

HYPOKRITES AND ANALYST

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This Greek word *Hypokrites* has had an interesting growth and shift in meaning. In the Ionian dialect used by Homer, the verb from which it is derived meant something like this: to express a decision, based on deep reflection, knowledge and intuition, in reply to a question - and the question is to be thought of not as a cold, logical question, but as informed with urgency, as much a challenge from one person to another as a question. From this meaning grew the further sense of explain, expound, interpret, and the word was specifically used of the interpretation of dreams and oracles in Homer, and much later in the Attic of Aristophanes and Plato.

A further sense of the word developed in the Attic dialect alone, to mean "to speak in dialogue, to play a part on the stage". Thus the noun Hypokrites was used of the stage actor from about 500 B.C. By the end of the 4th century B.C., in the speeches of Demosthenes, it was beginning to acquire a negative sense of to play a false part, to deceive. It was this sense of the word which was picked up in the Greek translation of the New Testament, when Christ is describing the Pharisees, and it is this sense with which we are familiar in our modern English word hypocrite.

My central concern this evening will be with the Hypokrites as actor. But the Greek word serves to remind us of a time when acting meant something very different to what it does today. We have a spread of meaning in this word from interpreter of dreams and oracles, through interpreter of a stage role, to false dissembler or deceitful hypocrite. It is this spread of meaning which I am invoking. But I must warn you how equivocal the Hypokrites can be. The ideas grouped round him have an uncomfortable way of changing faces, like masked actors on a stage. He will spoil our evening for us if we try to take him at his face value.

The other word in my title refers to the psycho-analyst. Anyone who has come into contact with psychoanalysis in any of its forms has felt sometimes, somehow, how very dubious the role of such an analyst is. It is easy to be funny about this, and it is easy to take it too seriously. We can talk heavily about the negative transference, and we can say bitterly that the analyst is hypocritical in pretending to care for us. But even on more neutral ground, there is a quality about the emotional involvement in analysis which is very hard to define. There are times when my relationship with my analyst seems the most real thing in my life. Yet how is it real compared to the job with which I earn my living, to my home? It comes to matter hugely that my

analyst cares for me. Yet how can I feel that his concern for me matches my need for him when I know he's seeing so many others, when there was someone here before me and someone else waiting outside for when I go? What is the nature of this situation to which I am asked to trust myself?

I'm not going to try a head-on answer to questions like these. Rather, I want to try and merge them in a wider and much older group of problems, those that have to do with the nature of dramatic reality, and especially that extraordinary emotional "conversion" which happens when we enjoy the enactment on the stage of events at which we would grieve outside the theatre. Can we regard the reality within the analyst's consulting room as related to the reality in the street outside in the same way as the reality within the theatre is to the rush for the underground afterwards? Has that strange shift from grief to joy in watching tragic drama - a shift which has fascinated Europeans for 2,500 years - anything to tell us about the equally strange conversions of emotion which can take place within analysis? Can we usefully consider the problem of how we enjoy tragedy in the theatre, as belonging to the same family as those psychoanalytical problems centred on that fundamental neurotic attitude by which we win pleasure from an inauthentic suffering?

Although my argument will be concerned with classical Greek theatre, the first stage on which the masked Hypokrites spoke his part, I would like to start by taking a recent stage event here in London to emphasise just how extraordinary this theatrical conversion of emotion from grief to joy can be. Some of you may have seen the play "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg". It is not easy to describe this play without making it sound tasteless and thoroughly unnecessary. We are shown the mother and father of a ten-year-old child who was born, as the doctors put it, "a vegetable", and would always remain so. Rather than put the child in a special home, the parents have kept it with them, and have developed over the years a kind of play of their own, round the child, to make the situation bearable. On the stage we see one day in their life, ending in the husband deserting the home after a half-hearted attempt to kill the child by exposure to the cold. It is a frightful theme, and touches levels of emotion in the spectator where it is no longer easy to know who this "I" is who is at the same time weeping and laughing: for comedy the play is, though the pain is there all the time. It is fair to say that audience reactions have been mixed. To many the play failed to maintain the necessary knife-edge balance. But whatever the particular reaction, audiences don't go to such a play to gloat over the imaginary misfortunes of others. They go because of the strange conversion of emotion which we have learned that the theatre has to offer. They go because they know that sometimes, in some places, we can rejoice in our grieving.

This is really a very extraordinary fact. And it raises awkward questions: not only *how* does this conversion, this catharsis, happen, but should it be allowed

to? Plato for one would have banned actors from his ideal republic, as a threat to the stability of the commonwealth. Many of you will remember St. Augustine's experiences when he came to Carthage and found himself in the midst of a hissing cauldron of lust:

I was much attracted by the theatre, because the plays reflected my own unhappy plight and were tinder to my fire. Why is it that men enjoy feeling sad at the sight of tragedy and suffering on the stage, although they would be most unhappy if they had to endure the same fate themselves? Yet they watch the plays because they hope to be made to feel sad, and the feeling of sorrow is what they enjoy. What miserable delirium is this.

It is a problem. Perhaps these emotions we feel in the theatre are essentially false, and to be avoided. One of the greatest of Englishmen believed so, and agreed to the closing of the London theatres; but then Oliver Cromwell found a more final way of coping with the conscience of a king than trying, like Hamlet, to catch it in a play. Even Shakespeare, who had done more than any man to glorify the stage, that other scaffold to which we are all born, came to feel the awful ambiguity of the actor. In "King Lear", for instance, he presents the need to play a role *in order to remain oneself* as evidence of an inexorable flaw in human nature reminiscent of the Christian doctrine of original sin.

So though we shall be primarily concerned with the questions: *how* does this conversion of emotion take place? - how can grief turn to joy in the theatre? - we must also remember that behind these questions is another: should it be allowed to happen? - should not the Hypokrites be dismissed as the hypocrite he is? The two lots of questions are very closely related, yet we need to recognise that they involve different issues.

This same need to distinguish is present when we consider psychoanalysis. It isn't just a question of how does it work? - but also, should it be allowed to work? The professional enemies of analysis are not alone in feeling in it a threat to the steadiness and fixedness of human attitudes, similar to the threat which the actor represented for Plato. Each of us who has been deeply involved in analysis has thought at some time: but if I can feel *that*, if I can feel hate where I also feel love, if I can find pleasure in pain, if I can feel joy where there is grief, then *who am I?* Who can tell me what is real and what is illusion?

In order to begin answering these questions, I shall invert the order of my title, and start by considering the Analyst, and then go on to the Hypokrites. I want to start by looking at one aspect of psychoanalytic practice which most obviously resembles the presentation of reality on the stage - I mean the fact of selection.

When we consider the way in which “having an analysis” fits into the whole shape of someone’s life, there is one fact which we should not overlook. However often, for however long a period of time, we go to an analyst, he is never going to know more than a fraction of what we know about our own lives, and what we know ourselves is never more than a fraction of the whole. If we have lived for thirty years before we get into an analyst’s consulting room, and if we live for another thirty years after we’ve said good-bye, whether we spend twenty, or two hundred, or two thousand hours with the man: we can never hope to tell him all about ourselves. Inevitably, selection, and selection of a minute fraction of our total experience, is a fundamental factor in determining the nature of psychoanalytical practice.

This kind of selection is familiar to students of drama, and indeed of the novel. Whatever we need to know about Hamlet in order to understand and react to the play is enclosed within the limits of the play. Similarly with whatever kind of understanding an analyst can acquire of the life presented to him. It is not the understanding of an outside observer contemplating a more or less complete causal sequence leading up to the present situation (though the name “analyst” unfortunately suggests just that to many people!). It is the understanding of someone who has tacitly agreed to accept an implicit principle of selection, in the same way as the audience agrees to accept the convention of the theatrical limits in time and space.

But if this selection is such a fundamental factor, it is surely relevant to ask: who, or what, selects the things we talk about to our analyst? Is there anything in the analytical situation that corresponds to the role of the playwright in the theatre?

We can look at this question from the point of view of the so-called presenting situation. Here it is obvious that the analyst hasn’t had any say in the selection of the problem we want to discuss. But is it even true to say that I have selected it? It usually feels much more as if life has in some way presented us with some intractable dilemma which we’ve just got to discuss, as if the problem has been selected for us.

Or we can look at this question of selection in terms of what happens in those first crucial interviews. There is that strange process so often commented on, by which the initial problem gradually drops away, and in its place quite other subjects occupy the analytical hours. What is happening here? Who is selecting these new questions? How can we understand this process of selection, which allows of such a shift of interest away from what I was convinced was my real problem?

Various answers to such questions have been proposed. The one I want to look at tonight is Jung’s concept of the complex. Here, it seems to me, we

have an idea which places this fundamental fact of selection where it belongs - at the heart of psychoanalytical theory and practice. The word "complex" has passed so easily into our general vocabulary that it has lost the special meaning which Jung tried to give it. But this meaning is central to an understanding of Jung's work, and has an immediate relevance today when analysts from various backgrounds are feeling their way to an understanding of their discipline in terms of semantic rather than causal theory. For, as I hope to show, the concept of the complex is intimately connected with problems as to the nature of language and meaning, which we should recognise as central to an understanding of what goes on in analysis.

Jung selected the complex as the theme for his inaugural lecture as Professor at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic Institute in 1934. This lecture is well known, but I want to remind you of two things he said in it about the complex, which are relevant to our question: who, or what, selects the things we talk about with the analyst?

The unconscious would in fact be ... nothing but a vestige of dim or 'obscure' representations, or a 'fringe of consciousness' ... were it not for the existence of complexes. That is why Freud became the real discoverer of the unconscious in psychology, because he examined those dark places and did not simply dismiss them, with a disparaging euphemism, as 'parapraxes'. The *via regia* to the unconscious, however, is not the dream, as he thought, but the complex, which is the architect of dreams and of symptoms.

And elsewhere in the same lecture:

Everyone knows nowadays that people 'have complexes'. What is not so well known, though far more important theoretically, is that complexes can *have us*.

I shall refer later to the idea of the complex as the architect of dreams as well as of symptoms. At this stage let us just consider what it means to say that complexes can have us, just as we can have them. What does this involve for me when I sit opposite the analyst with my problem?

It means that the analyst's attitude to this problem of mine is going to be infuriatingly equivocal. On the one hand he appears to treat me as a person who knows what he's doing and what he wants, i.e., to be rid of this "thing" which is making a thorough mess of my life. At any rate, he is accepting my money and unless he's dishonest that should mean that he is accepting me as a legally responsible person, who knows what I want. But on the other hand, I quickly sense that for him the problem isn't a problem in the same sense as it is for me. Sometimes I have the uneasy feeling that far from helping me get

rid of this incubus which has settled on me, he's almost more interested in the incubus than he is in me. When I get this feeling, I have mixed reactions. On the one hand, I'm furious. That's not what I'm paying money for. But on the other hand, I probably wouldn't have gone to an analyst in the first place, and certainly wouldn't have stayed more than an hour or two, unless I had felt somewhere in me that there might be more to this problem than met the eye. If I have this feeling then besides anger at the analyst being apparently more interested in my problem than in me, I'll also feel that precisely for that reason perhaps he can help where others can't. I am beginning to sense that I am "had" by something greater than myself: that the thing of which I was so anxious to be rid may be much more interesting and full of life than I am. In the analyst's jargon, I am beginning to recognise the value of the complex. Another way of putting it would be to say that I am beginning to realise that life is not merely something which I live, but is also something which I enact.

The idea behind Jung's phrase about the complex as having me, as well as being had by me, is one which we meet in many places in his work. In a sense, that is an idea we can grasp easily. But I wonder if it isn't also a mystery involving the most uncomfortable philosophical, if not theological, problems. For what we are being asked to grasp, to hold in our minds, is that we ourselves are had, are held, are comprehended, by something outside ourselves. How can we ever understand ourselves as understood?

This brings us to what for many is the central "scandal" of Jung's psychology, that cause of offence and stumbling which gives his work its special quality. But I don't want to open up that whole issue here. All I wish to do is to try to extend our awareness of what is involved in the idea of the complex so as to introduce my main thesis: that the psychoanalysis of complexes implies an essentially "dramatic" view of human life.

Now if we want to explore a bit more deeply what Jung meant with this idea of "complexes having us"; we have to turn to his writing on that most difficult area of experience which he has named, perhaps not very happily, "archetypal". It was out of reflection on the experience of the complex that Jung developed his theory of the archetypes, and it was in his writing about the archetypes that he developed the wider implications of this sense of being had by a complex, as well as ourselves having a complex.

Here are two passages - again derived from a lecture given in 1934 - which open up wider horizons round our question: who, or what, selects what we talk about with the analyst?

Life is crazy and meaningful at once. And when we do not laugh over the one aspect and speculate about the other, life is exceedingly drab, and everything is reduced to the littlest scale. There is then little sense and little nonsense either. When you come to think about it, nothing

has any meaning, for when there was nobody to think, there was nobody to interpret what happened. Interpretations are only for those who don't understand; it is only the things we don't understand that have any meaning. Man woke up in a world he did not understand, and that is why he tries to interpret it.

And,

It always seems to us as if meaning - compared with life - were the younger event, because we assume, with some justification, that we assign it of ourselves and because we believe, equally rightly no doubt, that the great world can get along without being interpreted. But how do we assign meaning? From what source, in the last analysis, do we derive meaning? The forms we use for assigning meaning are historical categories that reach back into the mists of time - a fact we do not take sufficiently into account. Interpretations make use of certain linguistic matrices that are themselves derived from primordial images. From whatever side we approach this question everywhere we find ourselves confronted with the history of language ...

Jung is here describing the human predicament of us all standing as we do between two worlds, the world of life and the world of meaning. The question of selection with which we started is seen to be one special case of a much wider problem: the need to distinguish between two ways of ordering reality, in one of which life seems to generate meaning, while in the other meaning generates life. He is setting the narrower problem we sensed behind the complex, of both having and being had by some experience, of my I-ness as both subject and object, in this far wider context of the relationship between life and meaning.

Now it is important that we should recognise just how radical this formulation of Jung's is. He is reopening philosophical questions which a large number of our most influential contemporaries insist are either finally closed and answered, or else meaningless, and at the heart of these questions he sets the individual man or woman suffering under the sense of being both the subject and object of his experience.

However difficult and strange these questions may seem to some of us today we cannot avoid them if we want to understand what the complex is all about. What Jung is saying is that that mystery which we call language flows in two opposed directions: from life into meaning, and from meaning into life. We can illustrate this if we wish, by saying that the first direction of flow, from life into meaning, is what we've got used to with the development of the natural sciences in the last three hundred years, while the second direction of flow, from meaning into life is familiar to us in the theological idea of the

creation of the world by the Word. But such illustrations should not be allowed to obscure the simple immediacy of the dilemma with which Jung confronts us: that we have to live as both the subjects and the objects of meaning, that "I is".

Now it's easy to say that, but if we take this experience seriously it is very, very hard to fit both sides of it into any of our accepted ways of looking at the world and at our own situation in the world. For if we accept this experience in its completeness, then we have to accept that at the source of all human attempts at explanation there lies what, for this audience, I would call a kind of "semantic original sin". By which I mean this. If we hope to understand and order our lives in terms of some meaning generated by life, which it is our job to recognise and then apply, we are up against the fact that this whole attempt will prove futile should it turn out that life is an explanation of meaning, rather than the other way round. And conversely, for those who hope to live their lives as the explanation of a meaning prior to life, a meaning that can be revealed in prophecy, in a great dream, in an oracle, in holy writ, there is the ever open question: how can we be certain that this meaning is not of our own making?

These are not easy ideas. It would be much more comfortable if we could do without them. Everything in us which wants to assimilate Jung's work to easier and less equivocal ways of thought would gladly forget them. But I'm not at all sure whether the most valuable opening into the future which the psycho-analysis of complexes has to offer is not precisely this awareness of what I have this evening called the fact of semantic original sin.

Let us note carefully that Jung does not answer his own question. He merely poses it: which comes first, life or meaning? - and then leaves it at that. But even to pose this question is to challenge the collective weight of our culture which presupposes that life comes first, meaning afterwards. It is because the analyst is committed to asking this question that he is felt to be such an equivocal figure, and his position is not helped by the fact that the very name "analyst" seems to imply agreement with precisely the assumption he is committed to questioning.

Now what does all this mean in terms of an actual analysis? I go to the analyst with my problem with which I need help. In so far as this is a complex which I have, in so far as life comes before, and is explained by, meaning, we will talk in terms of cause and effect, in terms of the association of ideas, in terms of the relief of symptoms. But in so far as this is a complex by which I am had, in so far as meaning comes before life and is explained by life, we will talk in terms of the religious or existential attitude, in terms of metaphor and symbol, in terms of involvement with, and not escape from, the presenting situation. How can two such irreconcilable movements of explanation cohere in an understanding that I can live?

What I am arguing this evening is that for over 2,500 years we have been used to just such a coherence, in the theatre; and that in going to an analyst we are looking for the kind of “answer” which we expect from the theatre; that we are, however dimly, trying to recover the sense of our life as something both lived and enacted; that behind the complex which we both have and are had by, lies the fact that we are on the one hand parts of the continuum of life which generates its own meaning, and on the other hand, interpreters of a meaning which requires life for its explanation.

In order to develop this argument, I am going to turn now to Aristotle and to the explanation he gave for the cathartic effects of the great plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. I hope as my argument grows, that the relevance of Aristotle to psychoanalytic practice will emerge. But let me start by making one point that refers to us here this evening.

As a collective group, we in the Guild are spread out between the biological roots of medicine on one side, and the religious experience of Christians on the other. Aristotle was a great biologist, perhaps the greatest that ever lived, and if we had time to go further into his explanation of catharsis we would see just how thoroughly his psychological ideas are informed by his biological studies. But in his concern with the emotion released by classical Greek tragedy he was also close to deeply religious experiences, however strange they may seem to some Christians. For him biology and religion belonged together in a way that it is not easy for us to imagine. Indeed, as far as the word “catharsis” is concerned, scholars are still arguing as to whether it was derived from medical or religious usage. So, I hope that somewhere what I now have to say will touch the biological soul of the Guild.

Now it so happens - it is a pleasing coincidence that makes my job easier, perhaps covering up certain holes in my argument - that the one Greek drama which more than any other has caught the psychoanalytical imagination, the story of Oedipus as told by Sophocles, was also the play which for Aristotle represented the ideal form of tragic drama. I hope to show that in his explanation of how Sophocles got his effect, and in particular in his distinction between what he calls plot, character and action, Aristotle says things about the relation between structure and process in the dramatic situation which can help us understand what the practising analyst is doing. And as we go on, let us remember that the Greek word translated plot was *muthos* (from which our word myth is derived), the word for character was *ethos* (from which we get both ethics and ethology), and for action, *praxis* (a word now introduced into psychoanalytical discussion by the existentialists).

The story Sophocles tells in his play *Oedipus the King* opens with the city of Thebes afflicted by a terrible plague. The king, Oedipus, who years before had rid the city of a similar plague inflicted by the hideous Sphinx, sends his

brother-in-law Creon to the oracle at Delphi to find the meaning of the plague. When Creon returns there is relief when King and elders hear that the city can be rid of the plague once the murderer of the previous king, Laius, is identified and expelled from the city. Oedipus takes on himself the search, and calls down a curse on the unknown killer.

The first stage in the search is the cross-examination of the blind seer Teiresias - a man skilled in the interpretation of oracles and dreams. Teiresias resists the King's questions, provoking by his resistance the rising wrath of Oedipus. Finally, cornered and himself now deeply angered, Teiresias names Oedipus himself as the killer. Oedipus takes this nonsense as evidence of a plot between Teiresias and Creon to usurp the throne, and he dismisses the seer with threats.

There follows an angry confrontation between Oedipus and Creon, in which the king accuses his wife's brother of treachery, and condemns him to a choice of death or banishment. The queen, Jocasta, enters the stage from the palace. Oedipus explains the reasons for his suspicions against Creon. But Jocasta insists that Oedipus cannot be the murderer of Laius, because an oracle had said that Laius would die by the hands of his own child, and this had proved to be untrue, because Laius had in fact been killed by unknown robbers while on a journey.

Oedipus is troubled by Jocasta's account of how Laius met his death. For the first time he begins to fear that perhaps he may have been responsible for the old king's death. He now tells Jocasta how he, too, has been dogged through life by an oracle which foretold that he would kill his father and marry his mother. The air is full of foreboding, though only of a partial horror: that Oedipus is the killer of Laius. There is as yet no suggestion in his mind that Laius was his father - and Jocasta therefore his mother.

Then comes relief, momentary but complete. A messenger comes with news that Oedipus' father has died of old age. Both Oedipus and Jocasta rejoice at this evidence of the untruthfulness of oracles. But almost immediately the new found relief is terribly destroyed, when the messenger further reveals that Oedipus was not in fact the child of the father and mother he had always accepted as such, but was a foundling. The messenger's story makes Jocasta, who knows all the details of how she had once got rid of her son, realise the whole truth. Desperately she tries, as Teiresias had tried at the beginning, to prevent Oedipus continuing with the search. But Oedipus, completely misunderstanding the grounds of her fear, as he had previously misunderstood Teiresias, insists on going on. The final revelation of parricide and incest comes quickly. Jocasta hangs herself, and Oedipus, blinded by his own hand, takes on himself the curse he had laid, unwittingly, on his own head.

For most men born of woman, this story is, of course, deeply exciting. There is certainly much in the development of the plot which reminds us with penetrating exactness of the process of recognition within analysis. The great confrontation between Oedipus and Teiresias, for instance: this scene alone is an unforgettable witness to the function and value of what analysts call “resistance”, of the way in which the thrust towards more effective self-recognition is resisted by a wisdom grounded in more complete knowledge of the total situation than that of the confident, enquiring ego.

But what I want to do here is to stand back from the detail and look at the overall shape of the play, in the light of two of Aristotle’s most obscure remarks when he came to try and describe how it is that we can rejoice in so much grief.

What does it mean, in relation to this play, when Aristotle says:

- (1) that Tragedy is an imitation not of human beings but of action and life; and
- (2) that the stage figures do not act in order to represent their characters; they include their characters for the sake of their actions.

I am no Greek scholar, and cannot pretend to give you anything more than a second or third hand explanation of these sentences. But I think we can all recognise that what is implied in these strange remarks of Aristotle is an attitude to the relation between actors and what they act very different from what we are used to. It is clear that for Aristotle it isn’t the character or fate of Oedipus which is important in Sophocles’ play. He is drawing a distinction between the action of the play and the stage figures enacting it which it is very hard for us who are brought up on the modern theatre, and especially the modern cinema, to appreciate. For what Aristotle is saying is that the person shown on the stage is of no significance in himself at all: he merely carries his share of an action whose interest does not lie in personality at all. There is something which needs to be acted through. The actors carry that need, and the mask they wear underscores the fact that precisely because they are *merely* acting, therefore they can represent an action which cannot be included within human personality.

Let me try and illustrate this very difficult idea with reference to Oedipus. What is the action which is being imitated in Sophocles’ play? On one level it is like a detective story: the uncovering of the guilt, with the surprising twist familiar from many dreams within analysis, in which the guilty one is found to be identical with the detective. But the motive that really drives the action along is the problem of the oracles. At the beginning before ever the play begins, both Laius and Jocasta, and Oedipus, try and undo, deny, the truth of oracular prediction, Jocasta by giving her child to be exposed, Oedipus by fleeing from the city where the man and woman he took for father and

mother reign. At the moment of greatest relief of tension, that brief interlude when both Jocasta and Oedipus imagine themselves safe, they both exult in the exposure of the oracles as untruthful, as unfulfilled. But in the end the truth of the oracles is justified, and it is shown that it was the blind Teiresias who saw truly, while the king who insisted on knowing in spite of Teiresias' resistance must blind himself once he too sees the truth.

In short, the imitation of action has to do with the interaction of two worlds, the world of human affairs, and the world of dream and oracle and prophecy. The humanly more comfortable attitude which would like to insist on a one-dimensional world has been refuted; and in its place the interdependence of two worlds has been celebrated.

We can call this a deeply religious attitude if we like, though I doubt if it is religious in a sense which would have satisfied the Augustine of the first nine books of the Confessions. But it certainly implies a profoundly dramatic attitude to human life, and serves to bring out very clearly how we can feel the things which happen to us as "selected". And if we look at this interaction of the world of human affairs with the world of oracle in terms of Jung's question: which is the younger event, meaning or life? we can perhaps see them not so much as two worlds, but as two ways of ordering one reality.

For it seems to me that in *Oedipus the King* Sophocles is presenting the conflict between the rival claims of meaning and life to explain one another. In trying to deny the power of oracular prediction, Laius, Jocasta and Oedipus are trying to assert the priority of life over meaning. Life must and can have its own direction, with its meaning flowing as a kind of secondary self-expression from out of its own development. It is that attitude in us which wants to insist, very humanly, that our problems, our ills, our complexes, are things which we have and can therefore control. But in establishing the inexorable truth of the oracles, the other view is asserted: that meaning is somehow prior to life, that human actions are not complete in themselves but rather the enactment of some action already laid down: that they are in fact dramatic (or, if you prefer it, sacramental) in character.

The extraordinary strength of this Sophoclean faith lies in the refusal to come down on one side or the other. Both attitudes can claim to be valid for moral man who must always "look to his ending". The dilemma is magnificently worked out in the enactment of Oedipus: on the one hand, he is the passive victim of oracles, helpless in the hands of a fate against which no man can struggle; on the other, as the victor over the Sphinx and redeemer-king, he incarnates the power of human free-will. And linking the two aspects of his experience, the fact that although he had tried to evade the earlier oracle, once he had himself laid the curse, albeit unknowingly, on his own head, he made no effort to escape from its consequences, but accepted the obligation to act

out the meaning he had given to his life.

Now all this magnificent drama may seem far removed from the more hum-drum problems which bring us into analysis. But though few of us need experience the Sophoclean heights and depths, I think the structure of such drama remains relevant. Unless we are to lose our grip on the world of convention in which we must make our living, we have to continue to insist that we have our problems and therefore can and must do something about them ourselves. But it is equally true that our problems have us, and that if we are to be equal to them, we must learn to recognise what action is waiting on our imitation, what meaning requires our life as its explanation.

It is time to round off our argument. Are we any closer to an understanding of either psychoanalytical or dramatic catharsis?

What I have done is to bring together two groups of ideas: those centring round Jung's concept of the complex, and in particular, that subtle deep question about the relationship between life and meaning, and those implied in Aristotle's idea of tragedy as the imitation of action, and of action as prior to character. Catharsis is the word, derived from either a religious or medical source, which Aristotle used to describe that great paradoxical contradiction of experience: joy in grief. He insisted that this enantiodromia arose from a mimesis or imitation of an action.

Now although the plays with which Aristotle was familiar are the sources of the Western theatrical tradition, much has happened in the theatre since he wrote, and I do not want to claim all-inclusive authority for his explanation of dramatic catharsis. His work has, however, the advantage of standing close to the ritual origins of the theatre, when the idea of the play as merely a pretence which we watch was unimaginable. Aristotle could still feel the play as a communal activity in which actor, chorus and spectators were all engaged together.

I have therefore tried to use his conception of the mimesis of an action to provoke reflection. Because if we are to make any kind of sense of this idea of his, then we obviously need to widen and deepen our understanding of acting beyond the more superficial idea of pretence to the more difficult and equivocal idea of "enactment". It is here that this word Hypokrites can help.

I pointed out at the beginning, that in this word we have a spread of meaning from the interpreter of dreams and oracles, through the interpreter of a stage role, to false dissembler and deceitful hypocrite. I have said nothing of the Hypokrites as an interpreter of dreams, for that would be a subject in its own right. But there is one characteristic of dreams to which reference must be made, as it is relevant to the distinction between acting and pretence.

Dreams are recollected. Whatever the EEG has to tell us of the electrical rhythms of sleep and their relation to dreaming, the dream that we talk about, either at breakfast or with our analyst, has no existence apart from its recollection. It is a phenomenon of the threshold between sleeping and waking. But if we reflect carefully on what happens when we recollect a dream, we must recognise that what we remember, the thing which we draw with us as it were over the threshold between sleep and waking, is not a discrete and complete whole. We do not need the EEG to tell us that there is much more to our dreaming life than what we recollect. This recollection is always a selection, and we can never know what it is selected from. Looked at like this, dreams share what I have earlier described as one of the essential characteristics of the whole analytical dialogue - the fact that what is talked about is selected from an infinitely greater background which can never be wholly known, and that this process of selection is never fully within the control either of analyst or analysand. If we take our dreams seriously, then we must take seriously the existence of two worlds, that of sleep and that of waking. We can agree that there is need of some kind of interpretation between these two worlds. But as to the nature of that interpretation, there has always been, still is, and probably always will be, disagreement. One of the things I am trying to do this evening is to suggest that the interpretation of dreams, starting as it does from a background of selection outside our control, is like the interpretation of a stage role in the theatre.

Jung frequently insisted on the dramatic structure of the average dream. He also emphasised that, just as with complexes, so also with dreams: we stand in a double relation to them. We do not only dream, but are dreamed. We suffer the dream; we are its objects. So if we accept the complex as the architect of dreams as well as of symptoms, then we should not be surprised if the complex has the same kind of dramatic form and dynamism as the dream. If we can agree that the complex which first takes us to the analyst, and then selects both the matter and the structure of the analysis, is dramatic in nature, does this help us to understand the kind of interpretation or conversion which goes on in psychoanalysis?

The elusive idea we've got to try and catch is that interpretation requires mimesis. In its classical sense, as interpreter of dreams and of a stage role, the word *Hypokrites* implies the existence of two ways of ordering one reality, in both of which man is involved, and between which there is need of some kind of interpretation. It is only when we recognise this that Aristotle's explanation of the cathartic effect of drama makes sense. What I have also tried to argue this evening is that Jung's idea of the complex implies the same human dilemma and the same human need. For most of us today it is much easier to live as if we were embedded in a process which generates its own meaning. Yet there are times, often concerned with the overcoming of suffering, when we can live our lives as an enactment of a meaning which requires life as its

explanation, and a great deal of the work being done in psychoanalytical practice revolves round the need to recapture this sense of life as enactment. From this point of view, that much-discussed phenomenon with the question-begging name, “the transference”, can be seen as a special case of something more general - the interaction of two orderings of one reality through what Aristotle called mimesis. To recognise the full power of the transference is to know that what we are both engaged in is “merely” an enactment. But enactment involves not only the reciprocal attention of actor and audience, but also recognition that what is being imitated is prior to, and independent of, both actor and audience. It is between these two moments of recognition that the psychoanalysis of the complexes works.

So much depends, you see, on our attitude to the mask. If we recognise our involvement in two such equally valid ways of ordering reality, then we will also recognise the need for the mask and for the constant two-way interpretative activity which the mask makes possible, an activity known in the philosophical tradition as “saving the appearances”. We will call this interpretation sacramental, metaphoric, enactment. But if we believe (and it sometimes seems as if there may be good reasons for so believing) that in the last resort there can only be one way of ordering reality, then we shall reject all such interpretation as at the worst hypocritical and at best unnecessary. Can “the great world get along without being interpreted”? If it can, then we can withdraw behind that one-way mirror which since the days of John Locke has “been part of the mental equipment of every English gentleman”, and consider the mask merely as evidence of the games people play. If it can’t, then not only we, but the great world too, have much need of the mask of the Hypokrites.