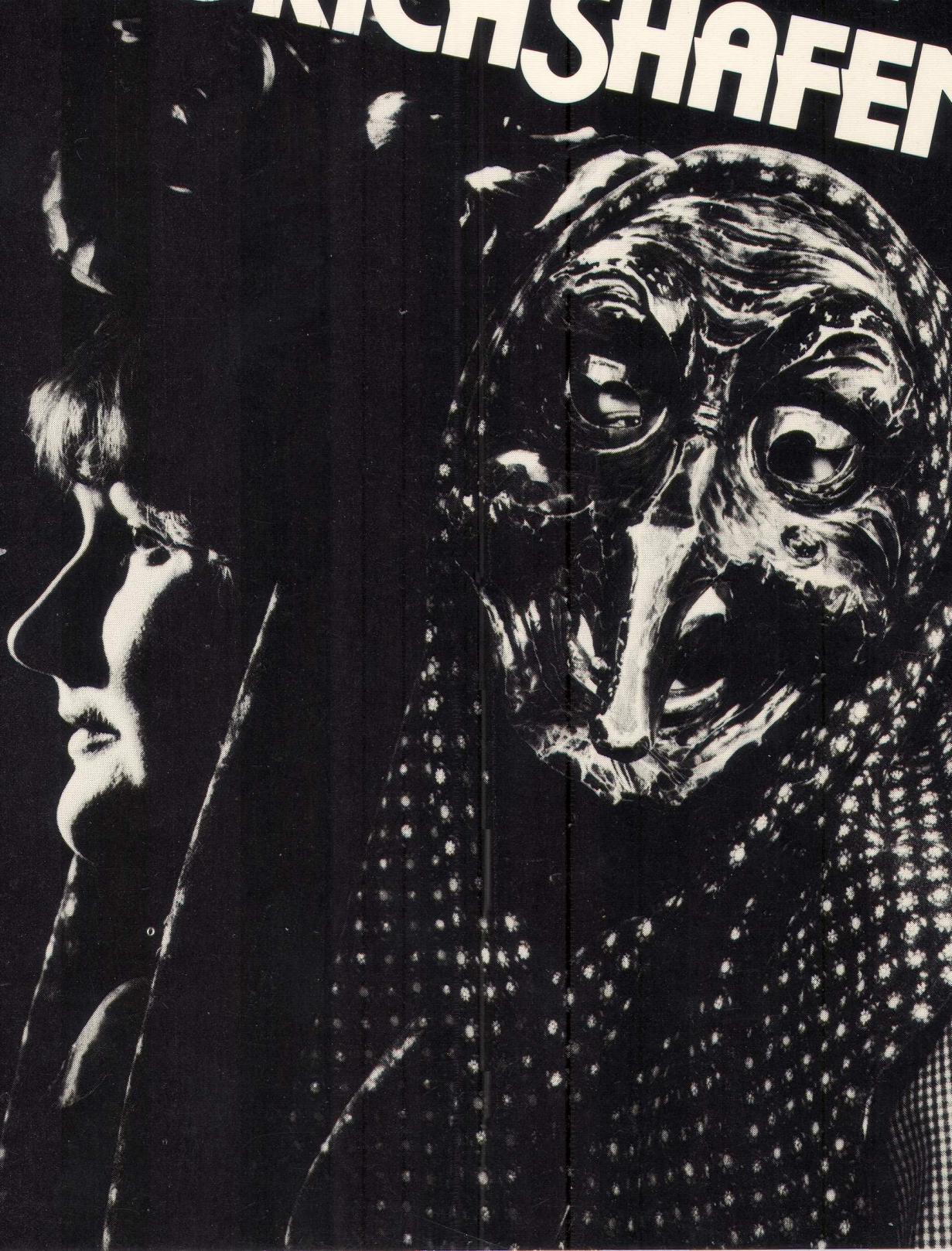


FASNET

IN FRIEDRICHSHAFEN



FASNET IN FRIEDRICHSHAFEN



The "Cocks of the Lake" and "Cock Butchers" in front of the Friedrichshafen City Hall (see page 11).

“FASNET” – The Background and Development of Swabian Folk Customs

There are several words in the German language which designate the so-called “mad days” immediately before Lent: Karneval, Fastnacht, Fasching, Fasnacht, Fasnet. Of these, only one has an English equivalent: carnival.

Both the English and the German term are borrowed words from the Italian (carnevale). Their origin is probably the Middle Latin expression “carne levare”, meaning “to take away the meat” (or “...the flesh”, in a symbolic sense). There are other explanations of the origin of that word. It might also come from the Latin expression “carrus navalis”, meaning the boat on wheels which used to be used in carnival processions instead of the more modern pageant cars; or it might even be interpreted as coming from “carne vale!”, which means “meat (or “flesh”), farewell!”. Most of these interpretations point to one fact: Carnival has been understood as the last day (or days) on which meat (i. e. the food) or the flesh (i. e. worldly pleasures) could be enjoyed before the long period of Lent. In 1091 the beginning of Lent was definitely fixed on the Wednesday before the Sunday of Invocavit, i. e. on Ash-Wednesday. This was done by Pope Urbanus II.

The originally German words “Fastnacht” etc. have a similar origin. “Fastnacht”, a word which is used all over the country, means, “the night (or “nights”) before Lent”.

“Fasching”, an expression that is found predominantly in Bavaria and in Austria, comes from the Middle High German “vast schanc”, meaning “the pouring out of the drink before Lent”.

“Fasnacht” and “Fasnet” are words that are found in the southwest of Germany, i. e. in the Swabian region. They come from the Middle High German verb “vaseln” or “faseln”, which has two meanings: a) to grow, and b) to talk nonsense. Both meanings are important for the historical background of “Fasnet”. On one hand, we find the “mad days” hinted at: people are then allowed to do all sorts of foolish things. On the other hand, it becomes obvious that there is a background which reaches far beyond those times when the mediaeval Church fixed the various holidays etc. within the church year. “Fasnet”, like so many other celebrations and customs, goes back to pre-Christian times, when pagan fertility rites were observed in the springtime to guarantee a good harvest and the health of man and animal. If, in addition to that, it is remembered that in former centuries all the forces of nature were, in a way, personified and that the heathen beliefs did not disappear immediately after the Christianization of Europe, but were partly integrated into the Christian faith, the following roots of “Fasnet” can be listed:

I. Fertility Rites and Protection against Demons

The fact that “Fasnet” is celebrated shortly before the beginning of spring reminds us that it was originally one of those rites connected with the fight between winter and summer, i. e. between death and life. This is still to be seen today in those places where the custom of the “expulsion of winter” exists: People make a lot of noise with rattles or whips, or they burn a huge figure of straw symbolizing the winter. This custom, of course, had its origin in the ancient

Germanic and Celtic rites of “alluring” the sun after the winter solstice.

At the same time, the fertility of the fields and of the domestic animals and the well-being of the farmers’ families had to be protected against all kinds of evil demons who were particularly active in the long winter nights and particularly dangerous immediately before spring. Some of these demons could be appeased with offerings. A custom connected with such beliefs was the throwing of nuts, corn, or flour during the carnival processions of former times. Nowadays these natural products have been replaced by confetti.

Among all these demons, the host of the dead, all sorts of witches, and the “wild host” of the ancient Norse god Odin, i.e. the demons of storms and hail and rain, were most feared by the superstitious.

In many cases these diabolical beings could be outwitted by man. Being continuously around they knew their environment. Thus, if man every now and then changed himself, e.g. by putting on the clothes of the opposite sex or by wearing animal or demon masks and costumes, the evil spirits became confused because for them the environment had changed. And if the masks worn by man were gruesome enough the demons might become afraid in their turn. Of course, man did not know exactly what these evil sprites looked like. On the other hand, being able to picture a danger helps greatly to overcome it. Now, if man put on a mask that was as horrible as he could possibly imagine he could be fairly sure that it was so terrible as to frighten the most dangerous demons. For the same reason the doors and the pillars of the Romanesque churches were adorned with so many fantastic and grotesque sculptures.

This ancient belief is at least one of the origins of the masquerade that is common in modern carnival, and it greatly influenced the masks that are worn in the “Fasnet”, processions of southwestern Germany.

It is not known in how far the ancient Roman celebrations of the Saturnalia influenced the Germanic traditions of carnival. It is, however, very possible that this happened. In any case, the Church neither in Rome nor in the Germanic regions approved of these customs at first. Take, for example, a report by Bishop Faustinus (352–384):

“On these days, miserable people and, which is worse, even baptized Christians, disguise themselves very strangely; and one does not know what to laugh at and what to regret; for what reasonable person can believe that these people are still of sane mind? They play around like stags, they change into the shapes of wild beasts. Others dress up in the hides of cattle, others put on the heads of wild beasts. They rejoice when they have thus transformed themselves into the shapes of animals so that they can no longer be recognized as human beings...”.

And four hundred years later, St. Pirminius, the founder of the abbey of Reichenau on an island in Lake Constance, decreed in the so-called “Dicta Pirminii”: “On the first day of a month or at any other time you shall not put on the hides of stags and horses in order to run about in them. Men shall not wear women’s clothes, and women shall not

wear men’s clothes on those days or on any other occasion. No Christian shall dare to dance, to make merry and to play abominable games near the churches, in the houses, on crossroads or in any other place.”

Later on, however, especially through the spreading of the teachings of Pope Gregory the Great, the Church became more tolerant towards the ancient folk traditions. And thus “Fasnet” also acquired a Christian background.

II. The Christian Background

In the same measure as the Church was willing to accept ancient pagan customs and traditions to make use of them for Christian purposes, the supernatural forces of nature began to change. With the assistance of the Church and with the Christian faith at their elbow, the people began to look upon the demons and evil spirits as less dangerous than these beings had hitherto seemed to be. In many cases the demons were even humanized. They began to be regarded as stupid, they could be duped and laughed at. If people continued to wear demons’ masks they no longer did so only for the purpose of averting a certain danger (although this continued to be important), but also in order to show that the evil spirits could be successfully kept off: They had become controllable, thanks to the “weapons” the Church had provided.

On the other hand, the Church in the course of the centuries had introduced a number of regulations severely restricting the worldly pleasures of the population. In one instance this had happened in a particularly drastic way: The forty days before Easter, the so-called period of Lent, required of man a maximum of abstemiousness and repentance. For compensation, a short period of hilarity and exuberance was granted to the people immediately before the period of Lent: from the Sunday of Estomihi to Shrove Tuesday. People were allowed to make merry and to feast extensively (cf. the “Mardi gras” of the French!) before Ash-Wednesday called them to repent of their sins and introduced a period of restrictions concerning food, drink, and sociability.

III. Man’s Natural Inclination to Play and Disguise

We would be very ignorant of the world if we were to look only for theological, mythological and mystical origins of the colourful scenes of carnival or “Fasnet”. Just as important as the roots mentioned above is man’s desire to play, to disguise himself, to be someone else, and to cast off the restrictions of every-day life, of sobriety and reason.

Life in the Middle Ages was extremely hard and privative: The struggle for life was severe; epidemics, famines, the forces of nature, and wars constantly threatened man’s existence; socage, payments of tithes and high taxes and

military service often brought him down to the minimum subsistence level. Thus the hilarity of carnival, once a year, allowed him to forget his hardships for a while. Moreover, man's style of life in the Middle Ages was far more constricted by laws and regulations than it is now. The ecclesiastical and the temporal powers, the class distinctions and corporations allowed him very little free play. Hence, it is understandable that once in a while he had the desire to break out of the daily restraints. Carnival gave him the opportunity to do so. Not only did he wish to disguise

himself, he also wanted to be amused and, perhaps, to entertain others. For this reason comedies and farces came into fashion, and the guilds and patricians of the cities and towns began to organize colourful pageants and spectacles which were greatly influenced by the splendid festivities that were customary at the courts of both the temporal and the ecclesiastical princes. The fashions at these courts, however, were in their turn influenced by popular carnival customs, a good example being the appearing of the court-jester.

Some Aspects of the History of "Fasnet"

Carnival or "Fasnet" not having been strictly organized in former times, it is not easy to find evidence of it in mediaeval documents. The earliest mention of it in Germany is found in a manuscript of the great Middle High German epic poem of "Parzifal" by Wolfram von Eschenbach, one of the greatest mediaeval poets. The manuscript, dating from 1206, may be seen in the library of the former abbey of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

A number of documents of the 13th and 14th centuries and of later times tell of "Fasnet" chickens that had to be delivered to the lords of the manors. In return, the lords were expected to distribute "Fasnet" cakes to their tenants and to entertain them with a special kind of "Fasnet" beer. The popular amusements of those early times seem to have been rather rough and uncouth and sometimes even obscene: Very often a city council had to prohibit certain practices or customs that had degenerated.

The sixteenth century saw the development of more cultivated and more refined amusements. Through the influence of the civilizations of late mediaeval Burgundy and Renaissance Italy picturesque shows became particularly popular: dances performed by the artisans and their wives, processions, pageants of all kinds, and plays. The so-called "Fastnacht plays" can be traced back to the early 15th century, they denote the earliest type of secular drama in the German language. They must have been popular in the whole of Germany, but those of Nuremberg were of the best quality. Sometimes the players would walk from one house to the next, performing "their" play before various carnival parties. Sometimes the plays were performed in the market-place or in the city hall.

The upper classes in general, and the courts in particular, enjoyed masked balls and similar amusements that were perfected in the Baroque age and were, in their turn, adopted by the wealthy and cultured commoners in the cities.

In the 17th and the 18th century the influence of the Italian carnival, particularly that of Venice, became increasingly apparent.

For the common people, especially for the lowest classes, customs did not change very much at first. It must, however, be remembered that the reformers of the Church were against carnival festivities, thus the "Fasnet" tradition became unimportant in the Protestant territories of Germany. The patricians continued to give their great dinners, but the merry-making among the lower classes lost its typical carnival aspect. In many cities the "Fastnacht plays" were retained, but the wearing of masks died out in most Protestant regions.

In the Roman Catholic states, on the other hand, a number of mediaeval traditions survived well into the 18th century; but the age of the so-called Enlightenment (the second half of the 18th cent.), with its cult of reason and its rejection of traditions that were disdainfully called superstition and crudeness, brought along a decline of "Fasnet" customs, quickened by ordinances of the princes who, certainly well-meaningly, tried to improve their subjects' minds by eradicating those "silly" ideas that brought about "idleness, extravagance and dissipation".

But the Romantic Age revitalized those traditions that had so long played an important part in the course of the year, and the second half of 19th century saw the founding of "Fasnet" corporations, or guilds, all over Swabia and other regions of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. This movement continued well into the 20th century. The two world wars brought, of course, an interruption, but the post-war years have been a time of an extremely intense revival of "Fasnet" traditions. This development can certainly not only be explained by "nostalgia"; the fact that people from all walks of life take part in the work of the "Fasnet" guilds shows that it has finally been understood that the so-called "folk customs" are an important part of a people's civilization that deserves to be taken seriously.

Whereas in former centuries only three days, namely the Sunday of Estomihi, Monday before Lent, and Shrove Tuesday were given to merry-making, the period of Fasnet has been extended in recent times. Swabian "Fasnet" normally begins on Jan. 6 at noon. It ends on Ash-Wednes-

day. That day being the Wednesday before the Sunday of Invocavit, which in its turn is the fifth Sunday before Easter, the space of time given to "Fasnet" may be some thing between four and nine weeks, depending on whether Easter comes early or late in the year.

In some regions the carnival season begins already on St. Martin's Day, on Nov. 11. It is not that St. Martin had anything to do with merry-making, but in former centuries it was on that saint's day that the contracts of the servants expired. They had to look for other masters, and before they assumed their new duties they enjoyed a number of merry days.

Generally, the calendar of "Fasnet" or "Fastnacht" or carnival would look somewhat like this:

Nov. 11 Begin of the carnival in the Rhineland. Some "Fasnet" corporations in Swabia have their first meetings of the season.

Jan. 6 Official start of "Fasnet" in Swabia: "Fasnet" is announced in various ways, e. g. by processions of fools cracking their whips or making a lot of noise with their rattles.

end of Jan./

beginning of Feb.: Important meetings of the "Fasnet" guilds; balls, etc.

Sunday of Sexagesimae (or later): Raising of the "Fasnet Tree", a tall pole, usually with a tree and a wreath at the top.

Thursday before "Fasnet" Sunday ("Greasy" or "Rollicking" Thursday): Processions; public meetings of the fools; taking over of the city governments by the fools, etc.

Saturday before "Fasnet" Sunday ("Greasy" Saturday): Processions, balls, etc.

"Fasnet" Sunday (Sunday of Estomihi): Processions, balls, children's parties, etc.

"Fasnet" Monday (in the Rhineland: "Rose Monday"): In many towns the climax of the season with merry-making in the streets.

Shrove Tuesday: Parties and all sorts of ceremonies marking the official end of the "Fasnet" season: felling of the "Fasnet Tree", burning of straw puppets; balls, etc.

Ash-Wednesday: End of "Fasnet"; in some cities special dinners.

Sunday of Invocavit: Burning of winter (a custom now almost extinct).

There are, of course, many deviations from this order of events in the "Fasnet" centres of Swabia, but fundamentally the observance of the "Fasnet" traditions is everywhere the same.

"Fasnet" in Friedrichshafen

Friedrichshafen as such has not got very old "Fasnet" traditions of its own because the city was "created" only in 1811 by King Frederick I of Württemberg by uniting the former Imperial City of Buchhorn and the former Benedictine priory of Hofen (now the castle of the House of Württemberg). Buchhorn was the smallest of all the Imperial Cities of the Holy Roman Empire. This and the fact that there were almost no important cities in the neighbourhood account for the almost total absence of official documents relating to "Fasnet" in the mediaeval city. In addition, the many wars in this region of Upper Swabia required a certain restraint on the part of the citizens concerning the expenditure of too much money on any kind of amusement. There are, however, a number of entries in the records of the city council that give us an idea of the kind of "Fasnet" celebrations that were customary in this small city. There must have been public "Fasnet" events in the guildhalls, because in 1633, i. e. in the middle of the Thirty Years' War, a councillor doubted whether it was prudent to have public "Fasnet" celebrations that year. But he considered it to be

all right that the city should offer a "Fasnet" drink to all the citizens, i. e. the members of the guilds. They were to be free to consume it at home or in their guildhalls.

There were a number of special days of merry-making: The Thursday before "Fasnet" Sunday was called "Greasy Thursday" (Ger. "Schmutziger Donnerstag") because people used to eat a special kind of cakes; or it was called "Rollicking Thursday" (Ger. "Gumpiger Donnerstag", from Middle High German "gumpan", which means "to dance" or "to spring", "to jump"). Then came the so-called "Sooty Friday", on which day the girls got their faces besmeared with soot by the young men. Next came "Greasy Saturday", when again pancakes (or doughnuts) were made. "Fasnet" Sunday was chiefly a day of feasting. Monday was a day of rest before Shrove Tuesday brought the climax of the "Fasnet" season. Sometimes the dances that had begun on Tuesday evening continued well into the morning of Ash-Wednesday. Ash-Wednesday as such was, in a way, a church holiday. People ate dried fish or sometimes snails. In the evening it was the custom to have

the "Fasnet" season buried by the unmarried young men. Imitating a funeral cortège and a funeral sermon they finally threw a big piece of wood into a pit.

On the Sunday of Invocavit, the first Sunday of Lent, a huge pyre used to be built on the top of which a tall pole was erected that had a witch made of straw tied to it. The burning of the witch symbolized the coming of the end of winter. There was dancing around the pyre, and afterwards special pretzels were eaten.

The early nineteenth century brought a revival of "Fasnet" traditions in Friedrichshafen, as was the case all over southern Germany. By 1852 several "Fasnet" corporations must have existed, for the local newspapers tell of special dances and plays in the casino on the lake. These "Fasnet" plays, the last of which was performed in 1884, were specially written each year. On the other hand, towards the end of the 19th century, we read of great "Fasnet" processions in the town, with a dozen of lavishly decorated pageant cars. According to the newspapers the fools tried to amuse the population with special pranks each year. They must have been successful at that, although most of what they did may seem very harmless by "modern" standards. Thus, in 1936, when a farmer had been known to believe in the doubtful arts of a certain diviner, the theme was taken up by the fools. One of them promised to find a mineral well in the city in order to make Friedrichshafen a spa. Taking his "divining-rod" he led the "Fasnet" procession to a place in a private garden where a water hose had been buried. The "diviner" told the people to bore a hole into the ground, and to everyone's surprise a fountain came gushing forth. But, alas, it was no mineral water.

The first World War had brought a short interruption of the celebration of "Fasnet", but in 1926 a "Fasnet" newspaper appeared for the first time. After the interruption caused by the Second World War Friedrichshafen revived "Fasnet" again in 1949. The founders' aim was to bring some joy to

the population of the city that had been so heavily and extensively destroyed in the war.

In 1949 a "Fasnet" guild or fools' corporation was founded and called the "Cock of the Lake". A mask of the same name was created two years later, and between that date and 1976 Friedrichshafen's "Fasnet" was enriched by a number of other picturesque masks and costumes. On one hand, these masks continue the Upper Swabian tradition, on the other hand, the creators always tried to invent something new that could be looked upon as typical of the thriving city. As more and more citizens joined the fools' corporation the city was divided into five districts in 1950, and these districts have made their own contributions to the arrangement of the "Fasnet" celebration. In 1951 the great "citizens' ball" was organized for the first time; it has been one of the highlights of the carnival season ever since. Next "Fasnet" plays were staged, and the great procession on "Fasnet" Sunday has attracted onlookers from many towns for many years now.

Friedrichshafen's present carnival traditions being younger than those of many other cities in southern Germany, the fools of Friedrichshafen very early began to organize visits to the neighbouring cities and towns in order to get into contact with other fools' corporations. Masked fools from those places, often accompanied by their bands, have returned these visits. Meanwhile, these contacts have been extended to Zürich and even to the carnival centres on the Rhine.

"Fasnet" in Friedrichshafen has become popular among all classes of society. The students get a few holidays, offices and shops are closed for one or two days –, in short: it has attracted a good deal of attention. Thus, when in 1979 the fools' corporation proudly celebrated its thirtieth anniversary H. R. H. the Duke of Württemberg gave a reception in his castle at Friedrichshafen, the most prominent guest being the Prime Minister of Baden-Württemberg.

Typology of the Swabian "Fasnet" Masks

Only the most common types can be considered here.

In former times all kinds of masks were worn. Some were modelled in clay or paper maché, others were made of wire or sheets of metal, others were carved of wood. Even mummified heads of animals were used in some instances. Nowadays one may divide the masks into three main groups:

1. The Fasnet fools besmear their faces with paint, soot, flour, or the like. This custom is of fairly recent origin, at least as far as it concerns carnival or "Fasnet" as such. It is not so very wide-spread.

2. The fools cover their faces with masks made of cloth, fur, straw, grass, or twigs. This custom seems to be very old: it shows that people in former times wanted to express the unity of all life: human, animal and vegetable. Masks of cloth, covering only the upper half of the face, sometimes combined with a long wooden nose and a fantastically big hat, were particularly popular in the eighteenth century carnival centres of Venice and Rome.

Sometimes these masks of cloth developed into whole mask hoods or even cloaks, with a few slits for the eyes, the nose and the mouth, thus creating uniform costumes.

3. The fools wear carved wooden masks. These masks are not so old as they may seem at first glance, and the custom as such need not be such an old tradition either. Although most of these masks recall the demons, witches and sprites that have always been present in superstitious minds they apparently do not date back before the end of the 17th century. They have been extremely and increasingly popular since the middle of the eighteenth century, and most types seem to have originated between ca. 1740 and 1830. The Romantic movement of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, which stressed many mediaeval traditions, greatly influenced and encouraged the creation of the masks and costumes as we know them today.

Most of these masks are carved of lime wood. They are then covered with a priming coat of chalk and, after that, painted and varnished. These masks fall into two categories: those representing beautiful and benevolent beings are rather bright-coloured; those symbolizing demons and other powers of darkness are ugly and dull, sometimes, however, they are painted in garish colours.

The number of types of masks being so large only those types that are to be found at Friedrichshafen and in its vicinity can be described here.

I The Savage

Formerly the most popular of all "Fasnet" figures, the Savage dates back to early mediaeval mythology. He was then looked upon as a gigantic forest sprite. But he was benevolent, protecting man against evil spirits and demons, particularly in winter and in bad weather. Late mediaeval and Renaissance paintings, engravings and woodcuts (e.g. by Cranach the Elder, Dürer, and P. Brueghel the Elder) and metal work show that he must have enjoyed great popularity among all classes of the population. According to these early works of art, the Savage's clothing consisted of straw, leaves, twigs, moss, or animal skins.

Some modern masks may be traced back to the Savage. In the case of Friedrichshafen we can mention the "Seewald-Kobold" (Mask No. 5) and the "See-Grendel" (Mask No. 8).

II The Witch

The witch is usually a malicious and malevolent being with the wish to harm and to hurt. She is in contact with the supernatural in so far as she can bewitch other beings, transform them into strange shapes, and change herself into different shapes and figures. Documentary evidence of the belief in witches is found, for example, in the Bible (2. Mos. 22,17) and in the statutes of Hammurapi of Babylon. They may be connected also with the cult of the Greek and Roman goddess Hecate as well as with ancient Germanic and Celtic cults. Originally there were many types of

witches: those transforming people into animals or vice versa; those specializing on harming innocent people by administering magic potions and by putting spells on domestic animals and fields; those that could change the weather ecc. In the Middle Ages these various types were united into that dangerously powerful being that has played such an enormous part in European superstition. In ancient legends and fairy-tales all over Europe the witches usually



appear as old hags, red-haired, blear-eyed, hump-backed, and hook-nosed, accompanied by black cats and riding on broom-sticks.

It is not quite clear how the witch came to be included among the masks and costumes of "Fasnet". However, everything seems to point to the fact that her appearance there is of quite recent origin (18th century).

It is also possible to interpret the "Fasnet" mask of the witch as the "savage woman", i.e. the female counterpart of the "Savage" as described above.

Two masks of Friedrichshafen and the villages near the town belong to this type: the Witch of Buchhorn (Mask No. 1) and the "Forest Witch" of the village of Ailingen (Mask No. 12).

III The Tomfool

There are several prototypes of this mask. On one hand, there is the good-natured fool that is known as a harmless buffoon. He is usually described as a glutton, a bully, a girl-chaser and, sometimes, as an acrobat. Very often he is a little stupid; unpleasant things may happen to him, but

usually he has much good luck. Then there is the wily and witty jester, who was particularly popular in 16th and 17th-century England and Germany and who had the privilege of telling the plain, and sometimes disagreeable, truth to everyone, even the highest dignitaries of church and state. A third type is the frolicsome and artful "arlecchino" of the "commedia dell'arte" of Renaissance Italy. All these fools have some attributes in common: the little brass bells that are attached to their jackets (and sometimes to their caps), the wooden masks with hoods that are often adorned with foxtails, and the foxtail or the wooden sword that they carry in their hands. They are up to all kinds of mischief, and masks of this type greatly enliven the carnival or "Fasnet" processions.

Here the following masks of Friedrichshafen must be mentioned: the "Fool of the Harbour" (Mask No. 4) and the "Riedhänsele" (Mask No. 14).

IV The Animal Masks

For various reasons and in certain situations man in former times wished to impersonate specific strange or supernatural beings by wearing grotesque and awe-inspiring masks and costumes. Most of these recall some kind of

animal, because formerly some beasts or birds were looked upon as powerful beings, sometimes exerting a strong influence upon man. Many animals were said to have supernatural powers. For example, the screech-owl and the cuckoo were thought to announce one's death or the number of years given to man; the wolf, the raven, and the crow were considered to be animals of death, whereas the stork and the cock were said to be bringers of good luck and fertility.

Some masks of Friedrichshafen belong to this type: the "Seegockel" (Mask No. 2), the Cuckoo (Mask No. 6) and the "Fox of Guntenbach" (Mask No. 13).

V Other Types

Many costumes and masks reflect local or regional legends and history and are difficult to trace. They give variety to the "Fasnet" processions of masks and fools and tell of the manifold traditions and historical connections of the Swabian towns. Superstitions of all kinds have, of course, greatly influenced, and contributed to, the development of masks. A number of the masks of Friedrichshafen must be mentioned here: the Cock Butcher (No. 3), the "Bächlesfischer" (No. 7), and the masks No. 9, 10 and 11.

Masks of the City of Friedrichshafen

It is quite certain that our ancestors celebrated the days of carnival or "Fasnet" in some disguise, as was common all over the country. Unfortunately, no descriptions of any ancient mummery are extant, thus all of our "Fasnet"

figures are modern creations that originated among the people of this city after the Second World War. Of course, traditional masks and costumes of southwestern Germany were the models of these new creations.

1. The Witch of Buchhorn (Die Buchhornhexe)

This mask was created in 1949, in the year when "Fasnet" celebrations started after the war.

People wanted to have a genuinely popular mask. Not a square inch of skin of the mask bearer should be visible any more. The bearer's own personality is subject to the figure of the mask, but the bearer must give life to the mask, and that is why it is not easy to impersonate the witch.

The most precious item of the costume is the mask as such, carved out of a single piece of wood. The face of the witch is lively and very wrinkled, it is of a brown-red colour, with a shade of green. The witch wears a black kerchief, with red and green flowers. The blouse is checkered in



black and red and has wooden buttons. It reaches slightly below the waist. The apron is blue with narrow white and black stripes, and it is shorter than the skirt by a hand's breadth. The skirt is black. The stockings are red, and beneath the skirt the white lace drawers are visible. The shoes are made of straw. The witch carries a birch-broom with a stick of ash or hazelwood.

2. The Cock of the Lake (Der Seegockel)

This is one of the best-known figures of the Friedrichshafen "Fasnet". Everywhere it is greeted with a merry "cock-a-doodle-doo", This cock was designed in 1951. He wears a dress of brown and yellow feathers with a red crest and red wattles. His beak is yellow, and his eyes are black, white



and red. He wears yellow cotton stockings that have three toes in front and a spur behind. Just somewhat below the calf of the leg there is another spur. The feather dress consists of about 4,000 patches of felt that have to be sewn on after a very special pattern.

It is a very colourful sight when the cocks move in a group, hopping about and flapping their wings.

3. The Cock Butcher (Der Gockelmetzger)

He wears black shoes and pants and a genuine butcher's overall with a broad red belt that has a large buckle. Fastened to the belt are various cans that are said to contain legs or breasts of chicken, just as the labels say. A cut-off head of a cock is also fastened to the costume.

The butcher carries a long knife – his most important tool – fastened to his wrist by a chain; the knob is decorated with a cock's head.

The head of the butcher is covered with a hangman's hood, with slits for the eyes and the mouth. Red gloves complete the costume.



During the "Fasnet" processions the cock butchers must keep the cocks in check. Very often they are seen to chase a cock, but almost immediately other cocks come to the rescue of the "bird".

The "clean-out" of "Fasnet" brings the great scene for the cock butchers: At 11.30 p.m. on "Fasnet" Tuesday they appear and look for their victims. In a rather gruesome ceremony the cocks are massacred and beheaded with the long knives, the "Fasnet" of Friedrichshafen being brought to an end in that way. To guarantee the revival of "Fasnet" in the following year one cock is spared for "breeding" purposes and locked in a big cage. In the following year, during the great "Fasnet" ball, he is set free again.

4. The Fool of the Harbour (Der Hafennarr)

This mask was created in 1953. The Fool has to impersonate the coming of the spring. This is expressed by the colourful wreath of flowers surrounding the upper half of the face. The cool and violent winds of spring are symbolized by the three foxtails that are fastened to the mask. The fool also carries a foxtail in his white-gloved hand. The costume as such is of blue, red, green or corduroy. A so-called mask-kerchief is fastened to the mask, its lappets



hanging down over the shoulders. The jacket has lappets, too, which hang down over the pants. The sleeves and the pants are decorated with trimmings with saw-like edges that correspond to the lappets of the jacket and the kerchief. All costumes are completed by a kind of yellow pinafore. Twelve little bells of steel are fastened to yellow leather straps that are crossed over the chest and the back. Seven bells are carried on the chest and five on the back.



5. The Hobgoblin of the Forest on the Lake (Der Seewald-Kobold)

He came into being in 1953–54 and is called after the large forests east of Friedrichshafen. The mask recalls the face of a sprite of the forest. The brows over the large round right eye and the squinting left eye look like twigs. The face has a shaggy beard carved of wood, a long tongue is hanging out of the distorted mouth. The entire mask is of greyish green colour, like an old root. A braid of bast that is fastened to the forehead surrounds the face like a beard.

The costume is of grey linen; green bast is sewn onto it. The hobgoblin carries a stick with a crotch or a snake from the forest.

After the “clean-out” of “Fasnet” the hobgoblins have to go back to the forest, because they are symbols of winter.



6. The Cuckoo (Der Kuckuck)

This figure was created in 1955. The Cuckoo wears pants and a jacket made of white linen. Both are decorated with large hand-painted colourful birds and are held together by a broad leather belt. The mask looks like a bird's head and has a cherry in its beak. Three foxtails are fastened to it. Two little bells (in F) are tied to the mask, and three other bells (in C, B, A and G) are fastened to each upper arm and knee. Thus the bells of the Cuckoo play the well-known German nursery-rhyme about the cuckoo that calls in the forest.



7. The Fisherman of the Brook

(Der Bächlesfischer)

This figure was created by a group of citizens of Friedrichshafen's suburb Fischbach (= the Fish Brook) in 1963.

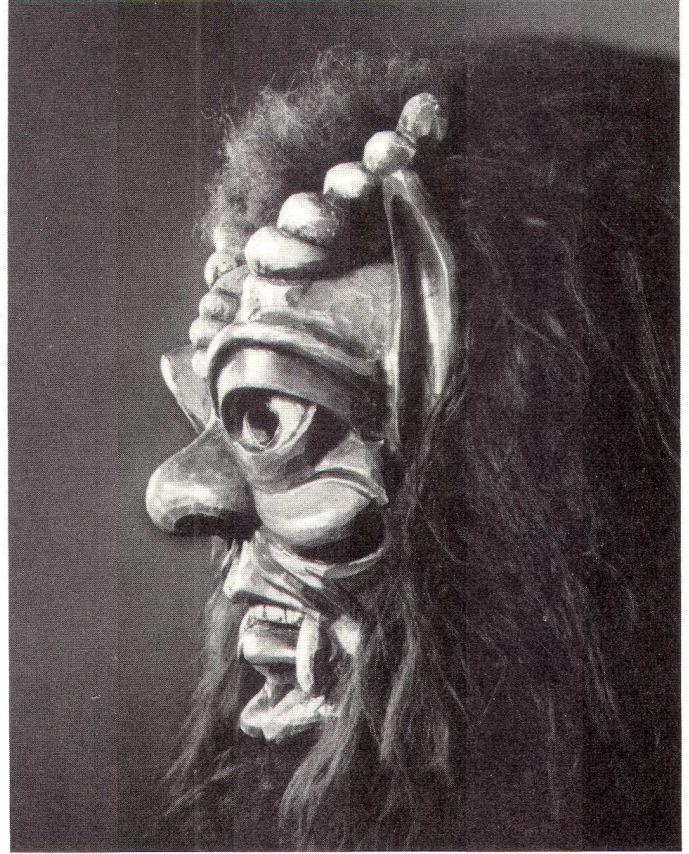


The mask shows the weather-beaten face of an old fisherman. He wears a southwester, a leather jacket that shows a dangerous-looking catfish (a fish frequently found in Lake Constance), and long leather boots. He carries a fishing rod with which he likes to tease the people watching the "Fasnet" processions.



8. The Monster of the Lake (Der See-Grendel)

This is the youngest of the "Fasnet" costumes of Friedrichshafen and was created as late as 1976. The word "grendel" is found in ancient Nordic mythology (cf. the



cannibalistic monster Grendel in the Anglo-Saxon epic poem "Beowulf", written in the 6th or 7th century). Later, it was also taken into the upper German dialects to denote all kinds of demons.

This mask, chiefly of a light brown colour, has four horns, two of which are set on the forehead, the other two growing out of the mouth. Moreover, the Grendel has two pointed ears.

His yellow blouse is adorned with red flames and blue waves. Besides, this monster wears a kind of cloak made of four black sheepskins. Short chains fastened to his belt make a rattling noise. In his hand the Grendel carries a horse's tail.



The villages around Friedrichshafen, formerly independent, now parts of the city, have their own "Fasnet" traditions and, consequently, their own masks and costumes. (Here they are numbered consecutively). There is the former village of Kluftern, which has two types of masks.

9. The "Göhrelöchner"

It is quite impossible to translate this name into English. The Göhrelöchner is a legendary figure: a former surveyor who used to favour those farmers who bribed him with food, wine, and liquor and who, consequently, did not find any rest in his grave. This figure was created in 1971.



10. The "Wiederwurz"

This name cannot be translated either. The "Wiederwurz" was invented in 1975 to symbolize the bad conscience of the "Göhrelöchner" that does not give him rest. He persuades him to be dishonest again and again. This is very adequately symbolized by his wooden tongs with which he often pinches the Göhrelöchner in order to incite him to all sorts of mischief.



The former village of Ailingen, now also a part of Friedrichshafen, has two "Fasnet" figures its own.

11. Little Man of the Gehren-Mountain (Das Gehrenmännle)

This figure recalls a legendary person of the time of the Thirty Years' War, who, after having lost his family, spent his life hidden in the forest. The "Little Man" wears a wooden mask that reminds one of the face of a wizened old man, with deep-set eyes and a nose that resembles a root. A grey wig and a long grey beard are fastened to the mask. The costume consists of brown trousers, boots, a shirt of clay-coloured linen the sleeves of which are embroidered with motives recalling berries and twigs, and a coarse woolen jacket of a greyish green colour. In his hand the "Gehrenmännle" carries a rough stick.



12. The Forest Witch (Die Waldhexe)

The mask of that figure is also carved of wood, the face is similar to that of the "Gehrenmännle". Thick eye-brows, a broad mouth, a pointed chin, deep wrinkles and big warts remind us of the fairy-tale witch. Long braids of hemp and a black kerchief are fastened to the mask. The witch's blouse is wine-red, the skirt is dark green, and the black apron is covered with white dots. Long white drawers with lace reach down to the knees. Red stockings and straw shoes complete the witch's costume. She carries a long stick with a crotch.



Another former village with "Fasnet" traditions of its own is the modern suburb of Friedrichshafen, Lottenweiler. There are two masks:

13. The Fox of Guntenbach

(Der Guntenbach-Fuchs)

The wooden mask is adorned with four or five foxtails. The costume as such (an overall) looks as if it were made of the fur of a fox. The trousers are so long that the shoes are hidden. The "Fox of Guntenbach" carries a foxtail in his hand, or sometimes he carries a bone or even a chicken.



14. Little Jack (or: Tomfool) of the Moor

(Das Riedhänsele)

His costume is covered with small rectangular patches of a greenish or brownish colour. His face is covered with a mask of brown felt the red mouth of which is strongly accentuated. The face has a white nose and blue eyes, and it is surrounded by a big white beard.

Brass bells of the size of a walnut are sewn to the back of the mask and to all the seams of the trousers. In his hand the "Riedhänsele" carries a whip the stick of which is very short, but which has a thong that is up to ten feet long. From January 6 (Twelfth Night, Epiphany) onward, the "Riedhänsele" may walk in the streets in order to announce the season of "Fasnet" with loud cracks of his whip.



15. The Witch of Buchhorn:

Children's Mask (v. Mask No. 1)

16. The Cuckoo: Children's Mask

(v. Mask No. 6)

17. The Forest Witch: Children's Mask

(v. Mask No. 12)

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