

HALLOWEEN



W A T E R H O U S E S Y M B O L I S M N E W S L E T T E R # 6 4

SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- Mask conveys equivocation, possessing a magic quality and protection.
- Bat conveys night, death and misfortune.
- Black cat conveys death and bad luck except in Great Britain where it means good luck.
- Fire conveys spiritual energy.

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Masks convey dissimulation, ambiguity, equivocation, possessing a magic quality, indicating what the wearer would be, protection, hypocrisy, hollowness. It is the attribute of the personifications of Deceit, Vice and Night. A mask of frown conveys tragedy and from the 17th century on, it is an attribute of Melopene. A mask with a smile conveys comedy and from the 17th century on, it is an attribute of Thalia.

The personification of Deceit is related to Apate who was the daughter of Nyx in Greek mythology. She was one of the evil spirits released from Pandora's box. Her Roman equivalent was Fraus, which is where the word 'fraud' originated. Her siblings were Geras, the personification of old age, Oizys, the personification of suffering, Moros, the personification

MASKS

of doom, Momos, the personification of blame, Eris, the personification of strife, Nemesis, the personification of retribution, and Keres, the personification of carnage and violent death. Her mother, Nyx is the personification of night, and her father, Erebus, the personification of darkness.

What are some popular masks for Halloween? The skull conveys mortality, the worldly survival of the dead, death, the transitory nature of life on earth, the useless nature of earthly things, sin, and the Fall of Man. The skull is the attribute for Adam, Hosea, Hamlet, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Romuald, Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint Paul and Saint Jerome.

Saint Romuald was the founder of the Camaldolese order and a major figure in the eleventh-century "Renaissance of eremitical asceticism".



Aztec mask of [Xiuhtecuhtli](#), c. 1500, of [Mixtec](#)-Aztec provenance

Disguises

Disguises convey concealment or changing a person's physical appearance, including a wig, glasses, makeup, costume or other ways. Camouflage is one type of disguise for people, animals and objects. Hats, glasses, change in hair style or wigs, plastic surgery,

and make-up are also used. One famous disguise of the late 20th Century (1986) is the Phantom of the Opera which conveys evilness, escapism and another world. How many times have you seen Phantom of the Opera? The poster to the right is from a 1920 edition.



B a t s

Bats convey night, death, misfortune, black magic, infernal power or being, desolation, witchcraft, terror, madness, revenge, idolatry, longevity, wisdom, and a woman between 80 and 90 years of age. It is an attribute of the Devil, Dracula and pride personified.

Bats have a long history of mythology connected to them. In Shakespeare's Macbeth, the witches put bats in their brew.

Many cultures have embraced the bat including: Tonga where the bat is considered the physical manifestation of the soul; Native Americans believe the bat is a trickster; Chinese lore sees the bat as a symbol of longevity and happiness; Pre-Columbia cultures associated bats with gods and displayed them in their art; and in Western Culture, the bat conveys night and its foreboding nature. One famous Hollywood character connected with bats is Dracula seen on page 3.



**When witches go riding,
and black cats are seen,
the moon laughs and whispers,
'tis near Halloween.
~ Author Unknown**

The broom conveys victory, dominance, insight, wisdom, power to do away with worry and trouble, servility and witches steed, which are called Besom brooms.

As a result of its construction around a central pole, the brush of the besom is rounded instead of flat. The bristles can be made of many materials including, but not

limited to straw, herbs or twigs. Traditionally the handle is of hazel wood and the head is of birch twigs.

Witches convey evil, spookiness and spells. Some symbols of witchcraft include pentagram (protection); crescent moon (female fertility); and wheel of the year (any cycle like the seasons).



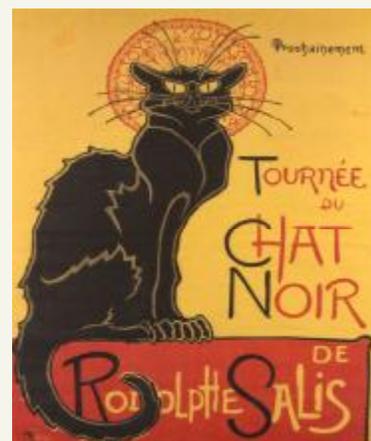
B l a c k c a t

The black cat image to the right is Théophile Steinlen's advertisement for the tour of the Chat Noir Cabaret in Paris. It was created in the 1880's for a cabaret in Montmartre which was open from 1881 to 1897.

The cat conveys domesticity, sensuality, ease, cruelty,

spite, laziness, salacity, magical forces, guardian of marriage, love of freedom, self-indulgence, resentment, lust, cleanliness, playfulness, grace longevity and treachery.

A black cat's specific symbols include death and bad luck except in Great Britain where it means good luck.



b l o o d

Blood conveys sacrifice (especially when spilled), passion, war, life, Christ's redemption of man, the soul, guilt, covenant, fertility and martyrdom.

Masks and disguises that deal with blood include Dracula (evil & darkness).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "blood" dates to the oldest English, circa 1000 AD. The word is derived from Middle English, which is derived from the Old English

word blōd, which is akin to the Old High German word bluot, meaning blood. The modern German word is (das) Blut.

Some 1931 Dracula movie trivia questions:

Who was considered for the movie before Bella Lugosi?

How did the cinematographer achieve the hypnotic state of Dracula?

How were the spider webs created in Dracula's castle?



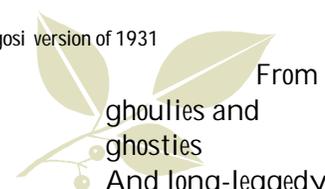
Bella Lugosi version of 1931

f i r e

Fire conveys spiritual energy, the libido, fecundity, creation, destruction, purification of evil, the soul, the creator God, essence of life, the sun, authority, power, spiritual enlightenment and zeal, sexual fertility, martyrdom, regeneration, forbidden passions, war, the torments of Hell and Pentecost. It is the attributes of St. Anthony of Padua, St. Anthony Abbot, Saint Agnes and St. Florian (usually extinguishing a fire). When you see fire and a serpent, it is an attribute of Saint Paul. Fire and brimstone to-

gether conveys Hell and the vengeance of God. A circle or wheel of fire conveys chastity, magic spell, charity, inviolability and is the attribute of Brunhilde.

Flame conveys transcendence, the Holy Spirit, wisdom, the soul, the supreme deity, charity, love, religious zeal and martyrdom. Flame on the head conveys divine inspiration. Flaming sword conveys sun rays, protection, and old Testament.



From
ghoulies and
ghosties
And long-leggeddy
beasties
And things that
go bump in the
night,
Good Lord, deliver
us!
~ Scottish
Saying

g h o s t s

Ghosts convey psychic dissociation, disembodied spirit and lack of substance.

In Victorian Literature, many English writers responded to portraying the ghost including M. R. James, Sheridan Le Fanu, Violet Hunt, and Henry James. Classic ghost stories were influenced by the gothic fiction tradition, and contain elements of folklore and psychology. M. R. James summed

up the essential elements of a ghost story as, "Malevolence and terror, the glare of evil faces, 'the stony grin of unearthly malice', pursuing forms in darkness, and 'long-drawn, distant screams', are all in place, and so is a modicum of blood, shed with deliberation and carefully husbanded..."

Famous Hollywood ghosts include Casper, Ghost Busters, and Poltergeist.



Brown Lady of Raynham Hall ghost photograph, Captain Hubert C. Provand. First published in Countrylife magazine, 1936

**What are your ideas
for future newsletters?**



**WATERHOUSE
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The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to research and document symbols locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

As you all know by now, one of my favorite times of the year is Halloween. Our neighbor is into it as much as we are with lots of lights, tombstones and a huge, mechanical spider that turns its head. Even the theme of the exhibition at the Cahoon Museum of American Art has a Halloween tinge to it: Celebration of Life—How death was interpreted in the 19th Century. If you have other Halloween symbols you think of, please send them my way.

Take care,

Richard Waterhouse

A c o u p l e o f s h a r e d m o n u m e n t s

Mike Brubaker sent me these two images and explains that the placement of the two monuments relates to transportation. He took both of these photos.

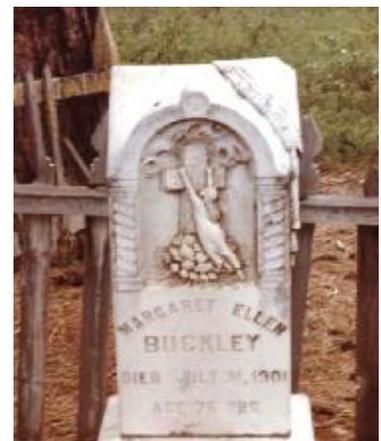
"Hanging from the cross" (a misleading title, but ...) was taken in Silver City, Idaho at least ten years ago.

The second was taken in Alliance, Nebraska in the summer of 2009. The similarities are interesting.

He explains that "both communities were on railroad lines. I wonder if there wasn't some national company selling the stone patterns, or the stones themselves."



"Hanging from the Cross",
Alliance Nebraska, c. 2009



"Hanging from the Cross",
Silver City, Iowa, c. 1999