
T.H.M. GELLAR-GOAD

MASKS

Before you start to read this book, take this moment to think about making a donation to punctum books, an independent non-profit press,

@ https://punctumbooks.com/support/

If you're reading the e-book, you can click on the image below to go directly to our donations site. Any amount, no matter the size, is appreciated and will help us to keep our ship of fools afloat. Contributions from dedicated readers will also help us to keep our commons open and to cultivate new work that can't find a welcoming port elsewhere. Our adventure is not possible without your support.

Vive la Open Access.

Fig. 1. Detail from Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

First published in 2024 by Tangent, an imprint of punctum books, Earth, Milky Way.
https://punctumbooks.com

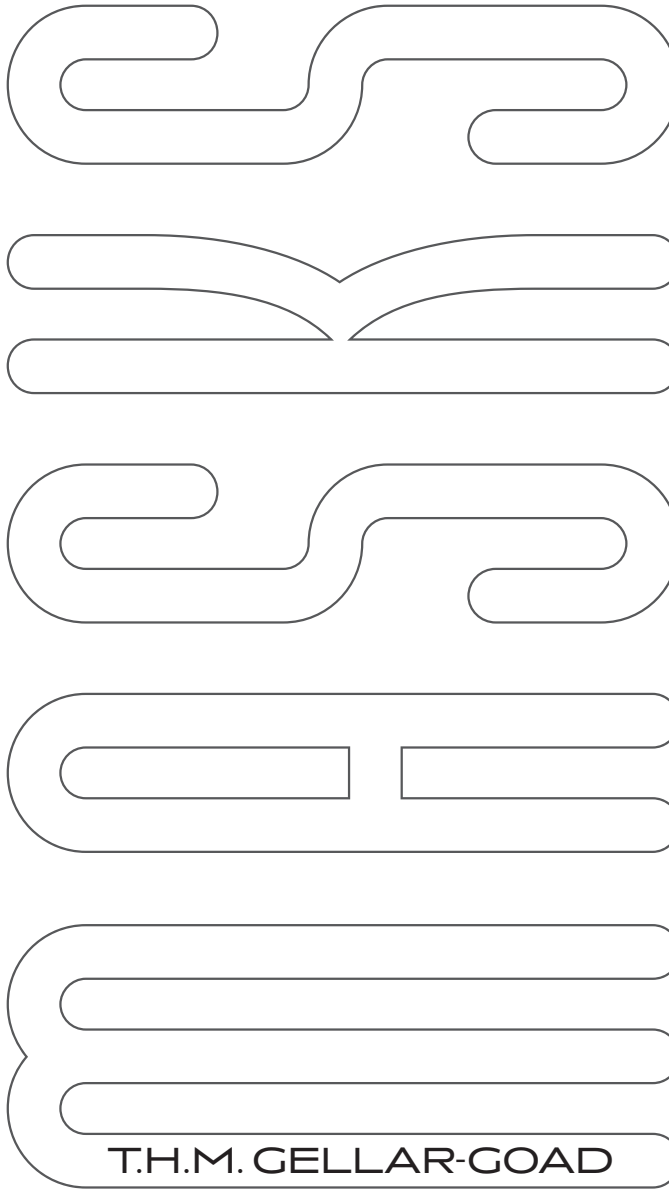
ISBN-13: 978-1-68571-142-9 (print)
ISBN-13: 978-1-68571-143-6 (ePDF)

DOI: 10.53288/0453.1.00

LCCN: 2024936120
Library of Congress Cataloging Data is available from the Library of Congress

Book design: Hatim Eujayl
Cover design: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

HIC SVNT MONSTRA


T.H.M. GELLAR-GOAD

Contents

INTRODUCTION
Mask Appeal · 15

1. Make-Believe · 29
2. Magic · 59
3. Memory · 79
4. Metamorphosis · 105
5. Mirror · 127
6. Medicine · 151

CONCLUSION
Mask Off · 169

Bibliography · 187
Index · 217

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude to Susan Harlan and Amber Gellar-Smith, for their guidance in shaping the proposal for this book; to Amy "Lips" Mars and Suzanne Lye, for pointing me toward Tangent; to my Tangent editors, Nandini Pandey and Sean Gurd, for enthusiastic and salubrious feedback; to Al Duncan for being a gracious, generous, and eminently helpful not-so-anonymous peer reviewer; and to Christopher B. Polt, Andrew Gurstelle, and my husband, Jake Gellar-Goad, for conversations that helped frame and shape the book.

I have learned so very, very much about masks in performance from C.W. Marshall and Amy R. Cohen. I am very thankful for bibliography support and special research assistance from Elizabeth Bevis, Christian Burris, Elizabeth Clendinning, Guillaume Coly, Rob Faggart, and Lora L. Holland Goldthwaite, and for insights on the potential for compassionate mask-wearing from Rumani Kafle, and on masked acting from Jay Houston and Henry Schott. Thanks also to the team at punctum books. I'd like to send mega appreciation to Tofte, Duino Duck, Sam, and Horrible "Antigonish" Horse for letting me pick their brains late in the book's revision.

I wrote the first draft of this book by hand on a reMarkable 2 tablet and I am hopelessly in love with the device. Masks was written on the ancestral lands of the Catawba, Cherokee, Keyauwee, Lumbee, Saura, Sappony, and Tutelo peoples.

for Lyta & Teucer

Mask Appeal

One of my dearest friends is afraid of clowns. My first year of grad school, he kept getting on my case, so I decided to play a little prank on him. I went to the local Party City, purchased a clown mask, and persuaded one of our professors to wear it into class the Monday after spring break.

It went off flawlessly. The prof came in and started lecturing about the day's reading. The clown mask covered his head entirely. My friend started shouting. He blamed a different, prank-inclined grad student, one I'd intentionally kept out of the loop. Once I fessed up, we all had a good laugh, debriefed, and took some photos to commemorate the occasion. And I got my friend off my case for a couple weeks.

The clown mask hung around in our grad-student office for the rest of the semester. Another friend was fascinated by it. He spent many a break between classes handling it, gazing at it, trying it on. The mask held some kind of pull for him — a magnetic attraction almost as strong as the repulsive force it exerted on my other friend, the coulrophobe. Laying on a desk, it was inert, just a heap of rubber with some holes and some paint. But in our hands, on our professor's face, the mask promised more. It spoke of hidden potential: to come to life, to conjure fear, to make its wearer someone or something different, extraordinary.

I'd wager almost nobody can truly say they remember the first time they saw a mask. I can't. For many, including me, it was probably in the delivery room at their birth, on the face of the doctor who delivered them.[1] Masks are some of the most common human crafts across the globe and across history. The concept "mask" covers a huge range of items, from representations of the human face, to functional face coverings (extending even to veils, helmets, and hoods), to metaphor.[2] In the pandemic epoch of COVID-19, a large portion of the global population has seen masks on a daily basis, and a smaller contingent of the population wears them. Even pre-pandemic, masks were an everyday experience in some societies, a seasonal or occasional one in most others. Masks can echo the rhythms of life, or cue them.

Now more than ever, we are summoned to think about the social and cultural meanings and functions of masking. In part, this is because it seems like masks are the subject of intense scrutiny and debate now more than ever. In part, it merely *seems* like masks are the object of intense scrutiny now more than ever. This book takes a long view. It reminds us that masking is not critical to our decade or century or epoch or culture alone. In a time marked by the ubiquity of masks, as well as the ubiquity of cultural criticism *about* masks, thinking beyond the immediate can be salubrious (hence I've delayed COVID-19 masks until the final chapter), and might just help us come to grips with what empowers a piece of fabric with a strap or two to hold us in its grip.

Masks have been with us longer than any scholar or society or scripture can remember. Masking isn't a universal practice, but it's utterly common across time and space. The modern capitalist world is actually kinda weird for keeping masks on the margins, and it isn't just some "traditional societies" for whom masking is a touchstone of social life. As we'll see in this book, modern Euro-American societies aren't as cut off from masks as we tend to think. Many readers of this book will, like me, be globally and historically unusual in not having full-face masks

Figure 0.1. The so-called "death mask of Agamemnon," in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Photo by Xuan Che, CC BY 2.0.

as a normal part of the cycles of life. Most readers of this book will, I hope, like me, be fascinated by masks.

The fascination and functionalities masks portend have captured generation after generation, people after people. The current moment reminds those of us who have forgotten — who have thought a globalized, technologized, open world has no need for the primordial physicality of a face covering — that masks matter. Now more than ever?

Masks are a consummate device for conveying or concealing meaning — or both at once — as we shall see throughout the six short chapters of this book. Masks can be among the most mundane objects we come into contact with, or among the most mystical and mysterious. The simplicity of the most basic mask belies the complexity of its grand gambit: to simulate a face. The intricacy of the most complex mask does not diminish the simple, arresting force it can have on beholders and wearers alike. Masks are multivalent, even when they're not trying to be. And masks imply movement, even when still.

Masks are also historical, cultural, political, and popular touchstones. One of the most iconic archaeological finds from

the prehistoric Greek Bronze Age is the so-called "death mask of Agamemnon" (fig. 0.1) and ancient Egypt is almost as famous for masked mummies like Tutankhamun as for the Pyramids (for these masks, mosey on over to chapter three). The white hood is the immediately recognizable and terrifyingly menacing symbol of the Ku Klux Klan, while the *V for Vendetta* Guy Fawkes mask was a unifying feature of many left-leaning protests across the world in the 2010s (chapter five). Mask-wearing sets us apart from the everyday, both in our lives — during holidays such as Halloween and Carnival — and in our fiction, particularly superhero comics and movies (chapter one).

Masks, I will show, are materialized metaphors, metaphor made tangible and wearable and perceivable and performable. They promise to tell us something about life, society, ourselves, the supernatural — and to reveal to ourselves and others the supernatural in life, in society, in ourselves. Chinua Achebe, working from an Igbo proverb, remarked, "The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place."[3] So we will try to see masks well from not just one place. This book is not a comprehensive survey of masks (which are so endemic to human cultures as to render such a survey impossible) nor a coffee-table book or museum catalog. I won't cover every kind or genre or function of mask. But I will explore what I see as six big things masks do, six realms of human and transhuman experience that masks open up for us, six metaphors made material by masks: make-believe, magic, memory, metamorphosis, mirror, and medicine.

The idea of "mask" exists only in its manifestations. That's the methodology behind this book and its episodic, paratactic construction. It's decidedly anti-Platonic, no ethereal form of The Mask out there in our collective consciousness, no Grand Unified Theory of masking to be found in these pages. I draw from examples recent and ancient, from traditional cultures and pop culture, from history and fiction and politics and art.

Theater is a common thread of this book. That's partly because theater is my area of research focus, specifically, ancient

Roman comedy. I write wearing the mask of a professor and teacher of Greek and Roman literature — as a "classicist" — at a time when my discipline has increasingly (and rightly) found itself at the center of, and participating in, a critical debate about the longstanding Eurocentric cooptation of the ancient Mediterranean, about the field's origins and complicity in white supremacy, and about future directions for the study of Mediterranean antiquity.[4] I return to ancient Greek and Roman examples in most chapters not because they are somehow more deserving of attention or more significant to the development and function of masking worldwide, but because those are the cultures I know best besides my own, the ones where I can make claims based on deep expertise.

Theater is a throughline of this book also because masked performance activates and takes advantage of all six of the big things masks do. After all, in a way, *any* wearing of a mask is a kind of performance. Any writing about masks is a performance, too.

Because masks are a primal, primordial piece of human handiwork, the forms, materials, and crafting methods they take are limitless in variety and possibility. Maskmaker, maskmaker, make me a mask! Cutting eyeholes and a mouthhole in something roughly face-sized is enough to create a mask, whether you do so with a paper plate or — as in the case of a mask found in Busan, South Korea, and dating roughly to 5,000 BCE — a shell (fig. 0.2).[5] Eyeholes and mouthhole are sufficient, but they're not actually necessary, since masks exist that lack one, the other, or both. There's also no rule that masks be anthropomorphic, or that anthropomorphic masks represent normative faces, although face-like masks do cue our brain's facial-recognition processes much like actual faces do.[6]

There's likewise no rule that masks are for the face only: in Bali, for instance, the lion-like Barong is a mythological figure danced by two performers, the one in front performing the

Figure 0.2. A mask made from a shell, from Busan, South Korea, circa 5,000 BCE. Photo by Gary Lee Todd, CC BY-SA 4.0.

mask with both hands, using wooden apparatuses attached to the mask's jaw.[7] Masks might be held on by a strap around the back of the head or around the ears; or they might cover the head entirely, like a helmet; or they might be held in front of the face, possibly with a handle (that paper plate with scissor-holes might have a popsicle stick glued to it); or they might be held in place with a mouthpiece clenched between the teeth, as was the case with an older style of mask in Bali.[8] The gigantic mask used in the Indonesian dance *reog* (fig. 0.3), which can weigh around 130 pounds, is supported and moved primarily by the neck and teeth.

Perhaps the most common traditional mask material worldwide is wood, though masks have been made across the millennia out of clay, wax, linen, metal, plaster, paper, rubber, plastic, mud, paint, hands, and words. Maskmaking can be a craft open to anyone with the desire and patience to whittle or cut or sew or glue — think as simple as a caretaker cutting out a ghost costume for a kid at Halloween — or it can be an art that requires

Figure 0.3. A *reog* dance performance in Ponorogo, Eastern Java, Indonesia. Photo by Sudibyo Saputro, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Figure 0.4. A sculpture of an anthropomorphic figure with a lion's head, from the Lonetal Valley in Germany, circa 30,000 BCE, with restoration work undertaken in 2013 CE. Photo by Dagmar Hollmann, CC BY-SA 4.0.

significant training, skill, authority, and even religious precautions.

This is how it is for the making of a traditional Balinese dance mask. The maskmaker finds a suitable pule tree (*Alstonia scholaris*) on a suitable day and makes offerings requesting permission to harvest wood. After that, it's a matter of waiting for inspiration, first chopping roughly with a hand axe, then shaping with chisels, then smoothing with knives and sandpaper, then painting (as many as forty coats, sun-dried between every application), with pigments made from a mixture of minerals, fish or pig bones, and fish or cattle skin boiled into glue. Once a mask is finished with goat-hair eyebrows, mustache, and headhair, a series of consecration and purification ceremonies prepare the mask for use.[9] Cultural customs and masking habits vary widely, but such artisanal care and a heightened sense of social-sacred importance are phenomena commonly associated with maskmaking in masking societies, including among maskmakers making masks for modern theatrical productions.

The earliest masks made by humans have not survived to our own time. It's likely that masks pre-date *Homo sapiens* as a species. A Neanderthal artifact from France, about 35,000 years old, appears to be a flat piece of flint rock crafted as a mask, or at least a representation of a face.[10] The earliest evidence for *Homo sapiens* masking comes from prehistory — millennia before the earliest written texts, possibly before even the domestication of wolves — in cave paintings and petroglyphs. A leopard skin that may have served as a masked costume has been found in Hortus in southeastern France, an archaeological site more than 40,000 years old. Artistic representations of humans with animal heads or torsos show up in sculpture from the Lonetal Valley (Germany, approximately 30,000 BCE, fig. 0.4), and in cave paintings from Lascaux and Trois Frères (15,000 BCE or earlier and about 13,000 BCE, respectively; both in France).[11]

It can be difficult to securely identify a mask in art, particularly prehistoric art with no contextual cultural information or explicatory texts. So the animal-headed paintings might

Figure 0.5. A rock painting from Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria. Public domain.

be of animal-headed deities (compare the ancient Egyptian pantheon), or of hybrid monsters (compare the minotaur and centaurs of Greek myth), or of anthropomorphized animals (compare Hello Kitty). But the art might also be meant to depict masked humans, or masked divinities in human form. A petroglyph from southeast Algeria (Tassili n'Ajjer) dating to 10,000–4,000 BCE, sometimes referred to as "The White Lady"

(fig. 0.5), seems to me to be a pretty clear depiction of a masked person: a dark body draped in light-colored fabric at the hands, upper arms, waist, knees, and ankles, with more light fabric and two dark horns around the head. A Mesolithic cave painting at Bhimbetka (central India, 20,000–8,000 BCE) depicts human figures wearing masks as part of a hunt.[12]

There's nothing but guesswork to go on for why humans started making masks. As with many questions of culture, the answer is probably that there were many different origins at different times, in different places, for different purposes. As we'll see throughout this book, there are lots of motivations for making and wearing a mask. One theory for the origin of masks is as decoys, to get close to prey before the development of spears, bows, and other ranged weapons.[13] This is mask as transformation (chapter four), making the human or Neanderthal into a deer or bison so as to infiltrate the herd. Homer's *Odyssey* includes such an instance of masking as part of a full-body decoy costume, when Menelaus and his comrades, who are trying to catch the shapeshifting, seal-herding god Proteus, receive sealskins from Proteus's daughter Eidothea to wear and hide among the herd until the god arrives.[14]

Yet hunting disguises aren't the only plausible reason to invent masking — especially when we recall that many animals have nonvisual ways of detecting friend from foe, such as smell and sound. We humans seem inherently fascinated with ourselves and our forms, and so maybe masks began as a way of manufacturing a human likeness to try on and to stare into (chapter five). Or maybe the imaginative, creative, outside-the-mundane potential of artificial faces drew people to maskmaking, for storytelling (chapter one) or remembering (chapter three) or invoking supernatural powers (chapters two and, in part, six).

The distant birth of masks may be shrouded in mystery, like masked figures lurking in shadowy woods. But the masks of the

current age, and of the last two and a half millennia or so, have a lot to say for themselves and a lot to be said about them. Let's go, now, and explore how masks can become and do and represent make-believe, magic, memory, metamorphosis, mirror, and medicine.

Notes

1 I checked with my mom and dad on this, and sure enough, both the doctor who delivered me and the doctor who fathered me (i.e., Dad) were wearing masks.

2 Jamie Shalleck, *Masks* (New York: Viking Press, 1973).

3 Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (London: Heinemann, 1964), 46. I am grateful to Guillaume Coly for introducing me to this quote.

4 For entry points into the debate, see Mathura Umachandran and Marchella Ward, eds., *Critical Ancient World Studies: The Case for Forgetting Classics* (London: Routledge, 2024); Dan-el Padilla Peralta, "Racial Equity and the Production of Knowledge," conference talk, Society for Classical Studies, San Diego, CA, January 5, 2019; Johanna Hanink, "A New Path for Classics," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* February 11, 2021, https://www.chronicle.com/article/if-classics-doesnt-change-let-it-burn; Sarah E. Bond, "Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color," *Hyperallergic,* June 7, 2017, https://hyperallergic.com/383776/why-we-need-to-start-seeing-the-classical-world-in-color/; and Rachel Poser, "He Wants to Save Classics from Whiteness. Can the Field Survive?," *The New York Times Magazine,* February 2, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/02/magazine/classics-greece-rome-whiteness.html.

5 Jeon Kyung-wook, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas: Their History and Structural Principles,* trans. Eur Do-seon (Paju: Youlhwadang, 2005), 18–19.

6 Peter Meineck, "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask," *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 19, no. 1 (2011): 127–34.

7 I Wayan Dibia and Rucina Ballinger, *Balinese Dance, Drama and Music: A Guide to the Performing Arts of Bali,* illust. Barbara Anello (Singapore: Periplus, 2004), 70–71. Thanks to Elizabeth Clendinning for bibliographical suggestions on Balinese masking.

8 Dibia and Ballinger, *Balinese Dance, Drama and Music,* 64.

9 Ibid., 67–68.

10 Jean-Claude Marquet and Michel Lorblanchet, "A Neanderthal Face? The Proto-figurine from La Roche-Cotard, Langeais (Indreet-Loire, France)," *Antiquity* 77, no. 298 (2003): 661–70; Barbora Půtová, "Proto-Art: The Origins of Non-Utilitarian Symbolic Thinking and Artistic Creativity," *Anthropologie* 54, no. 3 (2016): 181; and Stephen E. Nash, "The Masked Man," *Sapiens,* April 29, 2020, https://www.sapiens.org/column/curiosities/history-of-masks/. Evidence for pre-Homo sapiens artistic expression dates back half a million years, to shell carvings by *Homo erectus:* Helen Thompson, "Zizags on a Shell From Java Are the Oldest Human Engravings," *Smithsonian Magazine,* December 3, 2014, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/oldest-engraving-shell-tools-zigzags-art-java-indonesia-humans-180953522/. For a dose of skepticism about the existence of masking prior to the Neolithic (approximately 10,000 BCE), see Henry Pernet, *Ritual Masks: Deceptions and Revelations,*

trans. Laura Grillo (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 23–42.

11 Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 22–23.

12 For Tassili n'Ajjer, see Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 25, fig. 1.4, and Nathalie Hager, "Running Horned Woman, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria," *Smarthistory: The Center for Public Art History,* September 23, 2016, https://smarthistory.org/running-horned-woman-tassili-najjer-algeria-2/. For Bhimbetka, see Yashodhar Mathpal, *Prehistoric Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka, Central India* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1984), 72 and fig. 32.

13 Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 34.

14 Homer, *Odyssey,* 4.435–55.

CHAPTER 1

Make-Believe

In modern popular culture of the United States of America, the most recognizable iconography of the theater is a pair of masks, one smiling, the other frowning. These are the faces of drama, the mask of comedy and the mask of tragedy. Let's set aside the fact that there's little in the way of masked stage performances in the United States, proportionally speaking. The icon itself, with its exaggerated representation of two fundamental human expressions, communicates a range of emotions that drama is supposed or hoped to make us feel, from joy to sadness, a range of emotions that drama represents on stage in performance. The fact that the emotions are expressed by masks, not human faces, reminds us of the artificiality and fiction of the theater, of our decision to immerse ourselves in the world of the drama as we take our seats behind the fourth wall.

Theater's tragedy/comedy binary and its representation in big-mouthed masks draws inspiration from the dramatic practices of ancient Athens. Even in classical Athens itself, the mask was a quintessential emblem of the theater.[1] The two fundamental genres of Greek drama were tragedy and comedy, words themselves derived from Greek. A third type, the "satyr-play," was a short, tragicomic coda to a trilogy of tragedies. The various forms of Greek drama were masked genres. The speaking actors, the chorus, and the numerous silent extras all wore

Figure 1.1. A masked *talchum* dancer. Photo by Sungdeuk Kim, CC BY 2.0.

full-face masks for the duration of the performance. This was true, too, of Roman comedy and tragedy, dramatic forms that originated as adaptations of Greek plays and literary models but

Figure 1.2. St. George slays the Dragon in a production of St. George and the Dragon by the St. Alban's Mummers, December 26, 2015. Photo by Michael Maggs, CC BY-SA 4.0.

displayed profound innovation and blending with native Italian performance traditions.[2]

Many, perhaps most traditions of formal theater across the world use masks. Masked dramatic performances in Japan stretch back at least 1300 years.[3] The famous *nō* drama is performed in alternation with *kyōgen,* shorter pieces on comic themes. Masks are fundamental to the practice of both genres, which typically revolve around a single masked actor and a chorus. In *nō,* one function of the mask is to suspend the sense of time passing while the play is performed, to remove the play's action from the everyday.[4] A dramatic dance form, *bugaku,* features masks; each dance uses a different mask, each mask has a particular name, and the dance takes its name from the mask's. Balinese *topeng* — the word for both the mask and the theatrical genre — is a tradition over a thousand years old, and dramatizes legends of kings of Bali. Korean masked dance drama, *talchum* (fig. 1.1), encompasses a staggering variety of regional styles and stories, and is an official cultural treasure of the government of South Korea.[5] Informal theatrical traditions, too, often

Figure 1.3. Masked participant in the Mummers Parade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2013. Photo by Robert Moran, CC BY 2.0.

come with masks. Take, for instance, *mummering*. In the United Kingdom during Christmastime, *mummering* takes the form of theatrical routines in the street (fig. 1.2); on New Year's Day in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, it's a carnivalesque procession (fig. 1.3).

The masked *dìxì* (open-air "earth" or "ground" operas) of Guizhou province in southwestern China draw on a tradition from at least as early as the twelfth century, as attested in Zhōu Qùfēi's *Lǐngwài Dàidā*. In *dìxì,* the mask does not cover the performer's entire face, but rather sits up on the forehead, with the performer peeking either through the mask's nostrils or under its chin (fig. 1.4) so as to avoid muffling the voice and to offer a better viewing angle to the spectators, who are generally watching from higher ground. Compare this to *topeng* in Bali, mentioned above, in which speaking characters wear half-masks while silent characters have full-face ones (fig. 1.5 illustrates some of the wondrous variety of *topeng* masks). The *kōlam* dance-drama of Sri Lanka, again masked, is nocturnal

Figure 1.4. Dìxì performance in Qingyanzhen, Guizhou, China, June 9, 2018. Photo by Xiquinho Silva, CC BY 2.0.

theater, starting after dinnertime and running through early the next morning.[6]

Theater masks are made out of a variety of materials. Many Asian dramatic masks are carved from wood, and the making of them is itself an art form, with craftspeople often dancing or acting in the masks they have themselves created. A classic Hindu treatise on fine arts, *Nāṭyaśāstra,* on the other hand, prescribes theatrical masks made akin to papier-mâché. Cloth and ashes or rice husks are to be mixed with bilva fruit paste. The text calls for a particular focus on the symmetry of the masks' features and on equal measurements between different parts of the face. Ancient Greek and Roman masks were likely made with linen. Plaster is a common material for modern theatrical masks customized to a show or individual performer, and one of the highest-tech approaches to maskmaking uses 3D printouts of 3D scans of actors' faces as a mold for handmade linen masks. On the far other end of the spectrum is the "neutral mask," a featureless blank covering, with simple eye- and mouthholes, used by Jacques Lecoq in his practical theory of masked acting.[7]

Figure 1.5. Topeng masks on display, Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, Jakarta. Photo by Gunawan Kartapranata, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Masks in these theatrical traditions depict the whole range of animate beings, from humans to animals to supernatural entities. Sanskrit-language theatrical traditions from across the Indian subcontinent use masks not for all characters but specifically for divine entities (gods and demons) and animals. An animal mask, anchoring a full-body animal costume, can be the star of its show, as with *Bukcheong sajanoreum,* a lion-centric Korean masked dance drama (fig. 1.6), or the animalistic choruses of the ancient Greek comedian Aristophanes' *Birds, Frogs,* possibly *Wasps*, and many other now-lost plays known only by their animal titles.[8] His *Birds* in particular dramatizes a plot by birds to usurp the Olympian gods, and each mask of a bird character or chorus-member was, I think, highly individualized and vibrant, depicting one of the scores of species of birds named in

Figure 1.6. Lion-masked dancing in *Bukcheong sajanoreum* at the Hi! Seoul Festival, May 2008. Photo by hojusaram, CC BY-SA 2.0.

the play and familiar to his Athenian audience from their everyday lives.

The Olympians opposing the birds in *Birds* are a few of the many goddesses and gods to appear on the ancient Greek stage. For the most part, their masks would have looked like humans: in the few surviving ancient depictions of divine characters on stage, their divinity is only identifiable through costuming or props, such as Heracles' club. By contrast, many supernatural entities in Japanese dramatic masks, such as "demons" and "ogres," appear distinctively nonhuman.[9]

The depiction of human visages is as varied as the cultures that make masks. Some value realism, others stylized or exaggerated renditions, some a combination of the two. Ancient Greek masks, for example, included general character types such as old man or young woman, but also grotesque caricature masks and maybe even individual "portrait" masks that would be identifiable as a specific god/dess (such as a helmeted Athena, goddess of war), hero, or contemporary figure (such as Socrates or Pericles).[10]

Figure 1.7. An ancient Roman mosaic representing theatrical masks. On the left is a mask with pale complexion, depicting a woman; on the right, a mask with ruddy complexion, depicting a man. 2nd century CE, possibly from the Baths of Decius in Rome. Now in the Palazzo Nuovo of the Capitoline Museums in Rome. Photo by Carole Raddato, CC BY-SA 2.0.

Color is an especially sophisticated tool for characterization, often with little relationship to the pigmentation of living humans. Art across the ancient Mediterranean — not just Greece and Rome, but also Egypt, pre-Greek Crete, and elsewhere — used skin color to depict differences not in race or ethnicity but in gender (along the gender binary, we should note). Women were pale or white, men dark or ruddy (fig. 1.7). These were markers not of realism but rather of ideology: women were supposed to remain indoors, keeping house and making babies, while men were supposed to be outdoors, farming and fighting and governing. Gender ideology goes a step further in Italian Renaissance *commedia dell'arte.* Women characters were played by women actors, not men, in contrast to many performance traditions. But only men actors wore masks (fig. 1.8).[11]

Figure 1.8. Roar Sørli as Harlequin (left) and Karolina Ahrenstedt as Marie Antoinette (right) in a *commedia dell'arte* performance, January 30, 2010. Photo by Bouffonz, CC BY-SA 3.0.

In *dìxì* masks, color doesn't designate either ethnicity or gender. Instead, it's a guide to character traits. Red skin indicates loyalty or villainy, black uprightness, white treachery or courage, and blue or green the leering and grotesque. Gender and age are designated by eyes and brows, straight for youths, wispy for ladies, and fiery for warriors. The overarching concern in Sri Lankan *kōlam* masks, meanwhile, is with class. Elites appear more idealized, the underclass more grotesque. In *Nāṭyaśāstra,* the emphasis is on differentiation between deities and humans, realized through mask color, hair, and headgear.[12] Looking at a theater mask is not enough by itself to identify the gender, status, or nature of the character. You must know the cultural context and dramatic conventions, too.

One of the great mysteries of performing in a mask is that it's not really about the mask or the part of you that is masked. Wearing a mask tends to make you more aware of your body, and the fixed expression of the mask requires your body — especially your neck and your posture — to do much of the work.[13] This fact of masked theater is inverted by modern cinematic conventions, where close-up filming puts much of the acting into the unmasked face. The face itself then becomes a two-dimensional, depthless mask, a flat surface rendered in 3D by the chemistry between film or digital projection, human perception, and spectators' imaginations. Another cinematic permutation of the face/mask relationship is the application of a CGI mask over an actor's filmed face, as with Gollum from *Lord of the Rings* or the blue aliens from *Avatar*.

Performers of Balinese *topeng* speak of a heightened sense of reality when wearing the mask and a desire to become "one with the mask" or "married to the mask," variously called *menunggal, mesikang,* or *kawin.* My former student Jay Houston, on the other hand, said their experiences with masked acting had a dissociative effect, because it simultaneously places a barrier between the face you think of as yours and the surface perceptible by others, while also interrupting the most instinctive modes of self-expression — facial movements — and shifting that function to other body parts. The goal for a *nō* actor, meanwhile, is to draw the face into the mask, not the other way around.[14] The ancient Roman actor Aesopus was said never to put on a mask before contemplating it to ensure that his voice and gestures would befit it.[15] The combination of fixed-feature mask with living, breathing actor means that the same mask will take on different characters and individualities from the bodies of different performers.[16]

The design and construction of a mask can bring about unexpected special effects. An asymmetrical face gives a mask a world of possibility, since each angle, tilt, and shake of the mask presents a slightly different appearance to the spectators. Some methods of mask construction can actually make the actor's voice carry better instead of muffling it. The mask's big mouth

Figure 1.9. A Kwakwaka'wakw double mask, held by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. Photo by Myrabella, CC BY-SA 4.0.

hole, and its oversized face more generally, do a great job of signaling attention. Wherever a mask is pointed, there's where the audience is being directed, as if by a spotlight.[17]

Masks with mechanical parts can bring about even more elaborate special effects. The double masks (often inappositely called "transformation masks") of the Kwakwaka'wakw in the Pacific Northwest can open up their external façade to reveal a second mask surface within (fig. 1.9). They are used in dances and ceremonies to recount myths of metamorphosis. Some also have moving parts, such as a whale mask with a mouth that opens, a tail that thrashes, and flippers that extend and retract. The theatrical tradition of Tuan Kung plays performed by the

Figure 1.10. Three photos of the same *nō* mask from different angles, demonstrating the "*nō* mask effect," in which a mask appears to change expressions. The lighting and positioning of the mask was not changed, only the angle of the camera. Photo by Wmpearl, public domain.

Lolo people in Guizhou, China, includes masks with eyes and lips that can be moved using the wearer's teeth.[18]

Worn by a skilled performer, a mask takes on a life of its own. Viewers will swear that they saw the mask change expression, in what some scientific studies have termed the "*nō* mask effect" (fig. 1.10). Some *topeng* dancers change their expressions underneath the mask in order to bring the mask to life.[19] Our immersion in the dramatic illusion — even in non-illusory theatrical traditions — is so powerful that we read our expectations and imaginations onto the surface of the mask, which is already primed by expert construction and expert embodiment.

On the one hand, this might not be so surprising. We're neurologically hard-wired to perceive human faces, figures, and bodies in motion. Generally speaking, the only time we see a human face without expression or bodily gesture is when we look at a dead or unconscious person. Perhaps it's natural, then, that mask plus gesture prompts us to read expression onto the mask's sur*face.* On the other hand, it's a paradox: the mask produces a sense of intimacy even at a distance.[20] The result is an augmented reality, one that can delight or frighten or surprise or all three at once.

This is why a cardinal rule of masking in theater is don't let the spectators see you putting on or taking off the mask.[21] The rule even applies *within* plays. The *kyōgen* play *Oba ga sake* stages a young man who tricks his older relative out of her bottle of sake by wearing a demon mask and commanding her reverence. After drinking the sake to excess, he falls asleep, but only after moving the mask from his face to his knee. Eventually, his relative comes to investigate, figures out she's been had, and gives him his comeuppance.[22] His downfall was removing the mask, because it shattered her (suspension of dis)belief, and turned him from demon back into an actor acting up.

The young man puts on a demon mask and thus gets taken for a demon. This is analogous to a power of theatrical masks. The actor puts on a different mask and thus becomes a different character. Even without the actor, masks communicate character: either specific individuals from the present or past, historical or mythic or fantastical, or else character types, be they archetypes or stock types or stereotypes. An ancient Greek encyclopedist, Julius Pollux, lists forty-four distinct mask types for the theatrical genre Greek New Comedy. There are old and young men and women, of high and low status, enslaved and free, with different complexions and hairstyles and beards and expressions. Some of Pollux's descriptions are purely about physical features, but others suggest personality traits and characteristics. It's possible to fit all of the characters who would appear on stage in a Greek New Comedy into Pollux's list: the masks are a microcosm of the social world imagined by the genre.[23]

In ancient Roman comedy and Renaissance Italian *commedia dell'arte,* masks (in combination with costume, props, and gesture) telegraphed a character's stock type to the audience. From play to play and performance to performance, character types recurred — the young man in lust, the stern father, the trickster, the sex-laborer with more sense than anyone else on stage — and habitual theatergoers would likely be able to recognize them at a glance, before their first line of dialogue. By contrast, *dìxì* earth operas typically have 200–300 masks, a different one for each individual character, while *kōlam* dance drama can

Figure 1.11. Relief of a seated poet, Menander, with masks associated with Greek New Comedy. White marble, probably Italian, 1st century BCE / early 1st century CE, now held in the Princeton Art Museum. Photo by Dave Hill and Margie Kleerup, public domain.

involve over 100 masks.[24] Masks, since they're generally at least a bit larger than a typical human face, are also useful for identifying characters at a distance and for people with mild visual impairment in societies without corrective lenses.[25]

The character of a theater mask holds power for its wearer, too, who can come to understand the dramatic persona better through examination and embodiment of its mask. Some of the masks in *topeng* have been described as "character study," the exploration of the nuances and depth of personality that can be drawn out from what is suggested by a simple, surface-level description such as "aging former warrior."[26] A wall painting from ancient Pompeii depicts a man gazing at a tragedy mask, chin resting on his thumb and forefinger in a classic "thinker" position; a similar pose with a comic mask has been found in an ancient burial site in Athens. Likewise, there's a relief sculp-

Figure 1.12. Portion of a scene from the Pronomos Vase, a red-figure volute krater made in Athens around 400 BCE and discovered in Puglia, Italy in 1835, now in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. Photo by M. Tiverios, Elliniki Techni, used under the copyright of the Classical Art Research Centre at the University of Oxford.

ture of the Greek comic playwright Menander contemplating comic masks at his desk (fig. 1.11). And the famous "Pronomos Vase," painted in Athens circa 400 BCE, depicts actors in various phases of preparation for the stage, including one actor gazing directly into a mask (fig. 1.12).[27] Contemplation of a mask seems to grant greater insight into questions of character, both

in the sense of fictional person in a play and in the sense of our notion of personality, the human condition, and the traits and behaviors that make us who we are. Although mask-gazing is an effective way to get, ahem, *into character* — almost as effective as mask-*wearing* — the man in the Pompeian fresco does not seem to be gearing up to go on stage, but rather to be seeking important insight into himself or humankind.

In more practical terms, experts in masked acting attest to the profound effects of donning a mask. Chief among these is that spectators are bound, almost by a law of nature, to attribute extensive interiority to a mask's visage. C.W. Marshall notes, "the act of wearing a mask evokes the appearance of unanticipated depth of character," even as much of the technique of masked theater centers on what the mask's surface displays.[28] The ability of masks to stereotype means that masks come with a set of expectations about behavior and personality. Actors can harness those expectations by confirming them — or by confounding them, by playing "counter-mask," which makes the phenomenon of the acted mask still more complex.[29]

The interplay between fixed mask and vivacious performance, between what is expected and what ends up being acted out, allows skilled performers to turn a limited range of physical face-like objects into infinite possibilities of embodied imagination. The world of the stage is not our world, but it is *like* our world, just with key differences, sometimes small, sometimes huge.[30] Yet masked drama lets us explore and reflect on the real world through the archetypes and stereotypes it presents to the viewers. The characters that masks incarnate are enough like us and our fellow humans to make us connect ourselves with them. At the same time, mask-made characters are enough *unlike* us to give us pause, to provoke our attention and, in the right circumstances, our contemplation. The twentieth-century German playwright Bertolt Brecht is famous for experimental theater intended to shock spectators out of the comfort of the dramatic illusion, to alienate them from their immersion in the drama — and one way he did so was by reintroducing masked

performers to Euro-American stagecraft.[31] The loss of tradition means that the tradition itself becomes untraditional.

Masks of the theater are not just make-believe but *make believe,* endowed with the power to create. They can take spectators out of themselves and into the drama. They are a reality-altering technology, artifacts that encode our expectations and immersion into the virtual multiverses of the stage. The most expert masked performers of *topeng* possess *taksa,* which means both "presence of the actor" and "an ability to mediate between sacred forces and the human audience."[32] Masks are a principal way that theater taps into a sublime realm outside our everyday experiences, a realm outside the mundanity of our society, even when theater is depicting everyday experiences much like our own.

The make-believe and make believe of masks extends beyond the dramatic arts and into broader social life — and not just reality TV competitions such as *The Masked Singer.* Masked and costumed festivals and events are their own kind of drama, informal yet informed by performance traditions, generic expectations, and a sense of audience. This is obvious when it comes to Carnival, Mardi Gras, and related festivals across Europe and the western hemisphere, where there are processions enacted by formal troupes of performers and mixed audiences of locals and tourists, as well as masked amateurs who join in on the festivities.

Consider also the masquerade or masked ball, which in the popular imagination defaults to formalwear plus half-masks, in the style of *commedia dell'arte* or of eighteenth-century Venetian high-society incognito attire.[33] Consider Halloween in the United States, a costumed — and, frequently, masked — secular holiday with limitless possibilities for outfit ideas, but conventionally centered on a narrower range of types drawn from film, history, myth, stereotype, and public life. Trick-or-treating is itself a microcosm of the theatrical art: it has actors, costumes,

Figure 1.13. A person in a pup mask at Folsom Street Fair 2014 in San Francisco, California. Photo by joped, CC BY-SA 2.0.

props (at the least, the candy receptacle), a script for the performers, and an expectation of appreciation and compensation from spectators, who rotate in and out for serial performances by the actors. And in the dramas both of Halloween and the masked ball, audiences are primed for certain behaviors and garb. A person dressed as Batman asking for candy is as out of place at a fancy masquerade as a comedic mask in a tragedy would be, while the haute couture and handheld half-mask of a Venetian ball will strike many Halloween candy-givers as odd, lazy, or "aren't you a little old to be trick-or-treating?"

All three of these paratheatrical masking traditions, Carnival or Mardi Gras, Halloween, and Venetian masquerade, connect with another dramatic role of masks: erotics and kink. Mardi Gras is notorious for its promise of debauchery. Halloween is infamous for its sexist, heteronormative tendency to have costumes for men and "sexy" versions of the same costumes for women, such as "Ghostbuster" and "Sexy Ghostbuster." But that holiday can also be interpreted as a chance for straight people to celebrate, explore, and perform their heterosexuality in a saturnalian, liberated fashion, akin to the sex-forwardness and sex positivity of a gay pride parade at its best.[34] The Venetian masquerade mask, on the other hand, was adopted as an emblem of sensuality by the late nineteenth-century decadence movement,[35] particularly Arthur Schnitzler's 1926 novella *Traumnovelle,* a tale of secret-society masked orgies in turn-of-the-century Venice. Its adaptation to the 1990s United States by Stanley Kubrick in *Eyes Wide Shut* reinserted the erotic potential of Venetian ball masks into the American zeitgeist.

Masks have prominent, often dramatic roles to play in the world of kinks and fetish, as well. The common term for an erotic encounter in the BDSM community is "scene," involving the metaphor of theater as well as the dynamics of role play and performance. Masks help participants step out of the normal world and into the scene, the augmented reality of lived fantasy. In pup play, putting on a pup mask (fig. 1.13) identifies who is pup and who is handler — and, often, who in the scene is submissive and who is dominant — as clearly as theatrical masks

Figure 1.14. A person in a bondage hood at London Pride 2011. Photo by Ian Robertson, CC BY 2.0.

identify characters or stock types. The wearer is immersed in "subspace" and into the role of pup, which can elicit a change in character, an escape from the self, and pleasure and/in a playfulness that vanilla society tends to deny to adults.[36]

Another genre of kinky mask is designed for sensory deprivation and ranges from a simple band across the eyes to a bondage hood (fig. 1.14), a full-head covering with no apertures except nostril holes and perhaps a zippered opening for the mouth. These bondage masks again signal roles and power. The more all-encompassing versions also help both the wearer and the wearer's partner(s) conceive of the wearer as an object; in objectification fetish play, the bondage mask can be a clutch prop for setting the stage and enhancing the immersiveness of the scene.

In fact, kink scenes are thoroughly dramatic events, personal and sexual microcosms of the theater. They have genres — dungeon, medical, farm, and so on. They have character types, such as Dom(me), sub, switch, alpha, beta, trainer or handler, and animal. The play space is a staged one, whether it's an elaborate set with expensive scenery dressing or a simple normcore bedroom with a couple of kinky props. Indeed, props are often central to the fetish experience. And there is generally a script, which can vary from a simple bit of careful negotiation of consent and limits, to extensive pre-play questionnaires, to contracts and protocols that govern all the minutiae from start to finish. As with drama, there is pleasure in acting as well as in spectating, and the experience can be transformational. Given its theatricality, no wonder kinky business is frequently masked business.

Masks are a cornerstone of another dramatic form, superhero stories. I'm inclined to think that superhero masks find their origins, at least in part, in wrestling masks such as those of *lucha libre,* the iconic masked wrestling of Mexico (fig. 1.15). Masked wrestling took off in the second half of the nineteenth century,

Figure 1.15. A luchador wearing a *lucha libre* mask at an event run by the Consejo Mundial de Lucha Libre at the Festival Día de Reyes Territorial Obrera Doctores in Mexico City, 2013. Photo by Alejandro Linares Garcia, CC BY-SA 3.0.

kickstarted by a masked wrestler at the 1867 World Exposition in Paris. Wrestling masks were subsequently made famous in New York by Mort Henderson, a wrestler who performed as The Masked Marvel starting in 1915.[37] Not much later, the Golden Age of comics saw the first appearances of many iconic superheroes, including not only unmasked heroes like Superman and Aquaman and masked heroes such as Batman and Green Lantern, but also heroes sporting what look specifically like *luchador*-style masks, such as Captain America, Flash, and The Atom.

Notionally, the superhero mask is necessary to protect the hero's alter ego, so that the supervillain doesn't go after the hero's loved ones or catch the hero without their superhero gadgets. But in practice, the mask has the potential to define the comic-book hero's (or villain's) whole mystique. For Iron Man, Spider-Man, Ms. Marvel, the Lone Ranger, Zorro, Flash, and especially Batman, the mask is *the* identifying feature, or at least a significant one. The tagline for the Lone Ranger is, "Who was that masked man?" Iron Man's bright and shiny armored face represents his high-tech, brute-force style; Zorro's simple, sleek black eye covering speaks to his finesse and debonair; the big eyes and cartoony webbing of Spider-Man's mask picks up on his goofy, homespun charm. The mask is the gestalt of the hero.

For Batman in particular, the mask *is* the hero. Until he dons that cape and cowl — the latter a word I first learned because of Batman — he is just Bruce Wayne with a utility belt. The mask creates the gothic, brooding aura that makes Batman a paragon of superheroism. It also differentiates him from his most famous ally and rival, Superman, who wears no mask. It's Superman's alter ego, Clark Kent, who does, in the form of a pair of nebbishy spectacles.[38] The mask, in its presence or absence, is an emblem of two paradigms of superheroism. Superman contains his superpowers within himself, he operates in broad daylight, he always takes the high road, and he is so invincible and flawless that he needn't concern himself with concealment. Batman, on the other hand, relies on technology and tactics to achieve superherohood, he sticks to the shadows and the dark of

(k)night, he's not above dirty tricks, and he needs the mask to cloak his vulnerable, all-too-human body.

The Dark Knight has become even more morally shady in his recent incarnations, from Frank Miller's comics to Michael Keaton's willingness to kill his enemies to Christian Bale's grim fatalism to Ben Affleck's joyless torturer.[39] The Batman of today is more antihero than hero, not the night to Superman's day so much as the black hole to his yellow sun. In this respect, Batman falls in line with the trend towards antiheroes in Anglo-American pop culture, from Tony Soprano to Walter White of *Breaking Bad* to everyone in *Game of Thrones.* Yet the cottage industry of antiheroes caters to a fan base that revels in violence and cruelty and misogyny, what Emily Nussbaum calls the "bad fan," and, as she writes, "there has always been a less ambivalent way of regarding an antihero: as a hero."[40] Latter-day Batman is toxic, and his cowl gives him cover to do the abhorrent and the monstrous. When he puts on his mask, Bruce Wayne descends into toxic maskulinity.

Masks make believe, and in doing so, they give us permission. Permission to behave as a character, to become a persona. The drama of the mask is its ability to turn one person into any of a limitless supply of fictional entities, realistic or fantastical — and thus to bring those fictions to life. That permission, that superpower of masking, can turn it into a supervillain, too. Masks threaten to bring out the worst in us.

The face of horror is often not a face, but a mask, at least in the movies. Among the most famous and enduring horror monsters are masked serial killers: Leatherface from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre,* Hannibal Lecter from *The Silence of the Lambs,* the titular Jason, Ghostface from *Scream*. On the one hand, their masks make them horrifyingly inhuman, the scary, unreadable, ineffable Other. But on the other hand, the mask reminds us that — like *Scooby-Doo* villains — what lies behind the mask is very human indeed. The horrors that these killers carry out are

horrors we ourselves are capable of. The mask is merely a cover, a role to play. Alexandra Heller-Nicholas argues that it's the very ubiquity of masks across time and across the globe — their persistent connections with ritual (chapter two), with transformation (chapter four), with power — that makes them such a gripping, enduring wellspring of horror.[41]

Masks are a reminder that we are human. They remind us that part of our humanness is our ability to pretend, to perform, to make unreality real or to make reality unreal. Theater, both on stage and off, makes us believe, and can get at the darkness within us — and the light. Dramatic performance, and especially masked drama, can seem like it's working magic when done right. And that's not the only kind of magic masks can muster.

Notes

1 A.C. Duncan, "The Familiar Mask," in *The Materialities of Greek Tragedy,* eds. Melissa Mueller and Mario Telò (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 79–96.
2 C.W. Marshall, "Masks," in Vol. 2 of *The Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy,* ed. Alan H. Sommerstein (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), 528.
3 Monica Bethe and Kyōtarō Nishikawa, *Bugaku Masks* (Tokyo: Kodansha and Shibundo, 1978), 19.
4 Martha Johnson, "Reflections of Inner Life: Masks and Masked Acting in Ancient Greek Tragedy and Japanese Noh Drama," *Modern Drama* 35, no. 1 (1992): 26, and Peter A. Campbell, "Teaching Japanese Noh Drama through Visualizing Space," *Theatre Topics* 21, no. 1 (2011): 5.
5 For *nō* and *kyōgen,* see Timothy Moore, "Japanese Kyōgen in the Ancient Comedy Classroom," *The Classical Journal* 98, no. 2 (December 2002–January 2003): 189–98, and John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty, *Masks: Faces of Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 228. For *bugaku,* see Bethe and Nishikawa, *Bugaku Masks,* 15. For *topeng*, see Margaret Coldiron, Carmencita Palermo, and Tiffany Strawson, "Women in Balinese *Topeng:* Voices, Reflections, and Interactions," *Asian Theatre Journal* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 465. For *talchum,* see Jeon Kyung-wook, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas: Their History and Structural Principles,* trans. Eur Do-seon (Paju: Youlhwadang, 2005).
6 For *dìxì*, see Shen Fuxin 沈福馨, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas* 安顺地戏面具 (Taipei: Tai bei shi, 1994), 30, 25. For an argument that masked opera is key to Chinese modernism, and to nationalist propaganda about Chinese cultural heritage and development, see Sylvie Beaud, "Roots Reconfigured: Contemporary Chinese Masks in the Flux of Modernity," in *Behind the Masks of Modernism: Global and Transnational Perspectives,* eds. Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 206–25. For *topeng*, see Lisa Gold, *Music in Bali: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 98. For *kōlam,* see M.H. Goonatilleka, *Masks and Mask Systems of Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Tamarind Books, 1978), 49.
7 For the materials of Asian masks, see Shen, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas,* 33; Jane Caroline Turner, "Embodiment, Balinese Dance Theatre and the Ethnographer's Predicament," *Performance and Spirituality* 2, no. 1 (2011): 60–84; and Coldiron, Palermo, and Strawson, "Women in Balinese *Topeng.*" The Hindu treatise discusses mask construction at *Nāṭyaśāstra,* 23.182–92. For Greek and Roman masks, see Marshall, "Masks," 529. For plaster and 3D printing, see Amy R. Cohen as profiled by Randolph College News, "3D Printer Helps Makes Lifelike Masks for Greek Play," August 12, 2014, http://www.randolphcollege.edu/news/2014/08/3d-printer-helps-make-lifelike-masks-for-greek-play/. For the neutral mask, see Jacques Lecoq, Jean-Gabriel Carasso, and Jean-Claude Lallias, *The*

Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre, trans. David Bradby (New York: Routledge, 2001).

8 For Sanskrit theater, see Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 219. For *Bukcheong sajanoreum,* see Jeon, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas,* 118–23.

9 Bethe and Nishikawa, *Bugaku Masks,* 32.

10 Alan H. Sommerstein, "Portrait-masks," in Vol. 2 of *The Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy,* ed. Sommerstein, 530–31; Martin Revermann, "Cratinus' Διονυσαλέξανδρος and the Head of Pericles," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 197–200; S. Douglas Olson, "Kleon's Eyebrows (Cratin. fr. 228 K–A) and Late 5th-Century Comic Portrait-Masks," *Classical Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1999): 320–21; and C.W. Marshall, "Some Fifth-Century Masking Conventions," *Greece & Rome* 46, no. 2 (October 1999): 188–202.

11 On skin color in ancient Mediterranean art, see Erik Jensen, "Race in Antiquity: Skin Color in Art," *Co-Geeking,* https://co-geeking.com/2018/03/12/race-in-antiquity-skin-color-in-art/; Charles Freeman, *Egypt, Greece, and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 86; Velvet L. Yates, "The Significance of Skin Color in Aristophanes (*Ecclesiazousae, Thesmophoriazousae*)," conference paper, American Philological Association conference, Chicago, IL, January 2-4, 2014 https://classicalstudies.org/significance-skin-color-aristophanes-ecclesiazousae-thesmophoriazousae. For an argument that the ideological opposition between man and woman expressed via skin color in this art extends to the notion that the two genders were two separate species, see Mary Ann Eaverly, *Tan Men/Pale Women: Color and Gender in Archaic Greece and Egypt, A Comparative Approach* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013). On gendered masking in *commedia dell'arte,* see Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 239.

12 For skin color in *dìxì* masks, see Shen, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas,* 36–37, 34. For *kōlam,* see Goonatilleka, *Masks and Mask Systems of Sri Lanka,* 55. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* passage in question is 23.134–45.

13 C.W. Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 128, 127n7. At the 2023 National Endowment for the Humanities Institute for Higher Education Faculty, *The Performance of Roman Comedy* (co-directed by T.H.M. Gellar-Goad and Christopher B. Polt), Emma Pauly pointed out that movements made while wearing a mask may be larger and slower than life.

14 For *topeng,* see Coldiron, Palermo, and Strawson, "Women in Balinese *Topeng*," 472–73. Jay shared his perspective at the roundtable "Takeaways from the 2023 NEH Institute on the Performance of Roman Comedy," organized by T.H.M. Gellar-Goad and Christopher B. Polt, annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies, Chicago, IL, January 4-7, 2024, and also by personal communication, February 4, 2024. For *nō,* see Johnson, "Reflections of Inner Life," 25, and Campbell, "Teaching Japanese Noh Drama," 5.

15 Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *De Eloquentia,* 1.17. Henry Schott, at the 2024 SCS roundtable, noted that his ritual for getting into a masked role included shaking out his body and getting his neck set at just the right angle.

16 Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 131–32. At the 2023 NEH Institute *The Performance of Roman Comedy,* C.W. Marshall noted that the mask plus the actor is more than the sum of its parts.

17 On asymmetrical masks, see Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 134–35. For the voice-projection effect, see Amy R. Cohen, "Can You Hear Me Now?: Implications of the New Research in Greek Theatrical Masks," *Didaskalia* 7, no. 1 (2007), https://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol7no1/cohen.html, and Thanos Vovolis and Giorgos Zamboulakis, "The Acoustical Mask of Greek Tragedy," *Didaskalia* 7, no. 1 (2007), http://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol7no1/vovolis_zamboulakis.html. On the spotlighting effect, see Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 161.

18 For Kwakwaka'wakw double masks, see Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, "Transformation Masks," *Smarthistory,* August 9, 2015, https://smarthistory.org/transformation-masks/; Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 324, item 101; and Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl) culture, *Whale Transformation Mask,* 19th century, wood, paint, cord, metal, leather, denim, H. 191/2 × W. 241/2 × L. 63 in. (49.5 × 62.2 × 160 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/312626. On the misnomer "transformation mask," see Lorna Anderson, "Double Masks of the Northwest Coast of America in Museum Collections" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985), 2. For the Lolo masks, see Shen, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas,* 42–43.

19 For the *nō* mask effect, see Seiko Minoshita et al., "The Noh Mask Test for Analysis of Recognition of Facial Expression," *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 53, no. 1 (1999): 83–89; Michael J. Lyons et al., "The Noh Mask Effect: Vertical Viewpoint Dependence of Facial Expression Perception," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 267, no. 1459 (November 2000): 2239–45; Nobuyuki Kawai et al., "Shadows Alter Facial Expressions of Noh Masks," *PLOS ONE* 8, no. 8 (August 2013): e71389; and Peter Meineck, "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask," *Arion* 19, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 141–52. For masks changing expression more generally, see Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, *The Secret Art of the Performer: A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology,* trans. Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1991), 118, and Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 127n7, 156. At the NEH Institute *The Performance of Roman Comedy,* Amy R. Cohen described a "melting effect" that is common for spectators after a few minutes of observing someone in a mask. For *topeng* dancers, see Gold, *Music in Bali,* 97.

20 For humans as hard-wired to perceive human figures in motion, see Meineck, "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask," 120–39. For the intimacy of masks at a distance, see Marshall, "Masks," 529.

21 For example, the first of maskmaker and practitioner Sally Elsbury's "Rules of the Mask" is "Never put a mask on, or take it off, in front of anyone." Sally Elsbury, "Mask Theatre," *Mask Matters,* https://www.zhibit.org/maskmatters/mask-theatre.

22 Donald Keene and Kaneko Keizō, *Nō and Bunraku: Two Forms of Japanese Theatre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 56.

23 Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4.143–54; T.B.L. Webster, *Monuments Illustrating New Comedy,* 3rd edn. (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London School of Advanced Study, 1995), 6–51; and Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 129–30.

24 Shen, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas,* 33–34, and Goonatilleka, *Masks and Mask Systems of Sri Lanka,* 10.

25 Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 149.

26 Coldiron, Palermo, and Strawson, "Women in Balinese *Topeng*," 469. See also John Emigh, *Masked Performance: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 275.

27 For the mask from the Athenian burial site, see Margarete Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater,* 2nd rev. edn. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 48, fig. 201, and T.B.L. Webster, "The Poet and the Mask," in *Classical Drama and Its Influence: Essays Presented to H.D.F. Kitto,* edited by M.J. Anderson (London: Methuen, 1965), 6. For the Pronomos Vase, see David Wiles, *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy: From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 28–36, and Oliver Taplin and Rosie Wyles, eds., *The Pronomos Vase and its Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

28 Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy,* 153.

29 Lecoq, Carasso, and Lallias, *The Moving Body,* 59.

30 Rachel Mazzara, "Plautinopolis: Imagination and Representation in Plautus' Roman Comedy" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2021), 22–55. On the cognitive mechanisms behind our immersion — subconscious and intermittent — in drama and other forms of make-believe, see Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 266–67; Amy Cook, "Staging Nothing: Hamlet and Cognitive Science," *SubStance* 35, no. 2 (2006): 83–99; and Bruce McConachie, "Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies," *Theatre Journal* 59, no. 4 (2007): 558–60.

31 Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 243–44.

32 I Nyoman Wenten and Gamelan Naga Mas, "Topeng Dances of Bali and Java," Cottier Theatre, February 10, 2003, https://web.archive.org/web/20051219011059/http://www.nagamas.co.uk/0302_topeng.htm.

33 James H. Johnson, *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).
34 Lily Feinn, "17 Sexist Halloween Costumes to Avoid This Year," *Bustle,* October 25, 2016, https://www.bustle.com/articles/191264-17-sexist-halloween-costumes-to-avoid-this-year-and-every-year-really, and Dan Savage, "Happy Heteroween: In Defense of Sexy Pirates, Sexy Nuns, and Sexy Cadavers," *The Stranger,* October 29, 2009, https://www.thestranger.com/features/2009/10/29/2594616/happy-heteroween.
35 Peter Bugge, "Naked Masks: Arthur Breisky or How to Be a Czech Decadent," *Slovo a smysl / Word & Sense* 5 (2006), http://slovoasmysl.ff.cuni.cz/node/123.
36 Darren Langdridge and Jamie Lawson, "The Psychology of Puppy Play: A Phenomenological Investigation," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 48 (2019): 2201–15.
37 Jamie Greer, "The Pioneers: The First Masked Wrestlers," *Last Word on Sports,* March 23, 2021, https://lastwordonsports.com/prowrestling/2021/03/23/the-pioneers-the-first-masked-wrestlers/.
38 Harry Brod, *Superman Is Jewish? How Comic Book Superheroes Came to Serve Truth, Justice, and the Jewish-American Way* (New York: Free Press, 2012).
39 Frank Miller, *Batman: Year One* (1986), *The Dark Knight Returns* (1986); Michael Keaton in Tim Burton, dir., *Batman* (Warner Bros., 1989) and Tim Burton, dir., *Batman Returns* (Warner Bros., 1992); Christian Bale in Christopher Nolan, dir., *Batman Begins* (Warner Bros., 2005), Christopher Nolan, dir., *The Dark Knight* (Warner Bros., 2008), and Christopher Nolan, dir., *The Dark Knight Rises* (Warner Bros., 2012); and Ben Affleck in Zack Snyder, dir., *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (Warner Bros., 2016), Zack Snyder, dir., *Suicide Squad* (Warner Bros., 2016), and Zack Snyder, dir., *Justice League* (Warner Bros., 2017).
40 Emily Nussbaum, "The Great Divide," *The New Yorker,* March 31, 2014, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/04/07/the-great-divide-emily-nussbaum.
41 Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, *Masks in Horror Cinema: Eyes without Faces* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), 191.

CHAPTER 2

Magic

If you write "fuck" into the script for your movie, you can count on its getting a PG-13 or higher age rating on the basis of "profanity." That word, profanity, derives from the adjective "profane," as in the opposite of sacred. Say "fuck" in any given Christian church, and the reaction will be a lot worse than just a parental guidance warning.

So it might seem odd to learn that the fuck-filled, masked comedies of the ancient Athenian playwright Aristophanes were performances not merely of theater, but also of sacred ritual. Or you may instead be surprised that the sacred ritual of Greek drama included the fuck-filled, masked comedies of the ancient Athenian playwright Aristophanes.

Such a surprise once almost cost me my career. In my first year as a postdoc at my university, I was teaching a course on Greek and Roman comedy, and I'd arranged for my students to perform adaptations of plays by Aristophanes at the national convention of a Classics honors society. I figured that, since the audience was going to be college-age students interested enough in ancient Greek and Roman cultures to travel across the country for a meeting about them, my own students didn't need to hold anything back in their adaptations. Oh my, was I wrong. We ended up performing these skits — fuck-filled and comically-large-phallus-filled, just like the originals — as the after-

dinner entertainment. At a formal banquet. Filled with students who'd never read Aristophanes before. In honor of a nun.

The nun actually was quite familiar with Aristophanes and passed on word that she enjoyed the (ob)scenes. But afterwards, I got a stern talking-to from my joyless department chair, and his successor held a cussing-related grudge against me until the day she retired a decade later. I fell afoul of a mismatch of context and contents, of expectations, of what I versus the banquet organizers felt was appropriate for a ceremonial celebration of the Greek and Roman worlds.

Yet that seeming mismatch is precisely what these raunchy Greek spectacles were: dramas put on as part of several religious festivals in and around Athens, festivals honoring Dionysus and celebrating Athenian civic identity. They were religious rituals. Indeed, the premiere performances of most ancient Greek and Roman tragedies and comedies took place at religious festivals or funeral observances. In Greco-Roman antiquity, masked drama was masked ritual. The same is true for *talchum,* the Korean masked dramas discussed in the previous chapter. *Topeng* in Bali is often performed at temple festivals and other rituals (fig. 2.1), and a subtype that features one actor performing every character, *topeng pajegan,* is exclusively danced for rituals.[1] This isn't too surprising, all things considered, since theater and ritual are arguably two of the main categories of performance in most societies.[2]

Masks hold sacred potential. The interstices of make-believe and metamorphosis (see chapter four) lend masks a kind of otherworldly power, an alterity that takes the masked and their beholders out of the realm of the everyday and the here and now. When a mask is worn, whether for pretend or performance or personal transformation, the wearer summons an augmented plane of existence, elicits a heightened aura of attention and significance. So it shouldn't surprise you to learn that rituals across the world and history and fiction grant masks pride of place as tools and talismans of power.

Masks work magic, as we shall see throughout this chapter. While some societies make firm distinctions between "religion"

Figure 2.1. A performance of *tari topeng* at a religious ceremony in Bangli, Bali, June 25, 2015. Photo by Pande Putu Yoga Kamayana, CC BY-SA 4.0.

and "magic," masks span the rituals of both. Often, "magic" is merely a pejorative designation for religious practices not sanctioned by the elites, and the beliefs and behaviors that constitute Religion usually exhibit overlap and slippage with those that are relegated to Magic. Masking transcends these boundaries, finding a home in sanctioned religious rites, underground magical craft, and rituals that make no distinction between the two.

The process of making of a mask can itself be magical: *topeng* masks are blessed in temples, while the construction of *dìxì* masks is accompanied by rituals, including anointing the woodblock, the tools, and the finished mask with the blood of a fowl.[3] Masks can themselves be religious. For example, masks are objects of worship for some people in Korea either because they are masks placed over the heads of divinities or because the masks themselves are apotheosized. In numerous cultures across the world, masks are often involved in the religious ritual of sacrifice, serving as either gear worn during sacrifice, surfaces for the location of the offering, recipients of sacrifice, or vessels for entities receiving sacrifice. Masked rites petitioning deities

for successful harvests in Korea date as far back as the first seven centuries CE.[4]

One of the magical things about masks that can manifest both in ritual contexts and in theatrical performances is how wearing one can induce a trance state. Margaret Coldiron has argued that masked theatrical performances in *nō* plays and in Balinese *topeng* and *calonarang* dance-drama are, for the performers, dissociative experiences akin to trance. Improv director Keith Johnstone has defined a mask as "a device for driving the personality out of the body and allowing a spirit to take possession of it."[5] Mask-assisted trances are marked, paradoxically, by both a heightened awareness and a sense of being disconnected from one's place, space, time, and body — a flow state, the kind where you're so into the thing you're doing that you don't realize how long you've been at it.[6] Donning a mask is casting a spell that releases you from your self-conscious self, that conjures something else to possess you, whether it's a dramatic character, an ancestor or divine entity, or the spirit of the moment.

The ability of a mask to conceal one's identity makes it an obvious choice for a secret society, and the symbolic and dramatic messages that masks are capable of communicating mean that mystery cults are no strangers to masking. The English words "mystery" and "mystical" ultimately derive from the ancient Greek phenomenon of mystery rites, secret religious practices that were open only to those undergoing a special initiation. The most famous of these were the Eleusinian mysteries, which took place near Athens, and the cult of Mithras, which originated in the eastern Mediterranean and became wildly popular in the Roman Empire, especially among soldiers. The rituals of mystery cults were secrets, and as a result, the evidence for them that survives is limited. Many mysteries, including those at Eleusis and in Mithraism, seem to have involved animal sacrifice and prayer; procession into an underground chamber to witness the revelation of the symbols and stories of the cult; and worship of

the deities venerated by the cult, Demeter and Persephone in the case of the Eleusinian mysteries.

The lesser-known mystery cult of Despoina (daughter of Demeter and Poseidon) in Lycosura, a city in Arcadia, southern Greece, seems to have involved not only sacrifice, procession, and initiation, but also an ecstatic ritual dance performed by priests wearing animal masks.[7] Masked dance was commonplace in Greek theater, and dance was a familiar-enough component of mainstream religious activity, but the wearing of a mask as part of sacred rites underscored the separation of the Lycosura mysteries from everyday Greek religion. When the priests began leaping and whirling with the faces of beasts, the initiates knew they were watching something extraordinary. The animalistic visages and movements placed the ritual space of the mysteries outside of normal human society, suggesting a closer, more primal, even more dangerous connection with divinity.

Modern mysteries may mean masks, too. In certain parts of Mexico, celebrations of Holy Week — the Christian commemoration of the death and supposed resurrection of Jesus, also conceptualized as "the mystery of the cross" — involve ritual displays of believers wearing what they call "Jew masks," "Jew devil masks," or *cuernudos* ("horned masks," fig. 2.2; *cuernudo* is also slang for cuckold). Some of these displays include mock battles, others mock sex acts, either as coming-of-age rites or as purificatory dramas.[8] Where the Greeks used animal masks to draw the mystery initiates out of the human realm and into the magical wilderness, the Christians deploy dehumanizing antisemitic stereotypes to scapegoat, to establish group solidarity by conjuring and exorcizing a dangerous, Jewish, sexually threatening other. Masks representing Jews appear with similar meanings and functions in the Bilmawn masquerade in Muslim North Africa, which I discuss later in this chapter.[9] The masks ensure that the Jewishness is immediately legible and explicit, masking over a deeper anxiety that you won't always be able to identify dissenters, deviants, and disbelievers of your dogma.

While the arcana of the ancient Greek mysteries was to be kept secret, initiates of the mysteries were often proud to pro-

Figure 2.2. A *cuernudo* at the Carnaval in Calnali, Mexico, 2009. Photo by David Cabrera, CC BY-SA 4.0.

claim their participation. In fact, the procession of initiates to Eleusis was a public affair. As part of it, the initiates passed under a specific bridge where people not going to Eleusis hurled insults at them, resulting in my favorite Greek word, *gephurismos,* meaning "ritual abuse from a bridge." The me from that fateful Aristophanes college banquet needs you to know that Greek rituals sometimes involved ritual exchanges of dirty

insults — often enough that scholars even have a technical term for it, *aiskhrologia,* "shameful speaking."

Other religious applications of the magic of masks, however, depend on the hiddenness of the wearer's face. The Bamana people in Mali organized their culture around three power bases, each a different secret society: Komo, Kono, and Nama. Each society has a different style and lineage of masks, a different set of functions within Bamana daily life, and different roles in cosmological ritual. Among the Tolai people in Papua New Guinea, *tubuan* are supernatural entities, keepers of knowledge, tradition, and social power, who take the form of a cone-shaped mask and a body made of leaves. The same word designates a secret society that keeps the secrets of the beings themselves.[10]

The magic of the mask in a secret society fulfills two diametrically opposed purposes. On the one hand, it anonymizes. By covering the face of the individual, it erodes their individual identity. This function can be particularly important when masks are used to navigate taboo or sanctioned violence. Take the archetypal executioner's mask, which conceals (protects? erases?) the identity of the state's chosen killer. That mask is a device not only personal but also societal, the trappings of a ritual of the state. Peter L. Berger argues that formal acts of violence endorsed by society almost always involve religious symbology and ritual, because killing and death are among the most marginal situations a society finds itself in, ones that threaten the breakdown of the reality that the society constructs.[11] As such, among certain indigenous groups in Colombia, authority figures might wear a *nariguera* — a mask attached at the nose that covers the mouth (fig. 2.3) — when they issue judgments or when they perform rituals of death and of war.[12]

On the other hand, the mask identifies. Wearing a mask is a conspicuous act, and secret societies tend to ensure that their masks are readily identifiable even (or especially) to non-members. Think again of the distinctiveness of the masked executioner or the authority figure in a *nariguera,* both of whom are marked as performing a special social duty. When worn in numbers, the mask subsumes the identity of the one to the identity

Figure 2.3. Golden insignia from the Moche culture in northern Peru, including a crown, earpieces, and a *nariguera*. Photo by Rowanwindshistler, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Figure 2.4. People in *capirote* hoods at an Easter procession in Bilbao, Spain, 2010. Photo by Mindaugas Danys, CC BY 2.0.

of the many. It visually suggests a group ego, a hive mind of solidarity or conformity. It projects communal values, and tells its wearers that they are part of something greater than themselves.

An example of this duality is captured by the *capirote* hoods worn by confraternities of penitents in medieval and early modern European Catholicism (fig. 2.4). The members of these societies, who flagellated themselves in public processions, required anonymity as part of their ritual performance.[13] The hood made the penitent both unrecognizable as a particular person and utterly recognizable as a penitent. Wearing it emphasized the worshipper's subordination of self to deity, while signaling that they belonged to a community of the faithful and to a cosmic cycle of faith and justice. The *capirote* mask became such an icon of Christianity — and such a projection of Christian, European power — that the anti-Catholic, white-Christian-supremacist Ku Klux Klan adapted it for their own costume in the early twentieth century.[14]

Figure 2.5. Wooden miniature masks made by the Bassa people in the 20th century, now held by the Brooklyn Museum. Photo by Brooklyn Museum, CC BY 3.0.

Even detached from the act of mask-wearing, masks retain these sparks of identification and membership. The Dan and Bassa peoples in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia make miniature, non-wearable versions of full-face masks used in ritual and in reverence of ancestors (fig. 2.5). The miniatures create another space for guardian spirits, serve as protective amulets, and are so important as a means of identification while traveling that they are often called "passport masks." Secret societies are responsible for training children in the Dan way of life and in the mysteries of the spirits, who are incarnated through masquerades.[15]

Secret societies, mystery cults, coming-of-age rituals: all three share not only the use of masks, in some cultures and circumstances, but also the process of initiation. Masks oil the gears of rites of passage, as do other ritual insignia and tools that focus power and have efficacy, such as wands, amulets, crystals, and potions. One famous theoretical model for rites of passage,

developed by early-twentieth-century ethnographer Arnold van Gennep, contains three basic phases. First are rites of separation, which take the initiates out of normal society and into a special ritual space, termed "liminal" space because it lies on the threshold (Latin *limen*) between this world and an otherworld. Second are the liminal rites themselves, the initiation proper, often involving a ritual ordeal of some sort. Finally, rites of reintegration bring the initiates back into normal society in their newly initiated status or identity. Although van Gennep's model is reductive and too "one size fits all" to fit anything perfectly, it's a useful construct to think with, and it does shed partial light on many life-changing experiences, from college commencement ceremonies to transoceanic flight. A long-haul plane ride is liminal space, if anything I've ever encountered is, and it's a place you'd frequently see masks (the eye-covering sleep type) even before the pandemic.[16]

Masks can help set the stage at any stage of the initiation process. Rites of separation may entail a special name or attire for the initiates, to mark their departure from their former selves; masking separates the wearer from the everyday society of the unmasked. The otherworldliness of liminal rites can be signified by mask-wearers performing as spirits, animals, or elemental forces — as with the masked dancing priests at the mysteries of Lycosura, or as evidently with bear-costumed players at an ancient Athenian girls' coming-of-age rite, the *Brauronia*.[17] And in societies where masking is a special prerogative, donning a mask can powerfully proclaim an initiate's new status. The mask can even bring about the change of status or identity.

The most prolific type of secret society in the modern United States is "Greek life," that weird term denoting very un-Greek-like fraternities and sororities, whose typical process of inducting new members matches van Gennep's model quite nicely. Rites of separation? Rush, a tightly prescribed program of party-centric evaluation of potential initiates. Liminal rites? The pledging process, when initiates take on a special name and status ("pledge"), wear special attire (a pledge pin, perhaps demeaning clothes or facial hairstyles), and undergo ritual ordeals (hazing,

Figure 2.6. A newly initiated sister of Delta Sigma Theta wearing a mask at probate in 2006. Photo by Joe, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

branding, coerced binge-drinking). Rites of reintegration? The final initiation ceremony — itself often following the rites of passage model in microcosm — after which the new status (Sister or Brother) is celebrated and the initiate is welcomed into the fraternal or sororal society. In the traditionally Black fraternities and sororities of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the final step is coming out, also called probate, in which the new members are publicly recognized on campus. At some universities, the initiates show up to coming out in full- or half-face masks (fig. 2.6), which they then take off when they are announced to their collegiate world.[18]

Secret societies and their initiation rites tend to draw on animal masks, like the bear-players at the Athenian *Brauronia.* One mask motif that pops up across the world, across time, and across popular culture is the deer-skull mask or antler frontlet. It's found in a prehistoric site from around 9,000 BCE at Star Carr in England. It's found in a site in Oklahoma asso-

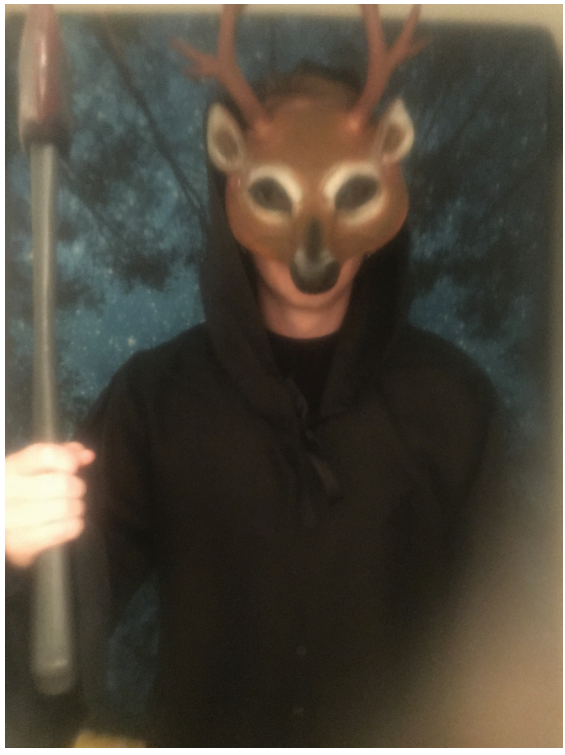


Figure 2.7. The author costumed as a deer-mask cultist, New Year's Eve 2019. The photo is intentionally blurry, an homage to the blurry photos of cryptids such as Bigfoot and UFOs and other paranormal pseudophenomena. Photo by Jake Gellar-Goad, used with permission.

ciated with the Mississippian culture dated to 1000–1600 CE. It's found as the initial plot hook of the first season of the TV series *True Detective,* a cultic murder victim naked but for an antler frontlet. It's found on the heads of the Norse experimental folk band Heilung in a 2017 live performance of their song "Krigsgaldr." It's one of the animal masks worn by the secret cult of college-campus wizards in the Netflix series *The Order.*[19] Yours truly dressed as a deer-mask cultist for a paranormal-

Figure 2.8. Line drawing of a cave painting from Trois Frères, France. Image by Doctor Suckling, Wellcome Images, CC BY 4.0.

themed party on New Year's Eve 2019 (fig. 2.7). Examples could be expounded endlessly.

Why are humans held in thrall and awe of deer masks? What's their primal pull? Deer and their kin are some of humankind's earliest prey. They remained undomesticated, unlike equines and bovines. Their skulls are conveniently sized to fit on or over a person's head, while their antlers are impressive, especially towering above a human face. Deer are a kind of liminal being for hunter-gatherer societies, both a primary meat source central to daily life and a fleeting glimpse of the wilderness and the

great unknown. A cave painting from Trois Frères, France, from approximately 13,000 BCE, depicts a figure with antlers who is standing on two legs and has two arms or forelegs, as well as forward-facing eyes and humanoid toes and genitals. The compelling figure seems to dare anthropologists to identify it as a "Horned God" or masked "deer sorcerer," evidence for ritual killing of deer or of magic associated with the hunt (fig. 2.8).[20]

Animal masks do play a role in magical/religious rituals for the hunt among peoples indigenous to the wide-open spaces of North America. In the Great Plains region in the late spring or midsummer, the Kiowa undertake a multifarious, extended ritual commonly called the Sun Dance. As part of the Sun Dance, chosen ritualists wear buffalo costumes — made from actual bison, including a full-face mask — in ceremonial dance and even while sleeping. The proceedings are both a celebration of the annual return of the buffalo herds and a rite to ensure the success of the buffalo hunt. Animal masks operate similarly for a deer-dancing event in Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico, that combines Indigenous religion with elements of Catholicism.[21] Masking in theater and masking in the hunt may have some family relation between them, since hunting is itself theatrical: hunters must follow a script and coordinate, and the hunt leads to a climax and a resolution. As a result, Richard Schechner has suggested that some societies follow a development of practices, starting with hunting, then turning into play, ritual, and drama.[22]

Masked ritual is a distinctive feature in observances of two important Muslim holidays in the Maghreb. Masquerades that take place between the Feast of the Sacrifice (*'id-Liekbir* or *tfaska*) and Ashura center on a character named Bilmawn, played by a performer in a mask made out of a goat's head and a goatskin costume. Masked "Jews" are involved, too, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter. Bilmawn and its entourage process through town, visit homes to terrorize children and to scandalize adults, and mime the labor of local artisans. (Terrorizing children is something that Germans wearing demon masks likewise do to

celebrate Christmas, for Krampusnacht on December 5.) The time of the Bilmawn ritual also coincides with the Muslim new year, and further marks key moments in the agricultural cycle, the harvesting of wheat and the planting of barley.[23] In this liminal time between two high holy days, between old year and new, the masked shenanigans offer a release from the nitty-gritty of normal daily life and a reminder of the preternatural world that exists beyond mundane human experience and conventions. Compare Halloween, which I think is the United States of America's own masked ritual — with the potent cocktail of secularism, consumerism, and mass pop culture that characterizes so much of the culture of the modern USA.

Masks are magical. Masks are handmaiden to magic and ritual. What we do when we wear a mask is imbued with grandeur, with greater significance. Masks, that is, command considerable ritual efficacy: they advance the religious or magical rite towards its conclusion. The way magic really works isn't hurling fireballs or moving things with your mind. Magic works socially, by influencing others in your community directly or indirectly on emotional, reputational, or psychosomatic levels. Masks heighten the conductivity of ritual's social power, by signaling or symbolizing its flow from performer to supernatural source to observer to target or recipient.

Wearing a mask is placing yourself in a social moment, assigning yourself to a piece of culture — even if temporarily. It is claiming for yourself something other than your self, stepping outside and beyond the trappings of your mundane life, your human body. A mask is itself a liminal space, a gate to worlds beyond, an intermediary between human and more than human. And that's the true magic of masks.

Notes

1 I Wayan Dibia and Rucina Ballinger, *Balinese Dance, Drama and Music: A Guide to the Performing Arts of Bali,* illust. Barbara Anello (Singapore: Periplus, 2004), 64, 65.
2 Richard Schechner, *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970–1976* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977).
3 For *topeng,* see Jane Caroline Turner, "Embodiment, Balinese Dance Theatre and the Ethnographer's Predicament," *Performance and Spirituality* 2, no. 1 (2011): 60. For *dìxì,* see Shen Fuxin 沈福馨, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas* 安顺地戏面具 (Taipei: Tai bei shi, 1994), 33.
4 For masks as objects of worship in Korea, see Jeon Kyung-wook, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas: Their History and Structural Principles,* trans. Eur Do-seon (Paju: Youhlwadang, 2005), 21–23. For masks in religious sacrifice, see Polly Richards, "What's in a Dogon Mask," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 49–50 (Spring/Autumn 2006): 92–114; Subhash Kak, "Ritual, Masks, and Sacrifice," *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2004): 29–44; Tord Olsson, "Animate Objects: Ritual Perception and Practice Among the Bambara in Mali," in *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism,* ed. Graham Harvey (London: Routledge, 2015), 226–43; Shen, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas,* 25–26, 33; and Patrick McNamara, *Spirit Possession and Exorcism: History, Psychology, and Neurobiology,* Vol. 1: *Mental States and the Phenomenon of Possession* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 36–37. For masked harvest rites in Korea, see Jeon, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas,* 16–17.
5 See Margaret Coldiron, *Trance and Transformation of the Actor in Japanese Noh and Balinese Masked Dance-Drama* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2004), and Keith Johnstone, *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (New York: Theatre Arts Book, 1979), 148. Compare also my comment in the previous chapter about Jay Houston's feelings of dissociation while acting masked.
6 For the flow state in masking, see Johnstone, *Impro,* 151–54; the concept of "flow," which I have adduced to explicate Johnstone's explanations, is the subject of the landmark study by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).
7 Jan N. Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 82–85.
8 John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty, *Masks: Faces of Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 313–14.
9 Abdellah Hammoudi, *The Victim and Its Masks: An Essay on Sacrifice and Masquerade in the Maghreb,* trans. Paula Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 23, and Paul Silverstein, "Masquerade Politics: Race, Islam and the Scale of Amazigh Activism in Southeastern Morocco," *Nations and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (January 2011): 65–84.
10 For Bamana masking practices, see "Komo-Society Headdress," *Cornell University Johnson Museum of Art,* https://web.archive.org/

web/20220702223608/https://museum.cornell.edu/collections/african/sub-saharan-west-africa/komo-society-headdress. For Tolai masking practices, see Klaus Neumann, "Tradition and Identity in Papua New Guinea: Some Observations regarding Tami and Tolai," *Oceania* 62, no. 4 (June 1992): 308–9.

11 Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 44–55.

12 Gary Edson, *Masks and Masking: Faces of Tradition and Belief Worldwide* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009), 47.

13 Andrew H. Chen, *Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260–1610: Ritual and Experience* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

14 Michael K. Jerryson, *Religious Violence Today: Faith and Conflict in the Modern World,* Vol. 1: *African Religion to Islam* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2020), 217.

15 For Dan miniature masks, see, e.g., Dan peoples, *Miniature Mask,* 19th–mid-20th century, wood, metal, H. 39/16 × W. 21/2 × D. 1 in. (9 × 6.4 × 2.5 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/312534. For Dan secret societies and the training of children, see Kathy Curnow, "Art in Small-Scale Communities," in *The Bright Continent: African Art History* (Cleveland: MSL Academic Endeavors, 2018), chap. 4.5, https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/bright-continent/chapter/chapter-4-5-art-in-small-scale-communities/.

16 Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), chap. 3, chap. 5, and Fritz Graf, "Initiation: A Concept with a Troubled History," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives,* eds. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (New York: Routledge, 2003), 3–24.

17 Christopher A. Faraone, "Playing the Bear and the Fawn for Artemis: Female Initiation or Substitute Sacrifice?," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives,* eds. Dodd and Faraone, 43–68, argues that the Brauronia was not a coming-of-age rite but rather a sacrificial ritual performed by young women. Either way, it was a masked ritual.

18 "NPHC Organizations Present New Members through 'Coming Out' Ceremony," *TCU 360,* December 10, 2012, https://tcu360.com/2012/12/10/16665nphc-organizations-present-new-members-through-coming-out-ceremony/, and ancherise, "A Deeper Look into Probates…," *UnifiedDivinity: Divine 9 Greek Life,* March 29, 2014, https://aytaylor.wordpress.com/2014/03/29/a-deeper-look-into-probates/.

19 For Star Carr, see the official visitors' page hosted by the Scarborough Museums Trust, https://www.scarboroughmuseumstrust.com/event/discover-star-carr/, and the "Antler headdresses" page of the Star Carr Archaeology Project, http://www.starcarr.com/headdress.html. For the Mississippian culture mask, see Hope B. Werness, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in Art* (New York: Continuum, 2006),

129. The *True Detective* scene is available at sideeffects, "Her body is a paraphilic love map," *YouTube,* January 14, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ6LtGXcyCE; the Heilung performance at Heilung, "Heilung | LIFA — Krigsgaldr LIVE," *YouTube,* November 1, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRg_8NNPTD8; and the trailer for *The Order,* complete with deer-skull mask, at Netflix, "The Order: Season 1 | Official Trailer [HD]," *YouTube,* February 21, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD-cFgDDuqM.

20 Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 22–23.

21 For the Kiowa Sun Dance, see Benjamin R. Kracht, *Kiowa Belief and Ritual* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 135, 230, 241. For the deer-dancing in Acoma Pueblo, see Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 33–34.

22 Schechner, *Essays on Performance Theory,* 56–60.

23 For Bilmawn, see Hammoudi, *The Victim and Its Masks,* 16, 37, 99. For Krampusnacht, see Elizabeth Lundin, "Krampusnacht: What Is It, and How Did It Start?," *History Things,* August 15, 2023, https://historythings.com/krampusnacht-what-is-it-and-how-did-it-start/.

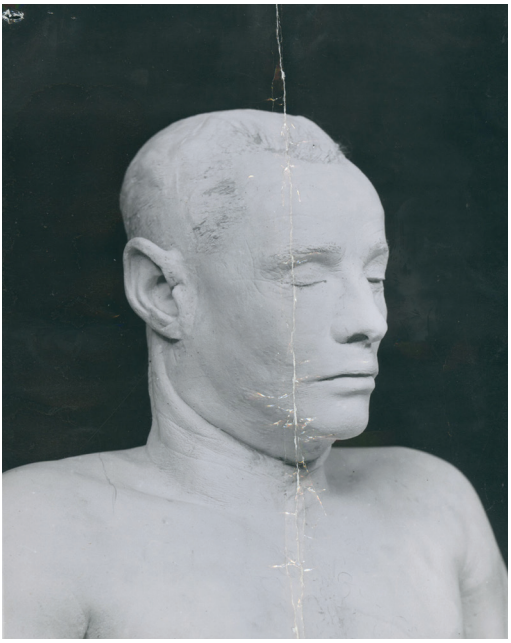


Figure 3.1. A plaster cast of the corpse of the Somerton Man. Photo taken in March 1958. Photo by State Records of South Australia, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

CHAPTER 3

Memory

A man was found dead on Somerton Beach in Australia a little more than seventy years ago. His identity was a total mystery. After six and a half months of investigation and a hundred or more people viewing the body in failed attempts to identify it, the local authorities buried the corpse of the "Somerton Man." First, though, they made a plaster cast of his head and shoulders (fig. 3.1), "in the hope that [his] identity may eventually be revealed."[1]

A month and a half later, a detective investigating the case showed the cast to a person of interest, a nurse. Her phone number had been found in the back of a book of poetry; a scrap of paper torn from that book had been found on the dead man's body. When she saw the cast, she looked, according to the detective, "completely taken aback, to the point of giving the appearance that she was about to faint."[2] She said she was unable to identify the man that the plaster cast depicted. The man who made the cast was present at the interview, and he later said that the nurse refused to look at the cast at all after her first glance.[3]

There's another term for a plaster cast of a deceased person's face: *death mask*. They were quite the rage in the nineteenth century. There are death masks of Napoleon Bonaparte, Ludwig van Beethoven, and John Keats. The death mask of a Jane Doe found drowned in the Seine in the late 1800s was used in 1960

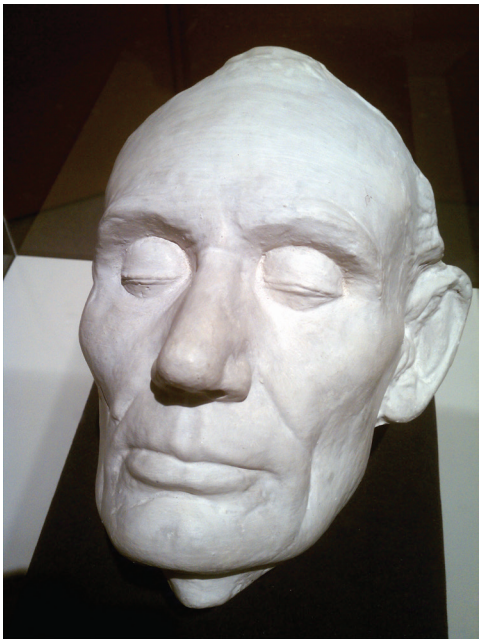


Figure 3.2. Life cast of Abraham Lincoln made by Leonard Volk in 1860, photographed at the New York State Museum in 2012. Photo by DannyBoy7783, CC BY-SA 3.0.

as the model for Resusci Annie, now the standard-issue practice dummy for CPR.[4] The degree of detail they preserve is striking, even as the casting technique entails a degree of distortions and imperfections. Plaster death masks were viewed as truer to life than photographs in a cultural moment obsessed with verisimilitude.[5] They figured into the burgeoning science of forensics, as we have seen with the mystery of the Somerton Man, and into the burgeoning, racist pseudoscience of phrenology.

The idea behind making a death mask of a corpse is preservation. The mask aims to keep the dead person's visage alive, to transmute the memory of them into a permanent, material form. The impression of a face in a medium more enduring than flesh can accrue talismanic power, as can be seen with the

Figure 3.3. Life cast of Abraham Lincoln made by Clark Mills in 1865, sixty days before Lincoln's assassination. Photo by Mike Fritcher, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Shroud of Turin and the persistent magical thinking and theorizing about its origins and properties. The death mask's three-dimensional replica of a face seems to conjure the dead back into the world of the living, if only for a moment.

Life masks — plaster casts of living rather than dead faces — exert this pull of permanence and reanimation, too. Two life masks of Abraham Lincoln, one taken in 1860, before the outbreak of the American Civil War (fig. 3.2), the other in 1865, two months before his assassination (fig. 3.3), are said to show how much his toil to save the Union aged him.[6] We feel like we *know* someone by studying their face, and so the urge to make a life mask is the urge to freeze the person in time, to ensure future access to this special knowledge of them.

Death masks, both the cast masks I've been discussing and other kinds we will encounter as this chapter progresses, are an

Figure 3.4. An attendee of Spooky Empire Ultimate Halloween Weekend 2015 in Orlando, Florida, wearing a Michael Myers mask atop a Captain Kirk costume. Photo by Michel Curi, CC BY 2.0.

attempt to time travel. What Luke A. Fidler writes of wax figures is equally true of the death mask: it "collapses the distance that separates then from now."[7] The hands-on immediacy, the vivid detail, enacts an alchemical effect on our psychology.

The casting of a mask from a person dead or alive also performs a second sort of alchemy: the maskification of the person. Face into object, flesh into form. In the period between the end of the original *Star Trek* TV series and the first *Star Trek* motion picture, William Shatner filmed a series of other B-movies, including the 1975 horror show *Devil's Rain.* A life mask of Shatner was made as part of the movie's special effects, and that

mask was subsequently copied for sale as a Captain Kirk mask.[8] Shatner's face, cast while he himself was cast as someone other than his iconic role, was now a commodity, the Captain Kirk persona easily im-persona-ted. Shatner claims to have worn his own Shatner mask when taking his kids trick-or-treating; if someone was stingy with the candy, he'd pull his mask up and let them see his face behind his face — the person underneath the persona.

The most high-profile use of the Shatner life mask has been in the *Halloween* horror franchise. Flipped inside out, the Shatner mask became the mask worn ubiquitously by the series' slasher villain Michael Myers (fig. 3.4). As I noted in chapter one, the horror-film slasher's mask makes the monster both horrifyingly inhuman and horrifyingly *human,* reminding us that the true monster is the one within. The inversion of the Michael Myers mask makes that subtext into text, and makes Myers hauntingly familiar yet unsettlingly abnormal. Kirk's celebrity features lurk beneath a mottled white fright of a face: empty, expressionless, and with an ineffable malice. The inside of the mask, when turned outwards, screams of inhumanity, despite its genesis in close contact with a living human face. There's even an optical illusion that turns on a plastic mask in rotation: once its inside is facing the viewer, there's a cognitive tendency to perceive it as another face, right-side out, making a concave surface appear like a convex face.[9]

Wax masks are, unlike plaster, usually sculpted rather than cast, with a consequent reduction in vividness of detail preserved, but their time-spanning powers of memorialization are just as potent. Funeral customs among ancient Roman elite men involved a wax death mask of the deceased, an *imago* (plural *imagines*), usually created during the prime of the man's life. Beyond the memorialization of the decedent himself, the *imago* served as an icon for the veneration of ancestors. The household's *imagines* would be displayed prominently and permanently in a house of the dead man's family. Keeping such masks was legally restricted to wealthy, politically engaged families.[10]

Figure 3.5. A performance of *geommu* (검무, a Korean word literally meaning "sword-dance") on May 11, 2014. Photo by Heeyon Kim, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

On special ritual occasions, especially at subsequent family funerals, the *imagines* would be paraded in a solemn procession, each mask worn by a living relative of the deceased, preferably someone with a bit of a family resemblance, or else an actor. The wearer would perform a *prosopopoeia* or *ethopoeia* of the ancestor, speaking and acting as him so as to conjure his face (*prosōpon*) and character (*ēthos*). In Latin, *imago* can mean not only mask but also ghost or apparition of the dead: the mask brought the ancestor's spirit into contact with the mortal realm.[11]

One ancient Roman death mask made of wax survives, excavated from a burial site in Cuma in southern Italy, now housed in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. It was originally painted, though that is now known only through microscopic analysis, and it had glass eyes, which survive. The lifelikeness is striking; the eyes seem to stare right back at you as you look at it. Though the mask itself is not an *imago* — since *imagines* were not buried with the deceased — it is a good guide to the artisanship and skill of Roman wax maskmaking, which scholars at Cornell University endeavored to reconstruct in 2013.[12]

The death mask reanimates the deceased. The ancient Greek historian Polybius, writing of *imagines* on display during Roman funeral rites, said that it was as if the masks were "living and breathing." By breathing through the mask, its wearer breathes life back into the dead. Doing so in the context of a public ritual breathes life into communal memory and values, as well.[13]

Ancestral masks are common throughout the world and throughout history. The Korean masked sword-dance *hwangchangmu* or *geommu,* for example, memorializes a mythohistorical general named Gwan Chang (fig. 3.5). A parade of maskers in the All Souls Procession in Tucson, Arizona, which incorporates elements from the famous Día de los Muertos, commemorates and grieves for the deceased. The *tago* masks of the Siassi people of Papua New Guinea (fig. 3.6) are not wax death masks like the Roman *imagines,* but rather stylized wooden masks that represent ancestors or the ghosts of ancestors. These masks are deployed approximately once every decade or two, and may be accompanied by ceremonies of circumcision and a yearlong prohibition against waging war and picking coconuts. The wearers inhabit the *tago* masks, becoming their revered ancestors in the flesh.[14]

Both *tago* masks and *imagines* invoke ancestral memory to admonish people living in the here and now. For the Romans, an ancestral *imago* asserted the importance and relevance of the *mos maiorum* (adherence to the behavior and values of Romans of earlier times) and *pietas,* dutifulness to father, family, government, and the gods. The *imagines* even acted as a sort of in-house surveillance, watching over the inhabitants of the household with the deceased ancestors' stern moral gaze.[15] *Tago* masks emphasize the continuity of tradition and — especially given connections with the harvest and the circumcision rite of passage — the succession of generations in the lifecycle of the world. Both the *tago* and the *imago* are heirloom masks, kept within the family and passed down as inheritance of the glories and

Figure 3.6. A *tago* mask, probably from the Siassi Islands in Papua New Guinea, late 19th to mid-20th century, made of palm bast, seed fibers, human hair, bamboo, bark, string, wood, fiber, turtle shell, indigenous paints, and mass-produced thread. Now held by the Saint Louis Art Museum. Photo by Saint Louis Art Museum, public domain.

responsibilities of the ancestors. The mask is a link to the past *and* the future, a familial and ideological archive with a face.

Across central and western Africa, many societies and peoples consider masks to be representatives and spiritual embodiments of their ancestors, both near and mythologically remote. Often, donning the mask means becoming the spirit depicted by

or contained within the mask. Like the Roman *imagines,* these African ceremonial masks venerate the dead, while also invoking ancestral spirits and ancestral memory to shape the present and future. In some of these central and western African cultures, masks are used to call upon ancestors to lead the newly deceased into the afterlife, or to offer aid in judging a crime, as with the *mabu yui wel* mask in Oku (in northwest Cameroon), or to police and punish violations of community norms around fire safety, as with the *sagbwe* mask among the Dan (in the Ivory Coast and Liberia). Ceremonial masks are common and prominent at rites of passage and initiation, such as weddings and coming-of-age observances, as well as at festivals marking the change of seasons and milestones of the agricultural calendar.[16] Masks memorialize time, marking and honoring the cycles of a life and the life cycles of a society. The magical, mask-incarnated presence of long-dead ancestors assures individuals of their connection to the eternal continuity of their society, even as it reminds them of the limits of their own time to live within it.

The paradigmatic setting for masks in these cultures is the masquerade. Part dance, part theater, part ritual, a masquerade simultaneously entertains and carries out the work of the society. *Mwana pwo* masks of the Chokwe people in Angola, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo represent women ancestors (fig. 3.7), and masquerades that feature a *mwana pwo* mask grant fertility to the audience they entertain. Meanwhile, *mwana pwo* joins other ancestor spirits embodied by mask-wearers to accompany boys through initiation rites, as guides and guardians. Among the Igbo in Nigeria, masquerades with ancestral masks provide entertainment and fulfill a variety of other functions; for example, *achikwu ocha* and *achikwu oji* masquerades take place at night and enforce social values and normative behaviors, such as warning away thieves or punishing criminals. Masked punishment and moral policing is a key component likewise of early-modern European *charivari* (which I discuss in chapter five). In Nigeria, masquerades — and masks as emblems of cultural heritage more broadly — can also serve as a driver of both economic and touristic activity.[17]

Figure 3.7. A full *mwana pwo* dance costume from the late 19th or early 20th century, with mask sewn into the costume. Now held by the Brooklyn Museum. Photo by Brooklyn Museum, CC BY 3.0.

Igbo masquerade masks play a central role in Nnedi Okorafor's *Nsibidi Scripts* trilogy of modern-fantasy novels, *Akata Witch, Akata Warrior,* and *Akata Woman*. They chronicle the adventures of Sunny Nwazue, a young Igbo woman who discovers she has magical powers and is connected to the spirit world. Those with access to such magic are called Leopard People, as opposed to the Lambs of the nonmagical world. Every Leopard Person has two faces, a human face and a spirit face. The latter takes the form of a carved ceremonial mask. The spirit face has a name of its own, a personality — and a memory, including of past lives. Sunny's is called Anyanwu, and she tells Sunny, "I'm your spirit memory, I'm you outside of time, I'm your spirit face, I am *you.* You are me."[18]

The spirit face and its mask link Leopard People with powerful pedigrees of magical capabilities and legacies of service to their people and the world. They represent the ancestral traditions of the Leopard People, one vessel of their collective memory. Ceremonial masks, not attached to spirit faces, are to be found on the walls of Sunny's mentor and on the walls of her greatest nemesis. These masks, too, have personalities, can interact with people who come near them, and communicate with the Leopard Person whose walls they hang from. Sunny, after her initiation, must struggle to integrate her human and spirit selves. Her identity crisis points to the novels' theme of "connected duality," materialized by the mask.[19]

Leopard People must live a double life, both as magical beings in a world of Lambs, and as beings with both human and spirit psyches. Sunny herself experiences this duality even more: she was born in Nigeria, grew up in the United States, and now lives in Nigeria, and so is partly an outsider (or, as her enemies insult her, *akata*). Both her parents are Lambs, unlike those of many other Leopard People, and so they cannot know about her involvement in the world of juju. Her albinism places her in a liminal space in Nigerian society, and also in Leopard society, to an extent. In the second book, Sunny and her spirit self Anyanwu are magically severed from one another; as a con-

sequence, Sunny occasionally experiences episodes of literal double vision.

Masking also figures into the nonhuman side of Okorafor's magical world. In the *Nsibidi Scripts* novels, traditional West African masquerades are a Lamb imitation, a mythopoetic memory, of the real thing: a gathering of spirits, including spirits of the dead, or a single masked otherworldly being that can be benevolent or malevolent, whimsical or terrifying. They can be summoned by Leopard juju but can be hard to control and vindictive if they escape. The most significant masquerades we encounter in the books are individual masked entities with bodies made of termite mounds topped by raffia (palm fronds) and other decorations, especially beads and cloth. The mask worn by this masquerade entity is often multi-headed, each head with a different expression. Removal of the mask can spell the destruction of the masquerade, or the unveiling of its power. Tearing off the mask-like spirit face of a Leopard Person would also spell certain doom.

The *Nsibidi Scripts* are coming-of-age novels, about Sunny finding her place in two worlds, Leopard and Lamb, and finding her place in herself. Masks guide Sunny on this journey and connect her to a heritage she didn't know she had. Through her spirit face, she remembers not only deeds she did before her present body's birth but also physical and psychological strengths and grace she had thought she lacked. By facing off against fearful masquerades, she secures both a future for the worlds she loves and her own spot in the long line of heroic legacy into which her magical nature has thrust her. Like real-world central and west African ancestral masks — and like Siassi *tago* masks and Roman *imagines* — Sunny's spirit face links her present with her culture's past and her own posterity, offering her a time-traveling admonition to uphold the values and virtues of the cultural tradition in which she has found herself. As Okorafor writes at the end of her second Sunny book, "The masquerades

dance and the ancestors smile, | And these in themselves make it all worthwhile."[20]

Let's turn away from ancestral masks and back to ones involved with death, which preserve and curate memory in both obvious and unexpected ways. Many cultures have used masks as part of funeral rituals or burial: requiem masks, if you will. In ancient Egypt, priests would wear masks of Anubis, the jackal-headed god of the dead, while overseeing the mummification process,[21] and in ancient Rome, as we have seen, wax death masks were paraded as part of funerary rites. The oldest masks made by humans that have survived and been discovered by archaeologists are from an area near Hebron (a Palestinian city less than twenty miles south of Jerusalem), circa 7,000 BCE, and may be associated with burial or a cult of the dead (fig. 3.8). Another artifact from the same culture is a human skull that has been coated with clay and lime to have a facelike appearance, with the eyeballs replaced by seashells.[22] Prehistoric Greek burials at Mycenae and elsewhere have preserved magnificent death masks made of gold, most famously the so-called "Mask of Agamemnon" (fig. 0.1, in the introduction), while masks are found with buried dead among the Maya and the Olmecs of Mesoamerica, and the Qìdān of Liáo-dynasty China.[23]

But perhaps most famous of all funerary masks are mummy masks, not only from Egypt but also from Tiwanaku or Tiahuanaco in western South America. In both cultures, mummification practices spanned centuries and outlived the fall of empires and succession of cultures. In both, masks were an integral part of the deposition of mummified corpses, not merely an elite privilege. In both, they memorialized the dead with a gesture to their living face. Unlike plaster casts, but like wax death masks, they represented the face of the deceased without reproducing the features identically. Egyptian masks, for instance, varied from upcycled scrap papyrus to painted wooden planks to the

Figure 3.8. Replica of a neolithic-era stone mask from Hebron, in the Moshe Stekelis Museum of Prehistory. Photo by Hanay, CC BY-SA 3.0.

world-renowned, iconic Egyptian gold mask of Tutankhamun (fig. 3.9).

Mummy masks from Egypt are a diverse and lively cultural tradition, turning memory into something material; at the same time, some mummy masks have turned out to be a material transmission point for texts from ancient history. And, along the way, mummy masks have been co-opted into Eurocentric ways of constructing knowledge and imagining the past. For over two thousand years, mummy masks have been the site and source of competing meanings and competing values. Alexander "the Great" conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, opening a three-century period of Greek colonialist rule in Egypt, followed by an

Figure 3.9. The mummy mask of Tutankhamun, on display at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Photo by Mark Fischer, CC BY-SA 2.0.

even longer period of Roman domination. The Greek and Roman imperialist settlers — and especially the Greek dynasty that ruled Egypt, from Alexander's right-hand man and successor Ptolemy to the brilliant, multilingual Greco-Egyptian queen Cleopatra — adopted a number of Egyptian customs as part of their process of colonization and cultural hybridization. Prominent among them was mummification. Again, the practice crossed class divides. Those who could not afford masks of gold or other valuable materials might make do with ones made of papyrus, just as the more-costly linen wrappings for the body of the corpse might be replaced by less expensive papyrus cartonnage.

Papyrus was the paper of the ancient Mediterranean. Yet even papyrus was not cheap to make. Thus many mummies that have been excavated across Egypt are wrapped and masked in recycled papyrus that itself had already lived one life as writing material. Mummy cartonnage, perhaps surprisingly, is one of the major sources of texts from ancient Egypt.

Here we have an unexpected way in which masks preserve memory. The mask itself depicts the face of a person long dead, often now anonymous without further identifying details in the grave. Yet the very material of which the mask is made has unintentionally transmitted records of the culture in which that person lived — sometimes literature, more frequently everyday ephemera such as tax documents, correspondence, criminal complaints, writing exercises, or letters of recommendation. Accessing these texts, however, requires unrolling the mask or cartonnage made out of them. A quandary for scholars and specialists in cultural preservation: leave the mask intact and the texts unknown, or destroy the mask to access the texts?

These competing claims to the memory troves of mummy masks turned last decade from an academic question into a political and religious clash of values, and a high-profile case of fraud. A small group of right-wing American Christians, most notably the family that owns Hobby Lobby, energetically acquired not only texts on papyrus but also mummy cartonnage that might contain them, all in hopes of finding Christian biblical texts that might date closer and closer to the supposed time of Jesus. In their zealous pursuit, they dealt with shady traffickers, obtained ill-gotten or mysteriously sourced goods, bought up supposed Dead Sea Scrolls that turned out to be forgeries, had artifacts seized by the Feds on the grounds that they were looted from archaeological sites in Iraq, and even, by some accounts, ended up funneling money to the so-called Islamic State (ISIS).[24]

The more media-savvy of the papyrus-hunters made a big splash dismantling a Greek-era mummy mask on video for YouTube, with dish detergent and water. This act struck some scholars as wanton, colonialist destruction and disregard for

cultural treasures. The mask was, at one point, said to be the source of a new fragment of ancient Greek poetry by Sappho. But the provenance of the mask is unconfirmed, in and of itself a serious ethical concern; its connection to the Sappho papyrus was at first uncertain and later rejected; and the papyrologist who published the Sappho papyrus, formerly the foremost in his field, was subsequently discovered to have been selling papyri possessed by Oxford University (whose collection he curated) to the very same Hobby Lobby crowd. The press that published the "new Sappho" has since retracted that now-disgraced papyrologist's paper, and the papyrologist himself was arrested.[25]

Text-wrangling is not the only area where the death masks of ancient Egypt inform the present-day political landscape. Egyptian mummy masks also have a role to play in how we nowadays remember and construct the peoples who lived and died there long ago — and the role they play can help correct a major error in common thinking about the ancient Mediterranean. During the period of Roman rule in Egypt, painted wooden panels became popular as mummy masks, not for the poorest or most lavish burials, but for the reasonably well-to-do bourgeois. Almost a thousand of these survive, called "Fayum portraits" after the necropolis where many of them have been excavated (figs. 3.10 and 3.11). Painted in full color, they are striking for their realism, and also for the diversity they depict, across genders, ages, and ethnicity (including Egyptians, Greeks, and mixed-race individuals).

That diversity places them squarely into the grand controversy now facing the study of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds: the collision of the long-held and racially motivated misconception that the Greeks and Romans were "white" with the overwhelming evidence from many kinds of sources that they simply weren't. This presumed whiteness undergirds the persistent and pernicious fictional construct of "Western civilization,"[26] while critical and clear-eyed study of the remains of the cultures themselves, from Fayum portraits to papyri to the Greek historian Herodotus and the Roman comedian Plautus, reveals a vibrant intercultural exchange across and beyond the

Figure 3.10. A Fayum mummy with wooden panel portrait, circa 2nd century CE, now held by the Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim, Germany. Photo by Einsamer Schütze, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Mediterranean, from prehistory through to the end of the Byzantine Empire. At issue is the ideological claim of Euro-American ethnonationalism and white supremacy, movements which very explicitly deploy Greek and Roman (presumed-white) "heritage" to further their race warfare.[27] The two-dimensional mummy masks from Fayum, with their vivid depictions of the dead, bring the peoples of Roman-era Egypt to life as they really were, in defiance of the racists' white-washing of Mediterranean antiquity.

Death masks, funerary masks, and ancestral masks are memory fashioned into physical form. They connect us with the deceased beyond the grave. They connect us with the values and valor of past generations. They connect us with times, societies, and controversies beyond our imagining. A mask can spell immortality. Even if it is a mask of mortality.

Yet lurking on the flipside of memory is forgetting. Wax melts. Wood burns, or rots like corpses. Faces with no names are, quite literally, anonymous. A plaster cast made for the pur-

Figure 3.11. A Fayum mummy with wooden panel portrait, circa 2nd century CE, now held by the Fitzwilliam Musem in Cambridge, England. Photo by ArchaiOptix, CC BY-SA 4.0.

poses of identification, if it goes unrecognized, will be forever without identity. And masks are, of course, used all the time to erase or conceal identity, to foster forgetting.

Death masks and their special hold on memory can end up preserving unexpected kinds of data, as we have just seen with mummy papyri and multicultural, multiethnic, non-white Fayum portraits. The death mask of the Somerton Man from the beginning of this chapter presents another example. In late 2017, a hobbyist investigator obtained permission to examine the plaster cast made back in 1949. During his examination, he found three strands of hair suitable for DNA extraction.[28] A couple months later, a specialized lab successfully sequenced the mitochondrial DNA contained in the hair. A year and a half after that, perhaps prompted by the DNA findings from the mask, Australia's attorney general approved the exhumation of the Somerton Man to attempt a DNA analysis.[29] The disinterment took place in May 2021.[30]

The South Australia Police and coroner still have made no official identification. But the researcher and his collaborator, an expert in DNA-based genealogy, identified him in 2022 as Carl "Charles" Webb, an electrical instrument maker, amateur poet,

and abusive husband given to suicidal ideation, whose brother died as a captive in World War II.[31] DNA matches from the Somerton Man's hair led the team to living relatives of Webb on both his father's and mother's sides, and family photos appear to match the dead man's face.[32] The mask, initially cast to allow for burial while leaving open the possibility of later identification, has now brought back the physical remains of the man himself, hairs and bones alike. Through his death mask, the Somerton Man has outlived death, and now seems to be, at last, reunited with his name and memory.

Notes

1 "Inquest to Open on Body of Unknown Man," *The Canberra Times,* June 15, 1949, https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2809097.
2 Gerald Michael Feltus, *The Unknown Man: A Suspicious Death at Somerton Beach* (Greenacres: G.M. Feltus, 2010), 178.
3 Excerpt of an interview with museum taxidermist Paul Lawson, April 23, 2009: Foxglove48, "Jestyn's reaction when she sees the dead man's bust," *YouTube,* April 11, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u571rcZHs-I.
4 Stephanie Loke and S.L. McKernon, "The Face of CPR," *The BMJ* 371 (December 10, 2020): m3899, and Ashley P. Taylor, "How a Girl's 'Death Mask' from the 1800s Became the Face of CPR Dolls," *LiveScience,* December 16, 2020, https://www.livescience.com/cpr-doll-resusci-annie-face.html.
5 Luke A. Fidler, "Impressions from the Face of a Corpse," *The Atlantic,* May 30, 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/impressions-from-the-face-of-a-corpse/371772/.
6 "Abraham Lincoln Life Mask by Clark Mills, 1865," *Smithsonian National Museum of American History Behring Center,* https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_500284.
7 Fidler, "Impressions."
8 Nicholas Brooks, "The *Halloween* Movies' Bizarre Connection to *Star Trek*," *CBR.com,* March 28, 2021, https://www.cbr.com/halloween-michael-myers-mask-captain-kirk-william-shatner/. There's an unsubstantiated urban legend circulating on the web that the mask was created as a death mask for an episode of *Star Trek:* for an example, StarTrek.com Staff, "Was Michael Myers' *Halloween* Mask William Shatner's Face?," *StarTrek.com,* October 25, 2021, https://www.startrek.com/article/was-michael-myers-halloween-mask-william-shatners-face. I am grateful to Christian Burris for his *Star Trek* expertise and his help in tracking down the truth of the matter on the Shatner mask.
9 Richard L. Gregory, "Knowledge in Perception and Illusion," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 352, no. 1358 (August 1997): 1122–23, and Peter Meineck, "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask," *Arion* 19, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 132–33.
10 Maurizio Bettini, *The Ears of Hermes: Communication, Images, and Identity in the Classical World,* trans. William Michael Short (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 234–35.
11 For *imagines* in processions, see Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), and Brian Rose and Marianna Lovink, "Recreating Roman Wax Masks," *Expedition Magazine* 56, no. 3 (Winter 2014), https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/recreating-roman-wax-masks/. In later periods, wax masks were replaced by hired actors impersonating the deceased and ancestors: Dorota Dutsch, *"Nenia:* Gender, Genre, and Lament in Ancient

Rome," in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond,* ed. Ann Suter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 259, 274nn13–15. For *imago* meaning ghost or apparition, see Debbie Felton, "Folkloric Anomalies in a Scene from the *Mostellaria*," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 62, no. 2 (1999): 129–30n13, and George Fredric Franko, *Plautus: Mostellaria* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 48.

12 Véronique Dasen, "Wax and Plaster Memories: Children in Elite and non-Elite Strategies," in *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture,* eds. Véronique Dasen and Thomas Späth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 117–18; Marco Beretta, "Usi scientifici della cera nell'antichità," *Quaderni Storici* 44, no. 1 (April 2009): 14; and, for a photo, see Hans Belting, *Face and Mask: A Double History,* trans. Thomas S. Hansen and Abby J. Hansen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 39, fig. 10. On the reconstructions specifically, see Megan Gannon, "Uncannily Lifelike Roman Masks Recreated in Wax," *LiveScience,* January 6, 2014, https://www.livescience.com/42334-lifelike-roman-wax-masks-recreated.html. My gratitude to Lora L. Holland Goldthwaite and Elizabeth Bevis for their assistance in tracking down recent scholarship on this mask.

13 Maik Patzelt, "Communing with the Spirits: Funeral Processions in Ancient Rome," in *The Routledge Companion to Ecstatic Experience in the Ancient World,* eds. Diana Stein, Sarah Kielt Costello, and Karen Polinger Foster (London: Routledge, 2022), 360. The Polybius quote is *Histories,* 6.53.10.

14 For *hwangchangmu,* see Jeon Kyung-wook, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas: Their History and Structural Principles,* trans. Eur Do-seon (Paju: Youlhwadang, 2005), 26. For the Tucson All Souls Procession, see Erin White, "All Souls Procession," *AZ DailyStar,* November 5, 2006, https://web.archive.org/web/20121106122818/http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-153859362.html. For *tago* masks as representing ancestors, see John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty, *Masks: Faces of Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 308. For ceremonial use of *tago* masks, see "Nakamutmut or Tago Mask," *Saint Louis Art Museum,* https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/8359/; "Tami Island Mask," *Second Face Museum of Cultural Masks,* https://www.maskmuseum.org/mask/tami-tago-1/, both evidently deriving their information from A.C. Haddon, "Migrations of Cultures in British New Guinea," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 50 (1920): 253–54.

15 Flower, *Ancestor Masks,* 202; Franko, *Plautus: Mostellaria,* 52.

16 "African Masks and Masquerades," *Minneapolis Institute of Art,* https://new.artsmia.org/programs/teachers-and-students/teaching-the-arts/five-ideas/african-masks-and-masquerades. For the Oku *mabu yui wel* mask, see Nicolas Pandely Albert Argenti, "The Material Culture of Power in Oku; North West Province, Cameroon" (PhD diss., University College London, 1996), 381; for the Dan *sagbwe* mask, Elizabeth Skidmore Sasser,

The World of Spirits and Ancestors in the Art of Western Sub-Saharan Africa (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995), 83.

17 For *mwana pwo* masks, see Chokwe culture, *Female Face Mask (Mwana Pwo),* 1875–1925, wood, fiber, beads, and pigment, 44.5 × 19.3 × 18.7 cm (171/2 × 75/8 × 73/8 in.), Art Institute Chicago, Chicago, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/120215/female-face-mask-mwana-pwo; Chokwe culture, *Mask (Mwana Pwo),* 19th century, wood, 71/2 × 31/8 × 51/2 in. (19.1 × 8 × 14 cm), Brooklyn Museum, New York, https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4812; and "Makishi Masquerade, Zambia," *UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage,* https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/makishi-masquerade-00140. For Igbo masquerades, see Augustine O. Onyeneke, *The Dead among the Living: Masquerades in Igbo Society* (Nimo: Holy Ghost Congregation, 1987), 75–78, and Adolphus Chikezie Anuka, *Mmanwu and Mission among the Igbo People of Nigeria: An Inculturative Dialogue* (Zurich: Lit, 2018), 131–34. For Nigerian masquerades and economic activity, see, for example, Jordan A. Fenton, "Nyoro Masquerade as a Hunt for Modernity: A View from a West African City," in *Behind the Masks of Modernism: Global and Transnational Perspectives,* eds. Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2016), 186.

18 Nnedi Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* (New York: Viking, 2017), 241. Emphasis retained.

19 Ibid., 242.

20 Ibid., 479.

21 "Anubis: Embalmer and Protector of the Dead," *Death Dogs: The Jackal Gods of Ancient Egypt, University of Michigan Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Exhibition,* 2018, https://exhibitions.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu/jackal-gods-ancient-egypt/anubis.php.

22 Belting, *Face and Mask,* 34–36, and Debby Hershman, *Face to Face: The Oldest Masks in the World* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2014).

23 Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 306, and Sarah Cascone, "The Tomb of an Ancient Maya God-King Was Just Discovered in Guatemala," *artnet,* September 21, 2017, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/ancient-maya-tomb-el-peru-waka-guatemala-1089872.

24 For the fake Dead Sea Scrolls, see Scott Neuman, "Museum's Collection Of Purported Dead Sea Scroll Fragments Are Fakes, Experts Say," *NPR,* March 17, 2020, https://www.npr.org/2020/03/17/817018416/museums-collection-of-purported-dead-sea-scroll-fragments-are-fakes-experts-say. For the federal seizure of Hobby Lobby's looted artifacts, see Adam Klasfeld, "Feds Seize Thousands of Iraqi Artifacts from Hobby Lobby," *Courthouse News Service,* July 5, 2017, https://www.courthousenews.com/feds-seize-thousands-iraqi-artifacts-hobby-lobby/. For the ISIS allegation, see Korey Lane, "Did Hobby Lobby Fund ISIS?," *romper,* July 6, 2017, https://www.romper.com/p/everything-you-need-to-know-about-hobby-lobby-allegedly-funding-isis-68523.

25 For the video of the mummy being dismantled, see The Green Scholars Initiative and Peel Media Productions, "From Mummy Mask to Manuscripts," *YouTube,* May 19, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_gwgGcpD1M. For mummy dismantling as colonialist destruction, see Usama A. Gad, "Papyrology and Eurocentrism, Partners in Crime," *Eidolon,* November 8, 2019, https://eidolon.pub/papyrology-and-eurocentrism-partners-in-crime-8a2778908e59, and Candida Moss and Joel Baden, "Hobby Lobby's Black-Market Buys Did Real Damage," *The New York Times,* July 6, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/opinion/hobby-lobby-iraq-artifacts.html. For the ethical problems of unprovenanced papyri, see Roberta Mazza, "The Illegal Papyrus Trade and What Scholars Can Do to Stop It," *Hyperallergic,* March 1, 2018, https://hyperallergic.com/429653/the-illegal-papyrus-trade-and-what-scholars-can-do-to-stop-it/, and C. Michael Sampson and Anna Uhlig, "The Murky Provenance of the Newest Sappho," *Eidolon,* November 5, 2019, https://eidolon.pub/the-murky-provenance-of-the-newest-sappho-aca671a6d52a. For the arrest of Oxford papyrus trafficker and retraction of the Sappho papyrus publication, see Charlotte Higgins, "A Scandal in Oxford: The Curious Case of the Stolen Gospel," *The Guardian,* January 9, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/jan/09/a-scandal-in-oxford-the-curious-case-of-the-stolen-gospel; Ariel Sabar, "A Biblical Mystery at Oxford," *The Atlantic,* June 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/06/museum-of-the-bible-obbink-gospel-of-mark/610576/; Anton Bierl and André Lardinois, "Retraction Notice," in *The Newest Sappho: P. Sapph. Obbink and P. GC inv. 105, Frs. 1–4,* eds. Anton Bierl and André Lardinois (Leiden: Brill, 2016/2021), https://brill.com/view/book/9789004314832/B9789004314832_026.xml; Charlotte Higgins, "Doubts Cast over Provenance of Unearthed Sappho Poems," *The Guardian,* March 25, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/25/doubts-cast-over-provenance-of-unearthed-sappho-poems; and Vikram Dodd, "Oxford Professor Arrested on Suspicion of Ancient Papyrus Theft," *The Guardian,* 16 April 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/apr/16/oxford-professor-arrested-ancient-papyrus-bible-theft-dirk-obbink. The papyrus thief in question was perfectly affable when he keynoted a conference I gave a paper at way back in 2010. After his arrest, he went into hiding on a houseboat in the Thames and has not appeared in court to face a fraud lawsuit from Hobby Lobby: see Alison Frankel, "Hobby Lobby Sued ex-Oxford Prof over Stolen Papyri in N.Y. Now It's Moving the Case to Oklahoma," *Reuters,* September 26, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/column-hobby-lobby-sued-ex-oxford-prof-over-stolen-papyri-ny-now-its-moving-case-2023-09-26/.

26 Kwame Anthony Appiah, "There Is No Such Thing as Western Civilisation," *The Guardian,* November 9, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/09/western-civilisation-appiah-reith-lecture.

27 Sarah E. Bond, "Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color," *Hyperallergic,* June 7, 2017, https://hyperallergic.com/383776/

why-we-need-to-start-seeing-the-classical-world-in-color/; Margaret Talbot, "The Myth of Whiteness in Classical Sculpture," *The New Yorker,* October 22, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/29/the-myth-of-whiteness-in-classical-sculpture; and Aimee Hinds, "Hercules in White: Classical Reception, Art and Myth," *The Jugaad Project: Material Religion in Context,* June 23, 2021, https://www.thejugaadproject.pub/home/hercules-in-white-classical-reception-art-and-myth. See also Sarah Derbew, *Untangling Blackness in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

28 Jessica Bineth, "Somerton Man: One of Australia's Most Baffling Cold Cases Could Be a Step Closer to Being Solved," *ABC News,* December 13, 2017, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-14/somerton-man-cold-case-could-be-one-step-closer-to-solved/9245512.

29 Daniel Keane, "Somerton Man to Be Exhumed by Police in Attempt to Solve Mystery of His Identity," *ABC News,* April 23, 2021, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-24/mysterious-somerton-man-to-be-exhumed-by-sa-police/100092750.

30 "Somerton Man: Body Exhumed in Bid to Solve Australian Mystery," *BBC News,* May 19, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-57166662; Daniel Keane, "Somerton Man Has Long Been Riddled with Russian Spy Speculation, But Is It a Red Herring?," *ABC Radio Adelaide,* July 19, 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-20/somerton-man-russian-spy-theory-irish-surname/101247430; and Clodagh Meaney, "Suspected Cold War Spy Unidentified Since 1948 Could Be Irish Man," *Sunday World,* July 22, 2022, https://www.sundayworld.com/news/world-news/suspected-cold-war-spy-unidentified-since-1948-could-be-irish-man/1579534355.html.

31 For the lack of confirmation from police and coroner, see: Julian Mark, "A Body Found in 1948 Became an Australian Obsession. Now, There's an ID," *The Washington Post,* July 27, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/07/27/somerton-man-identified-webb/. For Webb's biographical details, see Natasha May, "Mystery of Somerton Man's identity Solved after 73 Years, Researchers in Australia Say," *The Guardian,* July 27, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jul/27/somerton-man-mystery-identity-solved-identified-australia; Natasha May, "Solving the Somerton Man Mystery: No Russian Spy, Just a Bit of a Loner Who Wrote Poetry?," *The Guardian,* July 30, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jul/31/solving-the-somerton-man-mystery-south-australia-adelaide-tamam-shud-identified-carl-webb-no-russian-spy-just-a-bit-of-a-loner-who-wrote-poetry; Rebecca Opie, "The Somerton Man Has Been Named. What Do We Know about Carl 'Charles' Webb?," *ABC News,* August 1, 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-02/somerton-man-who-was-carl-charles-webb/101288890; and Rebecca Opie, "Carl 'Charles' Webb's Prisoner-of-war Brother Bears Resemblance to Somerton Man," *ABC News,* August 2, 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-02/carl-webb-brother-resemblance-to-somerton-

man/101293788. The identification prompted a popular true-crime podcast to do an episode on the Somerton Man: Phoebe Judge, "The Somerton Man," *Criminal,* ep. 215, https://pod.link/809264944/episode/960b016762e1df88b040456a68e2f9d2.

32 Ben Cheshire, "Somerton Man Charles Webb's True Identity Revealed in Family Photographs and Divorce Papers," *ABC News,* November 20, 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-21/somerton-manfamily-photographs-revealed-/101643524, and Derek Abbott, "How an Electrical Engineer Solved Australia's Most Famous Cold Case," *IEEE Spectrum*, March 20, 2023, https://spectrum.ieee.org/somerton-man. There has been an alternative claim made by the surviving family and friends of an Austrian man named Carl Josef Halban: Antoinette Milienos, "Somerton Man: Twist in On[e] of Australia's Most Mysterious Cold Cases Case as Bizarre 'Birthday Card' Emerges," *Daily Mail Australia,* September 17, 2023, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12528299/Somerton-Man-Twist-Australias-mysterious-cold-cases-case-bizarre-birthday-card-emerges.html.

CHAPTER 4

Metamorphosis

Jim Carrey, in his halcyon days of 1994, made a movie called *The Mask,* a goofy reimagining of a surrealist horror movie of the same title from 1961.[1] He starred as Stanley Ipkiss, a well-meaning but unlucky loser nerd, a self-proclaimed "nice guy" who lacks the courage to speak his mind. Ipkiss finds a mystical mask that transforms him into the title character, a paragon of self-confidence, wacky yet still — at least to Tina, the romantic interest, played by Cameron Diaz — debonair. The Mask is able to stand down street toughs, shrug off gunfire, and literally swallow bombs. The mask's magic lets Stanley become a heroic cartoon like the Looney Tunes characters he so adores. And the bravery that the mask grants him transfers back to his human self in the end: the movie's last words are The Mask's catchphrase, "Smokin'!," but said by Stanley as he and Tina embrace.

The Mask was excruciating for me to rewatch as an adult. Like James Cameron's *Titanic,* it's a shining testament to the endless battalions of cringe that 1990s American pop culture could field. But *The Mask* also highlights a truth about how people relate to masks. A minor character, Dr. Arthur Neuman (played by Ben Stein), is the author of a book titled *The Masks We Wear: The Mysterious Powers Of The Identities Within Us.* In an interview played on TV in the background of one scene, he says, "We all wear masks, metaphorically speaking. We suppress the id, our

darkest desires, and adopt a more socially acceptable image." The literal Mask that Stanley puts on, that he becomes, draws out his inner desires and powers, and in the process, it annihilates the "socially acceptable" metaphorical mask that Stanley wears on an everyday basis.

Yet when a work friend tells Stanley he's looking run down, shortly after he's started moonlighting as The Mask, he replies, "I haven't exactly been myself lately." The challenge for Stanley is to acknowledge that The Mask *is* him, and then to integrate The Mask's wildness into his regular personality. When Stanley asks Dr. Neuman whether to meet Tina as himself or The Mask, the doc advises him, "Go as yourself *and* The Mask, because they are both one and the same beautiful person."

The donning of a mask is a transmutative process. Masking generates selfhood from outside in. When we put on a mask — literal or metaphorical — we state an aspiration, a wish to become someone or something else, even if only for a little while. We may do so idly, out of curiosity or self-preservation, or in deference to tradition or peer pressure. But in the wearing, we *are* transformed, even if only a little, even if only for a little while. Behind the mask, we may feel uninhibited, empowered, or freed by a certain invisibility. Conversely, we may feel stymied, hampered, trapped, or closeted. But often, the barrier of the mask between the world and us grants permission to act or speak as we normally would not. Masks make us bolder, lustier, stronger, more graceful, more resistant. And yet we are still the ones behind the mask: it is a conduit that summons the mysterious powers of the identities within us. The metamorphic properties of both physical and figurative masking, as we will see in this chapter, do their work along various dimensions, often simultaneously: the individual and the social, the permanent and the temporary, the voluntary and the coercive, the playful and the survival-driven.

Figure 4.1. Parade-goers in fursuits at Euroference 15 in August 2009, Suhl, Germany. Photo by Tambako The Jaguar, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

The transformations that masks enact are sometimes literal. For some furries, wearing a fursuit — archetypally crowned by a full-face mask (fig. 4.1) — is a transformative moment and act, an opportunity to fully become their fursona and to realize their fursona's personality and behavioral traits more deeply. Some connect fursuiting to prehistoric art and hunting practices, or to Indigenous spiritual traditions from their own cultural or ancestral heritage.[2] Ancestral masks and death masks, as we saw one chapter back, enable wearers to be possessed by ancestral spirits or to bring the deceased back to life in ritual parade. Actors, meanwhile, may talk of *becoming* the character when they put on the mask, and Balinese mask dancers may place a new mask nearby to face them as they sleep, to draw the mask's essence into their body.[3] For the duration of the dance, the play, the funeral procession, or the ancestral rite, the wearer subordinates their identity to the mask's. Their selfhood shapeshifts.

Likewise, committed performance artists may never appear in public unmasked. Such is the case with the famous electronica duo Daft Punk, the somewhat famous guitarist Buckethead (fig. 4.2), and the niche industrial absurdist KOMPRESSOR. In

Figure 4.2. Buckethead in performance at NYS Fair 2011, in Syracuse, New York. Photo by dIPENdAVE, CC BY-SA 3.0.

these cases, the mask is the mask of art, and its replacement of the individual's face speaks to the artist's self-sacrifice and self-effacement for the greater fulfillment of their aesthetic vision. Not to mention that the mask offers the advantages of providing privacy amid celebrity status and generating mystique that grabs attention.

Masks can make something "safe" as opposed to dangerous or edgy — or the other way round — or both at once. For American photographic artist Cindy Sherman, masks, in combination with makeup (another type of masking, as we shall see later in this chapter) and prosthetics, are the ingredients for creating hyperrealistic and surrealistic fictional characters. She creates her worlds through manipulation of appearance alone. "I wish I could treat every day as Halloween," she's said.[4] Her signature is that she is both photographer and subject: the characters she shoots are embodied by her. Yet these are not self-portraits, according to Sherman, who has stated, "I don't see these characters as myself."[5] In putting on the mask, Sherman transmogrifies herself into not-herself. The mask is the face of the subject, not the face of the photographer. In at least one portrait, from 1995, Sherman is literally *not* the subject, because it is of just the mask, without her inside.[6]

Sherman's metamorphic oeuvre questions the norms, stereotypes, gazes, and boundary lines of gender, sex, celebrity, and the art world.[7] At the same time, it also appropriates and impersonates — and, in so doing, objectifies and dehumanizes — people more marginalized by society than she is, especially poor people and neurodiverse people. The most obviously repugnant example is her portraits of Black characters embodied, as in all her other work, by her. This is blackface and, as Margo Jefferson points out, Sherman's portraits of Black characters "are all exactly the same color, the color of traditional blackface makeup. They all have nearly the same features, too, while Ms. Sherman is able to give the white characters she impersonates a real range of skin tones and facial features."[8] Sherman's blackface performance follows the characteristic pattern traced by Ayanna Thompson of white artists using stereotyped parodies of Black faces and bodies to advance their own careers and creative agendas.[9] There are limits to the transformations that Sherman's masks carry out, and they do not extend to excusing her agency in perpetuating this exploitative raceplay. She is, after all, the photographer, even

if the mask has prompted her to renounce her claims of being the subject.

A mask can make you iconic, can become the essence of you, can make you who you are. The popular *Star Wars* spinoff series *The Mandalorian* centers on a bounty hunter who adheres to an obscure sect of masked warriors. Their creed requires that they never be seen by another person without their distinctive, mask-like helmet. To wear the helmet is to be a Mandalorian; to take it off is to abandon the Way, the Mandalorian sect's military-spiritual belief system. The mask makes the Mando. It conceals the individual's identity — and so maintains the secrecy of the cult. The meaning of the mask runs deeper, related to valuing the many over the one, ideology over personal desire, the Way over the particulars of biology or society, and inner commitment to the faith over surface details of the temporal body.[10] The Mandalorian's helmet offers not only physical protection from lightsabers and laser guns but also the safety of selflessness, and thus a means to transform into the ideal prescribed by the Mandalorians' creed.

What is literal for the Mandalorian holds figuratively for all of us, because the metaphor of the mask is a deep structure for how we think about social metamorphosis. *Persona* — a concept derived from the Latin word for "mask" — is a behavioral tool you can use to become a different you. Some ancient Romans thought that their word *persona* came from *per* + *sonare,* "to make sound through," but it actually is borrowed from Etruscan, a language that was spoken north of Rome (in modern-day Tuscany), whose word *phersu* means actor. The Romans used *persona* first to refer to a theatrical mask, but extended its meaning into the legal concept of "person" that can be found in modern law as well. A "person" is a legal construct, "a paradoxical figure of concealment and disclosure," that gives a human a voice and standing before the law.[11]

To adopt a persona is to put on a mask, one made not of wood or plaster but of speech and affect and attitude. Our persona, the mask(s) we wear, informs and substantiates our personality, what we're like as a person. As Christopher B. Polt writes, "we are the gestalt of all the masks we wear in front of others, not fixed identities, and in constant flux as old masks are taken off and new ones put on."[12] This metaphorical mask makes us who we are. The metaphor is less about the interchangeability of personality, the ease of taking one mask off to put on another, and more about the power of masking over the ineffable interiority that makes you "you." It's not that how we behave is determined by some enduring set of virtues or innate character. Rather, how we behave, heavily influenced by situational circumstances, shapes who we are and what we become.[13] A mask, literal or metaphorical, can alter our circumstances enough that it can alter *us,* modify what we say and do and, thus, who we really are. To put it another way, the masks we choose to wear, the masks we're forced to wear, the masks we wear without realizing it — they shape us at a much deeper level than the surfaces they present. *Mask ergo sum.*

Masks are vehicles for concealing identities, disclosing them, or layering one over another over another. The social effects of masking are complex and extend deep beyond the surface of the mask, even as "mask" in several languages comes from a word for "face." An Ancient Greek word for "mask," *prosōpon,* also and earlier meant "face" or "countenance." This is also true for the Japanese term *ko-omote,* which means both "little face" and "mask in Nō drama."[14] In English, the process of trying to link names with people in history is called "prosopography," meaning writing down masks/faces/persons; this word also refers to the historical study of groups of people whose individual biographies cannot be identified.

So a mask is a face-like thing, a prosthetic for fixing and projecting a countenance, a persona. A Chinese word for "mask"

is *miànjù,* literally "face-tool." When a person says "let me put on my face" — meaning, do their makeup — they assimilate face to countenance to cosmetic mask. Makeup might be the thinnest of physical masks, a mere layer of mineral between skin and society. It might often be a partial or selective mask of eyes, lips, and contours rather than full-face paint, but makeup is one of the commonest and most powerful in modern globalized society. It should be no surprise, then, that there's a whole range of cosmetics called "masques" — the first person to encounter Stanley as The Mask is his landlady, and she's wearing a masque the same color as his — but those masques are, ironically, meant *not* to be seen by the outside world. Like other masks, both tangible and figurative, cosmetics shape identity, projected or internalized or both.

Makeup is a way to curate the self. This is the whole idea behind the "makeover": that a new accretion of product will magically transform you into someone new. And while we should note the capitalist commercialism underpinning the makeover-magic industry, we shouldn't overlook how important cosmetics can be to a person's sense of self, self-esteem, and way of moving through the world. I'm reminded of the closing scene of the 1988 movie *Dangerous Liaisons:* Glenn Close's manipulative Marquise Isabelle de Merteuil, whose cruel improprieties have been made public, is booed by the crowd of socialites at the opera. She retreats to her washroom and, for the full final minute of the film, wipes off her makeup, while tears stream down her face. This is the first time the viewer sees her unvarnished — perhaps the first time the viewer is invited to consider her as a feeling, hurting human rather than the social supervillain she has been throughout the movie. The loss of her mask of makeup represents the loss of her position, her poise, her persona, and her sense of self.

The mask of cosmetics plays an important role in the queer community in particular. Drag is a consummate deployment of persona and a highly makeup-involved phenomenon (fig. 4.3). Through makeup and hairstyle or wig, drag artists take on a new face, new name, new affect — and, from there, a new identity.

Figure 4.3. Bob The Drag Queen at RuPaul's DragCon 2017. Photo by DVSROSS, CC BY 2.0.

For some, the drag persona is integrated with the non-drag persona, as two facets of a gem, while for others, drag is a total transformation and revelation, as a butterfly from a chrysalis.

Drag uses makeup to metamorphose society as well as the self. Drag styles are often loud, vivacious, and larger than life. They reject gender norms and binaries by embracing, celebrating, and expertly performing and exaggerating them. The campiness of drag is a carefully coutured counterculture. Cosmetics are clutch for drag artists in passing, which is a goal for some who do drag and is irrelevant or antithetical for others. In the context of drag, passing is a countercultural coup: by being read as the gender identity of their persona, drag artists prove the contingent, artificial, mutable properties of gender, a construct of society rather than a fact of nature.

Where the mask of makeup supports the art of drag in play, performance, or profession, it can assist with deeper acts of

safety, identity affirmation, or assimilation for people who are trans or nonbinary. Both makeup and passing are unsettled issues in the trans community. For some trans people, cosmetics offer a way to affirm their gender, a medium of self- and gender expression, and a technique for transforming the parts of their appearance that they may feel do not match their identity.[15] This is something makeup does for many cis people, too.

For trans women especially, makeup-wearing is a major gender norm that can be cheap (much cheaper than hormone therapy, permanent hair removal, or surgery), easy to obtain, and easy to remove.[16] But often the expectations for trans women to appear feminine are even greater than they are for cis women; some medical institutions require feminine gender expression of women pursuing transition.[17] Makeup may also be necessary for trans people to be read as their gender in facial recognition algorithms, which has become a matter of concern specifically for some trans women in Japan. This is an unexpected example of problems with a worldwide contemporary social issue, facial recognition technology. This tech can disproportionately harm people from marginalized groups, such as trans people in Japan, or Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in China; meanwhile, it has greatly empowered surveillance states across the world, and caused enough havoc in people's lives that even a heartless megacorp like Facebook has announced a plan to discontinue its use.[18]

Makeup in modern society signals gender. It does not do so quite so consistently or ubiquitously as the white and red skin tones of human figures in Greco-Roman theater masks and ancient Mediterranean art, but it does so thoroughly enough that, for trans people, wearing makeup can be tied to coming out as trans, and can be followed by risks of transphobic discrimination.[19] At the same time, makeup and the passing it can enable have served as a crucial technology for self-preservation for many trans people. In a world filled with transphobic people ready to violently police the essentialism of sex and gender, and to harass or assault perceived transgressors, passing is a lifesaving device. But it comes at a cost: not everyone can pass,

with significant discrepancies along familiar lines of race, class, and ability. Meanwhile, those who do pass — those who assimilate — miss an opportunity to chip away at the gender binary, even as their assimilation may be of critical importance to their own survival and personal well-being.[20]

Passing is a toll society charges for acceptance, belonging, advancement; passing takes a toll on the ones passing and the ones who cannot. It also takes a toll on the ones who pass without choosing to, or are made to pass by others. This is true of all sorts of passing, including gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, and religious passing. Even when it does not involve physical elements such as makeup, passing often ends up associated with the metaphor of the mask. So it is in a 2015 volume of essays about passing titled *We Wear the Mask,* which alludes to the poem of the same name by the epochal Black poet of the nineteenth century, Paul Laurence Dunbar.[21] The poem was adapted by Maya Angelou as "The Mask" in 1987.

The connection between masking and passing is a natural one, for passing is a mode of assimilationist transformation, one that entails creating and donning a persona, of becoming the identity which the persona performs. "To mask" is also a term for when neurodivergent people act in a way to seem more like neurotypical people. It can encompass both "impression management" and "social camouflaging"; it can be a way to cope with stigma, but it can also be another burdensome form of passing.[22] The mask of passing — perhaps more familiar than you realize, if you've ever not corrected someone when they get something wrong about you, just to be polite — asks us to lose the parts of ourselves that we put behind its façades and to replace them with the products of its artifice.

Many LGBTQIA2S+ people face a day-by-day, encounter-by-encounter dilemma of passing or coming out. Out queer people like me don't come out just once. We do it every time we say or do something that may disclose our identities to someone not already aware of it. Every semester, I have to (choose to?) come out anew to my students, usually when making an offhand reference to my husband. On phone calls and in grocery

stores, I sometimes just refer to my "spouse," to avoid potential hostility, confusion, or even just the exhaustion of having to exit yet one more closet. Strangely, I usually find myself choosing to keep the mask of presumed heterosexuality in front of my face not in the straightest of environments — like a straight wedding in a church that would never let *me* get married there, or a dance floor or nightclub where I'm one of two or three gay people present — but rather in places of unmarked but still palpable heteronormativity: car repair shops, customer service, public transportation. Bodies and identities marginalized as Other make the gears of society grind slower, and sometimes it's just easier to lubricate those gears with the refined oil of passing.

Back to makeup: cosmetics function literally as a mask in the Japanese dramatic form *kabuki* (fig. 4.4), where some actors wear makeup fashioned to imitate theatrical masks. Political pundits in the United States, meanwhile, have made a metaphor out of it: calling something "kabuki" dismisses it as mere show, as posturing (in willful ignorance of the actual richness of the *kabuki* tradition, and in a turn of phrase originating from hostility to Japanese people).[23] The mask in this American idiom is one not of transformation or characterization but of deceit. It's wormed its way into the lexicon deeply enough that, while I was drafting this book, my mother-in-law remarked to me, without knowing what I was working on, that "kabuki theater has nothing on Southern women. Because we're always putting on masks and pretending." Bringing things full circle, a fundamental component of the Southern socialite's pretentious mask is makeup: let us put on our faces.

My mother-in-law expressed a vivid version of the common metaphor of "masking" for concealment or deceit. Animals "mask" their pain, insecure young men "mask" their vulnerability with machismo, ideology "masks" the inner machinations of its production of power relations, and people "mask" from friends and family what's really going on in their personal

Figure 4.4. A boy performing the role of a warrior in the *kabuki* play *Ichi-no-Tani Futaba Gunki,* at the Hikiyama Matsuri (children's theater festival) in Nagahama, Japan. Photo by lensonjapan, CC BY 2.0.

lives.[24] The name and origins of masking tape are to be found in this metaphor. Its inventor experimented in the 1920s with sticky yet easily removable adhesives in response to complaints from auto workers painting two-tone cars, who needed to "mask off" different parts of the car to prevent paint mixing or crossing the tone line, and newspaper affixed with glue wasn't doing the trick.[25] Likewise, "masking" is an important tool in photography and Photoshop, as a way to increase dynamic contrast or modify portions of a photo while leaving the rest unchanged.

The power of masking to conceal, both metaphorically and literally, is again about transformation. It is the inverse of the metamorphosis of masking we examined earlier in the chapter.

There, the mask was a claim to a new identity, an affirmation. Here, the mask is a negation, a renouncement of an identity, even if only for a while. But the outcome is much the same, because your previous identity is displaced by a new one confirmed by the mask.

Take the Nixon mask, the stereotypical mask for bank robbers in heist films. The robbers are probably thinking more about evading security cameras and eyewitnesses than about acquiring the identity of "robber." But there it is nonetheless, awaiting them as soon as they don the mask — significantly, that's usually the last thing they do before marching into the bank, after reviewing the plan, checking the comms, and shouldering their weapons and empty duffel bags. That's when they go from people who might do a crime to Bank Robbers proper.

When it's done with a mask, concealment is also revelation. Alexandre Dumas's *The Man in the Iron Mask* is based on a historical figure, a person whose identity is still unknown today. The mask — actually black velvet, the misidentification as iron comes from Voltaire — was intended to prevent even the jailers from knowing who he was. But it also revealed him as a political prisoner who was so important to the King of France, possibly a father or brother, that he needed to *be* so thoroughly disidentified.[26] Masking is its own antithesis, a negation and assertion bound in one.

Concealment with a full-face veil such as a niqab or burqa similarly contains multitudes (fig. 4.5). The veil is, in some places and periods, a matter of societal ideology or religious orthodoxy, a doctrine of modesty through being unseen. Wearing the veil signals individual virtue and subscription to the ideals of the group and the faith. Veiling can simultaneously grant the veiler power and self-determination, as it provides a barrier against the nosy and the handsy, at once a suit of armor and a cloak of shadows. The veil both safeguards and signposts modesty, and in doing so can provide considerable freedom of movement and

Figure 4.5. The photographer's sister Suzan wearing a colorful niqab in 2008. Photo by Hydroxy, CC BY-SA 2.0.

action, even potentially "immodest" action.[27] The visual silence of the veil speaks volumes.

Sometimes we wear a mask not because we want to, but because we must, in order to wend our way through society and all its inequities. So it is, literally, for the title character of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. Because of congenital facial differences disparaged by his society, pushing him to

the margins, the Phantom finds he must don his iconic, creepy mask. By replacing his innate features with the smooth, featureless white mask — by concealing who society sees him to be and therefore judges him to be — the Phantom reveals who he sees himself to be: refined, talented, very high-society. The removal of the mask by Christine, the primadonna he's infatuated with, is a turning point in the plot not once but twice. The musical seems to want us to see a tale of redemption. Once the Phantom has been treated kindly by Christine, he has a change of heart, gives up his sinister ways, and vanishes, no longer a threat to the opera house.

Yet when he does vanish, all that's left is the mask. The message here is problematic. Does the mask remain because it is the truest expression of his selfhood, meaning that the parts of him that our disablist society finds distasteful must be permanently erased, in the name of his assimilation to dominant cultural norms? Or has he discarded the mask, fully embracing his embodied identity — only to have to remove himself from a society that prefers façade to foundation? We'll never know, I guess, because the story turns out not to be about him but about Christine and her normatively-bodied love interest. Social prejudice made an outcast out of the Phantom. The mask was both what made him count as fully human according to his society, and what made him a faceless villain whose subjectivity was secondary to that of society's upper crust.

Many comic-book superheroes likewise feel compelled to don the mask to efface themselves. They mask not to fit in, but to protect their secret identities and the loved ones of their alter egos. The transformation that takes place when the mask goes on is obvious. Batman is not Batman until his cowl goes over his head; without it, as I noted in chapter one, he's Bruce Wayne in a silly costume. By the same token, the most important component of a kid's superhero dress-up is the mask (okay, besides Superman — for him it's the cape). Without the mask, the costume feels incomplete, but even just the mask can be enough to transport the wearer into the universe of the comics. In the case of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, the superhero mask reveals

who's who. Without the masks, the turtles are essentially identical. It's the blue, red, orange, and purple eyemasks — which do nothing to conceal their alter egos, which they don't have, anyway — that make them into Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Donatello.[28]

Masks can transform not just their wearers, but also the atmosphere itself. Picture a crisp fall night on your block, streetlights and porchlights on, neighbors taking their recycling bins to the curb. Now imagine a crisp *October* night with people in masks walking from house to house. The Halloween mask *en masse* makes the Halloween ambience, makes Halloween feel like Halloween. The same goes for Carnival, Mardi Gras, Krampusnacht, and related festivals. A line of people marching down small-town Main Street decked out in Ku Klux Klan hoods transforms the scene from idyllic to menacing in the blink of an eye. A line of new Omega Psi Phi sisters parading across the quad in masks shifts the college campus out of its mundane academic mode into a holiday-like celebration of initiation. A masquerade of a scary goat-person and its entourage remakes a Moroccan village into a harvest-festival otherworld, while a bear mask turns a sanctuary outside ancient Athens into a site of coming-of-age transformations. Masking is a bullet train to a new identity, for the individual and for the community.

The express route is particularly useful for a nuts-and-bolts type of shapeshifting: doubled roles in masked theater. Surviving Greek drama, especially tragedy, tends to max out at three actors with significant speaking parts, not counting the chorus or silent extras. But that doesn't mean the genre was limited to only three characters per play. Instead, actors would perform multiple roles during the course of the show. Central to this — *the* tool for making it happen — was masks. Easy on, easy off backstage, perhaps a quick switch of props or a garment, and the young woman is now an old man, or the soldier is now a goddess.

Role doubling is at once a constraint and an opportunity. Having the same person give life to two characters opens up powerful interpretive aftereffects. One of the most powerful illustrations of this is Sophocles' tragedy *Philoctetes*. Throughout the play, Odysseus has been pressing Neoptolemus, a young man under his command, to hoodwink the stranded, wounded veteran Philoctetes into a military mission he has repeatedly refused. Neoptolemus eventually breaks free from Odysseus's influence and agrees to take Philoctetes home — until the god Heracles appears and promises that Philoctetes will be healed if he and Neoptolemus go on that mission together. What makes this *deus ex machina* a mask-ive *coup de théâtre* is that the actor playing Heracles *is the same actor who played Odysseus.*[29] This leaves room for doubt: are these two separate characters simply played by the same actor? Or did we just witness the world-famous trickster Odysseus, *disguised* as Heracles, pulling a fast one on the others? Who was transformed backstage, the actor or Odysseus?

A world with masks is a world of potential. Potential yous, potential mes. Masks both physical and figurative surround us, ask us to put them on and try out different personas. Sometimes we wear the mask perforce, sometimes to cope. Sometimes it is our society that wears the mask. But a mask doesn't always or only mask the truth. Sometimes — often — the mask *is* the truth.

Notes

1 Chuck Russell, dir., *The Mask* (New Line Cinema, 1994); Julian Roffman, dir., *The Mask* (Warner Bros., 1961).

2 Joe Strike, *Furry Nation: The True Story of America's Most Misunderstood Subculture* (Jersey City: Cleis Press, 2017), chap. 7; Michael John Healy and Michael B. Beverland, "Unleashing the Animal Within: Exploring Consumers' Zoomorphic Identity Motives," *Journal of Marketing Management* 29, nos. 1–2 (2013): 225–48; Kevin J. Hsu and J. Michael Bailey, "The 'Furry' Phenomenon: Characterizing Sexual Orientation, Sexual Motivation, and Erotic Target Identity Inversions in Male Furries," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 48 (2019): 1349–69; and Marla Carlson, "Furry Cartography: Performing Species," *Theatre Journal* 63, no. 2 (May 2011): 191–208. Gratitude to Tofte and Christopher B. Polt for bibliographical help on this point.

3 I Wayan Dibia and Rucina Ballinger, *Balinese Dance, Drama and Music: A Guide to the Performing Arts of Bali,* illust. Barbara Anello (Singapore: Periplus, 2004), 68.

4 Eva Respini, ed., *Cindy Sherman* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 69.

5 Fondation Louis Vuitton, *Cindy Sherman at the Fondation: A Retrospective from 1975 to 2020; Crossing Views, the Collection: A Selection,* press kit, https://presse.fondationlouisvuitton.fr/cindy-sherman-at-fondation-louis-vuitton/.

6 "Cindy Sherman Behind the Mask: Or Is She? Celebrating the Fine-Art Photographer on International Women's Day," *Phaidon,* March 8, 2017, https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2017/march/08/when-cindy-sherman-masked-up/.

7 Kristen Gaylord, "Cindy Sherman, American, Born 1954," *MoMA* 2016, https://www.moma.org/artists/5392.

8 Margo Jefferson, "Playing on Black and White: Racial Messages through a Camera Lens," *The New York Times,* January 10, 2005; see also Seph Rodney, "Cindy Sherman in Blackface," *Hyperallergic,* October 29, 2015, https://hyperallergic.com/246851/cindy-sherman-in-blackface/.

9 Ayanna Thompson, *Blackface* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2021).

10 James Richards, *"Star Wars:* Why Mandalorians Never Remove Their Helmets," *Dork Side of the Force,* November 29, 2019, https://dorksideoftheforce.com/2019/11/29/star-wars-mandalorian-helmet/.

11 Angela Naimou, *Salvage Work: U.S. and Caribbean Literatures amid the Debris of Legal Personhood* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 185. For the etymology of *persona,* see David Wiles, *The Masks of Menander: Sign and Meaning in Greek and Roman Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131, and Christopher B. Polt, *Catullus and Roman Comedy: Theatricality and Personal Drama in*

the Late Republic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 67–68, 67n52.

12 Polt, *Catullus and Roman Comedy,* 69.

13 John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

14 Martha Johnson, "Reflections of Inner Life: Masks and Masked Acting in Ancient Greek Tragedy and Japanese Noh Drama," *Modern Drama* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 25, and Peter A. Campbell, "Teaching Japanese Noh Drama through Visualizing Space," *Theatre Topics* 21, no. 1 (March 2011): 5.

15 Makeup practices can also be a source of community-building, life-affirmation, and decolonization: see Karla M. Padrón, "To Decolonise Is to Beautify: A Perspective from Two Transgender Latina Makeup Artists in the US," *Feminist Review* 128, no. 1 (2021): 156–62.

16 Rachel Lubitz, "Why Makeup Matters to Transgender People — and How the Internet Is Helping," *Mic,* February 23, 2016, https://www.mic.com/articles/135822/why-makeup-for-transgender-people-matters-and-how-the-internet-is-helping.

17 Estelle Grignon, "Trans Identity & Makeup," *Elle,* April 30, 2021, https://www.ellecanada.com/beauty/makeup-and-nails/trans-identity-makeup; Lux Alptraum, "Makeup Can Give Trans Women Freedom — But It Can Also Take It Away," *Racked,* March 23, 2017, https://www.racked.com/2017/3/23/14937266/trans-women-makeup; and Laken Brooks, "The Pigments of Patriarchy and Femme Trans Exclusion in the History of the 'All Natural' Makeup Movement," in *Makeup in the World of Beauty Vlogging: Community, Commerce, and Culture,* ed. Clare Douglass Little (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020), 127–41.

18 For gender and facial recognition, see Toby Chong et al., "Exploring a Makeup Support System for Transgender Passing Based on Automatic Gender Recognition," *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* 568 (2021): 1–13, and Michiyo Furutani, Zhou Yu, and Mikiya Nakatsuka, "Gender Expression among Transgender Women in Japan: Support Is Needed to Improve Social Passing as a Woman," *Acta Medica Okayama* 75, no. 3 (2021): 323–34. For facial recognition and ethnic minorities in China, see Donald Maye and Charles Rollet, "Dahua Race and Skin Color Analytic Cameras," *IPVM,* October 17, 2022, https://ipvm.com/reports/dahua-race-analytics. For Facebook and facial recognition, see Jerome Pesenti, "An Update on Our Use of Face Recognition," *Meta Newsroom,* November 2, 2021, https://about.fb.com/news/2021/11/update-on-use-of-face-recognition/.

19 Andrea James, "Makeup for Trans Women and Gender Diverse People," *Transgender Map,* https://www.transgendermap.com/social/makeup/.

20 Emily St. James, "The Assimilationist, or: On the Unexpected Cost of Passing as a Trans Woman," *Vox,* February 19, 2020, https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2020/2/12/21075683/trans-coming-out-cost-of-womanhood-pink-tax.

21 Brando Skyhorse and Lisa Frazier Page, eds., *We Wear the Mask: 15 True Stories of Passing in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017).
22 Will Mandy, "Social Camouflaging in Autism: Is It Time to Lose the Mask?," *Autism* 23, no. 8 (2019): 1879–81, and Iris Schneid and Aviad E. Raz, "The Mask of Autism: Social Camouflaging and Impression Management as Coping/Normalization from the Perspectives of Autistic Adults," *Social Science & Medicine* 248 (March 2020): 112826.
23 Jon Lackman, "It's Time to Retire Kabuki: The Word Doesn't Mean What Pundits Think It Does," *Slate,* April 14, 2010, https://slate.com/human-interest/2010/04/it-s-time-for-pundits-to-stop-using-the-word-kabuki.html.
24 Jessica Pierce, "It Hurts: 5 Reasons We Are Failing Our Animals When It Comes to Pain," *Psychology Today,* March 13, 2013, https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/all-dogs-go-heaven/201303/it-hurts; Alex Zernechel and April L. Perry, "The Final Battle: Constructs of Hegemonic Masculinity and Hypermasculinity in Fraternity Membership," *College Student Affairs Leadership* 4, no. 1 (2017): 6; Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production,* trans. Frank Bryant (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 13; and Megan Shauri, "5 Things You Think Are Normal But Would Actually Make Any Happy Marriage Choke," *Reporter-Times,* April 11, 2017, https://www.reporter-times.com/story/lifestyle/2017/04/11/5-things-you-think-are-normal-but-would-actually-make-any-happy-marriage-choke/46730635/.
25 Emily Matchar, "How the Invention of Scotch Tape Led to a Revolution in How Companies Managed Employees," *Smithsonian Magazine,* June 20, 2019, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/how-invention-scotch-tape-led-revolution-how-companies-managed-employees-180972437/.
26 John Noone, *The Man Behind the Iron Mask* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).
27 Rafia Zakaria, *Veil* (New York: Bloomsburg, 2017).
28 I owe this point to pillow talk with my husband, Jake Gellar-Goad. The TMNT's weapons are identifying props, too.
29 Jonathan N. Badger, *Sophocles and the Politics of Tragedy: Cities and Transcendence* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 118.

CHAPTER 5

Mirror

Two eyes and a mouth. Two shapes above, on the left and right, one below, in the middle. This is enough for human infants to process a face, a capacity they develop much earlier than other cognitive functions. A schematic, unlifelike drawing of a face will attract a baby's attention same as an actual face.[1]

The deep structure of the face, and the deep structure in our brains for recognizing faces, unmask why we have a deep connection to full-face masks, even the most rudimentary. Two eyeholes and a mouthhole. We're primed, by biology and by our earliest encounters with the Other, to pay attention to the features aped by a mask. A mask, unworn, may represent those key features, the shapes that tug on our brainstrings. Or it may mark their absence, the unsettling and ineffable void where eyeballs and teeth and tongue should be.

Masks inhabit the Uncanny Valley. This refers to a peculiar phenomenon: the more lifelike a representation of a human becomes, the more we empathize with it, up to a certain point. Stick figures don't usually capture our emotions, but cartoons and plushies do. When something is very lifelike, but not completely so — a corpse, a zombie, an android with *nearly* perfect facial expressions — we tend to recoil in horror or to experience some haunting sense of disquiet. Recall from chapter one that it's rare to see a living human face with no expression and no

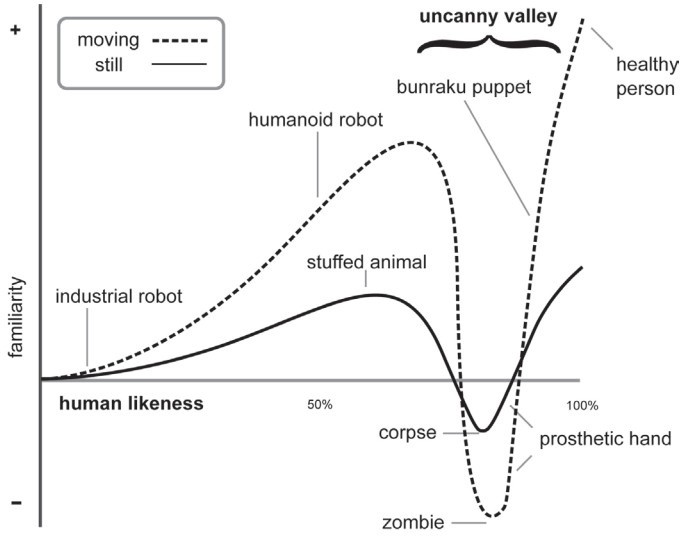


Figure 5.1. A diagram of the Uncanny Valley, based on an image by Masahiro Mori and Karl MacDorman at http://www.androidscience.com/theuncannyvalley/proceedings2005/uncannyvalley.html. Image by S. Murray, CC BY-SA 3.0.

gesture. This helps explain one of the uncanny-valley aspects of looking at a dead person's face: its lack of expression.

Why a "valley"? Consider fig. 5.1, a graph with a line indicating our comfort level with anthropomorphic figures. It rises to the right as something appears more human, then it plummets at that moment of recoil, and finally skyrockets when you get to the 100% verisimilitude of a normative-bodied human. The Uncanny Valley explains why dolls and clowns can creep you the fuck out. The Uncanny Valley is a liminal space, analogous to the ritual ones we encountered in chapter two.

Masks, as denizens of the Uncanny Valley, smack us with recognition and unfamiliarity at the same time. They're like a favorite song played on an out-of-tune piano. They are like us, but not quite like us. They are just a little *too* not quite like us. Death masks, covered in chapter three, are uncanny in this sense, "trad[ing] on a weird liveliness."[2] Masks are our reflec-

tion, maybe on the ripples of a windswept pond or through a glass darkly, maybe in a funhouse or a madhouse. Masks are us, with a certain margin of error. They ask to be — or we ask them to be — our mirror selves. Objects in the mirror may, of course, be closer than they appear.

Us is a good place to start — or, rather, *Us,* Jordan Peele's 2019 doppelganger horror film. (Spoilers ahead!) The movie follows Adelaide (played by Lupita Nyong'o) and her family as they encounter their exact doubles, called "the Tethered." The Tethered have been forced to live in a hellish underworld beneath the earth and, by some unexplained compulsion, have mirrored every physical action that their aboveground counterparts have taken throughout their lives. They have finally broken free and come to the surface to kill and replace their surface-dwelling alter egos. Near the climax, Adelaide learns that her duplicate, Red, was the singular doppelganger able to resist the compulsion and lead an uprising of the Tethered. In the film's final sequence, a flashback reveals that it is Adelaide who is truly Tethered: she throttled and switched places with Red, who was born and reared in the world above, when they came face to face as children in a boardwalk funhouse.

The movie's iconic poster features Adelaide/Red in the middle of removing a mask. *A mask of her own face.* The mask's empty left eyehole gapes into the void of the poster's background (fig. 5.2). Her actual left eye is barely visible through the mask's right eyehole. Her actual right eye is wide open, bloodshot, a tear trickling out of it and down her cheek. Her eyebrow is not quite normal — uncanny, even.

The poster's deployment of masking resonates with the film's motif of funhouse mirrors, anchored by the site of Adelaide and Red's initial childhood encounter. Mask and wearer are mirrored, but disjointed, reflections. We wonder, in a foreshadow or echo of the plot's principal revelation, which of the two is real.

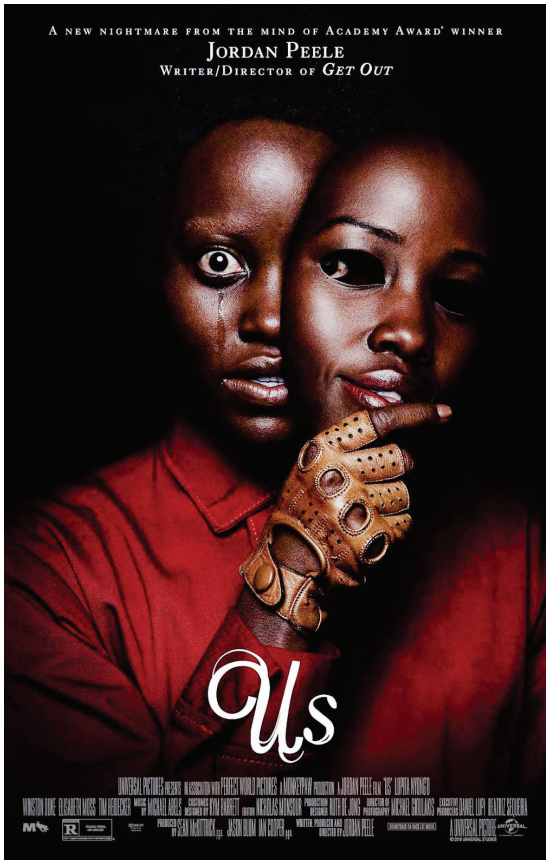


Figure 5.2. The poster for Jordan Peele's *Us* (2019).

Is it the normal-looking, but perhaps too-perfect mask, or the uncanny, horrific/horrified human visage that lurks beneath?

At the same time, the mask in the poster alludes to Adelaide's son and the son's doppelganger. The son wears a plastic Halloween werewolf mask as a safety blanket, pulling it down over his face when he's scared — including, crucially, in the movie's final twist, a signal that he's realized his mom was originally Teth-

Figure 5.3. In this still from Jordan Peele's *Us* (2019), the protagonist's son, left, meets his own doppelganger, right.

ered. His Tethered twin's mask is permanent, a creepy balaclava of white cloth that hides scars from burns suffered earlier in life (see fig. 5.3). For the child who lives above, masking is a temporary condition, one of choice, a transient trying-on of identity and security. For the one who lives below, the mask is his identity, fixed and forced. Yet in the film's last shot of Adelaide's son, his mask is pulled down, a symbol of his reversal of fortunes as he realizes his mother is one of the Tethered. In the end, he, too, is assimilated to his mask, permanently retreating behind its protective carapace.

Us asks us to contemplate the power of masking and its sway on our sense of self. The Tethered are like masks, humanoid shells with no agency of their own, acting out the wishes of the wearer, the abovegrounder. Or, the Tethered are the masked: concealed beneath the surface, true expression unseen, an unreachable interiority. We, like Adelaide, can be either, just as our masks can hide us from the world — or can instead unmask our truest selves.

Ancient Greek and Roman drama used full-face masks, as we have seen in earlier chapters, and some plays exploit masking for identity games and doppelganger effects akin to what we see in *Us*. The Roman comedian Plautus in particular puts masks to use in representing identical twins as well as copycats of other sorts. Plautus's *Menaechmi* (*The Menaechmus Twins*) is the ur-text for William Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors,* and the French word *ménechme* means "twin," "lookalike," or "double." Let's focus in on doppelgangery moments in two of Plautus's plays, *Amphitruo* and *Epidicus*.[3]

Amphitruo features the earliest surviving textual account of a person encountering their doppelganger.[4] The god Mercury has shapeshifted into an exact copy of a man named Sosia in order to cause confusion in the household of the title character (who enslaves Sosia). Why? Because Mercury's father Jupiter is currently in the house, shapeshifted as Amphitruo's doppelganger, having sex with Amphitruo's wife under false pretenses. (Like the legend of Uther Pendragon and Igraine, just a millennium or so earlier.) When Sosia encounters his double Mercury, his identity and sense of self are shaken to the core.

At first, he resists Mercury's claim to be the real Sosia, but Mercury's repetition of the claims, his threats of violence, and his absolutely perfect replication of Sosia's appearance win out. Sosia relinquishes his own claims to the name and personhood of Sosia. What makes the scene work is that both actors — the one playing Sosia and the one playing Mercury — are wearing duplicate masks, making them notionally indistinguishable and identical for the purposes of the theatrical experience. The play's prologue tells the audience that Mercury's mask will have feathers in his hat, which will be invisible to the characters on stage but will help viewers tell them apart. Both French (*sosie*) and Romanian (*sosíe*) get words for double, doppelganger, or impersonator from Sosia's encounter with his sinister second self.

Epidicus, meanwhile, stars as the titular trickster pulling off a series of schemes to swindle cash from the old man who enslaves him, in order to pay for the trafficked women the old man's son keeps falling for. Early in the play, after learning that

the first woman wasn't enough for the young hornball, Epidicus takes some time alone on stage to ponder his predicament. But instead of holding a skull and telling it, "alas, poor Yorick," Epidicus takes off his mask and uses it to have a conversation with himself.[5] Plautus brilliantly violates the norm for stage masks, and in doing so, he uses the mask to literalize an inner dialogue. The mask is at once separable from the actor's body and yet inseparably identified with the actor's person, at least within the confines of the stage space. Taking it off — normally a total no-no within view of the spectators — allows the actor to split himself in two.

The connections between *Amphitruo, Epidicus, Us,* and masks are already becoming apparent. Masks are a token of identity, a tool for recognition or misrecognition. They are a means of doubling, either yourself or someone you want to impersonate — or the yourself you want to impersonate. Through these traits, the mask turns into a question of who is real and who is an impersonator. The mask as a site for reflection; the mask as mirror. Or, to go with the etymology of the ancient Greek word for mask, *prosōpon* (from *pros* + *horaō,* "I look upon"), the mask as the reflected gaze. I speculate (*speculum*: Latin for mirror) that the concept of the doppelganger may have some genetic connection to the mask. The creation of a carriable, wearable representation of the face gave our prehistoric ancestors the power to shapeshift, to try on other personas, to impersonate others. And to contemplate themselves *as* persona, as impersonatable. Masks are prostheses, material extensions of our bodily capacities for imitation and impersonation (voice, movement, facial expression). To encounter our doppelganger is, ultimately, an opportunity to reflect on what the mask we wear reflects back at us.

So we see that something else binds these three dramas and their maskwork together: the issues they surface of identity and, more specifically, enslavement. In Plautus, both Sosia and

Epidicus are enslaved characters, while Mercury is temporarily guesting as his dad's enslaved factotum for the purposes of the plot. *Us,* on the other hand, presents a powerful allegory for enslavement and mass incarceration in the United States (or, if you will, the US[6]). In each, the sameness of appearance established by masks signifies the coercive loss of identity in regimes of human trafficking and forced servitude, while the removal of a mask — whatever it reveals beneath — points to the fragmentation of the self that enslavement or imprisonment can cause.

When someone else claims Sosia's name, likeness, and household, he is thrown into an identity crisis, an existential doubt about who he is and where he belongs. He plummets into an abyss of uncertainty and possibility. He finds himself simultaneously at a loss for what to do without an enslaver telling him, and at a crossroads that might set him on a path to freedom and self-determination. When Epidicus takes off his mask, he stages identity dissociation, a coping mechanism to weather the stresses and potentially violent punishments attendant upon serving two enslavers with opposing, and equally unreasonable, demands. Epidicus's externalized inner dialogue is again a matter of existential importance: how he proceeds from this moment will determine the success or failure of his schemes, and thus the safety or suffering of his person at the hands of the men enslaving him.

Adelaide in *Us* travels into the hellish underbelly of the earth, echoing the *katabasis* (journey to the underworld) of Dante in *Inferno,* Aeneas in Vergil's *Aeneid,* and Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey.* The difference is that she encounters not the dead, but herself, Tethered. Her journey invokes the Middle Passage by which Europeans and Americans forcibly trafficked enslaved Africans to the western hemisphere. The Tethered are confined underground (as enslaved people were confined below decks) and wear reddish-orange jumpsuits evocative of prison clothes, the garb of the carceral successor to American enslavement. So Adelaide undergoes her own Middle Passage, and in its wake she faces a struggle for, and against, herself.[7] Her identity is split in two, fractured, uncertain, and perhaps unrecoverable. The

two bodies of Adelaide and her Tethered twin, her two masks from the movie's poster, put a face to the trauma, alienation, isolation, and coercive identity-remaking of enslavement.

The image of Adelaide confronted by her doppelganger also raises the matter of double consciousness, the concept theorized by W.E.B. Du Bois to explain the psychological stresses and dissociative pressures on Black people living in America. Given the globally catastrophic trauma of enslavement, as well as the structural inequities and racist ideology of American society at large, Black Americans may live with constant awareness of external, racially informed perceptions of them superimposed on their own sense of self. As Du Bois writes, "One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."[8] One of the central goals and challenges of Du Bois's oeuvre is to find paths and structures to help Black people as they work to merge this double self — to unite themselves with the doppelgangers that history, society, and whiteness have created for them.

Du Bois deploys the veil as a powerful metaphor for racism. Within the veil, you can see the opportunity of the world, but you cannot ultimately get to it. The veil walls you off from full citizenship. Du Bois's veil metaphor functions in a second way. As a child, you may not recognize the oppression of racism that you will face, as through the fabric of a fine veil. Until you do. And from that moment on, as through the fabric of a fine veil, you can see how it filters your access to and interaction with the world, even (again, as with a veil) how the world accesses and interacts with and perceives you. Du Bois writes, "The worlds within and without the Veil of Color are…changing rapidly, but not at the same rate, not in the same way; and this must produce a peculiar wrenching of the soul…a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes."[9] The

Veil becomes not only a barrier between worlds, but also a mirror, a reflection of double consciousness. Recall the power and doubled message of veiling from chapter four.

When the foundational postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon wrote his first book, which deals in large measure with double consciousness, he settled on not the veil but the mask. The book, titled *Black Skin, White Masks,* uses masks as a governing metaphor. In contexts of white colonialism, enslavement, supremacy, and apartheid, Black people are confronted with the necessity and risk of putting on a white mask. Such a mask demands of them: you must always be performing; you must act differently from yourself around white people. You must put on a social costume/custom designed by white society. You must speak "proper" around white people. This kind of code-switching, familiar to racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities across the globe, is essentially donning or doffing the mask — often the former, because of the will of the dominant social order. But you mustn't speak *too* proper, because white people might then fear that you are trying to become them, become their doppelganger. At the same time, the colonizer, the enslaver, the supremacist wants the mask to be permanent, to be able to say that you're not truly Black.

Consequently, life in these societies can compel Black people to separate themselves from their interiority or from their true selves, to become the mask they are forced to wear. White-centric education and media — from children's stories to comic books and movies — pushes Black children to roleplay whiteness and identify with it.[10] They are caught between the world and themselves, for, as Fanon writes, "the first encounter with a white man oppresses him [i.e., a Black person] with the whole weight of his blackness."[11] More specifically, Fanon refers to the weight of that Blackness as viewed and devalued by whiteness. Encounters with white people and white society both require the veil of the white mask and provoke an encounter with the Othered self, the doppelganger hailing straight from the Uncanny Valley. This is what poet June Jordan alludes to when

she writes of "the grace of a boy removing | a white mask he makes beautiful."[12]

Recall Sunny, the protagonist of Nnedi Okorafor's *Nsibidi Scripts* series, discussed in chapter three. Her spirit face, Anyanwu, is her second self, which she must confront and integrate and cohabitate with — and is represented as a mask. Anyanwu is Sunny's doppelganger. Anyanwu is a symbol of her double consciousness, as a Black person in the world, as a Leopard Person living among and born to nonmagical people, and as someone born in Nigeria but raised in America and newly returned to her birthplace. Sunny's mask functions like those of other superheroes, whose masks often instantiate their alter egos — their "other mes," their second selves, their doppelgangers.

Let's return to Jordan Peele's *Us,* and its protagonist Adelaide's mask of her own face. The movie can be read not only as an allegory of enslavement, mass incarceration, and structural racism, but also specifically as a parable about the psychic struggle with double consciousness. From one point of view, Adelaide's descent into the underworld — imagery also used by both Du Bois and Fanon[13] — is a journey into the Veil. Her fight with her doppelganger down below ritually enacts the self-conflictory split lives and split personalities that colonists and their ideologies of power try to force upon colonized subjects. And, while the closing twist is more likely to be taken as a sign that the "bad" version of Adelaide has won out, we might also be so bold as to interpret the twist as suggesting, instead, that Adelaide has emerged from her hellish descent with a successfully merged, unified consciousness. Doppelganger no more, white mask no more. Is this a triumph of the self? Or perhaps, in words written by Ann K. Schwader, poet of the weird, "All masks are mirrors in the end: | Reflections of some inward scar, | Some pallid truth that we defend."[14]

Figure 5.4. A *gelede* masquerade in Benin City, Nigeria, December 18, 2013. Photo by Gogeafrica, CC BY-SA 4.0.

When we look at a mask, we look into a mirror. We see ourselves, or some distortion of the self. Yet when we *wear* a mask, what mask we choose can hold up a mirror to society. At the aggregate level, masks can be deployed to resist, to conform, or both at once; to hide, to annunciate, or both at once. Used *en masse,* masks turn mass movements into *masked* movements. They can become the mouthpiece, the medium, the message, or all three in tandem. As we saw in chapter two with secret societies in some cultures, masking both anonymizes and identifies, both grants a sense of belonging and projects a sense of solidarity with communal values. For example, in Yoruba lands such as Otta in the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries, *gelede* (fig. 5.4) and *egungun* (fig. 5.5) masquerades "developed into effective tools of statecraft and warfare," internally as well as in foreign relations with other peoples of West Africa and in encounters with white European colonizers.[15]

In the United States of America, the most notorious and deleterious secret society that uses face coverings is the Ku Klux Klan, a celebrity of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and antisemitism. Mention the Klan, and the images most likely to spring to mind are burning crosses — and white hoods. The Klansman's hood does the double duty that other masks do

Figure 5.5. An *egungun* masquerade in Benin, January 30, 2022. Photo by DoussFrance, CC BY-SA 4.0.

for other secret societies: it grants anonymity and broadcasts belonging. But the mask, the veil of the Klansman's hood, is also an intimidation tactic. It is a threat: a promise of violence as clandestine as the wearer's face, as prominent as the hood's point, and as senseless as the blank ghost-canvas of its white fabric. The hood is a talisman for the desire of a whitewashed society. It is also an edict: conform, or else. Its whiteness is overweening and overwhelming.[16]

A fictional Klan and its successors are major antagonists in the 2019 superhero TV series *Watchmen,* and masks are an omnipresent motif of the show. The white supremacists wear masks. The vigilantes wear masks. The Black protagonist, who also wears a mask, finds KKK robes and hood hidden in the closet of a friend. Even the cops wear masks — and in the wearing, they abandon their supposed commitments to civil rights, the rule of law, and humane treatment of civilians. In the show as in real life, masks grant anonymity, uniformity, identifiability, and feelings of impunity or invincibility. In the show, masks are also a tool for processing trauma, intentionally deployed as such by the show's creators: several characters wear masks that reflect and grapple with life-changing and life-shaking events from their cast. The show's thematization of masks and duality

challenges viewers to accept the idea that having multiple faces, multiple identities is normal, is what it means to be human.[17]

At the same time as the real-world mask of the Ku Klux Klan levels, cloaks, and broadcasts, it can also create hierarchies. Officers in some branches of the KKK may wear hoods and robes of different colors, such as black, green, or purple, to distinguish themselves by rank. The exact meanings of the color codes vary by locality, rendering the ranks just as inscrutable as the faces underneath.[18]

Masks can signal rank: a way to reflect the individual's position within society, even while the individual's face is effaced in the wearing. Among the Sala Mpasu people, who live within the Democratic Republic of Congo, the more masks someone has earned the right to wear, the higher their status.[19] Masks — our crafted countenances, our artificial doppelgangers — can do what our fleshy faces cannot on their own. A recognizably high-status mask overrides the anonymity of an unrecognized individual face.

Or a mask can remove the status associated with a person of note, can grant them the freedom to act classlessly. In the Republic of Venice, during the late 1600s until its fall in 1797, citizens and foreign dignitaries went masked publicly for fully half the year. This was not because Carnival overstayed its welcome, in some sort of mask hysteria. It was, rather, a mechanism of ideology, a way of cloaking inequalities in an ostensibly republican political order that had actually been captured by elite rule. Masks accompanied attendance at government events, intellectual salons, opera, and the theater. On the opposite end of the socioeconomic spectrum, masking offered well-known Venetians experiencing poverty an escape from the shame associated with begging.[20]

In Venice, masks broke down barriers while simultaneously maintaining them, because the expectation of masking meant that identity — both of the individual per se and as a person of station and rank — could go known but unacknowledged.[21] Yes, this person is very influential and I am penniless. But we are both of us masked, so we may freely pretend to be equal. We

Figure 5.6. The "Dorset Ooser," a mask used in the 19th century in Melbury Osmond, Dorset County, England, in "skimity riding," a local version of *charivari*. Photo taken between 1883 and 1891 by J.W. Chaffins and Sons. Public domain.

can navigate the mismatch between our statuses more openly because we have hidden our faces.

Between Venice and the Klan, we can see the power of mass, masked anonymity. This power is on display in early-modern *charivari* or "rough music," extending even into the nineteenth century, in England, France, Canada, and elsewhere. *Charivari* is the term for a genre of riotous parades, public humiliations, and other mob actions. These events often used masks to protest, provide satiric mockery, and enact informal justice against their targets: adulterers, cuckolds, strikebreakers, antipopulist politicians, and criminals. Cuckolds were often mocked specifically with deer horns (fig. 5.6), a mask type familiar to us from chapter two.[22] In *charivari* events, the mob at times forced its target to wear a mask, in which case the mask acted as revelation of the target's alleged hidden crimes; the target's entire identity became consumed by the transgression marked by the mask. A

Figure 5.7. A misogynistic "scold's mask" or "scold's bridle," 17th century, now held in the Märkisches Museum, Berlin, Germany. Photo by Anagoria, CC BY 3.0.

misogynistic subtype of rough music involved a husband and his co-conspirators forcing his wife to wear a "scold's mask" to shame her for expressing her voice and agency (fig. 5.7). Meanwhile, for the rough musicians who themselves wore masks, masking protected against retaliation at the individual level and, in aggregate, signaled the mob's oneness of voice and purpose. Mask means anonymity and unanimity. No surprise, then, that executioners went not only hooded but sometimes, as in the case of the execution of Charles I in 1649, masked.[23]

The twenty-first century's most famous emblem of the power of anonymous masking *en masse,* the Guy Fawkes mask (fig. 5.8), is actually from the seventeenth. The mask originated as the default costume element for Britain's annual, Halloween-ish celebration of the defeat of Fawkes's 1605 Gunpowder Plot against King and Parliament. It gained mainstream popularity in the United States after the 2005 movie *V for Vendetta,* an adaptation of Alan Moore's anarchist comic series from the 1980s. Moore

Figure 5.8. A protest by members of Anonymous, wearing Guy Fawkes/*V for Vendetta* masks, outside the headquarters of the Church of Scientology of London, England, March 15, 2008. Photo by James Harrison. Public domain.

and his illustrator, David Lloyd, had landed upon that mask as the chief disguise and token of the antihero V in his assault on the dystopian future government of the United Kingdom.[24] In the film, the mask is worn also by numberless extras who play protesters marching on Westminster.

Thereafter, the Guy Fawkes mask made the jump from fictional protests to ones in real life, first by the hacktivist collective Anonymous, then by the Occupy Wall Street movement, then worldwide. The mask's history, recent and distant, gives it an anti-institutional flavor that makes it an easy choice for oppo-

nents of governments, corporations, and organized religion. (In a similar way, gas masks are a natural pick for environmentalist protesters.) The specificity of the Guy Fawkes mask — depicting not just any person, but one particular person — plays paradoxically with the anonymity and conformity of mass masking. In doing so, it conveys a distinct identity and unity of purpose, one that is often unsettling or threatening to the targets of this critical mask/mass.

During the long and halting Arab Spring, some pro-democracy (and therefore anti-government) protesters adopted the Guy Fawkes mask. The mask served as a powerful symbol of their aims to overthrow authoritarian regimes and as a handy tool to evade surveillance by said regimes. Among these protesters were women, including some who combined the Guy Fawkes mask with a hijab. The mask and the veil, drawing on two different cultural traditions, worked hand in hand. Both de-emphasized the identity of the individual by refusing total access to her face. Each acted as a token of conformity or solidarity, depending on your ideological preconceptions. In putting on either one, the wearer donned a visible invisibility: faceless yet unmistakably present.[25]

Unsurprisingly, the Guy Fawkes mask did not play well with the tyrants and oligarchs seeking to usher in a return of Arab Winter; by 2013, both the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain had specifically banned the wearing of Guy Fawkes masks at protests. But these moves are nothing new. Anti-mask laws are common enough to have their own Wikipedia page, and mask laws are on the books in twelve US states and DC, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, Spain, and Ukraine — not to mention the Islamophobic bans on veiling (burqas, hijabs, and more) in Belgium, Catalonia, Denmark, France, Italy, and the Netherlands.[26] These anti-mask laws are about surveillance, about the need of state apparatuses to monitor and police people using facial recognition in both its high-tech and low-tech forms. So it is with veil bans, as nations in the west of Europe inscribe their fear of Muslims, migrants, refugees, and non-white people more generally into their jurisprudence. So it is, also, with

veil mandates in some countries, where the enforced wearing of veils reinforces patriarchal power relations and serves as a constant reminder that the government is trying to control women's sexuality and status.

In my own home state of North Carolina, it's altogether illegal to wear a mask in public, with four exceptions, each of which connects to a masking theme covered in this book: for health or safety, for a seasonally appropriate holiday, for theater and masquerades, or for activities of a secret society that has secured prior approval from local authorities. That last proviso stuck out to me as a North Carolina native with a family history of racist extremism. My mom grew up in eastern North Carolina with a father who was a member of the Klan — he referred to his participation in KKK racial terrorism as "Saturday night religion." Was the secret society for whom that carve-out was designed none other than the KKK? It turns out to be just the opposite: a law journal's assessment of the statute when newly introduced described it as "the so-called anti-Ku Klux Klan statute."[27] The permit exemption to the anti-mask law meant that the KKK legally had to register, and thus the authorities had a better chance of monitoring them. As the law journal put it, "Going on the theory that the strength of such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan lies in their secrecy…this new statute is designed to bring these groups out into the open by requiring that they unmask and have regular meeting places."[28] The mask of the KKK was jurisprudentially and politically regarded as foundational to not just their public image but also their public power.

Regardless, North Carolina's protest laws would seem to be honored more in the breach than in the observance when it comes to the Klan. In August 2019, about a dozen Klansmen marched on a small town down the road from the University of North Carolina, where I did my doctoral studies. The event was not approved by the local authorities, and yet the event took place without intervention by said local authorities. Some of the Klan marchers wore robes and hoods, seemingly in abrogation of the anti-mask statute. Some were armed, in clear violation of the state's prohibition on open carry at protests. In a series

of events totally unsurprising to observers of America's racialized policing practices — and totally unsurprising in retrospect to anyone who witnessed the January 6th Capitol Insurrection — none of the Klansmen were arrested on site, some chatted with police who were stationed there, and ultimately only two warrants were issued. The Klansmen were totally outnumbered by antiracist counterprotesters. The event was entirely peaceful.[29]

In photos of the event I have seen, the Klansmen in robes have pulled up their hoods to reveal their faces. They *want* to be recognized; they *want* to be identified. Hence why some didn't even bother to put on the regalia. For those who did, the mask of the hood is not one that keeps secrets or conceals identity, but rather one that avows identity and makes ideology overt. It is a bright white spotlight of hate and terror.

Masks are a way to become *not* ourselves, yet they keep returning us back to ourselves. When we wear the mask, we stare into our selves and into our societies. In the words of poet Cecilia Vecuña, "You don't put on a mask to be seen, but to see with different eyes."[30] We may not always like what we see. People rarely love everything they see when they look in a mirror. And the mask's reflection might be distorted like a funhouse, might be refracted by the cracks of stress and trauma, or might offer a rear view of the Uncanny Valley. The mask, in other words, is an object closer than it appears. A mask can be a duplicate we make with our own hands — a fashioned clone — or it could be a vision of a me, an us, or a society that we want to make reality. The masked doppelgangers of Jordan Peele's *Us* and Plautus's *Amphitruo* grapple with the fracturing of identity caused by enslavement, and the mirrored Adelaide in *Us* prompts further reflection on the double consciousness facing Black Americans and other postcolonial subjects.

Masking, especially but not exclusively in masked drama, imparts another kind of double consciousness upon wearer

and beholder alike: the suspension of disbelief, or our willing self-immersion into the dramatic fiction. We know that masked actors are not really the characters depicted by the masks, but we allow ourselves to feel like they are. Likewise, the actors remain themselves and yet are transformed into the personas of their masks, even to the point of feeling entranced or dissociated.[31] These divided selves can hold revelatory, magical, ritual power, produced by the concealment of the mask: by becoming Other, and by knowingly excusing the fiction of this metamorphosis, we may pass beyond the veil of everyday life, of unquestioned assumptions, and of the constraints of the here and now. A mask is not only a mirror but also a pair of augmented-reality goggles, a way to access what was, what might or should be, or what should never come to pass.

Notes

1 Yumiko Otsuka, "Face Recognition in Infants: A Review of Behavioral and Near-Infrared Spectroscopic Studies," *Japanese Psychological Research* 56, no. 1 (2014): 76–90; Viola Macchi Cassia, Chiara Turati, and Francesca Simion, "Can a Nonspecific Bias Toward Top-Heavy Patterns Explain Newborns' Face Preference?," *Psychological Science* 15, no. 6 (2004): 379–83; Catherine J. Mondloch et al., "Face Perception During Early Infancy," *Psychological Science* 10, no. 5 (Sep. 1999): 419–22; and Craig M. Mooney, "Age in the Development of Closure Ability in Children," *Canadian Journal of Psychology* 11 (1957): 219–26.

2 Luke A. Fidler, "Impressions from the Face of a Corpse," *The Atlantic,* May 30, 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/impressions-from-the-face-of-a-corpse/371772/.

3 T.H.M. Gellar-Goad, "The Uncanniest of Valleys: Ancient and Modern Doppelgängers," *Eidolon,* October 7, 2019, https://eidolon.pub/the-uncanniest-of-valleys-5cd325b0ac44, and T.H.M. Gellar-Goad, "Varro's *Bimarcus* and Encounters with the Self in Plautus' *Epidicus* and *Amphitruo*," *Arethusa* 51, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 117–35.

4 Maurizio Bettini, *The Ears of Hermes: Communication, Images, and Identity in the Classical World,* trans. William Michael Short (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 171–72.

5 Niall W. Slater, *Plautus in Performance: The Theatre of the Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 23–24, and Christopher B. Polt, "A Splitting Headache: Mask and Performance at Plautus *Epidicus* 81–101," *Mnemosyne* 68 (2015): 1008–17.

6 Matt Miller, "In Jordan Peele's *Us,* Jeremiah 11:11 Quietly Explained the Film's Central Meaning," *Esquire,* March 25, 2019, https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/movies/a26929824/jeremiah-11-11-us-meaning-jordan-peele-theory-spoilers-explained/.

7 On the powerful image and metaphor of the wake in Black experiences, see Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

8 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Library of America, 2009), 8–9.

9 Ibid., 146.

10 Compare the childhood experiences of learning to idealize whiteness via underwear models described by Matt Ortile, *The Groom Will Keep His Name: And Other Vows I've Made About Race, Resistance, and Romance* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2020), 85–116.

11 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 150. My phrase "between the world and themselves" alludes to Richard Wright's 1935 poem "Between the World and Me," made famous anew by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: One World, 2015).

12 In June Jordan, *Who Look at Me* (New York: Crowell, 1969).
13 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* 165–79, and Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* 10.
14 In Ann K. Schwader, "All Masks are Mirrors," *Unquiet Stars* (Portland: Dark Regions, 2021).
15 John Thabiti Willis, *Masquerading Politics: Kinship, Gender, and Ethnicity in a Yoruba Town* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 2.
16 See also Alison Kinney, *Hood* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), chap. 2.
17 Sarah Coury, "The Brilliance Behind Masks in HBO's *Watchmen,*" *Comic Watch,* December 25, 2019, https://comic-watch.com/television-shows/the-brilliance-behind-masks-in-hbos-watchmen, and Jeremy Kay, "Emmys Spotlight: From Masks to Racial Tragedy, the Uncanny Prescience of *Watchmen,*" *Screen Daily,* July 3, 2020, https://www.screendaily.com/features/emmys-spotlight-from-masks-to-racial-tragedy-the-uncanny-prescience-of-watchmen/5151167.article.
18 Anti-Defamation League, "Ku Klux Klan Robes," *Hate on Display,* https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/kkk-robes.
19 John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty, *Masks: Faces of Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 302.
20 James H. Johnson, *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), xi–xii.
21 Ibid., 134–35.
22 Allan Greer, "From Folklore to Revolution: Charivaris and the Lower Canadian Rebellion of 1837," *Social History* 15, no. 1 (1990): 35; Stephen Banks, *Informal Justice in England and Wales, 1760–1914: The Courts of Popular Opinion* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 38, 66, 85, 129; and Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music and the 'Reform of Popular Culture' in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 105 (1984): 79–113.
23 Kinney, *Hood,* 11–12.
24 Alan Moore, "Behind the Painted Smile" (1983), available at https://ceeeej-blog.tumblr.com/post/12404116820/behind-the-painted-smile.
25 I first learned of the hijab and Guy Fawkes mask combo from Kinney, *Hood,* 89. On the concept of veiling's visible invisibility, see Rafia Zakaria, *Veil* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).
26 For the Guy Fawkes mask bans, see Sorcha Pollak, "Bahrain Bans 'V for Vendetta' Masks," *Time,* February 27, 2013, https://world.time.com/2013/02/27/bahrain-bans-v-for-vendetta-masks/. For broader anti-mask laws, see *Wikipedia,* s.v. "Anti-mask law," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-mask_law, and James Pasley, "12 US States and 7 Countries That Have Barred Protesters from Wearing Masks," *Business Insider India,* October 8, 2019, https://www.businessinsider.in/politics/news/12-us-states-and-7-countries-that-have-barred-protesters-from-wearing-masks/articleshow/71485196.cms.
27 North Carolina Law Review, "A Survey of Statutory Changes in North Carolina in 1953," *North Carolina Law Review* 31, no. 4 (1953): 401.

28 Ibid., 403. I am grateful to Rob Faggart for bringing this explication to my attention and sharing his own perspective.

29 Joe Killian, "Armed KKK Members Demonstrate in Hillsborough, Are Outnumbered by Anti-racist Protesters," *NC Newsline,* August 26, 2019, https://ncnewsline.com/briefs/armed-kkk-members-demonstrate-in-hillsborough-are-outnumbered-by-protesters/; Town of Hillsborough, "Statement on Demonstrations in Hillsborough," August 24, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20191208220617/https://www.hillsboroughnc.gov/news/news-releases/2019/8/24/357/statement-on-demonstrations-in-hillsborough.html; Blake Hodge, "Warrants Taken Against 2 at Weekend KKK Rally in Hillsborough," *Chapelboro.com,* August 26, 2019, https://chapelboro.com/news/crime/warrants-taken-against-2-at-weekend-kkk-rally-in-hillsborough; and Blake Hodge, "Community, Local Officials Condemn KKK Rally in Hillsborough," *Chapelboro.com,* August 25, 2019, https://chapelboro.com/news/safety/community-local-officials-condemn-kkk-rally-in-hillsborough.

30 Cecilia Vicuña, "K'isa/alangó," in *New and Selected Poems,* ed. and trans. Rosa Alcalá (Berkeley: Kelsey Street Press, 2018), 247.

31 Constantin Stanislavski, *Building a Character* (New York: MacGregor, 1949), 15, and Nunley and McCarty, *Masks,* 230.

CHAPTER 6

Medicine

Surgical masks carried much less cultural baggage in much of the world before early 2020 than they do now. If I had written this book a few years earlier, masks and medicine might not even have merited a separate chapter. But the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown masks into the limelight, and given them an ideological heft more explicit and intense than they have perhaps ever held.

I personally hated wearing COVID masks. I know I'm not special in this regard. And I wasn't special in doing it anyway, not special in happily going unmasked once the mandates were lifted and I was vaccinated, not special in redonning them for my post-isolation recovery period after I contracted the disease at a friend's wedding late in revising this book. No matter what I tried, I couldn't wear a mask without constantly fogging up my glasses. Tighter mask? The air just tickled my eyes on the way to my lenses. Wear the mask higher? Same result. Anti-fog treatments? No such luck. KN95 mask fastened perfectly? Nope, plus it got soggy, and it stank, no matter how fresh my breath. Contact lenses? I've never had the mettle to meddle with my eyes. Such were the travails of masking with glasses… to which I'll return in the conclusion of this book.

Masks are one of the grand symbols of pandemics present and past. The most iconic visual from Europe's encounters with the Black Death is the mask of the plague doctor (fig. 6.1). Long,

Figure 6.1. The classic plague doctor. A copper engraving print by Paul Fürst titled "Der Doctor Schnabel von Rom" (Dr. Beak from Rome), circa 1656, as printed in Eugen Holländer, *Die Karikatur und Satire in der Medizin: Medico-Kunsthistorische Studie,* 2nd edn. (Stuttgart, 1921), 171, fig. 79. Public domain.

dark trenchcoat, wide-brimmed hat, cane, and creepy beaked mask with large glassy eyeholes, a staple of steampunk and goth costume parties nowadays. The beak was traditionally filled with aromatic herbs such as lavender, meant to prevent the transmission from patient to doctor of *miasma:* foul-smelling, polluted air by which disease was thought to spread. Because the plague was so fatal and the medical science of the day so inadequate, the plague doctor's mask became a symbol of doom, another kind of death mask. The crow-like appearance couldn't have helped with that, given that numerous cultures in numerous periods have long associated crows with death. Just as the presence of crows or ravens might signify that corpses or a battlefield were nearby, so the coming of doctors came to symbolize the advent of the plague.

The history of the plague doctor mask is a little more complicated, though. There's no firm evidence of its use during the medieval height of the bubonic plague. The earliest attestation of the archetypal plague doctor costume is in a 1619 outbreak of plague in Paris, where Louis XIII's royal physician Charles de Lorme invented the outfit, mask included. Even then, the mask may have remained more theory than practice until subsequent plagues in Rome and Naples in 1656 and in Marseilles in 1720. Prior to those pandemics, the mask may have belonged primarily to the domain not of medicine but of make-believe, first as the face of the *commedia dell'arte* stock character *Medico della Peste* (plague doctor) and then as a popular mask for Carnival.[1] If this is how things went down, that means its popularity in the world of pretend gave it such a prominent place in the zeitgeist that it seemed a natural choice for real plague doctors seeking to prevent contagion — another display of the totemic power of masks, and of life imitating art. By strange coincidence, the present-day function of the plague doctor mask as dress-up for make-believe may match its origins, while its deployment for actual medical purposes in times of plague turns out to be merely an intermission of a century or so.

Even with transformational advances in medical science and near eradication of the bubonic plague, today the mask of the

plague doctor is still a potent symbol of disease and contagion. Cut to March 2020. It's spring break, and Wake Forest University, where I'm a professor, has just shut down for the semester in the wake of COVID-19. My colleague Amy and I are meeting to plan the pivot to online of our co-taught course, and we decide to make it a walking meeting on campus. She also decides to don a costume plague doctor mask I'd bought not long before, and we do a photo shoot during our walk-and-talk.

What emerges, fig. 6.2, is a haunting piece of gallows humor that encapsulates that moment in the United States' response to the spread of the novel coronavirus: an isolated figure on a deserted campus, its stereotypically collegiate architecture hazy in the background, in a sign of the isolation from familiar social and work surroundings that was to come. The mask shouts that we are in a plague, of course, but more specifically, its cultural association with the medieval epoch of Black Death (plus its historical seventeenth- and eighteenth-century use) comments on how the COVID-19 pandemic seemed and may still seem like a shadow out of time, a blast from the past that revealed, in no uncertain terms, the limits of modern medicine in the face of virological unknowns.

In 2020, masks of a more mundane sort became the flashpoint of the pandemic. During the early spread of the virus, the different cultural valences of medical masks in different parts of the world led to differential outcomes in infection and fatality rates. In several parts of East Asia, mask-wearing had been a normal part of life in the Before Times, well ahead of the arrival of COVID-19. In some of these societies, sneezing and coughing out in the open are bad manners, so people with colds or allergies tend to wear masks.[2]

The 2002–2003 SARS epidemic struck East Asia the hardest, and mask use remained strong in the two decades that followed. Awful air pollution in some East Asian cities has made masking ubiquitous.[3] A former student of mine who studied abroad in

Figure 6.2. Amy Mars in costume plague mask on the campus of Wake Forest University on March 13, 2020. Photo by T.H.M. Gellar-Goad.

Shanghai in fall 2019 told me he returned with a top-of-the-line vented mask he'd needed to forestall pollution-related complications with his asthma — but then he couldn't use it as a COVID-19 prophylactic because of those very vents. At least partly because of the familiarity, acceptance, and timely, widespread use of masking, the initial phase of the coronavirus pandemic hit many East Asian countries less hard than Europe, Iran, South America, and the United States.

In the United States, COVID-19 masking is another kind of blast from the past, as the social and political discourse around masks has echoed the country's experiences with the 1918–1920

flu epidemic. Then, as in 2020, there was no vaccine, so "non-pharmaceutical interventions" were essential. Then, as in 2020, public health authorities called for social distancing, closure of public institutions and events, lockdowns, changes in individual behaviors, and masks — including, in some municipalities, mask mandates. Then, as in 2020, masks were met with skepticism, mockery, mixed messaging, improper wear, and resistance.[4] In Japan, on the other hand, the flu of 1918 inaugurated a century of mask-wearing — or, if you will, it was the beginning of the mask era. Masks like those worn during COVID-19 were invented by Malaysian Chinese physician Gnoh Lean-Tuck in response to the 1910–1911 outbreak of pneumonic plague in Manchuria. Gnoh's masks subsequently became tokens of mask-wearers' participation in modernity, even as the doctors designing masks for this plague were consciously situating their masks as successors to the famous mask of the plague doctor.[5]

This link between the plague doctor's mask of yore and the cloth and surgical masks of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries may be unexpected, but it runs in both directions. Anthropologist Christos Lynteris, writing two years before the onset of COVID-19, noted how the personal protective apparatus of medical masks had come to possess the same sort of ominous associations with sickness and death as had the costume of plague doctors centuries earlier. In Lynteris's assessment, "Portrayed as the last barrier between us and the killer virus to come, 'plague masks' ultimately transform us into a species inhabiting the anteroom of its own extinction."[6] If medical masks all around us signify the end times, maybe resistance to mask-wearing is a species of denial, a scream into the void.

The mask of the present pandemic became a shibboleth of partisan identity and ideological affiliation in the United States. After some initial mixed messages from public health authorities, expert consensus settled on masking as a crucial means of limiting the spread of the virus. The gold standard were N95 masks previously familiar primarily to medical professionals, chemists, construction workers, and carpenters, while the most accessible type, surgical masks, revealed their vocational origins

by their name. Masking went from a niche, situational, workplace act reserved for people laboring under hazardous conditions to a ubiquitous, nonstop necessity: the hazard was everywhere and everyone, at all times.

Many states and municipalities implemented mask mandates, a twist of fate in light of the anti-mask laws discussed in the previous chapter. But the expert consensus was a consensus of experts, and almost half of the United States belongs to a political party that has embraced an unhealthy skepticism of expertise.[7] The decision not to wear a mask was an affirmation of Republican bona fides, captured most concisely in the mostly mask-free event then-President Donald Trump held to announce his nomination of someone to the Supreme Court — an occasion that ended up a superspreader event.[8] Many who refused to wear cloth or surgical masks in public ended up wearing oxygen masks in the ICU.

Many Americans who did choose to wear masks likewise wore them as badges of their ideological commitments to science or to liberal-minded, cosmopolitan, communal sociality. Masked profile pics on social media were a dime a dozen and, as of this writing, are still a dime a half-dozen, even though COVID-19 is not transmissible over the internet. For a time, it felt like some mask proponents ended every post or message with "wear a mask!," regardless of topical relevance. Masks were not merely a lifesaving medical intervention — which, to be sure, they were and are — but also a membership token, a proof of belonging to the tribe that "believes in science" and was taking the disease seriously. Clinging to masks extended, in extreme cases, to wearing them when driving alone in the car, to policing and shaming people not wearing masks without considering why they might be maskless, and to rejecting the very same public health expertise they'd previously uplifted when the experts began advising that vaccinated people could safely go unmasked. This attachment to masks in some cases can be seen as a coping mechanism for pandemic trauma.[9]

Masks were tokenized and politicized. They were also commodified. Masks became a fashion statement as well as a politi-

cal one. They were sometimes both at once, as with the Biden-Harris mask sold in the official Joe Biden store during the 2020 presidential campaign. Or when anti-masker, conspiracy theorist, and Republican extremist congressperson Marjorie Taylor Greene appeared on the floor of the House of Representatives wearing a mask embroidered with the words MOLON LABE. This phrase, meaning "come and take them" in Ancient Greek, is said by the second-century-CE author Plutarch to have been uttered in the early fifth century BCE by the Spartan co-king Leonidas to the Persian king Xerxes, when he asked the Spartans to lay down their weapons in surrender. It has been appropriated by gun nuts, neofascists, and white supremacists in an attempt to grant the weight of antiquity to their maximalist libertarian revanchism.[10]

The public discourse around masking is as much a mirror, as much about memory and metamorphosis, as it is about medicine. Wearing masks can change us, just as our situations do. COVID face masks didn't actually dehumanize us, not even when it came to partisan or racial divides, but they did make it much harder to read each other's emotions, intentions, and identities. The contingent and unstable nature of our identities, masked or unmasked, makes us uneasy and unpredictable, makes us act out and act weird, makes us prone to believe and make-believe weird things. Of the almost 6,000 incidents of "unruly" passengers on airlines based in the United States in 2021, over 70 percent involved masks.

At the same time, our revealed preferences — how we behaved in aggregate, as opposed to what we said we thought — showed that we were, at times, not so far apart as our rhetoric and ideological messaging made us seem. At least in 2020, most Americans were socially distancing and wearing masks even if they rejected the severity of the pandemic. As Rumani Kafle remarked to me after reading a draft of this book, wearing a mask during the pandemic was a sign of care for others' wellbeing, too. Masks served not only as a tool to limit the spread of the disease but also as sign of compassion, a way to convey care for the wellbeing of others. Meanwhile, most Americans were

still going out of their homes, perhaps cautiously, even if they supported the lockdown approach to containing the spread of the virus.[11]

Perhaps COVID-19 masks were always already doomed to become polarized symbols of political identity. They are, after all, masks. We read ourselves onto masks, we read our masks onto ourselves. A mask is both carrier and constituter of identity, mirror and melder of the self. In an age and society where so much of who we are is informed or even determined by our political affiliations, maybe our relationships to the masks that are the ubiquitous medical devices of the day must necessarily be defined by those affiliations.

There is an entirely different genre of medicinal masks: ones used in healing rituals. The Navajo or Diné healing ceremony called the Nightway, for example, involves masked dancers representing gods called Yébîchai. The dancers aid the healer leading the ceremony; the healer calls upon the Yébîchai to help heal the patient, who may also wear a mask.[12] The ceremony combines many of the key functions of masks in this book — part medicine, part ritual, part performance, part metamorphosis. The masked dancers are somewhere between actors enacting a representation of the Yébîchai and vessels transformed into the deities. The mask serves both as a likeness of the healing spirits that invokes their power metaphorically, and as an amulet that summons the spirits themselves into the presence of the afflicted.

In a number of medical traditions, a potential cause of maladies is malevolent supernatural beings, demons, or human magic-users of ill intent, who have either possessed the patient or are otherwise inflicting illness upon them. Masked rituals and dances are conducted to exorcise or appease the entities and thus remedy the patient's condition. Just such a ceremony is found in Sri Lanka, the *yakuma* (demon-dance) called *tovil* or *sanni* (fig. 6.3), which involves bringing the patient face to

Figure 6.3. The mask of Maha Kola, one of the demons in *sanni yakuma*. From the ආරියපාල වෙස් මුහුණු කෞතුකාගාරය (Ariyapala and Sons Masks Factory and Museum) in Ambalangoda, Sri Lanka. Photo by Michael Gunther, CC BY-SA 4.0.

face — or, rather, face to mask — with the demon possessing them. *Tovil* involves a *kaṭṭaṇḍiya,* a ritual specialist or exorcist, who is accompanied by a drummer and a masked dancer representing the demon that possesses the patient. The *kaṭṭaṇḍiya*

and the dancer engage in a scripted, theatrical conversation that uses humor and food offerings to induce the demon to leave the patient, who may enter a trance during the rite. There is a wide variety of *tovil* mask types, each one associated with different ailments, from vomiting fits to bubonic plague to paralysis, some with physical features meant to symbolize the symptoms of the disease.[13] This use of masking is the inverse of one we encountered in the first and second chapters, where the mask was a means of effecting ritual or theatrical trance and of inviting the possession of an actor by their character.

Masks can do medicine beyond the level of the individual, too. Masked rituals to drive out plague ghosts are attested in *Zhōulǐ,* a classic of Confucianism dating to the second century BCE: a doctor or exorcist with the title *fāngxiàngshì* "leads hundreds of subordinates to perform the annual ritual of expelling epidemic ghosts, covered by the skin of a bear, wearing a mask with four eyes cast in gold, a black top, and red bottom, wielding a dagger-axe and shield."[14] Likewise, a Chinese poem written in the fourteenth century CE by the Korean poet Lee Saek describes masked, danced exorcism rituals including the *obanggwimu* (dance of the guardians of the five directions) and *sajamu* (lion dance), two of many such rituals practiced in Korea as early as the first century BCE and all the way into the twentieth century CE. In Sri Lanka, *gammaḍuva* is the name for a ceremony that invokes a pantheon of gods to dispel contagious diseases from the entire locale.[15]

If a person's or community's health can be harmed by possession or other intervention by unseen forces, it follows that exorcistic ritual may not only cure but also prevent illness. And indeed, masks meant to ward off evil are found across the globe, from a shaman's mask of the Evenki people in Siberia or the Inuit people of North America to an anti-sorcerer's mask of the kingdom of Oku in Cameroon or the Guro people of Côte d'Ivoire.[16] This is not so different from the talismanic use of COVID-19 masks we just considered, and there's a kinship also with hockey masks, welding masks, helmets of all sorts, and other forms of protective equipment. Masking during the pandemic is indeed

a very specifically *communal* ritual of warding and, like medical exorcism ritual, it depends on the belief, participation, and performance of a critical mass of the community to have any efficacy.

In 1941, a professor of neuropsychiatry and practicing clinician named Hervey Cleckley published a book that was to become a watershed in the history of psychiatric medicine. The book brought detailed case studies, a review of conventional wisdom among mental health doctors, and new theoretical approaches to bear on the diagnosis of psychopathy. The term *psychopath* is now utterly familiar and widely misused. In Cleckley's time, the field was still struggling to comprehend this class of individuals, who could not be classified as suffering from particular psychoses, but who nevertheless displayed often severe symptoms of non-normative mental affect and antisocial behavior. Cleckley focused his study on the protean aspects of people living with psychopathy: the disconnect between their actions and their accountability; their grandiose performativity in interpersonal interactions; their apparent lack of self-reflection; and their ability to appear mentally unstable when necessary to escape legal consequences for their behavior, but to appear mentally stable when needed to secure release from psychiatric care. Cleckley wove an overarching metaphor through his work, matched by the title he gave the book, *The Mask of Sanity.*

Unlike the severe mental illnesses identified by medical consensus in Cleckley's day, his diagnostic construct of psychopathy is characterized by its seeming normalness:

> In all the other psychoses one finds…a more or less obvious alteration of reasoning processes or of some other demonstrable personality feature. In the psychopath one does not see this. One is confronted with a convincing mask of sanity. All the outward features of this mask are intact; nor can it be

> displaced or penetrated by questions directed toward deeper personality levels.[17]

The first level of Cleckley's medical mask metaphor is that psychopathy entails wearing a mask to conceal from others the true, unstable self. This is mask as make-believe and as metamorphosis, as transformative device. (Hark back to chapter four, with *The Mask* movie's Dr. Neuman and his armchair psychoanalysis, for an echo of this part of Cleckley's metaphor.) On the second level of the metaphor, the mask hinders the wearer's own ability to read the true self because, in Cleckley's opinion, "the psychopath lacks insight to a degree seldom if ever found in other mental disorder[s]."[18] This is mask not as mirror but as anti-mirror, for the wearer sees only the mask, not how they really are or how others see them. The third level of the metaphor involves the extension of the mask to these others. Cleckley's psychopath lacks a human interiority that responds emotively to beauty, love, humor, horror, and the like, and thus has no sense that other people *do* respond with profound emotion.[19] Though the wearer of the "mask of sanity" deploys their mask to play the part of well-adjusted member of society, they cannot see past their own mask into their inner life, and so they assume everyone else is likewise wearing such a mask that conceals no personal interiority.

Cleckley's work is both paradigmatic and problematic. It reshaped the discipline and still echoes through the halls of psychiatry, yet it is reductive, stigmatizing, and now superseded by better, more humane models, principles, and technologies. His linkage of the idea of the psychopath with the metaphor of the mask has nonetheless resonated powerfully in the American zeitgeist. The archetypal psychopath in pop culture's imagining is the serial killer, and often he is a masked killer.[20] We've already crossed paths with Michael Myers from the *Halloween* series, who is clad in a William Shatner mask, while Jason of the *Friday the 13th* series wears a hockey mask, and the *Scream* franchise redefined horror masks for a new millennium. Three of the most

famous fictional serial killers in modern mass media, Norman Bates of *Psycho,* Leatherface of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre,* and Buffalo Bill of *The Silence of the Lambs,* all drew inspiration from real-life murderer and bodysnatcher Ed Gein. After he was arrested in Wisconsin in late 1957, he confessed to exhuming corpses and crafting them into various accoutrements. A search of his house found, among other nightmares, masks made from the skin of human heads, including a mask made from the face of one of his murder victims.[21]

Gein and his fictional derivatives wear the inverse of what Cleckley's psychopath wears. They wear a mask of insanity. Their abnormal headgear telegraphs their abominable behavior and increases the terror they can instill in their beholders. The masks worn by Michael Myers, Leatherface, and Buffalo Bill (as presumably the one worn by Gein in real life) push their wearers right into the Uncanny Valley, a liminal space in our brains that makes it all the easier for them to frighten us and strike deep into the unguarded parts of our psyche. The masks they wear signal their lack of "sanity," and may threaten our own.

Masks are signs and means of health and unhealth. Through a mask, metaphorical or literal, a person can register their wellbeing, or its absence, or their concern for the wellbeing of others. Through a mask, a person can fend off ill health, or summon a return to good health. What makes *masks* capable of this? A little bit of everything we've seen so far in this book. Masks, as mirrors, can reflect what's going on inside our bodies and our heads. Masks, as metamorphic tools, can transform us from sick to well, or from "sane" to "insane." Masks, as memory devices, are a link between past and future; as such, they can point the way back to a prior state of health or away from a prior state of sickness, into a future of feeling fine. Masks work magic, including healing magic. And masks help us make believe — they're a pathway for a placebo effect as powerful as a prescription pill or performance of a ritual.

Notes

1 Winston Black, "Exploring the Evolution of Pandemic Medicine and Debunking the Myths of the Masked Medics," *All About History,* August 15, 2019, https://www.pressreader.com/uk/all-about-history/20190815/281595242159014.

2 Ralph Jennings, "Not Just Coronavirus: Asians Have Worn Face Masks for Decades," *Voice of America,* March 11, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/a/science-health_coronavirus-outbreak_not-just-coronavirus-asians-have-worn-face-masks-decades/6185597.html; Hillary Leung, "Why Wearing a Face Mask Is Encouraged in Asia, but Shunned in the U.S.," *Time,* March 12, 2020, https://time.com/5799964/coronavirus-face-mask-asia-us/; and Massimo Leone, "The Semiotics of the Medical Face Mask: East and West," *Signs & Media* 1, no. 1 (2020): 47–52.

3 Tessa Wong, "Coronavirus: Why Some Countries Wear Face Masks and Others Don't," *BBC News,* March 26, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52015486.amp, and Jennings, "Not Just Coronavirus."

4 E. Thomas Ewing, "Flu Masks Failed In 1918, But We Need Them Now," *HealthAffairs Forefront,* May 12, 2020, https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/flu-masks-failed-1918-but-we-need-them-now, and J. Alexander Navarro, "Mask Resistance During a Pandemic Isn't New — In 1918 Many Americans Were 'Slackers,'" *The Conversation,* July 13, 2020, https://theconversation.com/mask-resistance-during-a-pandemic-isnt-new-in-1918-many-americans-were-slackers-141687.

5 For Japan, see Mitsutoshi Horii, "Why Do the Japanese Wear Masks? — A Short Historical Review," *ejcjs* 14, no. 2 (2014): art. 8, https://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcjs/vol14/iss2/horii.html. For Gnoh Lean-Tuck, see Christos Lynteris, "Plague Masks: The Visual Emergence of Anti-Epidemic Personal Protection Equipment," *Medical Anthropology* 37, no. 6 (2018): 444–45, 449.

6 Lynteris, "Plague Masks," 452.

7 Matthew Motta, "The Dynamics and Political Implications of Anti-Intellectualism in the United States," *American Politics Research* 46, no. 3 (2018): 465–98; Tom Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Bruce Bartlett, "The GOP's Murderous Anti-Intellectualism," *The New Republic,* July 13, 2020, https://newrepublic.com/article/158436/republican-murderous-anti-intellectualism; Matthew Motta, "Republicans, Not Democrats, Are More Likely to Endorse Anti-Vaccine Misinformation," *American Politics Research* 49, no. 5 (2021): 428–38; Elizabeth Chatterjee, "Numbers without Experts: The Populist Politics of Quantification," in *Limits of the Numerical: The Uses and Abuses of Quantification,* eds. Christopher Newfield, Anna Alexandrova, and Stephen John (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 23–46; and Christopher Newfield, "The Role of the Numerical in

the Decline of Expertise," in *Limits of the Numerical: The Uses and Abuses of Quantification,* eds. Christopher Newfield, Anna Alexandrova, and Stephen John (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 47–67.

8 Richard J. Baron, Marianne M. Green, and Yul D. Ejnes, "Seeing the Rose Garden Superspreader Convocation as a 'Never Event,'" *STAT,* October 19, 2020, https://www.statnews.com/2020/10/19/seeing-rose-garden-superspreader-convocation-as-a-never-event/.

9 Ed Yong, "What Happens When Americans Can Finally Exhale," *The Atlantic,* May 20, 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/05/pandemic-trauma-summer/618934/.

10 Sarah E. Bond, "This Is Not Sparta: Why the Modern Romance with Sparta Is a Bad One," *Eidolon,* May 7, 2018, https://eidolon.pub/this-is-not-sparta-392a9ccddf26.

11 For face masks as not dehumanizing, see Stephen M. Utych, "No, Face Masks Aren't Dehumanizing," *Political Studies Review* 19, no. 3 (2021): 528–35. For face masks as confusing, see Claus-Christian Carbon, "Wearing Face Masks Strongly Confuses Counterparts in Reading Emotions," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 566886. For unruly passengers, see "2021 Unruly Passenger Data," *Federal Aviation Administration,* https://web.archive.org/web/20230331072252/https://www.faa.gov/data_research/passengers_cargo/unruly_passengers/2021_archive. For revealed preferences, see Robert Bird and Zacc Ritter, "Is the Media Creating Division on COVID-19 Health Practices?," *Gallup,* June 23, 2020, https://news.gallup.com/poll/312749/media-creating-division-covid-health-practices.aspx. Rumani also pointed out to me how doctors will often adopt a mask of compassion and expertise, using their faces and their bedside manner to reassure their patients they're in good hands, even though the doctors' compassion is generally professional rather than personal in origin.

12 James C. Faris, *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Sandra Toni Francis, "The *Yé'ii Bicheii* Dancing of Nightway: An Examination of the Role of Dance in a Navajo Healing Ceremony," PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1996; and Tom Yazzie, *Yeibichai Dancers with Medicine Man and Patient,* c. 1991–1992, carved and painted cottonwood, sand, overall: 32.7 × 130.2 × 19.7 cm, A (base): 1.9 × 130.2 × 17.8 cm, B (medicine man): 26.7 × 10.2 × 8.9 cm, C (woman with basket): 24.1 × 10.2 × 7.6 cm, D (first man in mask): 30.5 × 9.8 × 9.5 cm, E (first woman in mask): 22.5 × 8.9 × 7.6 cm, F (second man in mask): 28.3 × 10.8 × 9.5 cm, G (second woman in mask): 21.6 × 8.9 × 7.6 cm, H (third man in mask): 27.9 × 8.9 × 10.2 cm, I (third woman in mask): 24.1 × 9.5 × 9.5 cm, J (fourth man in mask): 26.7 × 9.8 × 8.9 cm, K (fourth woman in mask): 22.2 × 9.2 × 8.3 cm, L (fifth man in mask): 28.6 × 10.5 × 10.2 cm, M (fifth woman in mask): 24.1 × 9.5 × 8.3 cm, N (sixth man in mask): 27.9 × 9.5 × 8.9 cm, O (sixth woman in mask): 24.1 × 10.2 × 8.6 cm, P (seventh man in mask): 27.3 × 10.8 × 10.2 cm, Q (eighth man in mask, bending): 23.5

× 14.0 × 12.1 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/yeibichai-dancers-medicine-man-and-patient-36194.

13 M.H. Goonatilleka, *Masks and Mask Systems of Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Tamarind Books, 1978), 19–20, 32–44.

14 *Zhōulǐ* (周禮), *Offices of Summer* (*Xiàguān sīmǎ,* 夏官司馬), section 102. See also Shen Fuxin 沈福馨, *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas* 安顺地戏面具 (Taipei: Tai bei shi, 1994). 30. Translation courtesy of my friend and Wake Forest University colleague Qiaona Yu, who notes to me that masked *fāngxiàngshì* is also performed at funerals, and who has commented on the United States, "It always surprised me how unwilling people are here to wear a mask."

15 For Korean exorcism rituals, see Jeon Kyung-wook, *Korean Mask Dance Dramas: Their History and Structural Principles,* trans. Eur Do-seon (Paju: Youlhwadang, 2005), 18–21. For Sri Lankan *gammaḍuva,* see Goonatilleka, *Masks and Mask Systems of Sri Lanka,* 20, 44–45.

16 John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty, *Masks: Faces of Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 328–29, items 116, 122, 117, and 118, respectively.

17 Hervey M. Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity: An Attempt to Clarify Some Issues About the So-Called Psychopathic Personality* (St. Louis: New American Library, 1941), 258.

18 Ibid., 245.

19 Ibid., 48.

20 Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, *Masks in Horror Cinema: Eyes without Faces* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019).

21 Robert H. Gollmar, *Edward Gein: America's Most Bizarre Murderer* (Delavan: Hallberg, 1981), 18–22.

CONCLUSION

Mask Off

Strangely, for a guy who's written a book about masks, I can't wear one. I don't mean a face mask — of course I've worn them frequently during COVID times, as I mentioned one chapter back, and I use an eye mask for sleeping through the morning sun — but rather a full-face, full-on, what-you-think-of-when-I-say-the-word-mask mask. I wear glasses, you see. No luck with contacts, and no perception at long distances with my eyes naked. This didn't stop me from wearing a full-face crocodile mask for Halloween 2009, when I masqueraded as the Space Pope (*Crocodylus pontifex*) from the classic sci-fi TV cartoon *Futurama*. I had to be led around by hand. Later, I could only manage to disguise myself as a deer cultist for as long as it took to take the photo in fig. 2.7, back in chapter two. Those experiences taught me: masks don't play well with glasses.

Or so I thought. Late in the revising of this book, in July 2022, after extensive internet searching, I acquired a plague-doctor mask made for glasses-wearers. It was inevitable that the mask would be in the style of a plague doctor, not just because of my personal affection for the style, not just because of the plague we'd been living through, but also because all the other glasses-friendly masks I found on the internet were mere templates for making my own out of construction paper. This mask, by contrast, cost just over two hundred bucks, and came from a website

Figure 7.1. The author in a Hot Plague Dogtor costume, wearing his regular glasses under the mask. Photo by Jake Gellar-Goad, used with permission.

called, appropriately, plaguedoctormasks.com, whose tagline is, in unassuming lowercase letters, "the first store specializing in plague doctor masks."[1]

I'll admit to skepticism as I prepared to put on the mask. I envisioned myself composing this paragraph and writing, "it

turns out I'd need to buy a special pair of glasses small enough to fit under the mask," or, "the mask caused the glasses to dig painfully into my nose," or, "my lenses fogged up as soon as I started breathing or talking." Wrong! The mask fit like a charm, sat light and comfortably, didn't block any more of my vision than the peripheral, and only fogged a little. It did feel a little isolating wearing it, like I was a bit detached from my surroundings. But I could finally join Amy from fig. 6.2 in haunting my campus. Or, as I ended up doing for Halloween 2022, combine it with my 2021 hot dog costume (fig. 7.1).

I decided I'd like to compare notes with others who'd masked with glasses, so I reached out to my friend Tofte — he's got 20/20 vision, the jerk, but he put me in touch with three glasses-wearing fursuiters. Their more-extensive experiences resonated with my own. Covering their faces with anything other than heads custom-made for glasses made it too difficult to see, led to pain and pressure on their noses, instantly fogged their glasses, or all three. Duino Duck, one of the fursuiters I spoke to, told me his optometrist recommended flexible frames often used by cyclists. He and another fursuiter, Sam, both had to get the makers of their suits to enlarge the heads enough for glasses, a move they each thought was totally worth it. Each of them found that their character in the suit changed slightly along with the change in the design of the head. For Horrible "Antigonish" Horse, the fursuit's head fit a bit tight, but that helped keep his glasses in place, and the result was perfect, he said: "As a fursuiter, I can help inject a sense of wonder into a troubled world and into lives that are too often a khaki-tinged malaise. I'm super-thankful I don't have to remove my glasses to be part of that."

Both Antigonish and Sam pointed out that furries with vision impairment may not seek to conceal it, but rather incorporate it into their fursona, including sometimes wearing glasses over their fursuits (fig. 7.2). There are indeed artisans who make custom glasses for fursuits, including magnetic attachments. This reminds us that glasses, too, can be a mask, not just for Clark Kent or the Men in Black. Wearing glasses can be a style choice — my big thick stark-white frames sure are for me — and

Figure 7.2. Troy the Dog at Biggest Little Fur Con in Reno, Nevada, in May 2018. Photo by Snapper Gee, public domain.

it can also be an embrace of non-normative embodiment, of sensory diversity. Contacts, therefore, are another type of passing (hark back to chapter four). I didn't fully realize until donning my new plague-doctor mask and chatting with Antigonish, Duino, and Sam that my glasses are doing this work for me, disclosing not just my nearsightedness but also my rejection of less visible forms of correction. Even if I weren't hesitant to give up my night vision (and, let's face it, I'm still freaked out by the LASIK gone wrong in the *Final Destination 5* movie), I'm not sure I'd be jumping for laser corrective surgery.

With repeated wear of my special plague-doctor mask, the initial feelings of isolation lessened, and I was able to take stock of the effects that wearing the mask was having on me. After all this reading, thinking, and writing about masks, I could experience, consciously, their power on and over me. I could live out the big things masks do, the whole inquiry of this book. Wearing my mask changes me into a different person(a), at least a little, at least for a little while.

It gives me a different sense of self — a sense that originates in my senses, in the transformed sensory world of the mask. The tinted lenses alter and color my forward view; my peripheral vision is not cut off by the sides of the mask, but rather fragmented by its fog-reducing vents. I can thus see inside and outside the mask simultaneously, a perceptual split that makes me think of the much-more-serious double consciousness explored and experienced by W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Nnedi Okorafor's Sunny Nwazue, and Adelaide/Red in Jordan Peele's *Us*. The smell of the leather from which the mask was made sticks with me throughout a session wearing it. The sound, too, in the echoes of my exhale. And the touch, the gentle but constant pressure on my forehead, chin, back of head (from the strap), and a slight increase in the weight of the glasses on my nose. The mask even affects my proprioception, my sense of my body in space, in particular a greater awareness of the angle and tilt of my head, and a deeper connection to the work my neck does for my head all the time, mask or no.

The me who wears this mask behaves differently. Masked me has a tendency towards reticence, a feeling that what I say should befit who I appear to be. Masked me also has a tendency towards broader body language and physical expressivity. It's as if my self is becoming theatricalized, ritualized, enchanted, or all three. I don't quite feel *myself,* either. When I look at my hands, my arms, and the tattoos on them, they feel like they're not quite mine — I have an impression of an erasure of identity, as well as a change of it. I also experience the inverse. I look at myself in the mirror, and I recognize what stares back as me, except for the part that's doing the staring back. The mask plays around with my memory of self and with my acts of self-reflection. I'm not the only one who doesn't recognize my face, either: my phone won't let me log in just by looking at it like normal, because the mask defeats its facial recognition, so I have to resort to entering my PIN like it's 2015.

Something about masks we've not yet dealt with is the expectation, with most types of masking both literal and metaphorical, that the wearing is transient. That, eventually, we will take the mask off. The conclusion of the play, ritual, funeral procession, or protest; the end of the workday, date, kinky scene, or football game; the completion of welding or surgery; or the time when we drop the pretenses and get to the truth that lies beneath. There's often an anticipated future in which the veil is drawn back, the makeup wiped off, the helmet removed, or the façade pulled up.

Some masks are meant for permanent wear, like mummy masks. Many are disposable, like N95s or facials. Some are intangible: virtual masks, like the animal-face filters on Snapchat and Facebook. But the rest fall into a liminal space of their own, as objects meant to be kept long-term but only used occasionally and temporarily. Masks are embodiments of metaphor, something we've seen throughout this book, but also of contingency. In the age of COVID-19, masks are an everyday thing

now — a certain kind of mask, at least, and one that insistently reminds us of the urgent contingency of our global situation. Think of all the disposable masks now in landfills across the globe! But because of their liminality and contingency, masks have the potential to turn the everyday into the otherworldly: "A masquerade turns the world upside down; the invisible spirit becomes visible in the masquerade; the visible person of daily life becomes invisible."[2]

Masks bridge the gap between our world and worlds beyond, between nature and culture, between the natural and the supernatural, between mortal and divine, between individual consciousness and collective or universal being.[3] Masks can reinforce these binaries or challenge them, sometimes simultaneously. Masks, with their fixed features and their invocation of the infinity of imagination, remind us that we are inwardly as well as outwardly contingent. Masks even challenge the binary of inward and outward selves, calling on us to recreate ourselves from outside in or/and to express our selves from inside out.

Masks, I think, are the original simulacra. A "simulacrum" is an image or representation of a thing in the real world. In Latin, where the word originates, *simulacrum* commonly denotes a statue, but can also indicate a shadowy form or figure, like a ghost or a reflection in a hazy mirror. For the twentieth-century French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, the modern world of technology, mass media, and popular consumerism is a world of simulacra, a world in which the representations and reproductions of real things have supplanted the things themselves and have eclipsed reality with "hyperreality." For Baudrillard, when we go to the mall or shop on Amazon, we're not going to buy things but to be told *what we should want to buy.* We immerse ourselves in hyperrealities both online and in the physical world, the paradigmatic example being Disneyworld. Our colors, flavors, scents, and fabrics are all displaced by artificial representations of natural things. Like pumpkin spice latte-flavored non-dairy creamer,[4] these representations smooth out the rough edges of reality through simulation. The 1999 blockbuster movie *The Matrix* illustrates Baudrillard's theory of simulacra, and was

indeed inspired by it. Technology brings today's simulacra ever closer to concrete reality: consider the recent phenomena of AI-generated deepfake videos and holographic performances of dead celebrities such as Tupac Shakur.[5]

Baudrillard is offering a critique of modernity. Artificiality, in his view, has erased the authenticity of humanity's supposed natural state. It's the kids these days, always on their phones, that sort of thing. Masks, though, complicate the picture. Masks are easy to make and have been made by humans longer than humans have been making history. Yet masks fit the definition of simulacra to a T: they are artificial products that represent a real thing and, in performance, open a gateway to hyperreality. We've always already been living with the artificiality and superficiality of simulacra via masks. Masks are superficiality incarnate — atop (Latin *super*) the face (*facies*).

The term *simulacrum* in ancient Rome is associated with Epicurean philosophy, of which our principal Latin source is Lucretius's poem *De Rerum Natura,* "How Everything Came to Exist." For Epicureans, *simulacra* are how we see. All things are constantly emitting tiny films (*simulacra*) of their surfaces, which fly around until they physically reach our eyes. If a human's *simulacrum* and a horse's *simulacrum* collide midair before hitting your eyeballs, you might end up thinking you see a centaur. This film-like understanding of optics is, of course, wrong. Yet the power on our perception of a different kind of film and its digital descendants has never been more powerful. In one of the more famous passages of *De Rerum Natura,* we also find masking, used metaphorically and with moral weight: "it's best to examine a person amid uncertain dangers and to learn in adverse circumstances what kind of person they are, because that will, at last, draw out their true voice from the bottom of their heart — the mask [*persona*] is torn away, the truth remains."[6]

The same take on masks underpins the rapper Future's hit single "Mask Off" (2017). The lyrics and flow are, on the surface, simple and repetitive — the refrain anchored on the line "mask on…fuck it, mask off" — while the sound production and the

music video both signal deep meaning underneath. Future's track samples "Prison Song," from Tommy Butler's 1976 musical *Selma,* a play about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement, and the song from that play is specifically about false accusations, race, and the carceral state.[7] The "Mask Off" music video, meanwhile, tells a story of street protests and violent police response. Almost everyone except Future wears a mask in the video, encompassing many of the uses we've covered in this book. Protesters wear bandanas and hockey masks to protect, anonymize, and unify themselves. Cops wear gas masks for defense, intimidation, and propaganda. One of the two women appearing in the video (both are sexualized and objectified) wears a spiky metal face mask that further eroticizes her and invokes BDSM/kink imagery. Future himself puts his hand over his face in some shots, fashioning an improvised mask that paradoxically conveys vulnerability and a personal connection with the viewer.

By the end of the video, Future has joined a triumphal gathering of protesters, surrounded by bonfires, street debris, and smoke from militarized police action. Everybody takes off their masks in sequence, staring directly into the camera — including Future, who takes off a mask of his own face, just like Adelaide in the poster for Jordan Peele's *Us* (another meditation on racism, imprisonment, and identity, as we saw in chapter five). Unmasking in "Mask Off" is, once again, about unveiling your true self, getting to the truth of things, and breaking down defensive barriers and façades. Lucretius would recognize this scenario: adverse circumstances are revelatory of what remains when the mask is torn away. Future's mask of himself calls attention to how the artist is a constructed persona, even when that persona shares a name and a visage with the creator themselves. Lucretius would recognize this, too.[8]

But sometimes we wear masks we didn't choose and can't take off. Study after study has shown the ubiquity, inevitability, and

intensity of first impressions based on superficial appearances. Height and hair are two of the first things we tend to notice about people we meet.[9] But it's our facial features in particular — especially ones like skin tone that observers can attribute to race, gender, or age — that get us assigned to categories by anyone who sees us. These categorizations happen before we've even said a single word, sometimes as quickly as a tenth of a second upon seeing our face.[10] The speed with which it takes place means it's not a conscious choice others are making about us, but a snap judgment cued up by learned perceptions and assumptions. In other words, society has made our physical appearance, and especially our face, into a mask that is just as stereotyping as a literal mask on the ancient Roman stage.

The masks of stereotyping intersect with a phenomenon that's repeatedly shown its face in this book, the mask as tool for surveillance. Government control of veiling, be it ban or mandate, works to surveil and monitor women. The Roman ancestral wax masks, *imagines,* surveilled the morality of the living descendants of the illustrious dead. Masks made up of makeup may be required for women seeking to move through society in the face of everyday gender surveillance. Pandemic times have brought mask surveillance to the fore, from public health-motivated mandate enforcement to partisan shaming to Florida governor Ron DeSantis yelling at children to take off their masks when standing near him.[11] Protestors from Hong Kong to Future's music video attempt to use masks to avoid surveillance, yet encounter it nonetheless. And facial recognition gives state surveillants a high-powered tool to turn our human façades into vouchers of our identity, tabs on our whereabouts, and checks on our actions. Our tendency to stereotype transforms our faces into tokens, and facial-recognition algorithms eat those tokens up like a vending machine gone bad.

Our faces, then, are metaphorical masks. On the flipside, literal masks can be the metaphorical face of our cultures. Museums

of art, of anthropology, and of cultural history frequently display masks from the societies that are the objects of their collections. In many cases, the masks are presented as exemplars of the customs and practices of the people who made them — as if the mask alone was enough to understand or "appreciate" their culture. This book has gone in the other direction, drawing together glimpses of various cultures to try to understand how masks work across them. In some cases, as with the medicine masks of the Haudenosaunee confederacy in northeastern Turtle Island, a First Peoples name for North America, it is sacrilege to replicate, sell, display, or photograph the masks, which are the subject of ongoing repatriation efforts.[12] Masks on exhibit may grant a genuinely superficial view of the traditions they are intended to represent.

This pattern holds true especially for Anglo-European collections of masks and other artifacts from Indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Masks made by these peoples have been plundered, appropriated, decontextualized, essentialized, and fetishized as part of an intellectual project of cultural voyeurism. Some nineteenth-century ethnographers even made life masks (refer back to chapter three) of Indigenous people to study and display as evidence of racial difference, not so much in a celebration of the diversity of humankind as in an effort to establish the supremacy of whiteness under a veneer of scholarship.[13] Ethnographic, museum-style collections of masks, to put it bluntly, are colonialist pornography. I'm not alone in feeling down on this manner of acquiring and displaying masks: as an anthropologist friend of mine has told me, "Anthropologists don't like museums."

I have endeavored throughout this book to present masks in a contextualized light, but one in which they could stand on their own, even as I traced patterns and common themes in masking across cultures and epochs. Without eliding fundamental differences, and without flattening the particularities of time, place, people, and situation — in short, without falling into the anthropological trap — we can see that, in any culture that masks, it's usually possible to find how masks play a role in make-believe,

magic, memory, metamorphosis, mirror, and medicine. Each of these works in some way or another across cultures, whether in the foreground or in the background, whether as text or subtext or metaphor.

There's a recurrent idea that European and Anglo-American masking is disconnected from traditional masking and lacks the deeper meanings of older traditions.[14] But the chapters of this book have shown that this isn't true. Along our journey, we've seen that masking isn't something "they" do and "we" don't, or something that "classical" cultures (e.g., China, Greece, Japan, Rome) do more than others. Nor is masking in the past for modern Europe and the United States, and immutably in the present for everywhere else. We've seen that masking is almost omnipresent, whether as material, metaphor, or both at once. Far from merely being exotic *objets d'art* to be ogled at in museums, masks and masking practices of all sorts are alive and powerful and inform some part of almost every aspect of our societies and our existence.

It's not just museums that fetishize and colonize masks, but pop culture too. Let's look back at the awful '90s movie *The Mask*. Dr. Neuman, the psychologist Stanley consults about the titular mask, has festooned the office wall behind his desk with masks from various cultures with no context and no rhyme or reason. These masks are not mere decor — instead, they are a statement of credentials, a claim of ownership on the topic of masking. Dr. Neuman appropriates and homogenizes the masks as a cloak of authority.

The magical mask that the movie's all about elicits similar acts of cultural appropriation from Stanley himself. At various points, Stanley as The Mask does a stereotyped Cuban dance sequence, a stereotyped salsa dance sequence, a stereotypical impersonation of a French person, and a heavy, stereotypically fake Italian accent laid atop a culinary cliché with the line, "that's a spicy meatball." Most of the action of *The Mask,* meanwhile, centers on the so-called "Coco Bongo Club." And when Stanley is first invited there, before he's even found the Mask, he calls the (white) friend who invited him "bwana," a Swahili term that, in

Anglo-European contexts, invokes the image of a Black person subordinate to a white man.[15]

Masks can be, as the Mask is, objects and agents of cultural appropriation, trafficked from the land where they have been fashioned and then deployed by colonizers to enhance their authority, their style, their sense of worldliness, or their sense of superiority. Ripped from their homes and their embodied practices, many masks have been turned not into death masks (chapter three) but dead masks: lifeless memorials, tombs of their own pasts. Ripped from their homes and showcased in museums, many masks have been turned into mirrors (chapter five), reflecting not the societies where they were born but rather the grasping imperialism of the societies in whose museums they now reside. This, too, then, is a function of masks as much as any other cultural heritage turned colonialist commodity: to testify to the forced dislocations and objectifications of empire, to speak silently as the unchosen face of the subaltern.

Masks are everywhere. Masks are more than meets the eye(hole). Masks metamorphose to meet many of our needs as individuals and as societies. Masks are not always optional, not always scary, not always fun, not always healthy. We humans have enough kinds of masks — literal, cosmetic, figurative, psychosocial; dramatic, ritual, memorial, transformative, reflective, and medicinal — that you can never really be sure when the mask is truly off.

Or maybe the fear and the friction are of a different sort. Maybe we're worried that there's nothing at all behind the masks we wear. To quote Polish-American poet and Holocaust survivor Irena Klepfisz, "the face was a mask | and I pulled it off | but there was nothing."[16] There's a fable of Aesop in which a fox, snooping around an actor's house, finds a mask and says, "o, what a head, and yet there's nothing inside it!"[17] You might have felt some unease as you traversed the chapters of this book, finding time and again that masks interpose themselves between you

and the world, between you and me — or that what you thought of as a "real thing" is actually a kind of mask. This is what Aesop and Klepfisz are getting at, an existential dread about persona and personhood, a lurking suspicion about a void behind the façade. Is there any there there?

Or, conversely, what if the there that's there is too monstrous? What if we reveal our nasty inner lives through or despite the masks we think we wear? That's what's going on in the most enduring lines of Robert W. Chambers's fin-de-siècle horror anthology *The King in Yellow:*

> CAMILLA: You, sir, should unmask.
> STRANGER: Indeed?
> CASSILDA: Indeed it's time. We have all laid aside disguise but you.
> STRANGER: I wear no mask.
> CAMILLA: (*terrified, aside to Cassilda*) No mask? No mask![18]

Situationist accounts of human behavior tell us that who we are is not character or virtue but, by and large, a range of environmental factors, habits, and cues. Personality from outside in, not the other way round. A man who harasses women is a man who harasses women, even if he espouses feminism, even if he says (or believes!) that "this is not who I am."[19] If there's nothing behind our masks, it means we *are* the masks. The mask makes each one of us the Stranger. To others and to ourselves. That ineffable gap, the ultimate doubt about reality and simulacra, that frisson of horror dwelling in the Uncanny Valley — that's the wellspring of masking's power. No masks? No masks!

Notes

1 This paragraph is *not* a sponsored post.
2 John W. Nunley and Cara McCarty, *Masks: Faces of Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 30.
3 Ibid., 38, 211, 210.
4 Philosophy Matters, "The Semiotics of Autumn," *Facebook,* November 8, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/PhilosophyMttrs/photos/a.305663529533101/3973338919432192.
5 Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in *Selected Writings,* ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 166–84; David Weberman, "The Matrix Simulation and the Postmodern Age," in *The Matrix and Philosophy: Welcome to the Desert of the Real,* ed. William Irwin (Peru: Carus, 2002), 236–38, 226–27 and n2; and Aude Lancelin, "*The Matrix* Decoded: Le Nouvel Observateur Interview With Jean Baudrillard," trans. Gary Genosko and Adam Bryx, *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* 1, no. 2 (2004), https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/the-matrix-decoded-le-nouvel-observateur-interview-with-jean-baudrillard/. On deepfakes, see, for example, Ian Sample, "What Are Deepfakes — And How Can You Spot Them?," *The Guardian,* January 13, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jan/13/what-are-deepfakes-and-how-can-you-spot-them, and Jessica Hallman, "Deepfakes Expose Vulnerabilities in Certain Facial Recognition Technology," *Penn State News,* August 11, 2022, https://www.psu.edu/news/information-sciences-and-technology/story/deepfakes-expose-vulnerabilities-certain-facial/. For the Tupac Shakur hologram, see, for example, Aaron Dodson, "The Strange Legacy of Tupac's 'Hologram' Lives on Five Years after Its Historic Coachella Debut," *Andscape,* April 14, 2017, https://andscape.com/features/the-strange-legacy-of-tupacs-hologram-after-coachella/.
6 Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura,* 3.55–58; my translation. I describe Lucretius as the principal Latin source of Epicurean philosophy, but it's a source that must be handled with care and multiple grains of salt, as I argue in T.H.M. Gellar-Goad, *Laughing Atoms, Laughing Matter: Lucretius*' De Rerum Natura *and Satire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020). Oscar Wilde has the opposite take from *De Rerum Natura:* "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth" (in Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," *Intentions* [New York: Wells, 1925], 185). Note the title of the next essay in the same collection: Oscar Wilde, "The Truth of Masks: A Note on Illusion," *Intentions* (New York: Wells, 1925), 240–86.
7 "Future — Mask Off Lyrics," *Genius,* https://genius.com/Future-mask-off-lyrics. I thank Will Hippokleides Lewis for getting me thinking about Future's "Mask Off."
8 Gellar-Goad, *Laughing Atoms, Laughing Matter,* 12–14.

9 Dan Scotti, "There's Finally an Answer to Why Men Prefer Short Girls or Tall Girls," *Elite Daily,* July 9, 2015, https://www.elitedaily.com/dating/short-vs-tall/1104880, and Leslie A. Zebrowitz and Joann M. Montepare, "First Impressions from Facial Appearance Cues," in *First Impressions,* eds. Nalini Ambady and John J. Skowronski (New York: Guilford Press, 2008), 195n8.

10 Keith B. Maddox and Kristin N. Dukes, "Social Categorization and Beyond: How Facial Features Impact Social Judgment," in *First Impressions,* eds. Ambady and Skowronski, 205–33; Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov, "First Impressions: Making Up Your Mind after a 100-Ms Exposure to a Face," *Psychological Science* 17, no. 7 (July 2006): 592–98; and Eric Wargo, "How Many Seconds to a First Impression?," *Association for Psychological Science,* July 1, 2006, https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/how-many-seconds-to-a-first-impression.

11 Associated Press, "Florida Gov DeSantis Berates Kids for Wearing Masks," *ABC News,* March 3, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20220709205212/https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/florida-governor-admonishes-students-wearing-face-masks-83212180.

12 Leon Shenandoah, "Haudenosaunee Confederacy Announces Policy on False Face Masks," *Akwesasne Notes* 1 (1995), http://www.nativetech.org/cornhusk/maskpoli.html, and Onondaga Nation, "Haudenosaunee Statement on Repatriation," *Onondaga Nation,* https://www.onondaganation.org/government/policy/haudenosaunee-statement-on-repatriation/.

13 Hans Belting, *Face and Mask: A Double History,* trans. Thomas S. Hansen and Abby J. Hansen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 42–48.

14 A representative example can be found in Andreas Lommel, *Masks: Their Meaning and Function,* trans. Nadia Fowler (New York: McGraw Hill, 1972), 213: "We have seen that European mask-traditions are no longer truly representative of the original significance of masks. Here the meaning that lies at the root of old customs and mask-ceremonies is too deeply buried to be defined. In Europe masks have become simply a disguise, whereas in other areas the mask personifies something or somebody (a principle, a power, a spirit)."

15 Isabel Santaolalla, "Close Encounters: Racial Otherness in Imanol Uribe's *Bwana,*" *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 76, no. 1 (1999): 111–22.

16 From "The House," in Irena Klepfisz, *Periods of Stress: Poems* (New York: Out and Out Books, 1975).

17 This is my translation of an ancient Greek version. You can find several versions of this fable in English, ancient Greek, and Latin, at http://mythfolklore.net/aesopica/perry/27.htm.

18 Robert W. Chambers, *The King in Yellow* (Cabin John: Wildside Press, 2005), 34.

19 On situationism, see John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For the trope of "this is not who I am," see, for example, Tim Morris, "'That's

Not Who I Am' Is Wrong. And It's the Wrong Thing to Say," *NOLA.com,* November 3, 2017, https://www.nola.com/opinions/article_6ed62356-a29c-5178-9be0-177bdd9b038a.html.

Bibliography

"2021 Unruly Passenger Data." *Federal Aviation Administration.* Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20230331072252/https://www.faa.gov/data_research/passengers_cargo/unruly_passengers/2021_archive.

"3D Printer Helps Make Lifelike Masks for Greek Play." *Randolph College News,* August 12, 2014. http://www.randolphcollege.edu/news/2014/08/3d-printer-helps-make-lifelike-masks-for-greek-play/.

Abbott, Derek. "How an Electrical Engineer Solved Australia's Most Famous Cold Case." *IEEE Spectrum,* March 20, 2023. https://spectrum.ieee.org/somerton-man.

"Abraham Lincoln Life Mask by Clark Mills, 1865." *Smithsonian National Museum of American History Behring Center*. https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_500284.

Achebe, Chinua. *Arrow of God.* London: Heinemann, 1964.

"African Masks and Masquerades." *Minneapolis Institute of Art.* https://new.artsmia.org/programs/teachers-and-students/teaching-the-arts/five-ideas/african-masks-and-masquerades.

Alptraum, Lux. "Makeup Can Give Trans Women Freedom — But It Can Also Take It Away." *Racked,* March

23, 2017. https://www.racked.com/2017/3/23/14937266/trans-women-makeup.
ancherise. "A Deeper Look into Probates…." *UnifiedDivinity: Divine 9 Greek Life,* March 29, 2014. https://aytaylor.wordpress.com/2014/03/29/a-deeper-look-into-probates/.
Anderson, Lorna. "Double Masks of the Northwest Coast of America in Museum Collections." MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985. DOI: 10.14288/1.0097731.
Anti-Defamation League. "Ku Klux Klan Robes." *Hate on Display.* https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/kkk-robes.
"Anubis: Embalmer and Protector of the Dead." *Death Dogs: The Jackal Gods of Ancient Egypt, University of Michigan Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Exhibition,* 2018. https://exhibitions.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu/jackal-gods-ancient-egypt/anubis.php.
Anuka, Adolphus Chikezie. *Mmanwu and Mission among the Igbo People of Nigeria: An Inculturative Dialogue.* Zurich: Lit, 2018.
Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "There Is No Such Thing as Western Civilisation." *The Guardian,* November 9, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/09/western-civilisation-appiah-reith-lecture.
Argenti, Nicolas Pandely Albert. "The Material Culture of Power in Oku; North West Province, Cameroon." PhD diss., University College London, 1996.
Associated Press. "Florida Gov DeSantis Berates Kids for Wearing Masks." *ABC News,* March 3, 2022. Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20220709205212/https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/florida-governor-admonishes-students-wearing-face-masks-83212180.
Badger, Jonathan N. *Sophocles and the Politics of Tragedy: Cities and Transcendence.* New York: Routledge, 2013.
Banks, Stephen. *Informal Justice in England and Wales, 1760–1914: The Courts of Popular Opinion.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014.

Barba, Eugenio, and Nicola Savarese. *The Secret Art of the Performer: A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology.* Translated by Richard Fowler. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Baron, Richard J., Marianne M. Green, and Yul D. Ejnes. "Seeing the Rose Garden Superspreader Convocation as a 'Never Event.'" *STAT,* October 19, 2020. https://www.statnews.com/2020/10/19/seeing-rose-garden-superspreader-convocation-as-a-never-event/.

Bartlett, Bruce. "The GOP's Murderous Anti-Intellectualism." *The New Republic,* July 13, 2020. https://newrepublic.com/article/158436/republican-murderous-anti-intellectualism.

Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and Simulations." In *Selected Writings,* edited by Mark Poster, 166–84. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Beaud, Sylvie. "Roots Reconfigured: Contemporary Chinese Masks in the Flux of Modernity." In *Behind the Masks of Modernism: Global and Transnational Perspectives,* edited by Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos, 206–25. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016.

Belting, Hans. *Face and Mask: A Double History.* Translated by Thomas S. Hansen and Abby J. Hansen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Beretta, Marco. "Usi scientifici della cera nell'antichità." *Quaderni Storici* 44, no. 1 (April 2009): 3–21. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43780226.

Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1967.

Bethe, Monica, and Kyōtarō Nishikawa. *Bugaku Masks.* Tokyo: Kodansha and Shibundo, 1978.

Bettini, Maurizio. *The Ears of Hermes: Communication, Images, and Identity in the Classical World.* Translated by William Michael Short. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011.

Bieber, Margarete. *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Bierl, Anton, and André Lardinois. "Retraction Notice." In *The Newest Sappho: P. Sapph. Obbink and P. GC inv. 105, Frs. 1–4,* edited by Anton Bierl and A.P.M.H. Lardinois. Leiden:

Brill, 2016. https://brill.com/view/book/9789004314832/B9789004314832_026.xml.
Bineth, Jessica. "Somerton Man: One of Australia's Most Baffling Cold Cases Could Be a Step Closer to Being Solved." *ABC News,* December 13, 2017. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-14/somerton-man-cold-case-could-be-one-step-closer-to-solved/9245512.
Bird, Robert, and Zacc Ritter. "Is the Media Creating Division on COVID-19 Health Practices?" *Gallup,* June 23, 2020. https://news.gallup.com/poll/312749/media-creating-division-covid-health-practices.aspx.
Black, Winston. "Exploring the Evolution of Pandemic Medicine and Debunking the Myths of the Masked Medics." *All About History,* August 15, 2019. https://www.pressreader.com/uk/all-about-history/20190815/281595242159014.
Bond, Sarah E. "This Is Not Sparta: Why the Modern Romance with Sparta Is a Bad One." *Eidolon,* May 7, 2018. https://eidolon.pub/this-is-not-sparta-392a9ccddf26.
———. "Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color." *Hyperallergic,* June 7, 2017. https://hyperallergic.com/383776/why-we-need-to-start-seeing-the-classical-world-in-color/.
Bremmer, Jan N. *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World.* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.
Brod, Harry. *Superman Is Jewish? How Comic Book Superheroes Came to Serve Truth, Justice, and the Jewish-American Way.* New York: Free Press, 2012.
Brooks, Laken. "The Pigments of Patriarchy and Femme Trans Exclusion in the History of the 'All Natural' Makeup Movement." In *Makeup in the World of Beauty Vlogging: Community, Commerce, and Culture,* edited by Clare Douglass Little, 127–41. Lexington Books, 2020.
Brooks, Nicholas. "The Halloween Movies' Bizarre Connection to Star Trek." *CBR.com,* March 28, 2021. https://www.cbr.com/halloween-michael-myers-mask-captain-kirk-william-shatner/.

Bugge, Peter. "Naked Masks: Arthur Breisky or How to Be a Czech Decadent." *Slovo a smysl / Word & Sense* 5 (2006). http://slovoasmysl.ff.cuni.cz/node/123.

Burton, Tim, dir. *Batman.* Warner Bros., 1989.

———, dir. *Batman Returns.* Warner Bros., 1992.

Campbell, Peter A. "Teaching Japanese Noh Drama through Visualizing Space." *Theatre Topics* 21, no. 1 (March 2011): 1–10. DOI: 10.1353/tt.2011.0003.

Carbon, Claus-Christian. "Wearing Face Masks Strongly Confuses Counterparts in Reading Emotions." *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 566886. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.566886.

Carlson, Marla. "Furry Cartography: Performing Species." *Theatre Journal* 63, no. 2 (May 2011): 191–208. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/438995.

Cascone, Sarah. "The Tomb of an Ancient Maya God-King Was Just Discovered in Guatemala." *artnet,* September 21, 2017. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/ancient-maya-tomb-el-peru-waka-guatemala-1089872.

Chambers, Robert W. *The King in Yellow.* Rockville: Wildside Press, 2005.

Chatterjee, Elizabeth. "Numbers without Experts: The Populist Politics of Quantification." In *Limits of the Numerical: The Uses and Abuses of Quantification,* edited by Christopher Newfield, Anna Alexandrova, and Stephen John, 23–46. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022.

Chen, Andrew H. *Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260–1610: Ritual and Experience.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

Cheshire, Ben. "Somerton Man Charles Webb's True Identity Revealed in Family Photographs and Divorce Papers." *ABC News,* November 20, 2022. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-21/somerton-manfamily-photographs-revealed-/101643524.

Chong, Toby, Nolwenn Maudet, Katsuki Harima, and Takeo Igarashi. "Exploring a Makeup Support System for Transgender Passing Based on Automatic Gender

Recognition." *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* 568 (2021): 1–13. DOI: 10.48550/arXiv.2103.04544.

"Cindy Sherman Behind the Mask: Or Is She? Celebrating the Fine-Art Photographer on International Women's Day." *Phaidon,* March 8, 2017. https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2017/march/08/when-cindy-sherman-masked-up/.

Cleckley, Hervey M. *The Mask of Sanity: An Attempt to Clarify Some Issues About the So-Called Psychopathic Personality.* St. Louis: New American Library, 1941.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me.* New York: One World, 2015.

Cohen, Amy R. "Can You Hear Me Now? Implications of the New Research in Greek Theatrical Masks." *Didaskalia* 7, no. 1 (2007). https://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol7no1/cohen.html.

Coldiron, Margaret. *Trance and Transformation of the Actor in Japanese Noh and Balinese Masked Dance-Drama.* Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2004.

Coldiron, Margaret, Carmencita Palermo, and Tiffany Strawson. "Women in Balinese Topeng: Voices, Reflections, and Interactions." *Asian Theatre Journal* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 464–92. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24737041.

Cook, Amy. "Staging Nothing: Hamlet and Cognitive Science." *SubStance* 35, no. 2 (2006): 83–99. DOI: 10.1353/sub.2006.0031.

Coury, Sarah. "The Brilliance Behind Masks in HBO's *Watchmen*." *Comic Watch,* December 25, 2019. https://comic-watch.com/television-shows/the-brilliance-behind-masks-in-hbos-watchmen.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience.* New York: Harper & Row, 1990.

Curnow, Kathy. "Art in Small-Scale Communities." In *The Bright Continent: African Art History.* Cleveland: MSL Academic Endeavors, 2018.

Dasen, Véronique. "Wax and Plaster Memories: Children in Elite and non-Elite Strategies." In *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture,* edited by Véronique Dasen and Thomas Späth, 109–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Dibia, I Wayan, and Rucina Ballinger. *Balinese Dance, Drama and Music: A Guide to the Performing Arts of Bali.* Illustrated by Barbara Anello. Singapore: Periplus, 2004.

Dodd, Vikram. "Oxford Professor Arrested on Suspicion of Ancient Papyrus Theft." *The Guardian,* April 16, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/apr/16/oxford-professor-arrested-ancient-papyrus-bible-theft-dirk-obbink.

Dodson, Aaron. "The Strange Legacy of Tupac's 'Hologram' Lives on Five Years after Its Historic Coachella Debut." *Andscape,* April 14, 2017. https://andscape.com/features/the-strange-legacy-of-tupacs-hologram-after-coachella/.

Doris, John M. *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk.* New York: Library of America, 2009.

Duncan, A.C. "The Familiar Mask." In *The Materialities of Greek Tragedy: Objects and Affect in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides,* edited by Melissa Mueller and Mario Telò, 79–96. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.

Dutsch, Dorota. "Nenia: Gender, Genre, and Lament in Ancient Rome." In *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond,* edited by Ann Suter, 258–79. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Eaverly, Mary Ann. *Tan Men/Pale Women: Color and Gender in Archaic Greece and Egypt, a Comparative Approach.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013.

Edson, Gary. *Masks and Masking: Faces of Tradition and Belief Worldwide.* Jefferson: McFarland, 2009.

Elsbury, Sally. "Mask Theatre." *Mask Matters.* https://www.zhibit.org/maskmatters/mask-theatre.

Emigh, John. *Masked Performance: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
Ewing, E. Thomas. "Flu Masks Failed In 1918, But We Need Them Now." *HealthAffairs,* May 12, 2020. https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/flu-masks-failed-1918-but-we-need-them-now.
Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks.* Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
Faraone, Christopher A. "Playing the Bear and the Fawn for Artemis: Female Initiation or Substitute Sacrifice?" In *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives,* edited by David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone, 43–68. New York: Routledge, 2003.
Faris, James C. *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990.
Fauconnier, Gilles, and Mark Turner. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities.* New York: Basic Books, 2002.
Feinn, Lily. "17 Sexist Halloween Costumes to Avoid This Year." *Bustle,* October 25, 2016. https://www.bustle.com/articles/191264-17-sexist-halloween-costumes-to-avoid-this-year-and-every-year-really.
Felton, Debbie. "Folkloric Anomalies in a Scene from the Mostellaria." *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 62, no. 2 (1999): 123–32. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20546592.
Feltus, Gerald Michael. *The Unknown Man: A Suspicious Death at Somerton Beach.* Greenacres: G.M. Feltus, 2010.
Fenton, Jordan A. "Nyoro Masquerade as a Hunt for Modernity: A View from a West African City." In *Behind the Masks of Modernism: Global and Transnational Perspectives,* edited by Andrew Reynolds and Bonnie Roos, 185–205. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2016.
Fidler, Luke A. "Impressions from the Face of a Corpse." *The Atlantic,* May 30, 2014. https://www.theatlantic.com/

technology/archive/2014/05/impressions-from-the-face-of-a-corpse/371772/.

Flower, Harriet I. *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Fondation Louis Vuitton. *Cindy Sherman at the Fondation: A Retrospective from 1975 to 2020; Crossing Views, the Collection: A Selection.* Press kit. https://presse.fondationlouisvuitton.fr/cindy-sherman-at-fondation-louis-vuitton/.

Foxglove48. "Jestyn's reaction when she sees the dead man's bust." *YouTube,* April 11, 2010. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u571rcZHs-I.

Francis, Sandra Toni. "The Yé'ii Bicheii Dancing of Nightway: An Examination of the Role of Dance in a Navajo Healing Ceremony." PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1996.

Frankel, Alison. "Hobby Lobby Sued Ex-Oxford Prof over Stolen Papyri in N.Y. Now It's Moving the Case to Oklahoma." *Reuters,* September 26, 2023. https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/column-hobby-lobby-sued-ex-oxford-prof-over-stolen-papyri-ny-now-its-moving-case-2023-09-26/.

Franko, George Fredric. *Plautus: Mostellaria.* London: Bloomsbury, 2023.

Freeman, Charles. *Egypt, Greece, and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Furutani, Michiyo, Zhou Yu, and Mikiya Nakatsuka. "Gender Expression among Transgender Women in Japan: Support Is Needed to Improve Social Passing as a Woman." *Acta Medica Okayama* 75, no. 3 (2021): 323–34. DOI: 10.18926/amo/62227.

"Future — Mask Off Lyrics." *Genius.* https://genius.com/Future-mask-off-lyrics.

Gad, Usama A. "Papyrology and Eurocentrism, Partners in Crime." *Eidolon,* November 8, 2019. https://eidolon.pub/papyrology-and-eurocentrism-partners-in-crime-8a2778908e59.

Gannon, Megan. "Uncannily Lifelike Roman Masks Recreated in Wax." *LiveScience,* January 6, 2014. https://www.livescience.com/42334-lifelike-roman-wax-masks-recreated.html.

Gaylord, Kristen. "Cindy Sherman, American, Born 1954." *MoMA,* 2016. https://www.moma.org/artists/5392.

Gellar-Goad, T.H.M. *Laughing Atoms, Laughing Matter: Lucretius' De Rerum Natura and Satire.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020.

———. "The Uncanniest of Valleys: Ancient and Modern Doppelgängers." *Eidolon,* October 7, 2019. https://eidolon.pub/the-uncanniest-of-valleys-5cd325b0ac44.

———. "Varro's *Bimarcus* and Encounters with the Self in Plautus' *Epidicus* and *Amphitruo*." *Arethusa* 51, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 117–35. DOI: 10.1353/are.2018.0005.

Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Gold, Lisa. *Music in Bali: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Gollmar, Robert H. *Edward Gein: America's Most Bizarre Murderer.* Delavan: Hallberg, 1981.

Goonatilleka, M.H. *Masks and Mask Systems of Sri Lanka.* Colombo: Tamarind Books, 1978.

Graf, Fritz. "Initiation: A Concept with a Troubled History." In *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives,* edited by David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone, 3–24. New York: Routledge, 2003.

The Green Scholars Initiative and Peel Media Productions. "From Mummy Mask to Manuscripts." *YouTube,* May 19, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_gwgGcpD1M.

Greer, Allan. "From Folklore to Revolution: Charivaris and the Lower Canadian Rebellion of 1837." *Social History* 15, no. 1 (1990): 25–43. DOI: 10.1080/03071029008567755.

Greer, Jamie. "The Pioneers: The First Masked Wrestlers." *Last Word on Sports*, March 23, 2021. https://lastwordonsports.com/prowrestling/2021/03/23/the-pioneers-the-first-masked-wrestlers/.

Gregory, Richard L. "Knowledge in Perception and Illusion." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 352, no. 1358 (August 1997): 1121–27. DOI: 10.1098/rstb.1997.0095.

Grignon, Estelle. "Trans Identity & Makeup." *Elle,* April 30, 2021. https://www.ellecanada.com/beauty/makeup-and-nails/trans-identity-makeup.

Haddon, A.C. "Migrations of Cultures in British New Guinea." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 50 (1920): 253–54. DOI: 10.2307/2843485.

Hager, Nathalie. "Running Horned Woman, Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria." *Smarthistory: The Center for Public Art History,* September 23, 2016. https://smarthistory.org/running-horned-woman-tassili-najjer-algeria-2/.

Hallman, Jessica. "Deepfakes Expose Vulnerabilities in Certain Facial Recognition Technology." *Penn State News,* August 11, 2022. https://www.psu.edu/news/information-sciences-and-technology/story/deepfakes-expose-vulnerabilities-certain-facial/.

Hammoudi, Abdellah. *The Victim and Its Masks: An Essay on Sacrifice and Masquerade in the Maghreb.* Translated by Paula Wissing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Hanink, Johanna. "A New Path for Classics." *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* February 11, 2021. https://www.chronicle.com/article/if-classics-doesnt-change-let-it-burn.

Healy, Michael John, and Michael B. Beverland. "Unleashing the Animal Within: Exploring Consumers' Zoomorphic Identity Motives." *Journal of Marketing Management* 29, no. 1–2 (2013): 225–48. DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2013.766233.

Heilung. "Heilung | LIFA — Krigsgaldr LIVE." *YouTube,* November 1, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRg_8NNPTD8.

Heller-Nicholas, Alexandra. *Masks in Horror Cinema: Eyes without Faces.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019.

Hershman, Debby. *Face to Face: The Oldest Masks in the World.* Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2014.

Higgins, Charlotte. "A Scandal in Oxford: The Curious Case of the Stolen Gospel." *The Guardian,* January 9, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/jan/09/a-scandal-in-oxford-the-curious-case-of-the-stolen-gospel.

———. "Doubts Cast over Provenance of Unearthed Sappho Poems." *The Guardian,* March 25, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/25/doubts-cast-over-provenance-of-unearthed-sappho-poems.

Hinds, Aimee. "Hercules in White: Classical Reception, Art and Myth." *The Jugaad Project: Material Religion in Context,* June 23, 2021. https://www.thejugaadproject.pub/home/hercules-in-white-classical-reception-art-and-myth.

Hodge, Blake. "Community, Local Officials Condemn KKK Rally in Hillsborough." *Chapelboro.com,* August 25, 2019. https://chapelboro.com/news/safety/community-local-officials-condemn-kkk-rally-in-hillsborough.

———. "Warrants Taken Against 2 at Weekend KKK Rally in Hillsborough." *Chapelboro.com,* August 26, 2019. https://chapelboro.com/news/crime/warrants-taken-against-2-at-weekend-kkk-rally-in-hillsborough.

Horii, Mitsutoshi. "Why Do the Japanese Wear Masks? — A Short Historical Review." *ejcjs* 14, no. 2 (2014): art. 8. https://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcjs/vol14/iss2/horii.html.

Hsu, Kevin J., and J. Michael Bailey. "The 'Furry' Phenomenon: Characterizing Sexual Orientation, Sexual Motivation, and Erotic Target Identity Inversions in Male Furries." *Archives of Sexual Behavio*r 48 (2019): 1349–69. DOI: 10.1007/s10508-018-1303-7.

Ingram, Martin. "Ridings, Rough Music and the 'Reform of Popular Culture' in Early Modern England." *Past & Present* 105 (1984): 79–113. DOI: 10.1093/past/105.1.79.

"Inquest to Open on Body of Unknown Man." *The Canberra Times,* June 15, 1949. https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2809097.

James, Andrea. "Makeup for Trans Women and Gender Diverse People." *Transgender Map,* 2024. https://www.transgendermap.com/social/makeup/.

Jefferson, Margo. "Playing on Black and White: Racial Messages through a Camera Lens." *The New York Times,* January 10, 2005. https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/10/arts/design/playing-on-black-and-white-racial-messages-through-a-camera.html.

Jennings, Ralph. "Not Just Coronavirus: Asians Have Worn Face Masks for Decades." *Voice of America,* March 11, 2020. https://www.voanews.com/a/science-health_coronavirus-outbreak_not-just-coronavirus-asians-have-worn-face-masks-decades/6185597.html.

Jensen, Erik. "Race in Antiquity: Skin Color in Art." *Co-Geeking,* March 12, 2018. https://co-geeking.com/2018/03/12/race-in-antiquity-skin-color-in-art/.

Jerryson, Michael K. *Religious Violence Today: Faith and Conflict in the Modern World,* Vol. 1: *African Religion to Islam.* Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2020.

Johnson, James H. *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017.

Johnson, Martha. "Reflections of Inner Life: Masks and Masked Acting in Ancient Greek Tragedy and Japanese Noh Drama." *Modern Drama* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 20–34. DOI: 10.1353/mdr.1992.0016.

Johnstone, Keith. *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre.* New York: Theatre Arts Book, 1979.

Jordan, June. *Who Look at Me.* New York: Crowell, 1969.

Judge, Phoebe. "The Somerton Man." *Criminal,* episode 215. https://pod.link/809264944/episode/960b016762e1df88b040456a68e2f9d2.

Kak, Subhash. "Ritual, Masks, and Sacrifice." *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2004): 29–44.

Kawai, Nobuyuki, Hiromitsu Miyata, Ritsuko Nishimura, and Kazuo Okanoya. "Shadows Alter Facial Expressions of Noh Masks." *PLOS ONE* 8, no. 8 (August 2013): e71389. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0071389.

Kay, Jeremy. "Emmys Spotlight: From Masks to Racial Tragedy, the Uncanny Prescience of *Watchmen*." *Screen Daily,* July 3, 2020. https://www.screendaily.com/features/emmys-

spotlight-from-masks-to-racial-tragedy-the-uncanny-prescience-of-watchmen/5151167.article.
Keane, Daniel. "Somerton Man Has Long Been Riddled with Russian Spy Speculation, But Is It a Red Herring?" *ABC Radio Adelaide,* July 19, 2022. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-20/somerton-man-russian-spy-theory-irish-surname/101247430.
———. "Somerton Man to Be Exhumed by Police in Attempt to Solve Mystery of His Identity." *ABC News,* April 23, 2021. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-24/mysterious-somerton-man-to-be-exhumed-by-sa-police/100092750.
Keene, Donald, and Kaneko Keizō. *Nō and Bunraku: Two Forms of Japanese Theatre.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
Killian, Joe. "Armed KKK Members Demonstrate in Hillsborough, Are Outnumbered by Anti-racist Protesters." *NC Newsline,* August 26, 2019. https://ncnewsline.com/briefs/armed-kkk-members-demonstrate-in-hillsborough-are-outnumbered-by-protesters/.
Kilroy-Ewbank, Lauren. "Transformation Masks." *Smarthistory,* August 9, 2015. https://smarthistory.org/transformation-masks/.
Kinney, Alison. *Hood.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.
Klasfeld, Adam. "Feds Seize Thousands of Iraqi Artifacts from Hobby Lobby." *Courthouse News Service,* July 5, 2017. https://www.courthousenews.com/feds-seize-thousands-iraqi-artifacts-hobby-lobby/.
Klepfisz, Irena. *Periods of Stress: Poems.* New York: Out and Out Books, 1975.
"Komo-Society Headdress." *Cornell University Johnson Museum of Art.* Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20220702223608/https://museum.cornell.edu/collections/african/sub-saharan-west-africa/komo-society-headdress.
Kracht, Benjamin R. *Kiowa Belief and Ritual.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017.

Kyung-wook, Jeon. *Korean Mask Dance Dramas: Their History and Structural Principles.* Translated by Eur Do-seon. Paju: Youlhwadang, 2005.

Lackman, Jon. "It's Time to Retire Kabuki: The Word Doesn't Mean What Pundits Think It Does." *Slate,* April 14, 2010. https://slate.com/human-interest/2010/04/it-s-time-for-pundits-to-stop-using-the-word-kabuki.html.

Lancelin, Aude. "The Matrix Decoded: Le Nouvel Observateur Interview With Jean Baudrillard." Translated by Gary Genosko and Adam Bryx. *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* 1, no. 2 (2004). https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/the-matrix-decoded-le-nouvel-observateur-interview-with-jean-baudrillard/.

Lane, Korey. "Did Hobby Lobby Fund ISIS?" *romper,* July 6, 2017. https://www.romper.com/p/everything-you-need-to-know-about-hobby-lobby-allegedly-funding-isis-68523.

Langdridge, Darren, and Jamie Lawson. "The Psychology of Puppy Play: A Phenomenological Investigation." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 48 (2019): 2201–15. DOI: 10.1007/s10508-019-01476-1.

Lecoq, Jacques, Jean-Gabriel Carasso, and Jean-Claude Lallias. *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre.* Translated by David Bradby. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production.* Translated by Frank Bryant. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976.

Leone, Massimo. "The Semiotics of the Medical Face Mask: East and West." *Signs & Media* 1, no. 1 (2020): 47–52. DOI: 10.1163/25900323-12340004.

Leung, Hillary. "Why Wearing a Face Mask Is Encouraged in Asia, but Shunned in the U.S." *Time,* March 12, 2020. https://time.com/5799964/coronavirus-face-mask-asia-us/.

Loke, Stephanie, and S.L. McKernon. "The Face of CPR." *The BMJ* 371 (December 10, 2020): m3899. DOI: 10.1136/bmj.m3899.

Lommel, Andreas. *Masks: Their Meaning and Function.* Translated by Nadia Fowler. New York: McGraw Hill, 1972.

Lubitz, Rachel. "Why Makeup Matters to Transgender People — and How the Internet Is Helping." *Mic,* February 23, 2016. https://www.mic.com/articles/135822/why-makeup-for-transgender-people-matters-and-how-the-internet-is-helping.

Lundin, Elizabeth. "Krampusnacht: What Is It, and How Did It Start?" *History Things,* August 15, 2023. https://historythings.com/krampusnacht-what-is-it-and-how-did-it-start/.

Lynteris, Christos. "Plague Masks: The Visual Emergence of Anti-Epidemic Personal Protection Equipment." *Medical Anthropology* 37, no. 6 (2018): 442–57. DOI: 10.1080/01459740.2017.1423072.

Lyons, Michael J., Ruth Campbell, Andre Plante, Mike Coleman, Miyuki Kamachi, and Shigeru Akamatsu. "The Noh Mask Effect: Vertical Viewpoint Dependence of Facial Expression Perception." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 267, no. 1459 (November 2000): 2239–45.

Macchi Cassia, Viola, Chiara Turati, and Francesca Simion. "Can a Nonspecific Bias Toward Top-Heavy Patterns Explain Newborns' Face Preference?" *Psychological Science* 15, no. 6 (2004): 379–83. DOI: 10.1111/j.0956-7976.2004.00688.x.

Maddox, Keith B., and Kristin N. Dukes. "Social Categorization and Beyond: How Facial Features Impact Social Judgment." In *First Impressions,* edited by Nalini Ambady and John J. Skowronski, 205–33. New York: Guilford, 2008.

"Makishi Masquerade, Zambia." *UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.* https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/makishi-masquerade-00140.

Mandy, Will. "Social Camouflaging in Autism: Is It Time to Lose the Mask?" *Autism* 23, no. 8 (2019): 1879–81. DOI: 10.1177/1362361319878559.

Mark, Julian. "A Body Found in 1948 Became an Australian Obsession. Now, There's an ID." *The Washington Post,* July 27,

2022. https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/07/27/somerton-man-identified-webb/.

Marquet, Jean-Claude, and Michel Lorblanchet. "A Neanderthal Face? The Proto-figurine from La Roche-Cotard, Langeais (Indreet-Loire, France)." *Antiquity* 77, no. 298 (2003): 661–70. DOI: 10.1017/S0003598X00061627.

Marshall, C.W. "Masks." In Vol. 2 of *The Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy,* edited by Alan H. Sommerstein, 528. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019.

———. "Some Fifth-Century Masking Conventions." *Greece & Rome* 46, no. 2 (October 1999): 188–202. DOI: 10.1093/gr/46.2.188.

———. *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Matchar, Emily. "How the Invention of Scotch Tape Led to a Revolution in How Companies Managed Employees." *Smithsonian Magazine,* June 20, 2019. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/how-invention-scotch-tape-led-revolution-how-companies-managed-employees-180972437/.

Mathpal, Yashodhar. *Prehistoric Rock Paintings of Bhimbetka, Central India.* New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1984.

May, Natasha. "Mystery of Somerton Man's Identity Solved after 73 Years, Researchers in Australia Say." *The Guardian,* July 27, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jul/27/somerton-man-mystery-identity-solved-identified-australia.

———. "Solving the Somerton Man Mystery: No Russian Spy, Just a Bit of a Loner Who Wrote Poetry?" *The Guardian,* July 30, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jul/31/solving-the-somerton-man-mystery-south-australia-adelaide-tamam-shud-identified-carl-webb-no-russian-spy-just-a-bit-of-a-loner-who-wrote-poetry.

Maye, Donald, and Charles Rollet. "Dahua Race and Skin Color Analytic Cameras." *IPVM,* October 17, 2022. https://ipvm.com/reports/dahua-race-analytics.

Mazza, Roberta. "The Illegal Papyrus Trade and What Scholars Can Do to Stop It." *Hyperallergic,* March 1, 2018. https://hyperallergic.com/429653/the-illegal-papyrus-trade-and-what-scholars-can-do-to-stop-it/.

Mazzara, Rachel. "Plautinopolis: Imagination and Representation in Plautus' Roman Comedy." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2021.

McConachie, Bruce. "Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies." *Theatre Journal* 59, no. 4 (2007): 558–60. DOI: 10.1353/tj.2008.0014.

McNamara, Patrick. *Spirit Possession and Exorcism: History, Psychology, and Neurobiology,* Vol. 1: *Mental States and the Phenomenon of Possession.* Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011.

Meaney, Clodagh. "Suspected Cold War Spy Unidentified Since 1948 Could Be Irish Man." *Sunday World,* July 22, 2022. https://www.sundayworld.com/news/world-news/suspected-cold-war-spy-unidentified-since-1948-could-be-irish-man/1579534355.html.

Meineck, Peter. "The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask." *Arion* 19, no. 1 (2011): 127–34. DOI: 10.1353/arn.2011.0024.

Milienos, Antoinette. "Somerton Man: Twist in One of Australia's Most Mysterious Cold Cases as Bizarre 'Birthday Card' Emerges." *Daily Mail Australia,* September 17, 2023. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12528299/Somerton-Man-Twist-Australias-mysterious-cold-cases-case-bizarre-birthday-card-emerges.html.

Miller, Matt. "In Jordan Peele's *Us,* Jeremiah 11:11 Quietly Explained the Film's Central Meaning." *Esquire,* March 25, 2019. https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/movies/a26929824/jeremiah-11-11-us-meaning-jordan-peele-theory-spoilers-explained/.

Minoshita, Seiko, Shinji Satoh, Nobuaki Morita, Akihito Tagawa, and Tadashi Kikuchi. "The Noh Mask Test for Analysis of Recognition of Facial Expression." *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 53, no. 1 (1999): 83–89. DOI: 10.1046/j.1440-1819.1999.00476.x.

Mondloch, Catherine J., Terri L. Lewis, D. Robert Budreau, Daphne Maurer, James L. Dannemiller, Benjamin R. Stephens, and Kathleen A. Kleiner-Gathercoal. "Face Perception during Early Infancy." *Psychological Science* 10, no. 5 (Sep. 1999): 419–22. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40063457.

Mooney, Craig M. "Age in the Development of Closure Ability in Children." *Canadian Journal of Psychology* 11 (1957): 219–26. DOI: 10.1037/h0083717.

Moore, Alan. "Behind the Painted Smile" (1983). Available at https://ceeeej-blog.tumblr.com/post/12404116820/behind-the-painted-smile.

Moore, Timothy. "Japanese Kyōgen in the Ancient Comedy Classroom." *The Classical Journal* 98, no. 2 (December 2002–January 2003): 189–98. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3298021.

Morris, Tim. "'That's Not Who I Am' Is Wrong. And It's the Wrong Thing to Say." *NOLA.com,* November 3, 2017. https://www.nola.com/opinions/article_6ed62356-a29c-5178-9be0-177bdd9b038a.html.

Moss, Candida, and Joel Baden. "Hobby Lobby's Black-Market Buys Did Real Damage." *The New York Times,* July 6, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/opinion/hobby-lobby-iraq-artifacts.html.

Motta, Matthew. "Republicans, Not Democrats, Are More Likely to Endorse Anti-Vaccine Misinformation." *American Politics Research* 49, no. 5 (2021): 428–38. DOI: 10.1177/1532673X211022639.

———. "The Dynamics and Political Implications of Anti-Intellectualism in the United States." *American Politics Research* 46, no. 3 (2018): 465–98. DOI: 10.1177/1532673X17719507.

Naimou, Angela. *Salvage Work: U.S. and Caribbean Literatures amid the Debris of Legal Personhood.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2015.

Nash, Stephen E. "The Masked Man." *Sapiens,* April 29, 2020. https://www.sapiens.org/column/curiosities/history-of-masks/.

Navarro, J. Alexander. "Mask Resistance During a Pandemic Isn't New — In 1918 Many Americans Were 'Slackers.'" *The Conversation,* July 13, 2020. https://theconversation.com/mask-resistance-during-a-pandemic-isnt-new-in-1918-many-americans-were-slackers-141687.

Netflix. "The Order: Season 1 | Official Trailer [HD]." *YouTube,* February 21, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD-cFgDDuqM.

Neuman, Scott. "Museum's Collection Of Purported Dead Sea Scroll Fragments Are Fakes, Experts Say." *NPR,* March 17, 2020. https://www.npr.org/2020/03/17/817018416/museums-collection-of-purported-dead-sea-scroll-fragments-are-fakes-experts-say.

Neumann, Klaus. "Tradition and Identity in Papua New Guinea: Some Observations Regarding Tami and Tolai." *Oceania* 62, no. 4 (Jun. 1992): 308–309. DOI: 10.1002/j.1834-4461.1992.tb00359.x.

Newfield, Christopher. "The Role of the Numerical in the Decline of Expertise." In *Limits of the Numerical: The Uses and Abuses of Quantification,* edited by Christopher Newfield, Anna Alexandrova, and Stephen John, 47–67. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022.

Nichols, Tom. *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Nolan, Christopher, dir. *Batman Begins.* Warner Bros., 2005.

———, dir. *The Dark Knight.* Warner Bros., 2008.

———, dir. *The Dark Knight Rises.* Warner Bros., 2012.

Noone, John. *The Man Behind the Iron Mask.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

"NPHC Organizations Present New Members through 'Coming Out' Ceremony." *TCU 360,* December 10, 2012. https://tcu360.com/2012/12/10/16665nphc-organizations-present-new-members-through-coming-out-ceremony/.

North Carolina Law Review. "A Survey of Statutory Changes in North Carolina in 1953." *North Carolina Law Review* 31, no. 4 (Dec. 1953): 375–452. https://scholarship.law.unc.edu/nclr/vol31/iss4/1/.

Nunley, John W., and Cara McCarty. *Masks: Faces of Culture.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999.

Nussbaum, Emily. "The Great Divide." *The New Yorker,* March 31, 2014. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/04/07/the-great-divide-emily-nussbaum.

Okorafor, Nnedi. *Akata Warrior.* New York: Viking, 2017.

Olson, S. Douglas. "Kleon's Eyebrows (Cratin. fr. 228 K–A) and Late 5th-Century Comic Portrait-Masks." *Classical Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1999): 320–21. DOI: 10.1093/cq/49.1.320.

Olsson, Tord. "Animate Objects: Ritual Perception and Practice Among the Bambara in Mali." In *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism,* edited by Graham Harvey, 226–43. London: Routledge, 2015.

Onondaga Nation. "Haudenosaunee Statement on Repatriation." *Onondaga Nation.* https://www.onondaganation.org/government/policy/haudenosaunee-statement-on-repatriation/.

Onyeneke, Augustine O. *The Dead among the Living: Masquerades in Igbo Society.* Nimo: Holy Ghost Congregation, 1987.

Opie, Rebecca. "Carl 'Charles' Webb's Prisoner-of-War Brother Bears Resemblance to Somerton Man." *ABC News,* August 2, 2022. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-02/carl-webb-brother-resemblance-to-somerton-man/101293788.

———. "The Somerton Man has Been Named. What Do we Know about Carl 'Charles' Webb?" *ABC News,* August 1, 2022. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-02/somerton-man-who-was-carl-charles-webb/101288890.

Ortile, Matt. *The Groom Will Keep His Name: And Other Vows I've Made About Race, Resistance, and Romance.* New York: Bold Type Books, 2020.

Otsuka, Yumiko. "Face Recognition in Infants: A Review of Behavioral and Near-Infrared Spectroscopic Studies."

Japanese Psychological Research 56, no. 1 (2014): 76–90. DOI: 10.1111/jpr.12024.
Padilla Peralta, Dan-el. "Racial Equity and the Production of Knowledge." Conference paper, Society for Classical Studies, San Diego, CA, January 5, 2019.
Padrón, Karla M. "To Decolonise Is to Beautify: A Perspective from Two Transgender Latina Makeup Artists in the US." *Feminist Review* 128, no. 1 (2021): 156–62. DOI: 10.1177/01417789211013432.
Pasley, James. "12 US States and 7 Countries That Have Barred Protesters from Wearing Masks." *Business Insider India,* October 8, 2019. https://www.businessinsider.in/politics/news/12-us-states-and-7-countries-that-have-barred-protesters-from-wearing-masks/articleshow/71485196.cms.
Patzelt, Maik. "Communing with the Spirits: Funeral Processions in Ancient Rome." In *The Routledge Companion to Ecstatic Experience in the Ancient World,* edited by Diana Stein, Sarah Kielt Costello, and Karen Polinger Foster, 351–66. London: Routledge, 2022.
Pernet, Henry. *Ritual Masks: Deceptions and Revelations.* Translated by Laura Grillo. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992.
Pesenti, Jerome. "An Update On Our Use of Face Recognition." *Meta Newsroom,* November 2, 2021. https://about.fb.com/news/2021/11/update-on-use-of-face-recognition/.
Philosophy Matters. "The Semiotics of Autumn," *Facebook,* November 8, 2021. https://www.facebook.com/PhilosophyMttrs/photos/a.305663529533101/3973338919432192.
Pierce, Jessica. "It Hurts: 5 Reasons We Are Failing Our Animals When It Comes to Pain." *Psychology Today,* March 13, 2013. https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/all-dogs-go-heaven/201303/it-hurts.
Pollak, Sorcha. "Bahrain Bans 'V for Vendetta' Masks." *Time,* February 27, 2013. https://world.time.com/2013/02/27/bahrain-bans-v-for-vendetta-masks/.

Polt, Christopher B. "A Splitting Headache: Mask and Performance at Plautus Epidicus 81–101." *Mnemosyne* 68 (2015): 1008–17. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24771912.

———. *Catullus and Roman Comedy: Theatricality and Personal Drama in the Late Republic.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Poser, Rachel. "He Wants to Save Classics from Whiteness: Can the Field Survive?" *The New York Times Magazine,* February 2, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/02/magazine/classics-greece-rome-whiteness.html.

Půtová, Barbora. "Proto-Art: The Origins of Non-Utilitarian Symbolic Thinking and Artistic Creativity." *Anthropologie* 54, no. 3 (2016): 175–85. http://puvodni.mzm.cz/Anthropologie/article.php?ID=2182.

Respini, Eva, ed. *Cindy Sherman.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012.

Revermann, Martin. "Cratinus' Διονυσαλέξανδρος and the Head of Pericles." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 197–200. DOI: 10.2307/632559.

Richards, James. "Star Wars: Why Mandalorians Never Remove Their Helmets." *Dork Side of the Force,* November 29, 2019. https://dorksideoftheforce.com/2019/11/29/star-wars-mandalorian-helmet/.

Richards, Polly. "What's in a Dogon Mask." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 49–50 (Spring/Autumn 2006): 92–114. DOI: 10.1086/RESvn1ms20167696.

Rodney, Seph. "Cindy Sherman in Blackface." *Hyperallergic,* October 29, 2015. https://hyperallergic.com/246851/cindy-sherman-in-blackface/.

Roffman, Julian, dir. *The Mask.* Warner Bros., 1961.

Rose, Brian, and Marianna Lovink. "Recreating Roman Wax Masks." *Expedition Magazine* 56, no. 3 (Winter 2014): 34–37. https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/recreating-roman-wax-masks/.

Russell, Chuck, dir. *The Mask.* New Line Cinema, 1994.

Sabar, Ariel. "A Biblical Mystery at Oxford." *The Atlantic,* June 2020. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/

archive/2020/06/museum-of-the-bible-obbink-gospel-of-mark/610576/.
Sample, Ian. "What Are Deepfakes — And How Can You Spot Them?" *The Guardian,* January 13, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jan/13/what-are-deepfakes-and-how-can-you-spot-them.
Sampson, C. Michael, and Anna Uhlig. "The Murky Provenance of the Newest Sappho." *Eidolon,* November 5, 2019. https://eidolon.pub/the-murky-provenance-of-the-newest-sappho-aca671a6d52a.
Santaolalla, Isabel. "Close Encounters: Racial Otherness in Imanol Uribe's Bwana." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 76, no. 1 (1999): 111–22. DOI: 10.1080/00074909960003094.
Sasser, Elizabeth Skidmore. *The World of Spirits and Ancestors in the Art of Western Sub-Saharan Africa.* Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995.
Savage, Dan. "Happy Heteroween: In Defense of Sexy Pirates, Sexy Nuns, and Sexy Cadavers." *The Stranger,* October 29, 2009. https://www.thestranger.com/features/2009/10/29/2594616/happy-heteroween.
Schechner, Richard. *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970–1976.* New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977.
Schneid, Iris, and Aviad E. Raz. "The Mask of Autism: Social Camouflaging and Impression Management as Coping/Normalization from the Perspectives of Autistic Adults." *Social Science & Medicine* 248 (March 2020): 112826. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.112826.
Schwader, Ann K. *Unquiet Stars: Poems by Ann K. Schwader.* Portland: Weird House Press, 2021.
Scotti, Dan. "There's Finally an Answer to Why Men Prefer Short Girls or Tall Girls." *Elite Daily,* July 9, 2015. https://www.elitedaily.com/dating/short-vs-tall/1104880.
Shalleck, Jamie. *Masks.* New York: Viking Press, 1973.
Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
Shauri, Megan. "5 Things You Think Are Normal But Would Actually Make Any Happy Marriage Choke." *Reporter-*

Times, April 11, 2017. https://www.reporter-times.com/story/lifestyle/2017/04/11/5-things-you-think-are-normal-but-would-actually-make-any-happy-marriage-choke/46730635/.

Shen Fuxin 沈福馨. *The Masks of Anshun's Earth Operas* 安顺地戏面具. Taipei: Tai bei shi, 1994.

Shenandoah, Leon. "Haudenosaunee Confederacy Announces Policy on False Face Masks." *Akwesasne Notes* 1 (1995). http://www.nativetech.org/cornhusk/maskpoli.html.

sideeffects. "Her body is a paraphilic love map." *YouTube,* January 14, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ6LtGXcyCE.

Silverstein, Paul. "Masquerade Politics: Race, Islam and the Scale of Amazigh Activism in Southeastern Morocco." *Nations and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (January 2011): 65–84. DOI: 10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00454.x.

Skyhorse, Brando, and Lisa Frazier Page, eds. *We Wear the Mask: 15 True Stories of Passing in America.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2017.

Slater, Niall W. *Plautus in Performance: The Theatre of the Mind.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Snyder, Zack, dir. *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice.* Warner Bros., 2016.

———, dir. *Justice League.* Warner Bros., 2017.

———, dir. *Suicide Squad.* Warner Bros., 2016.

"Somerton Man: Body Exhumed in Bid to Solve Australian Mystery." *BBC News,* May 19, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-57166662.

Sommerstein, Alan H. "Portrait-masks." In Vol. 2 of *The Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy,* edited by Alan H. Sommerstein, 528. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019.

St. James, Emily. "The Assimilationist, or: On the Unexpected Cost of Passing as a Trans Woman." *Vox,* February 19, 2020. https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2020/2/12/21075683/trans-coming-out-cost-of-womanhood-pink-tax.

Stanislavski, Constantin. *Building a Character.* New York: MacGregor, 1949.

StarTrek.com Staff. "Was Michael Myers' Halloween Mask William Shatner's Face?" *StarTrek.com,* October 25, 2021. https://www.startrek.com/article/was-michael-myers-halloween-mask-william-shatners-face.

"Statement on Demonstrations in Hillsborough." *Town of Hillsborough North Carolina,* August 24, 2019. Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20191208220617/https://www.hillsboroughnc.gov/news/news-releases/2019/8/24/357/statement-on-demonstrations-in-hillsborough.html.

Strike, Joe. *Furry Nation: The True Story of America's Most Misunderstood Subculture.* Jersey City: Cleis Press, 2017.

Talbot, Margaret. "The Myth of Whiteness in Classical Sculpture." *The New Yorker,* October 22, 2018. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/29/the-myth-of-whiteness-in-classical-sculpture.

"Tami Island Mask." *Second Face Museum of Cultural Masks.* https://www.maskmuseum.org/mask/tami-tago-1/.

Taplin, Oliver, and Rosie Wyles, eds. *The Pronomos Vase and its Context.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Taylor, Ashley P. "How a Girl's 'Death Mask' from the 1800s Became the Face of CPR Dolls." *LiveScience,* December 16, 2020. https://www.livescience.com/cpr-doll-resusci-annie-face.html.

Thompson, Ayanna. *Blackface.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2021.

Thompson, Helen. "Zigzags on a Shell From Java Are the Oldest Human Engravings." *Smithsonian Magazine,* December 3, 2014. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/oldest-engraving-shell-tools-zigzags-art-java-indonesia-humans-180953522/.

Turner, Jane Caroline. "Embodiment, Balinese Dance Theatre and the Ethnographer's Predicament." *Performance and Spirituality* 2, no. 1 (2011): 60–84. https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/605465.

Turner, Victor Witter. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Umachandran, Mathura, and Marchella Ward, eds. *Critical Ancient World Studies: The Case for Forgetting Classics.* London: Routledge, 2024.

Utych, Stephen M. "No, Face Masks Aren't Dehumanizing." *Political Studies Review* 19, no. 3 (2021): 528–35. DOI: 10.1177/1478929921993764.

Vovolis, Thanos, and Giorgos Zamboulakis. "The Acoustical Mask of Greek Tragedy." *Didaskalia* 7, no. 1 (2007). http://www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol7no1/vovolis_zamboulakis.html.

Wargo, Eric. "How Many Seconds to a First Impression?" *Association for Psychological Science,* July 1, 2006. https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/how-many-seconds-to-a-first-impression.

Weberman, David. "The Matrix Simulation and the Postmodern Age." In *The Matrix and Philosophy: Welcome to the Desert of the Real,* edited by William Irwin, 225–39. Peru: Carus, 2002.

Webster, T.B.L. *Monuments Illustrating New Comedy,* 3rd edn. London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London School of Advanced Study, 1995.

———. "The Poet and the Mask." In *Classical Drama and Its Influence: Essays Presented to H.D.F. Kitto,* edited by M.J. Anderson, 3–14. London: Methuen, 1965.

Wenten, I Nyoman, and Gamelan Naga Mas. "Topeng Dances of Bali and Java." *Cottier Theatre,* February 10, 2003. Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20051219011059/http://www.nagamas.co.uk/0302_topeng.htm.

Werness, Hope B. *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in Art.* New York: Continuum, 2006.

White, Erin. "All Souls Procession." *AZ DailyStar,* November 5, 2006. Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20121106122818/http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-153859362.html.

Wilde, Oscar. "The Critic as Artist." In *Intentions,* 107–237. New York: Wells, 1925.

———. "The Truth of Masks: A Note on Illusion." In *Intentions,* 240–286. New York: Wells, 1925.

Wiles, David. *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy: From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

———. *The Masks of Menander: Sign and Meaning in Greek and Roman Performance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Willis, Janine, and Alexander Todorov. "First Impressions: Making Up Your Mind after a 100-Ms Exposure to a Face." *Psychological Science* 17, no. 7 (July 2006): 592–98. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01750.x.

Willis, John Thabiti. *Masquerading Politics: Kinship, Gender, and Ethnicity in a Yoruba Town.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Wong, Tessa. "Coronavirus: Why Some Countries Wear Face Masks and Others Don't." *BBC News,* March 26, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52015486.amp.

Yates, Velvet L. "The Significance of Skin Color in Aristophanes (Ecclesiazousae, Thesmophoriazousae)." Conference paper, American Philological Association, Chicago, IL, January 3, 2014. https://classicalstudies.org/significance-skin-color-aristophanes-ecclesiazousae-thesmophoriazousae.

Yong, Ed. "What Happens When Americans Can Finally Exhale." *The Atlantic,* May 20, 2021. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/05/pandemic-trauma-summer/618934/.

Zakaria, Rafia. *Veil.* New York: Bloomsburg, 2017.

Zebrowitz, Leslie A., and Joann M. Montepare. "First Impressions from Facial Appearance Cues." In *First Impressions,* edited by Nalini Ambady and John J. Skowronski, 171–204. New York: Guilford Press, 2008.

Zernechel, Alex, and April L. Perry. "The Final Battle: Constructs of Hegemonic Masculinity and Hypermasculinity in Fraternity Membership." *College Student Affairs Leadership* 4, no. 1 (2017). https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/csal/vol4/iss1/6/.

Index

Achebe, Chinua 18
alter ego 51, 120, 129, 137
ancestral mask 84–91, 107 (*see also imago*)
animal mask 20–25, 34–35, 63, 69–70, 73–74, 174 (*see also* deer mask; furries; plague doctor mask)
anonymity 65, 67, 94, 96–97, 107–108, 110, 118, 134, 138–44, 177
antisemitism 63, 73

Balinese masking 19–20, 23, 31, 32, 38, 40, 42, 45, 60–62, 107
Bamana masking (in Mali) 65
Batman 47, 51–52, 120
Baudrillard, Jean *see* simulacra
BDSM *see* kink
Bilmawn 63, 73–74, 121
blackface 109
Brecht, Bertolt 44–45
burqa *see* veil

Carrey, Jim *see* The Mask
Carnival 18, 45, 47, 64, 121, 140, 151
cave paintings *see* prehistoric masks
character
  getting into 42–44

not real 111, 175, 182
charivari 87, 141–42
Chinese masking 32–33, 39–40, 41, 61, 91, 161
Chokwe masking (in Angola, Zambia, and Congo) 87–88
Cleckley, Hervey *see* psychopathy
clown mask 15
Colombian masking 65–66
color of masks 36–37, 95, 97, 114
coming out
National Pan-Hellenic Council 70, 121
of the closet 114–16
commedia dell'arte 36–37, 41, 45, 151
cosmetics *see* makeup
COVID-19 16, 151, 154–59, 161–62, 169, 174–75, 178
cultural appropriation and colonialism 92–95, 136, 138, 178–81 (*see also* double consciousness; racism and white supremacy)
Dan and Bassa masking (in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia) 68, 87
death mask 17–18, 79–82, 91, 96–97, 107, 128, 153, 181 (*see also* Fayum portraits; *imago*; mummy mask)
deer mask 70–73, 141, 169
Diné masking (in Turtle Island) 159
dìxì (earth opera) *see* Chinese masking
doppelgangers 129–37, 140, 146
double consciousness 89–90, 133–37, 146–47, 173
double mask (Kwakwaka'wakw mask type) 39
drag 112–13
Du Bois, W.E.B. *see* double consciousness

Egyptian masking (ancient) *see* mummy mask
etymology of words for "mask" 110–12, 133, 176
execution 65, 142
exorcism and possession 62, 159–62
eye mask 49, 69, 121, 169
facial recognition 19, 40, 114, 127, 144, 174, 178 (*see also* surveillance)
Fanon, Frantz *see* double consciousness

Fayum portraits 95–97
fraternities *see* "Greek life"
fuck 59, 128, 176
furries 107, 171–73
Future (rapper) 176–77

gas mask 144, 177
gender ideology 36–37, 47, 52, 109, 113, 114–16, 118–19, 142, 144–45, 177, 178, 182
glasses (corrective lenses) 42, 151, 169–73
"Greek life" 69–70
Greek masking (ancient) 29–31, 33, 34–35, 36, 41, 42–43, 59–60, 69–70, 121–22, 132, 181 (*see also* Fayum portraits; Homer; mummy mask; mystery religion; papyrus)
Guy Fawkes mask 18, 142–44

Halloween 18, 20, 45–47, 74, 83, 109, 121, 130, 142, 169, 171
Halloween movie 82–83, 163–64
Haudenosaunee masking (in Turtle Island) 179
Hello Kitty 24
hijab *see* veil
historical origins of masks *see* prehistoric masks
holes 15, 19, 20, 34, 39, 49, 52, 127, 129, 153, 181
Homer (Greek poet) 25, 134
homophobia *see* gender ideology
horror 52–53, 82–83, 105, 163–64, 182 (*see also* Uncanny Valley)
hunting 25, 72–73

Igbo masking (in Nigeria) 87–89 (*see also* Nsibidi Scripts)
imago (ancient Roman wax ancestral mask) 83–86, 87, 90, 91, 178
Indonesian masking 20–21
initiation *see* mystery religion; rites of passage
Italian masking *see commedia dell'arte*; Venetian mask

Japanese masking *see kabuki* theater; *kyōgen* drama; *nō* drama

kabuki theater 116–17
kink 46–49, 174, 177
Kiowa masking (in Turtle Island) 73
KN95 mask 151
KOMPRESSOR 107
Korean masking 19–20, 30–31, 34–35, 60, 61–62, 84–85, 161
Krampusnacht 73–74, 121
Ku Klux Klan 18, 67, 121, 138–40, 145–46
Kwakwaka'wakw/Kwakiutl masking *see* double mask
kyōgen drama 31, 41

laws about masking 144–46, 157, 178
life mask 81–83
Lincoln, Abraham 80–81
Lone Ranger 51
lucha libre mask 49–51
Lucretius (Roman poet) 176–77

makeup 112–14, 116, 178
The Mandalorian 110
The Man in the Iron Mask 118
Mardi Gras *see* Carnival
The Mask (Jim Carrey movie) 105–106, 112, 163, 180–81
maskmaking 19–23, 33, 38–40
masking (neurodivergent practice) 115
masking tape 117
masque *see* makeup
masquerade 175
  African-style 87, 90 (*see also* Bilmawn; Yoruba masking)
  European-style *see* Venetian mask
Mexican masking 63–64
mummering 32
mummy mask 18, 91–96, 174 (*see also* Fayum portraits)
museums *see* cultural appropriation

mystery religion 62–65, 69

N95 mask 156–57, 174
Navajo masking *see* Diné masking
neutral mask 33–34, 120
niqab *see* veil
Nixon mask 118
nō drama 31, 38, 40, 62, 111
The Nsibidi Scripts (Nnedi Okorafor novel series) 89–91, 137, 173

Okorafor, Nnedi *see* Nsibidi Scripts
Oku masking (in Cameroon) 87, 161

papyrus 91, 93–95
passing 113–16, 173
performance techniques 32, 38–41, 44, 121–22, 132–33
persona 42, 52, 83, 110–13, 115, 122, 147, 173, 176–77 (for fursona, *see* furries)
Phantom of the Opera 119–20
Photoshop 117
plague doctor mask 151–54, 156, 169–74
Plautus (ancient Roman playwright) 95, 132–34, 146
pornography, colonialist *see* museums
prehistoric masks 17–20, 23–25, 70–73, 91–92
psychopathy 162–64
pumpkin spice 175
puns, THM's 19, 40, 44, 52, 91, 110, 121, 122, 138, 140, 144, 156
pup play *see* kink

racism and white supremacy 19, 80, 95–96, 109, 116, 134, 158, 177 (*see also* cultural appropriation and colonialism; double consciousness; Ku Klux Klan)
rites of passage 68–70, 87
Roman masking 30–31, 33, 38–39, 41, 42, 44, 60, 62–63, 110, 177 (*see also* Fayum portraits; imago; Plautus)

Scooby-Doo 52
secret societies *see* Bamana masking; Dan and Bassa masking; "Greek life"; Ku Klux Klan; mystery religion; Tolai masking
sex *see* kink
sexism *see* gender ideology
Shatner, William 82–83, 163
Sherman, Cindy 109–10
Shroud of Turin 81
Siassi masking (in Papua New Guinea) 85–86, 90
simulacra 175–76
Somerton Man 78–80, 97–98
sororities *see* "Greek life"
Sri Lankan masking 32–33, 37, 41–42, 159–61
Star Trek *see Star Wars* instead
Star Wars *see Mandalorian*
superheroes 49–52, 120–21, 137, 139–40 (*see also* Batman; Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles)
surgical mask 151, 156–57
surveillance 85, 118, 178 (*see also* facial recognition)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 120–21
THM, as subject 15, 18–19, 59–60, 71–72, 115–16, 145–46, 151, 154, 169–74 (*see also* puns)
Tolai masking (in Papua New Guinea) 65
toxic masculinity *see* gender ideology
transformation mask *see* double mask
transphobia *see* gender ideology
Tutankhamun *see* mummy mask

Uncanny Valley 127–28, 129–30, 136, 146, 164, 182
Us (Jordan Peele movie) 129–35, 137, 146, 173, 177
V for Vendetta *see* Guy Fawkes mask
veil 118–19, 135–37, 139, 144–45, 147, 174, 178
Venetian mask 45–47, 140–41

Watchmen (TV series) 139–40

wrestling mask *see lucha libre* mask

Yoruba masking (in Nigeria) 138–39

Zorro 51