

The Face in Mind.

The Mask and its
psychology.

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THE FACE IN MIND.

The mask and its psychology.

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Introduction.

This thesis deals with the mask in its physical and psychological roles. It delineates the historical uses and roots of masks and their continued use today as items of social and religious significance to millions of people.

It sets out objectives - in the form of questions I would like answered. Delving behind the historical and contemporary uses the question of why masks are worn is asked, and thus the important psychological question is raised.

Finally, the use of the mask in the classroom is observed and reported on. In doing this lesson suggestions are incorporated.

The title of the discourse - The face in mind - is a reflection on the dual role of the mask, the object and objective.

Mary MacKenna.

June 1980.

Outings to the circus, when it came to the area, were great occasions. The clown was the main attraction, with his red nose and funny face. We were all frightened, yet fascinated, by this mysterious character.

The fact that most of these masks were grotesque in their own way never bothered me. Indeed, today, looking at the masks which are being sold, there is a great emphasis on the terrifying and the grotesque. Rarely do you find masks which are pretty.

But what exactly is a mask? One definition states :

"A form of disguise. An object that is frequently worn over or in front of the face to hide the identity of the person, and by its own features to establish another being. This essential characteristic of hiding and revealing personalities or moods is common to all masks. As cultural objects they have been used throughout the world in all periods since the stone age and have been as varied in their appearance as in their symbolism." (I)

The face is the main concern of the mask. If you cover the face you conceal the identity of the person. But why the face? The great interest in the face is found in many ways of making contact. The face assumes great importance in everyday social

(I) - Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Chapter I.

THE IDEA OF THE MASK.

Masks are a subject I have always found interesting, yet it's amazing how little people know about them. A mask is thought of as something worn by children on certain occasions, or by some tribes who know no better, or by actors in certain of the theatrical productions. Do we ever really wonder what a mask is? What is its purpose? Is it a gimmick, or has it any real purpose?

Before I began to seriously consider the role of the mask in society and its psychological effects my only knowledge of them - like many people - was my memory of getting a mask each Hallowe'en. These were usually ugly witch masks made from painted plastic, but nevertheless they always led to wonderful games connected with the big bad witch in which an old coat or blanket was tied about the shoulders to act as a cloak. This added to the atmosphere of surrealism.

I once took part in a play which was the high light of my school years. Why? Because, due to shyness, it was the only time I ventured onto a stage before an audience. But this occasion was different - I was wearing a mask. It was great. I couldn't be seen, my blushes were spared! I could, then, act. I played the part of a witch, complete with pointed nose and long nails.

life. Its role is crucial in greeting and in declarations of salutation and homage. There are some curious examples of ceremonial greetings to be found.

"In the Phillipine Islands the custom used to be to greet newcomers by rubbing the guests hand or foot over the hosts face. An old Nigerian form of greeting was to kneel and rub foreheads together." (2)

Rubbing of noses is a not uncommon form of greeting. The original purpose of this was to allow two people to experience the scent of each others body. This was accounted the most highly intimate form of contact possible.

The interest in the face and hiding it is derived from its mobility and remarkable powers of expressions - as from its shape. The curves and bumps on its surface have excited interest and were popularly believed to be an infallible guide to personality, character and ability. Even taking a part of the face - the eyes - the power of expression is immense. And putting all the elements together a very powerful expression is formed.

When making a mask there is no need for mathematical precision. No need for patient brush work, a hint suffices - holes for the eyes, a line for the mouth and nose - and we have a face with ready expression. Our minds eye can be relied on to create

(2) - The Human Face; John Ligget.

the necessary detail that gives meaning and character to the face. But the detail we fill in will be our own, and the face will be quite unique, in fact the face of our fertile imagination. So, we hide one face with another, which will not change but remain constant. This need not be human, it could be animal or abstract. But it portrays certain characteristics that are recognisable to the audience, and which create emotions and reactions. Imagine a person in full costume with no changes made to his face, neither a mask in make up or material form. The effects would be noticeably less on the audience. But cover his face with a mask and you have a completely new character. A desired reaction is achieved.

"This profound interest and preoccupation with the mysteries of the face and its parts have always been there, and there has always been a profound conviction that the spirit of the person resides in and around, enshrined in its likeness" (3)

Countless folk tales and legends have been witness to man's insatiable curiosity about the magical characteristics of the face and its features. The tales of the Evil Eye, of the spirits and demons dwelling in the eyes of witches, tales of

(3) - The Human Face; John Liggett.

mouths breathing an all consuming fire - folklore is rife with such stories. Such convictions underline the multitude of strange customs involving the mask.

There were certain points I hoped to deal with when I set out to write about masks. One was the question of when masks are worn. In Ireland, today, masks are seldom worn except in connection with folk festivals, like Hallowe'en. Yet, in other countries they are an intricate part of life, society actually revolves around the mask and its wearer. The mask is also an important part of theatre, especially in Japan and China.

In the Western world the mask never had this significance, 'though many contemporary playwrights are including the mask in their work.

Of course the mask and religious ceremonies are inseparable in many countries.

Finding the occasions on which masks are worn one finds a further question - why are they worn? Why do people wear masks? Basically to hide one identity and establish another. But the purpose is manifold. As I explained earlier, their first purpose for me was to hide nervousness when I went on stage. They can also create a sense of mystery, the fantastic and the grotesque. In doing so they give expression

to emotions and ideas and to arouse deep reactions.

Masks are also used in connection with the spiritual world and in religious ceremonies. The mask is supremely versatile. It does duty in folk lore and merrymaking, religion and ceremony, peace and at wartime, in crime and punishment, in social discipline and in social licence, in tragedy and comedy. It is part of the great events of life and death - and an integral part.

So we come to the wearer. Has he a part to play in the psychology of the mask ? Without the wearer the real power and drama of the mask would be lost! When a person is attired in a mask the personal identity is lost and the identity of the mask is assumed. The wearer sometimes undergoes a psychic change and assumes the spirit character depicted by the mask.

In most cases the mask is worn for the benefit of an audience, realistic or spiritual, except in industry where protection is the essence of wearing the mask.

Psychologically , the spectator becomes involved with the mask character and this can lead to a state of frenzy, dictated by the mask wearer - be it repulsion or familiarity.

These aspects will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Two, together with a history of the development of the mask

Chapter 2.

through the centuries.

The History Of The Mask.

The third chapter will deal with the questions of why and when the mask is worn.

The final chapter will deal with the modern uses of the mask and its use and value as an item of education.

Chapter 2.

The History Of The Mask.

The head, and particularly the face, has always been seen as a particularly important part of the body, holding magic properties in the eyes of some. Such properties were believed to go on after the death of the body. In many lands, and in many times, the head of the dead person has been held in particular reverence. Even today - and in developed society - a lock of hair from someone who has died is held in special awe. In many places, however, more than a lock of hair is kept. In Tibet and Bhutan the head is often severed from the body and kept as a reminder of the deceased. In the past, the head was kept in the home and the body left out to the birds of prey. The severed head was believed to possess magical powers.

It was the magical power of the head that fascinated the headhunters of Borneo. They believed their adversaries spirit was contained in his head. So, to conquer the spirit, they chopped off the head!

Even today the practice of head hunting and head shrinking continues among the Jivaro Indians of Ecuador, despite official prohibition. It is interesting that the mouths of the shrunken

heads have been tightly sewn up to prevent the escape of the spirit.

The curious power of the facial images is clearly shown in the central role played by idols and masks in religious ceremonies, particularly those of death.

In ancient Egypt masks were believed capable of conferring eternal youth on the deceased, they insured his eternal welfare in the next world. Such masks were made of precious materials - gold and jewels - and the splendour of the work can be seen in the funeral mask of Tutenkhammun which is made from gold, glass and precious stones.

Death masks were also worn in ancient Greece:

"Several bodies were buried together, laid directly on the pebble covered floor, fully dressed in gold ornamented clothes, their faces covered with golden masks." (4)

Masks representing Persephone, Goddess of the Underworld, were often attached to the faces of the dead to protect them and to ease their journey into the next world. In tombs at Mycenae such funeral masks have been discovered, beautifully

(4)- The Origins Of Western Art; Ann Powell



(B. & C.)

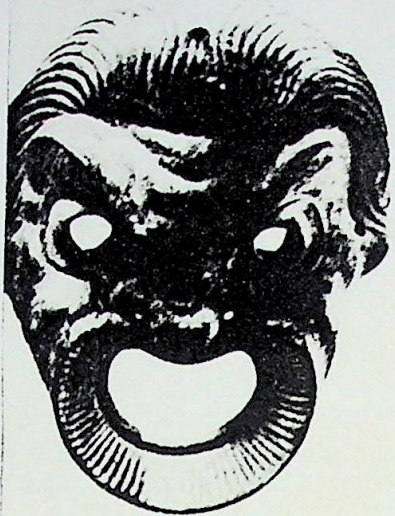
fashioned from gold. Masks of great beauty were worn, too by worshippers of Dionysius and Appollo.

Greek peasants celebrated the grape harvest with festivities in honour of Dionysius, the god of wine and fertility. Encouraged by the wine they had consumed they began to dance in the fires and smear their faces with wine. These humble people showed, for a short period, the way to escape from their awkwardness into the role playing of primitive gods of ritual. The festivities became occasions of great celebration, and the escape of anonymity led to the freedom of orgies. Grotesque and amusing variations of the old religious masks became popular and the revellers began to play parts. A pattern developed and a semi-religious ritual became increasingly dramatic, with parts being appropriate to the mask worn. Thus, the mask gave birth to a dramatic art form. Differing colours came to symbolise heroes and villains, masks became increasingly sophisticated and, eventually, quite large so that the actions could be followed in great amphitheatres, even though the players words might be inaudible.

Added to the mask the costume became an enlargement of effect.

"In Greek tragedy elaborate robes were worn, often brightly coloured and highly embroidered in imitation of their God Dinysius." (5)

(5) Concise History of the Theatre; Ed. Phyllis Hartnoll.



(a)

Later the height was increased by a head dress which lent dignity to a character. The most important feature of the costume was the mask, said to have been introduced by Thespis and made in light wood, cork or linen. This enabled the three actors in a tragedy to play several parts each, and in a theatre staffed only by men to impersonate women.

"Greek tradition explains how Thespis, said to be the first actor/manager had treated the faces of his actors with white lead, then covered it with wine lees, and finally introduced masks of unpainted linen. His successor introduced masks of light colour, enabling the chorus, who were all male, to appear as women. These early grotesque characters, perhaps similar to the masks with which we are familiar from Africa and North America today, but Aeschylus is credited with introducing large and dignified masks into the Greek theatre. Just as he elevated tragedy from its earlier crude origins so he raised the mask far above the primitive style of the archaic age." (6)

More than thirty types of masks are known to have existed, indicating not only the age and sex of the character but the dominant emotions - fear, hate, rage and despair. The actor, denied the use of facial expressions, and limited by his

(6) - Masquerade; George Speaight.

costume to broad, sweeping gestures. Furthermore, masks were exaggerated for comic use. Their theatrical use continued into Roman times.

Masks eventually disappeared from the civilized world and didn't reappear until the Middle Ages when they were used in the Mystery Plays. These plays achieved great popularity throughout Europe as a form of religious entertainment. Even today, colourful masks are employed in Eastern mystery plays.

The masks were used by the devils in the Mediaeval mystery plays and some of them have survived. We can see from these that the ornamentation centred on animal snouts and great horns.

But the real revival of the mask in theatre did not come until the sixteenth century. This was in the Commedia Dell Arte. this form of theatre is parallel with the growth of the serious academic theatre, dependant on the actor rather than the playwright. These actors were distinguished by their costumes and masks. Each mask possessed characteristics that were immediately recognisable to the audience, so that when a mask was put on the audience knew exactly who the character was. The masks worn in the Comedia Dell Arte were half masks, covering only the upper part of the face. This permitted easier flow of speech and also created a link with the unmasked

players.

"This use of masked and unmasked players playing together is almost unique to the Comedia Dell Arte, it fitted the structure of the plays in which romance and sentiment went side by side farce and bufoonery" (7).

The Comedia Dell Arte spread across Europe, carrying its masked characters with it. The characters of Harlequin and Punch in England came from the Comedia Dell Arte. From this form of pantomime came the true mimed entertainment. The only character to retain a mask was Harlequin, whose original tattered finery became prettified into a neat, skin tight costume of red, yellow and blue lozenges. In the nineteenth century, under the influence of Joseph Grimaldi, Harlequin was displaced by the clown. Yet, as long as Harlequin appeared - until the end of the century - he still wore a half mask.

It was around the end of the nineteenth century that theatrical make-up made its appearance. Going back to the Middle Ages and the Mystery Play, characters like God and the Angel had the appearance of having their hands gilded. When make up was first used it was limited to creating the impression of old age or dark skin. It was the clown in pantomime who introduced a non-naturalist form of make-up.

(7)- Masquerade; George Speaight.



(ع)

Circus clowns have developed into two main types. The white faced, with immaculate, sequined costume, with -perhaps- the eyebrow curling down over the cheek. The second type is the tattered figure with shoes and clothes which are too large, grotesque, red-nosed make-up, exaggerated features and straggling hair. Both of these types of make-up are, in fact, masks, insofar as they create an immediately recognisable type. Yet, they do not destroy personality as every clown devises his own make-up, which is accepted in the profession as copyright.

The social use of masks developed in the Western countries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the ladies covered their faces with small masks which had the added advantage of covering the ravages of disease and caustic make-up. These masks were also a protection when riding out in the Winter winds. Even at night masks were worn in bed to improve the complexion. Outworn day masks were used for this purpose, being heavily creamed and pulled against the face.

In Edwardian times the veil was very popular. These veils had extremely attractive designs. Together with the large hats of the day they combined to create a most pleasing and expanded visual space about the face. In the Eastern world the veil maintains its popularity today, being known variously as the Burqua, the Yashmak or the Chadri.

Another method of partial concealment was the fan. This was very popular in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century. Originally the fan was used only by ladies of the court or by courtesans, but by the end of the seventeenth century it had been adopted by most of the ladies of fashion.

An old Maori proverb declares: "There's no woman for a hairy man". There is strong evidence that since times of antiquity the beard has been regarded as a sign of virility and strength. In Babylonian times it was regarded as a symbol of manhood. It was used, too, as a mask, a means of changing appearance. Indeed, the Babylonians lavished great attention on their beards, decorating them with rows of curls and stiffening them with perfumed oil. The old testament counselled all good men: Ye shalt not round the corners of ye'er heads, neither shall ye mar the corners of the beard. (Leviticus 19:27).

In Egypt the beard was looked upon as a sign of social rank and dignity. Throughout history this mask has been honoured, at times assuming sacred proportions. Several folk legends tell of babies being put to death for daring to touch their own fathers beards. In the sixteenth century, however, the beard met with opposition, and became the object of a tax. The circle seems to be reaching a stage of completion today, with the beard, again, assuming a place of importance and fashion among younger men.

Another development of the masks' use was its place in folk festivities, usually in the work of Mummers. Masked mummary was a feature of the carnivals and was characterized by licence, bufoonery, jokes and a relaxation of inhibitions. Hungarian records show that King Louis II himself took part in a festival and wore a Devils mask.

"These sound harmless occasions, but in England King Henry VIII issued a decree against mummary and the penalty was arrest as a vagabond, and three months in prison. This was because it so often became an excuse for larcency and even murder"(8).

In Ireland mummers appeared at different seasons. They were particularly popular at weddings, where they were believed to bring good luck. On such occasions anonymity was important and recognition of the mummers was believed to break the good luck charm. Straw, a material readily available in an agricultural society, was often worn as a disguise. Indeed, it was often the only material the mummers could afford. These "strawboys" wore a conical straw mask, resting on the shoulders, usually, and sometimes a pleated straw coat which covered the body completely.

In Nova Scotia Christmas mummers dressed in tattered clothes

(8)- A Folklore Study; Venetia Newwell.

with masks of painted canvas and tall, pointed hats. Sometimes they dressed as women, or donned an animal face mask, with cowbells about the neck. Masks were known as "false faces" and were designed to be as ugly as possible.

"The Wooser, or Christmas Bull of Dorset and Wiltshire had a mask with horns, shaggy hair, glossy eyes and jaws that opened and shut, which was a frightening sight. A piece of folk drama, depicting a fight to the death and a resurrection, within the structure of a meeting between St. George and a Turkish Knight was, and sometimes still is, performed by rustic amateurs who were totally masked by strips of newspaper hanging down over their faces and clothes. These masks clearly serve the purpose of enabling the performer to shed his old personality before enacting a fertility rite." (9)

Such mummary is still an integral part of folk customs in many parts of contemporary Europe.

In the Chinese theatre of today masks play a crucial part. The same is true of Japan, Thailand and Ceylon. In the Bunraku and Noh forms of theatre, which still flourish in Japan, curious and pleasing effects are achieved by surrounding the impressive mask with elegant movements and gestures.

(9)- Masquerade: George Speaight.

The mask has made quite a significant return to the theatre of the twentieth century. Masks have been used in Eugene O'Neill's "The Great God Brown"; Jean Genet's "The Screens"; in Bertolt Brecht's "The Good Woman Of Setzuan". In the other theatrical forms of ballet and opera the mask has also been widely used. As the theatre moves away from naturalism more and more directors and writers are rediscovering the great effectiveness of the mask as a means of capturing the attention of an audience. The mask - a powerful contributor to the theatres past - is ,again, making its presence felt.

Chapter 3.

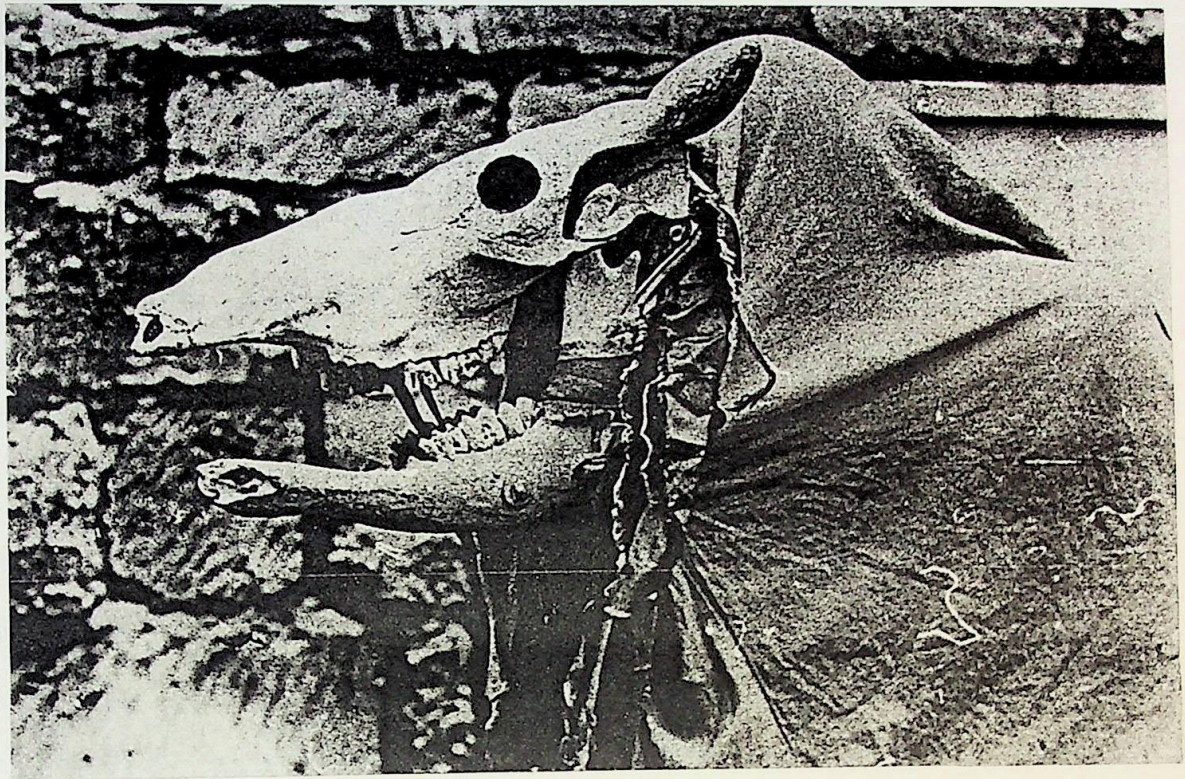
Part I.

When Are Masks Worn ?

The mask has played ,and still plays, a vital part in the folk culture of many European countries. In Ireland it is an integral part of the celebration of Hallowe'en. On that day (October 31st) children,their faces masked or painted, accosted - and still accost - the passerby, or went from door to door requesting contributions of fruit from house holders. Today the mask worn at this festival is usually that of a witch.

On St. Stephens day the young also go out,masked,to collect money "to bury the wren".They are almost always dressed in clothes of the opposite sex and the face masks are usually of a comic nature. Ireland,of course,is not alone in such customs. In Switzerland,for example,masks known as "The Black Devil",made from wood,are used among peasant communities.

The "Mari Lwyd",a mask based on a horses skull is used in Wales and is related to similar masks in Europe.It is used in festivities which are derived from pre-Christian horse festivities.Indeed,a contemporary success in the theatre - Equus - owes more than a little to the ritual of the horse mask. In Wales the "Mari Lwtd" is taken from house to house at Christmas and New Year. A battle of wits,followed by the entry of the "Mari Lwyd",was the signal for the feasting to



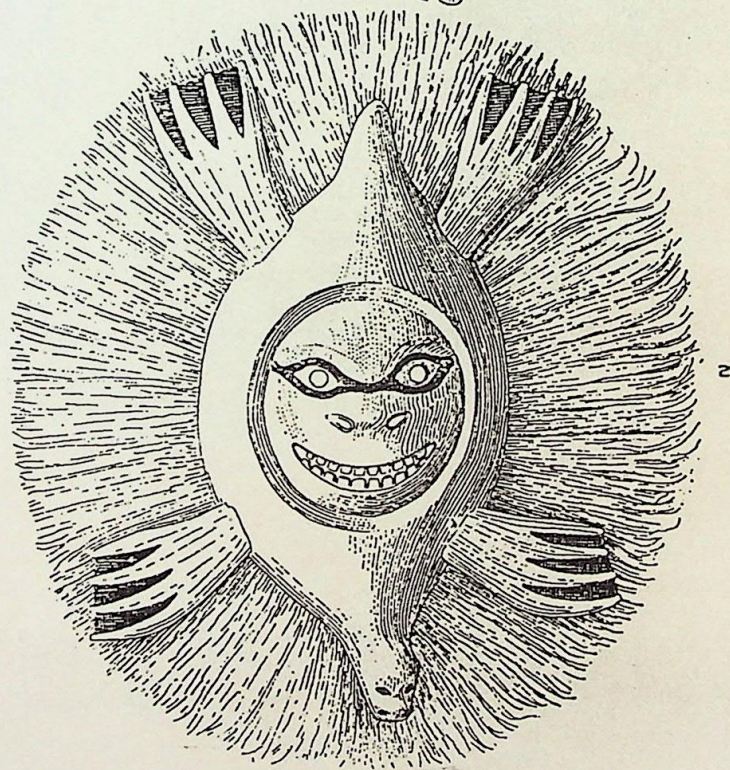
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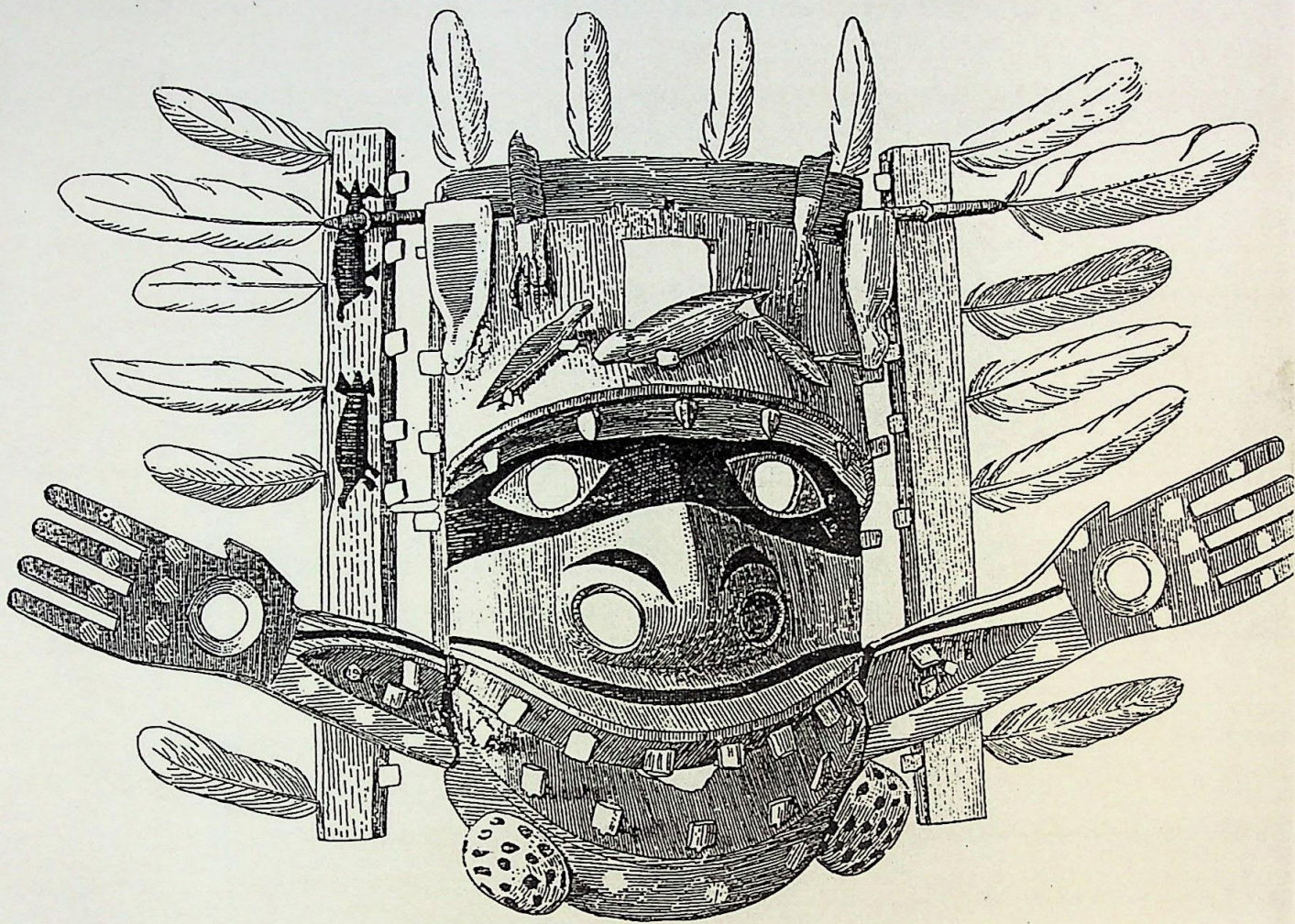
begin.

The Wooser, or Christmas Bull of Dorset and Wiltshire, could appear, uninvited, attended by his followers, at any door during the festive season. During the last century they were common all over Kent, and In 1839, were banned at Broadstairs - for frightening a woman to death! The custom of the Bull was revived in 1954 by Barnett Field. The Wooser and the Hooden Horse have gone out with the Handbell Ringers every Christmas since then, collecting for charity.

In other countries the mask plays a part in the religious and ritual ceremonies of society itself. In Alaska the mask is an important part of the religious ritual. Such ritual is closely associated with the way of life of the people - fishing and hunting. From this close alliance the masks derive their form, and are as close to reality as they are to ritual.

In Africa the mask has its place in initiation rites, and in denoting the tribe or class to which an individual belongs. Such classification is often carried to extremes, the soft skull of a child being shaped, for example, to give a particular appearance in later life. Scarring and tattooing of faces is another common masking practice. In some Brazilian tribes, large discs are inserted into the lips of young girls as signs and ornaments. All such changes are basically alterations or maskings of the face for a personal or tribal purpose.





(H.)

The North American Indians, too, used masks. Here, again, it had a social as well as ceremonial use. For the Indians of the North West coast the mask was of particular importance in their Winter ceremonies.

"In the long and chilly Winter various societies would give the people the opportunity to witness elaborate dance dramas. The participants would dress themselves in elaborate regalia and wear stupendously carved masks. Amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw, in particular, these ceremonies reached exceptional heights. These were very striking and bizarre ceremonies. One of the most interesting of the ceremonials, and one that provides us with some insight into the Kwakwaka'wakw imagination, deals with Hamatsa Cannibal Ravan Drama" (10).

The Indians of the Central Plains produced mainly totem poles and masks, which were painted in dramatic colours - black, red, green and some yellows. The predominant masks of the Plains Indians were of animals, humans and spirits from the supernatural world. The outstanding quality of these was their being three dimensional.

Perhaps the most interesting religious use of the mask is among the Iroquois Indians. This religious practice involves

the false face society. These Indians believe evil and sickness are carried by spirits which are, themselves, evil. They try, therefore, to overcome - or at least pacify - the spirits through a dance ritual. The dancers carve masks. In order to join the ritual a man must dream of a False Face, and carve the likeness when he wakes. Not only this but the face must be carved on a living tree. The tree is then felled and the making of the mask completed by its removal from the tree.

In Eastern and Moslem countries masks, in the form of veils, are worn by women. Such masks usually cover the lower half of the face. Indeed recent events have shown - in Iran in particular - a return to the strict observance of mask wearing among the Moslem women.

In the theatrical world many new writers are specifically returning to the mask, also. Of course, make-up is itself a form of mask which has long been popular in the theatre. But it is in the Japanese and Chinese theatre, and in opera that the mask, per se, has survived and flourished.

The Japanese mask is, first and foremost, a work of art. The ghostly, superhuman aspects of the mask are stressed in such theatre. In the Bunraku and Noh forms of the theatre this is particularly noticeable.

In China face painting is a prominent part of the classical

and operatic theatre.

After centuries the clown has changed, and yet he has survived. His hall mark to children today, as fifty years ago, is his painted face, his mask. The face is instantly recognisable, the essential connection between performer and audience has been made through recognition of the mask. As already stated, within the world of the theatre each clown has his/her own particular make-up, but the general format of the mask is the important signal to the observer.

Closely allied to the clown and the circus is the Carnival. Here too the mask is of importance. In Rio de Janeiro the annual Carnival is a sparkling display of masks of every conceivable shape, colour and size. Such is the prestige and excitement of the occasion that people save all year to afford the costumes and masks for the festival. On a lesser scale local carnivals and parades depend greatly on masked characters for notice and atmosphere. Whether the character is Miss Piggy, Kermit the Frog or a grotesque Gorilla the appeal is there for young and old.

The film industry has made tremendous use of the mask, too.

(10)- The Life and Art of the North American Indian; John Warner.

From "The Phantom of the Opera" to "Star Wars" the cinema has used the mask to heighten tension in its work. In characters such as Batman, Robin, The Lone Ranger, the simple half mask was used to create an impression of solid strength and reliability. In the world of horror films the uses of the mask were unparalleled, creating monstrous and hideous ghouls to terrify an eager audience. Even the recent wave of Science Fiction movies have made use of the mask - in such a field the future developments seem endless. As long as materials continue to develop the scope of the mask will keep pace.

On a less serious, and more entertaining level, the mask is used in that most successful of series' "The Muppets".

We can see the width of use of the mask in societies as different as their places on the globe. It has been adapted to all types of use. The criminal, the terrorist, the soldier, the doctor, the food processor - all use masks which are adapted to their need and environment.

From comic strip to goggles and steel helmet the various uses of the mask in Western, and world, society are enormous. In our highly industrialised and high speed society it has proven highly versatile, useful in work and pleasure and travelling beyond this planet, with man, to the moon.



(1).

Part 2.

Why are masks worn ?

To the psychologist the great mystery of the mask is how it can appear to appeal simultaneously to so many different levels of the mind. It is difficult to imagine any other inanimate object which rivets the attention, activates the imagination and arouses the emotions. The versatility of the mask is another point worthy of note - it does duty in folk lore, in merry-making, in religious festivities, in peace and war, in amusement and tragedy. It is part of life and death. Essentially, however, the appeal of the mask is aesthetic in its effect and its appeal.

Folk Masks.

IN folk celebrations drunkenness and the practises that went with it were made all the easier by the anonymity of the mask. The idea survives today in the collective release of emotions and expressions, otherwise taboo, in festive and folk celebrations. Traditionally the fantastic costume and mask provided a contrast with the staid and sober lifestyle of the revellers. The case is often similar today. We have already seen this in the Rio de Janeiro celebrations.

In Ireland the mummer, with his good luck, his good cheer and his lifting of the cloud of everyday sameness, encapsulated the same feeling, if on a lower level.

Primitive Uses.

In primitive societies today masks are worn mainly in ritual.

"The donning of a mask is believed to change a mans

identity and faculties, for the assumed appearance is held to affect the wearers inner nature and to assimilate it to that of the being represented by the mask"(II)

Thus, a masked person is not merely a man or woman whose identity is hidden but an enigmatic entity, standing outside the sphere of normal conduct and denying the conventions associated with other people who are still within the confines of "normal behaviour". Having submerged his own being in the wearing of the mask, other beings - be they ancestors, spirits or reincarnations - are enabled to manifest themselves through his body and voice. The mask, also, concentrates powers in the hands of those in charge of sacred objects, linking it not only with the representation of power but with its use. The human guardian, the wearer of the mask, partakes in the power of the spirit or divinity which the mask symbolises and is, thus, elevated above the ordinary masses. The mask, then, becomes more than a symbol, it becomes a means of transportation and a vehicle to spiritual position, achieved only through the shedding of humanity and the donning of a new and spiritually significant mask. In the same way the mask, in certain cultures, was viewed as a means of assuming magical powers - for the hunter over the prey, for example. On a more practical level, the mask, in such circumstances, was a means of camouflage. The human, in such a

(II)- Encyclopaedia of Magic and Superstition.



(10)



(D.)

situation, used the mask for another purpose, to call on the animal spirits to help him.

Within tribes the mask is also a symbol of position, a form of classification. Alternatively the mask can be used as a symbol ousting people from the mainstream of society, denoting their being outcast.

The use of the facial marking has led to incredible suffering among peoples, sophisticated and primitive. The example already given of the Brazilian Indian girls and their lip discs is a good one. In African tribes pairs of these discs are inserted in the upper and lower lips, causing a rattling sound when the women speak. Eating is extremely difficult and the women are rendered, to all intents and purposes, dumb. Such painful undertakings are not entirely in the pursuit of beauty, they also have ritual significance. They are used as initiations into the adult world. Among dark skinned peoples scars can be decorative - a revelation of the lighter skin beneath the dark. Such markings, though initially painful, bring esteem among the peer group.

Early Europeans.

The wearing of a mask is not always unpleasant. Indeed the concealment afforded can be quite pleasant. It can, for example, be charming and erotic, an excuse for coquetry and excitement. The seventeenth century mask concealed the ravage of disease. The fact that they were predominant in town rather than country suggests their use was at least as much psychological as physical. The half mask of the pro menaders in the Vauxhall Gardens gave the harmless pretence of being incognito. Thus,

social life was more entertaining, more serene. New freedoms were available to ladies of quality. Their walks through the streets had a certain anonymity and their enjoyment of the bawdy theatre went more or less unobserved. This had an interesting side affect - since the identity of the female was hidden other charms could be displayed, and so the revealed bosom became a fashion vogue!

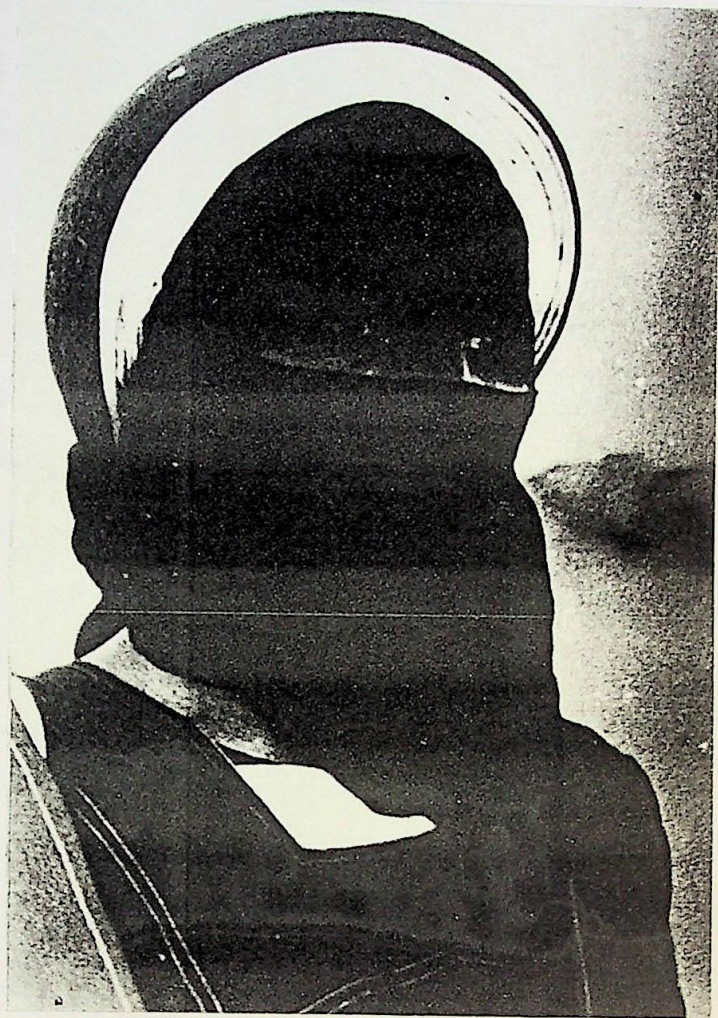
Eastern and Moslem Masks.

Outside Europe this facet has been taken further, with the use of the veil in Eastern and Moslem countries. This veil is known variously as the Yashmak, the Burqua and the Chadri. It is seen as a protection against the physical elements, but also as a psychological protection which perpetuates the notion of woman's weakness and vulnerability. The veil has, indeed, taken on a symbolic meaning. The sending of a veil by messenger is taken as a serious cry for help and is obeyed. Perhaps most importantly, it insures peace and privacy! Such qualities are valued in the Moslem world.

In recent times the modernisation of some Moslem countries has led to conflicts about the wearing of the mask and its role in society, but in general it maintains its position and popularity.

Theatrical Masks.

Masks virtually disappeared from the Western world after the Roman times, reappeared in the Middle ages, in Mystery plays, and faded from popularity again. In Eastern drama, however, the mask is still used widely. Japan, Thailand, Ceylon, China and Java are countries where the mask is linked closely with the theatre. Indeed, in these countries there is a particular theatre



(6.)

centred about the mask. In such theatre the bright mask and the elaborate gestures and ceremonies of the play bind together into an intrinsic art form.

"There is a delicate interplay between the beautiful but absolutely rigid masks and the highly practised gestures of the actor - which interacts to bring us characterisations and dramatic effects of great subtlety and delight." (I2)

In Chinese opera the use of face painting is crucial to the drama. Operatic face painting is the traditional facial make up in Chinese classical drama. It serves not only to enhance the sense of beauty in the play performance but serves a more fundamental purpose in symbolising the nature of the characters by means of facial colours and patterns of differing shapes.

"In other words the painted faces are not meant to show what the characters portrayed actually looked like but rather to indicate their nature, disposition and other characteristics. For example, a red face symbolises honesty, a white face deceit, a multi-coloured face courage and ferocity. Simple, uncomplicated pattern indicates a character of high position or strong nature, because such a person has a serious, imperturbable face, whereas the hot headed character, or the person of lower intellect

(I2) - Masks in the Theatre; George Speaight.

has less control over his facial expressions and is, therefore, portrayed, with a more complicated and uncomposed appearance." (13)

A.G. Bragaglia, a theatre director, claimed that "the use of masks testifies that this is authentic theatre, not a dull reproduction of real life, for the actor the mask serves to create a surreal type and to facilitate a journey into the world of the imagination."

Another director, Jacques Copeau, wrote: "The actor who performs under a mask receives from his papier mache object the reality of his part. He is controlled by it and has to obey it unreservedly. Hardly has he put it on when he feels a new being flowing into himself, a being the existence of which he had never suspected. It is not only his face that has changed, it is his whole personality, it is the very nature of his reactions, so that he experiences emotions he could neither have felt nor feigned without its aid. If he is a dancer, the whole style of his dance, if he is an actor, the very tones of his voice will be dictated by this mask, the Latin persona, a being without life 'till he adopts it, which comes from without to seize upon him and proceeds to substitute itself for him."

The puppet is another type of theatrical mask. From the hook nosed Punch to the Japanese Wayang, a puppet is no more than a masked actor, the actor having withdrawn to become the operator. An increasing number of puppet theatres now include masked actors in their repertoire.

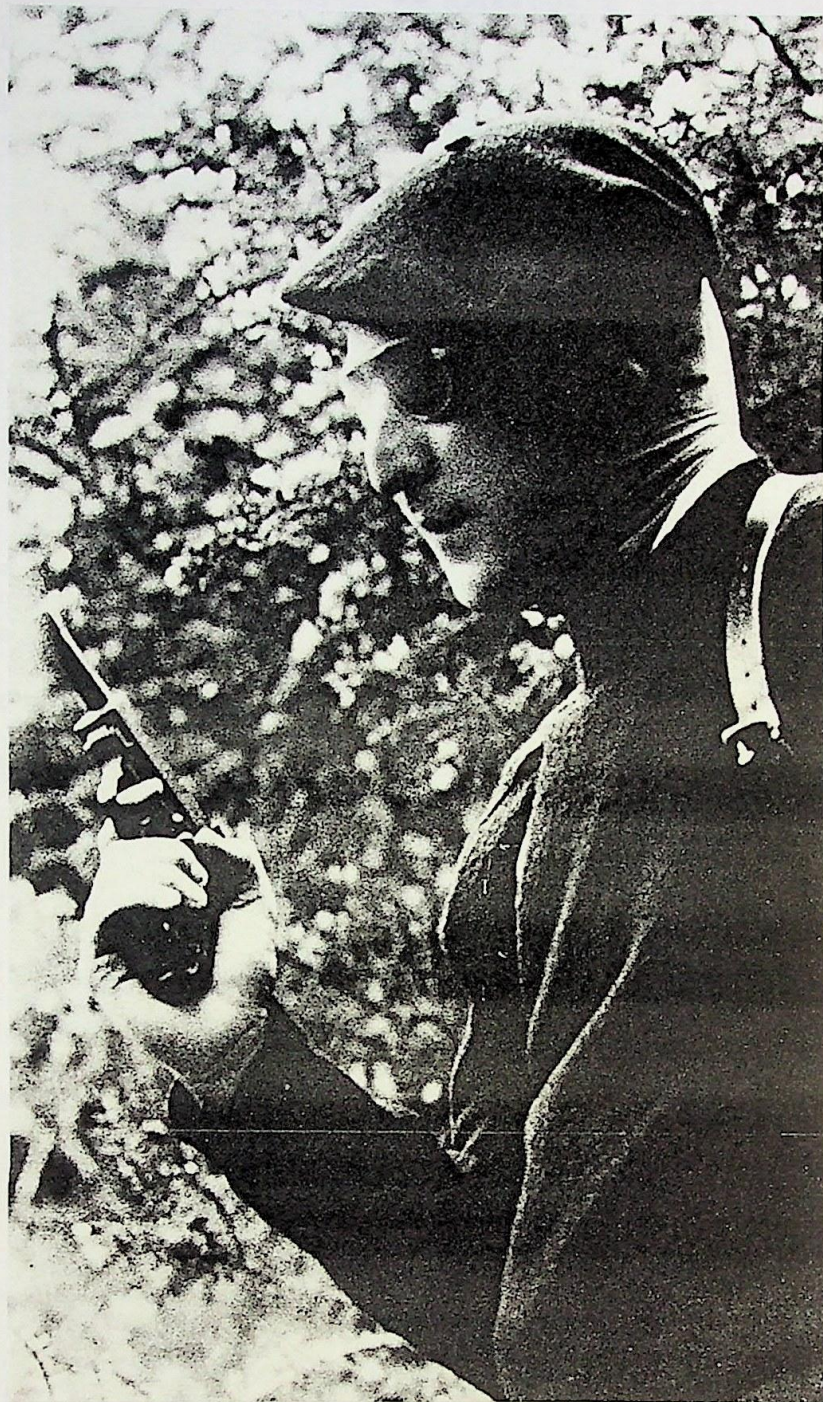
(13)- Face Painting in Chinese Opera.

Films.

People can be profoundly disturbed at the sight of a face disfigured in an accident and yet they are drawn to stare. The mutilated, the deformed, the grotesque are all repulsive yet attractive. The history of gladiatorial combat, cockfights, bull fighting, prize fighting, coursing bears witness to man's fascination with the hideous, the deformed and dismembered.

"Perhaps, as Freud declared, there are dark aggressive strivings deep within us that are craving some sort of outlet, however indirect." (I4)

The deformed and mutilated give great scope to the mask makers who can play on the human interest and repulsion. "The Phantom of the Opera" (first produced 1925) shows the use of just such a mask. The B.B.C. production of the series "Dr. Who", uses masks to depict the half human, half animal creatures. The mask has much exploitative potential. The possibilities for exaggeration are exciting. Deliberate distortion can be introduced to disturb the onlooker. Even the slightest adjustment of the norm can have an immense effect on the observer. The horror mask can create Werewolves, Franksteins, devils and monsters. Decay, death and the unusual are part of the stock in trade of the mask maker in the film world. The use of the animal mask leads to a tantalising semi-credible world. Perhaps the most tantalising masks are those which create a twilight world of uncertainty, when the observer is unsure whether he sees two eyes or four, an open mouth or closed. The ambiguity of such that they hold a special attention. An attention (I4) - The Human Face; John Liggett.



(5.)

much more powerful than that of the realistic mask.

Television, film, the comic strip have made use of the human face to suggest and imprint a certain standard. The mask has done more than that, moving out into new areas and abandoning the safe, the easily recognisable.

Modern Uses.

Our perception of masks tends to be surrounded by an aura of violence. In the contemporary world thieves, terrorists and murderers use them as disguises. Men use masks in warfare, secret societies and bizarre exploits. The gas mask became a necessary protection in wartime. The strange, elephantine nose pipe creates grotesque images of the horror of the first world war in particular.

Criminals have for a long time used a simpler form of mask - the scarf tied about the face. The highwayman and the cowboy adopted this to their own purpose, to hide the identifiable part of the face. The victim can create the image of the missing part but this will be totally subjective and useless for purposes of objective identification - all of which is to the advantage of the criminal.

The stocking mask, commonly used today, deforms the nose and soft tissue of the face slightly, but enough to confuse the observer when these small but important details are lost.

Industrial Uses.

The use of the mask as a protection for the face during work, or play, is quite ancient. Technology, however, has increased the necessity for such protection. It has also developed man's ability to work in an environment that is hostile. Such masks usually

involve a high degree of skilled workmanship and have become visual symbols of the industrial world.

The American football helmet is made from high density polyethylene with stitched in foam padding which ensures protection and comfort. Games such as fencing, baseball, ice hockey, car racing, and hurling make use of the face protection of a helmet or mask.

An essential to the astronaut is his mask, a life preserver in his case. Within the protection of his mask and suit he is protected from the hostile environment which would be instant death. In him the fantasy and fact of the mask become one.

The Personal Mask.

The majority of people in our society today wear masks in the form of make-up. Its use is common among men and women.

"There seems to be in all peoples, sophisticated as well as primitive a strong need for mystery, magic and ritual." (15)

This ritual has, for thousands of years, been satisfied by the ritual accompanying face elaboration. Even today the advertising of cosmetics suggests that they offer not alone physical beauty but an almost mystic protection, a raising of the individual out of the ordinary to a new and higher level. Western women go through this ceremony of make-up application in expectation of the manufacturers promises. All kinds of formulae are offered, even the fertility of the queen bee is now offered as a boost to the beautifying of the human skin - the sacrificial element of the ancient past is still with us. Many of the products currently offered as make-up demand a huge and horrible toll of sacrifice in the animal world. On a lesser scale the prices



(m.)

of these make-up masks demand a sacrifice of their own!

Differing occasions demand differing make-up. Some of its uses can be amusing yet the common fact - not easily accepted by women - is that using colossal amounts of cosmetics is merely creating a mask, a false face, behind which they hide.

Teenagers use the same cosmetics to denote their group - be it punk or sophisticated. It is a symbol of class, a brand.

Over the centuries the mask has done its duty, changing mere mortals to Gods, peasants into medicine men, girls and boys into women and men. It has amused, healed, protected and terrorised.

In doing all of these things it can only mean that the mask is appealing to our deepest instincts, our greatest sentiments and our most profound convictions and beliefs.

Chapter Four.

Education and the Mask.

The mask can claim the attention of every age as it employs a pattern that is irreversible - the pattern of the human face. The very young child, indeed even the infant is attracted to this familiar pattern.

"As child psychologists have demonstrated there is something very special about the pattern, however roughly a face is drawn, however rudimentary the sketch it will be instantly recognisable and followed with joy by the eyes of the youngest baby. There seems to be no need to learn the pattern, the power to recognise it is innate." (I6)

This has its advantages in human survival as the baby is drawn to the face of the parents who become sources of sustenance support and protection. Some psychologists maintain there are preferred shapes, like triangles and circles, which are innate in our minds and which need no clarification. They allow us to create order quickly out of the confusion that surrounds us. The pattern of the face is one of these preferred forms and fits into the basic scheme of the mind. These patterns, curiously, do not need to be complete. Even with part missing we still "see" the whole pattern. All we need is a segment to trigger off the image of the face. This great imaginative power, which can create images, is one of the wonders of the mind. Such images sometimes (I6) - Masquerade; ed. Banes.

come, literally, out of thin air.

This creative art extends beyond thought to visions. Visions can be created, while in reality they have no existence at all. Even through observation the mind can modify things amazingly. Often the link between what is there and what is "seen" is tenuous in the extreme. Particularly in times of dusk-light this is the case, the time for visions and ghosts! Dimly lit churches, forests at evening - the mind plays tricks; the phantoms appear. Particularly when mixed with strain or fear in the individual the situation can be imaginatively potent. In such uncertain terrain the face - in vision - takes precedence over all else. We see faces in the moon, in flames, in clouds, in wallpaper patterns and, of course, in the most rudimentary masks.

So it is with children, the familiarity, yet utility, of the face is a source of fascination when it comes to creating masks. Using this interest the mask is an ideal teaching tool. It can help the movement, dramatic potential, speech, and creative ability of the child. Needless to say, it also makes children aware of other peoples characteristics and of their own powers of imagination. The added benefit of such an exercise is the pleasure of wearing the mask which the child gets.

With many children the mingling of the familiar into the

unfamiliar is confusing and upsetting. Often common objects in a household, when moved or dismantled, can be frightening. Such unfamiliarity need not be a negative force, and this is seen in mask use. The face and the mask are compulsive to the child. The limitless possibilities are shown at a very basic level in relation to children in such work as that of the Childrens Television Work Shop, producing Sesame Street. The outlandish masked characters are appealing and provoke interest and response, the ideals of teaching situations. The unbelievable and unattainable become credible and attainable when the child dons a mask and becomes the character he adores. The learning process is working.

Adolescence.

In the adolescent period the main concern of the male and female is appearance, in the eyes of the peer group. The make-up mask is used to beautify or to individualise. Facial blemish is taboo and the adolescent is greatly concerned with avoiding this - or covering it up. Such blemishes are often connected with feeling of guilt, a belief that the blemishes are the result of masturbation. The importance of the face tends to suggest that a beautiful face represents a developed and beautiful persona or mind, and the myth goes on through adolescent period after period.

The making of masks with adolescents could lead to an understanding of the role of the make-up mask in society, and its unimportance in terms of reality. The idea that beauty changes in the fashion world, from generation to generation, could also be illustrated



(K.)

through masks.

The media bombards the adolescent with cliches about beauty - the new you; the real you; the beautiful you - preaching the dogma of the face as the person, or rather the mask as the person. The mask may make the young person aware that the beauty peddled by these companies is as deep as a layer of make-up. The beauty of the face is not the nose or eyes but the interaction of thousands of parts which create more than a mere look. The importance of pointing this out cannot be overstressed to the easily impressed.

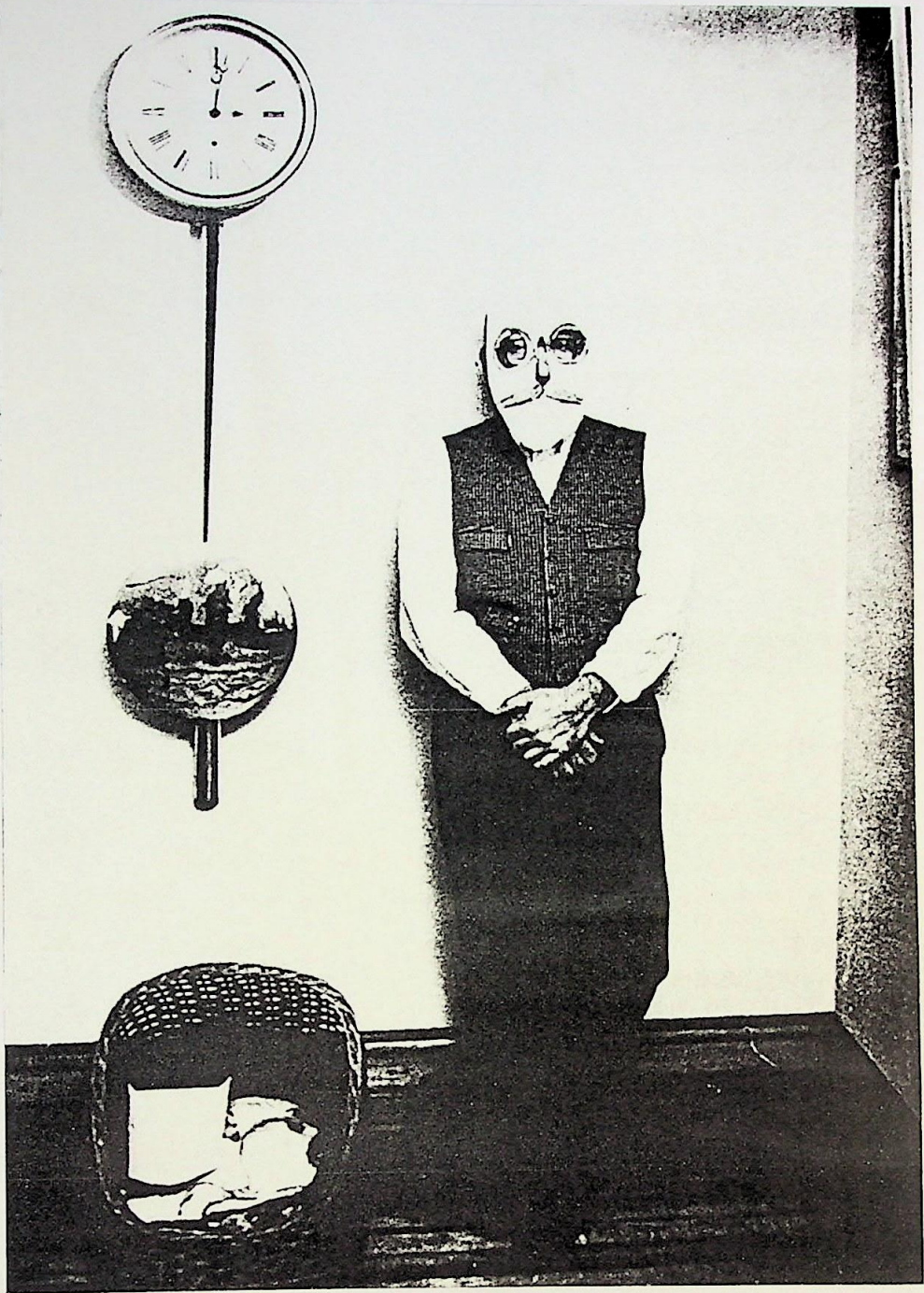
Particularly with contemporary young people the bright coloured hair and make up, the sparkling eyes, the glitter on the skin are a statement of individuality - of positive or negative positions within society. The aim may be expression or a lack of expression but there is an aim. Only through education can the relative unimportance of any and all masks, as attempted statements of reality, be exposed! In doing this for young people the education through the mask is serving a great need and purpose - the revelation of reality and of the usefulness of the mask as an image rather than a reality.

The immediacy of the film industry to young people and its use of masks is another tool easily adapted for the

educational situation. The very knowledge of how effects are created is in itself an act of creation and revelation leading to further creation among the young people themselves.

Basic psychology - why does a mask frighten; what creates the fear - can be introduced through studying the mask. In doing this the young person is learning to reason rather than resort through fear to violence. Wearing masks, too, creates a psychological situation for the young person. A young girl wears a mask - it sets her free, but it creates a need in her to pose, to play a part - she learns a lesson, her peer group witness this, they too are learning.

A world increasingly concerned with the face values of all things demands an educational system that reveals the banality beneath the images, the basic mask reduces such pretension to basic levels, comprehensible levels for the young person. The earlier a child adapts to the mask the sooner he recognises its drawbacks and also its massive theatrical potential. Such realisation and experience can only be good for the artistic and dramatic skills of that child and thus for the world.



(m.)

Suggestions for using the Mask in class.

The suggestions included in these lessons are not exhaustive. The potential for classes based on mask works is very great. It depends on the particular teacher. The following lessons can, indeed, be adapted and used in differing classes.

The suggestions are part of sequential lessons, terminating in the dramatization of a production by the class.

Puppets: are extensions of the mask, merely a mask from which the actor has withdrawn.

First Years.

Life size puppets.

Objective: To experience working in 3D;

To become aware of the quality of materials.

To encourage oral and dramatic expression and coordination in manipulation of the puppets.

These are the objectives involved in this lesson - there would also be skill objectives. The size of the puppets are important, they are easy to handle. They allow great scope for creativity and imagination. The size - and working in 3D - helps motivate the class. A dramatised story, written by the class, using puppets could be the end result.

Spontaneous puppets.

These puppets should be constructed quickly, using simple techniques, so they can be played with immediately. They are made from scrap material. These are ideal for younger classes who like to see immediate results. They, too, can write and stage a short play with their puppets.

Second Years.

Marionettes - jointed puppets.

Objectives: To develop imaginative and technical skills.

To combine craft and English.

To increase language and manipulation skills.

To develop design abilities.

The marionette is a further step from rod and shadow puppets. It needs more technically manipulative skill. It opens a field of design and creative possibilities. The objectives above can be multiplied as the marionette can be used in sequential classes. Movable features is an area that could be extended.

Paper Masks.

Designing and making paper and card masks to depict various emotions. They can be facial or overhead, depending on the practical use required. They develop a knowledge of paper cutting and scoring. Tribal masks could be used as a source.

Intermediate Certificate.

All over masks.

Objectives: To develop design abilities.

To encourage dramatic, creative and imaginative expression.

To experience limitation of a material.

These masks are made from a large grocery bag, placed over the head and shoulders, holes being cut for the arms. It is then decorated, striped, added to as the design dictates.

These can be used in mimed class productions. Design problems are highlighted- overcoming movement and speech problems.

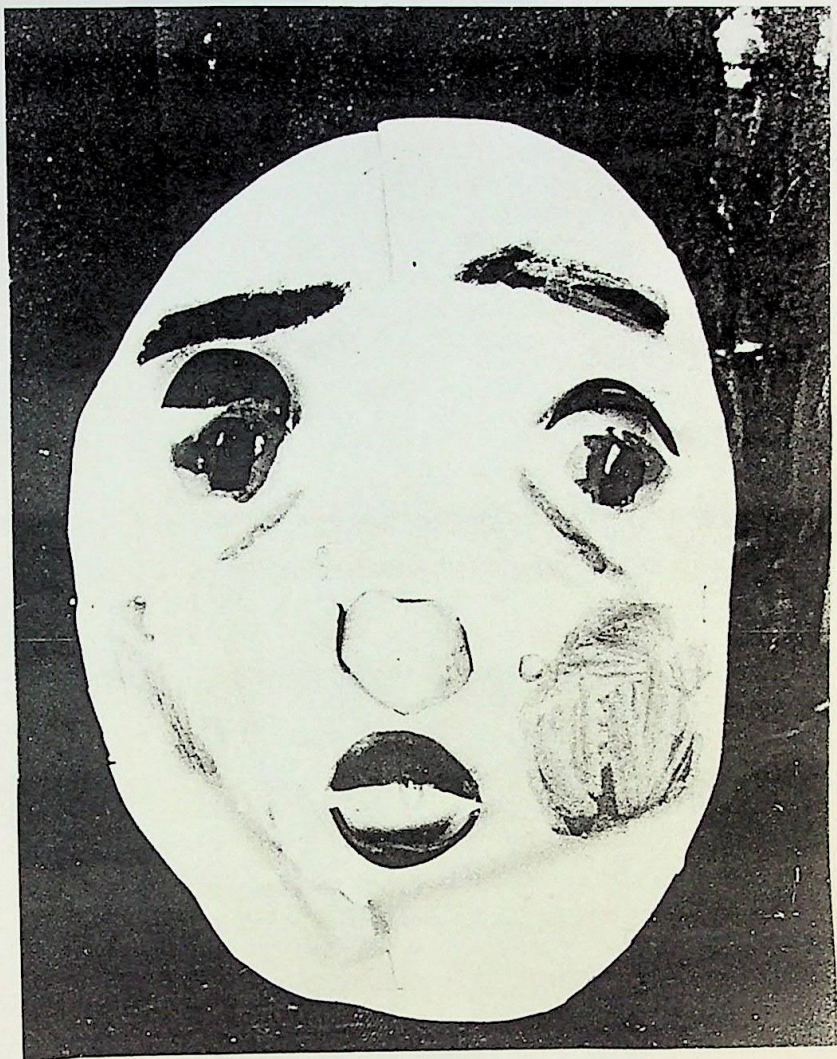
Fifth and Sixth Years.

Abstract masks and make-up.

These would give the class opportunities to widen their experience and initiate personal expression, also to give the class an insight into the cult groupings such as punk rock. This use of the face as a medium of expression would be explored. How make up advertising alters the role of women in society would be discussed. Mens use of make-up would also be included in discussions.



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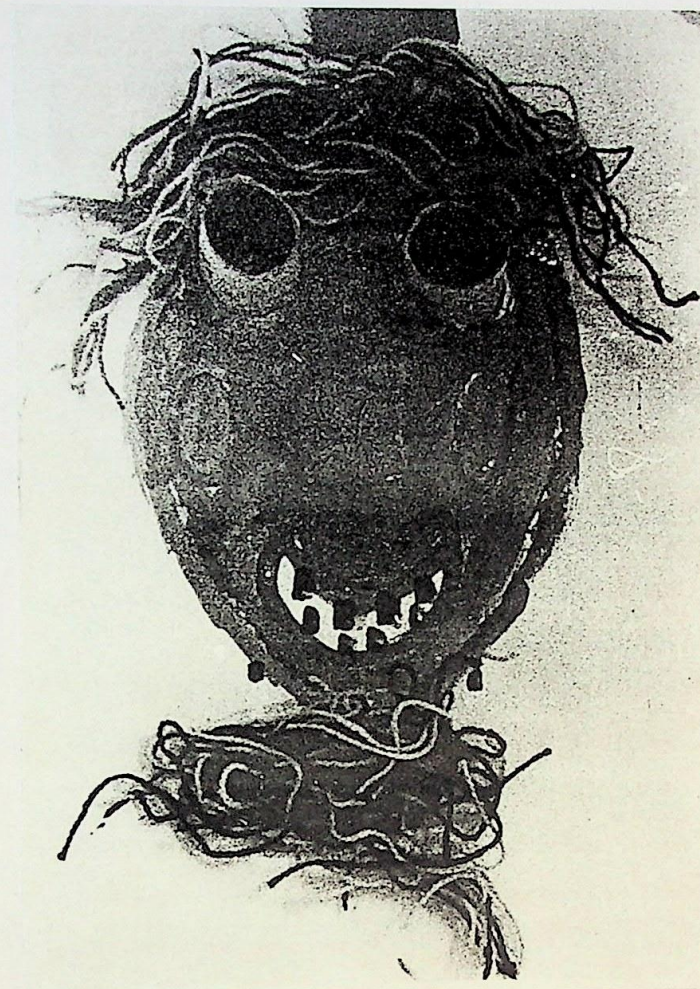
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(P.)



(Q)



(R.)

Ideas List.

- I. Spontaneous puppets-constructed quickly from waste materials.
2. Animated puppets-many parts.
3. Paper puppets- folding paper.
4. Flexible puppets-made from foam or material.
5. Polystyrene puppets-shaped polystyrene foam.
6. Glove puppets-used on the hand.
7. Rod puppets-worked by a rod.
8. Marionettes-jointed puppets.
9. Shadow puppets-used against the light.
10. Paper masks-cut and folded paper.
11. Papier mache masks-paste and paper.
12. Paper bag masks-all over masks.
13. Complete head mask-all over.
14. Body mask- extending down over the body.
15. Moulded masks-cast mask.
16. Carved masks-wooden.
17. Clay masks.
18. Wire masks.
19. Movable masks

Conclusion.

One can see, bearing in mind the long history of the mask and its importance today, that the world is still affected by masks. The traditional piece may have been relegated - if such is the word - to a position of minority or to a place in the folk customs of the world, but the mask idea has developed and adapted to time.

The uses today are very different from those originally intended but the psychological factors are the same - the game to frighten children has become the mask to frighten adults during violent incidents. It has also become the more subtle weapon of those who would be beautiful. It has found its way into industry, technology, space programmes and police and army equipment, it is the supremely versatile defence.

Being so important and yet so subtle it is necessary to educate the young to its uses - traditional, theatrical, creative - and abuses - advertising, violence, fear.

Being a challenge and at the same time an aid it offers the ideal area for work and study for the young. It is, indeed, supremely versatile, lending itself to its own study, continually revealing new subtleties and uses.