PARABOLA

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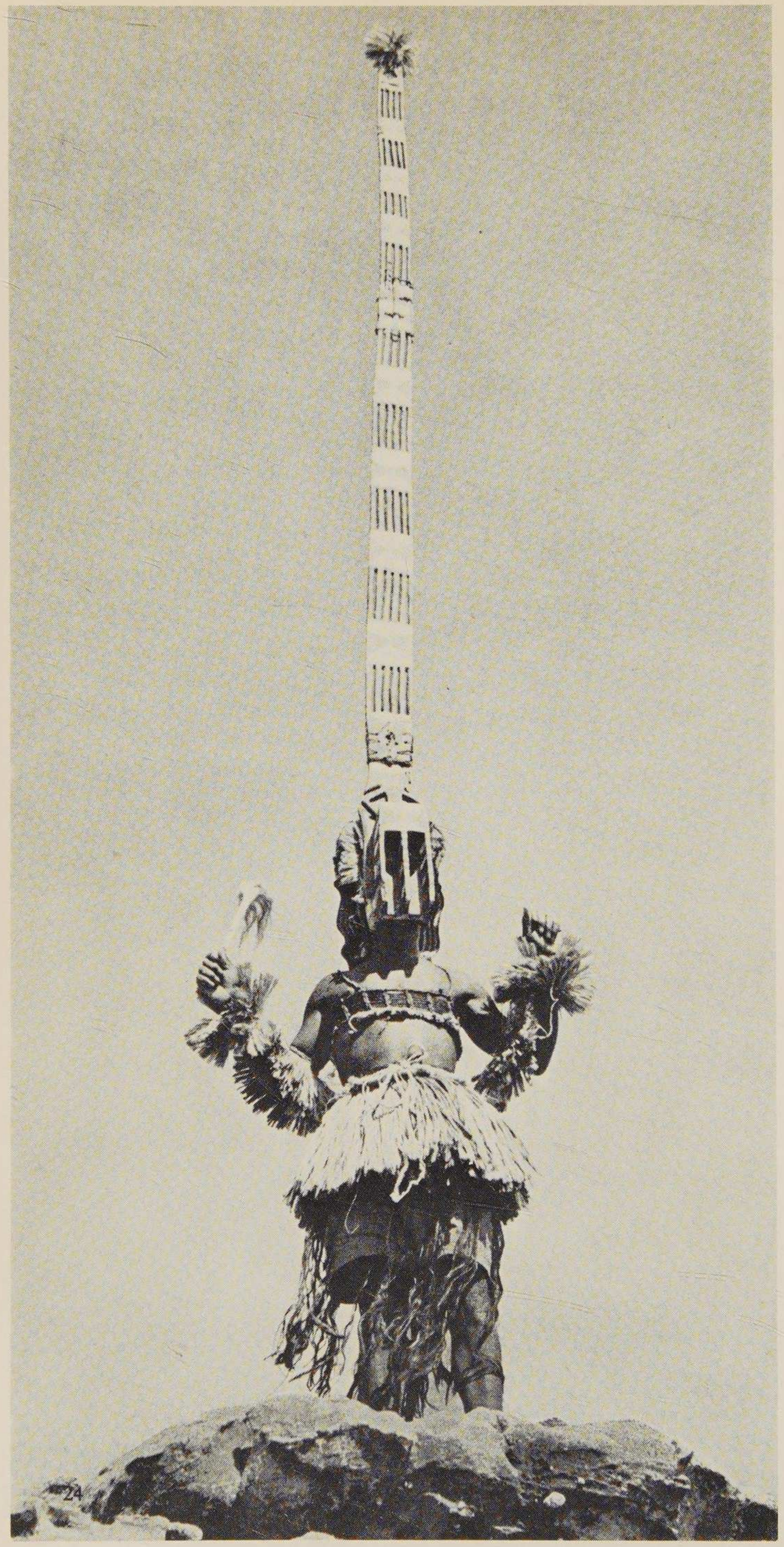
MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

MASK AND METAPHOR: ROLE, IMAGERY, DISGUISE



VOLUME VI, NO. 3

MASK AND METAPHOR

PARABOLA

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

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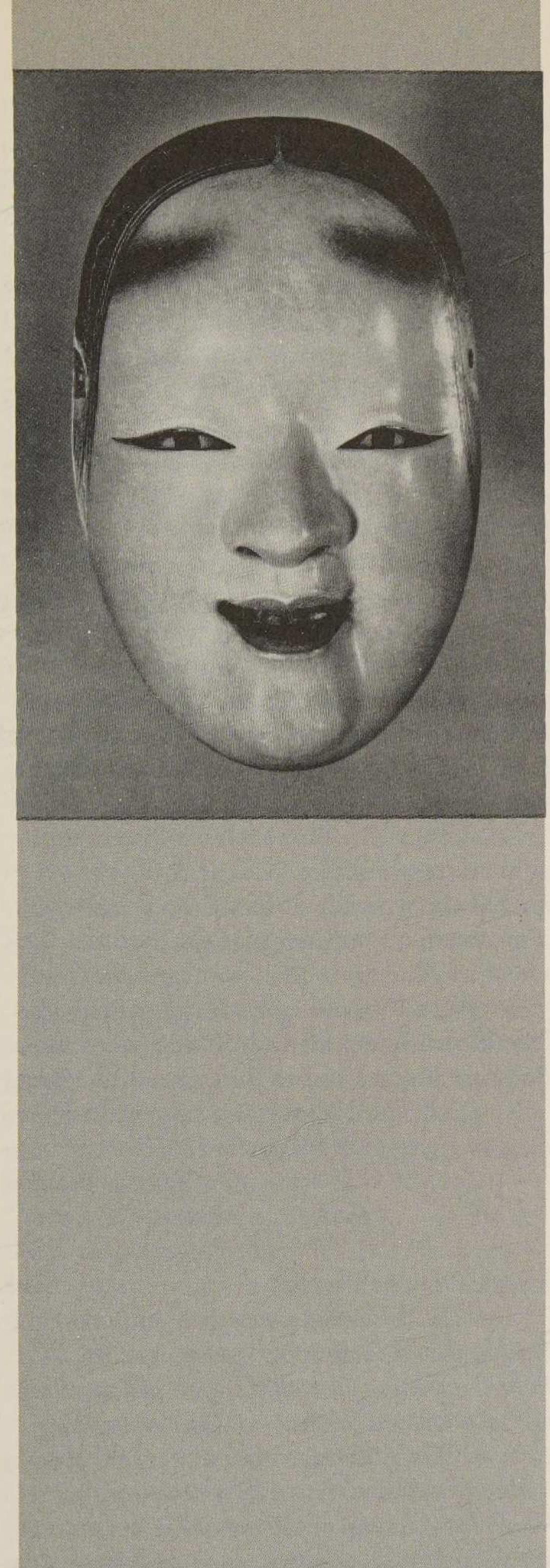
Cover: Statue of the monk Hoshi who lived in China from the beginning of the T'ang period to the end of the Heian period. Kyoto National Museum. Photograph Zauho Press, Tokyo.

Inside Cover: Many-storied house mask, French Sudan.

FOCUS

One of our favorite Mullah Nasr Eddin stories, which appeared in the very first issue of PARABOLA, tells how the Mullah went to the bazaar to buy cloth. Finding all the booths of the cloth merchants full of customers bidding and driving up the prices, he stationed himself near the opposite end of the bazaar and began shouting at the top of his lungs about the bargains there, hoping to draw away his competitors. He was so successful that people started streaming down to that end of the bazaar, leaving the cloth sellers' booths empty for him, just as he wished. But seeing all the people hurrying by, he thought: Perhaps there really *are* splendid bargains down there! So he abandoned the cloth dealers and ran after the crowd.

This story pokes wonderful fun at the tricky and self-serving person who falls into his own trap. But if we don't just dismiss it as a good joke on such people (the others), it could throw a useful light on how we all play the roles and wear the masks that are a legitimate and and necessary part of our human lives. For some unseen director gives us roles to play, whether we wish it or not, haphazardly or for some purpose we can't be sure of. We are born, as it were, on stage, in the middle of a play we didn't write. To what extent, then, can we *act*? Do we play the parts assigned to us, or do they play us? What have we to say about them? Almost nothing, certainly, as long as we, like the Mullah, are fooled by them; as long as we believe we *are* those characters. And we have a terrible tendency to believe in appearances. We are played by our roles as long as they are



more real for us than our own unseen reality. The masked and costumed character is visible and we confuse, it seems, the mask and the costume with the person behind them; we take the role for the player.

But the actor is not Hamlet—or is he, and in what sense? It's true that if he doesn't *become* Hamlet—think, feel, speak as Hamlet himself—he fails in the part. But no matter how brilliantly he succeeds, he is never HAMLET; nor does he need to be, nor do we expect it of him. Yet we expect our fathers to be FATHER; or (perhaps worse) we reduce FATHER to *our* father's performance, or to our own when our turn comes to be cast in that part.

What would it mean to wear a mask consciously, to play an intentional role? Wouldn't it first of all imply seeing the difference between it and my own *persona*?—and like the Balinese mask player, trying to conform myself to it, never forgetting that the mask, as prototype, is greater than my person or any one person, and I can only strive to fill the aspect of it that I see, which is never (and cannot be) the whole.

These and other questions and reflections arose for us as we pondered the theme of this issue, and were struck by the picture which is on our cover. Have I a "real" face, or are there only layers of the *persona*—mask after mask? Yet *something* is behind all this: a moving force, an *actor*, that could perhaps wear any face, or all of them. Perhaps, if this force were conscious, the masks, the roles, would be simply channels, through which it could express itself and whatever greater force it may spring from that may flow through it. If that were so, the mask would be a metaphor, a symbol, and a tool for the real self. And the real self might be itself a mask—a symbol and a tool for the life that is behind and above it. Perhaps this is an approach to the real meaning of the face within the face.

—D.M. Dooling

FULL CIRCLE/
A Readers' Forum

PARABOLA *is interested in an exchange of ideas and points of view through the active participation of its readers. We welcome your letters and comments on the issues raised in our pages. Please address all correspondence to:*

The Editor, PARABOLA, *150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011*

Another thank you for providing a reader with the opportunity to break a fixed false attitude given sanctuary for years.

I had always dismissed, *automatically,* national religious leaders and their kind as persons incapable of any real understanding.

The Dalai Lama in his conversation with Ruth Wilson, "Changing the Impossible" (Vol. V, No. 3), gave the lie to that.

—G.M. Barker
London, England

I have received two issues of your magazine, one of which (Obstacles, Vol. V, No. 3) was excellent and applicable to my life, and the other (Woman, Vol. V, No. 4) I found boring and completely unconnected to my life.

I don't know how representative of your readership I am, but for me articles about real people, such as the blind man who made his blindness an asset, or the Mohawk tribe, are much more exciting than the literary analysis of myth. I enjoy the myths themselves, but I don't get much from the analysis. I felt that the one exception to the mediocrity of your Fall issue was the story, "The Wife of Jonah." This story was beautifully written, and it came alive for me.

I hope to see more writing like this story and the articles I mentioned from PARABOLA, for in spite of my present disappointment, I do value your magazine highly.

—Melissa Barnes
Colorado Springs, CO

I read with great interest Joseph Campbell's notes on the Goddess (Vol. V, No. 4). I have always admired his work and his poetic interpretations. This time I must admit I am put off by his remarks on pages 82 and 83. It seems that every time a group must be blamed for the death of the goddess the Jews are pulled out. There is a real attitude held by predominantly Christian reformist theologians (though also certain feminist goddess revivalists) that, again, the Jews are responsible for deicide and for the unreformed sexism in our society. I submit that this projection simply amplifies particularly Christianity's failure to expunge sexism; that Judaism must be blamed for Christianity's failure is an old and very tired theme.

I also fault Mr. Campbell for his exegesis or even translation of Genesis 3:19. He quoted the second half of the verse leaving out what I suspect he could not include: By sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until your return to the earth [*adamah* perhaps the female principle?] for from it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you shall return.

Yes, even the Hebrews were poetic and used dust as a synonym for earth.

—Dr. Alice L. Perlman
Albany, CA

Joseph Campbell replies:

That Dr. Perlman can take comfort in the thought that in Genesis 3:19 the non-sexist Hebrew synonym for both the earth and ourselves is dust—*whereas for the sexy Greeks the living earth was* Gaia, *ultimate mother of all the gods, as well as of ourselves—is surely a demonstration (hardly a refutation) of my argument: the point of which, as I recall, was that in certain influential Semitic mythologies the image of the Great Goddess of Many Names was (and is) not only degraded but even cursed. Or is* dust *here to be understood, perhaps, as an ancient Hebrew figure of poetic speech suggesting honor, worship, and praise?*

And as for the faulting of my exegesis and translation: 1. I omitted the first part of the verse

(Gen. 3:19) because its point (that Adam was formed of the earth) had already been made in my introductory sentence; and 2. the sense of the difference between my "you are dust" and Dr. Perlman's "dust you are" escapes me quite: otherwise our two translations are identical. Mine, of course, is word for word from the Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version *(Thos. Nelson & Sons, Toronto, New York, Edinburgh, 1953), page 4.*

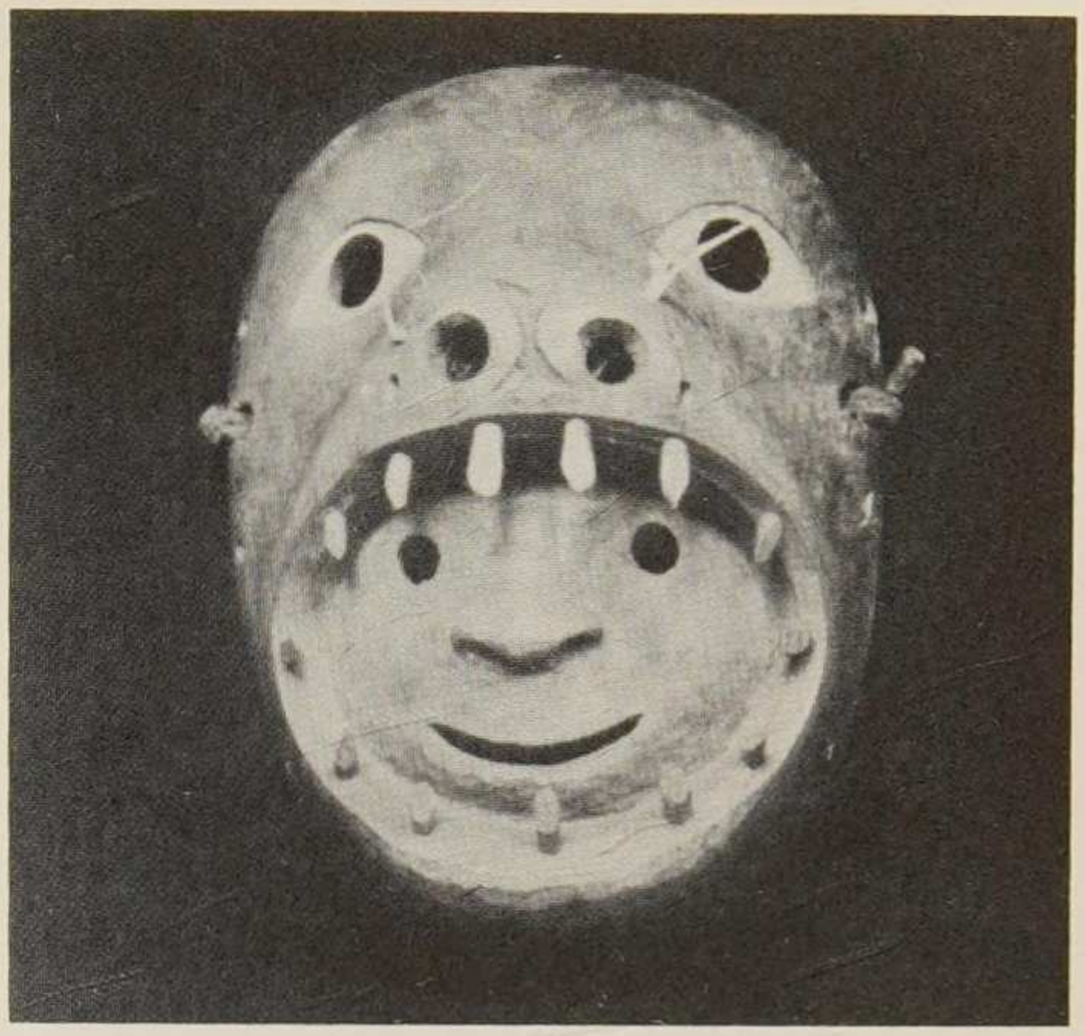
P.L. Travers' article "What the Bees Know" (Vol. VI, No. 1) was of great interest to me. It is an excellent example of the sort of startling illumination that I always hope to find in PARABOLA.

As it happened I read the article while bees were busy with the flowers in my window. They are extraordinarily intense little beings, and listening to their hum I could understand what Travers meant by "bee-stuff," and the voice of "the natural."

I cannot help but note, however, that one of the most subtle and profound uses of "bee-stuff" was not covered by the article, specifically its appearance in the mystic literature of Islam.

The image of the bee both as the Word of creation and the level of creaturehood is present in the depths of Islamic thought. For example, in great part the *dhikr* of Yunus express the Godly voice of nature, the poet at one point recollecting that God provides "honey for those who are bees,/a rose for those who are nightingales." (Y534) And Sura XVI assures us in regard to the bee that there "comes forth out of their bellies a drink/of diverse hues wherein/is healing for men" (v. 70).

I also note that the Arabic letter *mim* when sounded is very close to the hum of bees. *Mim* is the letter of the number 40, which is the number of levels through which man must ascend to God. It is the imposition of



mim in Ahad—to make Ahmad—that expresses the Prophet out of the One.

As *mim* is the letter of creaturehood the hum of the bee is surely nature's speaking the presence of creatures in the world—human creatures lovingly included. If the world is indeed the breath of God, then the sound of that breath must be contained in the hum of the bee.

Thank you for a very wonderful and provocative article.

—Whitley Strieber
New York, N.Y.

We were happy to see Golgonooza Press once more mentioned in your fine magazine, but were upset that Gnomon Distribution was not mentioned as their American distributors. Could you please make mention in the next issue that a free checklist of their books is available from us: Gnomon Distribution, P.O. Box 106, Frankfurt, Kentucky 40602. Thank you.

—Jonathan Greene
Director, Gnomon Distribution
Frankfort, Kentucky

PARABOLA *regrets the following error:*
—In Vol. VI, No. 2 thanks should have been extended to Johanna Broda (not Broder) for her assistance on the article, "Templo Mayor Rising."

Dancing with Dash-Kayah:

The Mask of the Cannibal Woman

by Terry Tafoya

She is tall . . . bigger than Sasquatch, and her body is covered with long, black, greasy hair. Her eyes are large like an owl's, and her fingers are tipped with sharp claws. Her lips are formed in the eternal pucker of an eerie whistle, and children are told if they don't listen to their elders, she will come to them at night and suck their brains out of their ears. She is called Dash-Kayah, At'at'ɬia, Tsonoquah, and names whispered when the time is right, and not for publication.

Long time ago, long before the world turned upside down, there was a young boy who woke and went down to the river to bathe. The sun began to rise, and the boy enjoyed the warmth of the sun on the side of his face. He sang a song to greet the sun.

When he had finished he went fishing for salmon for his family, but he had gone so far out he knew he would not be able to return home before the sun set. So he decided to camp out where he was.

It was late at night . . . now White people say there is a Man in the Moon, but our Old people tell us it is a frog, and this frog was looking down at the little boy. Clouds came up and covered the moon, when all of a sudden the boy woke up, hearing the sound of heavy footsteps getting closer . . . and closer. Then he heard the weird whistling as the clouds blew away, revealing the huge dark shape of Dash-Kayah.

She called to him, "Don't be afraid; all those stories you hear about me are just stories to scare little children. I'm really a very nice person; in fact, I have some plump, juicy huckleberries for you." And she held out her clawed hand, filled with berries. When the boy reached for them, she took her other hand from behind her back, which held sticky sap from the trees, and slapped the boy across his eyes. Now his eyes were stuck together as though with glue. Then she grabbed him and threw him in the enormous basket she carried on her back. She ran through the woods whistling and carried him to a clearing in the woods where she dumped him on the ground. She had built a great fire and had placed other children she had stolen in a circle around this fire, because she was going to roast them, just as our people roast

salmon. She began singing and dancing around the fire, proud of the fine meal she would have of the children. She sang:

Oh, Oh, Oh Oh La, Oh, Oh, Oh Ay,
Oh, Oh, Oh Oh, La, Oh, Oh, Oh Ay . . .

Now the little boy wished the whole day could start over again, and he recalled how it had started, with him bathing in the river, and the sun coming up. He leaned closer to the fire, and it reminded him of the warmth of the sun. He leaned closer—it felt so good—and suddenly, the heat of the fire started melting the sap that held his eyes together, just as fire will melt a candle's wax. Soon he could see a little out of one eye, and he watched Dash-Kayah dancing around the fire. He thought of a plan and whispered this idea to the little girl sitting next to him, who told the little boy sitting next to her, until the plan went all around the circle of the children.

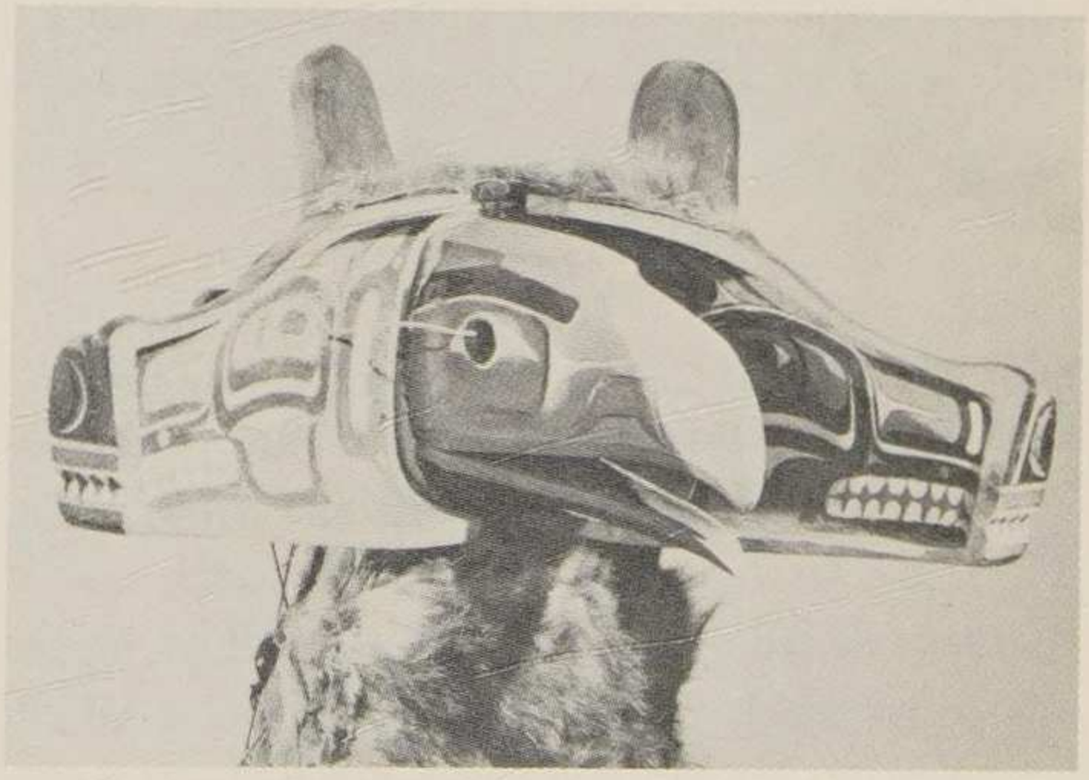
Finally, Dash-Kayah had finished dancing, and she was so tired she could hardly stand. That's when the little boy shouted, "Now!" and all the children jumped up and pushed her into the fire. She began to burn, but not like ordinary things burn . . . she burned the way cedar throws up its sparks into the night; like sparklers and fireworks on the Fourth of July. And as the children watched these sparks rise into the air . . . the sparks turned into mosquitoes. And that's why mosquitoes bite . . . they still live off the blood of young children. Now that was the end of Dash-Kayah, but she had four sisters . . .

I don't like to tell what legends "mean." Part of what the legend teaches, Bruno Bettelheim might suggest, is that no matter how great and dangerous a threat might be, if a child is clever enough, if a child acts in a proper way, he or she can be victorious. Dash-Kayah is not killed outright, but transformed from a huge monster to a small nuisance even the youngest child can handle with a slap.

However, this legend of my coastal relatives also carries an additional message, and to understand it we must look at the pervasive theme of the Cannibal Woman throughout the Pacific Northwest. Under her many different tribal names, she is depicted on totem poles, feast bowls, carving tools, and so, frequently, in masks.

She is related to power and status among Indian people to whom those things are most meaningful. In a common totem pole stance she displays the "copper," a coastal artifact that in many ways resembles a modern credit card in the sense that it represents a much greater value than its actual worth. The family that owns the right to use the Cannibal Woman as a symbol of its wealth and power is a family whose ancestors have faced Dash-Kayah and not only survived, but prospered.

She is shown in the act of whistling, and throughout the northwest we tell our Indian children not to whistle at night, for you might call this type of spirit person to you . . . at great personal risk. The spirit people of the Southwest Indian people, the Pueblo, the Hopi, and the Navajo, are often portrayed with a tubular mouth, for their language is a sacred language that must be different from the profane tongue of the secular man, and this can be represented by whistling.



Transformation mask, family crest, wolf's head opening on a raven's face whose beak opens and closes, Kwakiutl

And like the other spirit people of distant tribes, Dash-Kayah's power has a dark and dangerous side, as well as a positive, protective one. Joseph Campbell suggests that there is a duality that exists between "cold hard fact," and the awareness of a sacred presence:

> Hence the guardian figures that stand at either side of the entrances to holy places: lions, bulls, or fearsome warriors with uplifted weapons. They are there to keep out the "spoil sports," the advocates of Aristotelean logic, for whom A can never be B; for whom the actor is never to be lost in the part; for whom the mask, the image, the consecrated host, tree, or animal cannot become God, but only a reference. Such heavy thinkers are to remain without. For the whole purpose of entering a sanctuary or participating in a festival is that one should be overtaken by the state known in India as "the other mind" (Sanskrit, *anya-manas*: absent-mindedness, possession by a spirit), where one is "beside oneself," spellbound, set apart from one's logic of self-possession and overpowered by the force of a logic of "indissociation"—wherein A is B, and C also is B.*

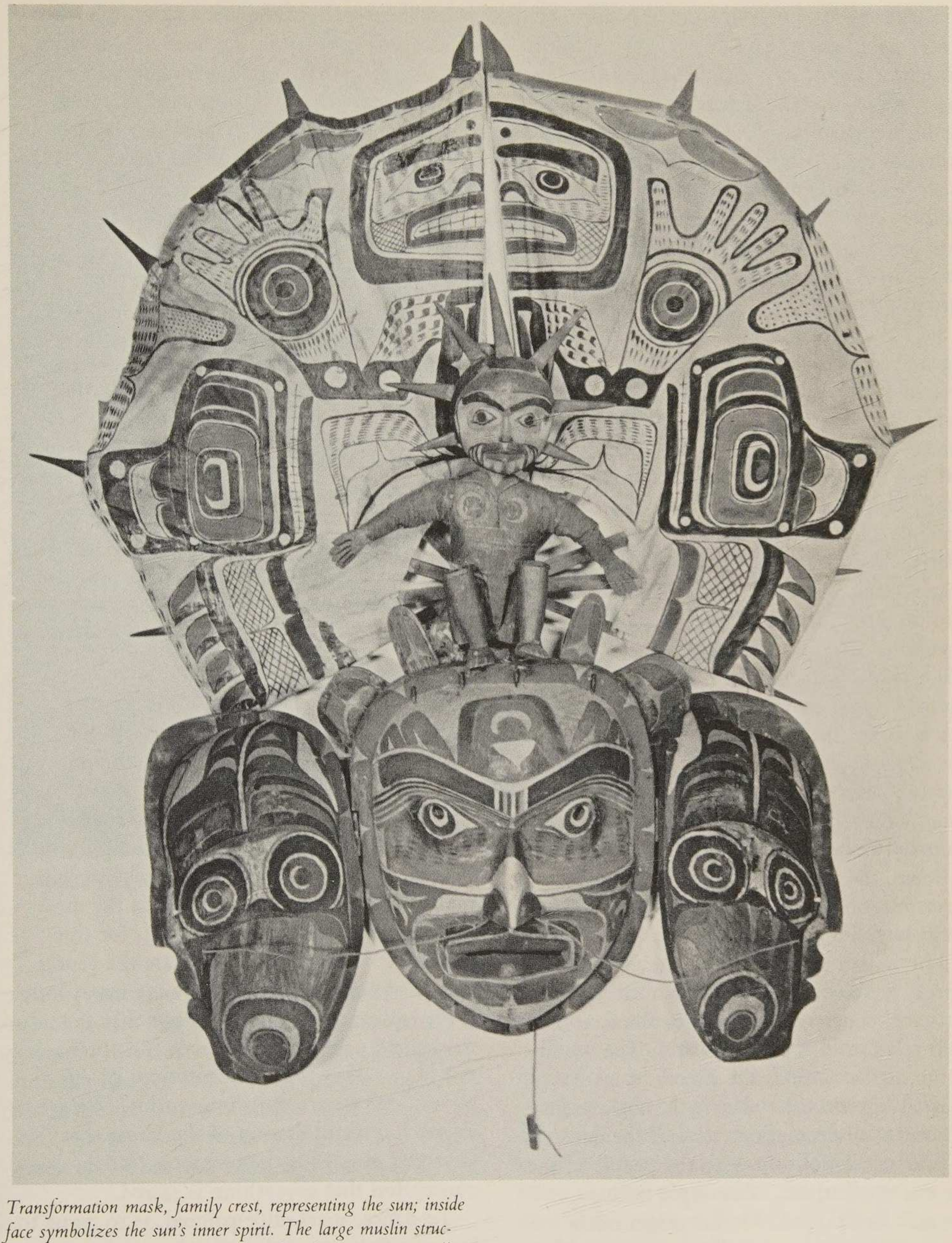
This then, is one of the functions of the Dash-Kayah figure: to frighten away those who are not pure enough in heart to survive being consumed by a spirit being. It is only by being eaten that one becomes incorporated into the spirit so that one takes on the power of that being . . . the complement of the Christian concept, where the deity is devoured by the worshipers.

When one dances with Power, one transubstantiates oneself. This is the central idea of what some have called "The Guardian-Spirit Complex," so common among many American and Canadian Indian tribes. The beautiful and frightening masks of the Cannibal Woman are most common among the more northern of the Pacific Coastal people, but it must be understood that with the exception of specific masks of the *Sxwaixwe* and a few other family-owned masks, the tribes of the southern areas of the coast use paint—red or black—for the same purpose as the mask. The various designs painted on with powdered devil's club or ochre represent whatever spirit is the Power of the dancer, and like the more northern masks, these designs are not always immediately recognizable to the outsider.

Throughout the Pacific Northwest, the theme of transformation is found over and over again. The Wild Man of the Woods, the Cannibal Woman's consort, has a mask among the Kwakiutl that flashes open to reveal a human-like face inside it . . . a marvelous irony when one considers that yet a third, and again, human face, lies behind the exposed human-faced carving. Time is measured by those things that happened before the Change . . . before the coming of the One called The Changer, or Transformer. There are other stories that occur during the Change, when the world began to take its present form as a result of the interactions between the Changer and those changed; and then finally there is Historical Time, that we live in even now. The Northwest designs are strange and difficult to comprehend to the first-time viewer because they can represent beings caught, frozen in the process of transformation; beings who have not quite taken on the shapes that they are forced to wear today.

The transformation of self—involving all the common dualities: of unknown to knowing, uninitiated to initiated, powerless to power-possessed, child to adult—is reflected in the use of mask and paint, making concrete the abstraction of change. One's brother is no longer only a brother, but brother and Power. And for those who listen to their elders, there is also a realization that we are all born with a song that under the right training and conditions manifests itself, so we learn of our potential. Thus our brother has always been brother and Power, or perhaps, brother and Power Immanent . . . hence yet

*From *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* by Joseph Campbell, (New York: Viking Press, 1970).



Transformation mask, family crest, representing the sun; inside face symbolizes the sun's inner spirit. The large muslin structure above the sun's face is compressed and is not seen initially, Kwakiutl

another understanding of the Monster-faced mask with the human face within.

To dance, either painted or masked, is never to be taken lightly. The Salish say: "The paint doesn't wash off." One who sups with Gods has permanent dinner partners.

The realization of one's potential is part of growing up, and the adult does not transform him/herself back into a child . . . this is the one transformation not permitted. During the initiation of the Coast Salish, the one undergoing the rite is called a "Baby," for he or she is learning to lead a new, and more fulfilled, life. After the initiation, and the cross-bonding with a spirit Power, one grows into true adulthood, regardless of one's chronological age.

Several years ago my relatives were attending a presentation where a family who had been adopted by a Kwakiutl family were displaying their adopted family songs and dances, along with the use of masks. A young girl had been masked by this displaying family, and been told to dance. When she had finished, she could not remove the mask. My relatives worked over her, singing their own Power songs until the girl was freed. One told the Head of the displaying family, "You have acted irresponsibly. You did not prepare this child to wear the mask." The man defended himself by saying that the child did not wear the mask with the proper attitude. He was told that this was not the point. To wear a mask one must be prepared, and a young child should not wear a mask if not properly trained by its owners.

Before the masks are donned, there are cleansing songs that must be sung, for these songs establish harmony between the dancer and his or her environment. The physical aspects of the masks and dance outfits are constant, concrete reminders to the dancers of their relationships to the World. The wood of the masks reminds the dancer of his/her relationship with the plants; the abalone insets and shell decorations remind the dancer of his/her relationship with the people of the waters; the feathers, often eagle feathers, remind the dancer of his/her relationship with the people of the air, and so on, with the various meanings of colors and specific designs. The masks and paint assist the dancers in a mental and spiritual merging with the world, which can be seen as a multiplex manifestation of the Creator. As Joseph Epes Brown has stated:

> This sense of relationship pertained not only to members of a nuclear family, band, or clan. It also extended ever outwards to include all beings of the specific environment, the elements and the winds, whether these beings, forms, or powers are what we would call animate or inanimate. In native thought no such hard dichotomies exist. All such forms under creation were understood to be mysteriously interrelated. Everything was as a relative to every other being or "thing." Thus, nothing existed in isolation. The intricately interrelated threads of the spider's web was referred to depict the world. . . . This is a profound "symbol," when it is understood. The people obviously observed that the threads of the web were drawn out from within the spider's very being.*

The masks and paint can be viewed as a "reference," to use Campbell's term, or a "symbol," but it is this and more. If one observes a beaded medallion so common among Indian people (or if one wishes to remain within a strict, traditional, coastal paradigm, consider the coiled basket) it consists of concentric circles whose relationships make up the intricate designs. But the most important bead is the center bead, for this represents the individual. We are the center of our own universe. Thus we are never lost, if we realize our center. It is not that the masks and paint only represent the outer world . . . they are representations of ourselves, and we are our own worlds. We are as much a manifestation of the Creator as anything else, thus the common Native contention that everything is sacred.

To dance, masked or painted, is to come to know sacredness with more than just eyes or ears, but with all senses of the body and mind operating at the same time. This I cannot tell

*From Joseph Epes Brown's article, "The Roots of Renewal," in *Seeing With a Native Eye*, ed. Walter Holden Capps (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

Tsonoquah transformation mask, family crest, Kwakiutl

you on paper alone. If you want to know the meaning of a mask, you must become masked yourself. It is not our way to sum up things in neat packages complete in themselves. A Keres Pueblo, Larry Bird, has said, "You don't ask questions when you grow up. You watch and listen and wait, and the answer will come to you. It's *yours* then, not like learning in school."*

Those who write and speak have no monopoly on Truth, for Truth changes subtly as we change our perspective. There are many masks because there are many ways of understanding the world. It is only to those that are prepared to accept that their own view may not be the total Truth that the Monster face will open to reveal the human face inside. ◇

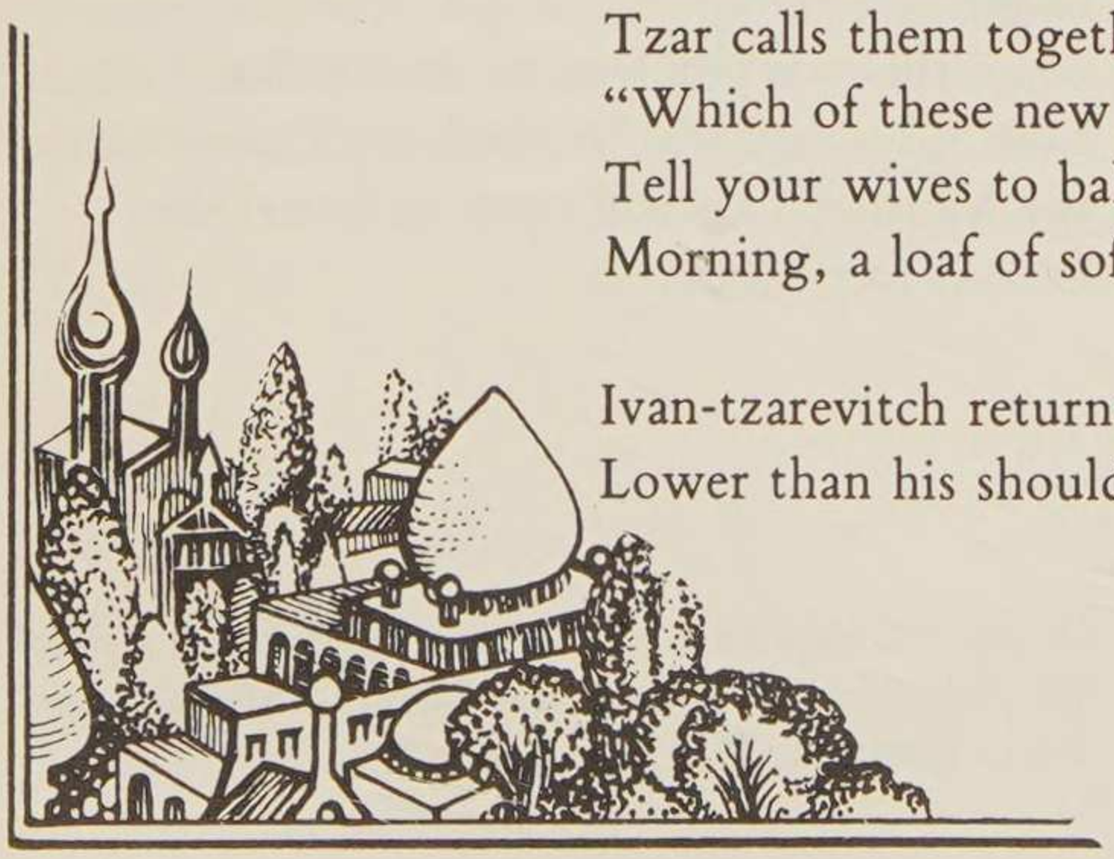
*From *Teachings From the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy*, eds. Dennis and Barbara Tedlock (New York: Liveright, 1975).

EPICYCLE

Tzarevna Lyagushka

In a certain kingdom, in a certain realm,
There lived and there was a tzar and tzaritsa;
To them were given three sons, such dare-devils,
Neither pen could descry, nor skazki skazat'.
The youngest was called Ivan-tzarevitch.
When the sons came of age, the tzar gathered them and said:
"It is time for you to wed;
Take each a strela, go into a virgin field,
Pull back taut your bows and shoot,
Each in his own way. There,
Where each strela falls, there
Seek for yourselves a wife."

Strela of the oldest brat fell in a boyar's dvor
And a boyar's doch picked it up,
And gave it to the tzarevitch.
Strela of the middle brat flew
Into a merchant's wide dvor;
The merchant's doch gave him the strela.
Youngest brat Ivan let fly his strela,
And it flew nikto znayet kuda.
He searched high and low, until he came to a muddy swamp.
And he saw, sitting upon a lily pad,
Lyagushka-kvakushka holding his strela.
Said Ivan-tzarevitch,
"Shto mnye delat? It's not possible to take a frog for a wife!
To live life is not like crossing a field.
Lyagushka is not equal to me."
"Take her!" answered his father. "Know, such is your sud'ba."
So the tzarevitch were wed.
Much time, malo time passes;
Tzar calls them together and delivers an ukaz:
"Which of these new brides is the cleverest housekeeper?
Tell your wives to bake for me, by tomorrow
Morning, a loaf of soft, white bread."



Ivan-tzarevitch returned unhappy,
Lower than his shoulders hung his head;

"Kva-kva, Ivan tzar's son, what so weighs you down?"
Asked Lyagushka. "Have you heard from your father
Some unpleasant word?"
"What so weighs me down? His highness, my father,
Orders you to prepare, by tomorrow morning,
A loaf of soft, white bread."
"Nye tuzhi, tzarevitch, do not grieve.
Lie down to sleep, take your rest.
Morning is wiser than evening."
Tzarevitch lay down to sleep,
Lyaguskha threw off her skin and turned herself into
Devitsa-krasavitsa, Vasilisa-Premudraya;
She went out upon the red roof and struck her palms together:
"Mamki, Nyanki! Gather together, make yourselves ready,
Bake for me a loaf of soft white bread,
Such as I have eaten in my own batushka's dom."
When Ivan-tzarevitch awoke,
The bread had long been ready,
Rich, rosy, and of such kracota,
None could imagine it, none foretell it,
Only v skazki skazat'.
The bread was embellished with great cleverness—
Cities with towers were raised upon it.
Ivan-tzarevitch rejoiced, wrapped the loaf in a towel,
And carried it to his father.

Tzar took the loaf of the stapshevo son,
He looked and sent it into the kitchen;
He took the loaf from the srednevo son,
And sent it—tuda-zhe.
When Ivan-tzarevitch gave his loaf, all were astounded;
Tzar himself took it and said,
"Set this bread upon the tzarskomu stolu."
After this, the Tzar said to his sons,
"Now I wish to see which of the brides works best with her hands.
Tell your wives to weave for me a carpet in one night."

Ivan-tzarevitch returned home unhappy;
Again his head hung lower than his shoulders.
"Kva-kva, Ivan-king's son, what so weighs you down?
Did my bread not come to please the Tzar, your father,
Or have you heard from him some cruel, unpleasant word?"
"Why should I not hang my head, why should I not be sad?
His highness, my father, sends thanks for the bread;
But yet he orders you to weave for him, in one single noch,
A silken carpet."
"Nye tuzhi, tzarevitch, do not grieve!
Lay yourself down to sleep, take your rest.

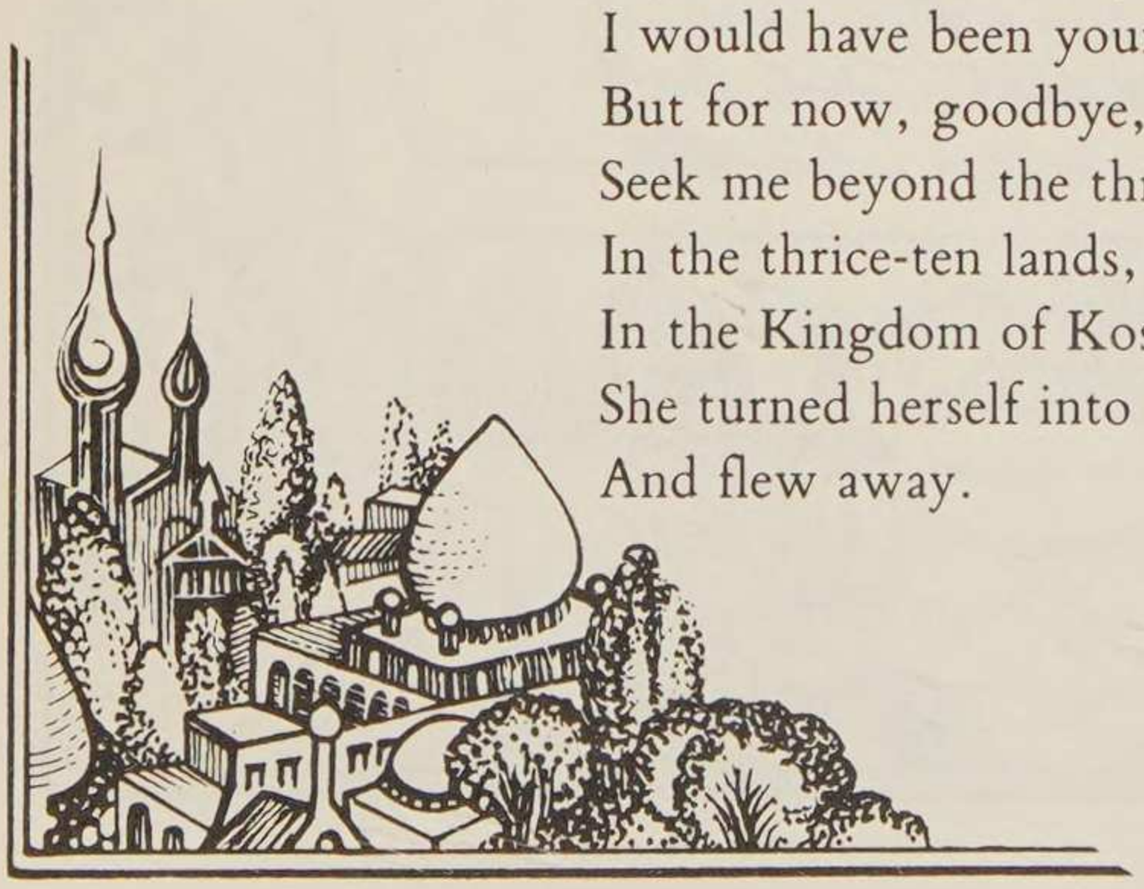
Morning is wiser than evening."
Ivan lay down to sleep, Lyagushka threw off
The frog skin, and changed into
Devitsa-krasavitsa, Vasilisa-Premudraya;
She went out upon the red roof, struck her palms together:
"Mamki, Nyanki! Get together, make yourselves ready,
Weave for me a silken carpet, so that it should be
Like the one I used to sit upon in my own batushka's dom."
When Ivan-tzarevitch awoke, Lyagushka hopped on the floor;
The carpet had long been ready—
And it was such a wonder, that no one could imagine it,
None could foretell it,
Only v skazki skazat'.
The carpet was embroidered with silver and gold,
Upon it was sewn all the kingdom—
Cities and villages, mountains and forests,
Rivers and lakes.
Ivan-tzarevitch was overjoyed,
He took the carpet and carried it to his father.
The older tzarevitch rolled out their carpets,
Tzar came to take them, he looked, and said,
"Thanks be! This one is suitable for the doorway;
And on this carpet, it is good to wipe one's feet."
But when unrolled the carpet of Ivan-tzarevitch,
Everyone was astounded.
Tzar himself took it and said,
"Lay this carpet before my tzarskim tronom!"
And the Tzar ordered his sons, that tomorrow
They should appear with him at a feast,
Along with their wives.
Again Ivan-tzarevitch returned unhappy,
Lower than shoulders hung his stormy head;
"Kva-kva, Ivan-king's son, what so weighs you down?
Or have you heard some unpleasant word from your father?"
"Why should I not seem weighed down?
His highness, my father, orders
That I come with you to join him in a feast.
How can I show you to the court?"
"Nye tuzhi, tzarevitch, go alone to the feast,
I will follow behind you;
When you hear a clap of thunder, say,
'It is only my ugly Lyagushka coming in her little box.' "

So the older bratya appeared before the Tzar
With their zheni dressed in colors, decked with gold,
They stood and laughed at Ivan-tzarevitch,
"Why is it you have come without your zhena?
You could have carried her in a little handkerchief!

JUNE ATKIN

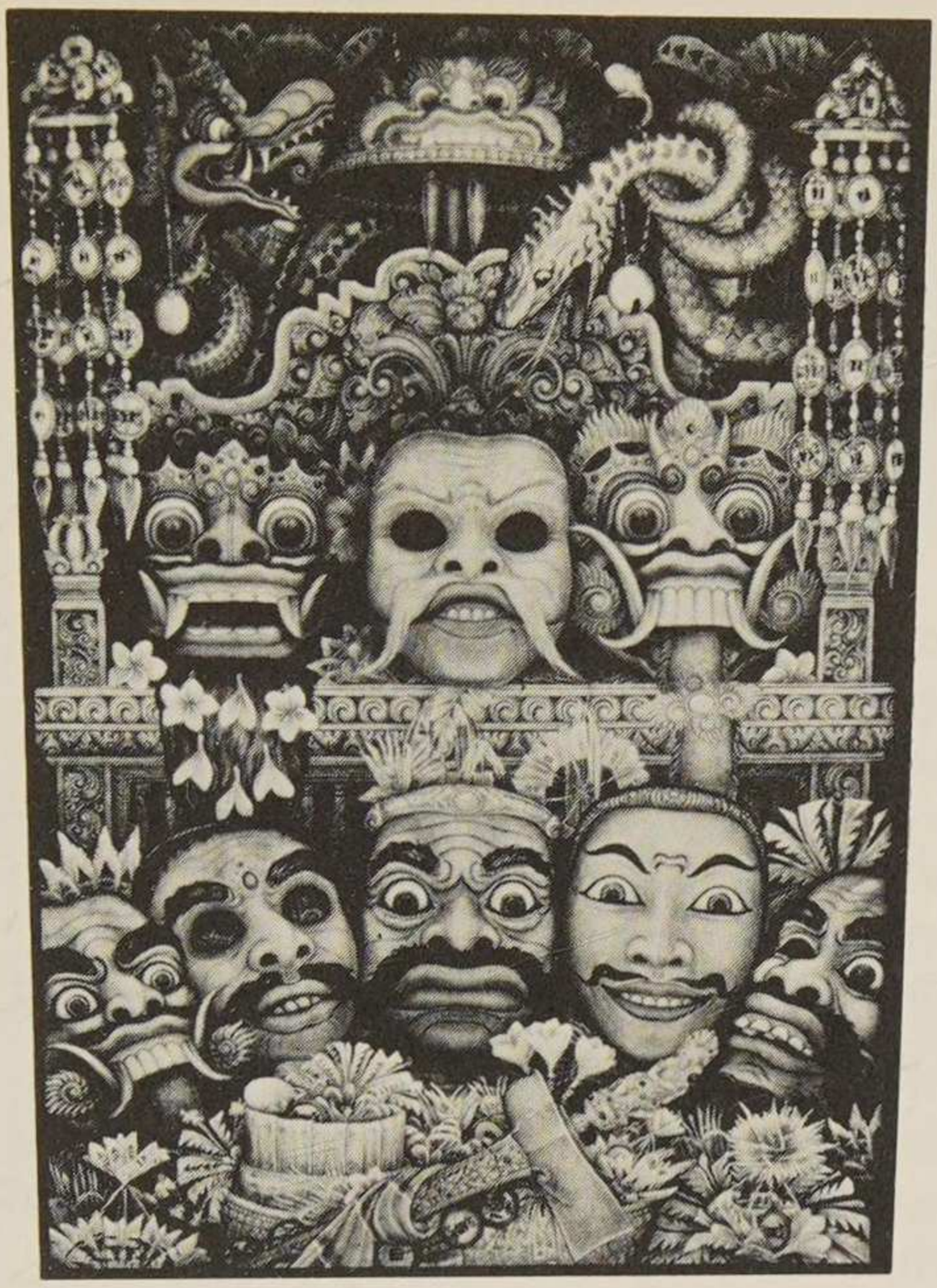
Where did you find such a krasavitsa?
Perhaps you searched the entire swamp!"
Suddenly, there was heard a clap of thunder
Shaking the whole palace.
Ivan-tzarevitch spoke up then:
"Nye boites, honored guests, do not be afraid.
It is only my ugly Lyagushka, coming in her little box."
A golden coach flew up to the palace, drawn by six horses;
And out stepped Vasilisa-Premudraya—such a krasavitsa,
That no one could imagine, none could foretell,
Only v skazki skazat'.
She took Ivan-tzarevitch by the hand,
Led him to the oaken table with silver cloths.
The guests began to eat, to drink, everyone to enjoy himself.
When Vasilisa drank from a cup, she poured the dregs
Down her left-handed sleeve.
When she tasted the swan-meat, she hid the bones
Down her right-handed sleeve.
Zheni of the older tzarevitch watched her cleverness
And made to do the same.
When they finished, everyone rose up to dance.
Vasilisa seized Ivan and led him to the plyass
When she waved her left arm, there appeared a lake;
When she waved her right, white swans swam vo vodye.
When the older brides came dancing,
Waved their right arms and their left—
Soon the guests were all bespattered,
And the Tzar threw them out.

In the meantime, Ivan-tzarevitch
Uluchil minutochku, seized the moment,
Ran home and found the frog-skin,
And burned it in a great fire.
When Vasilisa-Premudraya returned,
She knelt down and began to cry.
"Ivan-tzarevitch, do you know what you have done?
If you had waited only a little,
I would have been yours forever.
But for now, goodbye, proshchai!
Seek me beyond the thrice-nine kingdoms,
In the thrice-ten lands,
In the Kingdom of Koshchei the Deathless."
She turned herself into a white swan,
And flew away.



—Retold by Ann Himler

Illustration by June Atkin



Two-Way Mirrors

by Ron Jenkins

Privacy is rare in Bali. Even the theaters have no backstage. An actor must prepare to perform surrounded by throngs of onlookers. The only intimacy he achieves is a few moments of silent communion with his masks. The painted eyes stare up at him as if from a mirror of wood. He dips a frangipani petal in holy water and sprinkles the liquid first onto the masks, then onto his own face. Performing behind each of the masks in turn he uses movement and voice to weave epic tales of comedy, adventure, and romance. He shifts effortlessly from mask to mask, his body automatically assuming the positions dictated by the sculpted expressions he wears. Quicksilver strength marks the angular choreography of the minister of war. A servant mocks his mistress with a belch. The king expresses command with eloquent stillness. A master at giving life to a countenance of wood, the actor makes his masks breathe, sweat, and cry. The audience responds with awe and laughter to a performance that links them to their ancestors in a whirl of color, sound, and emotion.

Masks are dense with meaning. Their fixed expressions are charged with significance that does not lend itself to simple analysis. It is impossible to understand a mask without examining the person who wears it, the gestures that give it life, the audience that responds to it, and the tree from which it was carved. In isolation a mask is a lifeless museum-piece or a decorative wall-hanging. But in the context of performance, the mask becomes the center of a complex web of intersecting forces.

In Bali the mask is a mediator between opposing worlds. Past and present, kings and servants, spirit and flesh are all blended into a popular entertainment event that revolves around the masks. Much of the power in Balinese masks is linked to the religious beliefs of the people, but a close examination of the art of masked performance enables one to sift out the culture-specific aspects of the masks from their more universal functions.

During a year's research in Bali, I lived, worked, and eventually performed with a troupe of Topeng mask performers. Since returning from Bali I have discovered that the main obstacle confronting the successful adaptation of masks to Western performance is the tendency to focus on their arresting, but superficial, surface value. Conservative artists and audiences are distracted by this exotic appearance and feel it has no place in Western drama. Radical artists and audiences are attracted by this same exotic appearance and try to exploit the dazzling visual elements

of masking simply for the sake of novelty or shock. Both attitudes ignore the deeper aspects of the mask's potential for creating theatrical meaning, and are rooted in fundamental misunderstandings of the process by which effective masks are created, brought to life, and perceived. By focusing on these underlying processes rather than on the surface spectacle of Balinese masked theater, I hope to suggest possible paths for giving masks an appropriate place in Western performance.

Masks in Bali are living archetypes. They are the interface between the timeless world of myth and the immediate world of fact. Balinese spectators witness masked performance with a dual awareness of its legendary and contemporary significance. The mask of each stock character has been danced for centuries, but their features are continually resculpted to give freshness to their impact. During the Japanese occupation of Bali, the portrayal of king masks was slanted to emphasize tyranny and inspire rebellion. As a result many Topeng performers were arrested by the Japanese Imperial government. Even in less troubled times, variations in a masked character's features can be noted from village to village. The alterations are often modeled on well-known individuals in the community, or simply on an artist's conception of a current psychological trait that needs to be brought to the public's attention. The mask becomes a two-way mirror, reflecting images from the past and present in a single face.

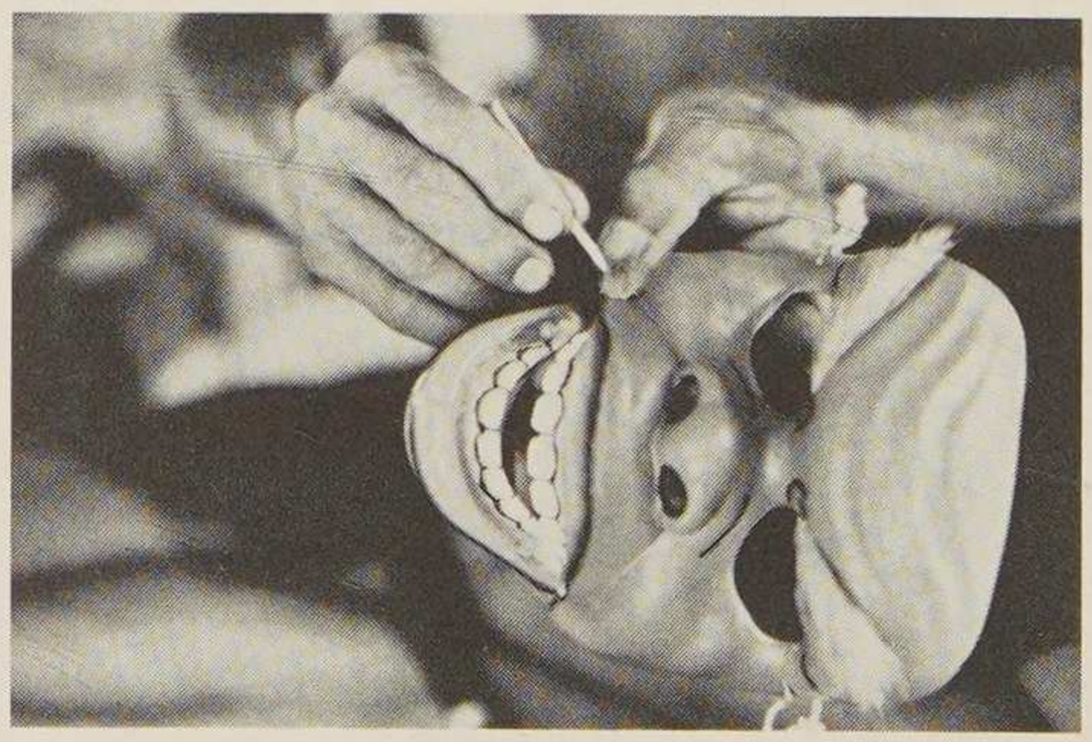
Western cultures tend to de-emphasize their mythic archetypes. The theater is one of the few places where the connections between history and current events could be reinforced, but commercial theater rarely realizes this potential. Dependence on a "star" system, which is the antithesis of masked drama, diminishes the likelihood that a particular role will be viewed with reference to its social meaning. A mask allows the actor to submerge his ego in the service of an archetypal role whose significance dwarfs his own personality. The Broadway star accomplishes precisely the reverse, subordinating the role to his own individuality and thereby focusing the audience's attention on himself at the expense of a broader interpretation of the story's meaning.

If utilized with the intention of countering this trend in drama, masks could be of value to Western actors and their public. The Russian director, Vsevolod Meyerhold, staged several productions according to his own principles of the mask in the early twentieth century. He noted the mask's power to reinforce meaning through subliminal allusions to past and present points of reference:

> The mask enables the spectator to see not only the actual Arlechino before him, but all the Arlechinos who live in his memory. Through the mask, the spectator sees every person who bears the merest resemblance to the character.

In this context the mask provides a resonance that projects the audience's perceptions beyond the particular fictionalized encounter on the stage. Used to portray easily identifiable Western archetypal characters, masks could help to shift the emphasis of our drama from its present "star" mentality to storytelling that reverberates with meanings relevant to our immediate concerns.

In Bali there is a deep bond between the maskmaker and the actor who wears the mask in performance. As he sculpts, the



woodcarver meditates on the performer who will use the mask as well as on the archetypal character he is trying to represent. He focuses on the needs of that individual actor as well as on the needs of the village in which the performance will take place.

In turn the performer acknowledges his responsibility to the maskmaker's intentions. He does not put on a mask immediately after receiving it. He first enters a period of contemplation during which he studies the character traits expressed in the mask's physical form. During this time the mask is kept in a special place in the actor's family temple. Sometimes he sleeps with it next to his pillow to induce dreams based on its image.

Some Balinese view this period of character development as analogous to the act of giving birth. The maskmaker is viewed as the father who gives the seed to the mother/performer. The actor's meditation is the gestation period necessary to give birth to a fully developed character.

This respect for the mask and the process of giving it life is not always understood by Western actors and maskmakers. Designers are often content to concentrate only on the effect of the mask's visual impact. Actors too often view a new mask as if it were a toy. This attitude results in theatrical products that are little better than Halloween tricks.

The tendency to ignore fundamental aspects of the mask's meaning is indicative of a major difference between performers in the East and West. The Western actor approaches a role as an opportunity to succeed or fail in creating something that originates inside himself. Unlike the Balinese actor who searches outside himself for the creative seed of the character's interpretation, the Westerner does not take time to consider the inherent qualities of the mask that were developed by a collaborating artist, the maskmaker. This

leaves the actor little opportunity to move beyond his personal limitations.

Balinese masks are inanimate pieces of wood. The performer's challenge is to make the wood move as if it were alive. When he succeeds, its fixed expression seems to change as the light illuminates its features from different angles. An actor who achieves this metamorphosis from deaf wood to living character is praised by his audience for having "taksu." Literally "taksu" can be translated as the "place that receives light," but what it actually refers to is the intangible relationship established between a performer and his mask. It is a recognition of the actor's ability to animate his mask in a way that conjures up the spiritual and musical rhythms that are in harmony with its sculpted expression. If there is no "taksu" the performer is disparagingly called a carpenter, because he does nothing more than push the wood around.

When working with masks in the West, respect for the mask and its maker will lead to the assumption that each mask captures in its expression some essential aspect of the character's personality frozen in time. To do

justice to the mask, it is necessary to begin by interiorizing its image in order to invent body images and gestures that are as economical as the mask's face in their expression of a character's central traits. One also searches for an interior rhythm or music that conforms both with the seed of expression contained in the mask and with the action of a particular script. But to see the musical movement and rhythm that has been shaped into a static object requires a discipline of observation that is rarely applied to mask work in the West. A Western actor's first impulse on seeing a mask is to put it on his face and look for a mirror. This leads to a focus on exteriors that narrows the interpretation to a one-dimensional level. When an actor does not take the time to sit motionless and study the facial lines of a mask as carefully as he studies the lines of a script, it is no wonder that the audience sees little more than the shell of the sculpted face's full expressive quality.

One of the mask's most potent functions in Bali is as a mediator between the sacred and the comic. As an object of fixed perfection placed on a face of constantly changing human flaws, the mask is at the threshold between the world of flesh and the world of spirit. The meeting of ridiculous impulse and sublime ceremony is epitomized by the half-mask of the Balinese clown, that covers the upper portion of the face and leaves the mouth free. The clown is half masked and half himself, half in the world of his ancestors and gods, half in the mundane world of his audience. During temple performances the clown is the public's link to these other realms. His mask gives him access to the solemn conversations of the kings and gods he serves, but his unrestrained mouth gives him freedom to mock their royalty and divinity with earthy humor. The obscene jokes and bawdy slapstick of this buffoon are not considered sacrilegious; laughter is sacred in

Bali, and it is believed that the gods could not be lured to visit the temple ceremonies were it not for the promise of being entertained by the clowns.

Most Western audiences are not linked by the shared religious vision that unites the Balinese spectators, so it would be difficult to make our clowns sacred (with the notable exception of the clown tradition among various Native American tribes). But the mask of the clown is still potent to the Western eye, and it is unfortunate that for the most part its potential languishes untapped in the glittering wasteland of the three-ring circus.

While the clown priest might be too radical a concept for general audiences in the West, it is not unrealistic to hope that our theater clowns might use their comic masks to make their audiences reflect on serious values and issues. This type of clown is foreign to most modern American audiences, but was once exemplified by the nineteenth century circus clown Dan Rice, whose circus toured America on steamboats and horse-drawn wagons. Rice, a deeply spiritual man, captured the issues and values of his time so strongly that his long white beard and comic flag have been mythologized into the image of Uncle Sam, a Western mask that evokes a complex constellation of responses in us all. According to Rice:

> A successful clown must be so ready-witted that he to the ringmaster is a stupid fool, a buffoon; to the audience a wise man whose every remark is impregnated with philosophy as well as humor. This is the dual character of the true clown . . . one of the grandest works of God.

The power of the mask is rooted in paradox, in the fusion of opposites. It brings together the self and the other by enabling us to look at the world through someone else's face. It merges past and present by reflecting faces that are the likenesses of both our ancestors and our neighbors. A mask is a potent metaphor for the coalescence of the universal and the particular, immobility and change, disguise and revelation.

But a mask is more than a metaphor. It is a tangible catalyst for transformation in the theater that can charge simple actions with complex meanings. Naturally, not all Western drama is suitable to adaptation for masks, but that should not prevent theater artists from considering possible applications of masks to modern theater. Audiences who may never have seen masks before will respond to them if they are presented in an intelligible context. I have seen children laugh at masks that mock their teachers, aging immigrants cry when masks remind them of folk-festivals in the countries of their birth, and psychiatric patients shrink in terror from masks that remind them of their own death. These are innocent audiences whose response to theater is unhindered by habit and expectation. Their encounters with masks are direct and powerful.

The symbols of Western theater are the twin masks of tragedy and comedy, an acknowledgement of drama's intrinsic commitment to the mystery of assuming another's persona. Our modern theater can trace its origins to the masked traditions of the ancient Greeks and the Italian Renaissance, but what we see in the theater today is a diluted version of what drama once was, and still is, in other parts of the world. As long as we refrain from hollow imitations of the past or the exotic, a clearer understanding of the meaning of masks in action might help drain our theater of some of its superficiality, shake our actors out of their egotism, and connect our audiences to an idea of a theater that is one of the essential tools for making sense and nonsense of their own reflections. ◇

Inner Faces

by Ray Zone

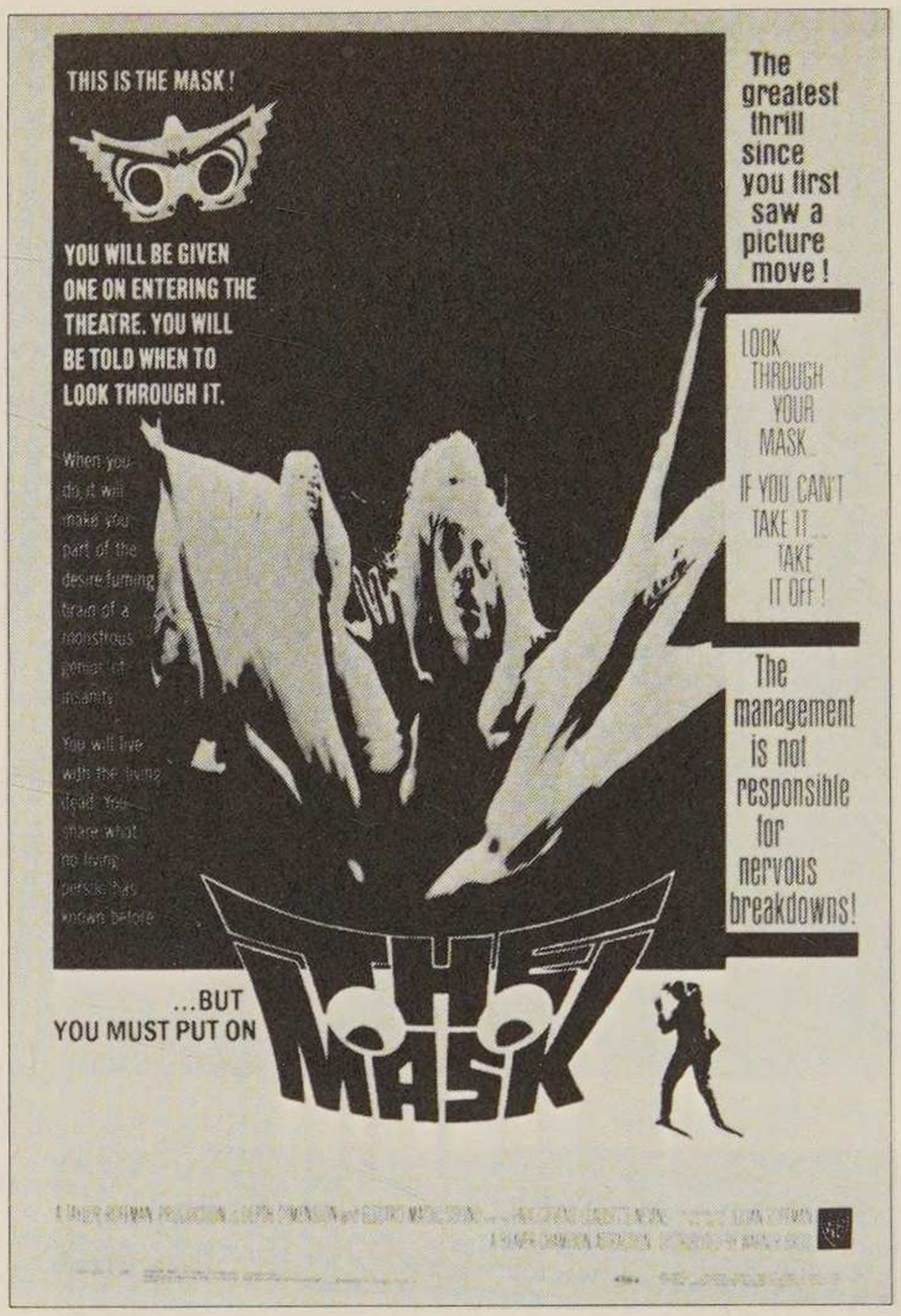


Figure 1 Medium as Interface

Masks have always been powerful symbols for the dual nature of human experience and the bicentric character of the universe. By putting a face on limitless time and space, the unknown is reduced to a quantity. The cosmos is *personified*, transmuted to our own configuration and, in identification with it, we are somehow given the ability or strength to master forces beyond ourselves. Between life and death, day and night, stands the human face as a gateway to two worlds, conscious and unconscious.

Art and culture are a kind of frozen dream extracted from human experience. As a gloss or mask for the imperatives of the instinctual unconscious, the dream is our primary mechanism of mythic consciousness. In the symbolic language of dreams and myths the world of things becomes the world of the mind. It is predominantly a world of images. Transcending boundaries of culture, this common language of the human race renders basic experiences into a pictorial formula.

The popular formula, with the repetition of an archetype that has been found pleasing, is the collective dream of the present day in which age-old myths are given a new face. The appeal of horror films, murder mysteries, and comic books lies in the compulsion to see a myth acted out.

It is the critically disreputable popular formulas which most accurately present the ritual reenactment of a universal and intuitive message encoded for the modern psyche. This ritual message is presented in an inherent visual language that is a temporary reversion to the pictorial thinking common to the early history of humanity and the childhood of the individual.

In the collective waking dream of the mass media the mask is a recurring symbol for the totality of the self. There are two archetypal formulas in mythic language which symbolize personal and universal experience using the mask. The first is that of Everyman, in which the human face becomes an icon of mortality. The second is the dissociated self, involving that aspect of myth known as duplication or multiplication. As a totem of the dissociated self the mask is a potent symbol for bicameral consciousness.

Icons of Mortality

Death. Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commandment to fulfill.

God. Go thou to Everyman,
And show him, in my name,

A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
Without delay or any tarrying.

*Everyman**

Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Masque of the Red Death* is an allegory of mortal life that harks back to the Dances of Death of the 15th century, the medieval mystery plays and the ancient Tarot deck. It has as its essential focus the brevity of human life, "the redness and the horror of blood." In the midst of the masquerade of life, played out in seven chambers of seven colors, we are in death. Every hour, the reveling stops briefly at the chiming of a clock, an insistent reminder of mortality, until eventually the figure of Death appears in a red mask with "the countenance of a stiffened corpse."

The allegorical nature of the tale is emphasized as Poe refers to each masked reveler as a *dream*. "To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams."

As a metaphor for our unconscious terror of death, Poe's *Masque* has been given new life over and over again in visual media of the 20th century. Its influence can be seen in the 1925 silent Universal film *The Phantom of the Opera* with Lon Chaney, Sr. in the title role. There is a masked ball sequence in the film in which Chaney emerges amidst the revelers as the Red Death (fig. 2). This sequence in original prints of the film was hand-tinted with red hues.

The Phantom of the Opera also contains one of the classic unmasking scenes in horror cinema that has since become a stock device in many films. When the heroine, played by Mary Philbin, unmasks the phantom as he plays at the organ, we look for a moment upon the face of our asocial self in a scene that is a visual analogue for latent and

Figure 2 The Red Death

Figure 3 The Asocial Self

manifest dream imagery (fig. 3). Chaney's torturous artistry has personified the terrible face of the unconscious, a visage so overwhelmed by desire it can only take its place in society (or consciousness) behind a mask.

The 1933 Warner Brothers film *The Mystery of the Wax Museum* also makes use of

*From *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays,* ed., A.C. Cawley (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1959).

Figure 4 Pity and Terror

an unmasking scene that has unnerved many audiences. As Fay Wray, the heroine, resists the advances of Lionel Atwill, she smashes the wax mask he uses as a disguise. The wax shards fall away to reveal the very face of obsession, a characterization that Atwill, like Chaney before him, invested with a subtle pathos that summons both pity and terror (fig. 4).

In 1964 Roger Corman produced and directed for American International Pictures a feature-length version of *The Masque of the Red Death* that elaborates Poe's allegorical concept of the seven chambers of seven colors. "Pathecolor" provides the process for this modern visual alchemy in which Vincent Price portrays the tyrannical Prince Prospero who amuses himself with Satanic practices.

Prince Prospero is a human monster who eventually succumbs to the inevitable fate of all mortals. James H. Nicholson, executive producer of the American International adaptations of Poe, has remarked on the symbolism of the films. "Each time our monster got his deserts, he had actually enacted a modern version of the medieval morality play. We had filmed *Everyman*."

The original ads for the 1933 version of *The Mystery of the Wax Museum* depicted a large death's head of Atwill composed of the bodies of women. This motif was rendered almost exactly much later in the ads for *The*

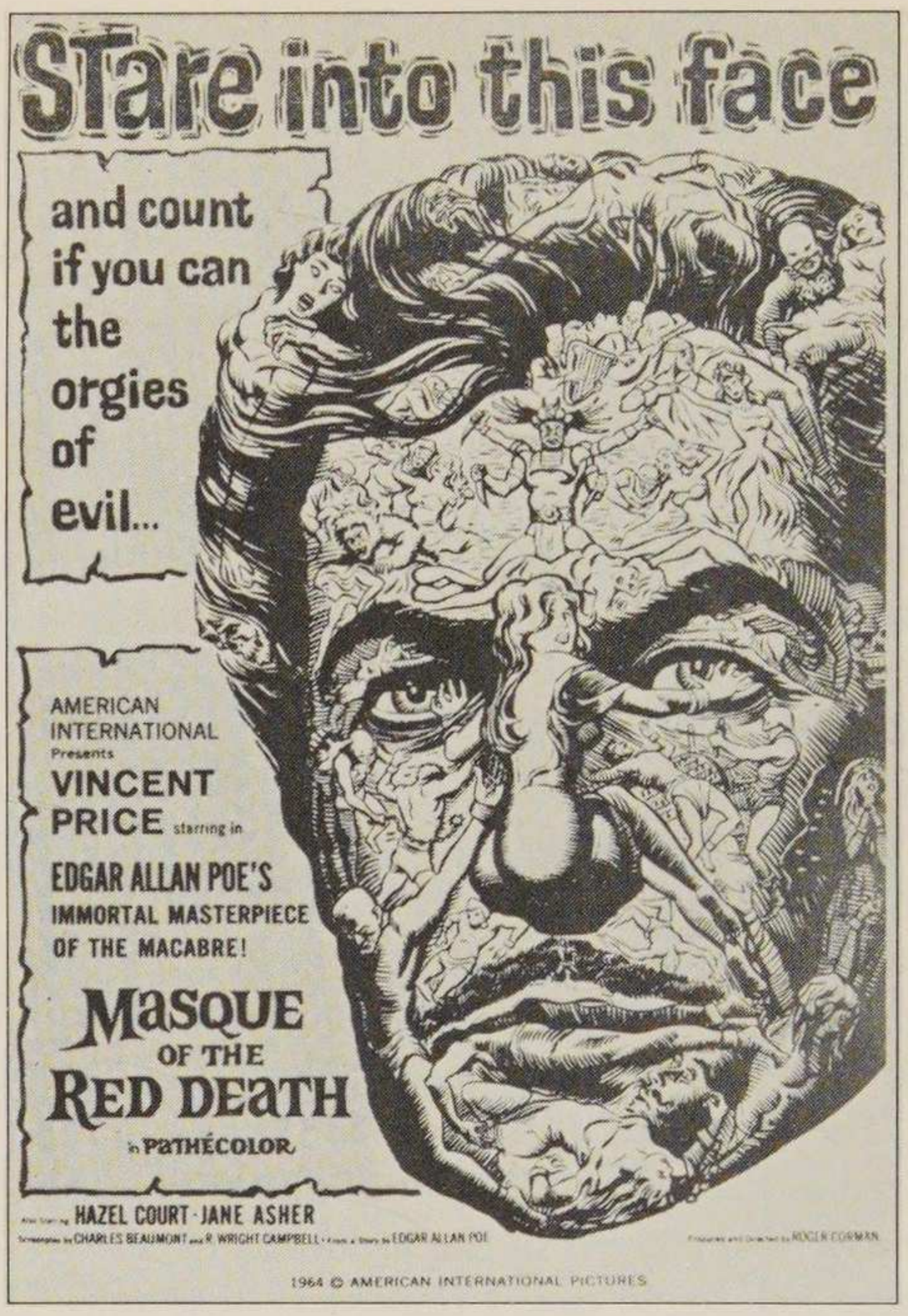


Figure 5 Unconscious Terrors

Masque of the Red Death (fig. 5). Corman's version of *The Masque* was subsequently adapted to comic book and paperback media. It survives to this day as a spectral icon on color television.

The woodcut, given the secondary elaboration of cinema, eventually evolved into the modern comic book. The Dance of Death is continued in the graphic story medium with *Mask Comics* No. 1, a 1945 comic book for which artist Leonard B. Cole created an hermetic allegory of good and evil that might well have come to us right out of the Middle Ages (fig. 6).

Poe also formulated the modern detective story which Arthur Conan Doyle brought to widespread popularity with his creation of Sherlock Holmes. The murder mystery is a modern morality tale in which the dualism of the detective and the criminal symbolize the known and unknown. The real concern of the murder mystery is our unconscious terror of death which the figure of the detective minimizes by restoring rationality. By unmasking the murderer and unraveling his

Figure 6 Hermetic Allegory

Figure 7 Malign Riddles of Identity

motives, the detective brings a malign riddle of identity within the compass of human understanding (fig. 7).

The detective story came to enjoy a great vogue in the pages of many pulp magazines of the twenties and thirties. Social realism was introduced to the genre in *Black Mask* magazine, with the private eye set as a contemporary Everyman against a landscape of near-universal guilt (fig. 8). The proliferation of such masked pulp crimefighters as *The Shadow, The Phantom Detective, Black Hood, The Masked Detective,* and *The Lone Ranger* may be seen as a daydream of wish-fulfillment compensating for a world in which there was little individual effectiveness. Hooded avengers and hard-boiled detectives evolved directly out of a social background of widespread lawlessness and economic depression.

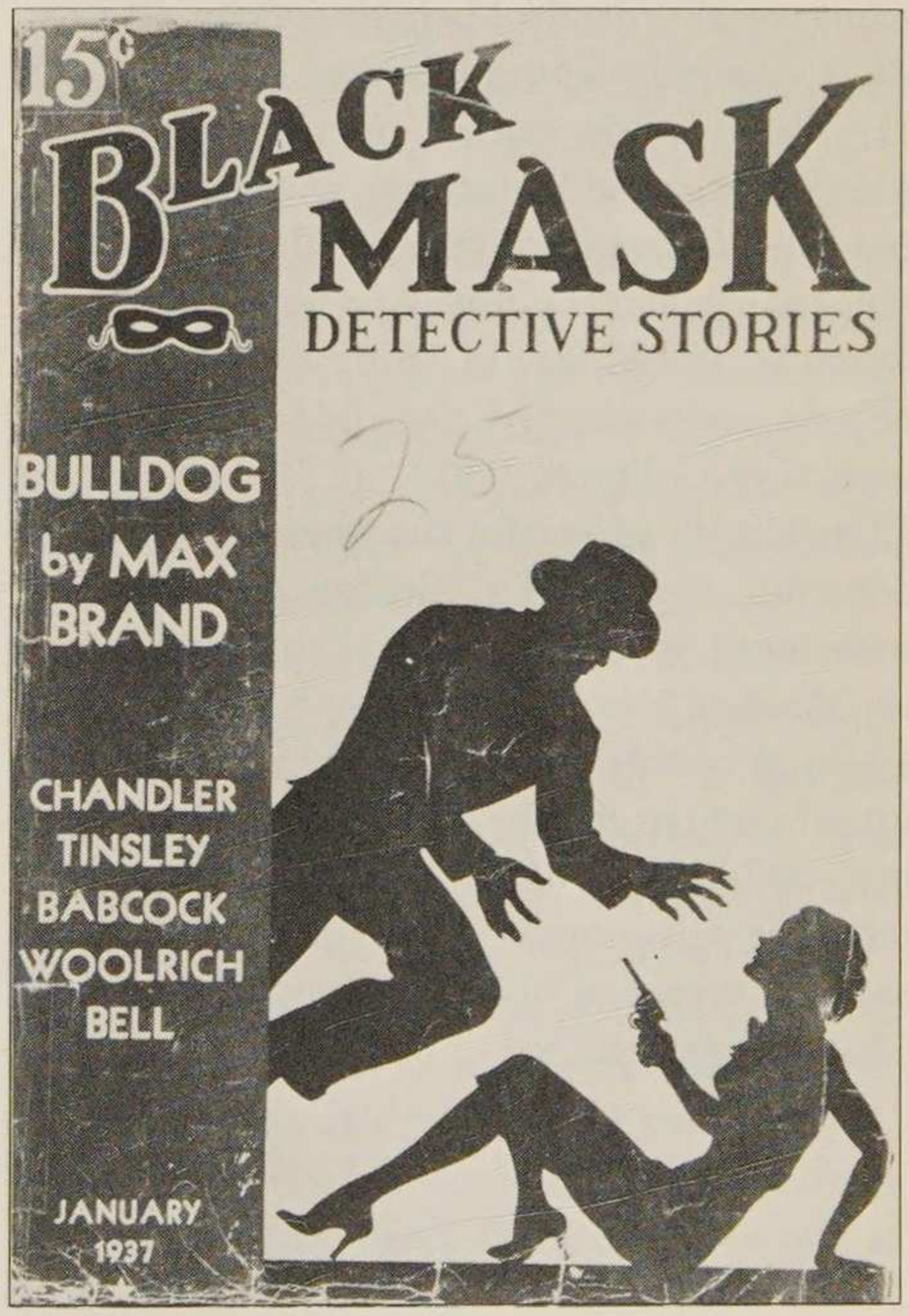


Figure 8 A Modern Everyman

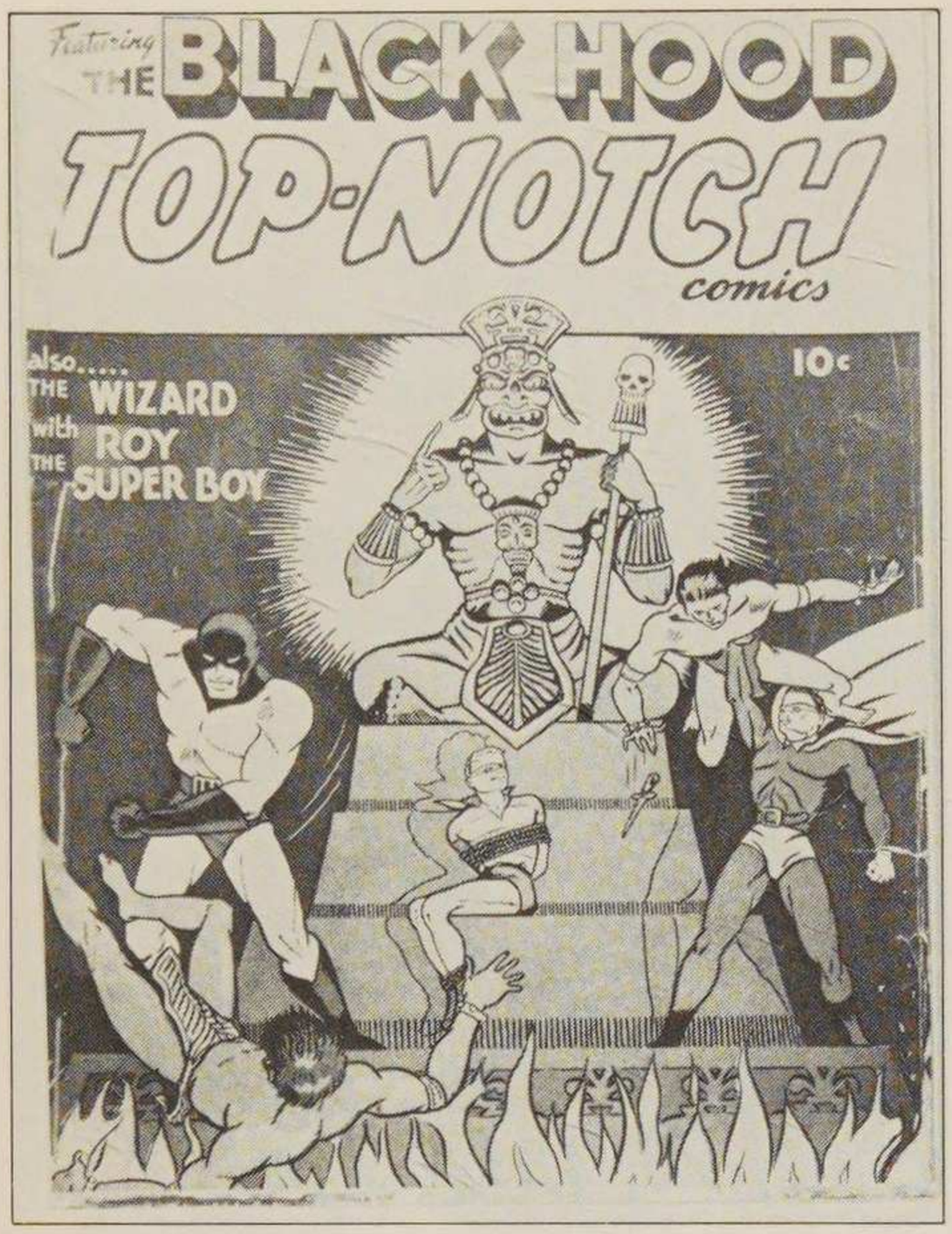


Figure 9 A Dream of Strength

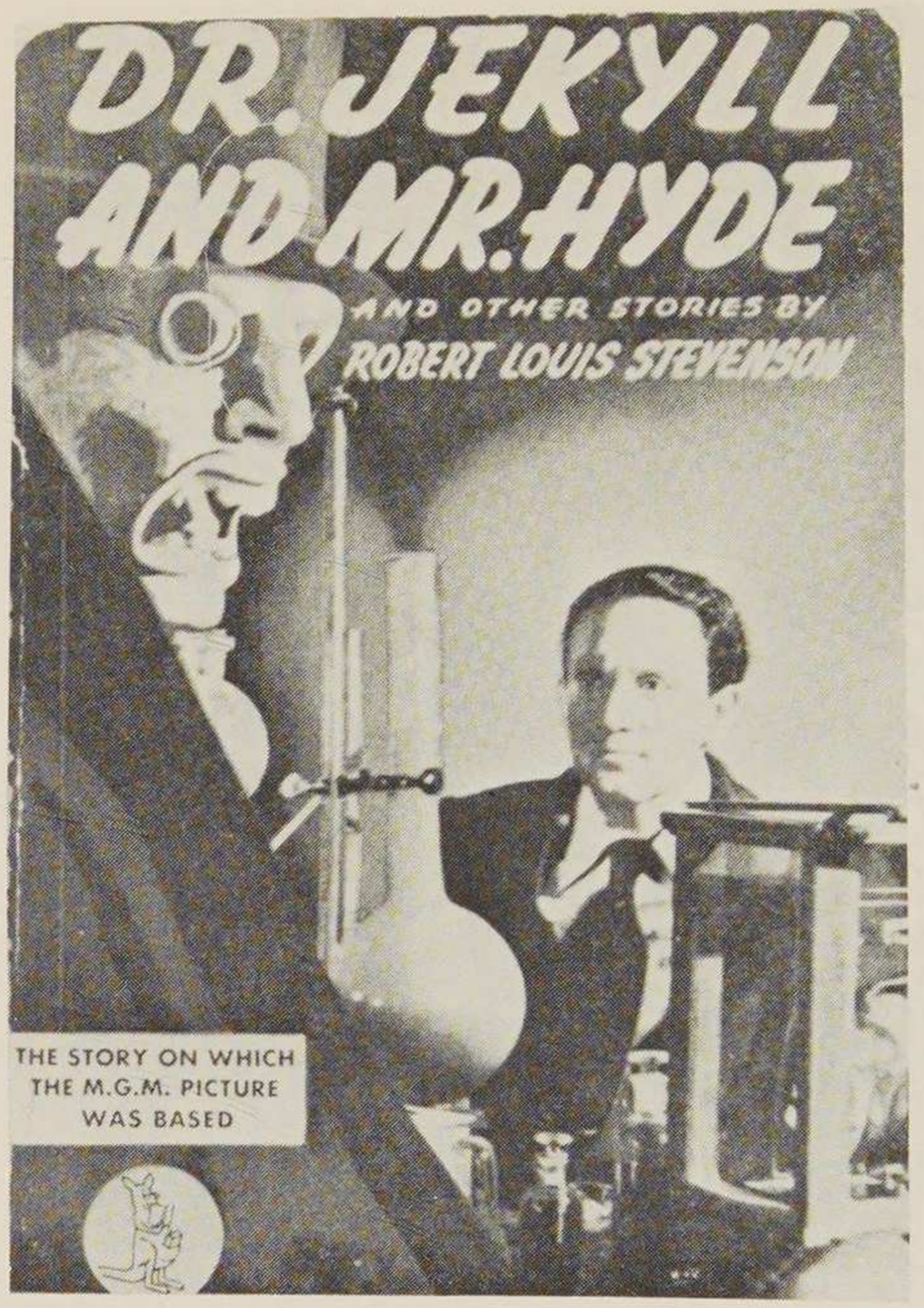


Figure 10 The Dual Id/entity

By restoring harmony to a troubled, if fictional, social order and bringing the guilty to justice, the pulp heroes provided an emotional safety valve for the reader. In assuming a secret identity and dispensing with the necessities of due legal process, the hooded avengers enabled the reader to temporarily assume an asocial face in acting out an imaginary dream of strength that had no actual sanction in reality (fig. 9).

The hugely successful superhero comic books which enjoyed a "Golden Age" in the forties with popular characters such as *Superman, Batman,* and *The Amazing Spiderman,* persisting to this day, serve similar compensating functions for the child/adult. The comic books assist a leap of imagination the child makes for reassurance in the face of an unconscious terror of his own diminutiveness and vulnerability.

The Dissociated Self

"Well, what makes him so terrible?" asked another.

"Because he hasn't got any face," replied the barber and the engineer in duet.

"Hasn't got any face!" repeated the man. "How can he do without any face?"

Stephen Crane
The Monster

The human brain is a bimodal construction which houses two complementary means of processing information. The left hemisphere has been found to house language, reason, and linear thinking. The right hemisphere is nonverbal, intuitive, and holistic. These hemispheres intersect in controlling the body so that the right hand (*dexter* in Latin) generally represents rationality and the left hand (*sinister*) is historically disreputable.

Connecting the brain's two hemispheres is a cable of fibers called the *corpus callosum.* It provides communication between the two hemispheres and allows for the transmission of memory and learning. As a medium to reconcile two opposing perceptions, the *corpus callosum* preserves our sense of individual unity.

The mask is a metaphorical *corpus callosum*, a true inter*face* mediating between two minds. In the mirror of culture handed down to us through millennia by artists, we see a face that is our own, or rather, our two faces; Janus, Comedy and Tragedy, Jekyll and Hyde.

As in dreams, mythic language may split the personality into one or more figures. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a fable of the dissociated self that has been filmed and adapted to comic books more than any other classic horror tale. It symbolically contrasts the civilized, conscious self with the instinctive and destructive self within. Freud was to construct his theory of human nature on just such a contrast.

Unity of consciousness is a tenuous thing. Other observers besides Freud have noted the apparent absence of a moral sense in dreams, and the revelation of secret and perhaps potentially criminal wishes. Yet Freud was a modern detective of the mind. In a triumph of rationalism, he deduced the existence of the unconscious.

Stevenson, in rendering his tale of social and asocial man, seems to have been aware of how the conscious mind may struggle with the instincts. He has depicted the disruption of consciousness bereft of the psychic mediation necessary for social survival.

The masking of the asocial self is an enduring formula in horror films. A mask is often seen as a necessary interface for survival of the self in society. Peter Lorre starred in a 1940 Columbia melodrama entitled *The Face Behind the Mask* that explored this idea (fig. 11). Without a face, how can a man take his place in society? And, if a man cannot take a place in society, may he not turn against it?

In *The Face Behind the Mask* Lorre plays an Hungarian immigrant who is terribly disfigured in a fire and so becomes a social outcast. Embittered, he turns to a life of crime

Figure 11 The Social Self

and devises a special rubber mask that conceals his scarred features. His only friend is a blind girl who is ignorant of his criminal activities. When his criminal accomplices accidentally kill the blind girl, he realizes life no longer holds any meaning for him. He dies in a tragic climax at the hands of his own gang.

The contrast between the inner and outer self has been touched upon in a number of horror films. This element is present in the 1935 Universal film *The Bride of Frankenstein* in a scene derived from the original novel. The monster happens upon a hut where he is befriended and entertained by a kindly blind man. This idyllic bond of kinship is broken when sighted visitors intrude upon the scene.

James Whitmore essayed a tragic role in a 1955 film entitled *Face of Fire,* adapting Stephen Crane's novel *The Monster.* Like the Peter Lorre character in *The Face Behind the Mask,* Whitmore's protagonist becomes a social outcast when his face is horribly disfigured in a fire. Since the accident occurs as a result of his heroism in saving a child from a burning building, the irony of the terrible situation is underscored. In this case, a prosocial act has created an asocial martyr.

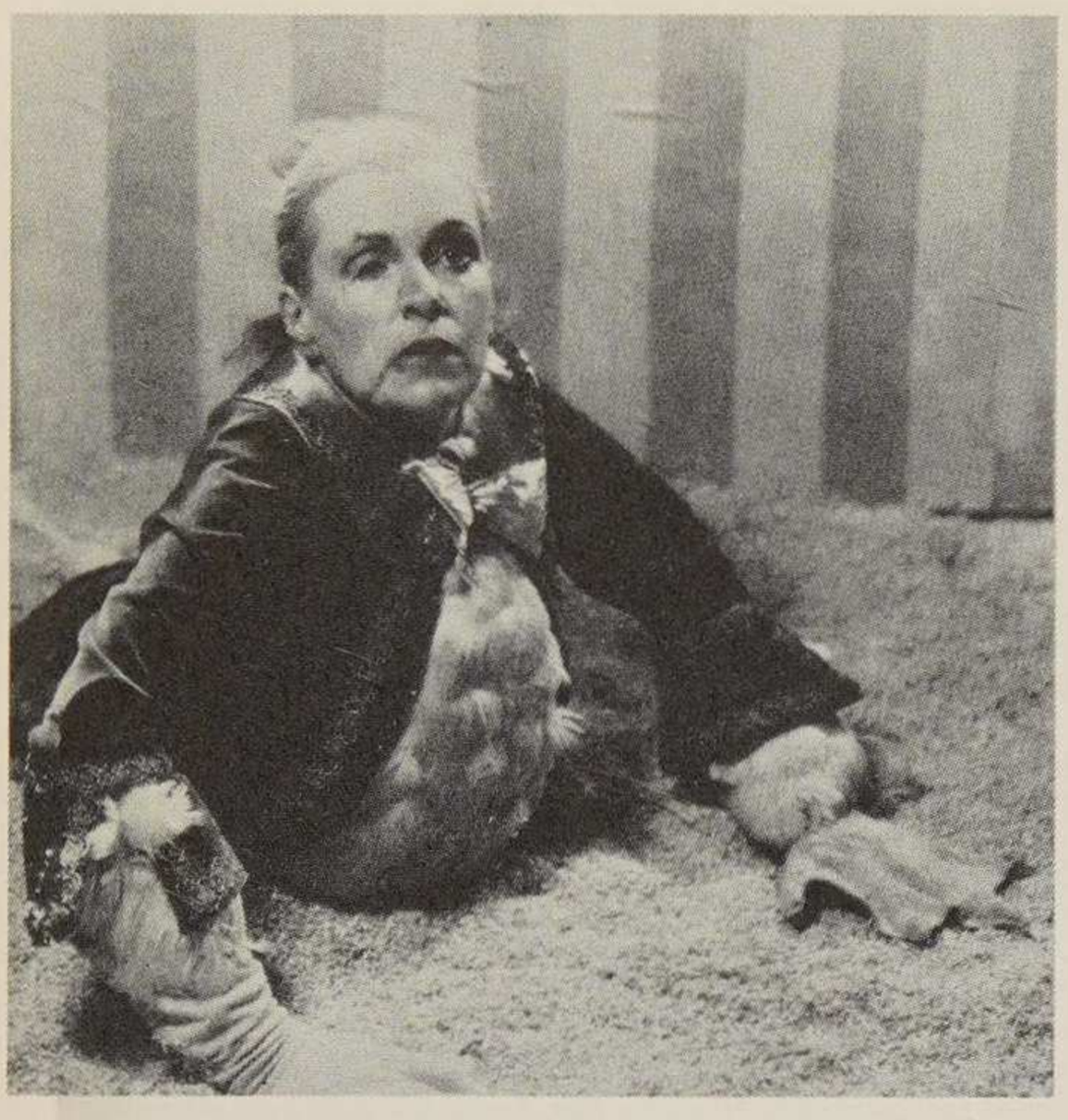


Figure 12 The Soul Made Visible

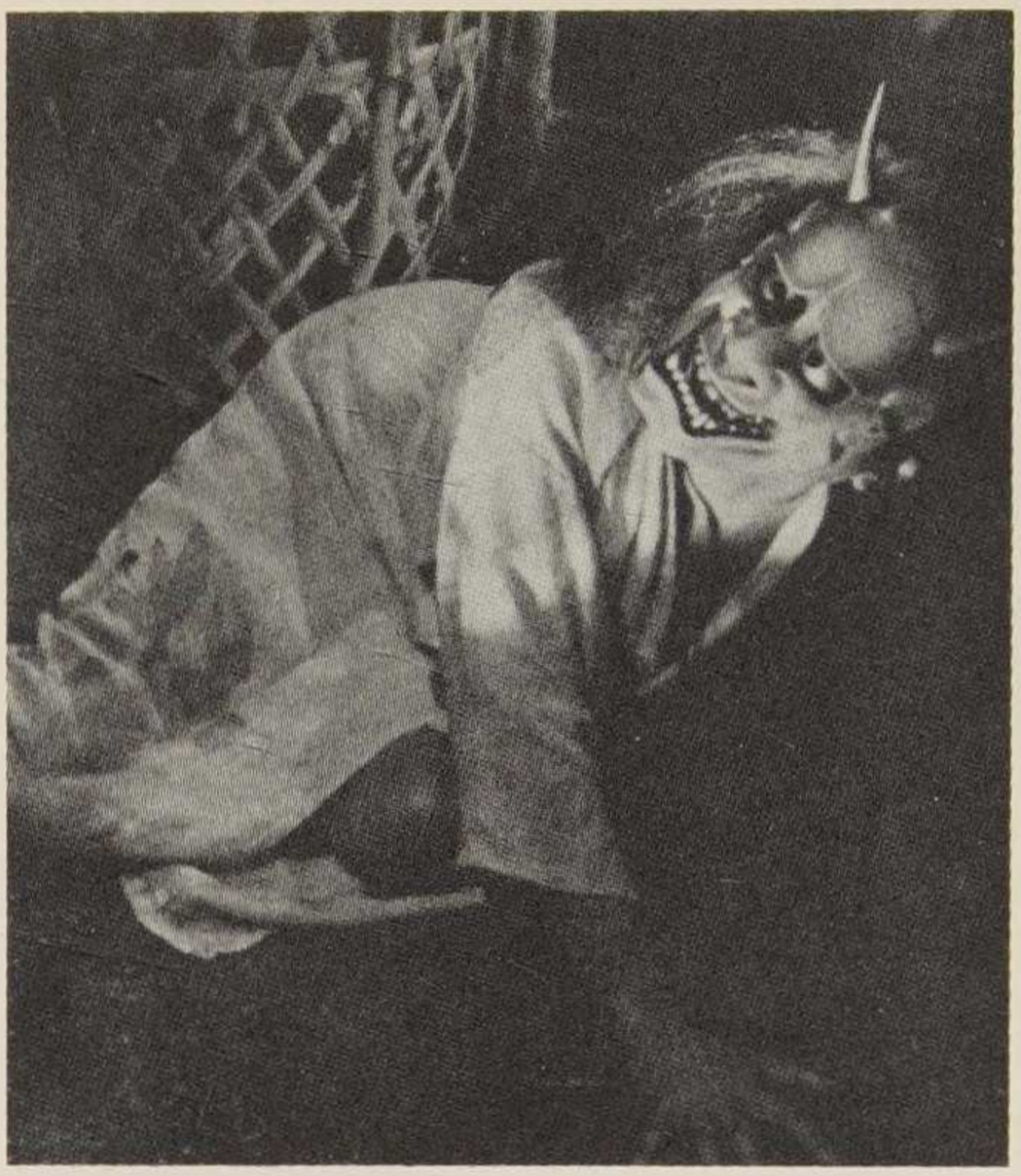


Figure 13 Dominance

The most recent film to contrast the inner and outer self in this manner is David Lynch's 1980 film *The Elephant Man.* The fragile sensitivity of the elephant man, beneath his monstrous exterior, is contrasted with the crushing inhumanity lurking beneath the guises of those of normal visage.

Tod Browning, with his notorious 1931 film *Freaks,* created a similar inversion of the popular formula, when he cast real "mistakes of nature" in his tale of circus life and contrasted their innate goodness with the evil soul of the beautiful heroine. Olga Baclanova plays a trapeze artist who marries an infatuated dwarf, played by Harry Earle. She intends to murder the dwarf and steal his fortune. When she is unable to hide her revulsion for the freaks at the wedding ceremony and begins to cruelly taunt her new husband, the assembled freaks realize the truth and band together for protection and revenge. In one of the most horrifying climaxes in all of cinema, the freaks transform the heroine, by an esoteric surgery unseen by the audience, into one of their own kind. No longer is her true self hidden with a mask of beauty. The freaks render the ugliness of her soul visible for all to see (fig. 12).

A 1965 Japanese film entitled *Onibaba* (*The Hole*) makes use of a demonic mask which ultimately comes to represent the final sundering of the self and a complete dissociation in the psyche. The grim story tells of a mother and daughter who make their living trapping and killing Samurai soldiers escaping from war, and selling off their armor. They hide the bodies of their victims in a hole.

A masked soldier forces the mother one night to show him an escape route. She traps him into the hole and strips the mask from his dead body, revealing a horrible face beneath. The mother later uses the mask herself in an attempt to frighten her daughter away from a clandestine love affair. In a scene reminiscent of *The Mystery of the Wax Museum,* the daughter removes the mask, revealing the mother's face to be as dreadfully disfigured as that of the soldier. The mask assumes a life of its own, just as Hyde achieved dominance over Jekyll (fig. 13).

With their symbolic language, horror films often use the mask as a representation for disruption of consciousness. A critically disreputable film of 1975 called *The Texas*

Figure 14 Leatherface

Figure 15 Seasonal Rites *Ray Zone*

Chainsaw Massacre, written and directed by Tobe Hooper, features a masked, chainsaw-wielding figure whose real face is never revealed. He is "Leatherface," a necrophile and cannibal (fig. 14).

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, like Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho,* is based on a real-life case of self-dissociation. The bizarre facts seem lifted from a horror film, rather than the material for one.

Ed Gein was a farmer, a small-town Everyman who would hire out as an occasional handyman or baby-sitter. Practically everybody in the rural town of Plainfield, Wisconsin knew him; yet they were unaware that Gein was (as the courts determined) a "psychotic-paranoid-schizophrenic" who led a murderous double life.

When he was apprehended in 1957, grisly remains were found at Gein's farm. He had plundered them from graves and had often worn them. They were well-preserved masks of human skin.

* * *

Masks remain in contemporary life disturbing symbols for malevolence and deceit. The ski mask, a relatively innocent invention, has now become a symbol for the terrorist and rapist. The Ku Klux Klan, at one time a hooded organization, has had to revise its regalia in the face of many local ordinances banning the public use of masks. Halloween, a benign ritual, continues as a seasonal celebration and an annual rite for children (fig. 15).

A technological device in a 1961 film called *The Mask* may serve as an apt metaphor for the mythic proportions of popular formulas in the mass media. At several intervals during this black and white film the audience is instructed to look through a "mask" with red and green 3-D lenses. This mask reveals the subjective mental world of a character in the story.

The persistence of archetypes as popular formulas in horror films, detective stories, and comic books suggests the existence of a mythic infrastructure in modern media. As mechanical extensions of psychic life, the popular formulas may be seen as ritual masks for the asocial self, forming a sort of cultural *corpus callosum* bridging the two worlds of daily life and the subconscious. ◇

Regarding the Invisible Marionettists

So they, those hiding behind the screens
Manipulating the strings of the apparent creature,
Tell you again what you know, would prefer not to know,
That these dramas though so lengthy, are always continuing,
That the man walking through the corridors of that house
To the assignation with himself where eternity can happen,
Has already walked there, that the woman
Combing her hair before the bright mirror,
Cannot really see the perpetual lover she has dreamed of, prepares for,
So that the two of them when they meet and exchange silences and
selves,
Are besieged by shadows which are themselves also,
And the scene shifts suddenly. The voices come to you
And the cries, the weeping:
Sometimes there is laughter. These are expert ventriloquists.
You wonder what their own voices would sound like,
What they themselves would look like if they were not hidden.
You never do find out.
They do not come forward afterwards winding up their cords,
Chatting about the performance, setting the place to rights.
There are only the screens there and the faint flicking of the threads,
The assumed voices.
When one showing ends, another has already begun.
The plot is seamless and perhaps pointless.
However, you find yourself watching with the closest attention:
Important matters are being dealt with, you have been told.

—Peyton Houston

EPICYCLE

The First Mask

From the Dogon

In the beginning there was no death. When people grew old they became serpents and gave up the language of the living, and spoke the language of the spirit. In those days, the power of creation was kept in a skirt that the God Amma had given to the earth when he made love to her. It was worn only by women.

One day an old man became a serpent and gave up the language of the living. He spoke the words of the spirit. As he left the village, he heard the sound of boys singing on the road. He saw them dancing and singing down the road. They had stolen the skirt of creation that only women wore. The old man was angered. He forgot, in his anger, and spoke the language of the living, "Stop!" he cried. In that instant, the soul of the man left the snake. A corpse lay on the road. The boys became afraid because they had never seen a corpse. They ran to the village and called the elders.

The elders came and carried the body of the snake to a cave. No one knew where the soul had gone, until months later a woman gave birth to a child. The child's skin was brown. However it had red circles on it, like the skin of the serpent. "The soul of the old man has entered this baby," the elders said. In order to remove the soul and put it to rest, they made a mask and painted it the colors of the snake. They made a dance like the first gods, like the first ancestors, and they sang the soul from the baby. Soon the infant's skin was brown again. The soul went to rest in the mask. Death came to the world.

The dance for the old man's soul was the first funeral. Because the men stole the women's power, from that day forth they wore skirts to dance. The serpent's mask was the first mask. They are made to house the souls of the dead.

—Retold by Laura Simms

I Am Not What I Seem!

by Demorest Davenport

illustrations rendered by Claire Rosenfeld

Moment by moment the line between "being" and "seeming" becomes more tenuous, even for the scientist. Was it really an eruption on Io or merely the gravity of great Jove, pulling out a handful of moon-stuff? When as men we have considered ways of making ourselves seem what we are not, the distinction all but vanishes.

Over the span of human history this may have come about for two reasons. First of all, though modern westernized people have lost sight of it, our ancestors and the members of most contemporary preliterate societies have been entirely familiar with the teeming creatures of their natural world. In their languages they have created names for hundreds of animals and plants. Why shouldn't they, when the creatures are the most familiar and important part of their life? How long does it take a modern youth to become quite familiar with car models, or the parts of his motorcycle or TV set? "Natural" man can frequently point out behavioral differences between almost indistinguishable species which otherwise would have become obvious to the professional only after long hours of observation. He is in fact more often than not a superb field naturalist, without doubt quite aware of the frequency with which creatures may appear to be what they are not. He never forgets how he started with fright on a jungle trail the first time he was stared at by the "eyes" on the wings of an owl-butterfly or how later, when he stopped to pick an orchid for his love, part of the bloom immediately became a great magenta mantis. Since the days before we could be known as Man our primate curiosity must have been held spellbound by the butterfly who turns herself into a leaf, the yellow crab-spider in the golden heart of a sunflower or that mistress of shape-changers, octopus, as she vanishes utterly against the mottled background of a reef. Is it so surprising that throughout our history we have taken on the form of another or even disappeared completely like the stage hand in a Kabuki drama or the wicked magician in Swan Lake? All such changes, animal or human, involve shape, color contrast, and pattern, position, movement, and sound. They are elements of paramount importance, not only to animals and to the ethologist, but

Magenta mantis

to the human "Director of Ceremonies," stage director, choreographer, conductor, artist, musician. As humans we are "knowingly" concerned with these accomplishments, but then, so is the method of creation, evolution.

The second element of importance becomes clear when one considers that when a masked shaman believes that he can become a jaguar or killer-whale and all his people so believe, then by all criteria available to them concerning the nature of reality, when he changes shape he *is* one. It is so difficult for us, captives of an entirely different world view, to grasp this significant fact. Yet this belief in shape-changing can almost be said to be "in our genes" and as old as time. We pride ourselves on our rational objectivity, but we still get the shivers when we encounter Merlin's "familiars," shrouded in the shadows of that universal mask, the night. Deep in us is the knowledge, long accepted by philosophers but all too rarely as a modus vivendi by scientists, that we can never really know the difference between "being" and "seeming." Even the experimentalist is aware that he can never prove; he can only disprove. In matters of belief, disproof approaches the impossible.

Behind us are millennia of observing the "shape-changers" of Nature, in the beginning, perhaps, with fear and superstition, later (though never losing sight of their intrinsic magic) with delight in their beauty and understanding of their practicality. Now many of us are engaged in an equally fascinating quest, an effort to understand how evolution has created the "maskers," the "shape-changers." We use fifty-cent terms like "Müllerian mimic" or "industrial melanism," but in fact all our investigation of what is loosely known as "mimicry" is devoted to the same end, that of finding out what advantage in natural selection a particular mimicking form has over its more conventional relatives. It *must* have some, else the form, or behavior, or production of chemical attractant, or whatever, would never have evolved. Unraveling the mystery is sometimes easy but, happily, more frequently takes long observation and careful experiment.

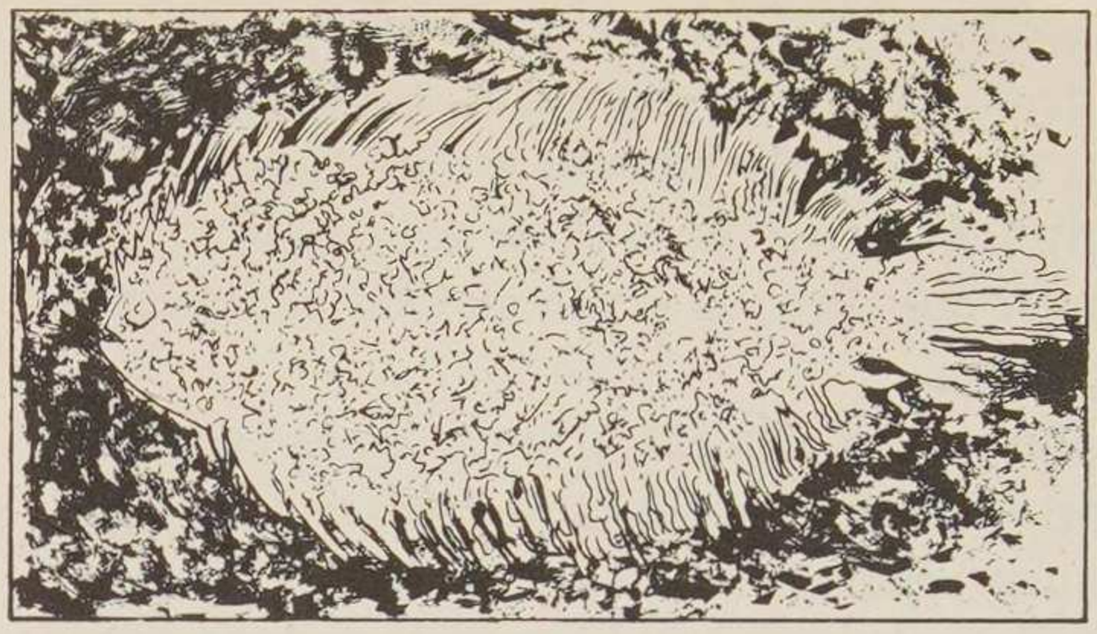
Before considering categories of masking in the animal world, one or two generalizations must be made. Major animal groups are far from similar when one considers the sensory banks with which they are equipped. And so when we consider masking animals we must keep in mind what each can and cannot do. For this purpose, octopus, the greatest of all masqueraders, provides us with an excellent example. The animal is, indeed, strongly sensitive to specific chemical signals. But she is most strongly visually oriented, with most of her behavior determined by what comes to her magnificent camera eyes. I have some color footage taken by a friend on the reefs at Bimini. The animal swiftly moves across the coral sand of the bottom like a smooth grey ghost, approaches clumps of orange Sargassum, turns orange, comes "all over bumps" like the spore-cases on the weed, and as she moves through it, proceeds with strides, using two arms only, the other six being held over her body in a waving weed-like posture! This whole behavior has to be seen to be believed.

Octopus must have been of unique interest to the sea peoples of the ancient world, who surely dove to considerable depths in their search for food, shell, and red coral. I suspect that her magic may have been one of the reasons for her so frequent appearance on the ceramics of the powerful Minoans. But there's something else of interest about her. She appears as a tomb fetish and is painted on funerary urns or sarcophagi. Could she have been the guild symbol of professional divers, her magic giving them protection in the deep? In any event, who *was* Medusa of the Snaky Locks, daughter and mistress of Poseidon?

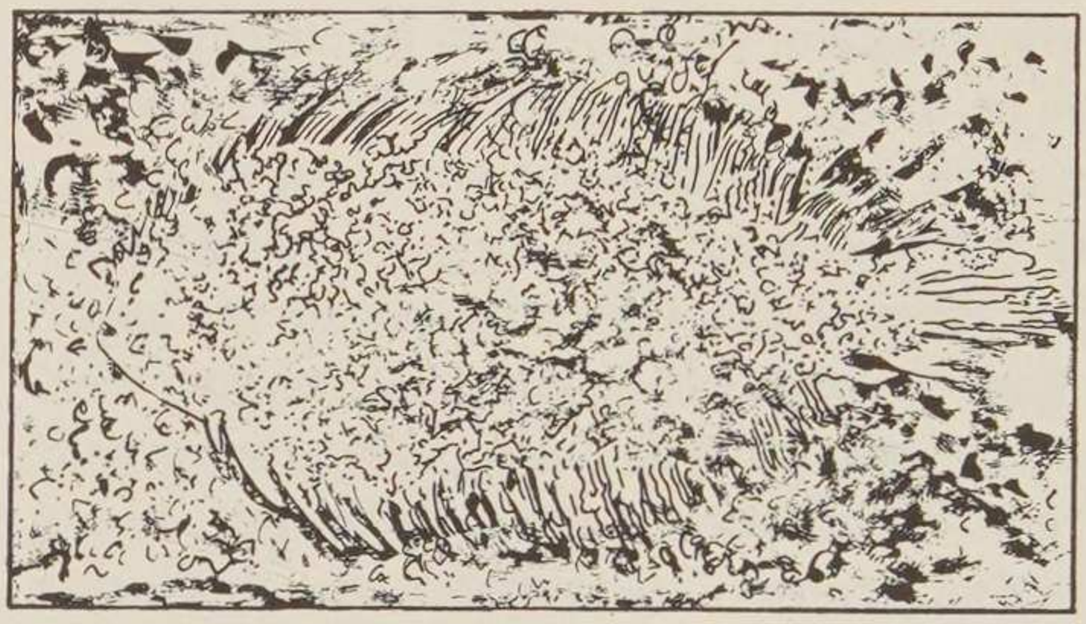
Octopus also provides us with a good example showing that the natural history of an animal and the habits of a people must be considered together when one approaches the relationship of the two in tradition, cere-

mony, and art. Far away across the world on the Northwest Coast, lives *Octopus doefleni*, the largest species in the world, reaching a weight of fifty pounds. In the ceremonies of the native peoples whose sculptured art is as great as any in the world, the animal frequently appears. For one thing, the bands know that octopus tentacles make superb halibut bait. Instead of diving (9° C. in the summer!) they spear the creature in the intertidal shallows. Once in a while they meet a monster; they are as nervous about it as we would be. The myth says that the only thing to do is to use a magic spear dipped in the menstrual fluid of the chief's daughter. In the dance the hunter wears the ferocious mask of man, while octopus is portrayed with some delicacy, sometimes reduced to nothing but suckers around a face with the animal's hawk-like bill.

Many creatures have great success in capturing prey as a result of structural, physiological or behavioral modification designed to make them "disappear" or seem what they are not. As everyone knows, certain mammalian predators—raccoons, ferrets, and the dog *Nyctereutes* (the mythical Tanuki of Old Japan)—wear small black masks like bank robbers in the "Westerns." This may serve to make their face and eyes less obvious as they approach their prey in the half-light. The commonest mechanism is to assume the appearance of the environmental background. Such appearance may be permanent, the result of eons of selection. A predator so colored has but to remain quite without motion, lying in wait for its prey (the mantis in the orchid, the crab-spider in her sunflower, the tiger in a cane brake). Even more effective is the predator who can change its color and pattern to conform with whatever background it encounters. Perhaps the best known is the flatfish (flounder or halibut) who can adjust its appearance to resemble variations in the sea bottom.



Flatfish against dark background



Flatfish against sand bottom

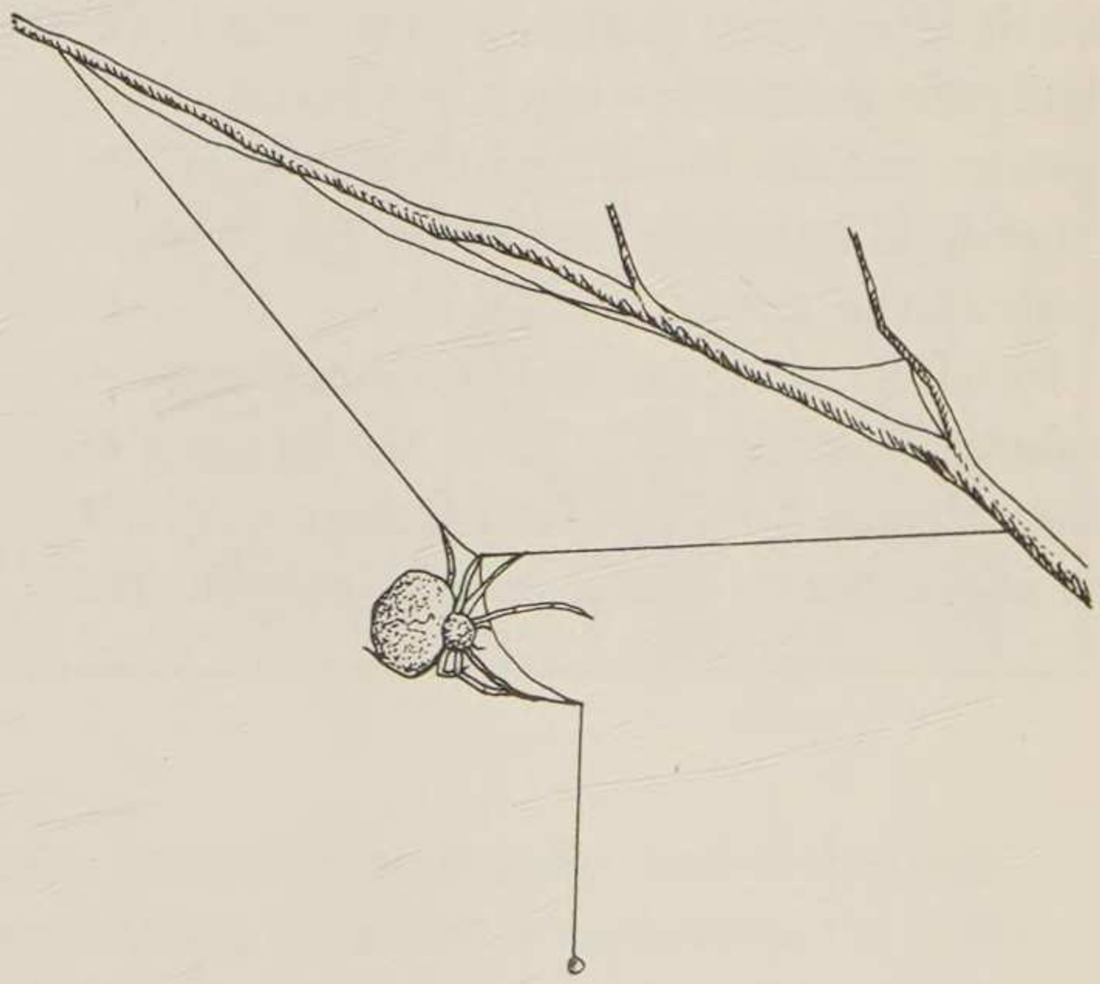
Angler-fish

Angler-fishes have evolved a number of utterly fascinating fishing methods, by using modified structures that appear to be what they are not. The animals have combined cryptic coloration with "fishing gear." The latter is generally a modified dorsal fin, positioned at the far anterior of the body. The lure itself can take the form of a tiny fish on a stalk, which is kept actively waving in front of the angler's mouth. In some anglers the whole dorsal fin is shaped like a fish and is

kept in sinuous motion. In the very deep sea most anglers are dead black, an effective mask itself where there is only low-intensity bioluminescence. The lures may be lit up and therefore effective in attracting smaller creatures that feed on luminous crustacea. As yet, even with our ability to penetrate into the deepest parts of the sea, nobody has published an observation confirming what may be a possibility in the case of the deep-sea angler *Ceratias*. Anatomical studies indicate that the jointed rod on which the lure hangs can be retracted into a groove on the top of the fish. One must assume that the angler, staying perfectly still, can dangle the lure some distance ahead of its mouth, and as a prey fish approaches, slowly bring the lure closer and closer to the grim portcullis beset with needle-like teeth. If this can be established by direct observation, we have as marvelous a case as one could ask for of the perfection by evolution of coordinated machinery designed to fool someone into being eaten!

On the land as well as in the sea luminescence may be used for predation. Over the years, of course, luminescence has proven itself a magnificent tool for the investigation of chemical reactions in cells, neurophysiology, and behavior. One of the primary reasons is that it may be under nervous control. Intensity, frequency of flashing, etc., can be quantified against all sorts of experimental conditions. Yet surely for those of us who have worked with the phenomenon, the salient feature is the sheer beauty of it. Years ago while on a pack-trip into some remote Mayan villages in the Chiapas highlands, I gazed at midnight upon a meadow. For a hundred yards in every direction the air was filled with flashing, diving stars. The flashes differed in intensity, frequency, and color: there must have been at least four species of fireflies present. I would have liked to have known whether there were species present who were trying to fool others. Not long afterwards a study appeared describing how the female of one species in the American South lures males of another non-predaceous species by mimicking the flash of the latter's females. The tiny sorceress proceeds to consume her eager but deluded suitor.

Probably masking by chemical means is more frequent than one might expect. Recently a marvelous case has been described, reminding one of the "con woman" among fireflies. For long years it has been known that bola-spiders do not build orb webs. In one foot they hold a thread which has a gob of mucus at the far end. Some appear to dangle the lasso at random in the hope that it will encounter a fly, but others whirl it like a gaucho and throw it directly at a passing insect. Many workers had noted the remarkable strike-accuracy of the spiders, but also that moths flew with conspicuous regularity towards them. Only recently has the true lure been discovered. One sharp investigator found that most of the moths captured consisted of males of one or two closely related species only. This gave him the clue; he held a baffle between the oncoming moths and the spider. Lo and behold, the moths moved upwind until they came to the baffle, flew around the edge of it in the airstream, and moved on directly to the spider and their demise. Analysis of the airstream downwind from the spider indicated that she released a chemical attrac-



Bola-spider

tant mimicking the sex attractant of the female moth.

It is now known that in parts of the world remote from each other (Europe, South America, Australia) members of different higher insect groups are sexually attracted to certain orchids (also of different genera), not only by a mimic sex-attractant coming from the flower but also by an extraordinary resemblance of the flower to the insect itself. There can be little doubt that the insects are tricked not only by the chemical lure but also by the appearance of the flower. The members of the orchid genus *Ophrys*, which are the sexual objectives of Andrenid bees, are uniquely insect-like when close congeners have no such appearance. Being something of a voyeur, I have always wanted to catch an insect in the act but never have; in over an hour spent in watching *Ophrys* on a sunny Mallorcan hill-top, not one bee came to the orchid "red-light district." I think the most perfect resemblance of flower to insect occurs in the tiny South American *Trichoceros* which mimics its pollinator, a *Tachinid* fly, right down to delicate mottled wings, spiny abdomen, and all. By this curious means pollination of the orchid is most effectively carried out, for one has but to observe the abdomen of a pseudocopulator after the floral rape. The pollinia of the orchids get stuck to its remote tip. One can almost imagine a satisfied smile on the face of the errant insect as he proceeds to another flower to do it again and deposit a pollinium. My good friend Gerhard Baerends of the University of Groningen has put the whole affair most delicately. He points out that male pollinators hatch out before their females and are therefore suffering from "threshold lowering" when they first encounter the mimic orchid.

In nature there are not too many cases of a creature "designedly" (like a GI donning his camouflaged hood) placing foreign materials on its surface so that it remains unseen. But

The orchid Trichoceros

there are a few. Sea-urchins pick up bits of shell and gravel with their tube-feet and pass them to their upper surface, supposedly masking themselves thus. Some masking-crabs attach bits of algae and detritus to their carapace, using their claws and glutinous saliva. They usually use what is commonest in their environment, and therefore resemble it: but if one denudes a crab and puts him in a uniformly grey tray with bits of red and green ribbon, he soon looks like a Christmas tree, sticking out like a "sore-thumb" against his background.

Among the reptiles, chameleon is of course the most famous of shape-changers because of his extraordinary ability to change color. As Ben-Amos has said, he is "considered a symbol . . . of the cleverness associated with the ability to change to meet all situations" and "is associated with the diviner-healer because (he) symbolizes the (latter's) power: transformation." This has been his ancient meaning across all Africa.

Among the birds there are many cases of making oneself disappear. Bittern and poor-me-one assume a vertical position against reeds and tree-trunks, in much the same way as some fishes do over the spines of sea-urchins. Some animals (ptarmigan, snowshoe

Poor-me-one on its nest

hare, ermine) change color seasonally from snow-white to leafbrown. Among the mammals we have a case of unique protective resemblance in sloth. These animals browse in

Flattid cicadas on a home plant

the jungle canopy, hanging by their curved toes, as Sidney Smith said, "in a continued state of suspense, like a young curate distantly related to a bishop." They could fall an easy prey to harpy eagles were it not for the fact that they are hard to see. Living among the thick hairs of the animal are symbiotic algae, which benefit by "housing," moisture, and perhaps nutrients in return for making sloth's hair green to match the jungle!

Finally there are "masks" of especially brilliant color and pattern, obviously the result of extended evolution, designed to delude the viewer into thinking that he sees an entirely different creature from the one he is looking at. Many years ago a geologist and a botanist were together in the Great Rift Valley in Africa. The former, "an old hand," pointed to a spike of flowers with green buds and yellow blooms. "What do you think that is?" he asked. "I don't know. Maybe a lobelia . . .?" "Go and pick it!" said the geologist. At the first shake of the spike the flowers flew away! The "flower-insects" were flattid cicadas of a uniquely interesting species, which forms floral inflorescences by making clumps of itself just below the tiny obscure flowers of the home plant. What wonderful questions remain to be answered about this creature! First of all the green and yellow individuals belong to both sexes and all age groups. In other words, there are two different color morphs of the species. How is this genetically controlled? It is reported that the green ones gather more frequently at the tip of the plant and the pink ones below it. If this is true, are the green morphs more positive to light, or the pink ones to gravity? Or both? How do they sort themselves out on the plant after flying away? Unfortunately there is a BUT. We have a "law" that no man should undertake a study in behavior unless he has available a reasonable number of the subject creatures from which he can get data that can be statistically analyzed. Before his death Louis Leakey told me that in his years in Africa he'd seen only two "inflorescences" which natives brought in while he was director of the Coryndon Museum in Nairobi. The creatures, in spite of their magnificent adaptation for survival, appear to be scarcer than hens'-teeth.

It would seem that "masking" as we have defined it presents a broader spectrum of functions in the animal world than in human culture. Limited parallels have been drawn. The spiked helmet of the World War I German soldier or even the broadened shoulders of the plunging fullback have been compared with the threat-postures assumed by some animals. The GI, like the moth on the tree trunk, uses his camouflaged hood to avoid detection for one purpose, the business man in his weekend duck blind uses it for another. Throughout our world, in ceremony, dance, and drama, the mask is used to diversify type and to accentuate personality and individual role. But we have forgotten the original function of the mask.

Since the rise of classical humanism we Westerners have conceived of ourselves as standing at the center of the web of life,

Shaman figure, Cave of the Dead Man, Lascaux

casting a dispassionate eye on the great majority of supposedly inferior beings making up the web. The masked shaman and his people *never did this*; they have the sympathetic understanding of the modern naturalist, continually awed by the beauty and perfection of his fellow creatures. I shall never forget standing with my wife and the discoverer, Jean Ravidat, at the bottom of the shaft of the "Cave of the Dead Man" at Lascaux. It was February, and not one soul was in the great cave but ourselves. Awed by the silence and the cool rush of air coming from vents of unknown source, we gazed in delight on the superbly delineated woolly rhino and evisicerated bison. But it is the figure of the shaman which immediately seizes one's attention. In the stiffness of death, he lies in front of the dying bison. He has a bird's mask. On his hands there are four fingers, the number that a bird has: no naturalist-painter would have portrayed him thus other than intentionally. In front of him on a staff is his spirit-helper or *ongon*. In the Dresden Museum there is a shaman's *ongon* from an Asiatic tribe which is remarkably similar; it is unmistakably one of the great forest grouse of the north, a Capercaillie. What better avatar could there be for the diviner-healer of Ice Age hunters? As one stands in the shaft, one knows that the shaman, his "familiars," and his *alter ego* will be forever present. No one can conceivably impart the magic of the place in words: it is as numinous as any shrine in this world.

This then was the true function of the mask in the world of our ancestors. It bestowed upon the wearer and his people the all-important power to enter into and maintain a mystical union with our fellow creatures.

How can we do the same again before it is too late? ◇

For further reading: Hugh B. Cott, *Adaptive Coloration in Animals* (Oxford University Press); E. M. Stephenson and C. Stewart, *Animal Camouflage* (Adam and Charles Black); R. Caillois, *The Mask of Medusa* (C. N. Potter); W. Wickler, *Mimicry in Plants and Animals* (McGraw-Hill).

Through A Glass, Darkly . . .

In order to understand the laws of the possible evolution or transformation of man, it is necessary to understand the laws of Nature's activity and the methods of the Great Laboratory which controls the whole of life . . . As an illustration I will take the so-called phenomena of mimicry . . . in the vegetable and animal worlds . . . (which) are most clearly manifested in the world of insects . . .

If you examine an insect which resembles a green leaf, . . . you see . . . not one feature which makes it similar to a plant, not two or three such features, but thousands of features, each of which, according to the old "scientific" theory, must have been formed separately, *independently of others, for it is utterly impossible to suppose that one insect suddenly, "accidentally," became similar to a green leaf in all its details. "Accident" may be admitted in one direction, but it is quite impossible to admit it in a thousand directions at once . . . We must either presume that all the most minute details were formed independently of one another, or that some kind of "plan" existed. Science could not admit a "plan." "Plan" is not a scientific idea at all. There remained only "accident". . . .*

In order to understand the phenomena of mimicry and resemblance in general in the animal and vegetable worlds, it is necessary to take a much broader view, and only then will it be possible to succeed in finding their leading principle . . .

This principle is the general tendency of Nature towards decorativeness, "theatricalness," the tendency to be or to appear different from what she really is at a given time and place.

Nature tries always to adorn herself and not to be herself. *This is the fundamental law of her life. All the time she is dressing herself up, all the time changing her costumes, all the time turning before a mirror, looking at herself from all sides, admiring herself—then again undressing and dressing . . .*

. . . All these small insects of which I have spoken are dressed up and disguised; they all wear masks and fancy dresses. Their whole life is passed on the stage. The tendency of their life is not to be themselves, but to resemble something else, a green leaf, a bit of moss, a shiny stone.

At the same time, one can only imitate what one actually sees. Even man is unable to devise or invent new forms. An insect or animal is forced to borrow them from its surroundings, to imitate something in the conditions among which it is born. A peacock dresses itself in round sun-flecks, which fall on the ground from the rays passing through the foliage. A zebra covers itself with shadows from the branches of the trees. A fish living on a sandy sea-bottom copies the sand in its coloring. The same fish living on a black slimy bottom will imitate slime in its coloring. An insect living among the green leaves of one particular plant in Ceylon will disguise itself as a leaf of this bush. It can-

not disguise itself as anything else . . . These leaves are all that it knows and sees, and it . . . plays the part of a green leaf.

— *P. D. Ouspensky*
A New Model of the Universe[1]

Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smoothes there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labor to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendor of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.

— *Plotinus*, Enneads[2]

. . . The Eskimo neophyte must undergo . . . a long effort of physical privation and mental contemplation directed to gaining the ability to see himself as a skeleton. *The shamans whom Rasmussen interrogated about this spiritual exercise gave rather vague answers, which the famous explorer summarizes as follows: "Though no shaman can explain to himself how and why, he can, by the power his brain derives from the supernatural, as it were by thought alone, divest his body of its flesh and blood, so that nothing remains but his bones. And he must then name all the parts of his body, mentioning every single bone by name; and in so doing, he must not use ordinary human speech, but only the special and sacred shaman's language which he has learned from his instructor. By thus seeing himself naked, altogether freed from the perishable and transient flesh and blood, he consecrates himself, in the sacred tongue of the shamans, to his great task, through that part of his body which will longest withstand the action of the sun, wind and weather, after he is dead."*

— *Knud Rasmussen, quoted by Mircea Eliade*
Shamanism[3]

From far away came Pablo's warm voice.

"It is a pleasure to me, my dear Harry, to have the privilege of being your host in a small way on this occasion. You have often been sorely weary of your life. You were striving, were you not, for escape? You have a longing to forsake this world and its reality and to penetrate to a reality more native to you, to a world beyond time. You know, of course, where this other world lies hidden. It is the world of your own soul that you seek. Only within yourself exists that other reality for which you long. I can give you nothing that has not already its being within yourself. I can throw open to you no picture gallery but your own soul. All I can give you is the opportunity, the impulse, the key. I can help you to make your own world visible. That is all."

Again he put his hand into the pocket of his gorgeous jacket and drew out a round looking glass.

"Look, it is thus that you have so far seen yourself."

He held the little glass before my eyes (a childish verse came to my mind: "Little glass, little glass in the hand") and I saw, though indistinctly and cloudily, the reflection of an uneasy self-tormented, inwardly laboring and seething being—myself, Harry Haller. And within him again I saw the Steppenwolf, a shy, beautiful, dazed wolf with frightened eyes that smoldered now with anger, now with sadness. This shape of a wolf coursed through the other in ceaseless movement, as a tributary pours its cloudy turmoil into a river. In bitter strife, each tried to devour the other so that his shape might prevail. How unutterably sad was the look this fluid inchoate figure of the wolf threw from his beautiful shy eyes.

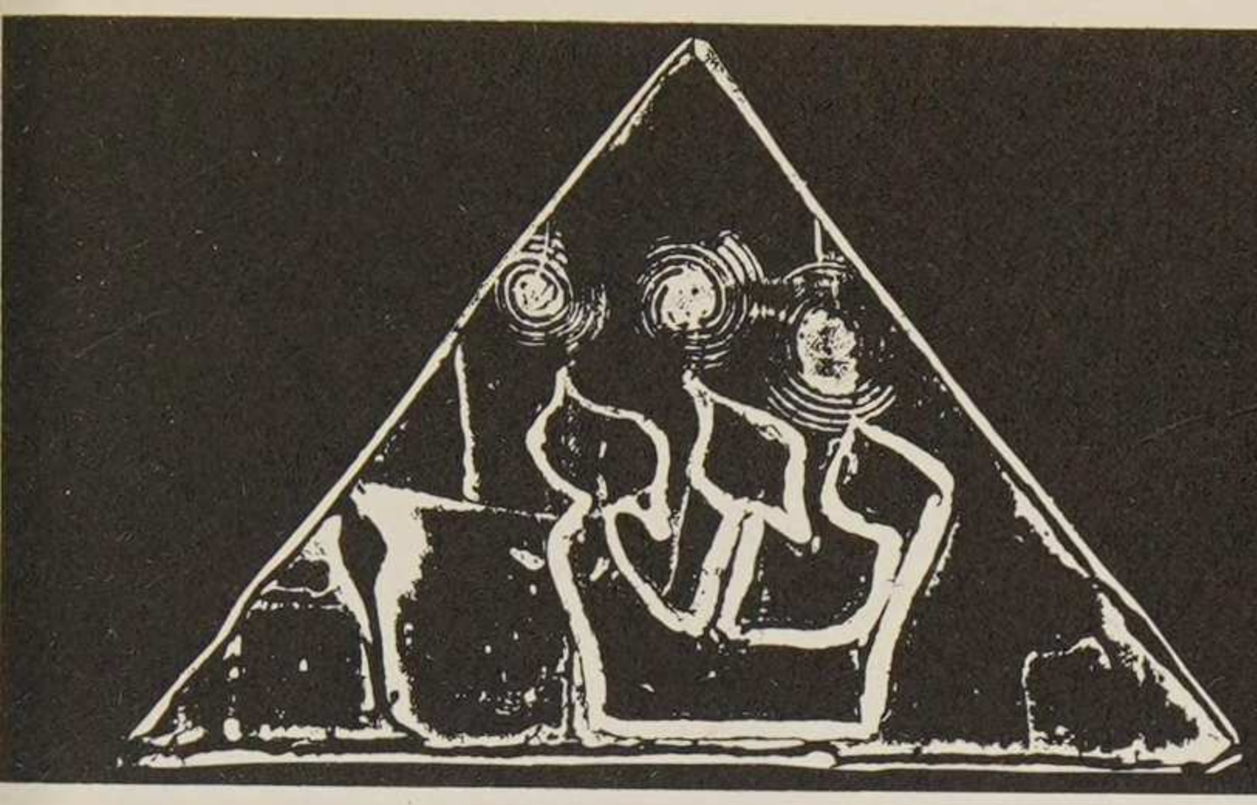
"There you see yourself," Pablo remarked and put the mirror away in his pocket.

— *Herman Hesse,* Steppenwolf[4]

You must realize that each man has a definite repertoire of roles which he plays in ordinary circumstances . . . He has a role for every kind of circumstance in which he ordinarily finds himself in life; but put him into even only slightly different circumstances and he is unable to find a suitable role and for a short time he becomes himself. *The study of the roles a man plays represents a very necessary part of self-knowledge. Each man's repertoire is very limited. And if a man simply says "I" and "Ivan Ivanich," he will not see the whole of himself because "Ivan Ivanich"" also is not one; a man has at least five or six of them. One or two for his family, one or two at his office (one for his subordinates and another for his superiors), one for friends in a restaurant, and perhaps one who is interested in exalted ideas and likes intellectual conversation. And at different times the man is fully identified with one of them and is unable to separate himself from it. To see the roles, to know one's repertoire, particularly to know its limitedness, is to know a great deal. But the point is that, outside his repertoire, a man feels very uncomfortable should something push him if only temporarily out of his rut, and he tries his hardest to return to any one of his usual roles. Directly he falls back into the rut everything at once goes smoothly again and the feeling of awkwardness and tension disappears. This is how it is in life; but in the work, in order to observe oneself, one must become reconciled to this awkwardness and tension and to the feeling of discomfort and helplessness. Only by experiencing this discomfort can a man really observe himself. And it is clear why this is so. When a man is not playing any of his usual roles, when he cannot find a suitable role in his repertoire, he feels that he is undressed. He is cold and ashamed and wants to run away from everybody. But the question arises: What does he want? A quiet life or to work on himself? If he wants a quiet life, he must certainly first of all never move out of his repertoire. In his usual roles he feels comfortable and at peace. But if he wants to work on himself, he must destroy his peace. To have them both together is in no way possible.*

— *G. I. Gurdjieff, as reported by P. D. Ouspensky*
In Search of the Miraculous[5]

Notes for ARCS *on page 125.*



The Human Image

by Adin Steinsaltz

with relief print by Yitzhak Greenfield

One of the things that shaped the ritual forms of Judaism is the absolute prohibition against fashioning a statue or a mask. This prohibition goes back to the Second Commandment, forbidding the making of an image. It should be emphasized that this commandment was interpreted not as prohibiting the creation of any and every kind of picture or figure, but only as prohibiting an image that could in any way be used in ritual. The prohibition, then, covered not only the fashioning of a false god or an idolatrous object of worship but also any statue or image of the true God himself or of any of His angels, or even a statue (but not a painting) of the human figure.

On the surface, the prohibition simply reiterates the fundamental opposition to idolatry on all its levels. And in so doing it implies a repudiation of all material representation of the Divine in any form whatever. This prohibition may be better understood, however, in the context of its use in the terminology and expressions of prophecy. For not only the style of the prophets but the very nature of the Hebrew language itself leans away from the use of abstraction and prefers instead symbolic and figurative terms.

Thus the Bible and the other literary creations of the Jews, such as *Aggadah* and the Kabbalah, abound with anthropomorphisms of all kinds, not only in relation to the deity but in every sort of description. This humanization of the world's reality, both of the objects and creatures lower than man and of those higher, are among the profoundly consistent aspects of the use of the holy tongue. As one of the sages expressed it: The soul describes everything according to the configuration of its mansions, which is the body. In other words, the world is conceptualized and its objects described by a system of metaphors based on the human body. The language thus "raises the lowly" by images like "the head [top] of the mountain" and "the foot of the mountain"; and it "brings down the high" by descriptions such as the "seat" of the Almighty, the "hand" of God, the "eye" of the Lord, and the like.

This use of plastic imagery and symbols is so characteristic of the language that it is hard to find a sentence in the Scriptures that is not constructed on the basis of metaphorical description rather than of abstract conceptualization. Imagery-bound concepts are to be found everywhere, in almost every paragraph of the books of law and jurisprudence as well as in poetry and literature, and serve primarily, and most strikingly, to describe all that pertains to the holy.

Precisely because of this prevalence of metaphorical statement, and the widespread use of figures of speech drawn from the human image, it becomes all the more necessary to emphasize that they are allegorical truths and not actual descriptions of reality. For there was a certain danger that

the word pictures, or imagistic descriptions, of sacred symbols in the Bible—and even more so in the Kabbalah—could lead to a crude material apprehension of the divine essence and of the higher reality. Hence the prohibition against all depiction of holiness through physical, plastic means. Accompanying it, and perhaps stemming from this extreme revulsion to plastic semblance of the Divine, Jewish tradition also maintains a certain suspicion of man's tendency to design, elaborate, and portray himself.

This inclination, to keep the greatest possible distance between man and God, has led to a more abstract comprehension of divine truth and of the ability to distinguish falsehood in the various descriptions of God. To be sure, there is a basic reason for the historical fact that the Jews, with their cultural or linguistic inclination to describe everything in terms of the human, shrink from depicting the spiritual in gross, physical terms. To understand this reason, a few points have to be elucidated. One has to recall that our whole material world is only a part of a greater system of worlds; whatever happens and offers itself to our apprehension is also tied in with that which is above and below our world.

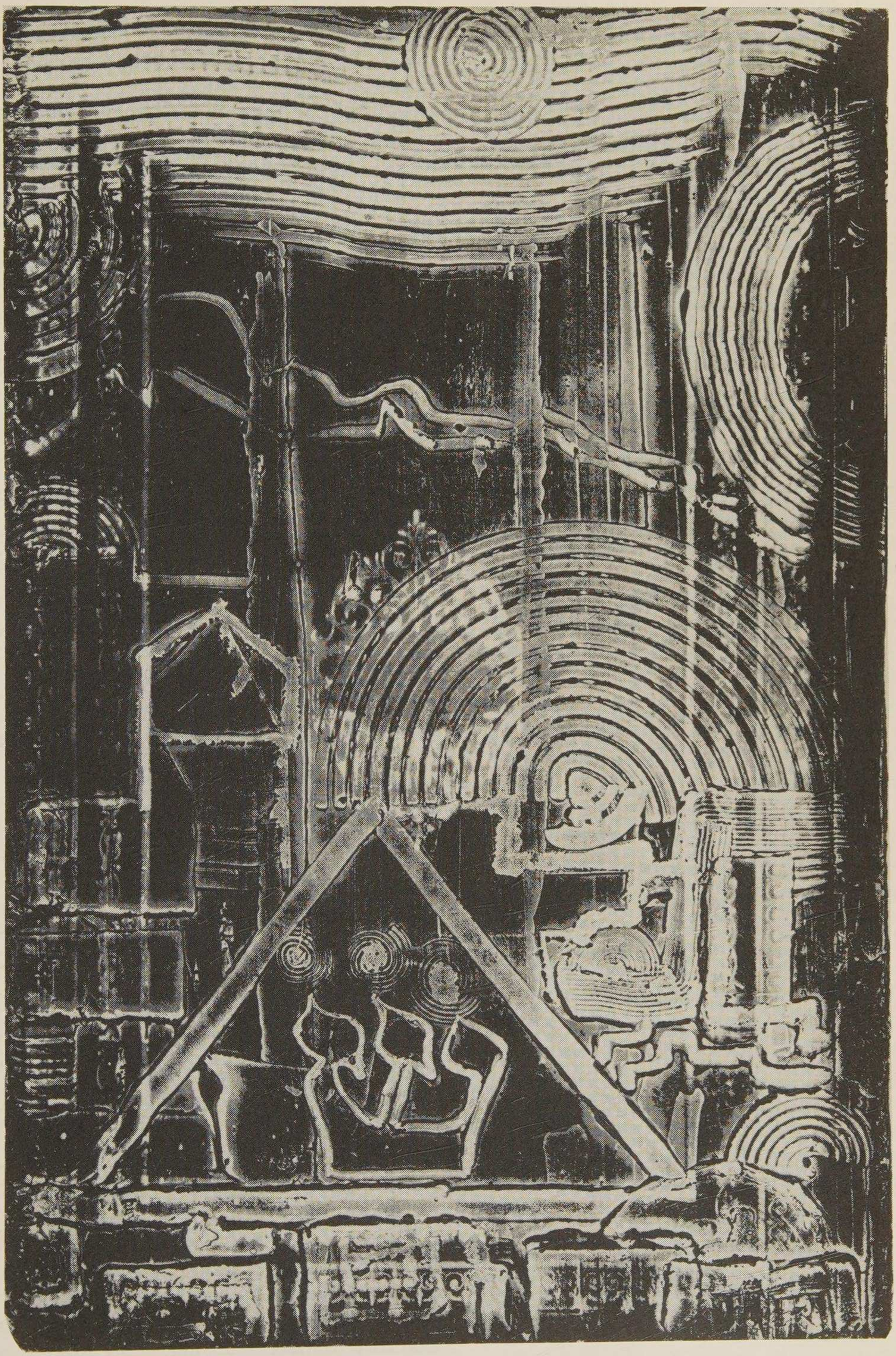
Which is to say, the nonphysical essences of other worlds are projected into our material world, adjusting to its limits and to its physical time and space. Thus, despite the limits of our material world, the higher worlds are present in it and may even be distinguished in one form or another. Indeed, every detail of the material world is a kind of projection of a nonphysical reality that has chosen to reveal itself physically in this particular way.

In such a view of the world there is bound to be a double distortion. First, there is the distortion that results from the projection of something nonphysical on a physical reality: since in essence these two are so different, it is impossible for anything in our world to be a complete replica of a nonphysical reality. Then there is the distortion resulting from the fact that our world is no longer in its first stage of pristine purity and health. The various creatures in this world do what they have to do as best they can, thereby making certain changes in the structure of the world—the most auspicious changes and distortions, of course, being those that result from the actions of man.

By virtue of his free will and the ability to impose his will on other creatures in the material world, man is, to a certain degree, independent of the forces of the other worlds, higher and lower. Consequently the thoughts and actions of man, especially his sins and his mistakes, can derange the simpler forms of nature and the world and can even affect reality in other worlds.

This world is therefore no longer a true replica or a true projection of the higher worlds. Only in its original state, that of the Garden of Eden, was it structured as a more or less perfect duplication of the physical world and the spiritual worlds. Since then all the worlds, and our world in particular, have become increasingly distorted, and much of the original essence has changed in various ways. Only those persons who know the secret of existence in the universe can know the extent to which the duplication between the worlds still exists and can perceive the essential analogy between the physical world and the spiritual worlds. They can make out the hidden paths in the concrete reality of the world leading to the upper worlds, and they read into whatever is apprehended as real the symbols and models of a higher world taking us step by step upward to the very pinnacle and source of all the levels.

And just as all of the worlds are reflected, to some extent, in the physical world in which we live, so to an even greater extent—indeed, in principle up to the utmost heights of divine revelation—is the inner image of the worlds reflected in the image of man. To be sure, all the creatures in the world, the great and the small, constitute copies and symbols of aspects in the existences of higher worlds, but in man there is also reflected the relationships among various



aspects of existence. Thus man is, on the one hand, a part of the general creation of the world, and on the other hand, as the possessor of the special attribute of free will, he is the unique concrete expression of divine reality in the worlds. For all the other worlds are ordered according to the fixed laws of cause and effect whether of a physical or a nonphysical nature. Only man can willfully change the framework somewhat and activate the "vicious circles" in various ways.

Therefore, man alone is the expression of the creative will in the world. By virtue of the spark that is his soul, man manifests the divine plenty existing in all the worlds unto their most sublime heights. So that the whole semblance of man is, in a certain sense, in the image of God. Which is to say, man is both the projection of the creative divine plenty into physical reality and the divine form revealed to the higher worlds as it appears in our world.

Clearly, the divine representation in man is far from complete; neither the body nor the soul of man faithfully expresses the supreme essence. And yet man, in all his spiritual and physical aspects, is to be viewed as a symbolic order oriented to the order of sovereignty in the world, the order of the ten *Sefirot* of the world of emanation.

One of the definitions of the name "Man" or "Adam" is likeness (*domeh*) to the Supreme. For, like God, man creates the worlds in the image of himself. His physical form, in the assemblage of its several parts, also constitutes a system that is a sort of model of the inner network of all the worlds. The structure of man is a paradigm of the structure of the worlds; it is the key to the order of the *mitzvot*; and it is also the configuration that symbolizes the system of relationships among the worlds. All of the organs of man correspond to higher essences in other worlds. The general structure of the human body is homologous with the order of the ten *Sefirot*, every part of the body of a man being congruous with a particular *Sefirah*.

Thus when the prophets speak of the "hand" or the "eyes" of the Lord, it is understood that they are not speaking of essences in any way physically similar to the human hand or eye. At the same time there *is* some essential connection to the body of man. The relation between the right hand and the left hand, for instance, is a matter of profound principle, which is derived from the difference between the *Sefirot* of *Hessed* and *Gevurah*. And so, too, with all the parts of the human body, in their general configuration and down to the smallest detail.

Man may therefore be viewed as a symbol or a model of the divine essence, his entire outer and inner structure manifesting relationships and different aspects existing in that supreme essence.

The secret of the positive *mitzvot*, the commandments to perform certain actions, lies, in a manner of speaking, in the activization of the limbs of the body, in certain movements and certain ways of doing things which are congruous with higher realities and higher relationships in other worlds. In fact, every movement, every gesture, every habitual pattern and every isolated act that man does with his body has an effect in whole systems of essences in other dimensions with and against one another.

Clearly, an ordinary person does not know anything of this; at best he is conscious only to a very small degree of the things he does and of their higher significance. Even among those few who are able to unravel the riddle and know the meaning of these secrets, only select individuals reach that state of being where knowledge is automatically lived out and manifested. It is a state where every act of a *mitzvah* or an impulsive movement or a dance, expresses, knowingly and unknowingly, the higher relationships—following on analogous parts of the body, in their separate as well as in their total effects.

Thus, it may be understood why fashioning and exhibiting the image of a man was also prohibited. Since man was, according to one of the sages, "an effigy of the king," anyone who tried to make something in his image was creating a statue, an idol. For man was

supposed to know that his body was not only the temple and the abode of the soul, but in itself an expression of the supreme essence; and therefore he had to maintain a special relation to the body, acknowledging that its gestures, movements, and actions involved manifestations of the higher order.

Since, like his soul, the body of man is oriented to higher essences, the idiom of the Kabbalah often makes use of organs of the body to depict conditions and higher relations in other worlds. In practical kabbalistic works there are to be found indications of various, sometimes impossible, movements of the limbs and parts of the body which serve to shed light on the complex occult ways of the Chariot on different planes and in different worlds.

And as has been said, precisely because there is such a voluminous and frequent use of symbolic structures and models, most of them connected with external forms, it is necessary to be extremely cautious about any attempt to give a concrete physical interpretation to higher essences.

From all of which it may be understood why, in actual fact, there is no Jewish iconography to speak of. True, in the Holy Temple there were a few symbolic elements—not images of the Holy One, Blessed be He, but of the cherubin who bear the Chariot. Even these symbols were hidden away in the inner recesses of the Temple, so that they should not become part of the ritual—for it has often happened in history that things once having no more than a symbolic or reminiscence value have been turned into ritual objects of idolatrous worship. That is why throughout the generations Jewish tradition has stringently resisted anything like defined iconographic imagery.

Instead, the tradition developed the whole order of *mitzvot*, which may be seen as a stylization of a system of pictures and symbols using the body and mind of man. For in a certain sense, the *mitzvot*, in all their minutiae, constitute an endless, moving series of images depicting a vision of supreme revelation. These images are expressed in the objective actions but are not to be identified with them; and if the action is a correct action in terms of the original revelation, then it will have significance within other systems of reality. Thus, precisely because the whole world is so full of symbols and meanings, pictures and forms, there is a repudiation of any attempt to make any one special image; for the existing reality is itself so entirely made up of, and by, one single organized picture.

This grasp of symbols, then, applies not only to the human figure but to every reality in the world. To those who know this meaning, reality is more clear and comprehensible. Thus, for instance, there is significance to the various colors and their relationships, each one expressing a certain *Sefirah*; fruits and flowers, kinds of living creatures, forms of vegetable life and minerals, all have individual meaning and at the same time make up a great unified system in which the whole of reality acts and is acted upon; and this is the vast picture, the great work of plastic art of a moment in time.

In Jewish thought, the concept of beauty is linked to the central *Sefirah* of *Tiferet* which in itself is actually an expression of several basic elements of existence, each of them manifesting the same fundamental quality in different ways such as: truth, Torah, beauty, compassion. The common denominator may be seen as harmony. And since this apprehension of harmony is so many-sided and variegated, it cannot be reduced to only one aesthetic meaning. Even in the Hebrew language there is a constant interchange and substitution between the concepts of the good and the beautiful, the good being called beautiful and the beautiful good, because both are grasped as a harmony between things. *Tiferet* is thus the basis of the good, the beautiful, and the true, without every being manifested or capable of being directly expressed in an "image." ◇

Concerning the Puppet Theater

by Heinrich von Kleist

translated and illustrated by Matthew Gurewitsch

In the city of M . . . , where I was spending the winter of 1801, one evening in a park I encountered Mr. C . . . , who had recently been engaged as the leading dancer at the opera house, and was finding great favor with the public.

I told him I had been surprised several times to find him at a puppet theater that had been slapped up in the marketplace entertaining the rabble with little dramatic burlesques interwoven with songs and dances.

He assured me that the marionettes' pantomime gave him much pleasure, and told me plainly that a dancer who wished to advance in his art could learn many things from them.

Since his manner in making this comment suggested that it was no mere fancy, I sat down beside him to hear the reason on which he could base so curious a proposition.

He asked me if I myself had not found several of the dance movements of the puppets, especially the smaller ones, very graceful?

I could not deny it. A pair of peasant couples in a painting by Teniers, dancing to the quick beat of a round, could have been no prettier.

I asked about the mechanism of these figures, and how, without having thousands of threads at one's fingers, it was possible to control each separate limb and point as the rhythms of the movements or the dance required?

He replied that I must not imagine that during the various moments of the dance the puppeteer placed and pulled each limb separately.

Every movement, said he, had a center of gravity; it was enough to control that center within the figure; the limbs, which are nothing but pendulums, followed without further ado, mechanically, on their own.

He added that this movement was very simple; that whenever the center of gravity was moved along a *straight line*, the limbs already traced out *curves*; and that often, jolted quite by accident, a whole puppet would fall into a kind of rhythmic motion that resembled dancing.

This comment seemed to me to shed a first ray of light on the pleasure he had claimed to find at the puppet theater. I did not, however, begin to suspect what further consequences he would later draw from it.

I asked him if he thought the puppeteer controlling the marionettes would himself have to be a dancer, or at least have some conception of beauty in the dance?

He replied that because a thing was mechanically simple to do, it did not follow that it could be done altogether without sensibility.

To be sure, he said, the line the center of gravity must trace out was very simple, and, he believed, straight in most cases. In cases when it was curved, the law of its curvature

appeared to be at least of the first order but of the second at most; and even in this last case, it appeared to be no more than elliptical, which (because of the arrangement of our joints) is the natural form of movement for the extreme points of the human body to follow; hence drawing it would require no great artistry on the part of the puppeteer.

But from another point of view this line was very mysterious. For it was nothing other than the *path of the dancer's spirit*; and he doubted that the puppeteer could find that path otherwise than by *imagining himself* at the marionette's center of gravity, or in other words, by *dancing*.

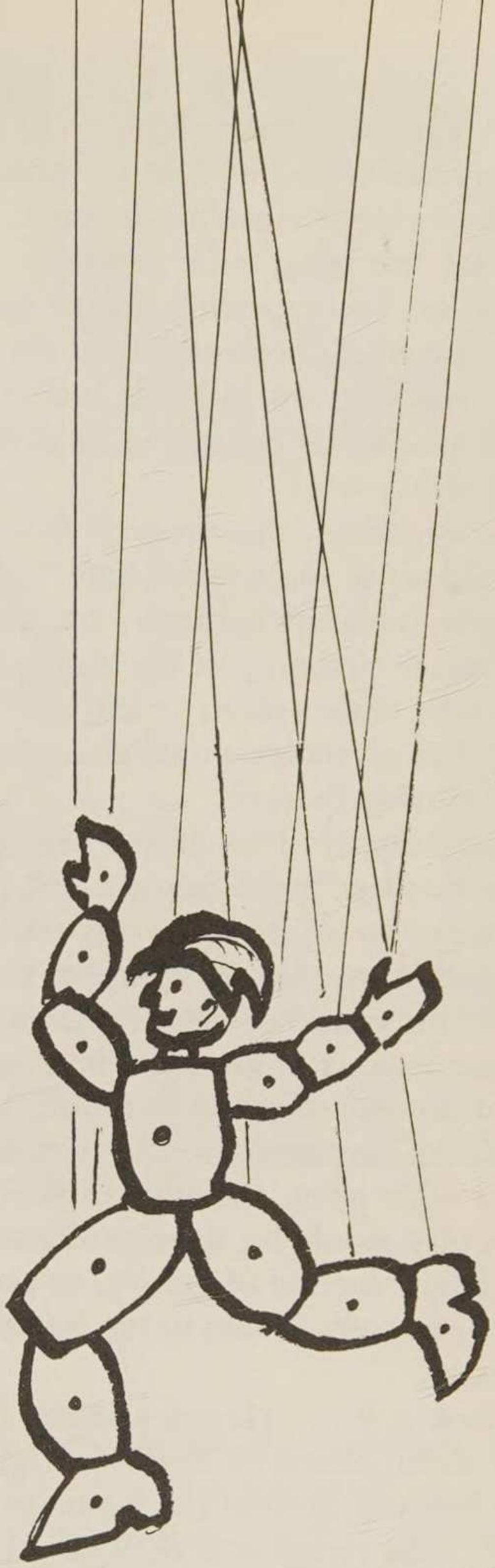
I rejoined that the puppeteer's job had been described to me as something quite mindless, like turning the crank on a hurdy-gurdy.

Not at all, he answered. On the contrary, the movements of the puppeteer's fingers were related to the movements of the marionettes tied to them in quite an artful way, rather like numbers to their logarithms or the asymptote to the hyperbola.

He believed, however, that even this last particle of mind he had spoken of could be taken away from the marionettes, that their dance could be translated entirely into the realm of mechanical forces, and could be brought about by means of a crank, as I had supposed.

I expressed my astonishment at seeing the thought he had given to this poor relation of a fine art, invented for common folk. Not only that he considered it capable of higher development: he seemed indeed to be working at it himself.

He smiled and said he would make bold to claim that if a craftsman would build a marionette to specifications he would supply, he would put on a dance with it that could be matched neither by himself nor by any other dancer of the age, however clever, Vestris himself not excepted.



Have you ever, he asked, seeing that I had silently dropped my eyes to the ground, have you ever heard of the mechanical limbs that English craftsmen manufacture for the unfortunate people who have lost their legs?

I said, No, I had never seen the like.

I am sorry to hear that, he replied. For when I tell you that these people dance on them, I rather fear you will not believe me. —Did I say dance? Certainly the compass of their movements is limited; yet the ones that *are* at their command they perform with a composure, ease, and grace that put any thinking mind in amazement.

I remarked jestingly that he then had found his man. For the craftsman who could construct so remarkable a limb would undoubtedly also be able to assemble an entire marionette, according to his demands.

And what, I asked, seeing that he now was gazing somewhat disconcertedly to the ground, and what would be the sort of demands you would want to make of the skills of such a man?

None, he replied, that may not be found to be met already in the artificial limb: right proportion, mobility, lightness—but all to a higher degree; and most of all, a more natural arrangement of the centers of gravity.

And what advantage would this puppet have over living dancers?

What advantage? First of all a negative one, my excellent friend, namely this: that it would never *put on airs*. —For airs and affectations occur, as you know, whenever the spirit (*vis motrix*) is located elsewhere than in the movement's center of gravity. Since, on account of the way the wires or threads are fastened, the puppeteer has no power at all over any other point, the other parts are dead, as they should be, mere pendulums, and simply follow the law of gravity, an excellent property one seeks in vain in the majority of our dancers.

Just look at P . . . playing Daphne, he continued, when, chased by Apollo, she glances back at him; the spirit of the movement is situated in the vertebrae at the small of her back; she bends as if she would break, like a naiad from the school of Bernini. Look at young F . . . when he stands as Paris among the three goddesses, and hands Venus the apple: the spirit of the movement is situated in, of all places (it is a horror to see it), his elbow.

Such blunders, he added in closing, are inevitable ever since we ate of the Tree of Knowledge. But Paradise is bolted and the Cherub behind us; we must travel around the world and see if there might be an entrance somewhere in back.

I laughed. —Indeed, I thought, the mind cannot err where none exists. But I noticed that there was more in his heart, and begged him to continue.

Besides, said he, these puppets have the advantage that *their weight is negative*. Of the lethargy of matter, that quality most contrary to dancing, they are innocent, for the force that lifts them into the air is greater than the force that binds them to the earth. What would our dear G . . . not give to be lighter by sixty pounds, or to have a weight of that amount assist her with her entrechats and pirouettes? Puppets, like elves, need the floor only that they may *touch* it, and let the momentary check renew the verve in the movement of their limbs; we need the floor to *rest* upon, to recover from the exertion of dancing: the moment we do so plainly does not belong to the dance, and there is nothing to be done with it but to mask it as well as we can.

I told him that no matter how skillfully he conducted his paradoxes, he could still never convince me that a mechanical puppet could contain more of grace than the frame of the human body.

He replied that it was impossible for mankind even to come close to the puppet in that respect. In this arena only a god could compare with inanimate matter; and here was the point where the two ends of the circular universe joined together.

I was deeper and deeper in astonishment, and knew not what to reply to such strange propositions.

It appeared, he continued, taking a pinch of snuff, that I had not read the third chapter of Genesis with sufficient attention; and that if one did not grasp the meaning of the first period of all human development, one could hardly speak about those that followed after, let alone about the last one still to come.

I said I knew very well what disorder consciousness causes in the natural grace of mankind. Before my eyes a youth of my ac-

quaintance had, as it were by a mere remark, lost his innocence, and despite all imaginable efforts had never regained its paradise again.

—Now, I asked, what do you make of that?

He asked me to explain.

About three years ago, I told him, I went bathing with a young man whose form at the time was suffused with a wonderful graciousness. He would have been about sixteen, and only the first faint hints of vanity might be glimpsed in him, provoked by ladies' favor. It so happened that we had just seen, in Paris, the youth extracting a splinter from his foot; casts of the statue are commonplace and may be found in collections all over Germany. A glance he cast in a great looking glass at the moment as he placed his foot on a stool to dry it reminded him of the youth in the statue; he smiled and told me the discovery he had made. Indeed, at that very moment, I had made the same discovery myself; but whether to test the steadiness of the grace that attended him or to deal a little salutary blow to his vanity, I laughed and answered that he must be seeing ghosts! He blushed and lifted his foot again to show me; but the attempt failed, as one might easily have foretold. In confusion, he lifted his foot a third time and a fourth, indeed he must have lifted it ten times: in vain! He was unable to reproduce the movement. —What

am I saying? The movements he made had an element so comical I could hardly keep from breaking into laughter.

From that day on, indeed from that moment, an inexplicable change came over the young man. He began standing before the mirror for days on end; and as he did, one charm after another left him. An unseen, inexplicable force seemed to gather like an iron net around the free play of his gestures, and when a year had passed, not a trace could be discovered of the beauty that before had delighted all eyes about him. There is another yet living who witnessed that strange, unhappy event and could confirm it, word for word as I have told it.

At this opportunity, Mr. C . . . said amiably, I must tell you another story. You will easily see why it belongs here.

During my trip to Russia, I found myself on an estate belonging to Squire G . . . , a Livonian, whose sons at the time were devoted students of the sword. The elder especially, newly back from university, played the virtuoso, and one morning when I was in his room offered me a rapier. We fought; but it so happened I was his better; his roused passions confused him; hardly a thrust of mine missed, and at last his rapier went flying into a corner. Half in jest, half smarting, he said as he retrieved it that he had found his master, as in time all things must, and he would promptly lead me to mine. The brothers laughed and cried: Away! away! Down to the timber pen!, and with these words they took me by the hand and led me to a bear that Squire G . . . , their father, was raising in the yard.

As I approached him in amazement, the bear stood on his hind legs, leaning against the stake he was chained to, his right paw raised to strike, looking me straight in the eye: such was his fencing stance. I could not tell if I was dreaming, finding myself face to face with such an opponent; but Squire G . . . cried, Thrust! thrust! And see if you can land him one. Recovering a little from my amazement, I fell upon him with my rapier; with a very short stroke of the paw, the bear parried. When I tried with feints to throw him off guard the bear did not stir. Quickly, artfully, I fell upon him again; I would certainly have pierced the breast of any man: with a very short stroke of the paw, the bear parried. Now my case was like young Squire G . . . 's. Besides, the bear's seriousness robbed me of my composure, thrusts and feints were exchanged, I was dripping with sweat: in vain! Not only did the bear parry all my thrusts like the best swordsman in the world; he did something no swordsman in the world could imitate: he quite ignored every false move. His eye in mine, as if he could read my soul there, he stood, his paw raised to strike, and if my thrusts were not meant in earnest, he did not stir.

Do you believe this story?

Completely! I cried, applauding with delight; I would believe it from the lips of any stranger, it is so probable: how much more readily from you!

Well, my excellent friend, said Mr.C . . . , then you possess all you need to understand me. In the living world we see that even as reflection dims and weakens, grace and beauty shine forth with greater brilliance and prominence. —But as the intersection of two lines to one side of a given point, having passed through infinity, suddenly returns again on the other side, or as the image in a concave mirror, having fled to infinity, suddenly materializes again right before us, so, when knowledge has traveled as it were through an infinity, does grace appear again, and thus it is that in the human frame grace is seen at its purest where consciousness either exists not at all or is infinite, that is, in the mannequin or in the god.

Then, I said in some consternation, we would have to eat of the Tree of Knowledge again to fall back into the state of innocence?

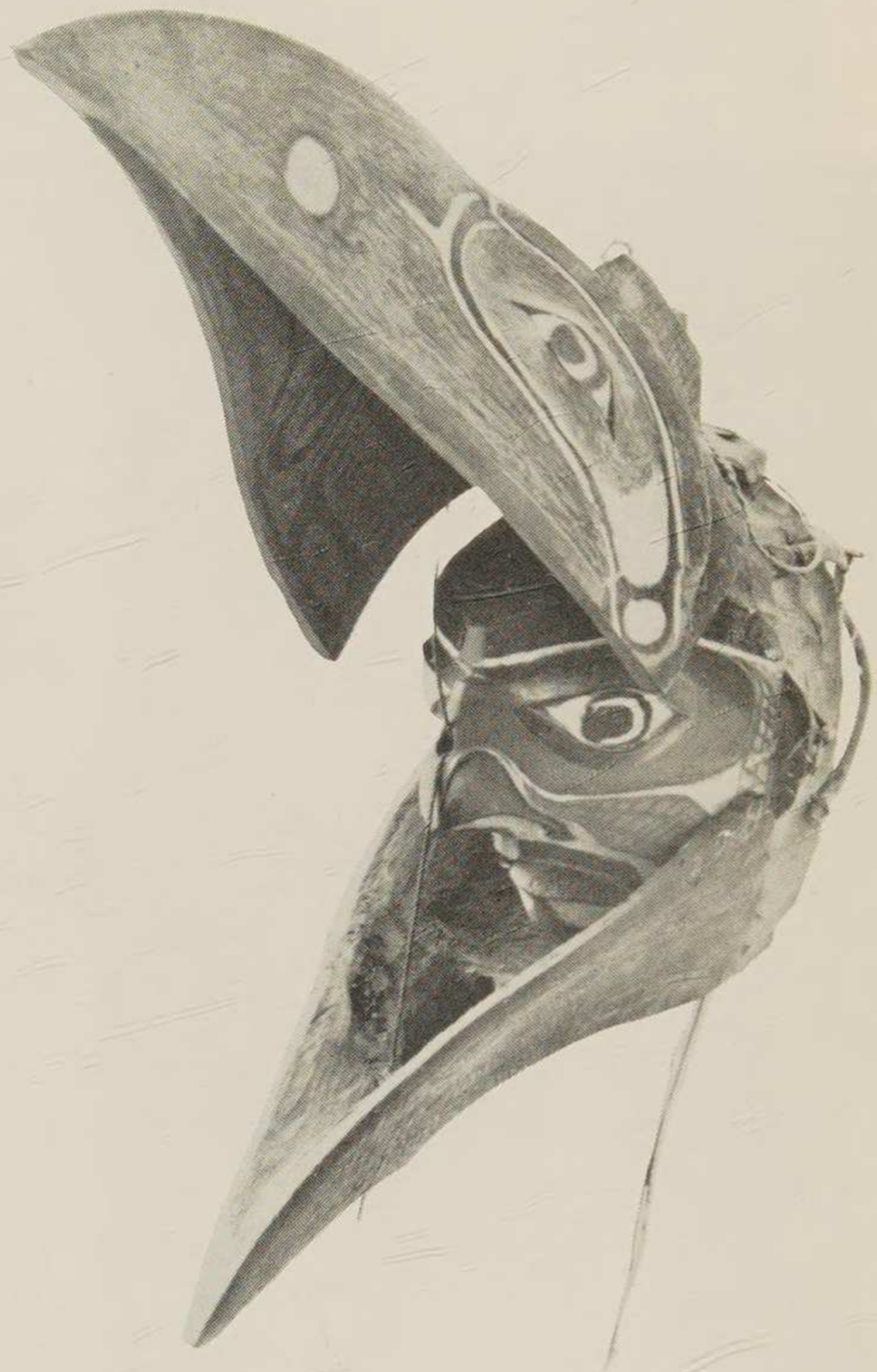
Yes indeed, he replied, that is the last chapter of the history of the world. ◇

Coincidence of Opposites

Masks are the crystallization of images and ideas: just as dancers become spirits for a while, a black child can display the face of the enemy, a cynical reversal which only masks allow. Mock the oppressor to confuse him; imitate him to know him better. Knowledge affords victory.

The dual nature of mask reaches its epitome in the double, the Janus-like face of opposites: comic and tragic; the black and the white; good and evil; here and there; animal and man; fantastical and actual; the lasting and the ephemeral.

—Winifred Lambrecht



Carlos Llerena-Aguirre

Bird-into-human transformation mask, Kwakiutl, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, courtesy of Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. Reprinted from *A World of Faces* by Edward Malin. Copyright © 1978 Timber Press.

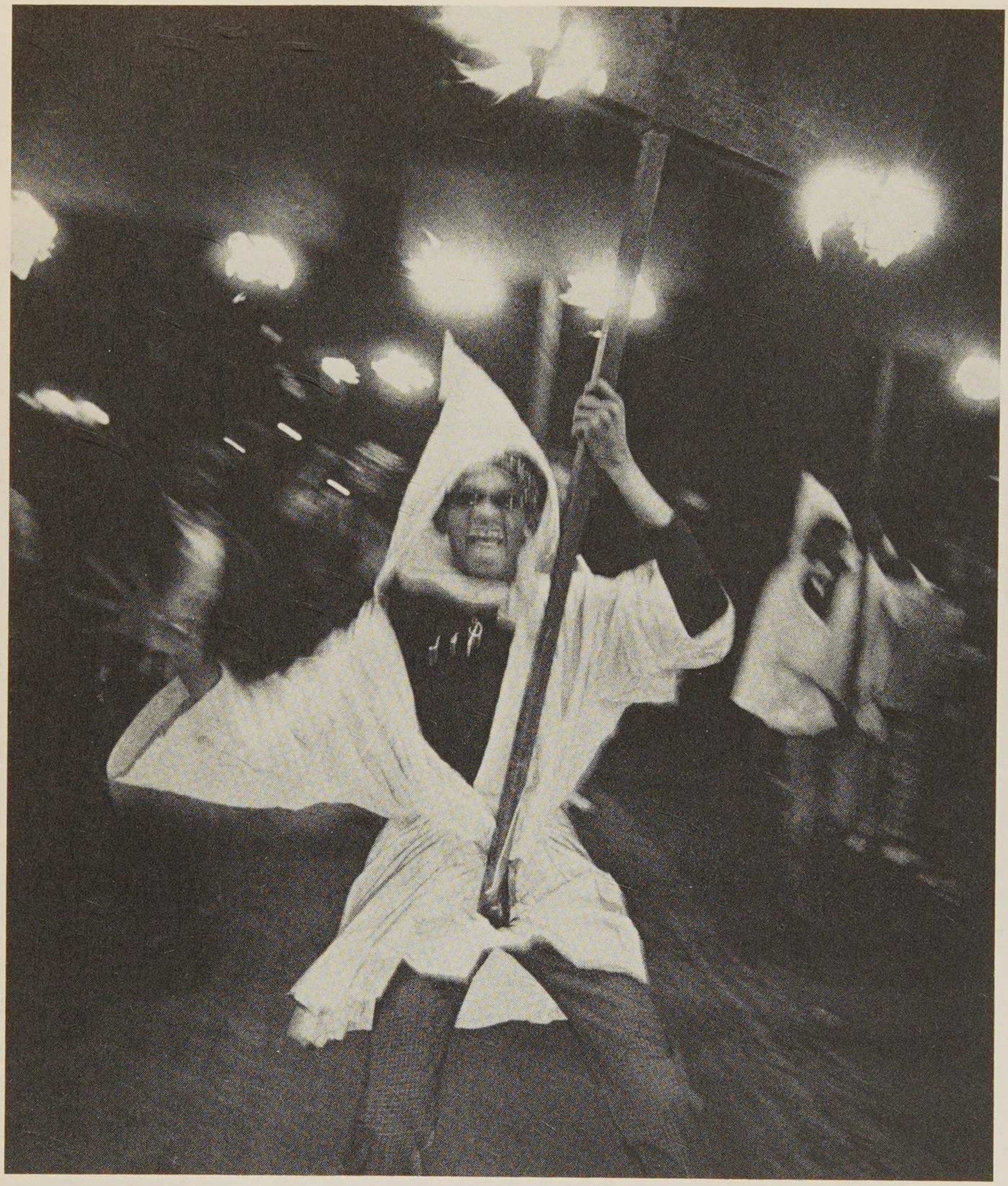
Humanidad Andina, Andean humanity, engraving by Carlos Llerena-Aguirre, Peru

Ralph Eugene Meatyard

Halloween. Photograph from *Ralph Eugene Meatyard,* an Aperture Monograph, Aperture, 1974.

Susan Meiselas

Youths wearing traditional Indian dance masks practice throwing contact bombs in forest surrounding Monimba, Nicaragua. Copyright © 1981 Susan Meiselas, from *Nicaragua: June 1978–July 1979,* by Susan Meiselas, edited with Claire Rosenberg (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). Reprinted by permission of Pantheon Books, A Division of Random House, Inc.

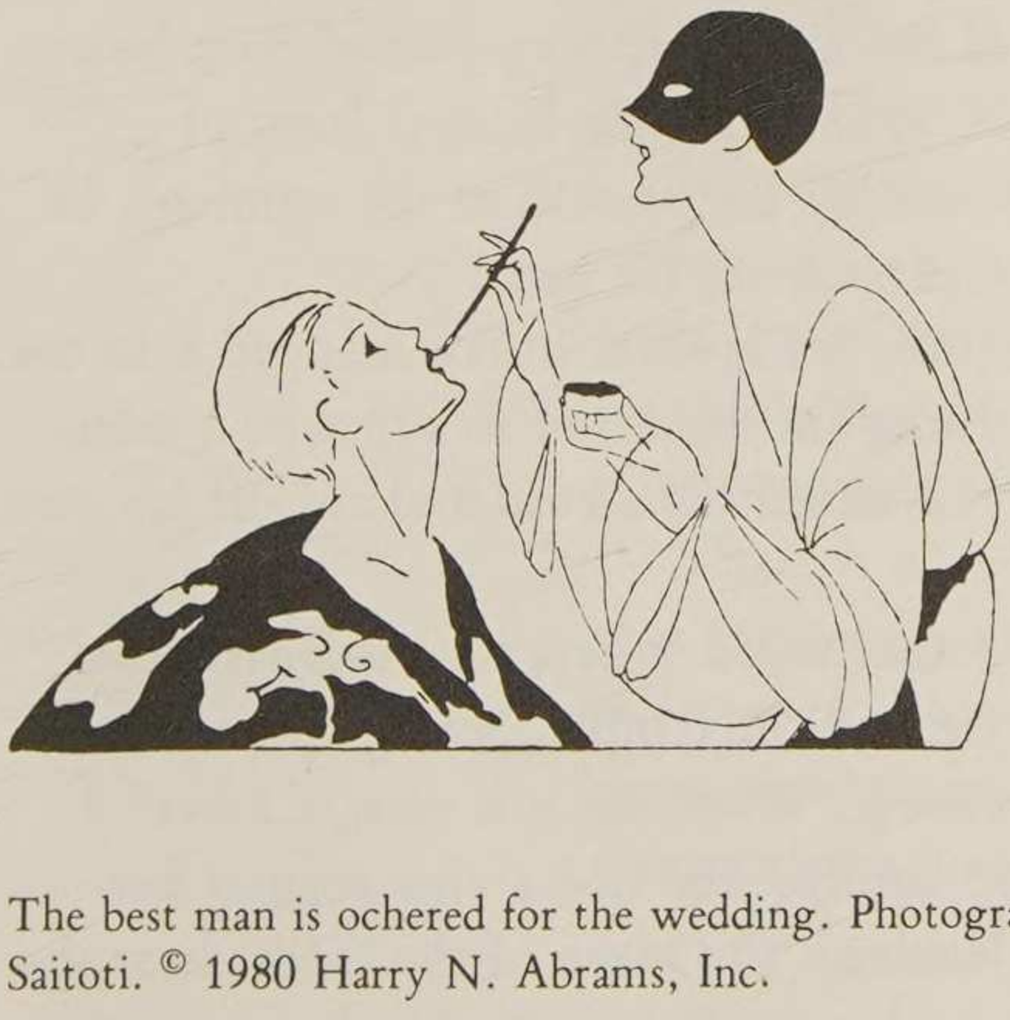


Charles Gatewood

Flambeaux, Mardi Gras, New Orleans. At one time slaves lit the parade with torches. Today kerosene is used, and white hoods are donned to protect the torchbearers from burns. Copyright © Charles Gatewood

Ku Klux Klan, engraving 1868

Carol Beckwith



The best man is ochered for the wedding. Photograph by Carol Beckwith from *Maasai,* text by Tepilit Ole Saitoti. © 1980 Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Twentieth-century French cosmetician.

EPICYCLE

The Transposed Heads

Several of the Tales of a Demon have appeared in PARABOLA. *The stories are told by a* Vetala, *a demon who inhabits a corpse carried by King Triple-Victory to a magical ceremony, and each contains a riddle which the king must answer upon pain of death. With each reply, however, the Vetala flies back into the tree, and the king must again cut down and carry the corpse—whereupon, the Vetala poses another riddle.*

The present story has become well-known through Thomas Mann's novella, The Transposed Heads.

"Most noble king," said the Vetala, "allow me to entertain you with a most curious tale.

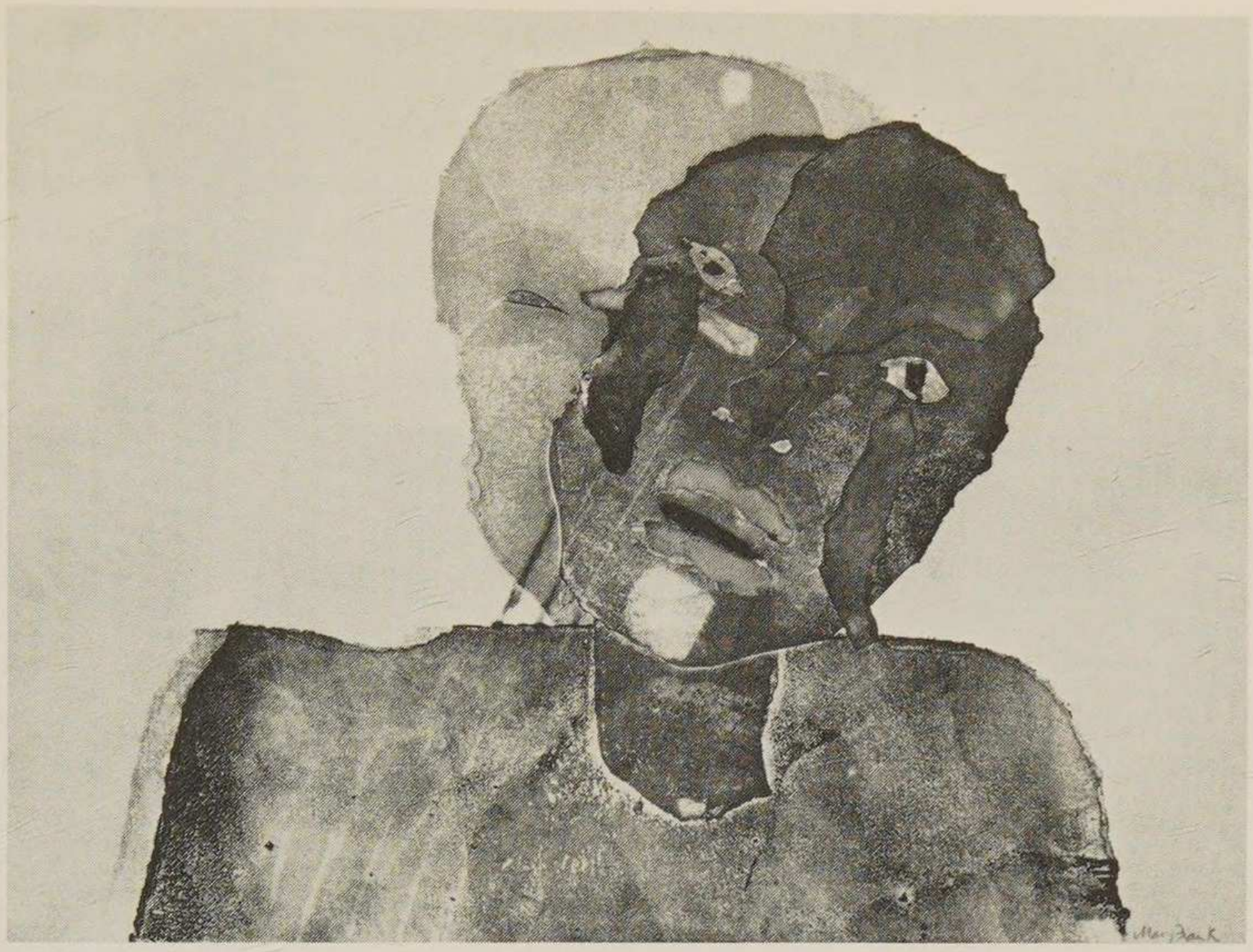
"Long ago in the city of Sobhavati, pilgrims from all parts of the country came to pay homage to the White Goddess, whose temple resides there. Among the pilgrims one day was a young man, Dhavala by name, who came to take the holy bath. To the same pond that day came also the beautiful maiden, Madanasundari, and the two fell in love. Dhavala told his parents about the maiden, and they urged him to marry. So it was arranged, and the young lovers were wed.

"Time passed. One day, Madanasundari's brother came to visit. After he had rested, he invited his sister and new brother-in-law to a special celebration for the White Goddess. They accepted, and the following morning, the three departed for Sobhavati. Upon arriving, Dhavala, passing by the great temple, was moved to piety. 'Come,' he said, 'let us visit the Great Goddess here and now!' But his brother-in-law demurred, not wishing to appear empty-handed, and so Dhavala went into the temple alone.

"In the temple, Dhavala was overcome with the might and splendor of the Goddess, whose image towered above him, her eighteen arms crushing the demon Ruru, her feet trampling the demon Mahisa. 'So many people bring sacrifices to the Goddess,' he reflected, 'but how many are truly worthy of her? Would not the highest form of sacrifice be one's own life?' Seized by the passion of the moment, he took a sword and with one stroke cut off his head.

"When Dhavala did not return, his brother-in-law stepped into the temple to look for him. Beholding the results of so supreme a sacrifice, he was so overcome that he seized the sword and cut off his own head as well.

"When her husband and brother failed to return, Madanasundari grew distressed, and she too entered the temple. Seeing the headless bodies of the two men, she wailed, 'What use is it now if I live? I might as well join my beloved family.' She tied a vine around her lovely neck, praying to the Goddess: 'O Queen of the Gods, hear my prayer. I do not know why you have taken my husband and brother from me, for I have always been devoted to you. I throw myself upon



your mercy. Take this body and do with it what you will, granting only that in my next life my husband and brother shall again be my husband and brother!' But no sooner had the noose tightened about her neck than a voice sounded from above:

" 'Do no violence to yourself, my daughter. I am pleased with your virtue and great faith, and will restore your husband and brother to you. Remove the noose from your neck. Join the heads of your husband and your brother to their bodies, and they will take their places once more in your life.'

"Overjoyed with the response to her prayers, Madanasundari ran quickly to the bodies. In her confusion, however, she joined her husband's head with her brother's body, and her brother's head with her husband's body. Instantly, they stood up alive; in joy the three left the temple and continued on their way, talking about their strange experiences. But Madanasundari soon discovered the mistake, and stood perplexed, not knowing what to do.

"Most great king," concluded the Vetala, "which of the two mixed-up men was really Madanasundari's husband? Was it the one with her husband's head and her brother's body, or the one with her brother's head and her husband's body? Answer me, if you can, or else your head will burst into a thousand pieces!"

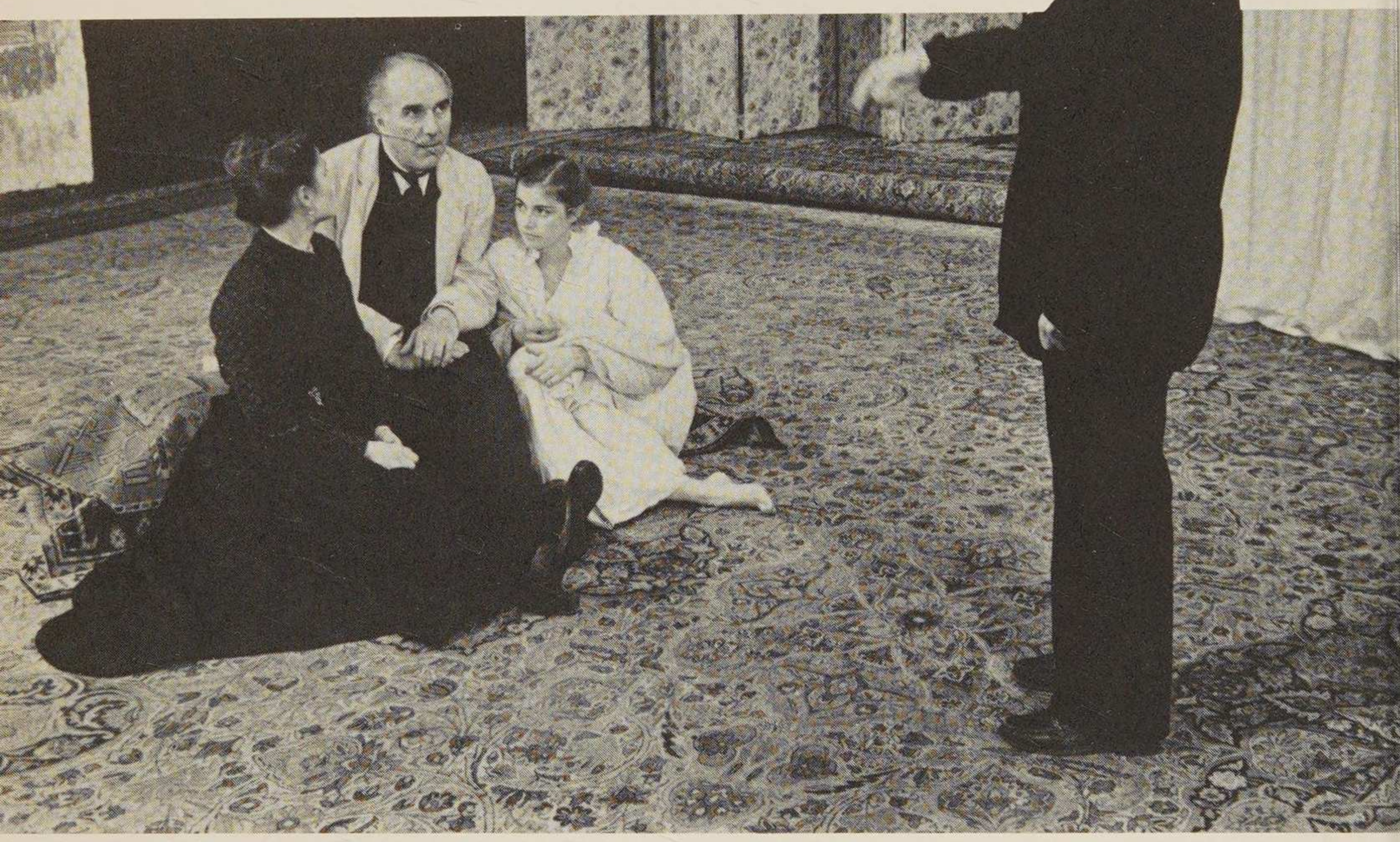
"There is no puzzle here," King Triple-Victory replied. "The body that carries the husband's head is the true husband, for the head is the overseer of the whole man, and it is by the head that a man is recognized and known." At these words, the Vetala again flew back to the tree, and the king once more began to retrace his steps.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

Illustration by Mary Frank

Lie and Glorious Adjective

An interview with Peter Brook



Peter Brook directing La Cerisaie *(*The *Cherry Orchard) with Nathalie Nell, Michael Piccoli, Anne Consigny.*

A. Patrix

It becomes less and less probable that one could find a reader of any nationality whatever, who is acquainted with theater and the arts, to whom Peter Brook's name is not familiar. He and his troupe have roamed Africa and Brooklyn, performing on the streets and in village squares; now, fresh from a triumphant production of The Cherry Orchard *in Paris, they are preparing to go to India where they will make a long study for a work on the Mahabharata. Brook has made a film in Afghanistan (*Meetings with Remarkable Men*) and produced Shakespeare in the world's capitals. New York audiences still remember with delight his vivid production of* A Midsummer Night's Dream *in 1971. More recently, the bill of four plays, in which he presented the acting group of his Paris Centre Internationale de Recherche Téatrale at La Mama last year, included* Ubu, L'Os, The Ik, *and the incredibly beautiful and moving* The Conference of the Birds, *of which our reviewer wrote, "The connection has been made, dynamically and essentially, to something much higher, and the everyday world, for that short moment at least, vibrates with the linking."*

The list of his achievements in theater, opera, and cinema would be too long to print here. But it is not the extraordinary quality and variety, or even the brilliance, of Brook's work that make the

greatest claim on our attention; rather, it is its innovative courage, the relentlessness of its drive to come closer and closer to the heart of truth. This same quality is evidenced in his keen and searching blue eyes, and in the total attention he gives to listening as well as to speaking. Behind his fluency and humor, one feels the intensity, as well as the speed, with which a thought is at once followed and disciplined, like a trained hunting dog, turned loose on the scent but never out of reach of its owner's eye and voice.

A previous interview with Peter Brook, under the title "Leaning on the Moment," appeared in our issue on Sacred Dance, Vol. IV, No. 2, of May, 1979.

Parabola: *I was talking with Arthur Amiotte about the theme for this issue, and he suggested that it went beyond the mask itself and included the whole idea of something "in the image of . . ."*

Peter Brook: Yes, that is interesting; because it's obvious that there are masks and masks. There is something very noble, very mysterious, very extraordinary, which is the mask, and something disgusting, something really sordid, nauseating (and very common to the Western art theater) which is also called a mask. They are similar because they are both things you put on your face, but they are as different as health and disease. There is a mask which is lifegiving, that affects the wearer and the observer in a very positive way; and there is another thing that can be put on the face of a distorted human being that makes him even more distorted, and gives an impression to a distorted observer of a reality even more distorted than the one he sees ordinarily! And both go under the same name, "masks," and to the casual observer look very similar. I think it has now become an almost universally accepted cliché that we all wear masks all the time; but the moment one accepts that as being true, and begins to ask oneself questions about it, one sees that the usual facial expression either conceals (so it's a mask in that sense) that it's not in tune with what is really going on inside, or it is a decorated account: it presents the inner process in a more flattering or attractive light; it gives a lying version. A weak person puts on a strong face, or vice versa. The everyday expression is a mask in the sense that it's either a concealment or a lie; it is not in harmony with the inner movement. So if one's face is operating so well as a mask, what's the purpose of putting on another face?

But in fact, if one takes these two categories, the horrible mask and the good mask, one sees that they operate in quite different ways. The horrible mask is the one most continually used in the Western theater. What happens here is that an individual, usually a scene designer, is asked to design a mask. He works from one thing only, which is his own subjective fantasy; what else can he do? So someone sits in front of a drawing board and draws out of his own subconscious one of his own million lying or distorted or sentimental masks and then pops it onto another person. So you have something that in a way is even worse than one's own lie—one is lying through the external image of someone else's lie. However, what is worse yet is that because another person's lie comes not from the surface but from the subconscious, it is basically even nastier, because you are lying through another person's fantasy life. And that is where almost all masks that you see, in the ballet and so on, have something morbid about them; because it is an aspect of the subjective subconscious—frozen. So you have this picture impression of something inanimate and basically belonging to the hidden area of personal hangups and frustrations.

Now the traditional mask works exactly the other way round. The traditional mask in essence isn't a "mask" at all, because it is an image of the essential nature. In other words, a traditional mask is a portrait of a man without a mask.

For instance, the Balinese masks that we used in *The Conference of the Birds* are realistic masks, in the sense that, unlike the African masks, the features are not distorted; they are

completely naturalistic. What one sees is that the person who designs them, exactly like the person who sculpts the heads in Bunraku, has behind him thousands of years of tradition in which human types are observed with *such* precision that you can see that if the craftsman reproducing them, generation after generation, goes one millimeter to the right or to the left, he is no longer reproducing the essential type but a personal value. But if he is absolutely true to this traditional knowledge—which you could call a traditional psychological classification of man, an absolute knowledge of the essential types—you find that what is called a mask should be called an anti-mask. The traditional mask is an actual portrait, a soul-portrait, a photograph of what you rarely see, only in truly evolved human beings: an outer casing that is a complete and sensitive reflection of the inner life. So because of this, in a mask carved in such a way, whether a Bunraku head or a Balinese realistic mask, the first characteristic is that there is nothing morbid about it. There is no impression, even when you see one hanging on the wall, of a shrunken head—no impression of death. It is not a death mask. On the contrary, these masks, although motionless, seem to be breathing life. Provided the actor goes through certain steps that we will talk about in a moment, the moment he wears the mask it becomes alive in an infinite number of ways. A mask of this order has this extraordinary characteristic that the moment it is on a human head, if the human being inside is sensitive to its meaning, it has an absolutely inexhaustible quantity of expressions. We found this while we were rehearsing with them. When the mask is hanging on the wall, a person could—crudely and falsely—put adjectives to it, saying, "Ah, this is the proud man." You put the mask on, and you can no longer say, "This is the proud man," because it could have looks of humility, it could have humility sliding into gentleness; those vast staring eyes can express aggressivity or they can express fear; it is endlessly, endlessly shifting—but *within* the purity and the intensity of the unmasked man whose deepest inner nature is constantly revealing itself, while the masked man's inner nature is continuously concealed. So in that way, I think the first basic paradox is that the true mask is the expression of somebody unmasked.

P. *What effect does it have on the person wearing it?*

P.B. I will speak from my experience with the Balinese masks, but I have to go back one step before that. One of the first, knockout exercises that you can do with actors, which is used in lots of theater schools where they use masks, is putting a plain, blank, white mask on someone. The moment you take someone's face away in that way, it's the most electrifying impression: suddenly to find oneself knowing that that thing one lives with, and which one knows is transmitting something all the time, is no longer there. It's the most extraordinary sense of liberation. It is one of those great exercises that whoever does for the first time counts as a great moment: to suddenly find oneself immediately for a certain time liberated from one's own subjectivity. And the awakening of a body awareness is immediately there with it, irresistibly; so that if you want to make an actor aware of his body, instead of explaining it to him and saying, "You have a body and you need to be aware of it," just put a bit of white paper on his face and say, "Now look around." He can't fail to be instantly aware of everything he normally forgets, because all the attention has been released from this great magnet up top.

Now to go back to the Balinese masks. When they arrived, the Balinese actor who was with us laid them out. All the actors, like children, threw themselves on the masks, put them on, started roaring with laughter, looking at one another, looking in the mirror, fooling around—having a ball, like children when you open up the dressing-up hamper. I looked at the Balinese actor. He

was appalled; he was standing there shell-shocked—because for him the masks were sacred. He gave me a pleading look, and I stopped everybody short and just said a couple of words to remind everyone that these weren't just things out of a Christmas cracker. And because our group had worked long enough under different forms, the potential respect was there; it was just that in our typical Western way, one forgets; everybody was too over-enthusiastic and excited, but at the tiniest reminder they came back right away. But it was quite clear that within a matter of minutes the masks were being completely desacralized—because the masks will play any game you want, and what was interesting was that before I stopped them, when everyone was fooling around with them, the masks themselves appeared to be not much better than what you get out of a Christmas cracker—because that was what was being invested in them. A mask is two-way traffic all the time; it sends a message in and projects a message out. It operates by the laws of echoes: if the echo chamber is perfect, the sound going in and the one going out are reflections; there is a perfect relation between the echo chamber and the sound; but if it isn't, it is like a distorted mirror. Here, when the actors sent back a distorted response, the mask itself took on a distorted face. The minute they started again, with quiet and respect, the masks looked different and the people inside them *felt* different.

The great magic of the mask, which every actor receives from it, is that he *can't* tell what it looks like on him; he can't tell what impression he is making—and yet he knows. I have worn them a lot myself when we were working on them, for the sake of investigating at first hand this extraordinary impression. You do things and other people tell you afterwards: "It was extraordinary!" *You* don't know; you just wear it and you do certain movements and you don't know if there is any relation or not; and you know that you mustn't try to impose something. You somehow do and don't know, on a rational level; but the sensitivity to the mask exists in another way, and it's something that develops.

One of the techniques they use in Bali which is very interesting is that the Balinese actor starts by looking at a mask, holding it in his hands. He looks at it for a long while, until he and the mask begin to become like a reflection of each other; he begins to feel it partly as his own face—but not totally, because in another way he goes towards *its* independent life. And gradually he begins to move his hand so that the mask takes on a life, and he is watching it—he sort of empathizes with it. And then something may happen which none of our actors could even attempt (and it rarely happens even with the Balinese actor) which is that the breathing begins to modify; he begins to breathe differently with each mask. It's obvious, in a way, that each mask represents a certain type of person, with a certain body and a certain tempo and inner rhythm, and so a certain breathing; as he begins to feel this and as his hand begins to take on a corresponding tension, the breath changes till a certain *weight* of breathing begins to penetrate the actor's whole body; and when that is ready, he puts on the mask. And the whole shape is there.

Our actors can't do it that way—and shouldn't, because that belongs to a whole tradition and training. But in a different way, because they can't play on that sort of highly developed instrument of technique, they can develop something through pure sensitivity, with no knowledge of what are right or wrong forms. The actor takes the mask, studies it, and as he puts it on, his face slightly modifies itself until it goes towards the shape of the mask, and he puts it on his face and in a way he has dropped one of his own masks; so the intervening flesh masks disappear and the actor is in close contact, epidermal contact, with a face that is not his face, but the face of a very strong, essential type of man. And his actor's capacity to be a comedian (without which he couldn't be an actor) makes him realize his potentiality to *be* that

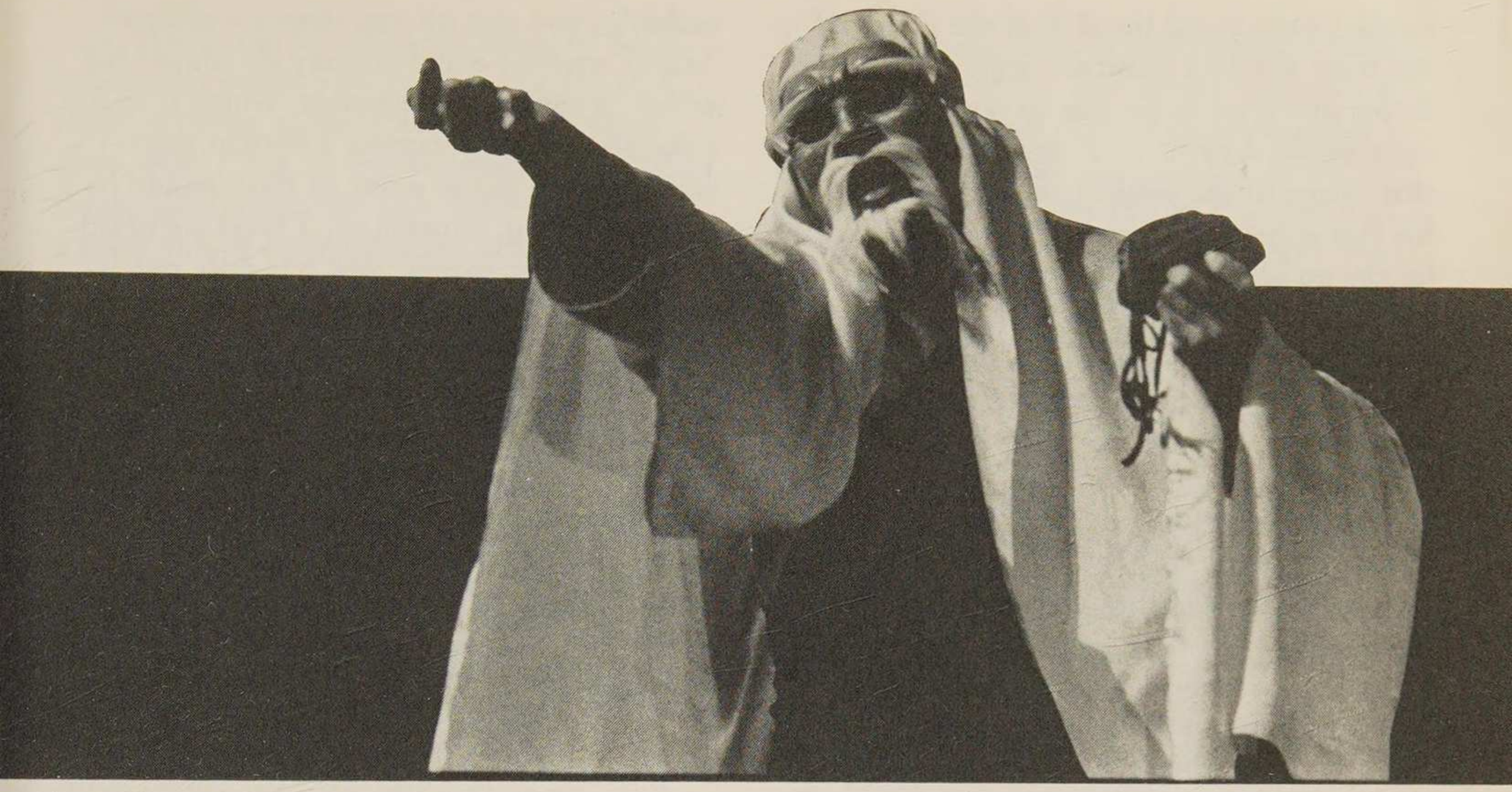
person. So at that moment he is in that role. And that becomes *his* role; and the moment it is assumed, it comes to life, it is no longer hard and fast but something that adapts itself to any circumstance; so the actor, having put that mask on, is sufficiently in the character that if someone unexpectedly offers him a cup of tea, whatever response he makes is totally that of that type, not in the schematic sense but in the essential sense. For instance, if he's wearing a proud mask, in the schematic sense he would be forced to say proudly, "Take away your tea!" But in a living sense, the proudest of men can see a cup of tea and say, "Oh, thank you," and take it without betraying his essential nature.

P. *So is it possible for a Western actor to act in these Balinese masks? What happens?*

P.B. It is exactly the same as playing a role—exactly the same. A role is a meeting, a meeting between an actor as a mass of potentialities—and a catalyst. Because a role is a form of catalyst, from outside; it makes a demand, and draws into form the unformed potentiality of the actor. That is why the meeting between an actor and a role always produces a different result. Take a great role, like Hamlet: the nature of Hamlet on one hand makes an absolutely specific set of demands; the words are there and don't change from generation to generation. But at the same time, like a mask, although it looks as though it is set in its form, it is exactly the reverse. Its seeming to be a set form is only an outward appearance. In fact, it's something which, because it operates like a catalyst, when it encounters the human material which is the individual actor, it creates all the time new specifics. This meeting between the demand coming from the outside, which is the role that the actor is assuming, and the individuality of the actor, produces always a new series of combinations. So an oriental actor, a Balinese for example, if he has the basic sensitivity, understanding, openness, wish, etc., can play Hamlet; and a great Balinese actor, bringing the whole of his human understanding to the part of Hamlet, *must* produce, second by second, something totally different from John Gielgud approaching the same thing, because it is a different meeting in different circumstances. But in each case, a truth of equal quality and of equal value can appear. In exactly the same way, a great mask put on a Balinese or on an American or on a Frenchman, given the same basic conditions of skill, sensitivity, and sincerity, should produce results qualitatively equal, but in terms of form, totally different.

P. *That makes me wonder: is there a difference in the use of mask in ritual and the use of mask in theater, where you are performing for different reasons?*

P.B. I think it goes through stages. I go back to the concrete experience we had: *The Conference of the Birds,* and why we *had* to use masks. We have always avoided them; I loathe masks in the theater, and I have never used them before, because every time I have even touched them it has been either Western masks or the idea of getting somebody to make masks, and I have always shied away from the idea of putting subjectivity onto subjectivity, which makes no sense at all. So in place of masks we have done everything with the actor's face—what better instrument do you have? But what we did up to the first time that we used masks was to work so that the actor's individuality appeared through his face; and that work is, by one technique or another, getting rid of his superficial masks. It would be virtually impossible to take a successful television character, let's say, and get his individuality to appear without a grueling and perhaps highly dangerous process of smashing his masks, because his identification with certain successful facial expressions is so deeply ingrained, and so much part of his way of life and his stake in the world, that he couldn't let it go. But a young actor, for instance, who wants to develop, can recognize and eliminate his stereotypes—to a degree; and in doing so his face becomes a better mirror—in the way a Sufi would talk about his



The Conference of the Birds *with Bruce Myers* *A. Patrix*

mirror becoming more polished, a cleaner mirror of what is happening inside his face. You see in many people that their faces reflect more rather than less of what is inside them. The use of the actor undisguised, without makeup, without costume, has been the trend of the experimental theater for the last twenty years or so; it has been to let the actor's nature appear—and one also sees that in the very best film acting; the actor uses on the surface what he has deep inside him, and he allows the flicker of an eyelid to be a sensitive mirror of what is happening inside him. In that way, through training that doesn't go towards using an actor's *personality,* but on the contrary towards letting his personality make way for his *individuality,* the use of the face in a sensitive way makes the face less of a mask and more a reflector of that individuality.

However, we found—which is why we turned to masks—that there is a point where the actor's individuality comes up against his own natural human limitations. A talented actor can improvise up to the level of his talent. But that doesn't mean that he can improvise King Lear, because his talent doesn't reach beyond his normal range of experience to *that* range. So he can't improvise King Lear, but he can *meet* King Lear if the role is given to him. In the same way, an actor can improvise with his face, and that will reflect anything within his normal circle of emotions, responses, and experiences. But for instance, if in *The Conference of the Birds* I ask one of our actors to find the face that corresponds with an old dervish, the leap is too great. He can have the beginning of an intellectual understanding of what it is about, he can have a beginning of respect for what that could mean, but he hasn't got what is needed to be able, unaided, without imagery of any sort, and without a great part like a great Greek or Shakespearian role, just by thinking and feeling to turn his face into the illuminated face of an old dervish. He can go, let's say, one step in a direction that needs a thousand steps. And it is at that point that you see that the skill of one of our actors (obviously one has to face the reality unpreten-

tiously) can't equal the skill of the carver of the mask fed by a thousand years of tradition. So for our actor to be able to say, "There was once an old dervish . . ." and then extend that image in the public's mind by showing his face as being the face of that old dervish, he can go one step in that direction, but by putting on the traditional mask he leaps a light year ahead, because he is drawn immediately by the mask to something he can understand when it is given to him, but he can't creatively impose on himself.

To connect with your idea of ritual: In terms of theater, in *The Conference of the Birds* we used birds when we saw that a big, fat actor flapping his hands doesn't convey flight as well as it can be conveyed, momentarily, by his holding a little object and suggesting flight with it, when for a moment what you want is the image of flight; but at another moment you don't want that, you want the humanity of the person and then you come back to the actor. In the same way we found, having rehearsed with and without masks (which is why we put them on and off), that there were moments when the natural, ordinary reality of the actor is better than the mask; because you don't want all the time the exalted impression. It is like using adjectives: there are moments when a good style is naked and uses very simple words, and there is a moment when without a glorious adjective the sentence can't make its point; and the mask is suddenly a glorious adjective that exalts the entire sentence.

Now, we are talking here all the time about masks that in their very nature are so-called realistic, naturalistic masks. And what amazed me when I saw the Balinese masks for the first time was to see that although they come from a very specific, local culture, they don't actually look primarily oriental. When you look at those masks you see, first and foremost, Old Man—Beautiful Girl—Sad Man—Astonished Man—and then only secondarily, you see: oh yes, they are oriental. This is why we could actually do something which in theory is impossible, which is to use a Balinese mask to express a Persian story—which from a purist point of view would be called shocking, scandalous, a total disregard of tradition. In theory, yes; but once one is dealing with certain essential strands, it is like in cooking—things that in theory you can't combine, in practice can be combined very well. In this case, because these masks were expressing certain specific *but universal* human characteristics, put in relation to a certain text that is talking about certain specific human characteristics, the two go together like bread and butter, and there is no mixture of tradition because tradition doesn't come into it.

On the other hand, when you are dealing with non-naturalistic masks, you are dealing with something very delicate. Non-naturalistic masks, I think, again fall into two categories. There are the masks that are so strictly coded that they are like a series of words in a foreign language—so highly ritualized that unless you know the language of the signs, you lose nine-tenths of its meaning. All you see is that it is very impressive. Some African or New Guinea masks, for instance, have something very impressive about them, but one can very easily miss the real force of what those masks are saying unless one knows the whole tradition that is behind them and the context in which they are appearing. And I think it is very easy for us to sentimentalize our approach to masks, the way people do who buy one just to hang it on the wall. It is a beautiful wall decoration, but what a degraded use of something whose signs, if read, are something infinitely more significant!

But there is another type of mask, where these two categories overlap: one that in a specific way is also reflecting inner experience, but not inner *psychological* experience. In other words, you can say that there is the type of mask that we have been talking about so far, which shows fundamental psychological types of man through very exact, realistic description of his features. And that is a concealed man that is being shown. But then you can say that there is another concealed inner

man, that could be called the essential deity inside each person—in the sense of the traditional societies where you have a thousand gods, each a face of the emotional potential inside each person. So you have, for instance, a mask that is the expression of maternity—the mask that expresses the fundamental maternal principle. Now, that expression goes beyond the picture of the benign mother, which one sees in paintings of the Virgin and child which go no farther than the benign mother with a kindly look. You go from that to the icon, for instance, where there is something more essential and more fundamental; the essential quality is there in something that is no longer reflected naturalistically, where the proportions begin to change, until you get into all the range of statues with eyes five times bigger than the nose and so on—and within that, there is a form of mask that is ritualized and is on a knife-edge of having a possible theatrical use. This is just the area where these two categories overlap. There is the mask which doesn't look like a face in the normal sense of the word—like in a Picasso painting with five sets of eyes one on top of the other and three flat noses—yet which, worn by a person sensitive to its nature, still expresses an aspect of the human condition, in a way beyond the capacity of any actor to show, because no actor can exalt himself to that degree. It is just like the difference between straight speech, for an actor, and poetic speech, and some declamation, and chant: these are all steps towards a more powerful, essential, less everyday expression which still can be totally real if it reflects a truth of human nature. And in that way it is possible to use masks— but that is something *so* delicate; it is something I would be very interested in exploring when we get to the Mahabharata, knowing how explosive and dangerous it is. We have one Balinese mask of that sort, a very ferocious sort of demon mask, and we have just used it amongst ourselves in rehearsal, with everybody feeling the incredible forces that are let loose just by putting it on—and that there one is going into a big area. For us, for instance, in the Mahabharata, we have to find the theatrical version of presenting a god. It is quite clear that an ordinary actor pretending to be a god is ridiculous. One sees that even in productions of *The Tempest* where a lot of girls try to be goddesses; *The Tempest* is usually a disaster. So you have to turn to something that can help you, and the first thing is a mask that contains forces in it and evokes stronger forces than the actor can evoke himself. I have never seen them used in the Western theater in this way, and I think it is something very dangerous for us to approach without a lot of experiment and understanding. In the East or in Africa, this kind of mask is used more in ritual but in a sense for the same purpose, which is to bring into the open abstract things that otherwise are just called forces, so that they take on flesh and blood.

Now that I've talked for an hour, I think I can put into one phrase more simply what I've been trying to say all along: the naturalistic mask expresses essential human types, and the non-naturalistic mask embodies forces.

P. *How do you see the danger you were speaking of? Can you specify exactly?*

P.B. It's a funny sort of danger. Masks really do radiate power; and if someone is sufficiently sensitive to them, he's not likely to use them badly; but it's possible, and there could be psychic dangers from using something too strong for you. On the other hand, with somebody insensitive to them, it's like a thief stealing something from an altar: the chances are not that he'll be punished by a thunderbolt, but just that whoever desecrates something simply contributes his little drop to pulling the world a little lower. So I think the greatest danger is just cheapening.

P. *The man is also in that danger.*

P.B. Yes, of being cheapened.

P. *Returning to my former question: it seems the mask can really have an effect on the wearer, and*

at least for the moment it is worn it is a sort of transforming agent.

P.B. Absolutely.

P. *Can it have more than a momentary effect, do you think?*

P.B. It depends on what people bring to it.

P. *I am suddenly remembering a story, without the faintest recollection of its source. It was about a man who is horribly, painfully ugly, so ugly that he shocks and frightens people. So he wears a mask with the face of a beautiful saint; and he tries very hard to conform himself to this mask, and to* be *the beautiful saint. Then—I can't remember whether it is the woman he falls in love with, or who it is, but someone realizes that he is wearing a mask and tears it off his face. He is crushed at the thought that his real ugliness is now revealed—and then, to his amazement, the other person says, "But why did you wear a mask when it is just like your own face?" He has become what the mask represented.*

P.B. That's marvelous.

P. *But what story* is *that?*

P.B. I never heard it before! But it is a beautiful story, and I'm glad to hear it today.

P. *I hoped you could tell me where I read it!*

P.B. You know, what is interesting is that, like a lot of great basic stories, it could exist in two versions. It could have the other ending, and be a negative story; and I'm sure if you look through different traditions you would find both: the one that when the mask is pulled off, he is left as a sort of angry monster, because in all those years he only wanted the appearance of saintliness—he never really wanted sufficiently to go all the way; so when the mask goes, he is a Caliban again. And the other ending, the beautiful one, which is that he has lived it so truly that when it is taken away, he is still what he seemed before. The story could be expressed with the two different possibilities that are always there, in the degree to which the wearer is responsible to his mask.

P. *I was just thinking along those lines: suppose that there* is *an ideal mask—a mask of the ideal mother or father or any human relation—the objective* fact *of a relationship. What could take the place of a mask, in real life, if one wished to conform oneself to this objective fact, this sort of paradigm of a relation? Is there such a thing in real life? What would a real-life mask be?*

P.B. I think that there is something extremely interesting here—which is that the mask is an *apparent* immobilizing of elements that in nature are in movement. It is very curious; the whole question of the life or death of the mask is there. A mask is like a frame of a movie of a running horse: it puts into *apparently* static form something which in fact, viewed in the proper way, is the expression of something in movement. So motherly love is shown as a static expression; but the real-life equivalent is an action, not an expression. To go back to the icon: if we wanted to show a real-life woman with the equivalent of what the icon is reflecting, we would not try to find a woman whose face or whose look toward a child has that expression, but we might follow Mother Teresa, from behind, with a camera, as she goes through her hospital. And it would be through the actions over a stretch of time that one would find the equivalent. It would be certain attitudes, movements, relationships in *time*; so that motherly love in life is not a snapshot, but an action or a series of actions in time, within a duration. And there is an apparent denial of time in the compression of that into an *apparently* frozen form, in a mask, or a painting, or a statue; but the glory of it, when it is on a certain level of quality, is that the frozenness is only a delusion, which disappears the moment the mask is put again on a human face, because then one sees this curious characteristic of its having endless movement contained within it.

P. *It's extraordinary how a Bunraku puppet also changes its expression when it is moved.*

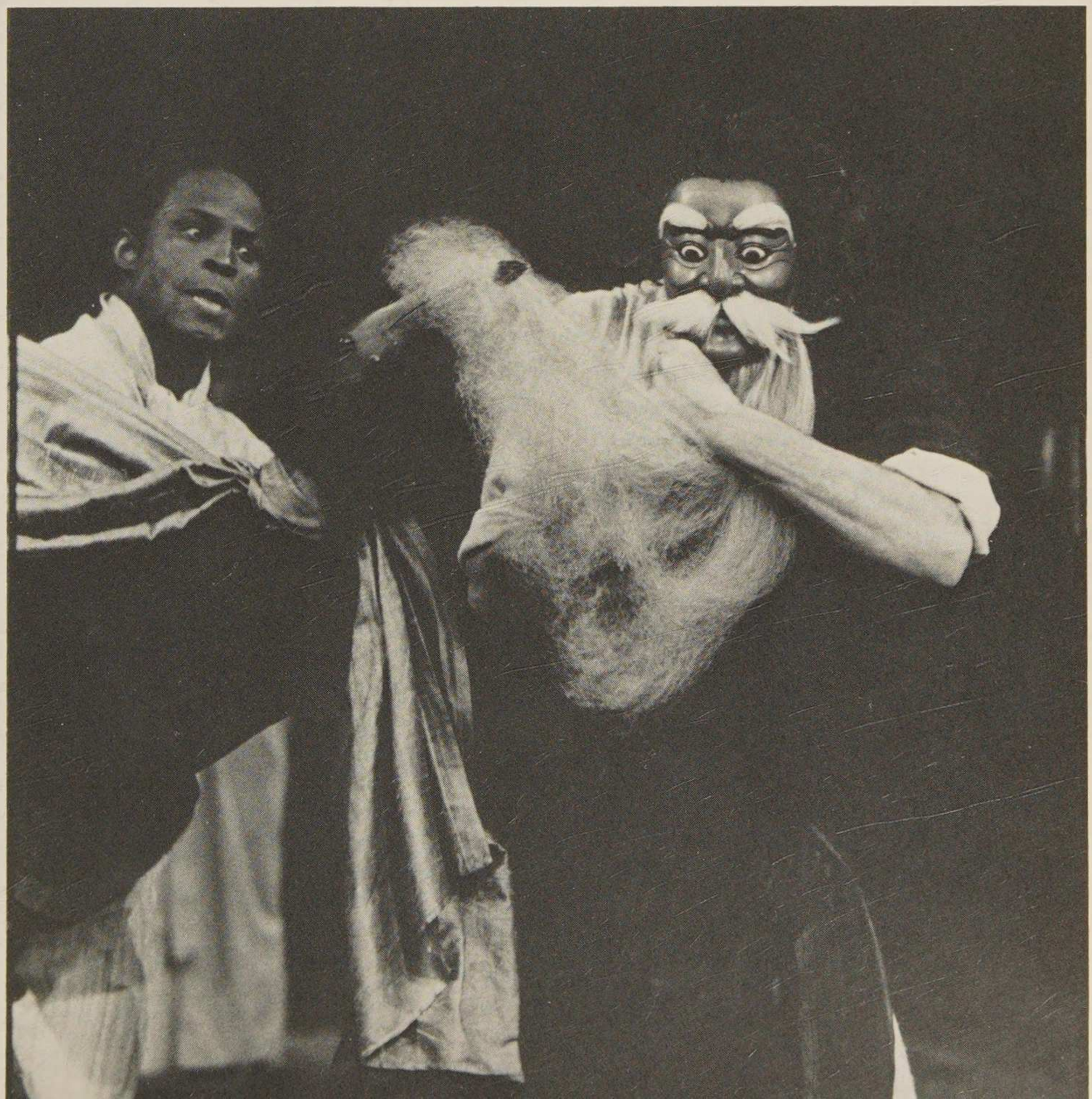
P.B. You know, there are Egyptian statues showing a king taking one step forward, and

you actually *see* movement. And you see a million attempts to do the same thing in every town square in the world, a statue of a man who has got one foot forward and there it stays, and he is *never* going to move the other foot!

P. *Have you ever had the experience of watching an actor get larger or smaller? I have seen it happen once or twice, and I was absolutely astonished; I was sure it was several people who were doing this and producing the illusion.*

P.B. But look at the greatest example of all—and heaven help any actor who tries to use it in the theater—the great Buddha statues, those vast stone Buddhas in the Himalayas, for instance. There is a head which is a human head, because it has eyes, and nose, and mouth, and cheeks; it sits on a neck; it has all the characteristics of a mask; it is not made out of flesh and blood but other material, it isn't alive, and it's motionless. On the other hand, is it concealing inner nature? Not a bit of it; it is the highest impression one knows of the expression of inner nature. Is it naturalistic? Not quite, because we don't know anybody that looks quite like the Buddha; but is it fantasticated? No; you couldn't even say it is idealized—and yet it is not like any human being one knows. It is a

The Conference of the Birds *with Bruce Myers and Malick Bowen* — *A. Patrix*



potential—a human being totally fulfilled and realized. The mask there is in repose, but is not like a dead person; on the contrary, it is the repose of something in which the currents of life are circulating all the time, over thousands of years. And it's quite clear that if you took one of those Buddhas and sliced off the head and hollowed it out and made it into a mask, and put it on an actor, either the actor would pull it down— because of his incapacity to support that head—or he would rise up to it. Therefore it would be an absolutely exact measure of the level of his potential understanding. Each person, even with the help of the mask, can go only so far, and a young acolyte wearing the mask would express something quite different from the great master. So the mask would be pulled down or the person would be pulled up exactly, scientifically, in accordance with what he has and what he brings.

This is very much the way possession takes place among the Yorubas. In their tradition, when you assume the role that you are inhabited, you have to rise to meet what is inhabiting you, and you serve the god to the degree that you can consciously bring to him. So again, a beginner inhabited by a god will dance differently, and express something different, from the master. It is exactly the same relation with the mask.

P. *But afterwards—is the person changed?*

P.B. Not if he is out for kicks! It depends on him. Something that has always fascinated me about actors is that they can go on playing parts all their lives and not be changed at all, because they are not interested—they haven't gone into the theater for that. This is an expression of the decadence of our theater; once it splits away completely from the temple, from any wider context, it becomes a great art form, yes, but the person practicing it has no longer any motivation to link it to more than a successful practice of the art. So why should he become a more developed or a wiser man through playing a whole variety of parts? But the actor who goes into the theater as a field for growth goes through the same experience quite differently, because he is listening to his experience in a different way; so of course he retains something differently.

P. *Then the question we asked before, about the difference between theater and ritual, depends on the person practicing them? Theater can be ritual—theater can be the "hall of God" which its name really means—or it can be just a way to get rich and famous.*

P.B. Yes, that's it.

P. *You will be working more with masks, with the Mahabharata?*

P.B. Yes. I saw this year some fascinating masks from Korea and Bhutan, both of which were quite different from the Balinese. Some of them were completely antinaturalistic, and yet at the same time they were actors' masks that weren't just making coded statements. For instance, the makeup in the Kathakali is more a coded statement than a human expression—you know, a red nose and great streaks across the face—like in the Japanese masks also, the fact that there is a red band and then a green band has an intellectual meaning attached, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they actually contain in their nature or essence that impression. Those masks are what I would call cultural masks; they are not the expression of a human impulse, but of cultural fact.

P. *Like the body paintings in Australia and Africa.*

P.B. Yes.

P. *Even those, in a way, retain something of what you have been talking about. As I understand it, very often with the Aborigines the body painting is an effort to illustrate the dream experience on an external level. I don't know if this is attached to any particular ritual, but it is an attempt to externalize an inner reality in a very abstract way.*

P.B. Yes, but through codes.

P. *Which are understood intellectually.*

P.B. It's very interesting to see that behind a cultural expression there is either this very specific, intellectual code, or something that is still specific but universal, so it can be touched by any human being anywhere and make the same impression, like certain very simple melodies that can really be felt and understood. We found that you have to come to melodies and rhythms of one or two notes to be at the point which is most universally understandable. At the other end of the scale, you have something like contemporary Western music, which is in its way as intellectual as these body paintings, and you have to know the whole intellectual structure to understand it. Without that you really can't feel it directly.

P. *There's an interesting question also about the mask being used both for concealment and for revelation. Is it concealing one level and revealing another, or what is that? Because it does seem to do both.*

P.B. It liberates the person by taking away their habitual forms, as we were saying before; and that's related to an experience I had in Rio. When I was in Brazil I asked a lot of questions about what possession was among the Macumba and others. Their possession, unlike the Yorubas but just like in Haiti, seems entirely based on the person losing all consciousness. I asked a very sophisticated young priest in Bahía whether it was possible for them to retain any consciousness at all when they are possessed, and he said, "No, thank God!"

In Rio I went one night to a ceremony—it was a Friday night, when there were about nine thousand little ceremonies on all the little back streets. This was on a *very* little back street—I was taken by a local girl who knew her way—and here one went into the equivalent of a sort of nonconformist church, in voodoo terms. It was a little room with rows of chairs laid out rather like a mission hall, and people waiting, and numbers were called out. When you come in, you ask to have your name put down, you are given a number, and when that number is called by somebody with a little loudspeaker, you go to the end of the room where there is something like the altar part of a little chapel, but where in fact nine people are standing. They are all local people who do this once a week in a state of possession: each one is possessed regularly by the same god. So you go up to the particular god you want to have a word with—like a confessional without a box—and just speak for as long as you want. The interesting thing is that there are these local people, who have become sort of specialized in it, who are in a state of pure possession; and its very extraordinary, because they clearly have absolutely no clue as to what's going on; it's totally effaced from their memory. They are all smoking cigars (which is a great characteristic of these particular gods—they all like cigars) so men and women are all puffing away, and talking both normally and yet with certain bizarre characteristics that belong to the god—breaking out with strange sounds. So you ask advice, and the person will tell you what to do. I went and talked to a lady who was possessed, not by a god but by a saint—a man of the parish who died 20 or 30 years ago and became a saint, and returns and inhabits this lady. We had a nice little chat; she was very interested in the coat I was wearing and said: "Es impermeable?" So we were having this chat, and she blessed me and blew smoke all over me, and because it was in Portuguese I couldn't get very far, but something suddenly struck me as I looked around at the other people who were having long conversations. I suddenly realized that the fact that one knew that the person was possessed—and so whatever else there was in the eyes looking at you, in a sense quite normally, they couldn't contain subjective judgment—gave you such a freedom! Obviously the Catholic church provides the same freedom by hiding the face of the person you are confessing to. But here you could look the person straight in the eyes, and because you knew that although

you would see this little lady, who was maybe your neighbor, in the street the next day, *she*—her subjectivity—was *not* looking at you through those eyes; she had become in that sense a mask, and it freed you to say absolutely anything. I felt if I had been able to speak Portuguese, I could have told her anything at all, just like that.

The moment the mask absolves you in that way, the fact that it gives you something to hide behind makes it unnecessary for you to hide. That is the fundamental paradox that exists in all acting: that because you are in safety, you can go into danger. It is very strange, but all theater is based on that. Because there is a greater security, you can take greater risks; and because here it is *not* you, and therefore everything about you is hidden, you can let yourself appear. And that is what the mask is doing: the thing you are most afraid of losing, you lose right away—your ordinary defenses, your ordinary expressions, your ordinary face that you hide behind; and now you hide a hundred percent, because you know that the person looking at you doesn't think it is *you*, and on account of that you can come right out of your shell. We are so imprisoned, also, in such a narrow repertory that even if part of us wanted to, we actually *can't* open our eyes or furrow our brows or move our mouths and cheeks beyond certain limits. And suddenly we are given the capacity to do it: we open our eyes wider and raise our eyebrows higher than we ever have before.

P. *We have talked about masks as being liberating, but how about the kind we do wear all the time unawares, which are certainly enslaving?*

P.B. Oh, yes! And I think that the use of artists' masks is enslaving for the same reason. But there is the other sort of mask, where you go deliberately *not* towards a liberation; on the contrary, you take some characteristic that you are not very proud of and have it brought out in its most monstrous form. In *The Conference of the Birds* we have two villains, two thieves, who wear animal-like masks that are very scary. It is the lower nature that comes out. In that sense, there have been contemporary masks that are quite interesting. Joe Chaikin did a play called *Motel*, about two people making love in a motel, who wore masks like caricature heads out of the New Yorker, with unchangeable, fixed expressions. No matter what they were doing, the expression remained the same. The woman was a terrible blonde, with a great idiotic face, and the man a sort of salesman type with a goamy expression. These are perhaps the most successful of the contemporary masks; they come out of something contemporary art is qualified to talk about!

P. *What about the necessity of masks? The traditional mask is the face of a real man; but we don't have that, so we have to wear some kind of false face—we can't do otherwise. Is there such a thing as being unmasked?*

P.B. I don't think that with human beings you take masks off; I think they dissolve through growth, which is a very different thing. There is a lot of talk about stripping off masks, but in fact it is either a very dangerous process or one that doesn't work at all. I think they can thin out and disappear with a process of growth. And I would say that the more evolved a person is, the less easy it is to imitate that person in the caricature sense of the word. If you compare someone whose *personality* is evolved, like Churchill, it is God's gift to the caricaturists and cartoonists, whereas with the person whose inner life has evolved, I think it is very hard to do a drawing-room imitation.

P. *Yes, because they are not* fixed.

P.B. So that in that sense, one could say, when one talks about our masks, what one really means is our rigidities. Somebody who has got just two expressions is someone whose natural capacity for being all the time in motion has become sclerosed, rigidified. Even someone who has twenty or even a

The Conference of the Birds *with Robert Lloyd, Malick Bowens, Bruce Myers*

A. Patrix

thousand expressions—that is still not a lot, compared with the life force; it is still limited.

P. *What about the maskmaker? It seems important, what is invested in the creation of the form. There is a link that exists between the maker and the wearer.*

P.B. These two actions traditionally are considered sacred actions. There is something that is understood as demanding respect in both operations. There are little rituals that are performed before putting on a mask or beginning to carve one, different things like sprinkling water or touching the ground, that show that it is more than a simple artisanal process. But in Western theater, I think it is a terrible thing almost always, the use of masks designed by painters and artists; because what do modern designers actually imagine that they are working *from*? They are making a face—but from what? That is a question that is by-passed. From what, and with what, are they making a face? It is not surprising that the result is neither flesh nor fowl, unless a person can stay very clearly in front of that question. ◇

EPICYCLE

The History of the Hollow-Men and the Bitter Rose

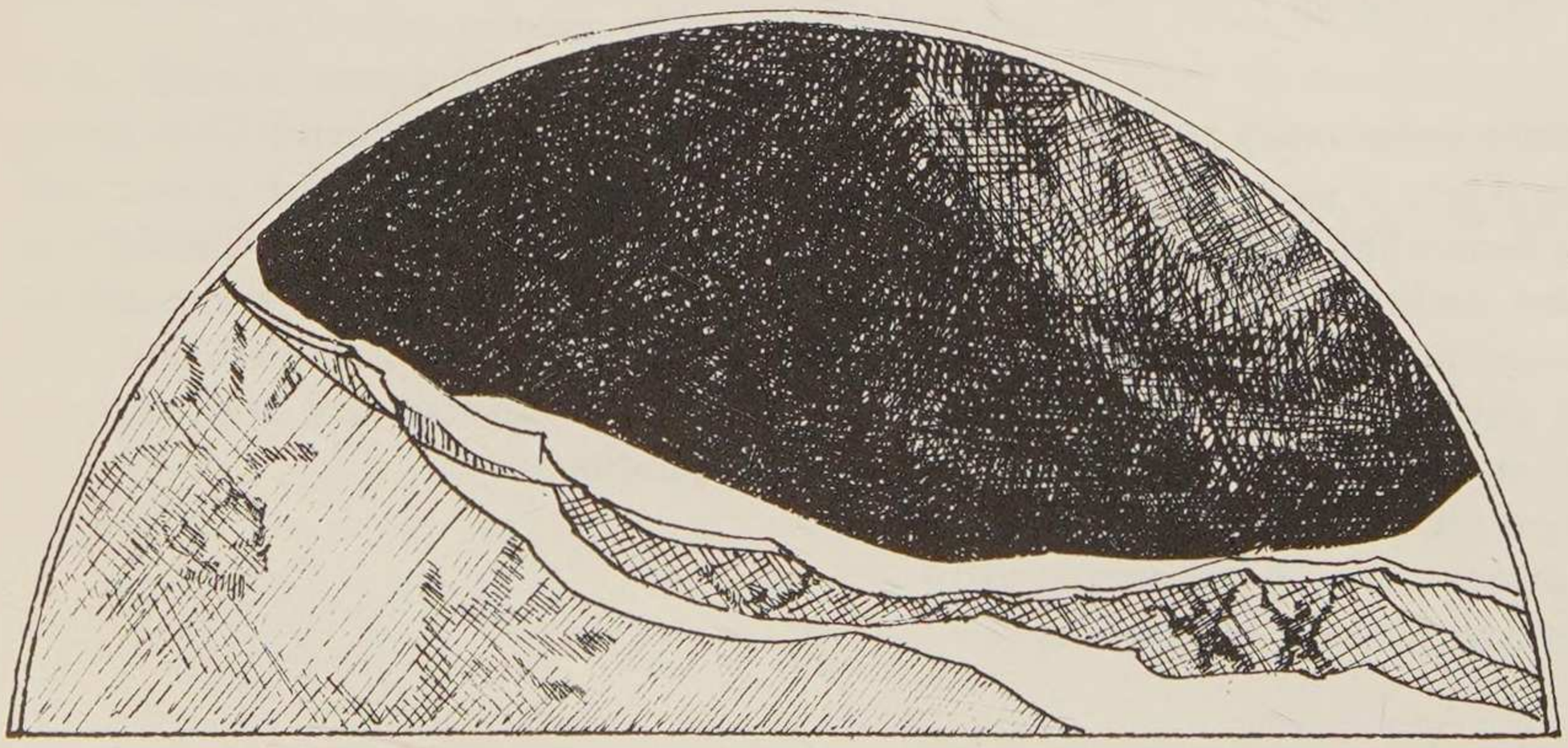
The Hollow-Men live in solid rock and move about in it in the form of mobile caves or recesses. In ice they appear as bubbles in the shape of men. But they never venture out into the air, for the wind would blow them away.

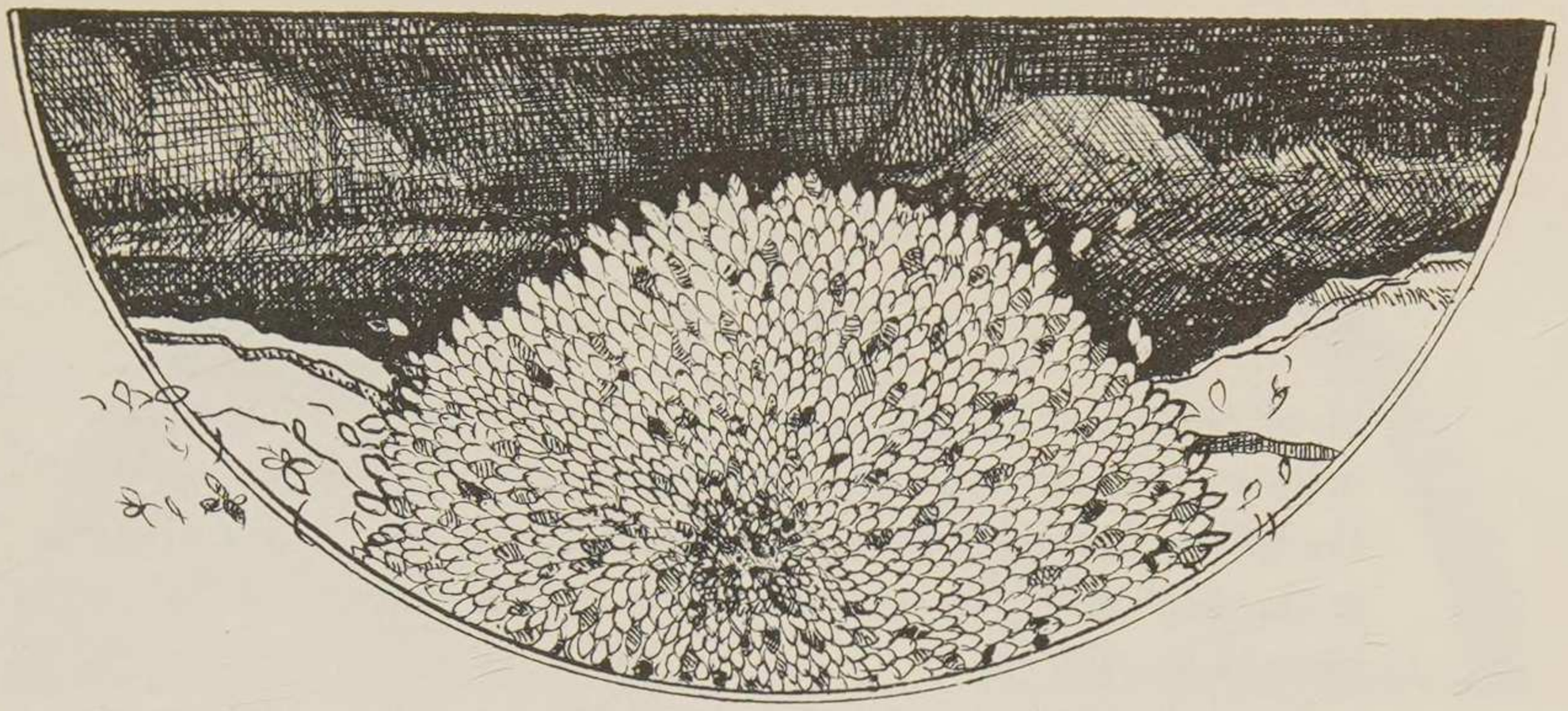
They have houses in the rock whose walls are made of emptiness, and tents in the ice whose fabric is of bubbles. During the day they stay in the stone, and at night they wander through the ice and dance during the full moon. But they never see the sun, or else they would burst.

They eat only the void, such as the form of corpses; they get drunk on empty words and all the meaningless expressions we utter.

Some people say they have always existed and will exist forever. Others say they are the dead. And others say that as a sword has its scabbard or a foot its imprint, every living man has in the mountain his Hollow-Man, and in death they are reunited.

In the village of Hundred-Houses there lived the old priest-magician Hunoes and his wife, Hulay-Hulay. They had two sons, two identical twins who could not be told apart, called Mo and Ho. Even their mother got them mixed up. To tell them apart the day of name giv-





ing, they had put on Mo a necklace bearing a little cross and on Ho a necklace bearing a little ring.

Old Hunoes had one great unconfessed worry. According to custom his eldest son should succeed him. But which was his elder son? Did he even have an elder son?

At the age of adolescence Mo and Ho were already accomplished mountaineers. They came to be called the two mountain goats. One day, their father told them, "To whichever one of you brings back to me the Bitter-Rose I shall hand on the great knowledge."

The Bitter-Rose is found only at the summit of the highest peaks. Whoever eats of it finds that whenever he is about to tell a lie, aloud or to himself, his tongue begins to burn. He can still tell falsehoods, but he has been warned. A few people have seen the Bitter-Rose: According to what they say, it looks like a large multicolored lichen or a swarm of butterflies. But no one has ever been able to pick it, for the tiniest tremor of fear anywhere close by alerts it, and it disappears into the rock. Even if one desires it, one is a little afraid of possessing it, and it vanishes.

To describe an impossible action or an absurd undertaking, they say: "It's like looking for night in broad daylight," or "It's like wanting to throw light on the sun in order to see it better," or "It's like trying to catch the Bitter-Rose."

Mo has taken his ropes and pick and hatchet and iron hooks. At sunrise he is already high up on a peak called Cloudy Head. Like a lizard, sometimes like a spider, he inches upward across the high red precipice, between white snow below and the blue-black sky. Little swift-moving clouds envelop him from time to time and then expose him suddenly to the light again. And now at last, a little distance above him, he sees the Bitter-Rose, shimmering with unearthly tints. He repeats to himself unceasingly the charm that his father has taught him to ward off fear.

He's going to need a screw ring here, with a rope sling, in order to straddle this outcropping of rock like a rearing horse. He strikes with

his hammer, and his hand breaks through into a hole. There is a hollow under the stone. Shattering the crust around it, he sees that the hollow is in the form of a man: torso, legs, arms, and little tubes in the shape of fingers spread in terror. He has split the head with the blow of his pick.

An icy wind passes across the stone. Mo has killed a Hollow-Man. He has shuddered, and the Bitter-Rose has retreated into the rock.

Mo climbs back down to the village and tells his father, "I killed a Hollow-Man. But I saw the Bitter-Rose, and tomorrow I shall go to look for it."

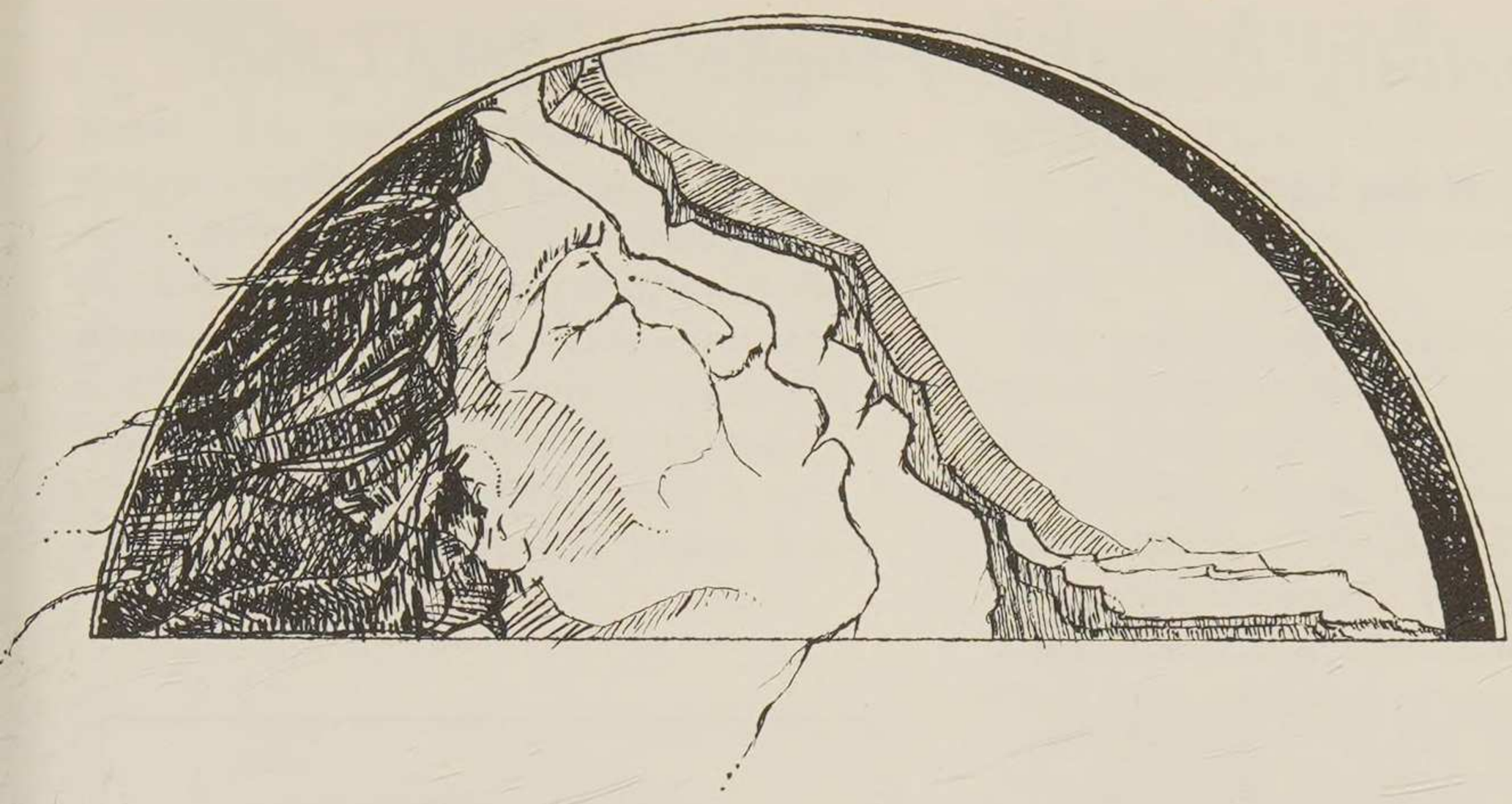
Old Hunoes became grave. Far off he saw one misfortune after another coming in procession. He said: "Watch out for the Hollow-Men. They will seek vengeance. They cannot enter our world, but they can come up to the surface of things. Beware of the surface of things."

At dawn the next day Hulay-Hulay gave a great cry, rose up, and ran toward the mountain. At the foot of the red cliff lay Mo's garments, his ropes and hatchet, and his medal with the cross. His body was no longer there.

"Ho," she cried, running back. "They've killed your brother. They've killed my son."

Ho rises up with his teeth clenched and the skin tightening on his scalp. He takes his hatchet and prepares to set out. His father says to him: "First, listen to me. This is what you have to do. The Hollow-Men have taken your brother and changed him into a Hollow-Man. He will try to escape. He will go in search of light to the seracs of the Clear Glacier. Put his medal around your neck as well as your own. Go to him and strike at his head. Enter the form of his body, and Mo will live again among us. Do not fear to kill a dead man."

Ho gazes wide-eyed into the blue ice of the Clear Glacier. Is the light playing tricks on him, are his eyes deceiving him, or is he really seeing what he sees? He watches silvery forms with arms and legs, like greased divers under water. There is his brother, Mo, his hollow shape fleeing from a thousand Hollow-Men in pursuit. But they are afraid of the light. Mo's form seeks the light and rises in a large blue serac, turning around and around as if in search of a door. Despite his bursting heart and the blood clotting in his veins, Ho steps forward. To his blood and to his heart he says, "Do not fear to kill a dead man." Then he strikes the head, shattering the ice. Mo's form becomes motionless; Ho opens the ice of the serac and enters his



brother's form like a sword fitted into its sheath, a foot into its imprint. He moves his elbows and works himself into place, then draws his legs back out of the mold of ice. And he hears himself saying words in a language he has never spoken. He feels he is Ho, and that he is Mo at the same time. All Mo's memories have entered his mind—the way up Cloudy Head and where the Bitter-Rose has its habitation.

With the circle and the cross around his neck, he comes to Hulay-Hulay. "Mother, you will have no more trouble telling us apart. Mo and Ho are now in the same body; I am your only son, Moho."

Old Hunoes shed a few tears, and his face showed happiness. But there was still one doubt he wished to dispel. He said to Moho, "You are my only son; Ho and Mo can no longer be distinguished."

Moho told him with conviction, "Now I can reach the Bitter-Rose. Mo knows the way; Ho knows the right gesture. Master of my fears, I shall have the flower of discernment."

He picked the flower, he received the teaching, and old Hunoes was able to leave this world peacefully.

—René Daumal

Illustrations by Jody Wheeler

The Healing Mask *by Stephen and Robin Larsen*

illustrations by Robin Larsen

There is a Zen *koan* in which the *roshi* asks the student, "Show me your face before you were born." To comply with this seemingly impossible request the student must enter his "original mind." Perhaps a quest like this was unconsciously occurring to a psychology student (unversed in either the lore of masks or Zen) who wrote in his dream journal:

A dream that occurred many times as a child was one that involved masks on my face, hundreds and hundreds of different masks. Each time I pulled one off another remained. I could feel my own face underneath it all, but never could reach it.

I can remember it bothered me for quite a while. Even now, sometimes, when I think about it, I wonder what a dream like that could uncover.

His last, perhaps not-so-naive question, is the same as the one asked by the Zen master. Does each mask imply the existence of others? Does the very fact of mask making imply the inexhaustible search for identity of the self, of God?

Modern attitudes to the mask have stressed its concealing role: The social mask one hides behind, the cosmetic mask with its painted expression, the sinister mask of the headsman, the ambivalent mask of the Lone Ranger. But perhaps closer to the archaic meaning is that of the mask worn to carnival. When one

Mask of Dionysos, Greece

enters "concealment" behind the mask, there is a paradoxical freeing of behavior. A transformation of character may take place, as hidden or suppressed parts of the self come to the fore. Ultimately the transformation is revealing rather than concealing. There is a glimpse of the inner cast of characters which inhabits each one of us.

While we feel that healing is one of the primary functions of the mask, we are in agreement with Carl Kerényi when he defines its secondary functions as to conceal and to terrify. These are "degenerate" forms (far from their own genesis). The primary function is to unite the indwelling wearer (and

the beholding observer) with a mythic being, or, as Jung would say, "an archetypal power." The mask becomes a transformer of energy, a medium of exchange between ego and archetype. Thus in traditional societies one finds the taboos surrounding it, its recognition as a power object, and the phenomenon of "possession by the spirit of a mask." One would not lightly put on a shaman's mask (or any one of power), for to do so would be to invite its spirit to possess you.

Face and body painting with colored down, Australia

However, the making of one's own mask is a different story. The spirit invited to the possession is from within the mask maker. There is a legitimacy and appropriateness about the relationship. A dialogue ensues in which the ego ultimately must encounter the other powers within the psyche. The spirit of the mask presents (usually) the most important of these confrontations for the person at the present moment: thus its healing role. It represents a concentration of psychic energy and an offer of dialogue between ego and "Other."

The mask's rigidity helps to bind the attention of the personality or "collection of masks" (Gr.: *persona*, mask) to this one face of the self which requires attention. This "arresting" quality of the mask is known as one of its recurring powers. We think of the Gorgon's head from classical mythology, which freezes the observer to stone, or the occult masks of the African secret societies, the mere glimpse of which is said to cause instant death to the uninitiated. It may be worn by different generations, and as each living person animates the shell, breathing his/her spirit into it, the mask is brought to life, reborn. Thus the mask may evoke images of life in death, death in life.

In traditional societies masks may be of several types; and various prototypes, such as the human death mask, animal masks, the remodeling of skulls, aboriginal face and body marking, and decoration.

The Shamanistic Mask: the animal reappears both in ancestral and totemistic form, but more dynamically as the helping animal. The spirit helper of the particular shaman shows up with unique and individual characteristics. The mask functions as evocation and invites possession, being used in magical ceremonies and in healing.

The Commemorative Mask: moves more into priestly and courtly traditions; celebrates or commemorates an encounter with the sacred in the long-ago. The significance of the rite derives from its connection to an original divine or heroic founder in *illo tempore*, the dreamtime when gods and human ancestors were in closer relationship. There may be the celebration of a seasonal festival honoring a contract with the supernatural world (as in the *Kachina* ceremony of the Hopi or the *Mani Rimdu* of the Sherpas).

The Theatrical Mask: provides (nominally) secular entertainment. Yet we find residues of the archaic magical, evocative and spirit-summoning powers still present in theater.

Greek tragedy or the Japanese *Noh* drama, as high art forms, educate the audience in deep mysteries of the spirit while providing secular "entertainment." Where *catharsis* takes place, a full circle back to the origins of theater in shamanistic healing rite has been accomplished. The deeper portions of the self are engaged with the dramatic ritual. We do not distinguish the "healing mask" as a separate category, for it is our belief that the role of healing functions throughout.

Hinged shaman's mask with bird, British Columbia

Human skull, modeled over and painted, New Guinea

Two examples from traditional societies led us to consider the structure of how masks may heal: the False-face Societies of the Iroquois and the Yaksha (demon) masks of Śŕi Lanka. The comparison is more interesting because of the extreme unlikelihood of influence by either culture upon the other. Yet the similarities are striking.

A visitor to either culture would observe the following ritual stages in common:

Serious illness threatens either individual members of the community, or an epidemic threatens the entire communal well-being (the illness may be "mental" or "physical," in our terminology).

Societies of masked dancers are summoned. The masks are twisted and grotesque, resembling demonic beings, or as one is told in Śŕi Lanka, "The sickness demons themselves."

A rite of exorcism or propitiation is staged, which resolves the illness on the symbolic or psychospiritual plane. The community is present or involved.

The patient recovers (or fails to recover) and the community simultaneously is revitalized by the ritual. (One suspects even in the latter case the importance of communal revitalization is not diminished by failure.)

In both cultures the meaning of the masked enactment is accompanied by a myth of covenant between the supernatural and human realms. Two sets of stories, paraphrased below, are worth comparing:

Śri Lanka I:

In the olden days there was a time when the demons of sickness (Yakshas, Rakshashas) were very powerful. They would wait for people on the roads, or even in the villages, and seize them. Many of these Sickness Demons controlled fatal illnesses, and people died in great numbers.

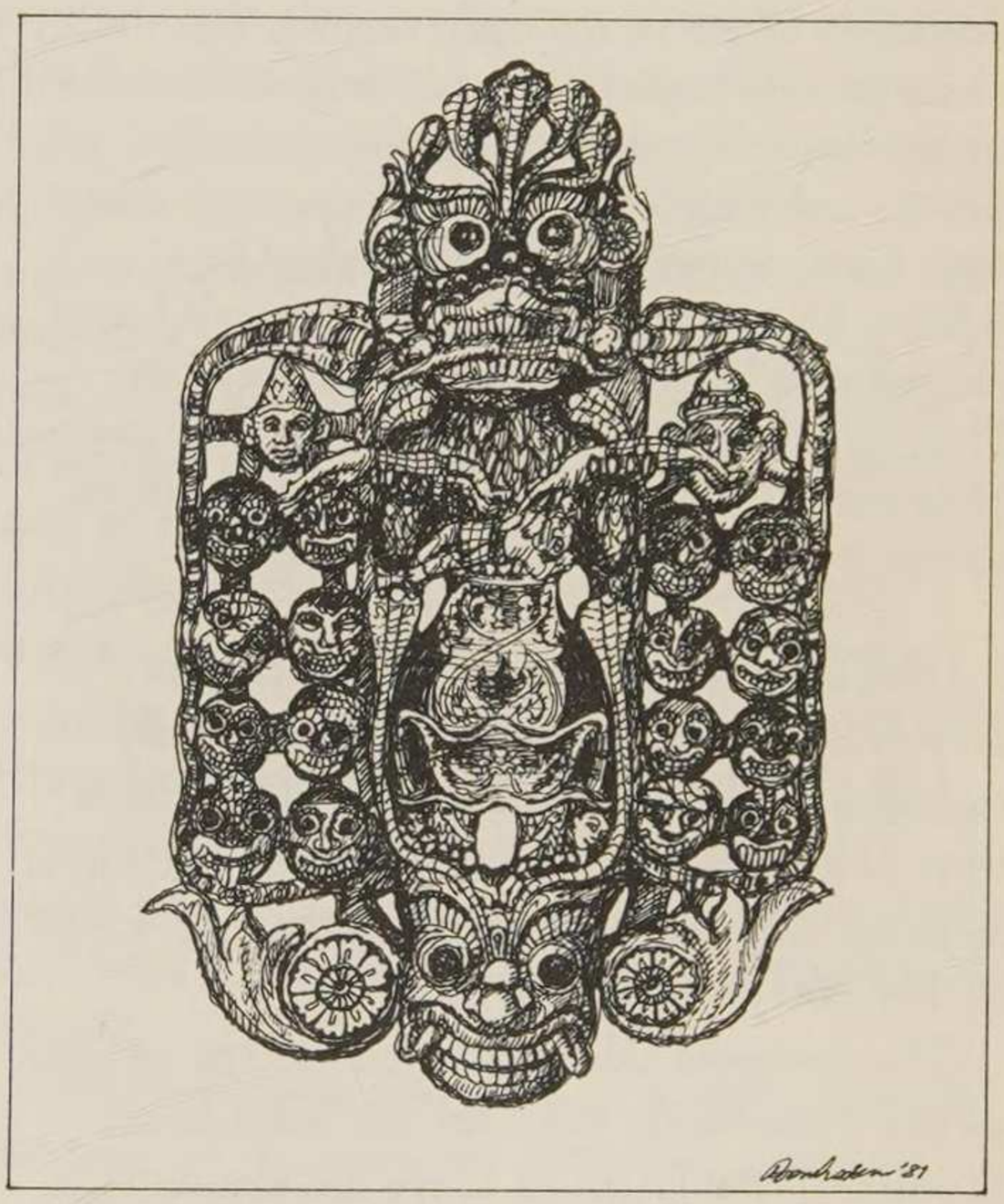
It got so bad the people complained to the Lord Buddha, "Where is your *karuna* (compassion)?" they cried. "We are grieviously afflicted with the Sickness Demons, and they are rampaging freely over the land. You must save us." So the Buddha called the Chief of the Sickness Demons (Maha-kola-sanni-yaksaya), who came before him.

"You must stop afflicting my people," said the Buddha.

"But," said the Great Sickness Demon, for he was wise and crafty, "Lord Buddha, the people are lazy and given to self-gratification. Some folk don't think much of us Sickness Demons, I know, but it is we who keep the people humble and pious. When they are well, they strut around and fatten their egos. When they are sick, their eyes roll heavenward, they begin to think of what they have done wrong, and to meditate upon spiritual things, and the nature of their attachment to the chain of suffering."

"Hmmm," said the Buddha, and meditated upon the problem for some time. Finally he gave his judgment to the Great Sickness Demon: "You shall continue to have the power to make men ill, but not to kill wantonly. And, if when they become ill they celebrate the proper rites and sacrifices (which include the masks of the great demons), they shall be healed."

Mask of a sickness demon, Śri Lanka



Maha-Kola-Sanni-Yaksaya, mask of sickness demon surrounded by eighteen small masks, representing the diseases the demon controls, Śri Lanka

Śri Lanka II:

Now the birth of Maha-kola-sanni-yaksaya, the Great Sickness Demon, was as follows:

Queen Asupalakumari was pregnant, and her husband, the king of Visala-maha-huvara, was journeying about the realm finding the things she craved during her pregnancy. On his return, a courtier, who hated the Queen, told him she had been unfaithful to him.

The King's fury knew no bounds, and he levied a harsh judgment: The Queen should be cut in half, one part to be hung on a tree, the other left on the ground for dogs to devour. The Queen, who was innocent, flew into a rage at this judgment and uttered a terrible curse: "If the sentence is unjust," she said, "then the child in my body shall be reborn as a demon, and this demon shall destroy the whole town together with you, its unjust King."

When the judgment was carried out, it was as she said: the great demon *Maha-kola-sanniya*, for it was he, sprang out of his mother's body, first nursed on her, then devoured her whole corpse to feed his strength. For a while he frequented cemeteries where he fed upon corpses, then, with a retinue of hideous followers, ravaged the countryside. He infected the King with a deadly disease, and then fed himself full upon his courtiers. Later, according to legend, the Great Sickness Demon was subdued by the gods Īṣvara and Ṣakra, who came in the guise of beggars. They extracted from the Great Demon the promise to accept sacrificial rituals using masks in exchange for restoring health to victims.

Usually, on the masks at the sickness demon ceremony (*Sanniya-Yakuma*), only eighteen *yakku* are represented, along with their chief. In the myths, however, the Great Sickness Demon is described as having 4,448 or 484,000 demon followers.*

The Iroquois tell two myths of the origins of the False-faces; both are included here, though abbreviated, as there are elements in each that refer to our theme.

Iroquois I:

As the Creator of the World was walking around inspecting his handiwork, a great Titan, in the form of a flying stone head, approached him. This demiurge disputed his creatorship, claiming the same office. The two decided to settle the issue by a titanic magical contest: moving a distant mountain toward them.

The Stone-faced One tried first, but moved the mountain only part way. When the Creator's turn came, the Stone-faced One got distracted for a moment (such was his nature) and looked away; when he turned again to watch, the mountain, rushing up, smote him in the face.

The Creator, contemplating the now-deformed demiurge, realized the being had great power, and assigned him the task of curing disease: men would make his crooked mask and heal with it.

Iroquois II:

As human hunters were camped in the deep forests, away from the habitations of men, they would catch sight of strange, querulous spirit-beings, with twisted faces, and long hair snapping in the breeze behind them. The hunters would return to their camps at night to find the ashes of the fire scattered about, and the marks of some great dirty hand on the lodge post.

One day a hunter agreed to stay in camp while his partner went afield. During the day a strange, twisted-face being came to him and picked up hot ashes and scattered them around. That night the hunter dreamed the being appeared to him and requested an offering of tobacco and mush.

Later the hunters learned from the beings their songs, and their method of curing by blowing hot ashes. They made masks of the spirits, which to this day are to be carved from a living basswood tree under ceremonial circumstances, and like masks of power in all traditional cultures, must be handled only in a sacred manner.*

Now what do these tales, and the peculiar usages of the mask in these societies, have to do with healing? In each tale we see a disturbance of balance, a resolution and a covenant between the supernatural realm (which in animistic belief is causal) and the human,

*The Sŕi Lanka stories are paraphrased from several versions collected during the authors' visit to Sŕi Lanka. See also *Exorcism and the Art of Healing in Ceylon* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954).

*The Iroquois stories are paraphrased from accounts in various journals: "The Iroquoian Concept of the Soul" by J. N. B. Hewitt, *Journal of American Folklore* VIII, 1895; "Secret Medicine Societies of the Seneca" by Arthur C. Parker, *American Anthropologist*, 1909; "Dreams and Wishes of the Soul" by A. F. C. Wallace, *American Anthropologist*, 1958, among others. See also *The Shaman's Doorway* by Stephen Larsen (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

natural, social world. Mask wearing is the sign of the covenant, the magical formula, the password for the aperture between worlds. The mask-wearing human makes a metaphysical statement found nowhere else in nature: the supernatural world, a separate reality, exists, and may enclose or inhabit the mundane one.

The task of the mask-manipulation therapy is to remind both the spiritual and the human worlds of their compact, and magically to

False-face mask, Iroquois

verify an ancient connection modern medicine may be struggling to recover: the effect of the patient's spiritual state upon his health. When a Navajo sand-painting healer places his patient in a mandala he has worked hours or days to prepare, he is trying to align psycho-spiritual forces in the patient, in himself, and in the universe. The priest in Śri Lanka who dons the mask of the patient's particular disease and dances for him is doing likewise. They are close to Paracelsus and Hahnemann's *similia similibus curantur*, "like cures like."

Illness brings its share of the grotesque into human life; grotesque masks are worn in its cure. And the restorative medicines of Asclepius, healing god of the classical world, came from horrific Medusa. When Perseus decapitated her, she bled two fluids: that which came from the right side brought death, that from the left side restored life. Medusa herself (whose mask petrifies) was violated and, pregnant, like Queen Asupala-kumari, was also cut in two parts. It was told that Poseidon seduced her in the form of a horse (some say a bird) in Athena's temple. Athena, furious, transformed her into a nightmare creature with a hideous mask: "She became a winged monster with gleaming eyes, huge teeth, protruding tongue, brazen claws and serpent locks, whose gaze turned men to stone."*

Strong passions and resentments are one source of illness, say the legends. Misunderstanding and cruelty make us sick. Put on the grotesque mask and, through voluntary acceptance of its message, achieve healing. It would not seem an overstatement to say these traditions recontext illness as trials of spiritual growth.

William James and Carl G. Lange, right at the turn of the century, each independently, proposed the theory of emotion which now bears both of their names. For this theory, emotion is really the proprioception of bodily changes already produced by built-in neurological response patterns. The most usual synopsis of the James-Lange Theory is: If you meet a bear in the woods, you don't "run because you're afraid"; but rather "you find yourself jumping back or running, and realize how frightened you are."**

The "Method-Acting" school of Stanislavski, years later, gave at least in part a first

*From *The Greek Myths* by Robert Graves (New York: Penguin Books, 1955).

**From *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, by William James. (New York: Dover Books, 1950).

corollary of the theory: one may induce a psycho-emotional state by physical imitation of it. A second corollary: one may induce similar changes in the emotional state of the observer (or audience) through perception. The recognition (*anagnorisis*) and emotional release (*catharsis*) of classical drama are successively deeper psycho-emotional events which unite the audience in an experience of the common structure of emotion and human meaning. When we see the familiar theatrical emblem of the two masks, the tragic and the comic one, we see the poles or boundaries of a spectrum of human feelings, or masks, which they enclose: the subject matter of the theater.

The mask's ability to heal (or to arrest illness) may reside in its deep reach into the living human nervous system. Only a small portion of this system may be reached verbally; far more is responsive to images. If I ask you how you are and you respond by making a face, I will probably understand your face without the mediation of words. And if you make the disgust mask (whose meaning is I-could-regurgitate [dis-gust]–but-I-won't), I may feel myself involuntarily make the same mask as well as experience a mild nausea, all without verbal mediation. The vocabulary of the communication is imagery and sensation.

The human face attracts minute scrutiny for meaning among humans. The nuances of expression which signal, for example, *I am sincere* or *insincere* are extremely subtle. The meaning dimension emerges then as a primary modality for our understanding of masks. The mask resides closer to what can be called "primary meaning" (which is perceptual, preconceptual, preverbal). Verbal definitions and logic refer to an order of "secondary meaning," which is learned, and has formal referents and definitions.

The meaning response in the human psyche is explained in the following way by Gestalt psychology and holism. The organism in confrontation with the challenge of wholeness seeks for meaning: "Who am I?" "What is the meaning of my life?" These are questions big enough to refuse to let us go, even when we would rather let go of them. Confrontation with them provokes our sense of incompleteness and fragmentation. We are "broken on the wheel of life." But even partial answers are glimpses of one's place in a larger, conscious whole; "awakening" to meaningful belonging is equivalent to healing. Our feelings about ourselves and our relationship to life affect our vitality at its origins; they reach from crown to roots of the living tree.

In some way the deepest meaning of the mask has to do with finding "our faces before we were born." The search for identity and a significant place in the universe we have found to be intimately bound up with healing. To make a mask is an excursion to that primordial zone where personal identity meets and merges with the more ancient powers of which it is constituted. This is truly a search for "roots" in the deepest sense, a quest into the field of life's vitality. ◇

The preceding is adapted from material which will appear in Transpersonal Anthropology *edited by Joseph Long and Michael Winkelman to be published by Schenkman Publishing Company, Cambridge, MA in 1982.*

Moving Designs of Masked Emotion

by Barbara Stoler Miller photographs by Lee B. Ewing

Kathakali South Indian Dance Drama from the Kerala Kalamandalum: "*Daksha-yagam,* The Sacrifice of King Daksha." The Asia Society, New York City, April 24-28, 1981.

Kathakali, "story play," is an epic theater that developed in the temples of Kerala in South India during the sixteenth century. It has its roots both in ancient Sanskrit drama and in the martial arts of Kerala, combining elements of formal ritual dance, mime, drumming, and vocal music into stylized dance dramas. Military postures and vigorous battle dances performed to intricate drum patterns establish a dominant tone of heroic energy. This is strengthened by multilayered costumes and fantastic make-up, the symbolic, abstract designs of which transform the exclusively male actors into divine, heroic, animal, and demonic types who recreate cosmic ritual events in dance.

On April 24th, the Kerala Kalamandalam dancers and musicians inaugurated the auditorium of the new Asia Society building in New York with the American premiere of the sacred drama *Daksha-yagam*. The drama is based on an ancient Indian legend concerning

the conflict between Shiva and his father-in-law, Daksha, a son of the god Brahma, who represents the skill essential to sacrificial ritual and the establishment of order in human and divine realms. In his obsession with sacrifice, Daksha fails to recognize that his son-in-law is the great god whose dancing form embodies the continuously changing universe. Daksha (somewhat like Pentheus looking at Dionysus, in Euripides' *Bacchae*) sees only the polluted, antinomian ascetic with his skull cap, matted hair, and ash-smeared body wrapped in a flayed elephant hide, and so he bars Shiva from the sacrifice he is arranging to obtain male offspring.

The drama itself was preceded in performance by an energetic passage of drumming that announced the play. In Kerala this occurs at sunset, when the audience assembles, and the canopied stage set in the open air is illuminated by the burning wicks of ceremonial brass oil-lamps. The preliminaries included traditional prayers and a pure dance invocation performed by young dancers dressed in the make-up and costumes of Krishna and his brother Balabhadra; these were followed by a virtuoso display of vocal music and drumming, during which the drummers competed for speed and improvisational complexity within the defined rhythmic cycle. In Kerala the performance lasts until dawn, and the preliminaries take hours; here they were abbreviated, but they remain crucial to establishing the intense atmosphere within which Kathakali communicates.

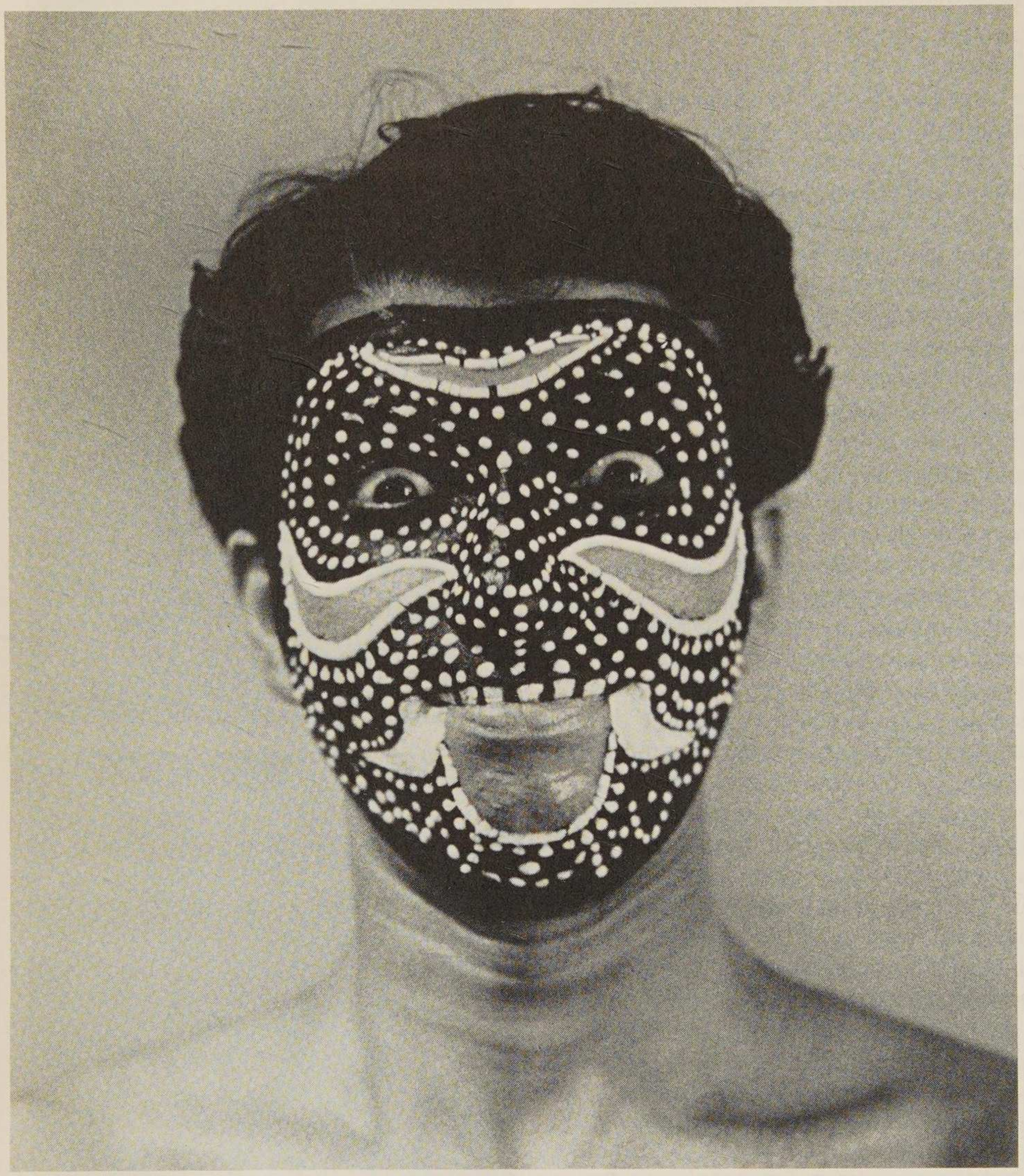
Daksha-yagam opens with a dialogue in dance and music between Shiva and his wife Sati, in which she begs him to attend the sacrifice that her father has announced. He refuses to go uninvited, but she convinces him to let her go alone. Her father cruelly rejects her, and she returns to Shiva. Her disgrace enrages him, and his wrath materializes in the form of two horrific demons, the male Virabhadra and the female Bhadrakali. They are sent to Daksha's hall of sacrifice to destroy everything and behead Daksha. But the uncompleted sacrifice threatens the cosmos, and Brahma begs Shiva to restore his son Daksha so that the sacrifice can be concluded. Since Daksha's head has already been burned by Virabhadra, the head of a sacrificial goat is placed on the body, and Daksha is revived. He worships Shiva and through the god's grace, he completes the sacrifice—now ironically bearing the head of one of his own animal victims. The myth is densely ambiguous in its details and demands multiple interpretations.

The story is exploited in the Kathakali form as a vehicle for the production of contrasting moods and varied character types. The production of these dramatic moods is at the heart of Kathakali. Human emotion, the basic material of drama, is divided by Indian theorists into nine categories; each has its corresponding mood: erotic, comic, compassionate, wrathful, heroic, terrifying, loathsome, marvelous, and peaceful. The actors' movements and facial expressions idealize spontaneous emotion and structure it to awaken a controlled response in the audience. Dramatic conventions whose abstraction and repetition may seem monotonous to the uninitiated are contrived to appeal to an audience that is familiar with the techniques of the art and can grasp expressive subtleties of the actors' movements and gestures. But for the Westerner who is schooled in watching abstract movement, the moving design and

the powerful rhythms also have an immediate appeal.

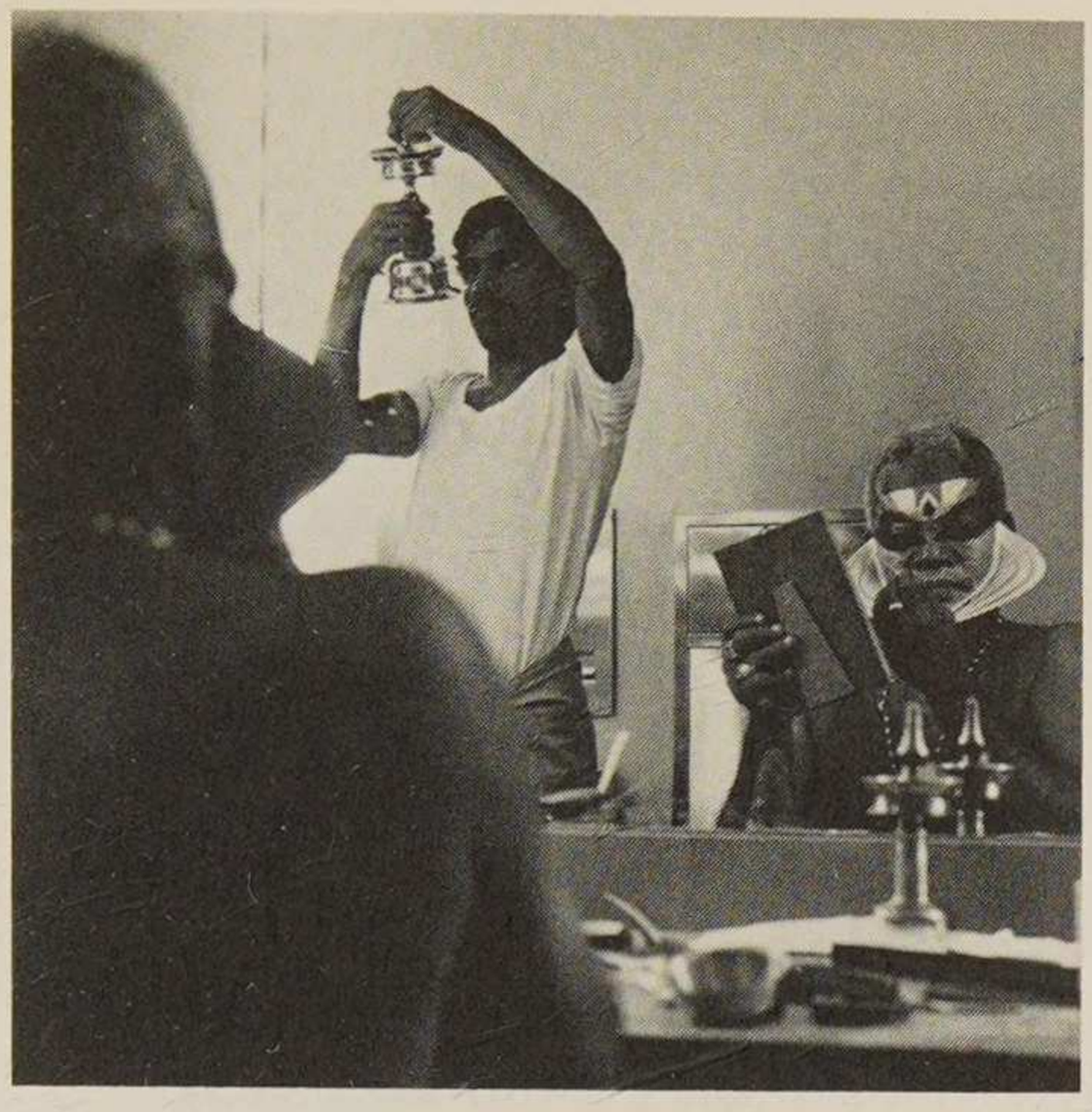
The principle of using elaborate make-up to transform the individual face into an epic character type is common to many forms of Asian theater, including Kabuki and Chinese Opera, as well as various regional dramas of India. Unlike the fixed mask of wood, used in Noh or Chau, the Kathakali mask of thickly applied make-up allows emotion to be expressed through stylized techniques of expression, including controlled use of facial muscles and micro-movements of the eyes. The skill and concentration that is required to create this living mask depends both on dance and painterly skills. These skills are challenged in the long hours before the performance, when actors assemble in the dressing room to begin the slow process through which the strictly patterned masks are recreated from pastes made of coconut oil, water, rice, lime, turmeric, red arsenic, vermilion, charcoal, and indigo.

Each character type wears a make-up that is basically different in color and form. In *Daksha-yagam,* the seven characters are represented by five different types of symbolic make-up. The heroine Sati, the attendant of Shiva, and the brahman priest, wear a naturalistic gold matte base dusted with glittering mica. Shiva's light orange-gold make-up is similar to the glittering bright green type worn by epic heroes and incarnations of the god Vishnu in other plays; these have in common the glossy black brows and eyes and a red-orange matte mouth, as well as the characteristic white paste and paper beard that frames the face from below the mouth, reflecting light toward the eyes, the compelling focal point of the mask. King Daksha wears the make-up of villainous royalty: basically heroic, therefore green with black eyes and brows; but perverted by egotism, so a grotesque red and white mustache extends from



cheek to cheek, and the pattern is carried over the brows. A white knob attached to the nose is a further exaggeration. The demon Virabhadra wears the menacing red-bearded, highly abstract make-up with its red lower jaw, black upper face, wing-like white mustaches curving up to the ears, and a huge knob nose. The other demon, Bhadrakali, wears a similar make-up, complemented by the opaque black base overdrawn with white skeletal lines and a lolling red tongue.

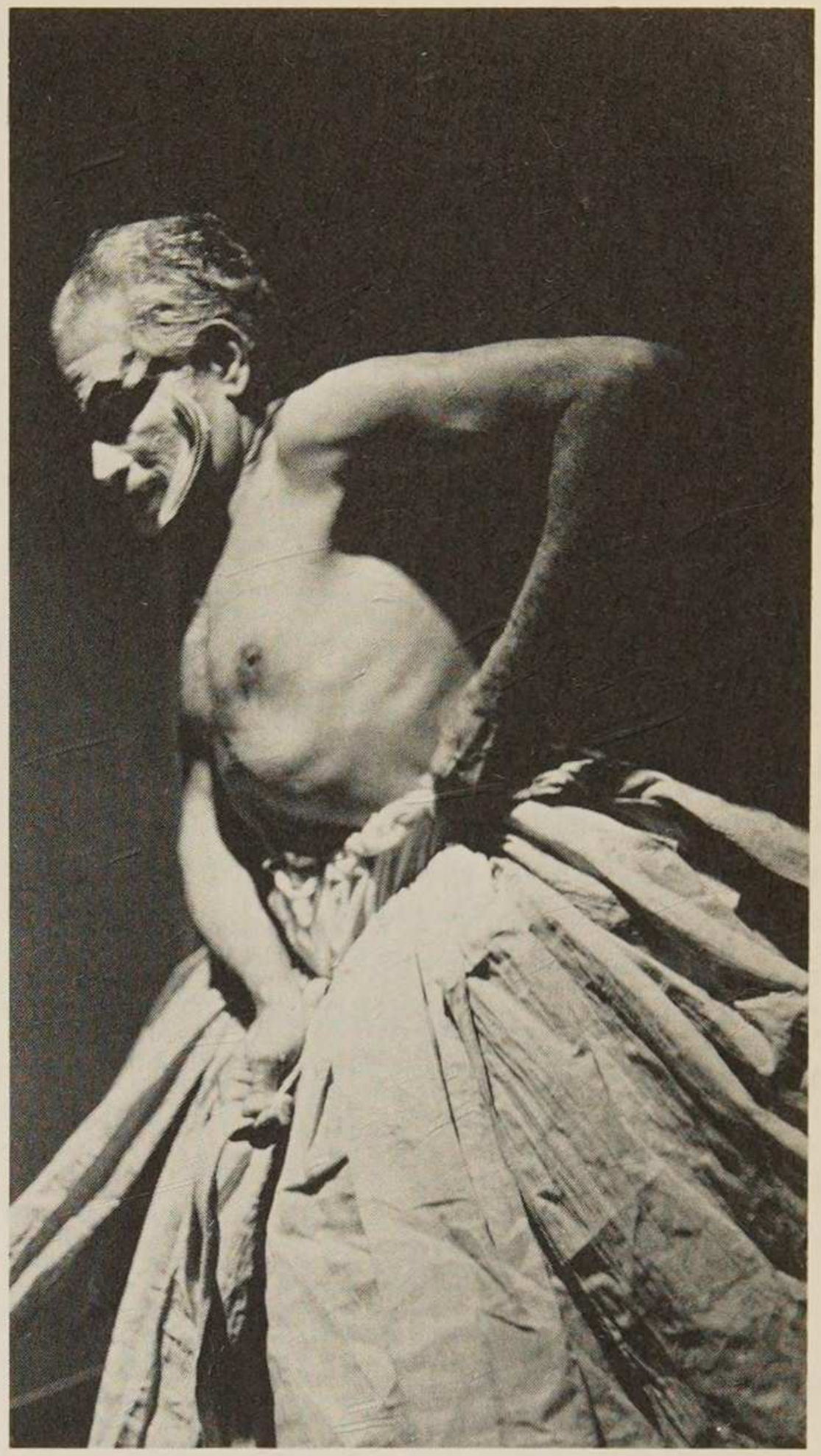
After the make-up is applied, the actor completes his mask by inserting a seed called *chundapoova* under each lower eyelid and rolling his eyes until they turn the prescribed shade of red—paler for heroes and heroines, bloodshot for demons. In addition to these make-up masks, Kathakali may employ literal masks for extraordinary physical changes (the



head of a goat in Daksha's revival; for this the actor wore a white lacquered mask carved of wood).

The make-up is only the first part of the costuming process. From the colored pastes made with grinding stones and voluminous piles of cloth, the layers of paint and fabric are ritually applied so that the actor is mentally and physically ready to put on ornaments: the carved, gilded wooden crown and the gleaming long silver talons that seal him into the fantastic realm of his character. He moves onto the stage behind a hand-held silk curtain and when it falls to reveal him (or is torn aside when the actor is a demon) he appears charged with superhuman powers which affect the audience's perception of reality.

Barbara Stoler Miller is professor of Oriental Studies at Barnard College, Columbia University. Her published works include Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gitagovinda *and* The Hermit and the Love Thief: Sanskrit Love Poems of Bhartrihari and Bilhana, *both published by Columbia University Press. She is currently working on studies and translations in Sanskrit drama.* ◇



Goddess in the Belfry

by Nancy Willard

C. S. Lewis gives credit to George MacDonald for baptizing his imagination, and I should like to start this paper with the event which baptized mine. I was sitting with my aunt during morning prayer at Saint Joseph's Episcopal church, and, much impressed with the priest's vestments, I whispered,

"Auntie Joan, when I grow up I want to be a priest."

"Girls can't be priests," said Auntie Joan.

"Then I'll be a priestess," I said.

"There are no priestesses in the Episcopal church," said Auntie Joan.

The look she gave me let me know that a priestess was altogether different from a priest. It was something dangerous, possibly wicked. Years later, when I came across the definition for priestess in the dictionary, I understood my aunt's concern. But before I give it to you, let me read you Webster's definition of a priest. A priest is "one whose office it is to perform religious rites, and especially to make sacrificial offerings." A priestess, on the other hand, is defined as "a girl or a woman who officiates in sacred rites, especially of a pagan religion." No wonder Auntie Joan thought I was on the road to hell. And I think what first attracted me to George MacDonald was his blend of pagan and Christian mysteries in a single figure.

Like the great goddesses of the major religions, past and present, she goes by various names. In *The Lost Princess,* she is called the "Wise Woman," the "goddess-child." In *The Golden Key,* she is "the lady" and "Grandmother," and though the child Tangle calls her "my grandmother" and the fishes she keeps call her Mother, the lady herself does not claim to be the grandmother or the mother of any particular creature. In *The Princess and the Goblin,* she is called Irene, the great-great-grandmother of the young princess of the same name. In *The Princess and Curdie,* MacDonald says she is as large and strong as a Titaness, and he names her the Mother of Light. Curdie calls her the Lady of the Silver Moon, and the miners believe she is Old Mother Wotherwop, a witch who strikes men blind and poisons wells and kills cattle. "What does it matter how many names if the person is one?" she asks Curdie. "That which is inside is the same all the time. . . . It is one thing the shape I choose to put on, and quite another the shape that foolish talk and nursery tale may please to put upon me."

For purposes of this article, I shall call her the goddess, for I believe that MacDonald found her among the goddesses served by those pagan priestesses which the dictionary-writers must have had in mind. Her names shed some light on her ancestry. As Irene, she is one of the three goddesses of Greek mythology who control the seasons. Irene brings peace, Dike justice, and Eumenia order. Though MacDonald's goddess bears only the name of the peacemaker, she could

just as well answer to the names of her sisters. In *The Lost Princess* she brings order out of the chaos that the ill-behaved princess Rosamond has caused in the royal palace, and in *The Princess and Curdie* she brings order to the corrupt kingdom of Gwyntystorm and brings to justice those who plotted against the king. When MacDonald calls her a Titaness, is he thinking of Rhea, the titaness worshipped in ancient Greece as Magna Mater, the Great Mother? When he shows her as the Lady of the Silver Moon and houses her in a high tower of the palace where she spins by the light of the moon hanging in her chamber, is she a descendant of Diana, virgin goddess of the moon, caretaker of the woods and the wild creatures in it? Or perhaps she is Frau Berchte, the goddess of distaff and spindle, whose name in Old High German means luminous, and of whom Jacob Grimm writes, in *Teutonic Mythology,* "In snow-white garments she shows herself by night in princely houses, she rocks or dandles the babies, while their nurses sleep: she acts the old *grandmother* or *ancestress* of the family."

We shall never know the temples of those lost goddesses, but I am sure that the homes MacDonald chooses for his goddess are very like those the ancients themselves would have chosen. Here is the lady's cottage in *The Golden Key,* as the young girl Tangle first sees it:

> There was a bright fire in the middle of the floor, upon which stood a pot without a lid, full of water that boiled and bubbled furiously. The air-fish swam straight to the pot and into the boiling water, where it lay quiet.

In MacDonald's description, earth, air, fire, and water are as vividly present as Tangle and the lady herself. The cottage is moss-green, as if it grew out of the earth, and Tangle's room for the night is an arbor, "cool and green, with a bed of purple heath growing in it," upon which shines "a large wrapper made of feathered skins of the wise fishes, shining gorgeous in the firelight." A fish flies into the cooking pot so that the lady may eat it. But to be eaten by the goddess is not to be destroyed; it is to be sacrificed and changed from water to air, flesh to spirit: an aëranth, a "lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings." The fish is a sign for Tangle who will soon set out on her own quest. "Even the fishes, you see," says the lady, "have to go into the pot, and then out into the dark." The end of the story will find Tangle and her companion Mossy in a cave, searching for a door "till it grew so dark that they could see nothing, and gave it up." But like the fish, they climb out of the darkness into the air where "beautiful beings of all ages climbed along with them."

From the outside the lady's cottage gives no clue to the inside. It is "round, like a snow-hut or a wigwam . . . The fact was, it had no windows; and though it was full of doors, they all opened from the inside, and could not even be seen from the outside." How could her house be otherwise? The goddess does not open her doors to everyone.

From The Golden Key, *illustration by Arthur Hughes*

"No one ever gets into my house who does not knock at the door, and ask to come in," says the Wise Woman to Rosamond, in *The Lost Princess.* And no one can find the door who does not seek it with trust in and obedience to the one whose house it opens. When she arrives at the Wise Woman's cottage, Rosamond, fearful and rebellious, finds no door at all.

> But the old woman . . . had told her that she must knock at the door: how was she to do that when there was no door? But . . . if she could not do all that she was told, she could at least, do a part of it: if she could not knock at the door, she could at least knock—say on the wall. . . . A loud noise was the result, and she found she was knocking on the very door itself.

Like the lady in *The Golden Key,* the Wise Woman lives in a cottage green with moss. She too has a fire and a bed of heather, for she would never allow her guest "to sleep upon any thing that had no life in it." But where the lady had a tank of water in which the enchanted fish flashed among green plants and flowers of all colors, the wise woman has a well, "just big enough to wash in . . ." Beside the well lies a towel, a comb, and a brush. Before we can be cleansed in a magic well, we must learn to wash in an ordinary one. Before we can be purified by an enchanted fire, we must know how to care for the fire which warms us. The goddess's first command is obedience. To Rosamond she says,

> You must keep the cottage tidy while I am out. When I come back, I must see the fire bright, the hearth swept, and the kettle boiling . . . and the heather in blossom—which last comes of sprinkling it with water. . . . But on no account leave the house till I come back . . . or you will grievously repent it. . . . Dangers lie all around this cottage of mine; but inside, it is the safest place—in fact the only quite safe place in all the country.

To those who obey the goddess, her house, whether cottage or tower, is home. In *The Princess and the Goblin,* when the goddess tells the young princess Irene she must go downstairs to the room from which she came, the child says, "I'm so glad, grandmother, you didn't say—*go home*—for this is my home. Mayn't I call this my home?" Whether Great-great-grandmother's house looks like a home depends on the spiritual state of her visitor. Instead of the spinning wheel and the roof of stars, and the light like the moon hanging from the roof, and the fire of roses, Curdie sees, on his first visit, a garret, a tub, a heap of musty straw, a withered apple, and a ray of sunlight coming through a hole in the roof. "Seeing is not believing," explains Great-great-grandmother to the astonished princess, "it is only seeing."

But all those homes which the goddess occupies have this in common: fire and water for the cleansing of those who seek her. The first cleansing is the mother's care for her child. When Tangle and Rosamond arrive, the dirt of the world is washed away. They are given new clothes and fed with bread and that nourishment which only a mother can give, milk. In *The Lost Princess,* when the child Agnes is put into a chamber which acts like a mirror for her ugly spirit, she is beyond the reach of bread, yet the Wise Woman mothers her still: "The moment she was asleep, the Wise Woman came, lifted her out, and laid her in her bosom; fed her with a wonderful milk, which she received without knowing it; nursed her all the night long, and, just ere she woke, laid her back in the blue sphere again."

For those less in need of spiritual correction, the bath not only cleans, it restores whoever receives it to a more perfect condition than before. Like baptism it requires the consent of the one that undergoes it. "You will not be afraid of anything I do with you—will you?" asks the lady before she lays Tangle into the tank with the feathered fishes, who clean her. She is quite literally immersed in creation: earth (the green plants and flowers of all colors), air (the feathered fishes), and water, and she is ready to stand before the fourth element, fire. A novice in

The Golden Wedding, 1901: George MacDonald and his wife.

the lady's order, she is dressed in a green robe like the lady's; Tangle is now one of the family.

Irene's great-great-grandmother also asks that the young princess go willingly when she carries her to the tub which shows no bottom but only "stars shining miles away as it seemed in a great blue gulf." To her small initiate, she says, "Do not be afraid, my child." And when the princess says, "No, grandmother," she is immersed in perfect peace, the rightful gift of the goddess Irene. The young princess, too, is dried by the fire. Her great-great-grandmother draws the child's nightgown through the flames and brings it forth "white as snow" and smelling of all the roses in the world. The girl is not merely clean, she is renewed. "When she stood up on the floor, she felt as if she had been made over again." After the cleansing, both Irene and Tangle are put to sleep, that state of oblivion so like death by which we pass back and forth between dreams and the ordinary world of our senses.

Water cleans and heals, but it is fire that purifies. The fire which Tangle walks through when she leaves the lady's cottage scorches her to the bone but does not "touch her strength"; tempered by the fire she walks among molten metals trickling from rocks in the country of the Old Man of the Fire. "But the heat never came near her," MacDonald assures us. For holding his hands in the rose-fire of the princess Irene's great-great-grandmother, Curdie receives the gift of knowing the spiritual condition of a man by shaking hands with him. When what men do makes them less than human, she explains, "the change always comes first . . . in the inside hands, to which the outside ones are but the gloves." Curdie will "know at once the hand of a man who is growing into a beast, nay . . . feel the foot of the beast he is growing . . ." In the Wise Woman's cottage, fire mends the mirror Rosamond smashes to pieces, and it might mend Rosamond herself, were she strong enough to bear it.

When MacDonald calls the goddess "Mother of Light," he reminds us that at the heart of Mother Earth, under its rivers and living creatures, burns the destroyer and

transformer, fire. In *The Princess and Curdie,* when Curdie and his father meet her in the darkness of the mine, Curdie beholds "the whole creation . . . gathered in one centre of harmony and loveliness in the person of the ancient lady who stood before him in the very summer of beauty and strength." The sacrifice of the feathered fish which Tangle witnesses is a nursery version of the sacrifice of the princess Irene's father witnessed by Curdie. The goddess gives him, not to the peace of air and the forgetfulness of water, but to the tempering fire of roses. "She stooped over the table-altar, put her mighty arms under the living sacrifice, lifted the king, as if he were but a little child, to her bosom, walked with him up the floor, and laid him in his bed. . . . All was safe; all was well."

Though the picture of the goddess as priestess accepting a sacrifice is pagan, the steps which lead her followers to that altar are not. Even my auntie Joan could have found no quarrel with confession, repentance, trial, and judgment as the way to salvation. To the goddess, what does it mean to be saved? In *The Princess and Curdie,* when the boy confesses to the sin of complacency, she tells him, "There is only one way I care for. Do better, and grow better, and be better." MacDonald himself explains what this means: "There is this difference between the growth of some human beings and that of others: in the one case it is a continuous dying, in the other a continuous resurrection . . . The boy should enclose . . . the old child at the heart of him . . ." Taught by the goddess, the king says, "Now . . . I am compelled to believe many things I could not and do not yet understand . . ." Put differently, unless we become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

The stumbling block to grace is self-love. To correct it, the Wise Woman has in her house a number of "mood-chambers" worthy of Hieronymus Bosch. "Its mood will come upon you," she tells Rosamond, "and you will have to deal with it." Rosamond cannot be a real princess, she reminds her, until she is a princess over herself. Provoked to anger, Rosamond learns to turn the other cheek and repent of her wilfulness. In *The Princess and Curdie,* the great-great-grandmother, disguised as a chambermaid, exhorts the king's household with all the moral fervor of John the Baptist. "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" becomes "The messenger . . . sent me to you again . . . to tell you to repent." Lest anyone take Curdie for a Christ figure sending the goddess to preach the Gospel, MacDonald identifies him with the messenger, thus linking him to the Baptist rather than to Christ: "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." And as promised, judgment falls on Gwyntystorm (going-to-storm). The goddess's white birds are the avenging angels; the enemy is "pursued and buffeted by the white-winged army of heaven."

Jehovah was not the first deity to take a humbler form that He might serve His people. Pillar of fire, faithful servant—can MacDonald's Christian-pagan lady do less? "The king rose and kneeled on one knee before her. All kneeled in like homage. . . . But she made them all sit down . . . Then in ruby crown and royal purple she served them all."◇

Nancy Willard is the author of many books, including Sailing to Cythera *and* The Island of the Grass King *(Harcourt Brace). Her new book,* A Visit to William Blake's Inn: Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travelers, *will be published by Harcourt Brace in the fall of 1981.*

Currents & Comments

In his weekly "Journal" on PBS television, Bill Moyers has repeatedly sought out the important thinkers of our time who are themselves searching for the moving currents beneath the surface. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was led to mythologist Joseph Campbell. In a two-part conversation, broadcast April 17 and 24, both men revealed boundless curiosity and wonder at the depth of human experience. Significantly, they shared concern and a sense of urgency in regard to our present situation. Campbell explained that one of the functions of mythology is to validate and support the social order. He has found that the "constellating images" of a mythology serve to "pull together all that tendency for separation . . ." He sees that today we have lost the support of the old mythic forms, and new forms have not yet emerged to take their place: we are a culture out of tune with itself. At the close of the lively and provocative exchange, Campbell was not optimistic: "I think it is all economics . . . and that looks like the end of a story rather than the beginning." Still, Campbell's own dedication to mythology, which he calls a "wonderful support for a life," is an inspiration and affirmation that "no matter what the dimensions of the chaos and agony, life can go past and through it." That a journalist of Moyers' rare and sensitive abilities would "find" Joseph Campbell is understandable. What is especially gratifying and encouraging about that meeting is that television, which so often exposes us to the worst in ourselves, can also put us in touch with the best.

"Mirror to an Invisible World" invited listeners to penetrate the external form of a series of Persian love stories which reveal heart wisdom about living through the stages on a mystical path. The stories, adapted from the *Haft Paikar* or *Tales of the Seven Princesses*, were assembled by twelfth century Sufi poet Nizami of Ganjeh, who gathered them from history and oral tradition. King Bahram Gur of Persia visits a different princess on seven different nights: each dwells in a pavilion whose color she personifies, and each tells a story; together the princesses represent all the countries of the then known world.

Storyteller Laura Simms performed the work with musicians Steven Gorn (bamboo flutes), Glen Velez (tamborines), and Julia Haines (Celtic harp). The rhythmic gestures of the storyteller complemented the traditional and original music from Persia, Turkey, Mongolia, and Tibet, interweaving sounds and words into new dimensions. The piece was presented by the Theatre for the New City in New York from May 14-24, 1981.

It seems remarkable that an ancient mythology can be as alive and vigorous as that of Shiva is for the people of modern India. There is no better witness to this than the new film, "Manifestations of Shiva." Produced cooperatively by the Asia Society in celebration of its new building in New York City and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in conjunction with its major new exhibit of the same name, the film begins with a thin thread of narrative about Shiva as creator and destroyer. As the words fade the viewer is treated to a rich portrayal of the many daily human activities that make up Shiva's dance in the continuously changing universe. This shifting montage of images and sounds heightens a sense of simultaneity, drawing together the dance, art, music, and ritual into a whole. As quickly as an intensity of feeling is created, activity subsides. What remains are the memorable images: the vitality of an aged Kathakali master, the ornate ritualistic dressings of the sacred lingam and the simplicity of a people's devotion to them, the Zen-like quality of an artist drawing the intricate image of Shiva in col-

ored chalk, and then leaving it to disintegrate by natural causes. In the end one is left with a keen sense that the simplest acts of life are indeed acts of worship.

The French translation of the first volume of Mircea Eliade's autobiography, *Journey East, Journey West*, was published in Paris by Gallimard last year as part of the Du Monde Entier Series, and reviewed in PARABOLA in the "Women" issue (Vol. V, No. 4). Harper and Row have now given us the English version of this astonishing account of an astonishing man, translated from the Romanian by MacLinscott Ricketts. An exile from his native Romania, Dr. Eliade has for many years held a distinguished post at the University of Chicago in the History of Religions, but no country can claim ownership of this international scholar and, in a true sense, man of "Le Monde Entier." The first volume of *Journey* takes Eliade only up to age thirty, by which time he had lived in half a dozen countries, published twelve books as well as countless newspaper articles and scholarly papers, and had more adventures, romantic and otherwise, than many men experience in a lifetime. What makes the book so stimulating and so delightful to read, besides the frank and sometimes poetic charm of Eliade's style, is the author's zest for life: his amazing capacity for work, study, self-discipline and self-indulgence, his vivid interests in people, the arts, nature, literature, religion, sex, politics. . . . The reader is left breathless and hardly able to wait for the next volume.

Toni Morrison is a wise woman and, one would have to add, one of America's most important writers—perhaps most like South America's Gabriel García Marquez in language and evocation of our mythic selves. In her previous novels, *Sula, The Bluest Eye,* and *Song of Solomon*, she has shown a rare combination of power and grace. Now again in *Tar Baby* (Alfred A. Knopf) she sets an ordinary "love" story in hallowed halls—in touch with a remote, primeval past, but as urgent and alive as the "crying girls split into two parts by their tight jeans, screaming at the top of their high, high heels, straining against the pull of their braids and the fluorescent combs holding their hair" on the streets of New York City. In a fable set in a Caribbean island fairyland, complete with sleeping princess, in a successful black model's get-up, watched and worshipped by a backwoods prince, in criminal's clothing—a true outcast—we become aware of the harshness and the beauty in the unending round of our lives, be they black or white or anything else. Morrison knows we hear what we choose to hear, and she delivers a sermon on that subject. But it is a sermon—perhaps an elegy—to our frailty and our grace.

Morrison makes an important statement about our presence on this torn and aching planet; and she does it with humor, sensuality, and intelligence in some of the most glorious and rhythmic language you'll ever hear. "At some point in life the world's beauty becomes enough. You don't need to photograph, paint or even remember it. It is enough. No record of it needs to be kept and you don't need someone to share it with or tell it to. When that happens—that letting go—you let go because you can. The world will always be there—while you sleep it will be there—when you wake it will be there as well. So you can sleep and there is reason to wake." She happily inhabits the realm of the profane, weaving layer over layer from a skein of a million colors, until she puts us in touch with the sacred, and some of those eternal truths about our human condition.

The second printing of *For Freedom Destined* by Franz Winkler (Myrin Institute, New York) offers an opportunity to bring attention to this small but noteworthy volume that could well stand as a handbook on the practical value and contemporary relevance of myths and legends. The late Franz Winkler's interpretation of Wagner as a spiritual visionary is refreshing and insightful, but one need not be a Wagner enthusiast to appreciate Winkler's exposition of the Germanic myths and the Parsifal legend which were Wagner's inspiration. A convenient appendix contains narrative reductions of the operas for the reader unfamiliar with the tales; what Winkler unfolds is a drama of human spiritual consciousness. The tragic story of the human striving for freedom represented by the Ring

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PARABOLA

The Quarterly Magazine of Myth and Tradition

cycle, and especially in the figure of Siegfried, finds its completion and fulfillment in the Christian legendary hero of compassion, Parsifal. In Winkler's discussion of these stories they become mirrors reflecting a freedom as important today as ever: the freedom to choose between the destructive and disintegrative forces of materialism and the transubstantiating forces of spiritual awareness.

Indiana University Press continues their outstanding series of Chinese Literature in Translation with the sixteenth century love story, *The Peony Pavilion (Mudan Ting)* by Tang Kianzu, translated by Cyril Birch; the beautiful new translations and commentary by Pauline Yu of *The Poetry of Wang Wei;* and Volume III of the eighteenth century novel of manners, *The Story of the Stone (Shitonji)* or *The Dream of the Red Chamber (Hong lou meng)* entitled *The Warning Voice*, by Cao Xueqin, translated by David Hawkes. Most recently Indiana co-published the twelfth century tales, *Outlaw. of the Marsh,* Volumes I and II, by Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong, translated by Sidney Shapiro, in association with Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, People's Republic of China.

In *Winter Count* (Charles Scribner's Sons) Barry Holstun Lopez captures the singular moments. He describes them, but he is also able—and this is his unusual ability—to make everything stop; he allows us to *hear* the moment of recognition. He is attempting to do in terms of our culture what he has learned from Native Americans of the Northern plains: to chart the passage from year to year; to establish a register of memorable events: a "winter count." In this slim and unpretentious book Lopez has an eye for the natural, the ordinary, and a sense of the wonder that is inherent in these moments which make up the quality of our lives. His goal seems to be to learn where one is, rather than where one is supposed to be, in these encounters that irrevocably change one's life. In "The Location of the River," a river disappears with the arrival of the white man; the Pawnees explain: "It suited the earth's purpose, they said, to suddenly abandon a river for a while, to confound men who were dependent on such things always being there." Perhaps "Winter Count 1973" captures one of the essential reasons for Lopez' being: "You can only tell the story as it was given to you . . . Do not lie. Do not make it up . . . Everything is held together with stories . . . That is all that is holding us together, stories and compassion."

Lopez brings an acute and economical power of observation to the landscape, a vision that has admirably matured from his earlier works, *Desert Notes, Of Wolves and Men,* and *River Notes.* He has learned to be a good listener with ear and eye; he has the gift of respect.

An interesting and diverse group of books for young readers and older friends have emerged with the spring. They include: *The Tale of the Shining Princess,* adapted by Sally Fisher from a translation by Donald Keene (The Metropolitan Museum of Art and A Studio Book/ The Viking Press, New York) and beautifully illustrated from an 18th century Japanese book with watercolors flecked with gold and silver inks; *Who Met the Ice Lynx,* translated—faithfully—by Howard Norman and illustrated—in a charmingly old-fashioned yet original style—by Tom Pohot (Bear Claw Press, 215 Bucholz Court, Ann Arbor, MI 48103), consisting of "naming stories" of the Swampy Cree people; *A Russian Farewell,* written and illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher (Four Winds Press, New York), an historical novel of changing times that deals with eternal values, as did Fisher's other volumes in this moving trilogy concerning emigration to America; *Mary of Mile 18,* story and pictures by Canadian author Ann Blades (Tundra Books of Northern New York, Plattsburgh), a reprint of a prize-winning story about a young girl growing up in an isolated landscape, enhanced by sensitive, childlike drawings; and one other that we missed in the fall: *Darkness Under the Hills* by Australian writer Bill Scott (Oxford University Press, New York), an intriguing continuation of his powerful book *Boori*, the tale of a young Aboriginal warrior and magician, done with skill and respect.

The Naked Man: Introduction to a Science of Mythology, Volume 4
By Claude Lévi-Strauss, translated from the French by John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Harper & Row, 1981. Pp. 746. $35.00, paper (no price available).

Reviewed by Paul Jordan-Smith

In this fourth and final volume of his *Introduction to a Science of Mythology,* Lévi-Strauss concludes his study of a group of myths belonging to the indigenous peoples of South and North America by turning his attention to the tribes of the Pacific Northwest, particularly the Klamath and Modoc. His intention is "to tie into place all the loose threads left hanging in the course of the argument," though probably only scholars of the subject would discern any loose threads. The book is long, and despite its flowing (and extremely readable) style, its contents will not hold the interest of the casual student of mythology. A full appreciation of this pioneer work can be gained only by those with an intense analytical interest in the subject, who have the time and ability to submit themselves to a long and rigorous methodology, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the innate structures by which myths are related to one another. For those willing to undertake the discipline, however, the experience can be richly rewarding.

The salient feature of the present volume is the author's demonstration of the structural affinities existing between the mythologies of tribes living in the Brazilian jungle and those living in the mountains and along the coast from Northern California to British Columbia. The geographical separation of these two groups is paralleled by distinctions in environment, climate, diet, even by the appearance of the sky at night. It must be expected, therefore, that the various cultural manifestations, such as language, social organization, and religious beliefs, will be diverse as well, and that the respective mythologies, insofar as they reflect each culture, must also differ fundamentally.

The popular observation that the same myths appear again and again all over the world leads one to suppose that we will discover identical mythologies despite such cultural diversion, and to conclude prematurely, as many diffusionists have done, that a single source alike of man and myth existed in prehistoric times. This is a pleasant notion, but it is based on superficial resemblances, and it is rather like saying that men and chickens are related because they both walk on two legs, or that they differ because one is feathered. It is the biological *structure,* not external appearance, which is the key to the relationship, and this structural affinity completely overrides any apparent differences. "However diverse appearances may be," writes Lévi-Strauss, "[myths] conceal structures . . . which, by means of successive deformations, engender types which can be arranged in series and should enable us to determine the most minute shade of meaning in each myth, considered as a concrete, individual entity."

The point he is making here is not that diffusionism is wrong; indeed, the choice of two ethnically related groups was a careful one, one in which diffusion was implicit in the evidence of prehistoric migrations. Rather, the point is that myths, like kinship structures, obey certain laws, are encoded by various microstructures, independently of the particular external circumstances which give them substance. It is the delineation of these laws that Lévi-Strauss is after, and structuralism is presented as a technique which will permit a valid deciphering of mythic thought.

Another point, made throughout all four volumes, is that the different codes expressed in myth—gustatory, astronomical, auditory, etc.—overlap one another throughout mythic thought. This should put to rest once and for all the single-system interpretations of various schools, such as the "solar-myth" school of Max Müller, and those that are exclusively psychological. These interpretations are not invalidated, any more than is diffusionism; it is when one code is taken as an interpretation to the exclusion of others that mythological analysis goes astray. Meaning in myth cannot be explicated by mapping it onto the lineal, discursive form of rational thought, nor can myths be understood simply as the sum of all their possible interpretations. "It would be truer to say that a group of myths constitutes in itself a code . . . which makes possible the reciprocal conversion of the messages in accordance with rules, the range of which remains immanent in the different systems which, through its operation, allow the emergence of an overall significance distinct from their particular meanings." Myths call for an openness to many different levels of meaning all at once, including those beyond our capacity to grasp intellectually. In much the same way, music calls upon the listener's willful suspension of an exclusively critical faculty, the better to be touched by an experience which transcends the limitations of everyday life, one accessible through the inner opening of one's self to one's self.

In the final chapter of *The Naked Man*, Lévi-Strauss returns to the analogy between music and myth with which he began *The Raw and the Cooked*. He also directs his attention to the criticism that he has ignored the affective dimension of myth. This response is critical for an understanding of Lévi-Strauss, but more importantly, it addresses the issue of the role of scholarship in the approaches that civilized man makes towards the seemingly ineffable content of myth. In the general outpouring of emotions which myths arouse in us (regardless of whether kindred emotions are inspired in those peoples for whom myths are fundamental expressions of their culture), we recognize a yearning which stems from the basic dilemma of man, that of existence and mortality. But emotions are not enough to move us to a deeper comprehension of our condition, any more than are the intellectual activities in which we engage in the name of a science that ignores that dilemma. The problem of mortality—and the question of immortality which it inevitably raises, when juxtaposed against the fact of our physical existence and the many states, from bestial to godlike, to which we are subject—calls us to reconcile in ourselves, while we have the time, the divisions and separations of the different parts of our being. It calls us to seek an informed feeling and a passionate intellection within a body the sensation of whose existence supplies both thought and feeling with the material of self-transformation, and of whose ultimate mortality there can be no question.

Paul Jordan-Smith is a free-lance writer, a storyteller, and a student of mythology.

The White Hotel
By D. M. Thomas. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1981. Pp. viii + 274. $12.95.

Reviewed by Michael Sexson

The life of a single human being, exactly and honestly told, is the life of an entire historical period. But told beyond simple exactitude and mere honesty, told, that is, mythically and imaginatively, it may be the life and fate of all humankind. And perhaps even more.

This stupendous premise is at the core of D. M. Thomas's novel, *The White Hotel*. Ineluctably, Thomas is drawn to the one person in our time who came closest to demonstrating this proposition: Sigmund Freud. Freud's case histories of pathological personalities, Thomas believes, are masterful narratives, and their subjects, the infamous Rat Man and Anna O., have all the depth and importance of great fictional characters. But

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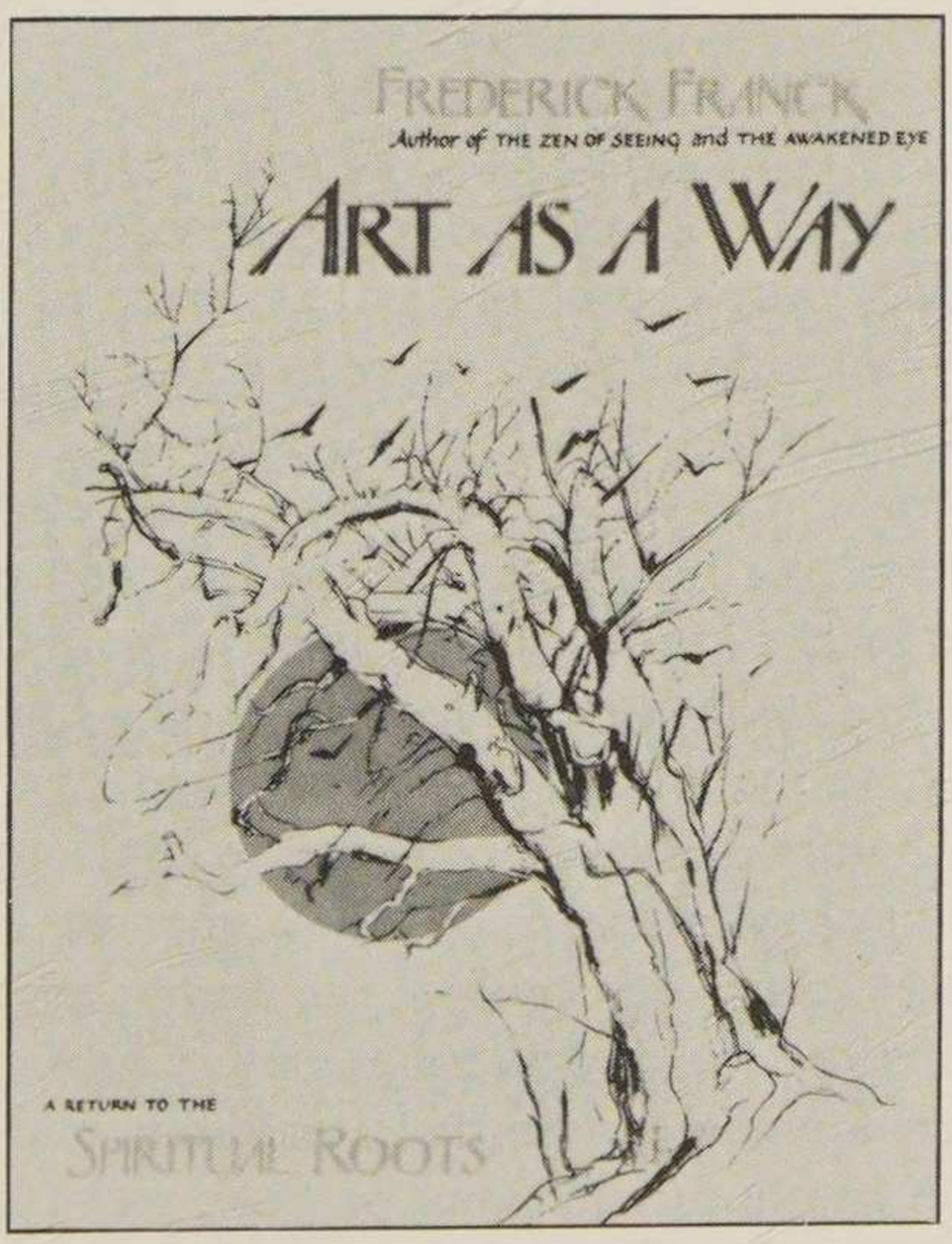

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Freud's fictions don't go far enough. Like mystery novels, they end with the revelation of the secret murderer and the ingenious explanation of the detective. There is still something lacking. There are clues we haven't yet seen which will change our understanding and push us far beyond, into realms Freud himself feared.

And so Thomas decided, wisely, not to write a Freudian novel, but instead a novel with Freud in it, or, more precisely, a novel with a fictional Freud's typical narrative of a case operating *as but one interpretation* of the "facts," one which, though brilliant, exact, and honest, is yet limited. It is as if, at the climactic moment of the mystery thriller, the detective and his "solution" become simply more evidence, further clues to a mystery deeper than anyone imagined, or, perhaps, even could imagine. If the life experience of an individual, the core of historical fact, is the rock dropped into the pool, the Freudian interpretation is but one ring around that falling stone, one ring in an ever expanding circle.

The prologue to *The White Hotel* consists of an exchange of gossipy letters from Freud, Ferenczi, and Sachs. Freud, it seems, is in possession of a collection of highly libidinous and fantastic writings done by a patient of his, a young woman he calls "Anna G." who came to him one day complaining of pains in her left breast and ovary. Her writings, consisting of a poem recounting her stay at a lakeside resort, and a prose interpretation of the same episode, are filled with extraordinarily powerful images of eroticism and morbidity, sex, and death.

The next two chapters are the young woman's writings. She tells how a young man, Freud's son, seduced her and took her to a "white lakeside hotel" where they engaged in unrelenting sexual activity while all about them flood, fires, avalanches, and other catastrophes claimed more and more lives. Her language is dream-like, as in the biblical Song of Songs and the images are buoyant, air-borne, as in a Chagall painting: "Stars rained/continuously and slowly like huge roses,/and once, a fragrant orange grove came floating/down past our window as we lay in awe." Others in the hotel, strangely appreciative of the couple's obsession with sex, participate in the fantasy.

The third chapter is Freud's analysis. Brilliantly, exactly, honestly, he reviews the case by uncovering a childhood traumatic episode involving a *ménage à trois* consisting of Anna's mother, aunt, and uncle. The "white hotel," Freud announces confidently, "is the mother's womb." Anna, though not cured, is at least able now to live a life of "common unhappiness" rather than "hysterical misery." Thomas's mimicry, incidentally, of the real Freud's tone and style, not to say his pompous self-righteousness, is almost perfect.

A Freudian novel would end here, with the case solved, the clues uncovered, the ingenious explanation provided. But a novel with Freud *in it*, Thomas's *The White Hotel*, goes on.

The wary reader, an interpreter himself of the interpreter named Freud, may have noticed clues dropped along the way that were dismissed by the great man as irrelevant. Freud records the death of one of his daughters and admits that Frau Anna, in one of her dreams, seemed to predict the event. "I have no comment to make," writes the fictional Freud, "on Frau Anna's prediction." Thomas is very much aware that the real Freud detested the occult, and, even, if we are to believe Jung's autobiography, referred to it as a "black tide of mud," against which psychoanalysis was to act as a bulwark. "Not given to mysticism," Thomas's Freud cannot believe that Frau Anna's hysterical symptoms and bizarre fantasy images refer to more than her private history, and, perhaps, in a limited way, to the times in which she lived.

Thomas, however, choosing to confront the black mud feared by Freud, goes on, moves to another room of the dream, another and wider circle of interpretation. Chapter Four, a highly conventional narrative told from an omniscient point of view, picks up the story years later. Anna, whose real name, we discover, is Lisa Erdman, is in her 40's, an independent woman living with her aunt. A

modestly talented opera singer, Lisa travels to Milan where she acts as a replacement for a star performer who has broken her arm. There, she meets Victor Berenstein, another opera singer, and a Jew, who eventually becomes her husband. She writes a long, almost lyrical, extraordinarily touching letter to Freud, revealing that she had lied to him about many aspects of her case, thus rendering his analysis inexact. Over the years she has rethought the meanings of her erotic writings and her dreams. They now mean something more, something different from what she, or Freud, believed.

The "something more" is, in fact, the subject of the concluding portions of the novel. For swimming through the conventional narrative, we find, are numerous images and situations from Lisa's fantasy writings. An episode involving Freud's son, missing luggage, and the wish for a toothbrush, is repeated, with slight changes, years after her sessions with Freud, when, in "real" life, Lisa meets Victor and risks an affair with him at a lakeside hotel. And, gruesomely, Lisa's youthful morbid fantasies involving catastrophe and death on a massive scale, are replaced when she and her son not only witness the Nazi atrocities at Babi Yar but, tragically, become victims themselves. As Lisa lies dying in the ocean of bloody bodies in the trenches, a Nazi soldier crushes with his boot her left breast and pelvis. "A quarter million white hotels," the narrator somberly observes, "in Babi Yar."

There are more things in ego and id, dear detective Freud, Thomas seems to be musing, than are dreamt of in your case histories. The deepest images of our unconscious do not point to problems in our lives—they *are* our lives. And more.

With this "more," Thomas steps through into zones where not only Freud, but most of us would not follow. The novel's epilogue takes place beyond death, in "Palestine," where thousands of Jews *believed* they were headed when actually they were murdered at Babi Yar. Here Lisa and her mother, though both dead to time and history, offer each other the milk of their breasts, an image prefigured in Lisa's sexual fantasy of long ago. At the end, Lisa smells the scent of a pine tree but can't place it. If she had, she would have recalled a moment in time and history, when, after leaving her husband and son for a stroll, she stood next to a pine tree and breathed in its scent and was overcome by unbearable joy. At that moment, she "saw herself at the beginning of all things. And when she looked in the opposite direction, towards the unknown future, death, the endless extent beyond death, she was there still. It all came from the scent of a pine tree."

Unlike Freud, Thomas *is* given to mysticism. The life of a single human being—Lisa Erdman, for example—told exactly and honestly, becomes the life of an epoch, a revelation of the meaning of a given moment in history; but told mythically and imaginatively it becomes everyone's life. And, unbounded by time and history, it becomes not only the life of what was, but of what might have been. In the realm of the imagination, the dead at Babi Yar, expecting to be deported to Palestine, *did* arrive there, and Lisa Erdman *did* encounter her mother and father, her long lost lover, and an old man with a heavily bandaged jaw who might have been Sigmund Freud.

The white hotel of the book's title, then, is an all-inclusive, perpetually elusive symbol like Melville's white whale or James's golden bowl. It is not simply, as Freud thought, the womb, or the pristine landscape of childhood innocence. Nor is it merely sex, as the prurient reader might guess; nor death, as the omniscient narrator suggests late in the novel. It is, of course, all of these things, but it is always something more. It is Palestine, that limitless expanse of the human soul discoverable only by those who, like Lisa Erdman and Sigmund Freud, are sick with love, and profoundly in touch with the most fundamental images of the psyche. It is, above all, the eternal moment, always present, combined of past and future, what has been and what might have been. Every moment we live is a white hotel. And the sign says, as then, now, and to come, always: vacancy.

Michael Sexson, an associate professor of English at Montana State University, is co-editor of the interdisciplinary journal, Corona.

Tertium Organum: A Key to the Enigmas of the World
By P. D. Ouspensky. Revised translation by E. Kadloubovsky and the author (original translation by Nicolas Bessaraboff and Claude Bragdon). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981. Pp. 320. $15.00.

Reviewed by Nicolai Rabeneck

The appearance of a new edition of P. D. Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum* is most welcome after a span of sixty years during which the book has proved a constant success all over the world.

Written in Russian and first published in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1912, the book was translated into English without the knowledge of the author (who at the time led a precarious existence in the Caucasus where the revolutionary turmoil brought frequent changes, skirmishes, and other upheavals) and published in New York in 1920. When Ouspensky was reached after his escape to Constantinople, he approved the translation so that its New York edition was copied for a later publication in England and used for retranslations into other languages published in many countries.

The new edition under review is especially valuable since its translation from the original text was made by Mme. E. Kadloubovsky, Ouspensky's secretary for many years, and revised by the author.

The text of the new edition has acquired the proper terseness of the English language

by avoiding some Russicisms that appear at times in the old translation. Some rather verbose turns of phrase in the old edition occur when habitual idioms are too literally translated; Russian is a leisurely, flowing language. Apart from these improvements of style, some key words have been replaced by synonyms, but with no obvious change in the meaning.

The greatest improvement in the new edition is the addition of a well-organized Index at the end of the book. The very nature of this book particularly calls for a good index. And this one admirably succeeds in showing the range of ideas discussed and the breadth of authors quoted, a valuable tool in enabling one to study the book.

The "Table of the Four Forms of the Manifestation of Consciousness," which in the old edition was attached as a long fold-out at the end of the book, has now been incorporated into the text and reorganized in a more convenient way on three pages (pp. 282–284). This table is of great significance to the overall meaning of the book as it draws together the thesis of *Tertium Organum.* From our limited three-dimensional way of viewing the world, by perceiving *space* (line, surface, solid form) and *time* (moment, hour, day) the expanding consciousness can reach the fourth dimension or form—*cosmic consciousness.* Relating to the title, this is what the author has to say, on page 221: "I have called this system of higher logic *Tertium Organum,* because for *us* it is the third *instrument* or the third law of thought after Aristotle and Bacon." This thesis is built up step by step through twenty-three chapters (each prefaced by a summation of its sequence of arguments and purpose) and carries the "long thought" of the book to its final conclusion. Like links in a chain the chapters carried the author through the tremendous task of writing *Tertium Organum.*

There is no patent way of studying the "Table of the Four Forms," but it is possible to find for oneself parts in the tabulation that appeal and make sense. From there it is possible to widen one's outlook and understanding, and one's capacity to observe and try to become conscious that the four forms are manifesting in us constantly.

"We must have long thoughts," Mr. Ouspensky used to say. It seems that this was a sort of credo of his in relation to the development of consciousness. Wherever one starts reading *Tertium Organum* it can be observed how the thoughts of the author flow on without interruption until the sequence of ideas comes to its full expression. And even then, the next sequence is skillfully and subtly connected with the preceding ideas. This smoothness of presentation can only be achieved in its fourth form of manifestation, using the lower forms only when necessary. Only "long thoughts," or thoughts expressed on the level of the fourth form, can hold on to the overall aim of the author, even when at times deviating, or throwing in an aside, to explain a detail.

In this, Ouspensky's most philosophical book, the author's aim to build up and expound "tertium organum" can be felt throughout. Perhaps because of this one-pointedness of the author's intention, the book has been, and still is, in constant demand.

The message *Tertium Organum* may have for our particular time, with its wide-spread interest in the Indian traditions, is its treatment of the ideas of Karma. Ouspensky said on the subject: "The idea of Karma, evolved in remote antiquity by Hindu philosophy, is the idea of the unbroken sequence of phenomena. Each phenomenon, however small, is a link in the endless and unbroken chain, stretching from *the past* into *the future,* passing from one sphere into another, now *appearing* in the guise of physical phenomena, now *disappearing* in the phenomena of consciousness.

"If we examine the idea of Karma from the standpoint of our theory of time and space of many dimensions, *the interconnection of separate events* will cease to appear to us miraculous and incomprehensible. Since events, even the most distant from one another in time, *are in contact with the fourth dimension,* this means that, in reality, they take place simultane-

ously, as cause and effect. . . . Things are linked together not by time but by an inner connection, an inner relationship. And time cannot separate things which are inwardly close and follow one from another."

And further on, "Phenomena which appear to us totally unrelated may be seen by another, wider consciousness as part of one whole. . . . Therefore, side by side with our view of things, another view is possible—a view as it were from another world *'over there,'* 'from that which lies on the other side.'

"But 'over there' signifies not another place, but another method of perception, a new understanding. And we shall begin to look not from here but from over there if we regard a phenomenon not as something isolated, but in conjunction with all the chains intersecting in it."

This is a philosopher's description of the unifying force that holds the universe together. When Karma is mentioned, we are accustomed to understand only its function of causally connecting two incarnations of a man: how the present life is dependent on the last one. Ouspensky does not even mention all this; he is concerned only with the vast, universal involvement of Karma in the created world.

Those interested in Indian philosophy will perhaps be induced by the above quotation to pay more attention to the cosmic significance of the law of Karma in their readings. It is a great pity that it is so difficult to find anything published that treats Karma as such an all-pervading force in the world. However, a new and more thoughtful approach to Karma is already in evidence in recent books and journals.

Nicolai Rabeneck is a Russian scholar and writer who has lived in New York since 1944. He met P. D. Ouspensky in London in 1932 and studied with him until his death.

Hades In Manganese
By Clayton Eshleman. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1981. Pp. 114. Paper $5.00.
Vienna Blood & Other Poems
By Jerome Rothenberg. New York: New Directions, 1980. Pp. 90. Paper $4.95.
The Masks of Drought
By William Everson. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1980. Pp. 92. $10.00, paper $4.00.
Arguments of Idea
By Peyton Houston. North Carolina: The Jargon Society, distributed by Gnomon Distribution, Frankfort, Ky., 1980. Pp. 73. Paper $8.50.
Truth Barriers
By Tomas Tranströmer, translated by Robert Bly. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, distributed by Charles Scribner's, New York, 1980. Pp. 64. $9.95, paper $5.95.
Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke
Translated by Robert Bly. New York: Harper & Row, 1981. Pp. 224. $14.95, paper $7.95.

Reviewed by Rochelle Ratner

The poet today finds himself increasingly at odds with his vision. Spirits and demons which inhabited the medieval landscape have been replaced by science. For even the good poet, the attempt to locate oneself amidst this apparatus becomes a constant refocusing, and it remains for only a chosen handful to pierce through everyday superficiality into a higher, mythic realm. In the finest work this struggle itself, to have and to hold, becomes dominant.

Clayton Eshleman would locate us even farther back in time than the medieval period. As he says, "it is not Dante's shoulders on which poets stand, but the shoulders of Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon men." In *Hades In Manganese*, he travels to the paleolithic caves in the Dordogne region of France. Instead of describing the caves, he attempts to psychologically evoke a paleolithic present. "Silence Raving," one of his best poems, begins: "Patters, paters, Apollo-gloves, sound/breaking up with silence, coals/I can still hear, entanglement of sense/pools, the way a cave would leak perfume . . ." But while the Cro-Magnon remain silent, Eshleman tells us, they have bequeathed their power "to me, to make an altar of my throat."

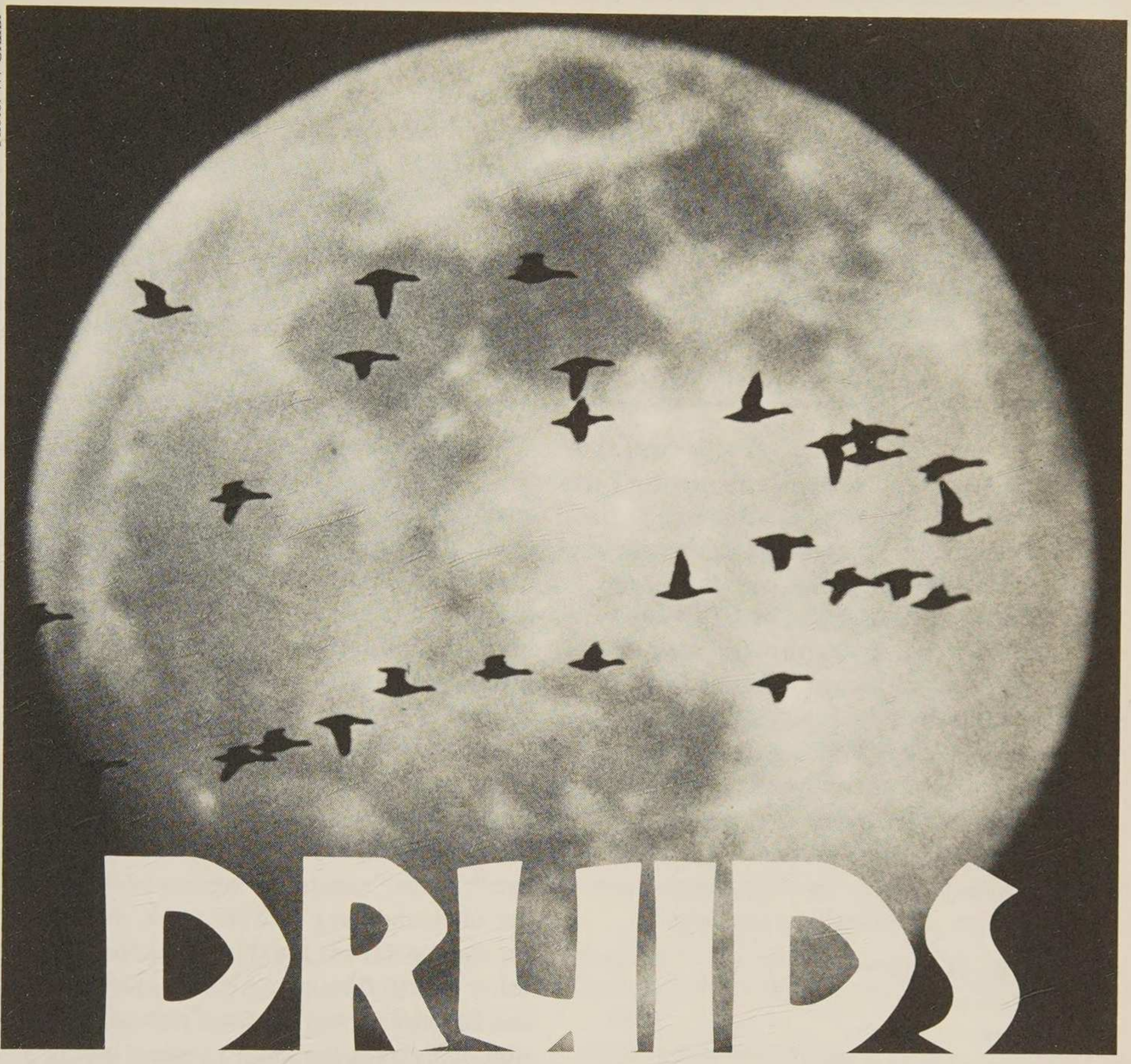
The dark caves are associated with Hades, and later Hell, external until man draws it inward. Eshleman's associative, collage-like style permits the poems to enter other hells. A poem such as "Frida Kahlo's Release," written in the voice of the Mexican painter seriously injured in a street car accident from which she never fully recovered, describes the hell of sickness as it is transformed into Art:

Where I come from
is the accident's business . . .

exactly, how it made
thirty-five bone grafts
of my impaled investment.
My dear father is here, not
off photographing monuments,
which he did so well,
in spite of epilepsy,
he took some
of the terror when the streetcar
created me . . .

In a similar fashion, Eshleman identifies with those who experienced the hells of concentration camps. Then there are the poet's own hells, the fraternity "Hell Week, 1953" when he was mailed a postcard of Hades and "his kids in demon-suits tied a string/about my penis led up through my white shirt/tied to a 'pull' card dangling/from my sport-coat pocket . . ." This sexual element, prominent in most of Eshleman's poetry (often in relation to his involvement with Reichian therapy), in *Hades In Maganese* is seen on the level of propagation: the need to preserve a species that is becoming extinct. "Our Lady of the Three-Pronged Devil" is also "Our Lady of the Caves"; in fact the entire focus on the cave becomes a re-entry into the womb, with its astonishing paintings he crawls on hands and knees to see.

One of the few poets to match Eshleman's understanding of transformation through liv-



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ing in a sexually-dominated landscape is Jerome Rothenberg. In a poem for his wife's birthday, he can write of "logos," that "material reproduction of the gods/the function of whose worshippers/through song/is pleasure paradise/I move inside you/(you in me)/the continuity is so intense/death only interrupts it/briefly." Writing in the voice of Jacob Frank, one of the more successful false messiahs, his language verges on profanity, words few poets could use, knit together to form an erotic prophecy that has always been one of the aims of Kabbalistic learning:

"I messiah Jacob Frank
"am in the center of
"a great heart
"my member raised to strike
"thee my shekinah bride
"on eiderdowns
"thou leans to me
"my mouth is like a birdcage
"—lock me up in it!
"& swallow floods of love
"like chicken drippings . . .

In *Vienna Blood*, Rothenberg's vision is equal to that of many medieval poets, but it is also truly contemporary, and not a vision for the queasy.

Nor is it a vision that has come easily to the poet. All Rothenberg's previous works can be seen as leading up to this: his early experiments with sound and sense (á la Gertrude Stein), his involvement with the vision quests and rituals of the Seneca Indians, his early Judaica poems collected in *Poland 1931* (forming a family history at the same time both real and imaginary), and his editing of several anthologies—most importantly, *America A Prophecy* and *A Big Jewish Book*.

In this world after Hitler, Rothenberg seems to be telling us that all who dare a Jewish vision meet with terrifying pain which "finds its place in heaven/though it blinds the eye." Three "messianic" figures have evolved out of Rothenberg's earlier work to become the main concerns for this book: the Kabbalist mystic Abraham Abulafia, Jacob Frank, and Dadaist writer Tristan Tzara. The inclusion of Tzara is the key to understanding Rothenberg's approach to poetry: the focus on *chance*, the willingness to include the irrational. He has finally achieved a world of ecstasy through torture, a mystic's paradise in which Abulafia can say to Hitler: "You kill I bring them/back to life."

The struggle to have and to hold is nowhere more intense than in William Everson's poetry. *The Masks of Drought* consists of work written since his return to a worldly life after spending several years as Brother Antoninus, a lay priest in the Dominican order. "Moongate," in which Everson views his brother, with wife and children, comparing this with his own decision to leave the order and finally take a young wife, describes this eternal conflict precisely.

Throughout the book, images of the priesthood return as potent symbols, found in the natural world now: "Forty-eight hours of

vertical rain, water falling/Like the splurge of God, the squandering of heaven" (from "Storm Surge"). Like Robinson Jeffers, Everson's poems speak of the northern California landscape where birds seem able to accomplish God's will better than man can. But this landscape, content with itself, oblivious to the births and deaths it harbors, midway through the book becomes barren, the focus of God's wrath. Describing the forests all around him quickly being destroyed, he says in "The Summer of Fire":

I stand in the dusk on Kingfisher Flat and
think,
"How Beautiful!"

Pride, itself fiery, incites defiance.
Rising out of the char of the past
To re-envision crisis—what came as affliction
Lives on in the mind as a kind of grace,
Restored to legitimacy in the distancing of
time,
Made memorable through struggle.

It's hard to pinpoint where the power lies in these long, rambling poems—an unspeaking voice traveling through them, perhaps, conversing with God under its breath, which you suddenly become aware of at the end of reading. Often it is felt in the repetitive vowel sounds of the words, or in the intense rhythmical patterns which dominate as you read the poems aloud.

Arguments of Idea, by Peyton Houston, consists of sustained meditations on the nature of existence. Consider a few of his titles: "The Question We Come To," "A Poem Of Thinking," "Ideas of the Swimmer," "Argument of the Explanation," or "The Imagination As Venice." He is determined to confront the scientific world head-on, and to learn by seeing. In the first poem, written in the voice of a conchologist (a collector of shells; given the choice, Houston always uses

the precise scientific word), he says: "All my life/I have been trying to collect some/coherent notion of the world just to/set up somewhere and look at." He will stare so long and intensely that what is before him begins to blur, disintegrate, transform itself.

Man's conflict with himself is not as intense as it is in a poet such as William Everson because Houston seldom speaks of it on a personal or emotional level. But it is there none the less, present in the intellectual understanding that knowledge is dangerous: "I have read old books that have told me,/Theological, argumentative old books,/That Cain was conceived in the garden/Just after the apple was eaten,/For, they say, the murderous came into us/When intellectual possession was sought." His language is simple and yet never specific; he evokes a dream world free of time and place, reminiscent of the poetry of Wallace Stevens. It is a world of sea and cloud, those landscapes which change most frequently, where the blue wave is "a mask hiding the intrinsic face." Everything seen must be quickly stored in memory because "Thinking back/is safe:/to see/directly/is not so safe." The poems are circular and somewhat repetitive of each other, most successful in poems as "Tricks of the Magician" or "Ursa Major," where the child-poet, watching to see and learn, wide-eyed and full of belief, is there to balance the intellectual theorist. All these poems are, finally, preparations for something greater, as he says at the end of "Grasshopper Knowledge":

In this light I see
world through the
pale glass of
autumn: my thought argues
with sound of wind, of
grasshoppers, of the mild
surf working on this shore.

There is this knowledge: I
argue with it, I begin to be
ready for it.

Well-situated in the dream landscape, *Truth Barriers* carries us to that clearing in the forest "which can only be found by those who have gotten lost," where the mind is quiet despite the chaos surrounding it. Whether in Sweden or the U.S., Tranströmer accepts the fact that he cannot escape technology; rather, it is the artist's duty to sleepwalk through it, ignoring that "whispering without lips" calling us to wake.

A PLACE IN THE WOODS

On the way there a couple of startled wings fluttered, and that was all. One goes there alone. It is a lofty building made entirely of open spaces, a building which sways all the time, but is never able to fall. The sun, changed into a thousand suns, drifts in through the open slivers. And an inverse law of gravity takes hold in the play of light: this house floats anchored in the sky, and what falls falls upward. It makes you turn around. In the woods it is all right to grieve. It's all right to see the old truths, which we usually keep packed away in the luggage. My roles down there in the deep places fly up, hang like dried skulls in an ancestor hut on a remote Melanesian island. A childlike light around the terrifying trophies. Woods are mild that way.

The power of these poems lies in their ability to draw the reader into the dream along with the poet, past that barrier between sleep and waking, until we can no longer distinguish between masks and faces. The distinction is no longer important, since: "It is so seldom/that one of us truly *sees* the other." Tranströmer has had several sympathetic translators, but the poems in this book are especially akin to the idea of solitude and the need to get in touch with the inner self that Robert Bly has put forth in his own poetry and articles; one could not hope for a better match.

Bly also gives us the first readable translations of Rilke's early poems. Rilke, like Houston and Everson, identifies with the faith demonstrated by animal sensibility, but his understanding is different: they, "having nothing to do with the jumble of new/strange objects that they don't understand," are not more peaceful, but "alone with their huge blood." It is this solitude which first drew Bly to Rilke: "Most American writers begin proudly, even aggressively, in the outer

world . . . but Rilke begins elsewhere. When I first read Rilke, in my twenties, I felt a deep shock upon realizing the amount of introversion he had achieved, and the adult attention he paid to inner states." To give one example, Rilke can address God with: "I want to be a mirror for your whole body,/ and I never want to be blind, or to be too old/to hold up your heavy and swaying picture./I want to unfold./I don't want to stay folded anywhere,/because where I am folded, there I am a lie." These poems are so full of life that we could easily overlook Bly's commentary, and that would be a shame. Rilke's vision matured as he grew older, and Bly skillfully traces all the changes. Always the excellent theorist, he gives himself over to Rilke's psyche to an extent that I've not seen in his previous work.

Whether it be through paleothic caves (as in Eshleman's work), through mystical Judaism (as in Rothenberg), through identification with landscape (Everson and Houston), the evocation of the dream state (as in Tranströmer's work), the sense of internal prayer and address to God (found in Rilke and Everson), or absorption in the sensibility of another poet (in Bly's case), all the poets discussed here have managed to reach a source higher than themselves, to move into a realm beyond that of daily pettiness. Yet ultimately, their writings remain personal as well—it is simply that the Self they present has achieved more understanding of its universal nature and its connection to others, and hence their work is of more value to us as readers.

Rochelle Ratner is managing editor of American Book Review. *Her two latest books of poetry are* Combing the Waves *(Hanging Loose Press) and* Sea Air in a Grave Groundhog Turns Towards *('Gull Publications).*

Storyteller
By Leslie Marmon Silko
New York: Seaver Books, 1981. Pp. 278.
$17.95, paper $9.95.

Reviewed by Peter Nabokov

The storytelling Marmons of Laguna Pueblo talk through *Storyteller* as if their lives depended on it, crossing genres of gossip, epic, bawdry, paean, joke, condemnation, folktale, and literature with voices of deft ferocity. Their respectful heir and ringmaster, writer Leslie Marmon Silko, designs this unique amalgam so that we seem to eavesdrop on the many-voiced chorus of tales floating over her home village, located some forty miles west of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Part of our pleasure comes from their variety—past and present family kitchen intimacies intermingling with ageless and formal mythic lore. Silko proves a case with this wonderful book: the stories people tell themselves about themselves *are* what makes them endure.

In one sense *Storyteller* seems a private scrapbook, an extended family album conveyed through poetry, fiction, photographs, and many subtleties and currents of persona and commentary. It possesses the excitement of "found" art. Further polishing to homogenize its facets might have made it stand alongside N. Scott Momaday's innovative autobiography, *The Names*, and American Indian writers could be said to have christened a new literary form. But Silko wants the warp and woof to show; *Storyteller* is the product of her conscious wrestling with the problem of converting oral literature to the printed page. She feels duty bound to create more than a new literary form.

"One of my frustrations in writing," she told a magazine interviewer some years ago, when she was struggling with the finish of her novel *Ceremony*, "is that unless you're involved in this, in these stories, in this place [Laguna], you as a reader might not get it. I have to constantly fight against putting in detail and things that would be too tedious for the 'outsider.' At the same time I have to have some sort of internal integrity there in the piece . . . In describing places and directions, there are stories that identify the place. These kinds of things make condensing a problem. It all depends on how much you want to make the stories acceptable to communities outside this one. I condense, but I try to be very careful to preserve the essential quality that stories have that makes them stories. If that is out, then you've ruined the whole thing."

The tales are many-sided, in part because of Silko's complex personal history. Her great-grandfather, Robert G. Marmon, was a white who married into Pueblo society and carved out a major mercantile role in Laguna's development. It was a controversial prominence. In a masterly interlude Silko candidly discusses her great-grandpa's reputation, and caps a story which he related to anthropologist Elsie Parsons with this observation: "Maybe he chose that particular coyote tale to tell Parsons because for him at Laguna that was the one thing he had to remember: No matter what is said to you by anyone you must take care of those most dear to you."

This book is the sharing of *her* own caring. The tales tumble after one another, various in mood and duration and setting, asides about family mixing with sensual love lyrics and older legends laden with ancient place-names and animal-spirit actors. Silko's short fiction becomes uncompromisingly harsh when it portrays the white man; as in her novel, *Ceremony*, he looms as a spirit gone to evil, a witch. As one lets her guide us through her Laguna, the whites beyond her family circle incite an almost hallucinatory dread. I found this one-sided until I reread the interviews conducted by psychologist Robert Coles with Pueblo youngsters (in *Eskimos, Chicanos, Indians*, Vol. IV in the *Children of Crisis* series), where the Anglo world is almost invariably seen as monstrous and intimidating. Perhaps her anger has blunted her care in building believable characters, or perhaps she is providing reportage on the heritage of oppression and poverty of her people.

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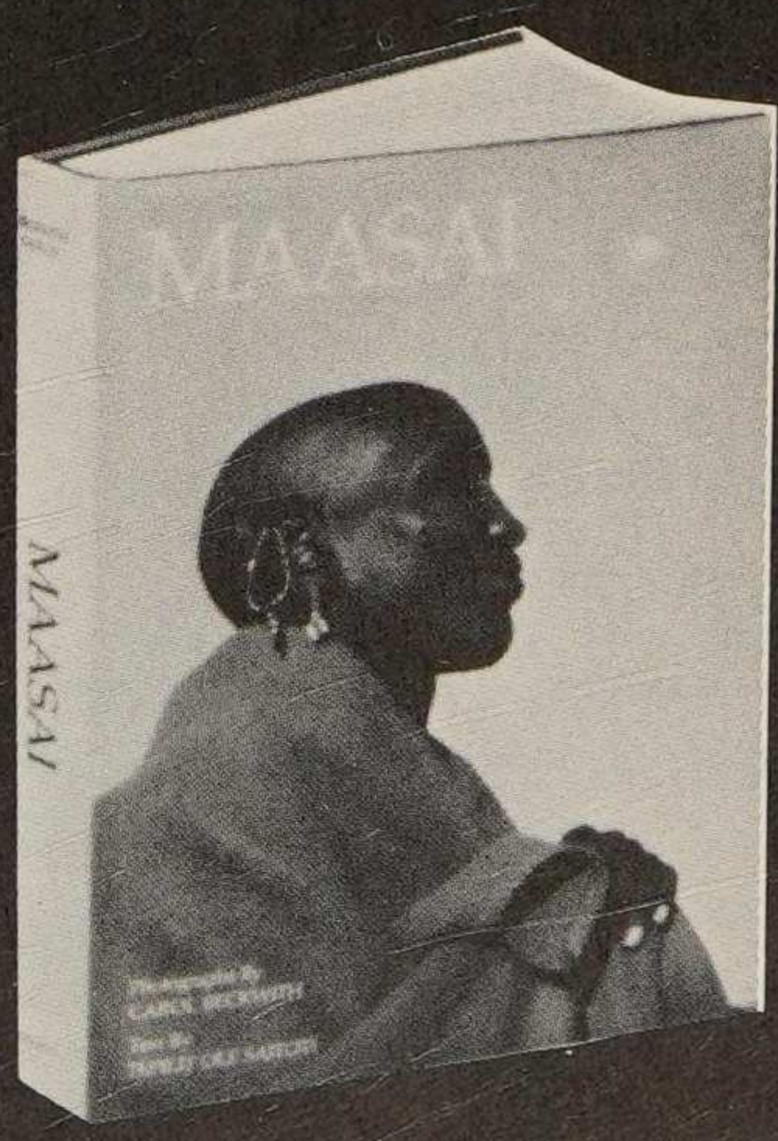

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It is not at all that Silko has merely done a scissors and paste job on notes collected since childhood and photographs she dug out of her family's old Hopi basket. *Storyteller* straddles the autobiography and the scrapbook precisely because Silko is testing the membrane between you and her, between the private and the public, between the formal and the impersonal, between the reminiscence and the disclosure, between what words can say and what they can't. Come, she says, behave yourselves like any Navajo who'd come for a summer evening's feed at my family's table, hear my Aunt Daisy, hear me at my angriest, hear me hum my teenage dreams of love, hear my Grandma A'mooh tell-read us Brownie the Bear, listen to this yarn about the guy who got to feel up Hopi women, hear what I learned when I worked in Alaska, break bread with me and my family. Like the Navajo guests, you won't leave hungry.

Peter Nabokov is the editor of Native American Testimony *and the author of* Two Leggings *and* The Way of Indian Running, *to be published by Capra Press in the fall of 1981. He is currently at work on a book about the cosmological significance of Native American architecture.*

Gurdjieff: An Approach to His Ideas
By Michel Waldberg, translated by Steve Cox. London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1981. Pp. 180. Paper $9.95.
Who Are You, Monsieur Gurdjieff?
By René Zuber, translated by Jenny Koralek, with a Foreword by P. L. Travers. London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1980. Pp. 82. Paper $7.50.

Reviewed by James Wyckoff

Among the multitude of books that have recently appeared on G. I. Gurdjieff, these two volumes, one by a pupil, the other by an outsider, happily steer clear of both the devotional rendering as well as the hostile debunking which this remarkable man so often seems to engender. Both books are refreshingly simple, direct, honest; and therefore, intelligent. And they complement each other. M. Waldberg, writing "secularly," begins his book by confronting head-on one of the thorniest questions concerning the master-disciple relationship: the ego and transference. His first two chapters deal with what critics have called the "inhumanity" of Gurdjieff and his work, his use of the "way of blame"—the method of a number of religious teachers throughout history of awakening the pupil in spite of himself.*

In Waldberg's words: "To bewilder, baffle and disorientate are the paramount actions of the master . . . Refusal of the useless question, and behaviour provoking the often painful awakening of the disciple, these are what I see as the essence of the way of blame . . ."

In short, it is a matter of the master's attack—direct or indirect—on the pupil's ego, often through the use of laughter, vulgarity, lying, shouting, embarrassment, even physical violence; anything at all that will "shock" the disciple back into himself so that he can drop his mask, his egoism, and awaken for the moment to "see" the horror of his situation, his reactions, his lying, vanity, greed, his "explained world," the world he is constantly making up in the endless thoughts and inner talking of which his egotism consists; his craving for a spurious security in a surrogate life. All this is his hypnotic sleep.

The author cites Christ as another master of the way of blame. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." Waldberg adds: "Nobody would dream of calling Christ inhuman."

The book is admittedly a manual—a short, clear view of the Gurdjieff "system," the system of cosmological ideas and practical work—both the "what" and the "how"—that Gurdjieff apparently recreated from the original teaching which he discovered after

*"The Way of Blame," a translation by Barbara Gutoff of part of Waldberg's book, appeared in PARABOLA Vol. IV, No. 1.

many years of search. Just as others had done before him, Gurdjieff fashioned this teaching into the language of his time and place: the West—Europe and America.

The author draws upon the works of P. D. Ouspensky and Dr. Maurice Nicoll, both pupils of Gurdjieff's, for the presentation of these ideas in our western tongue and for our time, which is one of sequence and explanation, and where for the most part the temporal has overcome the eternal. Yet the core of the book, its thrust, is Gurdjieff's oral and practical teaching, manifested in his allegorical *All and Everything*. The author quotes copiously from the first two volumes, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* and *Meetings with Remarkable Men.*

Waldberg draws attention to the fact that "writing is above all a religious act," and that Gurdjieff begins and ends *Beelzebub's Tales* in that vein. He points out further that while Ouspensky teaches as a philospher, Gurdjieff assumed the role of storyteller, and in listening to him one is reminded of the great parables and of "little children" who live without concepts. He goes on to say that Gurdjieff's critique of humankind—"men are not men"—is the same as that of many great artists and poets, citing Balzac, Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Rimbaud. He could easily have added Dostoyevsky, Blake, Céline, and Nietzsche. Waldberg considers these men to be people who have reached a place where influences of a higher level sometimes appear, but who are "prisoners" who know something is very wrong but do not know what to do about it. But "we have not heard the lesson of the masters"—that is to say, the poets, the seers, the clear-visioned, who "have not deceived themselves, not lulled themselves with the deadly illusion of progress. But they have died of it . . . of that hunger, that thirst, without which Gurdjieff tells us that no one can find the way."

"The culprits," Waldberg adds, "are the intellectuals, because they are also the teachers." For not only are their own minds distorted, but they also warp the minds of others. They are "those who promulgate a system of education which has never allowed us either to think for ourselves or to feel or love freely . . . It is scandalous that in our civilization the learned—giving this word its broadest sense—are not also the wise."

Is not this the frightful question raised by Dostoyevsky in his "Grand Inquisitor"? It is also the question for the saintly Alyosha Karamazov and for the "idiot" Prince Myshkin. And it cannot be escaped that it is our question also: the eternal question of different levels—the world of Christ and the world of the Grand Inquisitor; or in the *Tales,* the world of Ashiata Shiemash, the messenger from above, and the world of the destroyer of his work, the "Hasnamuss"

Lentrohamsanin; the never-ending conflict of the Giver and the Explainer, which everyone carries inside himself.

Waldberg points, too, to those critics who have made much of the austerity of Gurdjieff's teaching, "not to say its ruthless character and ultimate impracticability, whereas all that needed understanding was its realism." In short, the requirement is clarity of vision—Blake's injunction "to annihilate the selfhood of deceit and false forgiveness."

As for austerity, Waldberg states that the "way of blame" of Gurdjieff "was, quite simply, devised for times in which the very love of which people imagine themselves capable is itself an illusion. This way is—and I insist that the point must be properly understood—the *sine qua non* of love. It excludes love only in so far as that love is debased by human beings."

For, to understand the way of conscience, the way of inner honesty, one must *be able to be honest;* not truthful, but true. And it is essential that to know the truth one must also know its opposite. One must not be naive. Anyone can be truthful. But to be true is something quite other. It means that one must also know the lie: that to know Ashiata Shiemash one must know Lentrohamsanin; to know Christ it is necessary to know the Grand Inquisitor.

On the final page of this short memoir of his years spent as a pupil of Gurdjieff, René Zuber questions whether his own thought is sufficiently clear regarding the role his master played in the "game" of awakening. It is this discipline—the author's effort at honest declaration—that rings like a bell through these pages.

Zuber begins with his early encounters with Gurdjieff in Paris, 1943, and ends at the master's death in 1949. This is a slender book—which begins with a splendid introduction by P. L. Travers—yet wholly appropriate in length. In these brisk pages the author reveals the eye of a true writer, one who leaves his ego in the next room while he gets down to serious business. Clearly, the time with Gurdjieff bore fruit.

As well as being disciplined, the book is humorous, respectful, and approaches an all-too-rare precision of relationship. Thus, it is written from the principle that sees connections rather than separations; the author is obviously concerned with the Given rather than the Explained. We immediately see that he is not expecting, indeed not even attempting, to answer the question which is the title of his book. M. Zuber has largely eschewed writing *about* Gurdjieff in the accepted reportorial, academic, or idolatrous sense; nor does he write *about* himself. He attempts—if it may be so put—to write Gurdjieff. That is to say, his effort is the approach to a direct immediate knowledge and thus the instant transmission of what he has understood of Gurdjieff (and so, himself); where there is no gap, no separation between oneself and what one seeks. One is both seeker and what is sought, both subject and object, at the same moment. Thus, Zuber, evidently searching for the truth of Gurdjieff (Who are you?) is at the same time asking, "Who am I?"

He says: "One must enter, as Gurdjieff invites us to do, into a personal relationship with him, whatever the cost and whatever the difficulty." And then he adds, "But is not a personal relationship by its very nature incommunicable?" One could say that that is why love can never be "explained." And so the Hermetic dictum:

"If you cannot equate yourself with God,
You cannot know him,
For like is known by like."

"Was Gurdjieff a traditionalist?" asks the author. "It would be much more correct to say that everything about him was traditional: *he was himself the tradition.*"

Emil Bock in *The Three Years** quotes the German philosopher Schelling: "The real content of Christianity is simply and solely the *person* of Christ. Christ is not the teacher, as He is usually made out to be. He is not the

**The Three Years: The Life of Christ Between Baptism and Ascension* by Emil Bock (London: Christian Community Press, 1956).

founder of Christianity. He is its content."

And the content? Innocence. "This is indeed the first and indispensable quality needed to approach Gurdjieff," writes Zuber. "It exists at any age. This little patch of childhood that remains intact in spite of all the ills of life, in spite of 'education,' is pure gold, the trace of gold without which, as alchemists know, no gold can be made."

Describing the provocations Gurdjieff heaped upon his pupils, Zuber points out that the children made no attempt to cling to their positions the way the grownups did, for "anything they have not yet experienced is irresistible. That is why games attract them.

"It is obvious that the game Gurdjieff was playing in the comical, absurd, odious or ridiculous situation in which he sometimes placed his pupils was one of extreme rigor, and in this game, into which he voluntarily allowed himself to be drawn, he always *played true.*"

James Wyckoff has published biographies of Wilhelm Reich and Franz Anton Messmer, as well as numerous short stories and novels. He is presently working on a new novel.

Bali Behind the Mask
By Ana Daniel, foreword by R. Buckminster Fuller. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981. Pp. 168. $30.00.

Reviewed by J. Stephen Lansing

This is a lovely, fascinating, and utterly perplexing book. Ana Daniel is a young American photographer who went to Bali in 1973 "to photograph Balinese dance theater." This book is not, however, "intended as an analysis of Balinese dance theater but is rather the record of a participant." The record begins with her arrival in the artists' village of Peliatan, where she photographs another American's unsuccessful attempts to learn a classical Balinese dance style. Enchanted with Balinese art, she is drawn to study dance herself and to participate in the artistic life of the village.

There is a long and honorable tradition of such involvement by Westerners in Balinese culture. In the 1930s, a host of notable performers visited Bali and some of them—the painter Walter Spies, the dancer Katherine Mershon, and others—stayed to become a part of the artistic life of the island, even helping to initiate new developments in painting, music, sculpture, and dance. More recently, however, the tide of Western visitors to Bali has swollen to unmanageable proportions. An international airport opened in 1969, and within ten years tourists were arriving at the rate of a third of a million per year. (There are only two million Balinese.) The tourists are drawn by the same lure which drew the earlier visitors—the enduring Western image of Bali as a South Sea paradise, where art permeates and ennobles the whole of life. The tourists come to experience Balinese art—not as art, but as a way of life, and they arrive in busloads at traditional temple festivals as uninvited guests. Most are content with such brief glimpses of Bali, but some are not. Many well-known Balinese dancers, musicians, and mask-carvers withstand a steady stream of foreign apprentices. Some are young students discovering the attraction of art for the first time; others are talented performers who have come to study with Balinese masters. But for them all, the attraction is not simply the technical skills to be learned; it is rather the chance to experience the unique relationship of art to life in a Balinese village. It is this image of a life somehow aesthetic which draws us Westerners, intrigues us, makes us long to understand, and somehow belong.

Bali Behind the Mask in its title alone betrays this yearning to penetrate the mask, to go beyond photographing dance by becoming a dancer and experiencing a personal transformation. It is the dream of every sensitive visitor to Bali, and it is the theme of this book.

Daniel describes her own decision to learn to dance; leaving her tourist lodgings to live in her teacher's household in a village; going to temple performances; and finally, preparing to dance before the village in a major temple ceremony. The book is attractive, even

beautiful. There are long, eloquent passages describing performances, and conversations about Balinese art. Splendid photographs adorn almost every page. There are fine translations of several stories and poems, which along with the photographs and commentary on performances help to convey something of the richness of Balinese art.

But the book lacks any self-awareness, any sense of history, any recognition of the part the author herself is playing. There is a truly embarrassing foreword by Buckminster Fuller—embarrassing, because everything he says about Bali is simply incorrect: "We know little about the Balinese prior to their island's hundreds of independent village-sized kingdoms being militarily overwhelmed by the Dutch in the early seventeenth century." The Dutch actually attacked Bali in the twentieth; "hundreds of independent village-sized kingdoms" never existed; we know a great deal about the pre-colonial era. Fuller describes himself telling the Balinese the story of their origins—he has homo sapiens emerging in the middle of the Ice Ages, arriving in Bali 30,000 years ago, and preserving a racial memory of this event in the form of their temple gates. The Balinese are depicted as thrilled by these revelations, and by Fuller's love for them. How all this managed to get past the editors at Knopf is beyond me. I don't know which is more offensive, the patronizing tone or the hodgepodge of factual errors.

Which leaves us wondering: how, finally, does one come to terms with such a book? The foreword is inexcusable, the epilogue regrettable—the author returns to Bali after four years to find that television, tourism, and French fashions threaten the culture. To romanticize Bali is also, finally, to trivialize—to see this culture not as itself, but as the embodiment of a Western dream. On the other hand, some of Daniel's passages on Balinese art and artists are beautifully written, as good as anything on the subject. But what the book tells us about our own perception of the Balinese is equally significant, and deeply disturbing.

J. Stephen Lansing, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern California, has lived in Bali and has recently completed a film on Balinese culture. A book on his experience is forthcoming.

The Game of Tarot: from Ferrara to Salt Lake City
By Michael Dummett. Pp. 600. $95.00.
Twelve Tarot Games
By Michael Dummett. Pp. 242. $32.50, paper $12.95.
Both volumes published by London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., distributed by Biblio Distribution Centre, Totowa, N.J., 1981.

Reviewed by Lynda Sexson

The Tarot, regardless of those remarkably evocative images, originated in the fifteenth century as a simple pack of playing cards, and its connection with the occult and divination

did not arise until the eighteenth century, according to the distinguished philosopher, Michael Dummett. In *The Game of Tarot* he sets out to meticulously document his point of view and to provide the reader with a complete "Hoyle" to the games of Tarot or Triumphs. Readers may look to Dummett for his critical approach to the background of the Tarot rather than for instructions in playing the games, despite the author's encouragement that ". . . once you have experienced the subtlety and variety of games played with one or other form of the Tarot pack, you will see little point in going back to games played with so dull a piece of equipment as the ordinary regular pack of cards."

Dummett's approach to the origins of the triumphs, or twenty-two image cards attached to a deck of playing cards, is narrowly focused, and his thesis is rigidly applied. With the assistance, and following the lead, of Sylvia Mann (who stated in a book published fifteen years ago that the Tarot originated merely as a pack of gaming cards), Dummett maintains and defends: that the twenty-two triumphs never existed apart from the suit cards, that they were never intended for anything but mechanical objects necessary for a card game, and that the figures were chosen randomly from the images common to the fifteenth-century Italian culture.

Indeed, we have no early Tarots that did not include suit cards (with the exception of one very tenuous possibility, and some indirect evidence from an early manuscript against gaming); the literary references from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries refer to the Tarot as a game or include it among other gaming devices; and certainly, the images are simply those common to the time and place of origin. However, Dummett regrettably turns aside from the more compelling questions that then follow. He states that serious study of the cards has focused upon their design, not their use; but rather than remedying the situation, the author only reverses it.

"We have a deep ambivalence about games," he begins, but never elucidates the nature of that ambivalence. He makes use of documentary sources which themselves demonstrate a cultural ambivalence toward gaming: an inclination toward moralizing or allegorizing, an attempt to reject cards as evil, or otherwise turn them into "texts"—that is, to read into them something about the nature of human life. Dummett, however, is silent on these issues. The ambivalence toward game, from its use in healing by Native Americans, to the aspiration in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* to "come out by day and sit in the hall and play at draughts," to the allegorical and spiritual uses to which games were put in the world that gave rise to the Tarot—suggests that the claim is oversimplified, that the cards functioned unilaterally, as nothing more than a gaming device. Gaming, even when it is mere diversion, is inextricably bound up in our theories and beliefs about the nature of reality.

Dummett manages to spend more time describing the details of various suits than in describing the images of the triumphs themselves. His reluctance to discuss the iconographical dimension of the cards forces his otherwise excellent scholarship into a dimmed search through the original territory of the cards. As far as his work goes, it is refined and precise; he has not, however, provided the history of the Tarot. To do so requires iconographical and iconological studies. The images of the pack may not be corollaries to esoteric allegories or symbolic depths, but it is absurd to ignore the obvious—that these common images had meaning (and would be "read" as naturally as reading the backs of cereal boxes) within the culture that devised them.

Since the first decks that have come down to us were unnumbered, and the literary sources and later numbered decks are fairly consistent, we assume that the triumphs originally formed an ordered sequence. But Dummett does not consider *how* that order might have been derived; or, if it was randomly devised, how it was able to remain somewhat resistant to evolution or deviation. It seems more likely that the "canonical"

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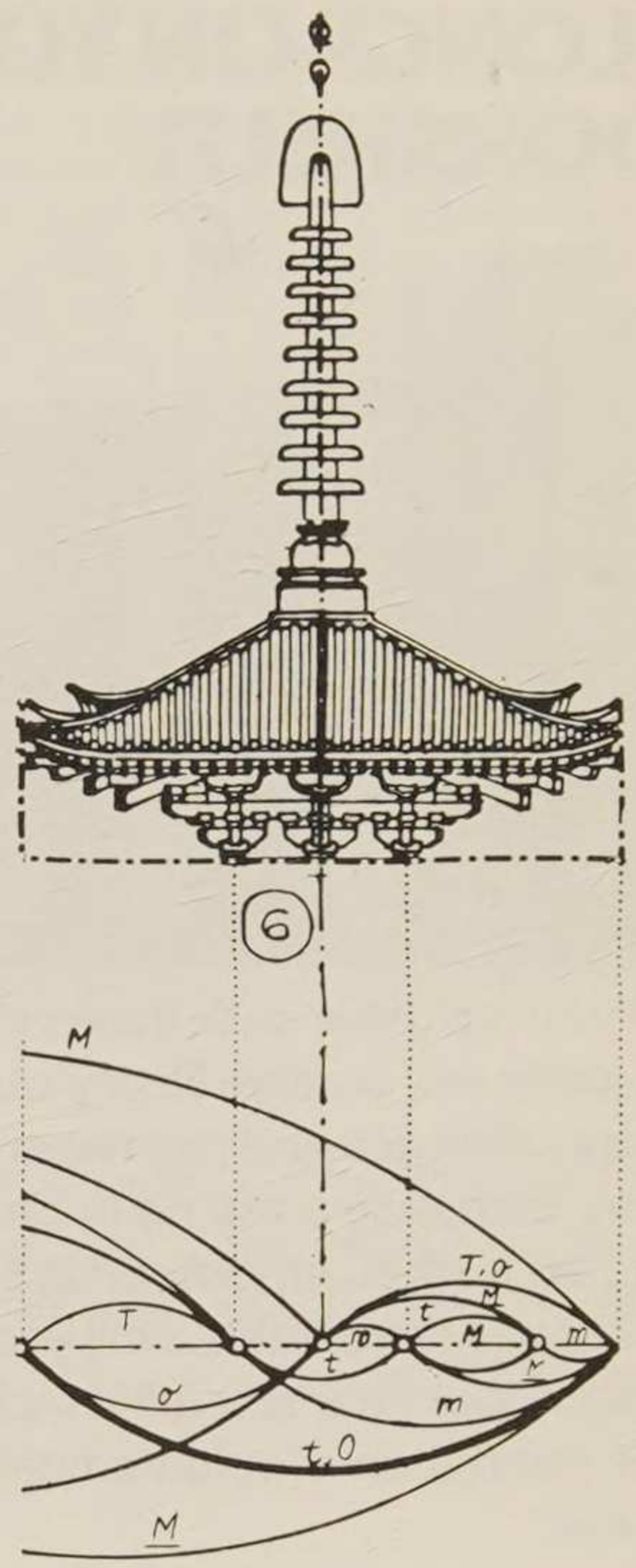

One of the delights of life is the discovery of patterns of order and beauty in nature—the designs revealed by slicing through a head of cabbage or an orange, the forms of shells and butterfly wings. These images intrigue us not only by their beauty, but also because they suggest an order underlying their growth. What does it mean that such an order exists? How far does it extend? The author has investigated hundreds of patterns and discovered that certain proportions occur repeatedly. He suggests that these harmonious relations could also extend to social organization. Whatever conclusions we draw from this lavishly illustrated tour through the world of forms, *The Power of Limits* presents a rich field of questions and possibilities for a fuller acquaintaince with our world.

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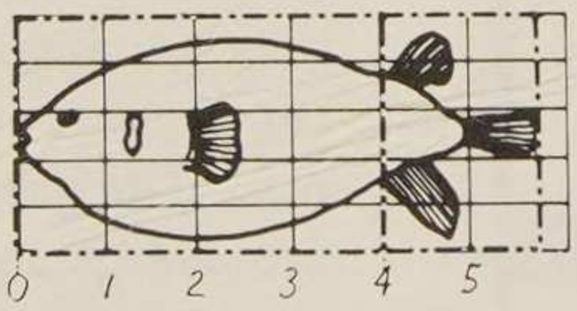

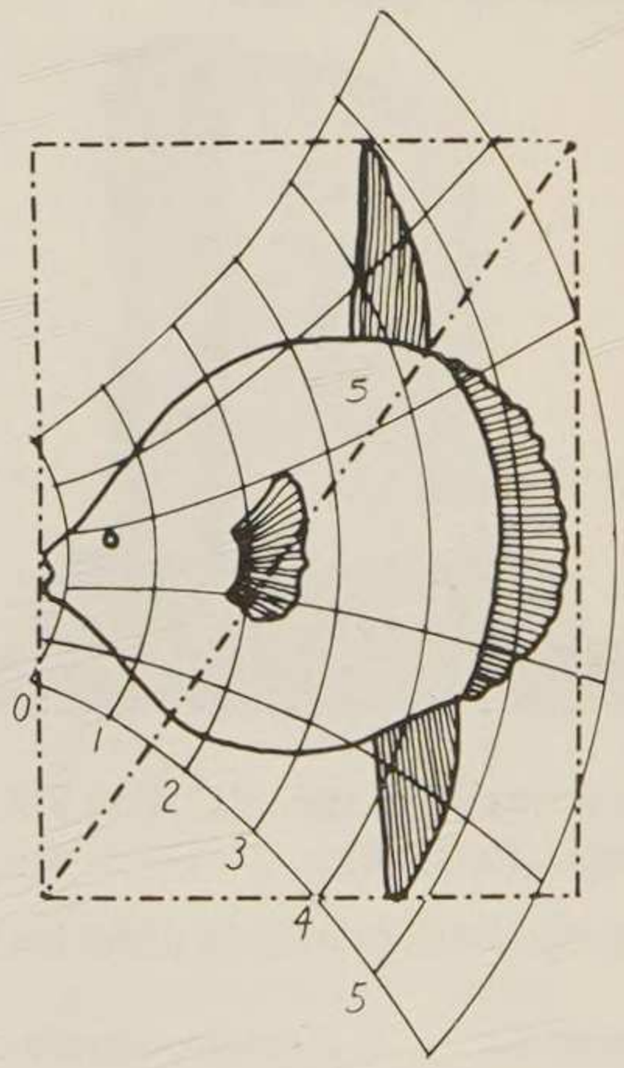

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order and subject-matter of the triumphs were originally referential to an outside source. In fact, what seems to have been most persistent in the early Tarot packs is not the imitation of design, but the following of the "idea" or theme inherent in the images. The implication of the evidence in the early cards themselves is that the subject-matter of the triumphs was granted some interest, and the repetitions, as well as the deviations, suggest that the triumphs were more than the result of the conservative impulse to reproduce convenient pictures.

Inventions are usually more a matter of imaginative adaptation than *ex nihilo* creations. It is more likely that a series of figures were adapted to the purpose of playing cards rather than the unlikely speculation Dummett offers, that the triumphs were made specifically to create an augmented deck for new card games. Gertrude Moakley's proposal, that numerous *trionfi* or figured collections suggested and preceded the augmented deck of the Tarot, and that originally the term *trionfi* referred to sets of these pictures or personifications, seems more persuasive. The triumphs may have originated as correspondent to processionals, to allegorical narrative, or as memory guide, or even as the representation of cosmic or psychic quest. However they came to be used, it seems to me, they originated as just what they are: images, not simple counters. Games are made from the stuff at hand. Stones and depressions in the earth were not "invented," to serve little boys in their gaming. The stones and holes were perceived as and transformed into objects for play. The perception of their possibility is the primary game; the game itself is the secondary entertainment.

Dummett has accomplished a Herculean task, unscrambling some pseudo-history that has been plagiarized and recycled in generations of books concerning the history of playing cards generally and the Tarot specifically. His descriptions of various games and their

sources will engender delightful entertainments for card players.

Yet, I suspect that these games might lead the players back to some that are even more complex and fascinating: the pursuit of the history of image and idea, and in the participation in the most enduring game of all- the play of the imagination to construct Foolish worlds. At least I would not like to play with such beautiful cards and have my companion respond to a remark about them with, "What pictures? I don't see any pictures."

Lynda Sexson teaches at Montana State University and publishes short stories. She is working on a book about the religious dimensions of ordinary experience.

Continued from page 42.

Notes

1. Excerpted from pp. 44–48 of A New Model of the Universe *by P. D. Ouspensky (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1931).*

2. From The Enneads, *translated by Stephen MacKenna (London: Faber & Faber, 1956).*

3. From Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy *by Mircea Eliade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964) quoting from* Intellectual Cultures of the Iglulik Eskimos *by Knud Rasmussen (Copenhagen, 1930). Reprinted by permission.*

4. From Steppenwolf *by Herman Hesse, translated by Basil Creighton, copyright 1929 © 1957 by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Publishers.*

5. From In Search of the Miraculous *by P. D. Ouspensky (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1949).*

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Page 93 George MacDonald and his wife, 1901.

PROFILES

Demorest Davenport is Professor of Zoology and the Humanities, Emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara. He has twice received the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship. His more than sixty professional publications have dealt primarily with the experimental analysis of behavior in invertebrate symbionts. His special interests include animals in art, archaeology, trout fishing, and bird hunting.

Matthew Gurewitsch, who holds a doctorate in comparative literature from Harvard, has a special interest in dance and music. His essays and reviews have appeared in publications including *The New Republic, Saturday Review, National Review, Opera News, Ballet News, High Fidelity,* and *The San Francisco Chronicle.* He contributes a regular dance page to *The New Leader.*

Peyton Houston is a poet who is also a corporate executive in the environmental control field. His published books of poetry include *Sonnet Variations, Occasions in a World, The Changes* and his latest work, *Arguments of Idea* (The Jargon Society).

Ron Jenkins is a Danforth Fellow in Drama and Education at Harvard University. He is also director of Cambridge's Mudhead Mask Theater Company, who represented the U.S. at the International Festival of Masks in Rennes, France.

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Ray Zone attempts to champion the aesthetic legitimacy of popular art by demonstrating its connection to primal human experience. He has published articles and photographs in *Dreamworks: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly, Fanfare, Mystery Magazine, L.A. Reader, 3-D International Times* and the 1981 edition of *The Comic Book Price Guide.*

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