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Hjortsjö, Carl-Herman

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Carl-Herman Hjortsjö

Man's Face and Mimic Language

Mimicry is man's first language. The ability to mime thoughts and feelings is fundamental, and lies securely anchored in the genes. We humans are therefore extremely sensitive to changes in the play of facial features of our fellows. However, if anyone is asked to describe objectively his observations, no answer is forthcoming. We understand, or think we understand, the silent language of mimicry which we ourselves can also speak, but we know neither the letters of the language nor the spelling of the words.

Hardly any serious attempt has been made to investigate and to systematize the muscular activities that result in certain decisive facial expressions. This impelled the author — who over a number of years studied various motion-mechanical conditions in the human body — to penetrate this question, and problems connected with it, in more detail.

The book should interest medical and dental students and should also be of value to anthropologists, psychologists, teachers of the deaf and dumb, artists, actors, and to everybody interested in facial analysis and portrait interpretation.

The work is illustrated by a rich material of photographs, diagrams, and schematic drawings.

Carl-Herman Hjortsjö is professor of Anatomy and Head of the Department of Anatomy at Lund University, Sweden, a position he has held since 1948. His considerable production within the field of science is characterized by its pronounced systematic thought. In Sweden, Professor Hjortsjö has a well-earned reputation as the writer of several Textbooks of Anatomy and for the accomplishment of a number of investigations in the border areas between medical and humanistic research.