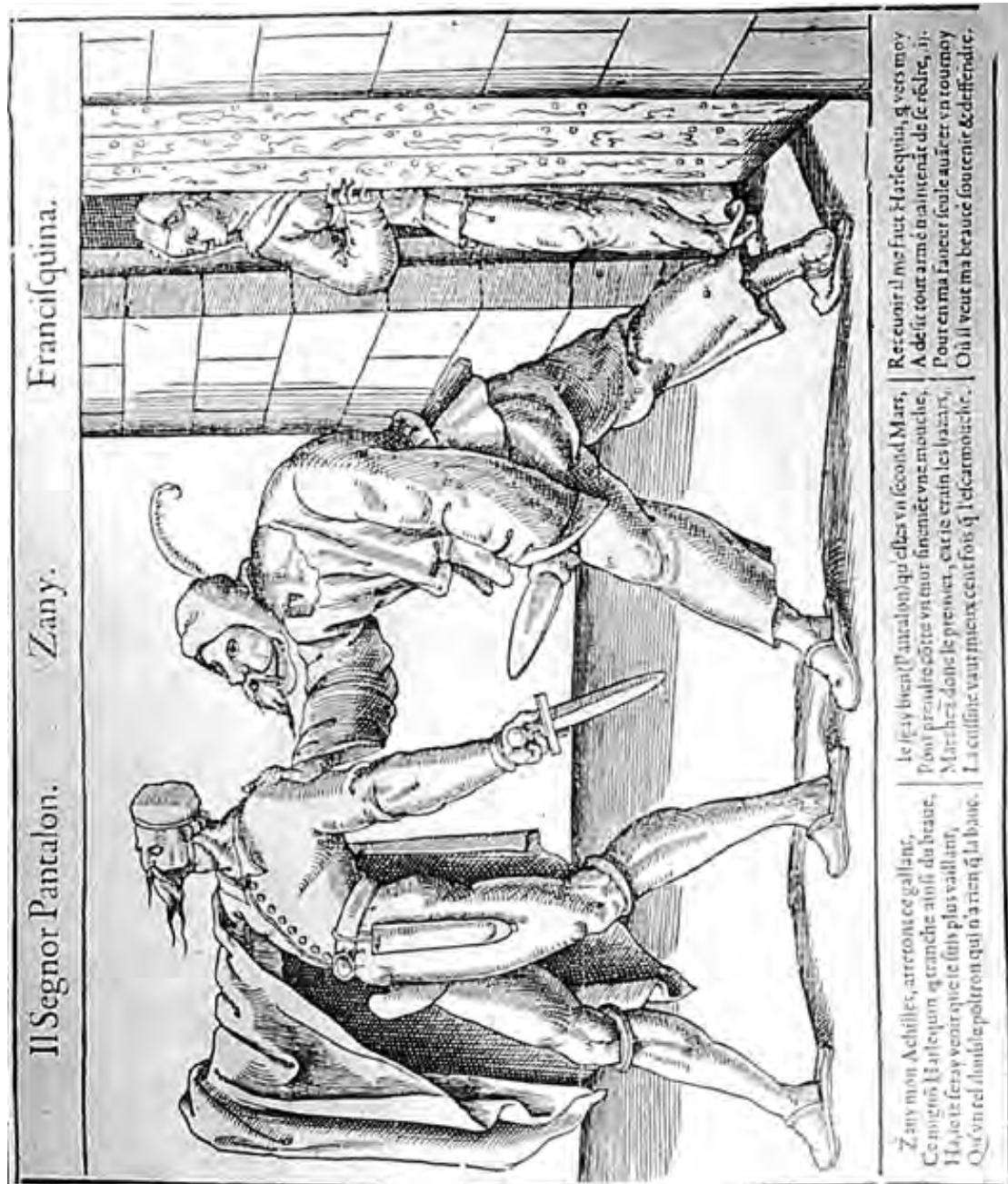


Il Dottore is here called Doctor Scatalon. Though the names of the Commedia dell'Arte characters changed all over Europe, the basic principles of their masks, clothes and body language remained.



Images 9-10 give us an idea how different character gestures relate to each other. Isabella walks with her feet in the air, gesturing delicately. The loving lady's poetic pose is contrasted by Pantalone, who in love pushes the waist – and more – forward. Zanni and Arlechino (or Harlequin) are playful and acrobatic, as the lover Leandro (originating from the Il Capitano and Il Cavaliere characters) approaches women respectfully with his "sword" down, yet obvious. The servant woman Franceschina (the same character type has many names like Colombina, Riccolina etc.) clearly contradicts Isabella with her feet on the ground and her intellect alert, as the lover approaches her.



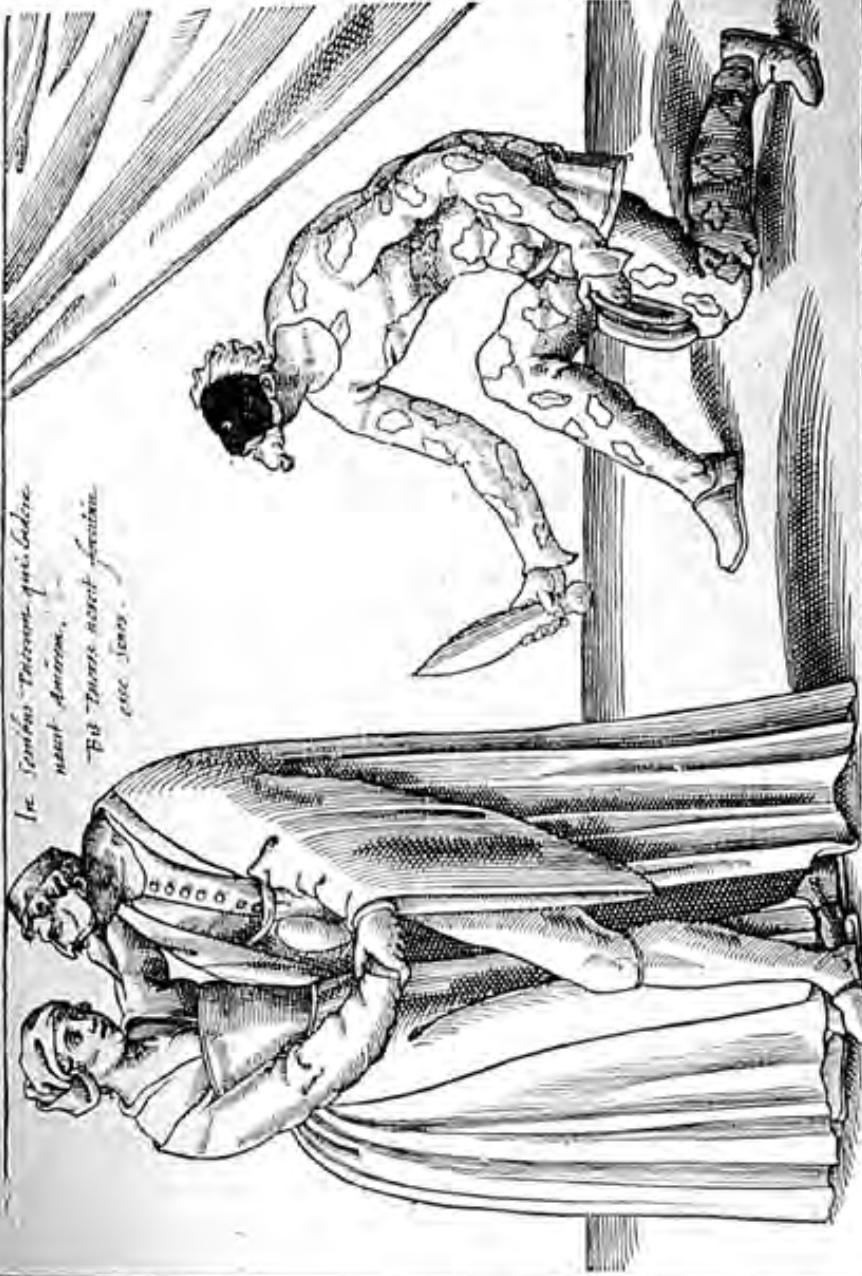


Images 11-13 show us how the gestures of Commedia dell'Arte character types relate to each other on the stage, and give us some idea on how avatar types can become clearly identifiable by their animation and poses in MVWs. For example, Zanni's and Pantalone's poses in Image 11 show us clearly who's the master and who's the servant.

Francisquina.

Pantalon.

Harlequin.



*Je sçavois bien que qui l'adore
 n'est point Amour.
 Et l'on ne sçait point
 être sans.*

36 Cher amy Pantalon, je vous suis venu veoir,
 A fin d'enrichir nostre amitié pecuniere,
 Car je suis tout à vous, comme peusiez sçavoir:
 Commandez donc sans vier de priere.

Francisque mon cur, & ma seule esperance,
 Nous pouons librement toy de nos amours;
 Que Harlequin se fâche ou entre en desfiacs,
 Tu vientras cependant, me visiter tousiours.

Je vous pien sur le fait, putain de haute gresle,
 Et toy vieux radoteur, vieux rustien tout pelé,
 Fy ce coup de scouvert ta subtile fincesse:
 Par la mort d'un étron, tu seras crutillé.

uij.

Harlequin. Zany Corneto. Il Segnor Pantalón.



O la belle chanson, Pantalón chantez bien,
Si voulez esgayer vostre maistrresse belle,
C'est le moyen certain pour en fin avoir d'elle,
Qu'estre musicien de chüen, d'y-je musicien.

Accordons nous tous trois, si bien & proprement
Que puissions l'endormir au doux son de ma lute,
Encore que comme vous ne n'y e apris à lire,
Je ne laisseray pas de jouet brauement.

Courage (mes amis) je chante le deffus,
De ce plaisant trio, composé pour madame,
La douceur de ma voix luy penetrera l'ame:
Mes paiffages ne font ni tortus ni boiffus.



In Image 14 Pantalone shows his typical pose. As we reflect this with Image 15 that shows a typical Zanni pose and his clothes, we must wonder Image 16 that claims to represent Pantalone. Did Commedia dell'Arte start mixing body language and masks in order to create more variation to the characters? Then it did the same as does the WorldsAway avatar technology today.







Images 17-18 show us French Commedia dell'Arte characters from the 17th century. The characters are of the Scapino type, scheming servants and advisers after their masters' money. If Commedia dell'Arte started mixing different masks with different body languages, the Scapino character type might very well have been a result of a mixture between Zanni and Pantalone. Whatever the historic background, looking at the different bearded man heads united with the different body languages (Images 11-23) suggests us the amount of dramatic avatar variation we can create to a MVW by separating the two and thinking through all the possible combinations.



Chetase del.

Déposé à la Direct^{re} de la Lib^{re}

Paul bon. sculpt.

(Troupe du Marais)

GANDOLIN.

(Année 1634.)

*Gandin par sa Rhetorique
 Nous fait la rote spanoir,
 Et pour n'avoir plus la colique,
 Il faut tout seulement Coûr.*

*Quelques filles qu'il nous raconte,
 Elles ont un si bel' effet,
 Que chacun y trouve son compte
 Et s'en retourne satisfait.*

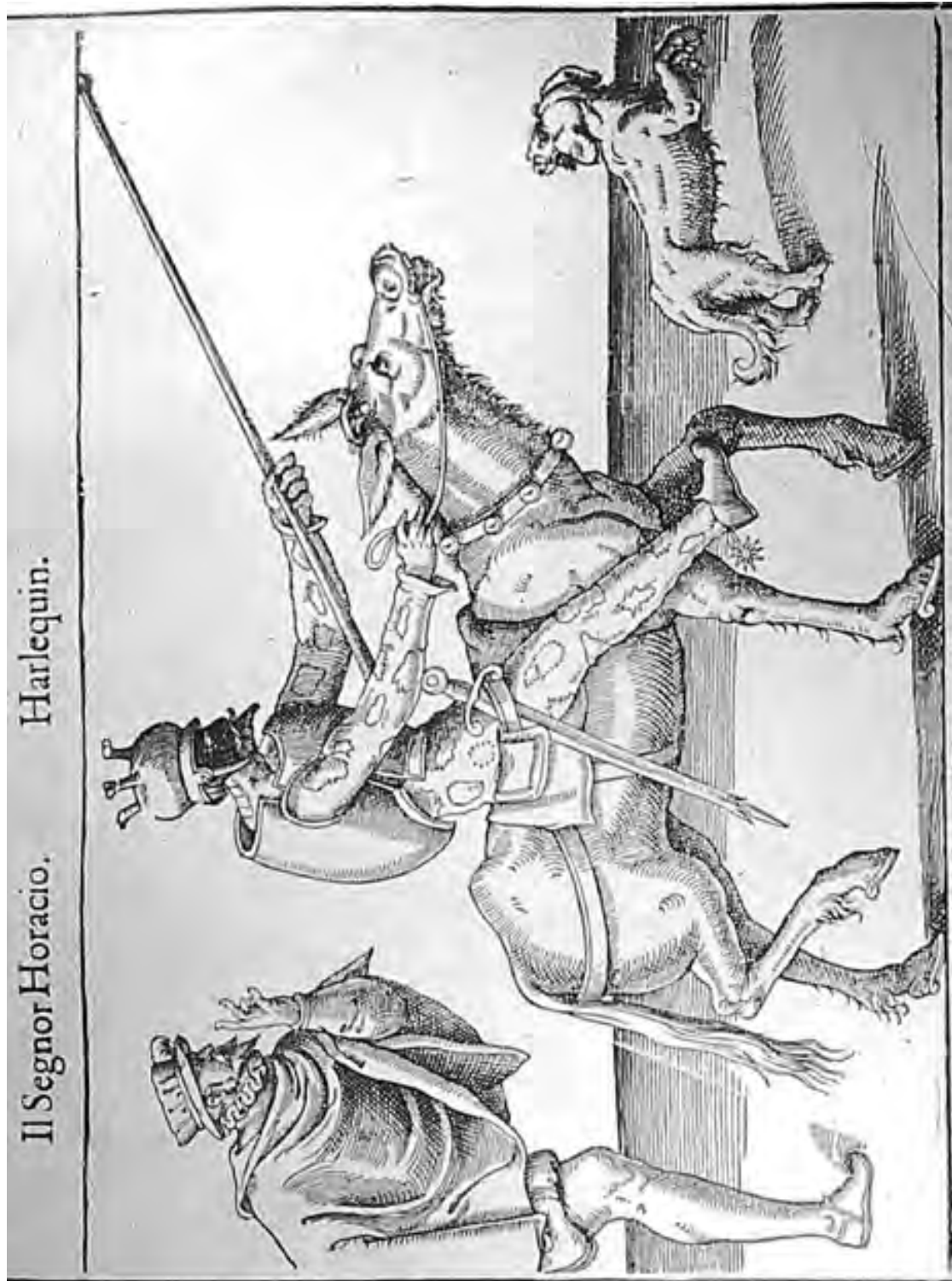


IL CAPITANO SPAVENTO, NAPOLITANO.
Miles inter hifiriones gloriofus.
Plautus in Milit. glor. I. j.
Hiccine Achilles est, inquit, tibe ?
Immo ejus frater inquam - - - -

Il Capitano as a typical military man. Compare this with Image 21 and you can see how a military man head looks with the Arrlechino body language. Adding the properties like the pot in the head, the breast plate on the back and the donkey as the means of transportation, we have a completely new character.



The lover character Il Cavalieri is a soldier like Il Capitano. Uniting youth and amorous expressions to military like gestures can create a courteously flirting avatar.



Arlecchino showing off as Il Capitano. Uniting the two Commedia dell'Arte characters and their properties brings in mind Don Quixote, the classic, pathetic and touching character of Miguel Cervantes.



Images 22-23 show Il Capitano masks played with acrobatic Zanni/Arlecchino mimics.





Images 24-27 show the development of the Arrlechino character. The costume, name and even the gender of Arrlechino (as a woman considered Colombina, but the qualities of the Arlecchino character are there) changed, but the character type remained clearly recognisable. By the eighteenth century actors revealed their face behind the mask (Images 26-27) in the end of performance in order to receive recognition for their mastery in acting the character. Artist and individual behind the mask had become important, as they have in MVWs that are capable of encouraging meaningful individual activity inside virtual community. Avatar's unmasking in the web usually occurs by providing one's own homepages for other community members to investigate.



L'E HARLEQUIN
Scurra Mimarius jocosissimus
Plautus in *Mutell.* l. a. 13.
Urbanus Scurra, deliciae populi.



dessiné par Lottin *Déposé à la Direction de la L.^g* *gravé par Stulken*

(Châssin Italien.) **DOMINIQUE.** (Rôle d'Aslaquin.)

*Bologne est ma patrie et Paris mon séjour;
S'y règle avec éclat sur la scène Comique.
Aslaquin sous le masque, y cache Dominique,*



MADemoisELLE HARLEQUINE

Horatius lib. I. oda. 19.

Ura grata protervitas.

Et vultus nimium lubricus affici.

Appendix:

Conversations in Dreamscape

The conversations below I have recorded with WA's "save messages" function during May-August 1998, as going around the WA world Dreamscape represented by my avatar Snow Leopard. I haven't marked the dates of the conversations, nor did I realize, until August, that the "save messages" function only saves the text still on the screen as I log out. WA remembers only x lines of communications and deletes the old lines as you go on "talking" around. That's why, for example, I have lost a very wonderful debate on the meaning/meaninglessness of chatting in virtual communities with avatar Jvc, but can offer some reflections on the debate in the conversation that continued with Lady J (NC). I've named the conversation "On Estrangement and Community Spirit."

As usual, the Dreamscape community has, however, already come up with a solution to my problem. Bolti Kymerling may still go around Kymer, the city of Dreamscape, sharing his software for saving all your messages without using WA's "save messages" function. Here's his announcement:

Bolti Kymerling: !!! ATTENTION !!!

Bolti Kymerling: A new Plug In for Dreamscape is now available.

Bolti Kymerling: The LINESAVER 1.1

Bolti Kymerling: Now save all your messages without the save messages in the menu bar.

Bolti Kymerling: Send marked text again from a preview window.

Bolti Kymerling: Click on me and load it down from my HP or go to the webside

Bolti Kymerling:

[HTTP://OURWORLD.COMUSERVE.COM/HOME/PAGES/BOLTEN](http://ourworld.comuserve.com/homepages/bolten)

Bolti Kymerling: <bow>

As you can see, I use the plain text font Courier New as referring to Dreamscape recorded material. All my own additions and explanations will be written with Times New Roman.

1. On Estrangement and Community Spirit

In this conversation one can see how a conflict can unite people in MVW. Just before the conversation below, avatar Jvc criticized virtual communities and other avatars claiming that their activities were pointless. He felt that people are stupid, as they give their money for the service provider just in order to walk around and say "hello" and "lol". He constantly referred to Sartre and existentialist angst showing off his level learning. Happily, I too am an existentialism fan and have also directed a Sartre play, so we got into a debate over the matter of existentialist choice. Jvc and I ended up departing from each other in a friendly atmosphere.

Avatars Trashka and Lady J (NC) gave me good support during the conversation with Jvc, and we are now close virtual friends. The conflict with Jvc produced me the best friends I've had in Dreamscape.

I like having this recording of my first encounter with them and think that there are many important points for world managers in my and Lady J's conversation.

Trashka: bye all<wave><grin>

ESP to Trashka: Just happened to know what he was being critical about.

Lady J (NC): bye T!<grin><wave>

Trashka: hugggggsmooches sis<grin>

Joscelin: Gonna run myself.. nice to meet you all!

Lady J (NC): smoochuggs<grin><bow>

ESP from Trashka: well you certainly seemed to know!

Snow Leopard: Bye, T.

ESP from Trashka: see ya<wave><grin>

Snow Leopard: Nice folks.

ESP from Lady J (NC): Do you teach?

ESP to Lady J (NC): I do - sometimes.

ESP from Lady J (NC): You seem ver well versedin that sort of thing<grin>

Betha Chief Golden Knight, SrK: Hiyas <wave>

ESP from Lady J (NC): I need a typing teacher<grin>

ESP to Lady J (NC): Just because I had happened to direct Sartre's play in question...

ESP to Lady J (NC): I TOO!

ESP from Lady J (NC): LOL

ESP from Lady J (NC): Wow!

ESP to Lady J (NC): I think the guy had really misunderstood the thing...

ESP from Lady J (NC): So, it was perhaps not mere chance that you happened along just when you did<grin>

ESP to Lady J (NC): perhaps he was very young.

ESP from Lady J (NC): I think he must have been drinking

ESP to Lady J (NC): Yes, that's a fine perspectrive...

ESP to Lady J (NC): May be.

ESP to Lady J (NC): I DO need the typing teacher: PERSPECTIVE - well you understand.

ESP from Lady J (NC): well..I certainly could not have argued with him on that subject

Snow Leopard: Very often people argue about a subject with terms...

ESP from Lady J (NC): and I'm sure he didn't expect to find anyone in here who could!! LOL

Snow Leopard: they expect others no nothing about so they can just show off.

Lady J (NC): exactly

Snow Leopard: It's a bit sad...

Lady J (NC): which was why it was great hearing you set him right

Snow Leopard: Why not to approach people with common language?

Lady J (NC): I have a brother like that

Snow Leopard: I used to be like that...

Snow Leopard: I hope I'm no longer.

Lady J (NC): I think we all have a need to be right to one degree or another

Snow Leopard: I'm sure.

Snow Leopard: But in order to be right...

Lady J (NC): You used to be, huh?

Snow Leopard: I think we should also be ready to learn by listening.

Lady J (NC): I agree

Snow Leopard: How can one listen, if one doesn't open the conversation with the terms...

Lady J (NC): Some people have a great deal of difficulty saying I was wrong, or I don't understand

Snow Leopard: all can use?

Lady J (NC): oh yes, he was not trying to enlighten

Lady J (NC): he was trying to denigrate

Snow Leopard: You know the joke about PhDs?

Lady J (NC): no

Snow Leopard: Wanna see me TRYING to type it?

Lady J (NC): LOL

Lady J (NC): I thought you were!!

Lady J (NC): If it's too long, nevermind<grin>

Snow Leopard: I TRY to be brief.

Lady J (NC): Up to you<grin>

Snow Leopard: Have you noticed the white gloves the person, who gives a fresh PhD his papers, ALWAYS wears?

Snow Leopard: They have a specially targeted biochemical poison in them...

Snow Leopard: part of the PLAN.

Lady J (NC): the plan?

Snow Leopard: The poison goes to a person's cortex, to a particular section of words in the brain...

Lady J (NC): uh huh...

Snow Leopard: and emits two sentences that you just mentioned before.

Snow Leopard: I don't know and I was wrong.

Lady J (NC): oh really?

Lady J (NC): <grin>
Snow Leopard: I've seen PhDs trying to do it...
Snow Leopard: They CANNOT.
Lady J (NC): oooohh...you meant Omits, not Emits, right?
Snow Leopard: Right.
Snow Leopard: Sorry.
Lady J (NC): Now I get it! LOL
Laurette: Hi Lady J
Laurette: Hi Snow
Lady J (NC): hi Laurette
Lady J (NC): bte Laurette
Lady J (NC): bye
Snow Leopard: Typing is TERRIBLE.
Snow Leopard: SLOW
Lady J (NC): mine is worse
Snow Leopard: PITA
Lady J (NC): it's late
Lady J (NC): where in the world are you?
ESP to Lady J (NC): Pain In The Ass
The Princess: is it cold in here or is it just me?
Snow Leopard: In Finland.
ESP from Lady J (NC): yeah, I know<grin>
Snow Leopard: Here it's early.
Lady J (NC): Is that where you're from?
Snow Leopard: Yes.
Lady J (NC): so...then, English is your second language?
Snow Leopard: Should you get some sleep?
Snow Leopard: Yes.
Lady J (NC): Wow!!
Lady J (NC): I'm impressed!
Catolyte Marvelous Melinda - GK: hi
Lady J (NC): again!
Snow Leopard: I'm VERY clumsy...
Lady J (NC): hiya Mel<wave>
Lady J (NC): so what?
Snow Leopard: Hi, M.
Lady J (NC): you're smart!! lol

Snow Leopard: lol

Snow Leopard: Where are you from?

<system>: Tue Aug 18 20:55:02 1998

<system>: Total time online: 100 hr 46 min 41 sec, since Wed Jan 28 05:01:48 1998

Lady J (NC): I'm American...born and raised in Boston....

Lady J (NC): have lived all over US

Snow Leopard: Still living there?

Lady J (NC): no, I'm in North Carolina now

Lady J (NC): Moving to Wales, UK soon

Snow Leopard: Haven't been there...

Snow Leopard: I've been in Boston often...

Snow Leopard: Wales will be nice!

Lady J (NC): I still like it there

Lady J (NC): Yes<grin> I'm looking forward to it<grin>

Snow Leopard: Have you been living in Europe before?

Lady J (NC): no, I've only been there once, in May

Lady J (NC): But I'm getting married in 2 weeks to a Welshman

Snow Leopard: I hope it will fulfil your expectations.

Lady J (NC): I will be very happy, I know it<grin>

Snow Leopard: Congratulations!

Lady J (NC): Thank you<bow>

Lady J (NC): What has taken you to Boston so many times?

Snow Leopard: There's no expression in the world I could take with this avatar!

Lady J (NC): <grin>

Snow Leopard: I've been looking into VR technologies in MIT.

Lady J (NC): VR?

Snow Leopard: Virtual reality

Lady J (NC): oooooooooohhh....

Lady J (NC): right<grin>

Snow Leopard: This a part of it, really.

Snow Leopard: This is...

Lady J (NC): It's a start<shrug>

Snow Leopard: Yep.

Snow Leopard: Just a met a guy here...

Lady J (NC): How long have you been coming here?

Snow Leopard: Tatsuko...

Lady J (NC): oh sorry...continue

Lady J (NC): uh huh

Snow Leopard: Since March.

Snow Leopard: Wel, Tatsuko just said to me yesterday...

Snow Leopard: that Kymer feels a better palce to come in...

Snow Leopard: as the technology is more simple and thus takes less downloading time.

Lady J (NC): you know...I've been coming here over 2 years now, and it used to be a lot better

Snow Leopard: It's a practical approach.

Lady J (NC): this technology is termed simple?

Snow Leopard: VERY interesting.

Snow Leopard: I'd like to hear about your experiences.

Lady J (NC): I was referring to the atmosphere actually, the technology has improved a lot

Snow Leopard: The atmosphere is most important!

Lady J (NC): I always liked coming here because there was a sense of community

Snow Leopard: I've felt that too.

Snow Leopard: But it was better before?

Lady J (NC): and people generally wanted to have fun and get along...manners were important

Lady J (NC): well...

Snow Leopard: You think it has changed?

Lady J (NC): I feel that there has been a shift away from that to some degree

Lady J (NC): It may change again,

Snow Leopard: Do you know if there are more people NOW than before?

Lady J (NC): but with the advent of it moving to the web, there is a different clientelle

Lady J (NC): no, there used to be more

Lady J (NC): a lot left when it went to the web

Snow Leopard: Where are they now?

Lady J (NC): some have gone to other virtual worlds

Lady J (NC): like Realm

Snow Leopard: So WA used to work where before the web?

Lady J (NC): it was just different<shrug>

Lady J (NC): It's probably going to keep evolving

Snow Leopard: Why have you stayed "loyal"?

Lady J (NC): just as any community does

Lady J (NC): One reason

Lady J (NC): I have some friends here

Snow Leopard: A good reason.

Lady J (NC): we have been friends for over a year

Lady J (NC): we come to have fun...joke around

Snow Leopard: Some of your friends are now in Realm and other worlds?

Lady J (NC): but also to talk to about many other things that affect our real lives

Lady J (NC): no

Lady J (NC): the friends I speak of have stayed

Snow Leopard: 2,5 years...

Snow Leopard: It's a long time.

Snow Leopard: I'm just a baby.

Lady J (NC): <grin>

Snow Leopard: lol

Lady J (NC): lol

Lady J (NC): I remember when I first got here

Lady J (NC): I was takin in and taken care of by a person I had just met

Lady J (NC): so that after just a couple of weeks

Lady J (NC): I felt like this was home<grin>

Lady J (NC): so, 5 months...you're no baby<grin><shrug>

Lady J (NC): lol

Snow Leopard: The same happened to me.

Snow Leopard: And I've done the same to newbies.

Lady J (NC): sohawe I<grin>

Snow Leopard: Newer than me I mean.

Lady J (NC): so there is still a sense of community

Lady J (NC): <grin>

Snow Leopard: I guess so...

Lady J (NC): ghostie, you can come doen<grin>

Lady J (NC): down
Snow Leopard: Come, come, ghostie...
Snow Leopard: It's acommunity down here.
Lady J (NC): lol
Snow Leopard: lol
Snow Leopard: We are a one big family, ghostie.
Lady J (NC): lol
Snow Leopard: A new hobby...
Lady J (NC): the wabbits and the cats are frindly<grin>
Snow Leopard: ..ghostie teasing & hunting.
Lady J (NC): ack
Lady J (NC): friendly
Snow Leopard: We are.
Snow Leopard: Trust us.
Lady J (NC): muahahahah!!!
Snow Leopard: Come on, Ghostie.
Lady J (NC): oops
Lady J (NC): oh well...
Snow Leopard: Your ears are neat.
Lady J (NC): thanks<grin>
Snow Leopard: Express emotion well...
Lady J (NC): <frown>
Lady J (NC): this is my favorite
Lady J (NC): lol
Snow Leopard: Yes!
Snow Leopard: Look at this.
Snow Leopard: I swing often with this expression.
Lady J (NC): hiss! spit!
Snow Leopard: sssssssss
Lady J (NC): <snarl>
Lady J (NC): wabbits snarl
Lady J (NC): hehe
Snow Leopard: This is SOOOO stupid gesture.
Lady J (NC): well...as much as I'd like to stay, I think I
need to be getting some sleep
Lady J (NC): lol
Snow Leopard: But the body was good for a snow leopard.

Lady J (NC): the flex?
 Snow Leopard: yes.
 Lady J (NC): it is<grin>
 Snow Leopard: Good night.
 Snow Leopard: See you later.
 Lady J (NC): Good night...great to ahev talked to you<grin>
 Snow Leopard: It was nice, indeed.
 Lady J (NC): Take care<grin><wave>
 Snow Leopard: Bye.
 <system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple St. Terrace
 Errika(tm): cher rofl
 <system>: Entering Locale: Lobby
 <system>: Entering Locale: Elevator
 <system>: Entering Locale: Lumi Residence

2. Shops, Soap, Sex and Literature

This recording gives a good overview of the activities avatars are involved with in Dreamscape. As I leave my good friend Lady J, I pass SkyRanger, who advertises his shop selling items no more available in the public vending machines. (There are a lot of shops hold by avatars in Dreamscape.) I go to a bank machine, but have no tokens left in my account, so I just start looking around the city. I follow a conversation on dirty language in the world and get at the same time a recording of a nice little poem by Patricia Yonkoske on "*Those Four-Letter Words*." After Myr's literature lesson, I witness Morning dew's and Errika's conversation on men in soap operas. Here we can see how television as a mass medium brings conversational subjects to the world after literature. As we can see, all these subjects are brought in by avatars. Would it be possible to bring in the subjects already in the design phase of the world, for example, by providing objects and locales with more information about their origin? Should we create thematic locales and objects linked with what ever are the matters of concern in the world today?

Snow Leopard: Good night.
 Snow Leopard: See you later.
 Lady J (NC): Good night...great to ahev talked to you<grin>

Snow Leopard: It was nice, indeed.

Lady J (NC): Take care<grin><wave>

Snow Leopard: Bye.

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple St. Terrace

Errika™: cher rofl

<system>: Entering Locale: Lobby

<system>: Entering Locale: Elevator

<system>: Entering Locale: Lumi Residence

<system>: Entering Locale: Elevator 3

<system>: Entering Locale: Elevator 2

<system>: Entering Locale: Elevator

SkyRanger III - Golden Knight: Come shop 'till you drop at THE HAWK'S NEST.

<system>: Entering Locale: Lobby

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple St. Terrace

Arora1: hmhhh....

morning dew: yes<jump><jump><jump>

<system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street

<system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Magic Shop

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Regency Hall

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Isle Caribe

<system>: Entering Locale: West Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: West Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: West Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: South Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: South Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: South Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: East Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: East Fountain

<system>: Entering Locale: East Fountain

<system>: You withdrew 60 tokens.

<system>: You have no tokens left in your account.

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside StarWay Cafe

<system>: Entering Locale: Entrance to Theatre

<system>: Entering Locale: Corner Gnarled Oak & Temple

<system>: Entering Locale: Entrance to Victorian Gardens

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple of Morpheus
 <system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple of Morpheus
 <system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple of Morpheus
 <system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street
 <system>: Entering Locale: Outside Magic Shop
 <system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street
 <system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street
 <system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple St. Terrace
 <system>: You have entered as a ghost due to overcrowded
 conditions.
 Errika™: yes
 Agent Dana Scully: Hi
 Errika™: u know son used to think todd was mech
 morning dew: he said----it really doesn't matter whether you
 believe me or not
 Errika™: lol used to say daddy all the time when it was on
 rofl
 Errika™: ahhh
 morning dew: in a sinister way
 Errika™: that gave him away then<shrug>
 Myr: THOSE FOUR-LETTER WORDS
 Myr:
 Errika™: lol
 Myr: Some four-letter words offend me,<frown>
 Myr: Whether by ear or in a book;
 Errika™: lol
 Myr: The ones that evoke the worst feelings in me,
 Myr: Are:IRON, DUST, and COOK.<grin><grin>
 Myr:
 Myr: --Patricia Yonkoske--<bow>
 Errika™: lol
 morning dew: rofl
 morning dew: good one
 Errika™: really noone good looking really on oltl cept
 todd<shrug>
 Myr: Nite all<wave>
 morning dew: Arora you are not in the loop here

Errika™: and amc only tad<shrug>lol
morning dew: hee hee
Errika™: lol
Aroral: Niters
morning dew: don't watch soap
morning dew: lol
Errika™: dont watch much anymore
Aroral: nope I'm not
Aroral: don't watch them<shrug>
Errika™: caught last few min. gh today<shrug>
Aroral: lol
morning dew: hmmm thinking of cute guys
Errika™: lol
morning dew: Max is kinda cute
Aroral: I used to watch all the night time ones but now they
are history - LOL
Errika™: well jax takes it in soaps<jump>
Errika™: well kinda dorky tho lol
morning dew: yes he does
Errika™: lol
Errika™: a
morning dew: did you watch when Jaeger was on
Errika™: max is kinda dorky lol
morning dew: ouch
Errika™: yes
Errika™: lol
Errika™: orstone<shrug>
morning dew: He is a hunk
Errika™: ya
Aroral: ouch?
Errika™: lol
morning dew: Antonio Sabata Jr.
Aroral: Howdy Keef<wave>
Errika™: hot arora lol
morning dew: oh la la
Errika™: hence ouch! lol
Aroral: roflmao

Errika™: oo la la
Aroral: oh
Errika™: lol
Errika™: how bout y and r md?
Errika™: <shrug>
morning dew: did you watch when he was in Earth 2
Errika™: a few times
Errika™: kids did
Errika™: <shrug>
morning dew: nope don't watch that
Aroral: I watched Earth 2 a couple of times
Errika™: ah
Errika™: noone there any good anyway lol
Aroral: Ryker used to watch it all the time<shrug>
Errika™: <shrug>
Errika™: my dad did too
morning dew: he was the Calvin Klien looking guy in it
morning dew: Antonio Sabata Jr.
Errika™: but that victor newman guy was at an italian store we
have nearby few years ago when they opened<shrug>
Errika™: they have pic of him ther
Errika™: e
Aroral: Antonio - good Italian name - LOL
morning dew: hmmm
morning dew: yea
Errika™: and a friend of mechs knows all y&r actors
personally<jump>
Errika™: lol
morning dew: great bod
Errika™: yep
Errika™: yep
Errika™: <jump>
morning dew: you guys are bad
morning dew: my hubby is away
morning dew: now ya got me all hot
Aroral: awwwww

Errika™: mechs friend did promotion for coke who presented y&r
people at ex<shrug>
morning dew: and bothered
Errika™: lol
Aroral: get out the v word Dew
Errika™: lol
Aroral: lol
Errika™: the v.....
Errika™: lol
morning dew: kewl
morning dew: he knows PEOPLE
Errika™: lol
morning dew: in the know
Errika™: ive seen some of them rw<shrug>
Errika™: nicky, gina
Aroral: wild
Errika™: victors brother who used to be on there<shrug>
morning dew: I waited on Jodie Foster
Errika™: ya?
morning dew: when I was a waitress
Errika™: what was she like?
morning dew: in California
morning dew: very nice and tall
Errika™: ah
Aroral: Howdy Ghostie<wave>
Errika™: she seems very smart too
morning dew: Bobby Brown too
Errika™: <wave>
Errika™: hmm
Aroral: Come on down - we don't bite - LOL
Errika™: not fond of him
Errika™: <sigh>
morning dew: but he was a schmuck
Errika™: <frown>
Errika™: <grin>
Errika™: ya
Aroral: rofl

Errika™: lol
morning dew: this place was Hyatt Regency
Errika™: ah
morning dew: and he was throwing food
Snow Leopard: Sorry.
Aroral: Howdy<wave>
Errika™: lol
Errika™: np
Errika™: hi
Aroral: How are ya?
Snow Leopard: Just getting a taste of...
Snow Leopard: A conversation between women.
Errika™: of?
Errika™: lol
morning dew: lol
Snow Leopard: lol
Aroral: roflmao
Snow Leopard: Scary.
Aroral: was it an eye opener?
morning dew: hee hee not our typical conversation
Errika™: lol
Errika™: lol
Errika™: no
Errika™: lol
Snow Leopard: What we are compared with...
morning dew: we usually talk about sex
Errika™: lol
Snow Leopard: That's better.
Aroral: ROFLMAO Dew
Dylan Zen: my kinda subject
Aroral: Hi<wave>
Dylan Zen: can i join in?
Errika™: ya kinda hard being compared to that jax guy eh
md?lol
Errika™: lol
Errika™: sure
Errika™: <grin>

morning dew: yeah
Errika™: hi
Snow Leopard: I prefer more intimate spaces for the sex
converstaion...
morning dew: man that guy doesn't really exist I don't think
Errika™: lol
Dylan Zen: hey you guys
Errika™: prolly not
Aroral: lol
Errika™: puter generated md lol
morning dew: lol airbrushed
Snow Leopard: lol
Errika™: u know what his reall name is md?
Errika™: <grin>
morning dew: I wanna see more
Errika™: lol air brushed
Errika™: lol
morning dew: ummmmmmm
Aroral: ROFL
morning dew: can't recall it
Errika™: ingo wannamaker
morning dew: sorry
Snow Leopard: Funny folks.
morning dew: Ingo?
Snow Leopard: FUUUNNY.
Errika™: lol
Errika™: yep
Errika™: rofl
Errika™: <shrug>
Snow Leopard: Bye.
morning dew: Wanna make er scream
morning dew: lol
Errika™: lol
Errika™: <wave>
<system>: Entering Locale: Lobby
<system>: Entering Locale: Elevator
<system>: Entering Locale: Lumi Residence

3. Birth of Theatre Group with Mother and Bride

In this final conversation I first made the suggestion of founding a stand-up comedy theatre group to avatars Lady J and Trashka. As you can see in the conversation with these two Americans, they will make a very good team. Trashka is a mother for three children she talks about in the conversation and Lady J was just getting married to a Welshman. Now she's married and in Europe. We had already in two weeks time developed our own sense of humor as you can see.

Dredd: Hi all

Trashka: my nieces beg me to brush their hair

Snow Leopard: trust her

Trashka: cuz there mom

Lady J (NC): her hair is wet and long and thick

Trashka: makes them scream<grin>

Lady J (NC): lol

Lady J (NC): muahahaha!!

Trashka: I think it's a mom thing! lol

Snow Leopard: to torture kids?

Lady J (NC): I think it's a lack of patience thing<grin>

Trashka: well that goes without saying

Trashka: <shrug>

Daira: My daughter opted for shorthair cuz of me<g>

Lady J (NC): <grin>

Trashka: but having no girls myself....I have more patience

Lady J (NC): lol, D

Trashka: with the long hair<jump>

Lady J (NC): Paul brushes it for her and she loves it

Snow Leopard: poor boys

Daira: easy for youto say, T<grin>

Trashka: I know<grin>

Trashka: poor boys?

Snow Leopard: What's cooking now, T?

Trashka: poor boys?
Trashka: actually my son has long hair
Snow Leopard: well just imagining
Trashka: and he lets me brush it!<jump>
Snow Leopard: how old is he?
Trashka: imagining?
Trashka: he's 16
Snow Leopard: well, and he likes it?
Snow Leopard: I didn't back then
Trashka: the reason he has long hair is the girls mess with it
all the time
Lady J (NC): yeah sis....but daughters have a totally
different temperment
Trashka: lol
Snow Leopard: I know
Snow Leopard: LOL
Daira: VERY
Snow Leopard: That's why I used to have long hair too
Trashka: figures
Trashka: lol
Snow Leopard: but mom didn't touch it
Trashka: he lets me mess with it
Trashka: put braids in it
Trashka: and stuff
Trashka: lol
Snow Leopard: well educated
Lady J (NC): lol
Snow Leopard: tortured
Snow Leopard: that's the way he learns
Lady J (NC): and dye it too, huh sis?
Trashka: ok SL what is this idea you had?
Trashka: was gonna say that sis
Trashka: lol
Lady J (NC): hehe
Snow Leopard: the idea...
Snow Leopard: should we seek for more privacy?
Trashka: well...

Trashka: ummmmm...

Lady J (NC): lol

Daira: sounds like it<shrug>

Trashka: what the hell kinda idea is this???

Trashka: <grin>

Snow Leopard: just to keep the surprise for other?

Snow Leopard: others

Trashka: ok then....

Trashka: brb I guess

Lady J (NC): brb

Trashka: if we're not...

Snow Leopard: to my place or yours?

Snow Leopard: LOL

Trashka: will you organize a search party

Daira: sure

Trashka: and give a description

Lady J (NC): lol

Trashka: of the cat?

Trashka: brb<grin><wave>

Snow Leopard: It's LEOPARD!

Trashka: follow me

Trashka: CAT

Trashka: <grin>

Snow Leopard: ok...

Lady J (NC): how about feline?

Lady J (NC): would that do?

Trashka: No I like CAT

Snow Leopard: gee

Lady J (NC): lol

Lady J (NC): figures sis

Trashka: well ya know...he doesn't like it...

Trashka: soooooooooo

Trashka: CAT it is<grin>

Snow Leopard: say the Superior Pharaof Cat

Jaques: ???

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Magic Shop

Cutter: lol

<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Regency Hall
Jaques: awwww
Jaques: I wanna see too
Snow Leopard: Where did they go?
Jaques: secret stuff
Daira: it was a secret<shrug>
Jaques: we not allowed
Celtia: hiya folks
Jaques: celtia<wave>
ESP from Trashka: come to turf: Brat Pad
Daira: Hi Celtia and Jugs<wave>
Snow Leopard: oh my
Celtia: hi Jacques! <jump>
Celtia: hiya Daira
<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Magic Shop
<system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street
<system>: Entering Locale: Temple Street
<system>: Entering Locale: Outside Temple St. Terrace
<system>: Entering Locale: Lobby
Indigoflight3: awwwwwwwwww its kinda cute
<system>: Entering Locale: Elevator
Lissa-Squire GK: awswwwwwww how sweet he giving you kisses
Peppermint I: I brush them every day
<system>: Sorry, that address is not serviced by this
elevator.
Peppermint I: he just likes my teeth lol
Lissa-Squire GK: lol<grin>
<system>: Entering Locale: :-P
Trashka: Hi There<wave><grin>
Lady J (NC): Hiya<grin><wave>
Lady J (NC): so.....
Snow Leopard: so do I get a Prats Pad now
Trashka: lol
Lady J (NC): lol
Snow Leopard: What a name...
Snow Leopard: lol
Lady J (NC): this is a shared turf<grin>

Trashka: you get the dubious honor of saying you were INVITED to the Brat pad<grin>

Snow Leopard: for you two?

Lady J (NC): yeah!

Lady J (NC): that's what ya get!

Lady J (NC): for a lot of us

Snow Leopard: ok

Snow Leopard: You see I was thinking that we could organise a theatre group here in Kymer...

Snow Leopard: You've been around a long time - have you seen any/many?

Trashka: theres one theatre group

Lady J (NC): saw it tried once

Trashka: was awful

Trashka: <grin>

Snow Leopard: was it good?

Lady J (NC): yeah

Snow Leopard: ok

Trashka: in my opinion

Trashka: anyway<grin>

Lady J (NC): awful

Snow Leopard: what did they do?

Trashka: well....they used objects

Trashka: as characters

Trashka: and a play written by one of the oracles

Snow Leopard: puppet theatre?

Trashka: yeah?

Trashka: thats' it

Trashka: puppet theatre

Trashka: you saw it?

Lady J (NC): hope he doesn't say he ran it

Lady J (NC): lol

Snow Leopard: but your PERFORMANCE work was really nice - made me laugh

Trashka: thinkin the same damn thing!

Trashka: lol

Lady J (NC): lol

Lady J (NC): but Cat?

Lady J (NC): we are not performing, exactly

Trashka: We are strictly Improv!<grin>

Snow Leopard: specially the silly cats on both sides of "Sinatra"

Lady J (NC): yes...nothing is scripted

Snow Leopard: That's what performing is really about!

Trashka: well then..we do that everyday!<grin>

Lady J (NC): yep!

Lady J (NC): <grin>

Snow Leopard: <grin>

Snow Leopard: but some things could be rehearsed...

Lady J (NC): sometimes, when we're both "on" it's really great

Snow Leopard: like TERRIBLE ladies' Cabaret Number

Lady J (NC): some times are better than others

Trashka: lol

Snow Leopard: you looked awful as wicked witches

Snow Leopard: funny

Trashka: ya know what....Ny and I were talkin about working up

Trashka: some little skit like things

Trashka: for when things were slow

Trashka: did she tell you J?

Lady J (NC): lol

Trashka: lol

Lady J (NC): no

Lady J (NC): you two are always scheming<grin>

Trashka: We were actually talkin about it...

Trashka: when someone says

Trashka: Entertain me!

Trashka: we were gonna...entertain them!

Trashka: yeah we are

Lady J (NC): I see....

Trashka: aren't we? lol

Lady J (NC): lol

Snow Leopard: so you were already doing it...

Lady J (NC): we have some things that may as well be scripted<grin>

Trashka: nahhh we were talkin about having some routines
Trashka: on standby
Trashka: so to speak
Trashka: <grin>
Lady J (NC): I understand<grin>
Snow Leopard: yes!
Snow Leopard: routines in free improvisation
Snow Leopard: in interaction with audience
Lady J (NC): well....I'd be interested in hearing your ideas
Trashka: yeah so would I<grin>
Snow Leopard: shutting them up sometimes
Snow Leopard: stretching the limits
Lady J (NC): no guarantees of course
Snow Leopard: sure
Lady J (NC): I'm still a damn brat
Lady J (NC): lol
Trashka: I'm the Queen!<grin>
Snow Leopard: This is a kind of long story...
Snow Leopard: my coming to the world...
Lady J (NC): send e-mail!!<jump><jump>
Snow Leopard: and I really should provide some material to you
in order to communicate better...
Snow Leopard: I will if you are up to it.
Lady J (NC): sure<grin>
Trashka: <grin>
Snow Leopard: good
Lady J (NC): Jjen1@compuserve.com
Lady J (NC): is the adress I use the most
Trashka: gosh I thought you used the other one most<frown>
Lady J (NC): and now...I have to call my future father in
law<grin>
Trashka: k sis
Snow Leopard: See I'm actually currently doing research - my
address is mika.tuomola@coronet.fi - ...
Lady J (NC): nah!
Lady J (NC): I have Sprynet mail
Lady J (NC): I mewn I hate sprynet mail

Lady J (NC): um.....

Lady J (NC): e-mail me and then I'll have your address<grin>

Snow Leopard: me?

Lady J (NC): yes, you

Snow Leopard: you got the address

Snow Leopard: but I'll mail you

Snow Leopard: T?

Lady J (NC): that would be better

Trashka: sorry talkin to one my kids!

Snow Leopard: k

Trashka: he makes things so complicated sometimes!

Trashka: ok

Trashka: you gonna send us email then?

Trashka: you need my address?

Snow Leopard: so, should I mail you first and we continue from there?

Trashka: trashka@thevision.net