



Edward Gordon Craig: Stage of Puppets

Mike McCafferty

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Edward Gordon Craig is considered one of the greatest dramatists of the 20th century. His contributions to stage lighting, set design and directing have directly influenced theatre as we know it today.

And yet, it was one article that he wrote which might have changed theatre to the point of being unrecognizable. His short piece, "The Actor and the Übermarionette" went to great lengths to make the case for completely replacing stage actors with giant marionettes. It caused such an uproar in the theatre community, that Craig would later recant the text, saying that it was only a metaphorical statement and not to be taken literally. For decades, this explanation has satisfied scholars and dramatists alike.

But new discoveries have cast doubt upon that interpretation. The recent revelation that Craig had in fact ordered the construction of several large marionettes now suggests that he was completely serious with his desire to rid the stage of living actors. But the question is: why?

Stage of puppets looks at the evidence supporting Craig's Übermarionette theory and his reasons behind it. It also examines past and present uses of puppetry, marionettes and other surrogates for humans on stage, including CGI. And finally, asks the question of whether his theory would have truly worked, or is already at work as we speak!

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