

PERSONA AND ACTOR

Jung's concept of the persona examined in relation to the actor's mask or role,

with special reference to the figure of Falstaff

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INTRODUCTION

One of my first control analysands was a young woman whose initial dream featured an actress preparing to play the part of Ophelia. This acting theme recurred in her dreams. Sometimes she was playing before the wrong audience. In the thirty-first analytical hour she produced a dream in which she was sitting talking with a man about the 'hypokrites'. She explained that by this she meant the Greek word, which she remembered learning at school meant 'actor' and did not then have its modern meaning of *scheinheilig*. She was sufficiently impressed by the dream to look up the etymology of the word, which was further discussed in the next hour.

The word *hypocrites* focussed my attention on the extent to which 'play setting' characterized the analysand's attitude to the therapeutic situation, and also to her life as a whole. Once I had recognised this factor in the analysis, I came quickly to feel that I could not understand what was going on unless I learned more of the wider significance of acting in the traditional theatre. The analysand shortly afterwards saw the film version of Genet's 'Le Balcon'. She was very impressed by it, and promised to write me a critique of the film. This she did, but destroyed it before showing it to me.

This event determined me to read more widely round what might be called the 'philosophy of the theatre'. I turned to Jung's works to read all he had to say on the persona, but found little that seemed to apply to my analysand. It seemed to me then that Jung's descriptions of the persona were concerned with the social and professional 'roles', but not directly with what an actor did and was, nor with the more mysterious link between actor and audience on one side, and actor and the plot of the play on the other. In thinking about my analysand it seemed to me that this three-cornered relationship, actor, plot or action, and audience, was the necessary frame of reference within which to understand what was going on in the analysis. In our case we had the actor in the person

of the analysand, and the audience in the analyst. But that which should give meaning to our coming-together, the plot, was undefined; not merely undefined, but concealed with a sort of natural and instinctive skill which I came to believe had something to do with the inherent nature of the actor.

It was at this time, in the summer of 1964, that the Zürich Schauspielhaus produced the two Parts of Shakespeare's 'Henry IV'. These two plays culminate in the famous 'Rejection Scene', in which the newly crowned young King banishes Falstaff, the boon companion of his youth. There is something in this dramatic situation which reminds us irresistibly of Jung's definitions of the persona, in terms of social and professional roles. The young King has quite literally assumed a new role and the dramatic effect of the scene depends on the consequences which that role brings with it.

I decided therefore to make a study in depth of this particular dramatic situation, to see what it might have to teach me about the nature of acting. I believe that this scene has proved a happy choice, because in it we have 'acting' on two levels. There is *the theatrical level*, on which the young King is confronted with one of the most ambiguous and many-layered characters of European drama, Falstaff; and there is *the level within the play*, on which a prince assumes the persona of king, a level to which Jung's various definitions of persona apply. It has therefore given me an opportunity to consider the persona against a very rich theatrical background, a background that has convinced me that 'acting' means much more than the limited significance that Jung attributed to the persona.

The shape of the thesis derives from its origin. The First Part is a detailed study of the dramatic movement that culminates in the Rejection Scene. My aim in this first Part is to define the two chief protagonists in that scene, King and Falstaff, by answering the questions: what is being en-acted? For whom is it being en-acted? What is the nature of the relation that links actor, audience and action? In the Second Part I draw conclusions as to the nature of acting from the analysis in depth of the dramatic situation made in the First Part, and relate these conclusions to what Jung had to say about the persona.

PART 1

THE REJECTION OF FALSTAFF

1. SUMMARY OF PLOT OF SHAKESPEARE'S HENRY IV

In the 1964 production of Shakespeare's two plays, Henry IV Parts I and II, at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich, a very severely cut version was used so that both plays could be presented continuously in one evening. The result was in many ways unsatisfactory, but it had the effect of emphasising the dramatic difficulty of the Rejection scene with which the two plays close. In this particular production the difficulty was enhanced by the accidents of casting. Falstaff consistently dominated the stage, both physically and temperamentally, while the Prince never seemed to grow large enough to fill the role of King. But even without such accidents of casting, this scene has been recognized for two hundred years as intrinsically difficult, demanding of the reader or the spectator a divided and ambiguous reaction. What are the dramatic ingredients of this difficulty?

The two Henry IV plays are the centre of the four play historical cycle which starts with Richard II and ends with Henry V.¹ All four plays have a strong political character. They are concerned with the effects of treason and civil war on society as a whole and on the relations between individual men and women, and they centre on the concept of the rightful king. In Richard II we see the last of the true medieval kings, king by right of descent. But his hands are already defiled by the murder of his royal uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. This murder is felt to explain, though not to excuse, the revolt against Richard led by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke who, at the end of the play, deposes and then kills him, to become king in his place as Henry IV.

Henry IV is therefore king by might and not by right. To reach the throne, he has risen in armed revolt against his lawful lord, imprisoned him, and murdered him. But the murdered king had himself been a murderer. The distinction between right and wrong is too blurred to allow of a good and a bad king. Henry IV is in a real sense the political saviour of his country, and though he personally is both traitor and regicide, it is possible for him to hope that with his son Hal the integrity of the crown as both the legal and

¹ On the whole group of history plays to which Henry IV belongs, the books I have consulted are: Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1944) and Campbell, *Shakespeare's Histories* (London 1964). These two books cover all the histories, i.e. the earlier group of the three Parts of Henry VI and Richard III, together with the later tetralogy belonging to Shakespeare's early-middle period, Richard II, the two Parts of Henry IV, and Henry V. On the second group, Treaversi, *Shakespeare from Richard II to Henry IV* (London 1958) has been very helpful.

political centre and fount of authority will be restored. But Prince Hal absents himself from the court, living in taverns and brothels in the companionship of Sir John Falstaff, an ex-soldier who lives only for drink and women. The apparent viciousness of the Prince is redeemed in battle against the civil enemies of his father (the same men who had helped him to the throne against Richard) who have revolted under the brilliant Hotspur. At the end of his father's troubled reign, Hal comes to the throne as Henry V. He turns decisively away from Falstaff and his other former companions, and unites the kingdom by turning all the military and political energies of the feudal aristocracy against neighbouring France. His apotheosis as hero-king is the theme of the play Henry V.

Such in brief is the political development dramatized in the four plays Richard II, Henry IV Parts I and II, and Henry V. Though in this thesis I am primarily concerned with the relationship between Prince Hal (the future Henry V) and Falstaff, as it is developed through the two parts of Henry IV, it is not possible to understand the full dramatic relevance of this relationship without constantly bearing in mind the wider historical context.

In order to reconstruct the psychological impact of the final Rejection Scene, we must now summarize the development of the two plays.

The First Part opens with the king receiving news of the victory of Hotspur over the Scottish invaders in the north.² Henry contrasts Hotspur with his own wastrel son, and wishes that he could believe that his own son were a changeling. The next scene shows us the Prince together with Falstaff. The closeness and intensity of their mutual dependence is made clear. The scene ends with a soliloquy from the Prince in which he lets the audience know that he is only playing with Falstaff and his rogues' gallery of friends, and that in due course he will turn from them to assume his proper royal person. (This soliloquy is of crucial dramatic importance. Some critics have used it to argue that the character of the Prince must be understood from the outset as basically hypocritical and false. Even if we do not agree with this view, it is an inescapable fact that the result of the soliloquy in any theatrical production is to cast doubt over the authenticity of the friendship between Prince and Falstaff). In the third scene, we are back in the political world of court and army: the King and Hotspur quarrel, and the beginnings of revolt are

² The text used is the New Cambridge, edited by Professor Dover Wilson, 1961 edition. I have followed Dover Wilson's interpretations throughout. In quotations, Part I is given as A HIV, and Part II as B HIV. Studies of the two Henry IV plays consulted. Dover Wilson, *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (1943). This book, based on lectures by the editor of the New Cambridge edition, has been my chief guide. Other books consulted are referred to at the appropriate place in my more detailed argument.

seen. The rebels do not fail to remind us that the King against whom they plan to rebel is himself a rebel, whom they have in the past raised to the throne.

The second Act (except for a brief interlude in which we see Hotspur with his wife) is devoted to the Prince-Falstaff theme: the planning and execution of a robbery. Falstaff and his companions successfully waylay a party of rich merchants. The Prince and his friend Poins in their turn set on Falstaff, and chase him away, retaining the stolen goods themselves. The Act closes with the great scene at the Boar's Head Tavern, in which the Prince exposes Falstaff as a coward only to have Falstaff escape from discomfiture by his famous appeal to the wisdom of 'instinct'.

In the third Act the rebellion develops, and in the middle scene the King and his son are for the first time confronted. The King bitterly condemns his son's behaviour: Hal replies with a promise to vindicate his honour in battle with Hotspur. In the scene immediately following we again see Hal in company with Falstaff, who openly doubts whether he will in fact behave like a prince.

The fourth and fifth Acts culminate in the battle between the royal and rebel armies at Shrewsbury. The rebels are shown as divided against themselves, while the King continues suspicious of his son (even at one time suspecting that he may try to kill his own father in battle) until the moment in which he proves himself in personal combat with Hotspur. Falstaff is shown as a captain of foot, exploiting the campaign for his own financial gain, pretending to be dead on the field of battle in order to avoid danger, and then rising to claim credit for the death of Hotspur, a credit which the Prince allows him to take. In various exchanges Falstaff represents the opposite view to war to that taken by Hotspur.

The general shape of the play can be described in terms of two circles of interest, the political and the Falstaffian. To the first belong the King, his court, and the rebels. To the second, Falstaff, the Prince and their companions. As the play develops the Prince moves gradually but decisively to play a growing part in the political world until, in killing Hotspur, he appropriates to himself the power and *mana* of the chivalric hero.

The Second Part is an altogether more sombre play than the First. On the political side there is again rebellion, but a rebellion that does not come to a head in open battle. Instead, it is overcome by the Machiavellian trickery of Hal's younger brother, who persuades the rebel leaders to disband their army on promise of a pardon, only then to arrest and behead them. Falstaff is increasingly a destructive figure of appetite and selfishness, while the Prince is shown as oppressed by the thought of the responsibilities that await him. The

dramatic figure who emerges to challenge the Prince and to oppose the influence of Falstaff in something of the same position as filled by Hotspur in the First Part, is the Lord Chief Justice.

The first Act opens with the news of Hotspur's death reaching his father Northumberland. There follows the first confrontation between Falstaff and the Lord Chief Justice. Falstaff is markedly more arrogant and self confident than in the previous play. The final scene develops the further plans of the rebels for revolt. There are long and important speeches on the nature of civil war and of the sickness in the body politic which makes such war necessary.

The second Act is concerned primarily with Falstaff and his circle. Falstaff's selfishness towards his own friends is exposed, and the antagonism between him and the Lord Chief Justice is intensified. There is an important scene between the Prince and his friend Poins, in which some critics have seen hints of the later Hamlet in the indecision and moodiness of the Prince.

The third Act introduces us to the King, now sick and old. The sickness of the land is incorporated in the ageing king. We are then shown Falstaff on a recruiting mission to Gloucestershire, in the company of two country squires. This scene is used to point the contrast between the political activity of court and rebels, and the continuity of the agricultural life of the countryside. Falstaff is again shown exploiting the war for his own benefit.

Act Four takes us through the defeat of the rebel army by trickery to the deathbed of the dying king. Still deeply distrustful of his heir, the king wakes from sleep to find that the Prince has removed the crown from a pillow by his bed. He accuses his son bitterly of wishing him dead, and the Prince defends himself passionately. This 'crown scene' contains passages of the greatest importance referring to the relationship between father and son, and to the mystery of kingship.

The last Act opens with Falstaff again in Gloucestershire, overweening and arrogant. The next scene returns us to the court after the death of the old King. The Lord Chief Justice, as the guardian of the law, waits anxiously to see how the new young King (whom he had once sent to prison for brawling) will behave towards him. Hal, now Henry V, enters and announces his intention of ruling as a true king. In the next scene we are immediately returned to Gloucestershire where Falstaff hears the news of the king's death, and sets off to ride in all haste to London to receive the honours he is convinced his old friend will now heap on him. In the final scene, as the King emerges from his coronation in

Westminster Abbey, Falstaff is standing in the front of the crowd to congratulate 'his Hal', eager to receive the expected favours. He pushes past the Lord Chief Justice who tries to bar his way, and cries:

My king! My Jove! I speak to thee, my heart.

and the King answers:

I know thee not old man. Fall to thy prayers.
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamed of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;
But, being awakened, I do despise my dream.
Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace,
Leave gourmandising, know the grave doth gorge
For thee thrice wider than for other men.
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest,
Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turned away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company.
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,
He tutor and the feeder of my riots:
Till then, I banish thee, on pain of death,
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,
Not to come near our person by ten mile.....

(B HIV 5.5. 48-67)

Although Falstaff in the Second Part is a less sympathetic figure than in the First Part, although we have seen him cheating his own companions and mocking his friends in their absence, and although his identity with the powers of Misrule has been underscored again and again, it is impossible to produce these plays without this final scene leaving many of the audience with a sense that in rejecting Falstaff the Prince has in some sense rejected life itself in the interests of a political role.³ We cannot but feel that the political circle has in

³ Mention must be made of Dover Wilson's convincing argument that to the contemporary audience the terms of Falstaff's banishment would not have seemed anywhere near so severe as they do to us today, and in particular that there was not 'the least hint of vengeance, or even of sending Falstaff to prison, in the ordinary sense of the word' (*Fortunes*, pp. 118-9). This argument, however, while convincing when we read the play, is almost impossible to translate into a convincing theatrical production.

some way swallowed up, destroyed or suppressed the Falstaffian circle of interest, and that in so doing a flesh and blood reality has been banished so that the man who was Hal may now identify himself with a political role. The ambiguity of this Rejection Scene, which is both challenging and unsatisfying, lies in the feeling of uncertainty as to whether the Prince, in identifying himself with the crown which he is now called upon to wear, is betraying 'reality' in favour of a 'mask', or whether the 'mask', the role which he must now play, is in some sense more real than the life he leaves behind him in the person of Falstaff. Is the Prince who is now King acting, or is he being himself? And how do we distinguish between the two?

These are the problems raised by this scene. In discussing the dramatic imagery that culminates in and defines the rejection of Falstaff we shall therefore be concerned with the distinction between illusion and reality, public role and private identity, or, in terms of Jungian psychology, with the nature of the persona.

In the Rejection Scene, two dramatic figures are opposed, the King (both old and new) and Falstaff. At a first attempt to define the dramatic tension of the scene we are tempted to do so in terms of a choice between two levels of reality: either the young king is now 'playing a part' and in doing so betraying the reality of life as represented by Falstaff, or it is the king who has accepted the reality of social obligations while Falstaff continues to live in a world of fantasy. But I believe such a definition to be false. When we turn now to consider in more detail some of the dramatic imagery which Shakespeare uses to express the nature of King and Falstaff, we shall see that the opposition constellated on the stage in the final scene is far more complex than any simple distinction between acting and reality.

2. IMAGES OF KINGSHIP

Much has been written in Jungian psychology about the special position of the King. At the time Shakespeare wrote his plays the position of the King (or rather the Queen) was already the subject of open political debate. Although the King was recognized occupy a pivotal position in society, we must remember that the two Henry IV plays were written almost exactly fifty years before Charles I, after two decades of political and legal argument, was executed. This 'slaying of the King' carried with it many of the mythological associations with which we have become familiar since Frazer wrote *The Golden Bough*: but in so far as it was the end-result of deliberate and conscious political and legal reflection, carried out openly and by all articulate sections of society and involving a

civil war which divided the country along every conceivable social axis - geographical, religious, economic and even familial, so that there is more than one known case of father and son fighting for opposite sides – the execution of Charles by men already living when Shakespeare wrote serves to remind us that for an Elizabethan audience the King was no longer a figure embedded in a mythological stratum of consciousness.⁴

In the two plays under review we shall consider the king imagery under two main heads: the disintegrating images associated with the old king, and more integrative imagery that clusters round the prince. Under the first head, the Old King, we can conveniently distinguish three groups: those of consecration, politics and cosmology.

A. THE OLD KING

1. The consecrated king

Henry IV was not the rightful king of England. He was a usurper, and had himself caused the anointed king, who was his predecessor, to be killed. He is a false king. The mask he wears does not belong to him.

As suggested above, the full significance of this theme can only be understood when we consider these two plays in their place in the series of four plays from Richard II to Henry V. The final words of this same Henry, the usurping King, at the close of Richard II, speak of his guilt of the murder of the rightful king, a guilt that he will seek to redeem in a

⁴ Besides the general studies already referred to, the following books have proved useful: Palmer, *Political Characters of Shakespeare* (London, 1945). This study is not friendly to the Prince. Palmer is in the tradition of the early nineteenth century critic Hazlitt who saw the hero-king Henry V as an 'amiable monster, a very splendid pageant'. To Palmer, the Prince is a young man who 'must satisfy himself that he is doing only what is right and proper' (p. 185), 'who is never at a loss to present himself to advantage' (p. 216). Wyndham Lewis, *The Lion and the Fox* (London 1927), has some illuminating remarks on the nature of the Elizabethan monarchy seen against the medieval and Renaissance background, and also on the effect of Machiavelli on the political imagination of the sixteenth century. Danby, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* (London, 1961). Primarily a study of King Lear, this book has an important section (pp. 81-101) on Henry IV. Danby's description of the conflict between 'Benignant Nature' associated with the macrocosm-microcosm view of the middle ages, and the 'Malignant Nature' associated with the more aggressive elements in Shakespeare's society, has influenced everything I have written on the Images of Kingship. Hunter, Shakespeare's Politics and the Rejection of Falstaff in *Critical Quarterly*, Autumn 1959, pp. 229-237, is a short but very useful discussion of the nature of the political attitude implied in the Rejection Scene. Hunter sees this scene as having a crucial status for the whole understanding of Shakespeare's History Plays, involving as it does a combination of ritual elements with more modern conceptions of politics. His summary is in harmony with the central argument of this thesis as it is developed in Part II. In trying to understand the Rejection Scene, we must allow sufficiently 'for the current of opinion in the plays that a King must be kingly to be admirable and that kingship is at times quite monstrously inhuman. The status of the scapegoat king may throw some light on what seems to be required here. The scapegoat reigns in honour, even adoration, but then he is slaughtered mercilessly, and his death rejoiced over as taking away the sins of the nation.... It may seem a long way from the anthropological studies of *The Golden Bough* to the straightforward modern history of Shakespeare's day, but enough of the old capacity to hold contrary attitudes to sovereignty together survived into Tudor times Some such undogmatic subtlety of approach is needed if we are to hold together in a sympathetic unity the multifarious perceptions of the History Plays'.

crusade. The idea of a crusade is referred to in his opening speech of A HIV and again in his last words in B HIV when, dying, he demands to be carried to the 'Jerusalem Chamber' in the Palace of Westminster. The imagery centring around Richard in the earlier play is specifically and repeatedly Christian in tone:

Yet I well remember
The favours of these men: were they not mine?
Did they not sometimes cry 'All Hail' to me?
So Judas did to Christ

(4.1.168)

Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands,
Showing an outward pity' yet you Pilates
Have here delivered me to my sour cross
And water cannot wash away your sin.

(4.1.20)

The crusading theme comes again in the second part every time we meet the old King (3.1.108-9; 4.4.1-10). Dr Tillyard has written:

Richard was no crusader, but he was authentic heir of the crusading Plantagenets. Henry was different, a usurper; and it is with reference to this fact that we must read the lines which recount his desire and failure to go to Palestine. That honour was reserved for the authentic Plantagenet kings. Richard had the full sanction of medieval kingship and the strong pathos of being the last king to possess it.⁵

But we can take the argument further. It is not only that an 'honour' is denied to the usurper; it is more that the whole conception of the consecrated king has been destroyed by a poison within the royal blood itself so that the outward expression of the Christ-centred kingship – the crusade – has ceased to be a practical possibility. Richard certainly has more right to the throne than Henry, but he also had shed royal blood in the murder of his uncle ...

⁵ *Shakespeare's History Plays*, p. 254.

That blood already, like the pelican,
Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly caroused,

a striking distortion and deepening of the Christ-imagery that focuses itself on Richard. Richard is a consecrated king who has sinned against his own royalty in the murder of his royal uncle and is to the end unconscious of his sin. Henry's sin is the greater, in that he has murdered the king himself, but he is more conscious than Richard, and in his closing words in *Richard II*, as Traversi has written:

The guilt of conscience is firmly asserted in the new king, and his last words announce the intention, which will accompany him as an unfulfilled aspiration to his death, to redeem this guilt by a spiritual enterprise in the Holy Land. This aspiration, the failure to fulfil it, and its transformation into a more limited political purpose, are the themes of the plays to follow.⁶

For, whereas at the opening of *Henry IV* the old king is planning a religious crusade, on his deathbed reconciliation with his son he urges on him the *political* wisdom of foreign war to distract attention from his doubtful claim to the throne:

I had a purpose now
To lead out many to the Holy Land,
Lest rest and lying still might make them look
Too near to my state . . . Therefore, my Harry,
Be it thy course to busy minds
With foreign quarrels; that action hence borne out
May waste the memory of former days....
(B.4.5.209 seq.)

In place of the consecrated king, we have the political king.

2. The Political King

⁶ Traversi, *op. cit.*, p.48

A series of quotations will serve to bring out the way in which the fact that the king reached his throne through usurpation provides the centre of the ever-widening circles of political problems.

1.3.380-7. Worcester, the most 'politically' minded of the rebels, argues that the King will always suspect those who helped him to the throne, in rebellion against Richard, of planning rebellion against himself.

For, bear ourselves as even as we can,
The king will always think him in our debt,
And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,
Till he hath found a time to pay us home.

The same theme is later further developed by Worcester (5.2.10-14):

For treason is but trusted like a fox,
Who, ne'er so tame, so cherished and locked up,
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.
Look how we can, or sad or merrily,
Interpretation will misquote our looks....

and in the Second Part when the rebels are debating whether to make their peace with the King, Mowbray doubts: 'that no conditions of our peace can stand . . .'

4.1.189:

Yea but our valuation shall be such
That every slight and false-derived cause,
Yea every idle, nice and wanton reason,
Shall to the king taste of this action;
That were our royal faiths martyrs in love,
We shall be winnowed with so rough a wind
That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff,
And good from bad find us partition.

Traversi has commented:

The rebels' distrust of Henry follows from their participation in his crime; for, as Hotspur recalls, 'it was my father and my uncle and myself who gave him that same royalty he wears'.⁷

But it is not only that the rebels distrust the King, they also feel themselves caught in a common fate together with the King. In the confrontation between rebels and the royal commander in the Second Part, the rebel Archbishop says (4.1.54):

we are all diseased
And with our surfeiting and wanton hours
Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,
And we must bleed for it: of which disease
Our late king, Richard, being infected, died.

True peace can only be restored when the original crime, which gave the *name* of king to him who was not truly king, is in some way made good. The rebels are in arms (4.1.86-7):

To establish here a peace indeed
Concurring both in name and quality.

But whereas the Archbishop insists that the cause of the civil war lies not in the evil will of the rebels, but in the original crime in which they all share, the crime that has divided the outward name from the inner quality of royalty, the royal general will have none of it (4.1.104):

O my good Lord Mowbray,
Construe the times to their necessities,
And you shall say, indeed it is the time,
And not the king, that doth you injuries.

Those who hold power always identify the meaning of their actions with the 'meaning of history'; for them 'the time' and 'the king' act together. But those who feel themselves

⁷ Traversi, *op. cit.*, p. 95

excluded from the meaning of the contemporary political scene will always seek, like the Archbishop, to insist on a distinction between the two. In these two plays, the polarity expresses itself as between those who feel themselves the agents of history, and those who feel themselves the victims of necessity. Westmoreland and the young Prince John, the younger representatives of the new political attitudes inaugurated by Bolingbroke's usurpation, feel themselves to be the conscious makers of history: the rebels see themselves as victims of necessity. The King himself, incorporating in one person as he does both rebel and king, is aware of both sides of the dilemma (B. 3.1.67):

I had no such intent,
But that necessity so bowed the state,
That I and greatness were compelled to kiss.

The development which, seen from *outside* by Northumberland, Hotspur and Worcester, seemed to be false scheming, appeared from *within* the situation, as necessity.

The use of false names to give a false meaning to events, and the need to reconcile name with quality, occurs again and again in widely differing contexts throughout the Second Part.

1.3.36-62. In the speech of the rebel Lord Bardolph, the imagery is very fully developed.

in this great work
(Which is to pluck a kingdom down
and set another up) should we survey
The plot of situation and the model,
Consent upon a sure foundation,
Question surveyors, know our own estate,
How able such a work to undergo,
To weigh against his opposite; or else
We fortify in paper and in figures
Using the names of men instead of man:
Like one that draws the model of an house
Beyond his power to build it . . .

On which passage Traversi has commented,

In the distinction between men and their 'names' we come very close to the spirit of these scenes, in which politicians and those who follow their perverse designs are habitually the creatures rather than the creators of circumstance.⁸

Enough has been said to show that the forces of political disintegration set in motion by the murder of Richard II and the usurpation of Henry IV result in processes of disassociation which we can group under two heads:

1. The relation between 'appearance' and 'reality' is so distorted as to make impossible a common understanding of social and public events. (The split between men in their reality, and their names, is a special instance of this distortion.)
2. The leaders of society no longer have a common sense of purpose. Political action is meaningful only for those with power.

We shall meet both these themes again when we turn to the Prince's work of re-integration, and to the Falstaff imagery.

3. The cosmological king

To draw a distinction between the political and the cosmological king is easier for us than it would have been for an Elizabethan. A considerable literature has grown up to prove the key function of the King as the link between the three structures: the pattern of the universe of created things, the pattern of men's own nature and the pattern of human society.⁹ In Shakespeare's plays the full cosmological implications of a 'false' king come

⁸ Traversi, *Op. Cit.*, p. 115.

⁹ The literature here is large. I have used:

Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London 1943), which for its background draws extensively on Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), which is now classical English language statement of the development of the macrocosm-microcosm view of the universe.

Sixteenth century works to which Tillyard refers and which have influenced all that I have written here, are: Montaigne's essay on Raymond de Sebonde, which gives an extraordinarily intimate picture of the Renaissance imagination looking with incredulity at the world of 'participation' implied in the traditional medieval view of man's place in the universe; and the long poem by

Sir John Davies, *Orchestra* (available in *The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*).

Danby's book referred to above is important in this connection.

Wolff-Windegg's *Die Gekröntne* (Stuttgart, 1958) has a valuable section (pp. 299-314) on Henry IV, besides wide background material. And I am grateful to a lecture reference of his for knowledge of

finally to dominate the state in King Lear: but in the Henry IV plays they are still latent. There is, however, one passage worth quoting in this context because, by comparing it with a famous exchange in Lear, we can demonstrate how the conflict between the new cosmological ideas and the old could be felt as one of the causes of the Prince's doubt as to his own identity.

In the confrontation between the Welsh prince Glendower and Hotspur, the tradition macrocosm-microcosm doctrine is held up to ridicule (A 3.1.20 seq.):

Glendower: I say the earth did shake when I was born.
Hotspur: And I say the earth was not of my mind,
If you suppose as fearing you it shook.
Glendower: The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble.
Hotspur: O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,
And not in fear of your nativity.

The quarrel mounts to such violence as to threaten the solidarity of the rebel princes.

This passage is a direct precursor of the more celebrated soliloquy in Lear, when the bastard Edmund, prototype of the 'new man' who will later blind his own father, mocks at the astrological superstitions of the previous age:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune – often the surfeit of our own behaviour – we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, an all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on.

Lear, 1.2.132 seq.

To give some idea of the implications behind this antithesis, I quote Professor Danby's comment on this speech of Edmund's.

For Edmund, Nature is a dead mechanism and does not include man, except as he is an animal body. Apart from his body, man has a mind. As

Rees, *The Celtic Heritage* (London, 1961) which has excellent descriptive insights in to the ritual nature of Welsh and Irish kingship.

mind, man is free of nature and superior to it. He knows its laws, he can manipulate it for a given effect; human nature, too, can be known and manipulated. It is significant that in the figure of Edmund the sense of separation from nature and superiority to it goes with a sense of the individual's separation from the community, and a feeling of superiority to his fellows. As nature goes dead, community becomes competition, and man a nexus of appetites. Reason is no longer a normative drive but a calculator of the means to satisfy the appetites with which we were born.¹⁰

Now Hotspur is no such radical 'new man' as Edmund was to be. Politically he is a Janus-faced figure; his chivalry and his obsession with honour look back to the idealized world of Arthur and his knights, while as leader of the rebels he gives expression to the forward-looking political scheming of his uncle Worcester. But in this scene Shakespeare makes him mock the old cosmology, and we shall see in considering the Falstaff imagery that the dissolution of the old cosmology confronted the Prince with one of his greatest works of re-integration.

¹⁰ Danby, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

B. THE PRINCE

We can now turn to consider the prince's growth into definition until he is ready to be king. There is nothing 'balanced' about the construction of these two plays, and it would be to impose a false pattern were we to try and match the 'integrative' imagery grouped round the prince with the 'dissolution' themes associated with the old King. Instead, we shall consider two sets of images: first, centred on the contrast between true-born or bastard, real or false prince; second, those in which the Prince is shown as consciously 'playing a part'.

1. True-born or bastard

It has been a commonplace of critical discussion of these plays that the Prince lives on two levels, and the general view has been that in the final scene he chooses one level, that of law and order, and rejects the other, that of Riot. But I believe that when we consider the various references to his birth, echoing as they do the doubts as to the 'true' kingship of his father, we shall see that the ambiguity at the heart of his nature is not merely an expression of the Law-Riot, King-Falstaff polarity. It has more to do with the mystery which separates yet relates Son and Father.

In the opening scene, the King is talking of the brilliant Hotspur:

O that it could be proved
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And called mine Percy, his Plantagenet,
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.

(A 1.1.86ff)

At least one critic has read this as implying that the king suspected his son of being a changeling.¹¹

In the Boar's Head scene there is again the suggestion that the prince is in some sense no true prince:

¹¹ Danby, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You, Prince of Wales!

(A 2.4.132)

This insinuation is followed by the famous 'By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye' Falstaff claims that he recognized the 'true prince' even in his disguise, by instinct, comparing himself with the lion: 'The lion will not touch the true prince.' Perhaps nowhere in the play do we come closer to the secret identity between Falstaff and the Prince; yet the meaning remains ambiguous. Hal is proved a true prince, *if* we accept Falstaff as lion. But can we? Can such a confusion of incongruities as Falstaff serve as a measure of what is true or false?

At the end of the same scene, Shakespeare returns to the same dramatic image, measuring Falstaff against Prince and Prince against Falstaff. The sheriff is at the door demanding entrance to search for the thief and highway robber, Sir John Falstaff: Falstaff will hang unless the prince is prepared to deceive the officer of his royal father.

Hostess: The sheriff and all the watch are at the door; they are come to search the house, shall I let them in?

Falstaff: Dost thou hear, Hal? Never call a true piece of gold counterfeit. Thou art essentially mad without seeming so.

Prince: And thou a natural coward, without instinct.

Professor Dover Wilson paraphrases Falstaff's words:

Don't let me down by calling a true-mettled fellow a false thief. Appearances are deceptive; you, for example, are really mad, though you don't look it, e.g. mad enough to give the whole thing away for 'old father antic, the law'.

The Prince, in his reply, echoes Falstaff's previous claim to be able to distinguish the true prince from a false thief by instinct; the Prince denies that Falstaff has instinct, implying that he cannot distinguish the true from the false, with the additional play on the word 'natural' which in its sense of 'illegitimate' (in a 'natural' son) applied to a bastard touches that mysterious root-experience where 'nature' and 'society' are felt as contrasted opposites.

Throughout this scene Falstaff and Hal are related on a level where there is awareness of a distinction between true and false, genuine and counterfeit, son and bastard, being and seeming, but inability to decide which is which.¹²

When the King is face to face with his son for the first time in the play, he tells him the news of the revolt against his throne, led by those same men who had raised him up as successful usurper over the dethroned Richard; but he doubts whether he can trust his own son....

King: Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
 Which art my nearest and dearest enemy?
 Thou art like enough, through vassal fear,
 Base inclination and the start of spleen,
 To fight against me under Percy's pay ...

Prince: Do not think so; you shall not find it so; ...
 I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
 And in the closing of some glorious day
 Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
 When I will wear a garment all of blood,
 And stain my favours in a bloody mask ...

(A 3.2.122-136)

The mention of blood, echoed in the image of the bloody mask, touches a deep nerve of meaning. At the opening of the scene the King has reflected that the shameful character of the Prince is a divine punishment, issuing out of his own blood, for the crime he committed in murdering Richard. He uses the word blood three times in this context. Now the Prince uses the word in looking forward to the moment when, in shedding Hotspur's blood, he will appropriate to himself the 'honour' of Hotspur. Altick, in his essay on the imagery in *Richard II*,¹³ has remarked how these two meanings of the word are entwined, so that the blood which soaks the earth in sudden death, murder or battle, and the blood which constitutes the reality of inheritance, descent, familial pride are used together to point the full horror of civil war.

The two significances constantly interplay, giving the word a new multiple connotation wherever it appears. The finest instance of this merging of ideas is in the Duchess of Gloucester's outburst to John of

¹² The link between this bastard theme and the arguments about the cosmological role of the King is discussed by Danby.

¹³ Altick, *Symphonic Imagery in Richard II* in the Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America, 1947. A magnificent piece of criticism.

Gaunt. Here we have an elaborate contrapuntal metaphor, the bases of which is a figure derived from the familiar genealogical symbol of the Tree of Jesse, and which is completed by a second figure of the seven vials of blood. The imposition of the figure involving the word *blood* (in its literal and therefore most vivid use) upon another figure which for centuries embodied the concept of family descent, thus welds together with extraordinary tightness the word and its symbolic significance.

Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?
Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
Or seven fair branches springing from one root.
Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;
But Thomas, my dear Lord, my life, my Gloucester,
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
Is crack'd and all the precious liquor spilt,
Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded,
By Envy's hand and Murder's bloody axe.
Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine!

(R II, 1.2.10-22)

Blood is here associated with the idea of the consecrated king, and also with the Biblical imagery which we have already seen Shakespeare using to invest the martyred Richard with some of the significance of Christ, and his usurper and those who helped Henry to the throne with the guilt of Pilate, a guilt which Henry explicitly invokes at the opening of this first scene of confrontation with his son.

But the fact that a king is 'consecrated' means that he is not 'natural'. The question whether or not Hal is a 'true prince' takes on a far wider significance in the imagery and structure of these speeches between father and son. The King who reproaches his son with treachery to his blood, has himself murdered his cousin to reach the throne, and knows therefore his own act has destroyed the identity of legitimacy and consecration. So he warns the Prince that Hotspur

Hath more worthy interest to the state
Than thou the shadow of succession.

thereby invoking the new reality of the political king as rival to the idea of the consecrated king.

But there is further implication to be considered before we leave Hal's:

And in the closing of some glorious day
Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
When I will wear a garment all of blood,
And stain my favours in a bloody mask

It is of the essence of kingship (at least of the medieval European variety) that there can only be one king at a time.¹⁴ The first moment, therefore, in which the Prince can truly know himself as 'royal' is when his father dies. There is this a strange and dramatic paradox in the father's exhortation to the son to show himself true to his blood: for, in the end, the blood that must mask the prince before he can truly say 'I am my father's son', is his father's blood. This fact, which accounts for much of the dramatic tension of the play, becomes explicit on the battlefield at Shrewsbury when the King, rescued by his son, admits he had half expected the Prince to take the opportunity to kill him; and again in the great 'crown scene' when the King lies on his deathbed.¹⁵

¹⁴ Wyndham Lewis (*op.cit.*) has important historical amplifications here.

¹⁵ The crown scene is discussed very perceptively by Wolff-Windegg, *op. cit.*, p.312. He writes:

Das Missverständnis Prinz Henrichs – der seinen Vater tot glaubte und deshalb seine Krone aufsetze – erlaubt dem Dichter, in der Todesstunde Heinrichs seine beiden Helden, nun beide gekrönt, beide Könige, an jenem mythischen Punkt zu vereinigen, den wir also den Höhepunkt der herrscherlichen Existenz erkannt und gedeutet haben. Wir erinnern uns jenes Brauches in Rajasuya, in dem der Priester König und Prinz anredet, aber jeden mit dem Namen des andern.

The custom to which he refers is a particularly interesting amplification in this context, since in Henry IV Part I, Scene 2, we have already seen Falstaff and the Prince 'play-acting' a situation in which each takes in turn the role of King and Prince, Father and Son, so that we can say that the Prince plays at deposing his father.

The wider theme of the ritual slaying of the king has been discussed from the point of view of Frazer and also of Freud in Stewart, *Character and Motive in Shakespeare* (London, 1949). This essay refers to an essay by the American psychoanalyst Dr Franz Alexander on these two plays. I have not been able to trace Alexander's essay, but it is referred to in Trilling's essay Freud and Literature (reprinted in *The Liberal Imagination* (London, 1951). Trilling writes of Alexander's essay:

Dr Franz Alexander undertakes nothing more than to say that in the development of Prince Hal we see the classic struggle of the ego to come to normal adjustment, beginning with the the rebellion against the father, going on to the conquest of the super-ego (Hotspur, with his rigid notions of honour and glory), then to the conquest of the id (Falstaff, with his anarchic self-indulgence), then to the identification with the father (the crown scene) and the the assumption of mature responsibility.

Stewart's essay had been usefully amplified by Williams, The Birth and Death of Falstaff Reconsidered in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, 1957, pp. 359 seq. He argues that the rejection of Falstaff can be understood

In the Second Part there are two important references to doubt as to the Prince's birth. Falstaff, in his new arrogance after Shrewsbury doubts not only his royalty but his manhood:

I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one off his cheek; and yet he will not stick to say his face is a face-royal: God may finish it when he will, 'tis not a hair amiss yet: he may keep it still at a face-royal, for a barber shall never earn sixpence out of it; and yet he'll be crowing as if he had writ man ever since his father was a bachelor.

(B 2.2.20-28)

Falstaff is suggesting that the Prince is not only a bastard but a Eunuch as well.

The other reference is brief, but penetrating. Falstaff calls the Prince 'a whoreson Achitophel'. Professor Dover Wilson explains this by reminding us that for the Elizabethan Achitophel was 'the Old Testament counterpart of Judas Iscariot, and that it was to his predilection for security and his refusal to take further chances with Absalom that Falstaff alluded.' In terms of this explanation, the Prince is being associated with the greatest act of 'untruth' known to Shakespeare's audiences: the betrayal of Christ. But re-reading the story of Achitophel (2 Samuel ch. 15 and 17), reminds us that any mention of his name would also conjure up for the Elizabethan one of the most violent and tragic stories of a son rebelling against a father: Achitophel was counsellor to the rebellious Absalom against his royal father David; his counsel was 'as if one consulted the oracle of God'. He advised Absalom to publicize his revolt against his father by sleeping with his father's concubines; and it was only after Absalom had ignored his counsel that Achitophel then went away and hanged himself (like Judas). As the result of ignoring Achitophel's advice was the defeat and murder of Absalom by his father's army, it is not exaggerated to see in Achitophel the figure of the 'wisdom' which enables son to overcome father. But the analogy with Iscariot deepens the paradox by reminding us of the most ambiguous image of the father-son relationship, the crucified Christ.

as a substitute killing of the father, and finds support for this thesis in various passages in the text. He sums up:

It is not however Freudian psychology, but Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious of the race which offers a possible further explanation of why, as Stewart claims, the rejection and death of Falstaff are felt to be inevitable and just.

Cp also Hunter, as quoted in note 1 above.

These Biblical overtones recur in the scene in which the Prince and Poins disguise themselves as drawers in order to 'see Falstaff bestow himself in his true colours'. In the moment when they reveal themselves, Falstaff cries:

Ha! A bastard son of the king's? (B 2.4. 282)

and at the close of the increasingly abusive exchange between the two there is a strange remark of Falstaff's which serves suddenly to set the relatively comic contrast of a true-fake prince against a background of the more terrible contrast between life and death, salvation and damnation. Traversi writes of this passage,

The presence of moral reality which colours, however unwillingly, Falstaff's thought makes itself felt almost immediately, when he crowns Doll's question to the Prince with the embittered pun 'His Grace says that which his flesh rebels against.' The echoes which derived from this wry evocation of the conflict between body and spirit are indeed manifold..¹⁶

and he refers to the contrast between:

Lenten abstinence	and the illegal eating of flesh
Law	and evasion
Moral rigour	and irregulated appetite

and goes on:

To link these references... against the background, also evoked at this point, of burning in hell fire, is to respond to some of the sombre undercurrents which associated with age, decay and approaching retribution, amount to a profound transformation of the earlier comic effect.

2. Playing a Part

¹⁶ Traversi, *op. cit.*, , p. 132.

We not turn to those situations in which the Prince is shown as consciously playing a part. The first example is the notorious soliloquy at the end of the first scene in which we have been introduced to the Prince with his boon companions Falstaff and Poins. They have left him, and he speaks:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness,
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted he may be more wondered at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wished for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents:
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes,
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

(A 1.2.187ff)

This soliloquy is plainly of central relevance to our question: What do we feel in the Rejection Scene? For here, at the very beginning of the plays, we are already shown the Prince's intention (which was of course 'given' to Shakespeare by popular tradition: the play is a 'history'). Much critical ink has flowed over the speech. It is a principal ground for complaint for those critics who see the Prince as consistently cynical, as grossly

abusing the confidence of his humbler associates.¹⁷ In terms of the alleged opposition between Mask and Reality, however, we must ask: If this is the 'true' prince speaking, then in all the Falstaff-Poins scenes he is wearing a 'mask', which he finally puts aside to appear in his true reality in the Rejection Scene.

But it is impossible to be satisfied with such a simplification. The Prince that Shakespeare has given us in the great scene at the Boar's Head with Falstaff, or in the Hamlet-like dialogue with Poins at the beginning of the Second Part, is not a cynical dissembler: he is a man genuinely unhappy with the ambiguities of his own nature. There can be no simple reaction to this soliloquy, and if we consider the imagery more clearly we shall see why.

The Prince uses two main images to explain, or to justify, his conduct: the sun, and the holiday. The figure of the sun in relation to royalty is one of the most well-known in the History Plays.¹⁸ The significance of 'a principle afflicted by change' which Shakespeare gives to it in this passage, by bringing it into relation with 'base contagious clouds' is one which he used again and again. (Indeed it comes naturally to anyone accustomed to the English climate). To give only a few examples: the hunchback Gloucester, who also will usurp a throne through the blood of his own family, contrasts himself with the reigning king in his soliloquy at the opening of Richard III:

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried...
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.

¹⁷ Cp Palmer, *op. cit.*. But the soliloquy as a dramatic form is discussed usefully and from the point of view taken by this thesis as a whole in Bethell, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (London, 1944).

¹⁸ The classic analytical study of Shakespeare's imagery is Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's imagery and What it tells us* (Cambridge, 1935). For my purposes I have not found much help here. I have made more use of Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Imagination: a study of the Psychology of Association and Inspiration* (London, 1946). His approach has much in common with the Jungian's interest in 'complexes' (and he refers indeed to Jung's Word Association Tests), an approach which he calls 'thematic'. This thematic approach is used by Altick in the essay quoted above, which also has valuable things to say on the sun imagery in our play. Another important book whose argument I consider justifies the interpretative use I have made of Shakespeare's imagery is Clemen, *Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (English translation, London, 1951). For instance, he has this to say on the way in which imagery relates the particular to the universal:

For it is the nature of imagery to express and suggest something more than the bare details of the situation. Imagery is capable of adding a further meaning to the immediate meaning; it may reveal and underline the symbolic import of what is happening on the stage. By means of a certain kind of reflective imagery, the particular significance of a certain event may be expanded by a more general significance (p.54).

In King John, in association with the threat of war:

The sun's o'ercast with blood: Fair day, adieu! (3.1.26)

In Richard II, it is a central image to picture the decline in the power of Richard, and the rise of Bolingbroke:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the East,
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory, and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the Occident
(3.3.63)

I have no name, no title,
No, not that name was given me at the font
But 'tis usurped. Alack, the heavy day!
That I have worn so many winters out,
And know not what name to call myself.
O, that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,
To melt myself away in water drops!
(4.1.261)

In our plays, when Hotspur hears Vernon's magnificent description of the Prince arming himself like Achilles for battle:

No more, no more! Worse than the sun in March
This praise doth nourish agues.
(A 5.1.1)

and again of battle:

How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon busky hill! The day looks pale
At his disemp'ration ...
(A 5.1.1)

These examples suffice to show that in Shakespeare's imagination the sun is not only an image of royalty: it is also an image of the mutability of things, a reminder that the king too must die, and in the extraordinary close relationship between 'sun' and 'blood' in *Richard II*, a reminder that to die is in some sense the essence of kingship. In this opening soliloquy to Henry IV the Prince implies, to be sure, that the sun controls the clouds: yet the contrary suggestion, that the power and reality of the sun are in some way uncertain in the presence of cloud, was obviously also present within Shakespeare's mind. Through this image, the 'play-acting' of the Prince is brought into relation with the play between light and shadow, summer and winter, life and death, a 'play' which existed before men knew themselves as 'actors'.

The second image used by the Prince in explaining his conduct is the contrast between holiday and workday. We shall see later how for Falstaff, who knew no time, all life was holiday. For the Prince, the distinction is quite literally vital. It is only through the contrast between holiday and workday that time can acquire a vertical as well as an horizontal axis. Without that distinction the linear consciousness of time, within which the political king is imprisoned, vanishes; but there is also lost the consciousness of the present as a Now in enduring contact with what Eliade has called sacred time: and without that consciousness there can be no consecration, no ceremony, no ritual.

At the beginning of this scene Falstaff was shown to us as outside time. At the end, the Prince explains his living on two levels, one of which is an apparent deception in terms of the other, by a reminder of the mysterious experience of time that lies behind holiday, feast, ritual. His relationship with Falstaff will have about it a quality of holiday: and in holiday we partake of that world of ritual which can never be compared with everyday in terms of deception and truth without destroying a mystery essential to life:

Outside the ritual the deeds of mythical heroes cannot be repeated by mortal men. As events in ordinary life they are, as often as not, fantastic, anti-social, immoral and catastrophic. Yet it is one of the great paradoxes of human life that it derives its deepest meaning from a mythological realm the inhabitants of which conduct themselves in a way that is antithetical to what is normal in everyday behaviour and experience.¹⁹

¹⁹ Rees, *Celtic Heritage* (London, 1961), p.211.

One of the most psychologically revealing scenes in the play is the dialogue between the Prince and Poin in the Second Part. It is in this scene that we can most justly speak of the Prince as wearing a mask which is false, in which he feels how inevitably he must appear as a hypocrite to others.

Prince: By this hand, thou thinkest me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency. Let the end try the man. But I tell thee, my heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick, and keeping such vile company as thou hath in reason taken from me all ostentation of sorrow.

Poin: The reason?

Prince: What would'st thou think of me if I should weep?

Poin: I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

Prince: It would be every man's thought, and thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks; every man would think me an hypocrite indeed.

But that this is no deliberate deception which can be dropped at will is brought out by Traversi in his comment:

The political vocation will shortly prevail in him, bringing together with success a certain detachment, a touch of necessary inhumanity which his exalted position will at times impose; but in the ambiguous tension of certain brief utterances, especially frequent at this point, the imminence of his father's death brings out a submerged note of reflection which anticipates, occasionally and incompletely, the future difficulties of Hamlet.²⁰

A note of reflection which anticipates also the self-knowledge that he will have as king, when he moves incognito among his soldiers the night before Agincourt and knows himself a man as well as king.

For though I speak it to you, I think the king is but a man as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth

²⁰ Traversi, *op. cit.*, P 126.

to me; all his sense have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but as a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing.

(Henry V, 4.1.106ff)

'His ceremonies laid by'. Henry V knew, as neither his father nor the murdered Ricahrd knew, how to combine ceremony with action. To understand this is to understand the nature of the mask he wore as Prince with Poins, the nature of the 'deception' he played on Falstaff. After his father has died, he says to his brothers:

Yet be sad, good brothers,
For by my faith, it very well becomes you;
Sorrow so royally in you appears
That I will deeply put the fashion on,
And wear it in my heart.

On which Traversi comments:

From now on Henry is a public figure, consecrated to the royalty he has assumed, and even natural grief has become for him a garment to worn, not, indeed in insincerity, but in the light of a vocation in terms of which no emotion can be purely private or personal.²¹

Dr Tillyard has shown how in Richard II Shakespeare has given us two opposed worlds: the world of ceremony represented by King Richard, and the world of action and personal emotion represented by the usurper Bolingbroke. It was an important element in Hal's education in how to be a 'perfect king' that he should learn to incorporate both the consecrated command of ceremony which Richard possessed, and also the power for action of Bolingbroke, his father. Just as at the end of Henry IV we are shown him wearing his ceremony *consciously*, whereas Richard had been totally contained within a ceremonial and symbolic society, so in Henry V we are shown him as effective in the world of action as ever his father had been, but with one crucial difference:

²¹ Traversi, *op. cit.*, P. 158.

Hal differs from his father in having perfect knowledge both of himself and of the world around him. Of all types of men he is the least subject to Fortune.²²

Let us now try and summarise the significance of this King imagery for our thesis as a whole.

Our starting point was the Rejection Scene in which the newly crowned King, wearing the full persona of royalty, turns away from Falstaff. In what sense does the imagery of the plays allow us to think of this person as a 'mask'? Can we understand the behaviour of this new King in terms of a distinction between appearance and reality, between deception and truth?

I submit that the imagery we have studied shows that we can only understand the adult personality of the young Henry V that appears on the stage in the Rejection Scene in terms of a choice which has taken into account an almost unlimited number of opposites. Indeed, it is probably better not to talk in terms of particular opposites, but of a field of experience which can only be described in terms of opposition: the opposition between a view of politics grounded in consecration, ceremony, ritual, on the one hand, and in personal self-assertion and power on the other; between believing that nature is a dead mechanism and a living organism; between names and things; between father and son, an opposition which in its turn involves and expresses the opposition between nature and society, between the blood of murder and the blood of inheritance, the sense in which sexual potency is a killing of the father; between the sun as immutable and as subject to change (an opposition of painful acuteness at the time of the Copernican revolution); between secular and sacred time, and through them back again to the opposition between the king who rules by divine right and the king who rules as the personification of political power.

The significance of this submission for the thesis as a whole will be more apparent when we have studied the other great group of images behind the confrontation of the Rejection Scene.

²² *Shakespeare's History Plays*, p.260/

FALSTAFF

Opposed to the figure of the King in the Rejection Scene stands that of Falstaff.

The imagery that clusters around Falstaff is full of conceits and contradictions. It has much of the quality that Jung has taught us to call 'mercurial'. Critical attempts to define his character have always recognized the multi-dimensional nature of a figure who, while possessing our imagination, himself eludes our grasp. In so far as he has a 'character', it is generally agreed that Falstaff deteriorates both morally and in terms of his comic hold over the audience during the course of the Second Part. But even in terms of a development from comedy to tragedy, we are reminded at almost every appearance that in some sense he is never what he seems.

The conclusions which I shall be drawing from the Falstaff imagery may appear to be far-fetched. It is, therefore, perhaps wise to open with a few quotations from the critics of the past and present who have recognized that, if we are to understand Falstaff, we must widen and deepen our everyday categories of understanding.

In the eighteenth century Johnson wrote:

But Falstaff unimitated, unimitable Falstaff, how shall I describe thee?
Thou compound of sense and vice; of sense which may be admired but not
esteemed, of vice which may be despised but hardly detested.²³

. Maurice Morgann (again in the eighteenth century):

Falstaff is a character made by Shakespeare wholly of incongruities, a man at once young and old, enterprising and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality; a knave without malice, a liar without

²³ Taken from his 1765 Edition of Shakespeare, in *Shakespeare Criticism, 1623-1840*, ed. D. Nichol-Smith (Oxford, 1963).

deceit; and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier without either dignity, decency or honour.²⁴

In the 1920s, Wyndham Lewis:

The humour of Falstaff achieves the same magical result as Don Quixote's chivalrous delusion – namely, it makes him immune from its accidents ... The contrast of the two knights is a contrast in two unrealities – two specifics to turn the world by enchantment into something else²⁵

A more academic note from America:

He has been a baffling figure because all interpretation insists on taking him for a coherent image of a human being, morally unified and self consistent. He was originally a personification, or a set of cognate personifications, to whom, because he was too theatrically attractive to die with the dramatic convention to which he belonged, Shakespeare gives a local habitation and a name. Although he walks like a man his innards are allegorical.²⁶

²⁴ Morgann, *An essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, 1777, republished in 1903 by Nichol-Smith in *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*. My references are to the abridged version available in *Shakespeare Criticism 1623-1840*, as above. This essay, which is one of the most important attempts to understand Falstaff, will be extensively quoted later in the thesis.

²⁵ Wyndham Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

²⁶ Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (Oxford, 1958). The central purpose of this important book is to explain the figure of Iago in *Othello* by reference to the medieval tradition of Vice in the *Psychmachia*. But Spivak illustrates his argument from many of Shakespeare's plays, including *Henry IV*, and has much to say on the allegorical origins of Falstaff. His argument is so apposite to this thesis that I may be forgiven a lengthy quotation. After describing the figures of Gluttony, Lechery, Pride in medieval *psychomachia*, and showing how all the same themes are brought together in the figure of Falstaff, he continues:

The dismemberment of Falstaff into allegorical fragments ... reverses the synthesis that put him together. The homiletic allegory of youthful delinquency and personified vice in a dozen morality plays, perennial on the stage, supplied Shakespeare with the moral and dramatic structure of the Falstaff epos, and also with the image of the personae who fit into it ... The delinquent prince, his precocious first soliloquy, and his rejection in the end of 'that revered vice, that grey iniquity' who has been such 'good fellowship' to him for so long, create problems of interpretation mainly because the play has become isolated from its source in homiletic allegory. The robbery at Gadshill, the tavern frolics, Doll Tearsheet meretrix, the endless jests about hanging, the antinomy of Falstaff and the Lord Chief Justice, are all stock motifs of action, dialogue and 'character' in the moralities The problems arise because two worlds, one metaphorical and one literal, have been fused. Allegory has been overlaid by history ... Falstaff himself oscillates between an historico-moral figure and a personification (p. 90).

An American poet:

Falstaff understands everything and so is never serious. If he is even more amusing to himself than he is to others, that is because the truth about himself is something very obvious which he has never taken the trouble to define. His intelligence can define anything, but his wisdom tells him that the effort is not worthwhile. We do not know him in our words. We know him in his – which are never to the point, for they glance off his centre and lead us away along tangents of laughter. His enormous bulk spreads through the play But his mind is still larger. It is at home everywhere, and it is never darkened by self thought.²⁷

And to close, Dr Tillyard:

Falstaff enlarges the play, as none of Shakespeare's hitherto had been enlarged, into the ageless, the archetypal. Though richly and grossly circumstantiated, though quite at home in Elizabethan London from court to brothel, he reaches across the ages and over the earth(He is the eternal child, the Fool, the active imposter and adventurer, but he also) ... goes on from the harmlessly comic Vice to the epitome of the Deadly Sins at war with the law and order. And he fulfils that last function not only through delightful human action, but through precise and academic symbolism. This symbolism is important because, being traditional as well as academic, it is antique and helps greatly to turn Falstaff into the archetypal character that he is.²⁸

If it is true that we can know Falstaff only in his own words, then any attempt to give order to the Falstaffian imagery must start with what he himself says. For the purposes of exposition I shall divide this study into two sections: those images that centre round *dissolution*, and those which have more the nature of a *matrix of new possibilities; of transformation*.

²⁷ Mark van Doren, *Shakespeare* (New York, 1941).

²⁸ *Shakespeare's History Plays*, P 285, 287.

A. IMAGES OF DISSOLUTION

1) We have already seen how one image of the dissolution of the political order is that 'names' become separated from person and quality. Falstaff is shown three times as rejoicing in and profiting by, this separation.

In the recruiting scene in Gloucestershire he puns mercilessly on the names of the men offered for service, contrasting the name with the man. On the stage this is pure comedy, but Falstaff is quite literally engaged in 'using the names of men instead of men' to fill his own purse at the expense of the order of society. In A 4.2.12, on his way to the battle of Shrewsbury, he soloquizes:

I have misused the King's press damnably. I have got in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but goodhouseholders, yeoman's sons, inquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the banns, such a commodity of warm slaves.

In the recruiting scene there is one passage deserves quoting as it serves to link the name-man imagery with the bastardy theme that we have seen to be so important for the Prince.

Falstaff: Shadow, whose son art thou?

Shadow: My mother's son, sir.

Falstaff: Thy mother's son! like enough, and thy father's shadow – so the son of the female is the shadow of the male: it is often so, indeed, but much of the father's substance.

Dover Wilson paraphrases what he describes as this 'difficult passage full of quibbles with obsolete implications' as follows:

Your mother's son! That's probable enough and the very image of your father; which is as much to say that what is a son (sun) to the female is but a shadow (=image) to the male. Indeed, a mother's son is often enough merely the shadow (= delusive image) of her husband, because there is precious little of his substance in him.

Bastardy, and the related problems of uncertain identity, confusion between appearance and reality, are no problem for Falstaff. They are facts in which he rejoices, because in this field of total uncertainty where moral choice is impossible, where there is nothing 'known' to choose between, he, Falstaff, can grow fat.

At the end of the same scene Falstaff soloquizes contemptuously on the pretentiousness of his host, Shallow, a passage which prepares us for the penultimate Gloucestershire scene when he talks scornfully of the likeness between Shallow and his servants, a likeness which grows daily closer because they 'by observing of him do bear themselves like fooled justices; he by conversing with them is turned into a justice-like serving man.' A society in which name and quality no longer concur, is a society in which 'degree' is no more.²⁹

2) We quoted above the soliloquy in which Falstaff referred to his recruits as a 'commodity of warm slaves'. This word 'commodity' is used three times in our two plays, and through it we touch one of the most effective agents of dissolution working in the society of Shakespeare's day.

The first use is when Falstaff says to the Prince:

I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought (A 1.2.81), i.e. where they could buy the names on which they could raise credit.

The second use of the word we have already quoted. The third is after Falstaff's encounter with the Lord Chief Justice, when he turns to the audience to complain of and confess his syphilitic infection, and ends:

a good wit will make use of anything; I will turn diseases to a commodity (B 1.2.243)

Professor Dover Wilson gives the meaning of commodity as ranging between 'profit' and 'a packet of goods upon which money could be raised at the usurers'. But Shakespeare had already used the word as the leitmotif of the memorable speech (in the earlier play King

²⁹ Students of Shakespeare will recognize that the theme is the same as that expressed in Ulysses' famous speech on 'degree' in *Troilus and Cressida*.

John), when the Bastard Falconbridge recognizes and accepts the true nature of the political world in which he has come to live:

That smooth fac'd gentleman, tickling commodity,
Commodity, the bias of the world;
The world, who of itself is peized well,
Made to run even upon even ground,
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
This sway of motion, this commodity,
Makes it take head from all indifferency,
From all direction, purpose, course, intent:
And this same bias, this commodity,
This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,
Hath drawn him from his own determin'd aid,
From a resolv'd and honourable war,
To a most base and vile-concluded peace ...
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

In other words, commodity, the whole economic process centring round the profit motive and the use of interest to stimulate economic activity, is seen as the 'bias' of the new political order, replacing the medieval order centred, through an intricate network of personal feudal loyalties, on the person of the consecrated king. Elizabethan society was profoundly shaken by this impact of usury, emerging from its medieval identification with all the forces of evil to become one of the prime instruments of an increasingly 'capitalist' order. But whereas to Falconbridge commodity was an expression of a new way of political activity, to Falstaff its meaning and value is centred only on himself.³⁰

3) The last group of 'images of dissolution' which we have to consider in relation to Falstaff is more personal and has to do with Falstaff's knowledge of himself. We have heard Mark van Doren say: 'His intelligence can define anything, but his wisdom tells him that the effort is not worthwhile.' We are here concerned with the destructive aspect of this refusal to 'define'.

At our very first meeting with Falstaff, the Prince says of him:

³⁰ I owe my recognition of the importance of the word 'commodity' to Danby, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-3.

Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know.

On the face of it, a half-comic dig at a friend. But this is the scene at the end of which the Prince soliloquizes about knowing Falstaff for what he is, and not being deceived as to his true nature, and it is surely not without dramatic significance when the Prince tells the old man that he is unable to ask for what he really wants, that is, he is already on the first steps of the path that leads to self-deception.

In terms of the Elizabethan view of man's psychology, such a break in the process by which we recognize our desires and then seek to realize that desire, is analogous to the 'break' through which the effects of original sin entered into the organism to disrupt its original perfect working. For the Elizabethans, man had three souls: a vegetable soul, a sensible soul, and a rational soul. The rational soul had two aspects, the passive power of wit (Reason) and the active power of will (Desire).³¹

Wit, or reason, is distinguished from common sense and imagination by

- I. being self-conscious
- II. being able to see objects in their real nature
- III. ability to generalize and perceive causal connection, possessing that 'discourse of reason' which was denied to the beasts.
- IV. possession of an innate idea.

Will, or the Rational Appetite, pursued Good and avoided Evil, just as at a lower level in the sensible soul, the voluntary appetite pursued pleasure and avoided pain. The Will was created good and incapable of desiring evil. But the Will itself was blind, and depended for its knowledge on the Wit. It was Wit which decided the nature of an object, and whether it was morally to be desired or avoided, while Will provided the active drive to carry out this decision. Now once a man begins to forget to ask what he would really

³¹ There is now an extensive literature on Elizabethan ideas of psychology. I have used: Tillyard, *Elizabethan World Picture* (London, 1943); Campbell, *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes* (Cambridge, 1930); Bamborough, *The Little World of Man* (London, 1952); Spencer, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (Cambridge, 1943). I have also referred to the first three chapters of Sherrington, *Man on his Nature* (Cambridge, 1951), in which this distinguished neurologist expounds the arguments of the French sixteenth century physician Jean Fernel.

know, the psychologist must infer, in terms of the Elizabethan system, a loosening in the link between Wit and Will. But behind such a loosening lurked a greater danger. For

It was because of the possibility that Evil might disguise itself as Good, mislead the Wit, and so lead the Will into sin, that hypocrisy and deceit were so abominable to the Elizabethans.³²

Only a constant moral effort could guard against such a disguise. Falstaff had already ceased to be capable of that effort: that is what the Prince is saying.

The implications of this weakness in Falstaff's constitution are inescapable. Beginning as a great comic figure who, by exploiting the ambiguities between appearance and reality, between hypocrisy and truth, extends to us visions of a freedom which knows no law, he ends as the victim of his own deception, believing that he who already denied the existence of law, can yet command the law.

Significantly, the final and fatal moment when he succumbs to his own deception is when he hears news of the old king's death:

I know the young king is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses: the laws of England are at my commandment. Blessed are they that have been my friends, and woe to the Lord Chief Justice (B 5.3.138 seq).

This scene immediately follows the reconciliation between Hal and Justice. 'To an audience which has just watched the Prince adopting My Lord Chief Justice as his father, these last words will appear crazily self-assured' (*Fortunes*, p. 118). And Professor Danby writes:

This is an unusual piece of self-revelation. Malice, vindictiveness and overweening arrogance have not hitherto displayed themselves so openly in Falstaff. Nor, up to now, has he shown any sign of the fatal defect now apparent – the taking himself seriously (p. 92)/

³² Bamborough, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

This is the scene that precedes the Rejection. It was not only the friend of his youth from whom the new King turned away. Falstaff had become so in love with the ambiguities and ambivalence at the heart of all things that he had ceased to know himself.

We can now turn to that other group of images that show Falstaff as in touch with a world of new potentialities.

B. IMAGES OF TRANSFORMATION

We shall select three groups of images which express the transformative possibilities constellated round Falstaff: those associated with Acting, Wit and Holiday.

1) **Acting.** We have already considered the destructive effects of Falstaff's deceptions as soon as he himself becomes their victim. But there is also a positive aspect to them, which takes us to the heart of the mystery of acting.

One of the most famous scenes in our two plays is set in the Boar's Head Tavern after Falstaff has returned from the robbery on Gad's Hill. In this robbery we have seen Falstaff and his low followers fall on certain defenceless merchants, robbing them with ease, only to be routed by the Prince and Poins in their turn. The Prince and Poins were disguised, and the whole purpose of the Prince's game at the expense of the fat knight has already been stated by Poins:

The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper, how thirty at least he fought with, what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured, and in the reproof of this lives the jest (A 1.2.178).

The audience are prepared for the gigantic boasts of the knight, and then to see him unmasked. The lies are duly forthcoming, and the dramatic tension mounts. Falstaff is boasting of the two or three and fifty enemies he has put to flight, when suddenly he switches his narrative to 'two rogues in buckram suits' in particular – the Prince and Poins. In the words of Professor Dover Wilson:

Falstaff's saga of Gad's Hill falls into two clearly marked sections: the first dealing with the battle in general and the second concerned with the buckram men alone. And the switch from the one to the other is surprising, even a trifle forced ... Why this sudden singling out of 'two rogues in buckram suits' if not to inform us that he knows, well enough, who they were? Surely, it is his turn to wink at the audience now ... In short, the solution I offer to a well-worn critical problem is that Shakespeare filled his dialogue with these gathering hints in order to

produce an ever-deepening impression upon the brighter spirits in the theatre ... He drives them step by step first to a suspicion and then to a belief that the old scoundrel very well knows what he is about and that he holds the trump card in his hand ... and that he had recognized the men in buckram from the beginning.³³

Dover Wilson is suggesting that Falstaff establishes, in this scene, a secret understanding with the audience, an understanding from which the Prince and Poins are excluded. Now on one level this is one of the oldest comic tricks known to the theatre – the aside to the audience which the other actors on the stage are presumed not to have heard. But something much deeper is also involved: the ambiguity which is at the root of Falstaff's character (in so far as it is possible to speak of his having 'a character') is transferred to the relationship between audience and actors. It is as if in that moment of secret understanding Falstaff reminds us, seated in the audience, that once, in the beginning, actors and audience were one in their worship of the mask. In the very moment when the Prince turns to 'unmask' him, Falstaff is both on the stage and with us in the audience: we see ourselves as actors watching a play within a play, the mask is everywhere and we know the Prince can no more unmask Falstaff than we can unmask life itself. Thus can Falstaff close the scene with words which for a Jungian must have an almost infinite extension of meaning:

By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye ... Why, hear you, my masters – was it for me to kill the heir apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct – the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter – I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince (A 2.4.264 ff).

The psychological significance of this scene seems to me so important that I do not wish my argument to depend only on Dover Wilson's suggested interpretation. We shall now, therefore, consider the way in which an eighteenth century critic answered the same dramatic question: Are we meant to consider Falstaff a coward or not?, and we shall see

³³ *Fortunes of Falstaff, op.cit.*, pp. 52-3.

that he too could only make sense of this whole episode by presupposing two levels of consciousness in the audience.

Maurice Morgann wrote his *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* in 1774. He states his purpose thus:

I am to avow then, that I do not clearly discern that Sir John Falstaff deserves to bear the character so generally given of him of an absolute coward; or, in other words, that I do not conceive Shakespeare ever meant to make Cowardice an essential part of his constitution.³⁴

Now Falstaff's reputation for cowardice is reasonably grounded in his behaviour in the Gad's Hill robbery, and at the Battle of Shrewsbury: on both occasions he behaves as we expect a coward to behave. Morgann does not try to avoid this fact: he meets it head on by his distinction between 'mental impressions; and 'Understanding'.

I presume to declare it, as my opinion, that Cowardice is not the Impression, which the whole character of Falstaff is calculated to make on the minds of an unprejudiced audience, tho' there be, I confess, a great deal of something in the *composition* like enough to puzzle, and consequently to mislead the Understanding – The reader will perceive that I distinguish between *mental impressions* and the *Understanding*.³⁵

and he goes on to describe mental impressions as:

certain feelings or sensations of mind, which do not seem to have passed thro' the Understanding; the effects, I suppose, of some secret influences from without, acting upon a certain mental sense, and producing feelings and passions in just correspondence to the force and variety of those influences on the one hand, and to the quickness of our sensibility on the other ... And it is equally a fact, which every man's experience may avouch, that the Understanding seems for the most part to take

³⁴ Morgann, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

³⁵ Morgann, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

cognizance of *actions* only, and from these to infer *motives* and *character*; but the sense we have been speaking of proceeds in a contrary course; and determines of actions from certain first principles of character, which seem wholly out of the reach of the Understanding.³⁶

Morgann's aesthetic and his psychology are of the eighteenth century, and it would be false to try and equate his 'mental impressions' or 'Understanding' with any of the concepts of contemporary depth psychology such as the unconscious as opposed to consciousness. The striking fact, however, is that in this essay he invokes two levels of psychological reaction to Falstaff – one that is diffuse, difficult to define, unreflective, the other selective, systematic; within our 'mental impressions' incongruities can exist side by side without arousing in us a need to 'explain', but in 'Understanding', the syllogism must order all things.³⁷

In terms of Falstaff's character, the leading quality, 'and that from which all the rest take their colour, is a high degree of wit and humour, accompanied with great natural vigour and alacrity of mind.'³⁸ It is this 'wit' which we apprehend by our mental Impression; it is in our Understanding, which cannot tolerate incongruity, that he appears a coward. So Morgann sums up the Boar's Head scene in which the Prince seeks to expose him as a coward:

We are ready to hug him, gush, lies and all, as an inexhaustible fund of pleasantry and humour. Cowardice, I apprehend, is out of our thought; it does not, I think, mingle in our mirth. As to this point (his cowardice), I have presumed to say already, and I repeat it, that we are, in my opinion, the dupes of our own wisdom, of systematic reasoning, of second thought, and after-reflection.³⁹

To sum up the argument of this section: Dover Wilson has suggested that we can only make dramatic sense of the Boar's Head scene by supposing that at a crucial moment Falstaff lets the audience realize that he knew all along that the two men in buckram were the Prince and Poins. In terms of Morgann's essay, Falstaff, when he winks at us over the head of the Prince, is telling us to rely on our 'mental impressions', and to leave the Prince as the victim of 'Understanding'. (Although the Prince, who has connived with

³⁶ Morgann, *op. cit.*, p. 157-8.

³⁷ It is this point in Morgann's essay which Stewart has used in his more Freudian approach to the play.

³⁸ Morgann, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

³⁹ Morgann, Complete Version, 1903 ed., pp. 279-80.

Poins at the staging of the whole incident, and in a sense knows Falstaff better than the fat knight knows himself, is perhaps the ultimate 'spectator', watching with a deeper irony the 'play' between Falstaff and the audience!). In terms of our fundamental concern with the Mask, the climax of the unmasking of Falstaff, the exposing of the 'essential' coward behind the 'fictitious' bravado, is turned into the triumph of 'wit'; of 'wit' which uses the mask not to deceive but to establish some relationship between the matrix of incongruities in which human nature is grounded, and the Understanding that can think only in syllogisms. And it does this by re-establishing for a moment the almost forgotten identity between actor and audience.

2) Wit

Morgann says of Falstaff's character for wit and humour, that it was to this that 'all his other qualities seem to have conformed themselves', and Falstaff says of himself in a famous passage:

Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me: the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that intends to laughter more than I invent, or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men (B 1.2.6 ff).

What are we to make of Falstaff's wit?

The New English Dictionary distinguishes more than ten separate meanings for the word WIT in English usage between 1550 and 1650. A study of these meanings serves to remind us that it was in this century, with the Book of Common Prayer, Shakespeare, and the King James translation of the Bible, that the English language was created. Words were used with a range of meaning which would be impossible today, and any attempt to correlate Shakespeare's use of 'wit' with any one group of present day meanings is impossible.

Shakespeare uses the word, either as 'wit' or 'wits', more than three hundred times in the plays. A study of his usage shows four broad classifications.⁴⁰

- (i) A group of about eighty instances in which the word means a quality of mind, expressed primarily in the dialogue and repartee, which is eloquent, quick, sharp and often destructive, corrosive, shallow.
- (ii) Another large group of about sixty instances in which it means intelligence, native good sense, understanding, something both visionary and creative: a quality which can be both natural, inborn, and also a result of breeding and education as apposed to nature.
- (iii) A small but very interesting group in which wit and folly are contrasted yet related, often in the context of a Fool as in King Lear or As You Like It.

⁴⁰ Bartlett, J., *A New and Complete Concordance to Shakespeare*, 1894.

- (iv) Another large group of about sixty in which the plural usage, very often as 'five wits' is contrasted to madness.

In our particular instance the meaning is centred on the idea of humour and laughter which has survived in the modern sense of 'witty'. But the context shows that the word draws its meaning from far wider associations. It is the first time we have seen Falstaff in the Second Part: he appears in a new grandeur, transformed as the apparent conquerer of Hotspur at Shrewsbury. He is preceded, in his new state, by a diminutive page. Falstaff:

Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me: the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that intends to laughter more than I invent, or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one. If the prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgement. (B 1.2.6-14).

Falstaff's huge size has provoked the wit of the prince to 'set him off', by giving him the diminutive page as his servant, as a contrast that 'tends to laughter'. The wit of the Prince lies in seeing the comic possibilities. Later in the same scene, when the Lord Chief Justice has remarked that the King has separated Falstaff from the Prince, Falstaff comments: 'Yea, I thak your pretty sweet wit for it' (B 1.2.202), where wit refers to the intelligence of the Lord Chief Justice in seeing the possibilities inherent in a separation of the Prince from his low companions. At the end of the scene Falstaff again uses the word to mean the ability to see how a present, unfavourable, situation can be transformed into something better:

A good wit will make use of anything; I will turn diseases to commodity (B 1.2.243).

Elsewhere in the same scene, it refers to that quickness in repartee which can not only enliven a situation but also prevent a dangerous situation from developing, a quality necessary for instance in the waiter serving drinks to an important customer:

Virtue is of so little regard in these costermongers' times that true valour is turned bear'ard; pregnancy is made a tapster, and his quick wit waster in giving reckonings ... (B 1.2.168).

These four examples are from one scene of a play only. They suggest that, for Shakespeare, wit was a quality of mind not necessarily associated only with 'funny' in the modern sense. The range of mental experience covered by the word is brought out further if we study its use in an early comedy such as *Love's Labours Lost*. Here we find 'wit' as a quality possessed by the young but not by the old, and associated with the idea of rising sap in the new shoots of a tree (1.2.85; 2.1.54); as incompatible with love, an idea reiterated in *Romeo and Juliet* (1.2.165); associated with the heat of a horse spurred to speed (2.1.120); as a ball game or duel between two persons (5.2.29; 5.2.484); as penetrating and sharp (2.1.49; 5.2.398). There are two interesting examples of the inner connection felt to exist between wit and folly in spite of their apparent contradiction (5.2.69; 5.2.373). In the second of these, Berowne speaks to Rosaline:

This jest is dry to me. My gentle sweet,
Your wit makes wise things foolish: when we greet
With eyes best seeing, heaven's fiery eye,
By light we lose light....

The relation between wit and wisdom is expressed in terms of that between the eye and the sun, the sun which is both the source of the light by which we see and also conceived of as the eye of heaven, the source of divine omniscience.⁴¹ Wit turns to folly when it looks too directly into the sun: the inner relation between wit and folly is this to be understood in terms of wit ignoring its own limits, a kind of hubris or inflation. In the same play we have wit as hurtful (4.3.145; 5.2.64; 5.2.398) and as associated with the creative power of poetry and invention (4.2.158). Finally in Rosaline's last speech to Berowne we have wit used twice within ten lines, once with the emphasis on its corrosive quality, once on its cleansing, healing quality:

Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Berowne,
Before I saw you, and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute

⁴¹ Pattazoni, *The All-Knowing God*. English translation (London, 1956), pp. 121,151.

That lie within the mercy of your wit:
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And there withal to win me, if you please,
Without the which I am not to be won,
You shall this twelve month term from day to day,
Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavour of your wit
To enforce the pai'ned impotent to smile.

(5.2.831-844)

As we have already seen, the relationship between 'wit' and 'will' was of great importance in the Elizabethan view of man's psychology.⁴² In *Love's Labours Lost* it is to a defective connection between the two that the weakness in Longaville's character is attributed:

The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,
If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,
Is a sharp wit match'd with too blunt a will;
Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills
It should none spare that come within his power.

(2.1.49).

and in a more famous passage, his father's ghost speaks to Hamlet:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitrous gifts –
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce! – won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen.

But the word 'wit' was also used at a lower level, to describe the five 'inward' sense that were often associated with the more familiar five outward sense. Examples given in the *New English Dictionary* suggest that the distinction between outer and inner was in Shakespeare's day, comparatively recent.

⁴² Bamborough, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-48; Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101; Spencer, *op. cit.*, p.24; Tillyard, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-4.

- 1300 Hearing, sight, smelling and feel, chewing, the wits five.
- 1515 I comfort the wits five, the tasting, smelling and hearing. I refresh the sight and feeling.
- 1532 In Tindale's Book of Common Prayer: 'there is no bread in the sacrament, nor wine, though the five wits say all yea'.
- 1570 The five wits bodily and ghostly.

This 'lower' sense of the word, in which wit and sensation are close to each other, is the one present when Shakespeare uses the plural form (as also in contemporary usage). Thus in the Rejection Scene in Henry IV the Lord Chief Justice reprimands Falstaff: 'Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?'

and in Twelfth Night, the Clown mocks Malvolio: 'Alas, sir, how fell you beside your five wits?'

This sense is related to the now almost obsolete early use of the word to mean 'to know'. Now found only in such forms as 'unwittingly' (to mean 'unconsciously', it was one of the basic Anglo-Saxon sense, as in the noun *witan*, the assembly of wise men. Etymologically, this form is connected with German *wissen*, *Witz*; Latin *videre*, Greek *eidon* (= 'I saw') and (*oida* = 'I know'), and the Sanskrit *veda* (= knowledge)/ In the most recent edition of Kluge's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, we read of the German *Witz*:

Vom Wissen ausgehend, war Witz im vorliterarischen Deutsch das Urwort des Verstandesbereichs, in dem die allen Menschen zukommende Klugheit mit dem erworbenen Wissensinhalt des einzelnen noch zusammenfloss.

Onians has written of the seeing-knowing nexus of meaning in the aorist *eidon* and perfect *oida* (tense forms of the same verb *eido*) and has explained their connection

By the primal unity of mind in which perception or cognition is associated with or immediately followed by an emotion and a tendency to action varying in degree and kind according to the nature of the object, a unity whose survival in our own processes is stressed by the 'ideo-motor' theory

of modern psychology which asserts that 'every idea is not only a state or act of knowing but also a tendency to movement'.⁴³

The quotation from *Love's Labours Lost* in which the wit is related to wisdom as the eye to the sun, reminds us of a more primitive level on which seeing and knowing are experienced as one.

These examples may suffice to show how manifold were the meanings of the word 'wit' in Shakespeare's day.⁴⁴ On the one hand it reaches down into the physiological structures of perception; on the other, out into the creative fantasy of poetry and rhetoric, the conceits of courtly dialogue and the humour of the potboy. For Shakespeare the word has still the almost infinite range of associations of the sixteenth century, although it is beginning to take on the more specific connotation of the seventeenth. In the 1548 Book of Common Prayer it can still refer to the seat of consciousness or thought:

O Holy Ghost, into our wits send down thine heavenly light.

and in 1526 Tindale translates 1 Corinthians, 14-20 with 'Brethren be not children in wit', a sense taken up by Shakespeare in *Midsummer Night's Dream* when Bottom wakes from his enchanted sleep: 'I had a dream, past the wit of man, to say, what dream it was.' Whereas when Falstaff uses the term himself, see look forward to Boyle's definition of 1665:

That nimble and acceptable Faculty of the mind, whereby some Men have a readiness, a subtilty, in conceiving things, and a quickness, and neatness, in expressing them, all which the custom of speaking comprehends under the name of Wit.

When Morgann, a hundred years later, found the clue to Falstaff's character in his Wit, his psychological insight led him back to the earlier and more inclusive conceptions of wit, in which lies, foolishness and all incongruities, even to the extreme case of vice itself, could be included. This level of psychological organization is familiar to us from Freud's book *Jokes and their relation to the Unconscious*, and from Jung's work on the Trickster and Mercurius figures.

⁴³ Onians, *Origins of European Thought*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴ Lest my argument may seem to be making too much of the various associative meanings one word may have had for Shakespeare, reference should perhaps be made to studies such as: Willcock, *Shakespeare as Critic of Language* (London, 1934), and the books by Spurgeon, Armstrong and Clemen already cited.

The English translator of Freud's book remarks in the introduction on the difficulty of rendering the German *Witz* into English, combining as the word does shades of meaning found in the English words joke, wit and fun. Although using the word 'joke' as the main translation, he is at times compelled to use 'wit' in order to retain the correct sense.

Freud explains the psychological effectiveness of jokes in terms of relief of psychic tension or economy of psychic energy. He distinguishes three groups of joke techniques and then writes:

We see that the first and third of these groups – the replacement of thing-associations by word-associations and the use of absurdity – can be brought together as re-establishing old liberties and getting rid of the burden of intellectual upbringing; they are psychical reliefs which can in a sense be contrasted with the economising which constitutes the second group. Relief from psychical expenditure that is already there (i.e. from the burden of intellectual upbringing) and economising in psychical expenditure that is only about to be called for – from these two principles all the techniques of jokes, and accordingly all pleasure from these techniques, are derived.⁴⁵

This idea of wit as 're-establishing old liberties and getting rid of the burden of intellectual upbringing' fits Falstaff well.

Elsewhere Freud speaks of wit as a special capacity, in a sense reminiscent of sixteenth century psychological teaching.

Although the joke work is an excellent method of getting pleasure out of psychical processes, it is nevertheless evident that not everyone is equally capable of making use of that method, the joke work is not at everyone's command, and altogether only a few people have a plentiful amount of it; and then they are distinguished by being spoken of as having 'wit'. Wit appears in this connection as a special capacity – rather in the class of the old mental 'faculties'; and it seems to emerge fairly independently of the others, such as intelligence, imagination, memory etc.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Freud, *Standard Works*, Vol VIII, p. 127.

⁴⁶ Freud, *op. cit.*, p 140.

This capacity joking shares with dreaming, and Freud draws many comparisons between the two, though he considers that in the dream-work 'representation by the opposite plays a far greater part even than in jokes'.⁴⁷

This conception of joking as related to forgotten or repressed levels of meaning, to 'children's play with words or thoughts which have been frustrated by rational criticism' as 'presenting a double face to their hearer, forcing him to adopt two different views of them' is apposite to Falstaff. It is all the more a pity to find Freud's view of Falstaff himself⁴⁸ so uninspired.

The grandiose humorous effect of a figure like that of the fat knight Sir John Falstaff rests on an economy in contempt and indignation. We recognize him as an undeserving gourmandise and swindler but our condemnation is disarmed by a whole number of factors. We can see that he knows himself as well as we do; he impresses us by his wit and, besides this, his physical misproportion has the effect of encouraging us to take a comic view of him instead of a serious one, as though the demands of morality and honour must rebound from so fat a stomach. His doings are on the whole harmless, and are almost excused by the comic baseness of the people he cheats. We admit that the poor fellow has a right to try to live and enjoy himself like anyone else, and we almost pity him because in the chief situations we find him a plaything in the hands of someone far his superior. So we cannot feel angry with him and we add all that we economize in indignation with him to the comic please which he affords us apart from this. Sir John's own humour arises in fact from the superiority of an ego which neither his physical nor his moral defects can rob of its cheerfulness and assurance.

When we turn from Freud's contribution to the psychology of humour to that of Jung, the Trickster nature of Falstaff is at once evident. In his essay on the Trickster Jung refers to the same historical background in medieval carnival, New Year festivals, and the profane Italian theatre of the fifteen and early sixteenth centuries which is recognized as providing the dramatic 'origins' of Falstaff 'that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffians,

⁴⁷ Freud, *op. cit.*, p 174.

⁴⁸ Freud, *op. cit.*, footnote to P. 231.

that vanity in years.' But the connection with Mercurius is perhaps worth a more detailed exposition.

The metaphorical connection between wit and salt is well established. Shakespeare equates the two in a play on words in *Tow Gentlemen of Verona* (3.1.370): the Latin phrase *Sal Atticum* to mean wit was first used in English in 1633, and the *New English Dictionary* gives a 1579 example of salt used to mean 'that which gives liveliness, freshness or piquancy to a person's character, life etc.' while the phrase 'salt of wit' is used by an early seventeenth century writer. Salt as something which both hurts yet cleanses a wound has almost precisely the double function attributed to wit in Rosaline's speech to Berowne which we quoted above (5.2.831-844).

In *Mysterium Coniunctius* Jung has given extensive proof of the relationship felt by the alchemist between Mercurius and salt. In one passage, after giving various examples of the salt-Christ identification he writes:

The Christ parallel runs through the late alchemical speculations that set in after Boehme, and it was made possible by the *sal=sapientia* equation. Already in antiquity salt denoted wit, good sense, good taste etc, as well as spirit. Cicero for instance remarks: 'In wit (*sale*) and humour Caesar has surpassed them all.' But it was the Vulgate that had the most decisive influence on the formation of alchemical concepts. In the Old Testament even the 'salt of the covenant' has a moral meaning. In the New Testament the famous words 'Ye are the salt of the earth' show that the disciples were regarded as personifications of a higher insight and divine wisdom ... The other well-known passage is in Mark 9.50: 'Salt is a good thing; but if the salt becomes tasteless what will you use to season it with? You must have alst in yourselves, and keep peace among yourselves ...'

and he also quotes Colossians 4.6: 'Let your speech be always with grace, and seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man' and comments: 'Here salt undoubtedly means insight, understanding, wisdom.'⁴⁹

And later:

⁴⁹ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 241-2

Apart from its preservative quality salt has mainly the metaphorical meaning of *sapientia*. With regard to this aspect the *Tractatus Aureus* says: 'It is said in the mystic language of our sages, 'He who works without salt will never raise dead bodies .. he who works without salt draws a bow without a string. For you must know that these sayings refer to a very different kind of salt from the common mineral ... Sometimes they call the medicine itself 'salt'. These words are ambiguous: here 'salt' means 'wit' as well as 'wisdom'.⁵⁰

Salt is again and again associated with the moon and the sea (pp. 187, 191-2, 197, 235, 246). Like Hermes, who was also god of thieves and frauds⁵¹, so also was Falstaff the servant of the moon, and his 'time' was of the tides' ebb and flow, not of the sun.

Falstaff: Marry then, sweet wag, when thou art king let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty; let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minion of the moon, and let men say we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

Prince: Thou sayest well, and it holds well too, for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed as the sea is by the moon.... (A 1.2.24-35)

Morgann dares to explain the 'vice' within Falstaff as the greatest 'incongruity' of all, and in this insight he is confirmed by the secret relation between Christ and the Devil which Jung sees as mediated by the figure of Mercurius. On the one hand Mercurius is

the spirit of the chaotic waters of the beginning, before the second day of Creation, before the separation of opposites and hence before the advent

⁵⁰ Jung, *op. cit.*, p 245.

⁵¹ Jung, *Spirit Mercurius*, separately printed (NY), p.49.

of consciousness. That is why it leads those whom it overcomes neither upward nor beyond, but back into chaos.⁵²

but on the other hand it is the salt which causes 'the *aqua pontica* to behave very much like the baptismal water of the church'. Just so do we feel Falstaff to be redeemed by his wit, yet also finally destroyed by that quality (or defect) which finds 'the truth about himself as something very obvious which he has never taken the trouble to define.' And Morgann could not have asked for a better description of that quality in Falstaff which treats the incongruity of opposites as a reason for wit and not as demanding a choice between either-or than what Jung writes in the *Spirit Mercury*⁵³:

To the Christian attitude the dark other one is always the devil. Mercury avoids exposing himself to such a pre-judgement by only a hair's breadth. But he avoids it, thanks to the fact that he scorns to carry on opposition at any price. The magic of his name enables him, in spite of all his ambiguity and duplicity, to maintain himself unaffected by the split, for as an ancient pagan god he retains a natural undividedness that is impervious to logical or moral contradictions.

Through his wit Falstaff was thus associated with all the possibilities of transformation latent in that level of experience which exists before the emergence of opposites. It is his wit that gives him the 'touch of infinity' on which Bradley remarked.⁵⁴ What he lacks is an enduring point of reference outside himself. In the First Part, the Prince provides him with such an outer pole. But as the Prince moves out of his influence, his wit turns against him until he is finally exposed as the victim of his own unconsciousness.⁵⁵

⁵² Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol 14, p. 197.

⁵³ Jung, *Spirit Mercurius*, p. 44.

⁵⁴ A.C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, (London, 1909). His lecture on the Rejection of Falstaff, which sets out to answer the questions: 'What do we feel, and what are we meant to feel, as we witness this rejection? And what does our feeling imply as to the character of Falstaff and the new King?', is one of the essential critical discussions of the whole problem.

⁵⁵ Such wide use has been made in this section of Morgann's arguments from the eighteenth century, that reference must be made to a very thorough modern attack on Morgann's presuppositions, in E.E. Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies* (New York, 1927). Stoll argues that Morgann was completely beside the point in his approach to Falstaff's 'character', because he ignored the fact that Falstaff was a 'type', not a character. Stoll's thesis is thus in line with my own argument, but whereas he argues that Falstaff was only a 'type', it is my submission that we can only understand Falstaff by seeing him as belonging *both* to the theatre of types, and *also* to the theatre of realism. Much that Stoll has to say is however so apposite to my central concern to insist that we will never understand the 'mask' if we think only in terms of contemporary ideas or realism, that I cannot resist one quotation:

We fail to penetrate the mask of unrealistic and malicious portrayal because, in or out of soliloquy, the particular method of characterization is a thing outworn, outgrown...Characters are no longer driven to banter or expose themselves. Psychology, born of sympathy, will have none of it, as a method too external, ill-fitting, double tongued The lines of the character are for us confused: the author seems to peer through and wink at the audience and our modern sympathy and craving for reality are vexed and thwarted, somewhat as they are by the self-consciousness of the villains or by the butt-and-wit-in-one (p. 469).

This is a clear statement of the modern difficulty in appreciating the 'reality' of the 'type'.

3) Holiday

The third group of dramatic images in which we recognize the transforming possibilities associated with Falstaff are centred round his attitude to Time and Holiday.

When we first meet him, Falstaff is defined for us as a man without relation to time.

Prince: What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

Falstaff: Indeed, you come near me now, Hal, for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars and not by Phoebus....

and Falstaff goes on to wish that when the Prince be King, he will not invoke the time of the Day to confound 'the gentlemen of the shade, the minions of the moon.' Traversi writes of this passage:

Falstaff, as the Prince brings out in his elaborate reply, repudiates time. Time is no concern of his, as it will be in ever increasing measure of the politicians who will become – as we shall see – its victims; but the very fact that he repudiates it implies that he will himself have to be repudiated before the Prince can take up a vocation in which he will be at once conscious of time and, in some sense, its slave.⁵⁶

This contrast between Falstaff as repudiating Time, and the politicians who live within and under Time, is one of the recurring dramatic polarities of the two plays. In the first part, it is chiefly evident in the contrast between Falstaff's and Hotspur's chivalrous and already outdated attitude to 'honour'; in the second part, the implications of a more modern political attitude and obsession with time became apparent in the speeches of the rebels.

⁵⁶ Traversi, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

Falstaff serves as a connecting link between two worlds, the tavern world of comic incident, and the world of court rhetoric and political decision.⁵⁷

This distinction between 'incident' and 'decision' serves to isolate and define the two contrasted attitudes to Time. To Falstaff, things *happen*. The politicians round the throne, on the other hand, see themselves or their enemies, as the agents by and through whom events are made. In the only scene in the two plays in which Falstaff is on the stage during one of the great political confrontations, he has a single line of interjection. The rebel Worcester argues to the King that he has not sought the armed confrontation at Shrewsbury. The King replies: 'You have not sought it! How comes it then?' and Falstaff interrupts: 'Rebellion lay in his way and he found it' (A 5.1.28).

Neither the rebels nor the King can allow that the battle on which they are about to engage is an 'incident', something which has happened to them, something which they have found in their way. To do so would be to deny the reality of the world of political choice. For both the rebels and the King, the cause of the present situation lies in the deliberate agency of the opposite side in having broken a pre-existing order. The older generation of politicians (the King and Worcester in this scene for instance) still cling to a traditional view by which they themselves are the agents of 'necessity', while the 'other side' are the active, disturbing force working against the natural order. Thus Worcester:

Ye stand opposed by such means
As you yourself have forged against yourself. (A 5.1.67)

It is only with the younger generation of politicians, represented by Hal's brother Prince John, that there is full consciousness that there is no such thing as a 'natural order', that political action is both means and end. In the act of treachery by which he secures a total and bloodless victory over the rebel army in b 4.2.100ff., he expresses a cynicism as total as that of Falstaff, but lacking the indifference which gives to Falstaff's cynicism its redemptive possibilities. For although Falstaff's attitude to politics is in many ways what the Elizabethans would have condemned as 'machiavellian', he recognizes, in a way which Prince John does not, how destructive of humanity such political cynicism is. Falstaff's rejection of the world of political choice has its roots deep in his rejection of the distinction between virtue and vice. When he first hears of the rebellion he cries:

⁵⁷ Traversi, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

Well, God be thanked for these rebels, they offend none but the virtuous; I laud them, I praise them. (A 3.3.189)

But it is when we consider Falstaff's connection to that special aspect of time represented as Holiday, that we become aware how deep and widespread are the roots of his being. We have already heard the Prince invoking the distinction between workday and holiday in his opening soliloquy excusing his friendship with Falstaff and in the closing Rejection Scene it is the new King who accepts the need to work, while Falstaff lives with the delusion (or is it faith?) that all is Holiday.

Holiday is the original setting for Comedy as a dramatic form and Falstaff is one of the great incarnations of Comedy. There is now a considerable literature which traces and analyses the connection between Falstaff as a dramatic character and the traditional figure of the Lord of Misrule in the Morality Plays of the English medieval and early Tudor stage.⁵⁸ I propose to quote at length from one book only, in order to bring out some of the social and indeed metaphysical issues which are focussed in the Rejection Scene. These quotations will serve incidentally to begin to define the nature of *acting* in comedy, and the relation of that 'Make-believe' to reality.

In *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* Professor Barber is concerned with the general nature of 'festival' in Elizabethan England and with various plays, including the comic or Falstaffian aspect of *Henry IV*, as examples of festive comedy. He accepts the fact that in the character of Falstaff Shakespeare builds on a 'type' already established in the medieval morality play, the Lord of Misrule who triumphs within the Saturnalia.⁵⁹ But he warns us against seeing too close an analogy between Elizabethan drama and more primitive ritual.

The Falstaff comedy, far from being forced into an alien environment of historical drama, is begotten by that environment, giving and taking meaning as it grows. The implications of the saturnalian attitude are more drastically and inclusively expressed here than anywhere else, because here misrule is presented along with rule and long with the tensions that challenge rule. Shakespeare dramatizes not only holiday, but also the need for holiday and the need to limit holiday ... It is in the *Henry IV* plays that we can consider most fruitfully general questions concerning the relation of comedy to analogous

⁵⁸ In addition to books by Tillyard, Spivack, Stoll and Dover Wilson already quoted, I have used: Farnham, *Medieval Comic Spirit in the English Renaissance*, in *John Quincy Adams Memorial studies* (Washington 1948); Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* (London, 1931). Useful on the development of the *capitano* as a theatrical type; Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* Princeton, 1959).

⁵⁹ The essential source book here is of course Frazer, *The Scapegoat*.

forms of symbolic action in folk rituals: not only the likenesses of comedy to ritual, but the differences, the features of comic form which make it comedy and not ritual. One way in which our time has been seeing the universal in literature has been to find in complex literary works patterns which are analogous to myths and rituals, and which can be regarded as archetypes, in some sense primitive and fundamental. But at the same time, such analysis can be misleading if it results in equating the literary form with primitive analogues. When we are dealing with so developed an art as Shakespeare's, in so complex an epoch as the Renaissance, primitive patterns may be seen in literature mainly because literary imagination, exploiting the heritage of literary form, disengages then from the suggestions of a complex culture...[so that] in using an analogy with temporary king and scapegoat to bring out patterns of symbolic action in Falstaff's role, it will be important to keep it clear that the analogy is one we make now, that it is not Shakespeare's analogy; otherwise we falsify his relation to tradition In creating the Falstaff comedy, he fused two main saturnalian traditions, the clowning customary on the stage and the folly customary on holiday and produced something unprecedented.⁶⁰

But Falstaff is not only Clown and Fool, he is also related to the figure of the Scapegoat. Barber examines the Second Part in terms of carrying off bad luck by the scapegoat in the saturnalian tradition, and writes directly of the Rejection Scene:

Hals' final expulsion of Falstaff appears in the light of these analogies to carry out an impersonal pattern, not merely political but ritual in character. After the guilty reign of Bolingbroke, the prince is making a fresh start as the new king. At a level beneath the moral notions of a personal reform, we can see a nonlogical process of purification by sacrifice – the sacrifice of Falstaff. The career of the old king, a successful usurper whose conduct of affairs has been sceptical and opportunistic, has cast doubt on the validity of the whole conception of a divinely ordered and chivalrous kingship to which Shakespeare and his society were committed. And before Bolingbroke, Richard II had given occasion for doubts about the rituals of kingship in an opposite way, by trying to use them magically. Shakespeare had shown Richard assuming that the symbols of majesty should be absolutes, that the names of legitimate power should be transcendently effective regardless of social forces. Now both these attitudes have been projected onto Falstaff; he carries to comically delightful and degraded extremes both a magical use of moral sanctions and the complementary opportunistic manipulation and scepticism. So the ritual

⁶⁰ Barber, *op.cit.*, pp. 192, 194-5.

analogy suggests that by turning on Falstaff as scapegoat, as the villagers turned on their *Mardi Gras*, the prince can free himself from the sins, the 'bad luck' of Richard's reign and of his father's reign, to become a king in whom chivalry and a sense of divine ordination are restored.⁶¹

If we accept this view of Falstaff's heredity, then we can see in the Rejection Scene not merely the choice of one role as against another, but the act by which profane and political Time defines the limits beyond which Riot and Holiday cannot be allowed to trespass. Falstaff is, as it were, lost in Holiday. He does not know that Holiday only derives its meaning by contrast with workday. The Prince, on the other hand, is aware of the need for, and the reality of, both sacred and secular time. He knows that human life moves between the two. In choosing to put distance between himself and Falstaff he is recognizing the separate reality of the two aspects of Time.

We have now studied the imagery associated with the figures of King and Falstaff. How does it affect our understanding of our feelings in the Rejection Scene?

The new King has just left Westminster Abbey, crowned and consecrated. He has assumed the role, the persona of King. Wearing the garments of royalty, being a King, he can no longer associate with Falstaff. We see now from outside the outer form of the royal persona. But earlier we have seen how ambiguous and uncertain is the nature of the kingship which Hal must assume. He knows more fully than his brothers or the Lord Chief Justice that his is no ready-to-wear mask which society gives to him on coming of age.

The nature of kingship has been called into question by:

- (i) a poison within the royal blood itself, a poison which is felt to be akin to the betrayal which stands at the heart of a Christian culture;
- (ii) a changing sense of the relation between individual and society so that the source of political meaning is increasingly felt to lie in the individual and not in the forms of society;

⁶¹ Barber, *op.cit.*, p. 206.

(iii) a fundamental shift in the relation felt to exist between cosmos, society and man.

Through association with Falstaff, the Prince has been vouchsafed a vision of the infinite possibilities available to man and society when Form is allowed to fall back into the flux of Potentiality, possibilities of both destruction and of new forms of understanding: the destruction that ensues when

(i) the link between name and thing is broken so that society is left with no common language;

(ii) there is no longer agreement on how to use the common medium of exchange and expression of value – money;

(iii) man forgets the limitation laid on him by the human inability to know oneself, a limitation drastically intensified in Christian culture by belief in original sin.

and the new forms of understanding inherent in

a) creative awareness of the power of the mask.

b) 'wit'

c) recognition of time as a function of consciousness.

In terms of Shakespeare's own development the personality which the Prince has created from the tension of these experiences has drastic limitations, and it is our sense of all that he has *not* assimilated from Falstaff which accounts for the feeling of loss of life which accompanied the Rejection Scene. But nevertheless the new persona which he wears as King is a creative achievement that is only a 'pretence' or a 'deception' for those who, like Falstaff, have not realized that *choice* is an essential constituent of human consciousness.

The rejection scene at the end of Henry IV is one of the most famous dramatic instances of a man 'assuming a new role; and thereby being, apparently, 'untrue' to a life with which he had previously been identified. Our study of the imagery of the two plays has shown how impossible it is in this instance to draw a clear distinction between the prince's 'true nature' and the 'role' which he assumes. If we take his relationship with his father, with Hotspur and the Lord Chief Justice, with the whole political action of the play, as the public side of his development, orientated towards society and the collective; and his relationship with Falstaff as the private side of his development which will have nothing to do with the forms of society, then we can say that his adult personality as king has been

formed within a field of tension existing between two relatively opposite poles. But the dramatic tension of the plays is not expressed in terms of a conflict between a healthy society threatened by Falstaffian anarchy. Society is sick, corrupt, threatened from within itself by dissolution, and in Falstaff we see both the regenerative and destructive faces of anarchy. The Prince does not have to choose between two ready-to-wear masks, one offered by Hotspur and the Lord Chief Justice, the other by Falstaff. He has to create a new concept of the kingly role suitable to the total situation represented by the mutual dependence of society and anarchy following on the destruction of the medieval order centred on Richard II. His 'education' is thus a fine example of the creative role of the personal as a function of relationship between ego and the public world.

Part II The Nature of the Actor

INTRODUCTION

What does this study-in-depth of the two groups of dramatic images confronted in the Rejection Scene tell us about the nature of the actor?

If we think of the royal images as grouped round the emergence of the young king out of the dissolution of the old, and as set off against the less differentiated and more diffuse Falstaffian images, we get an extraordinarily rich and complex structure of meaning. Both King and Falstaff have some of the same images in common: the importance attached to the relation between names and things, and to the distinction between everyday and holiday, for instance. Other images are peculiar to the King: the political group centred on the contrast between consecration and personal power as the explanatory principle in politics, and the intensely complicated and numinous group revolving round the father-son tension are examples. While the possibilities inherent in 'wit' are something which only Falstaff could teach the Prince.

But if we consider these various images, what is perhaps most striking is the extent to which they reflect issues common to every individual member of the audience, insofar as he is a member of society as well as a private individual. This point, which I will elaborate in the first section of Part II, provides the clue to what I believe is the chief lesson to be learned from our study so far: that we can only understand what the actor is an does if we think in terms of a three-cornered relationship which involves the *action* of the play, the *actor* and the *audience*, and that this relationship is not fixed or static, but subject to change. I will further argue that this relationship between action, actor and audience is changing within the dramatic tradition of which Shakespeare's History Plays are a part, and that this change can be described as a movement away from ritual into realism.

This distinction between ritual and realism in acting is so important that it needs further amplification. This is provided in the second section of the next Part, 'Action, Actor and Audience in Classical Greece'. The argument is developed round the etymology of the word *hypocrite* in Greek, the use of the mask in primitive ritual, and the development of Greek tragedy out of ritual. It is shown that realism is not an opposite to ritual, but a development out of it. What a man is 'in himself' is not an opposite to what he is a 'type'; rather, it is only through learning to be a type that man learns to be himself.

Once we have reached this stage in our exploration of the nature of the actor in the theatre, we can turn to our primary concern with acting as a psychological phenomenon. I shall argue that the dramatic evidence submitted shows that the function of the mask is highly ambiguous, and that this ambiguity is rooted in the nature of the actor; because the actor is one of our remaining points of contact with that level of experience on which individual and society are distinguished and united, at one and the same time, in ritual, a level on which the antithesis between individual and society presupposed in certain of Jung's definitions of the persona is meaningless. This argument, which is the heart of the thesis, is developed in three parts. First I demonstrate by quotation the various shades of meaning which Jung attributed to the persona. Second, I relate these various meanings to the different conception of acting within the ritual-into-realism development already studied. Third, I suggest that the meaning and value we attach to the persona depends on how we answer such a questions as: which comes first, man or society?

1. ACTION, ACTOR AND AUDIENCE IN HENRY IV

In choosing the Henry IV Rejection Scene as the centre of the argument we have selected a dramatic situation in which the 'playing of a role' is on two levels. The first level, with which we have till now been mainly concerned, is *within* the plays, and involves the relationship between particular actors, as well as between actors and audiences. It is the level on which Falstaff feels the new King is acting when he says to Shallow:

I shall be sent for in private to him; look you,
he must seem thus to the world.... (B 5.5.78)

and on which the new King himself says:
This new and gorgeous garment, majesty,
Sits not so easy on me as you think ... (B 5.2.44)

The second level is implicit in the four plays of Richard II, Henry IV Parts I and II, and Henry V: plays written by Shakespeare to point a contemporary political moral relevant to the situation of the Elizabethan monarchy, in the late 1590's as the Virgin Queen grew old and the problem of the succession became critical.⁶² On this level the Prince is acting a role that is impersonal in something of the same sense as Orestes or Oedipus were impersonal figures for audiences of Aeschylus and Sophocles: he was a figure of national regeneration, and his education *had* to happen in the way it did not for reasons of inner development of character but because that was how it had in fact been. The past which Shakespeare was dramatizing was historical in a sense which the themes of the classical Greek dramatists were not. But nevertheless, its re-enactment on the Elizabethan stage had much of the quality of the collective re-enactment we associate with ritual.

But this was not only true of the political theme. It was only a generation since the English stage had broken free of the conventions of the Morality and Passion Plays. Falstaff himself was on one level drawn to the pattern of an actual historical figure, Sir John Oldcastle: while on a deeper level he was modelled on one of the great traditional figures of the English Morality Play, the Vice.

Because he carried so many of the overtones of such a traditional figure, his own role, and the scenes in which he appears, had a predetermined pattern of their own which

⁶² The relevant evidence is collected mainly in: Campbell, *Shakespeare's Heroes* (*op. cit.*). Also useful material in Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (*op. cit.*); Tillyard, *Some Mythical Elements in English Literature* (London, 1961).

Shakespeare could not ignore. The Prince's regeneration was not only predetermined in terms of political necessity; it was also predetermined by the whole corpus of the 'morality' tradition which was in Shakespeare's day as old as Shakespeare's plays are for us today.⁶³

Falstaff was a 'type' in the sense in which van der Leeuw writes:

Modern drama begins as a comedy of types. L'avare, le bourgeois gentilhomme, le malade imaginaire, are types, not characters in the modern sense of the word. Sir John Falstaff, Mistress Quickly, Aguecheek, and the innumerable fools and clowns are *tipi fissi*. But just because they are types, they are also men, often on a grand scale.⁶⁴

He is a 'type' drawn from Vice, from the morality figure of Riot, and also through the Italian theatre from the *miles gloriosus* of Seneca.⁶⁵

It is necessary to remember these facts if we are to understand the nature of the 'acting' which is going on in Henry IV. S.H. Bethell has put the point thus:

The Elizabethan drama's sudden efflorescence and its rapidly attained maturity, have tended to distract attention from the dramatic tradition out of which it developed, and to which it must have been bound by the strongest ligaments of organic growth. Miracle plays were still performed in Shakespeare's youth, and moralities continued to be produced well into the second half of the 16th century. It is very important to realize that the degree of representationalism attained in Shakespeare's characters was something quite new, and that an elderly member of the Globe audience might be more familiar with personified virtues and vices than with the new-fangled character types....⁶⁶

and

⁶³ Besides literature already quoted in Part I, the central work of reference here is E.K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, Vol 1 (London, 1903).

⁶⁴ Van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty* (London, 1961).

⁶⁵ Cp. Stoll's book quoted in Part I.

⁶⁶ Bethell, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (London, 1944), p. 97.

Shakespeare's technique of character presentation reflects his own, and the Elizabethan, mode of thought. He is concerned for a number of things besides character: ideas, words, wit. His speeches do not merely illustrate their speakers: what is said is more important than why it should be said.⁶⁷

Bethell is here making a very important point: that if we try to see 'character' in Shakespeare's plays in the sense that two hundred years of the novel and the whole Romantic tradition have given to the word 'character', then we will misunderstand completely the relation between action, actor and audience when Shakespeare wrote. The action was not something which Shakespeare had conjured up out of his own imagination. It was already *known* to his audience. The roles which the Prince and Falstaff played were not attempts at realistic portrayal of character which the audience could watch from outside; they were much more attempts to express aspects of a collective myth of which the audience felt themselves to be part.

Tillyard has made the same point in considering Shakespeare's development as a dramatist from the early history plays of Henry VI and Richard III, to the later four we have been chiefly concerned with.

It is in these plays (Henry VI and Richard III) that we can see as good an example as it is possible to find of works owing their origin, and much of their power, to a myth cherished by almost the whole community... Rich in promise but still immature and developing, Shakespeare needed the support of a current myth and the great popular backing it had, to achieve the grand conceptions and the nobility of shaping that give to the Henry IV plays their quality ... For all his proclivities to make living people, he is now content that sharpness of character should yield to the impersonal workings of God's will, that realism should yield to ritual, and that the author's idiosyncrasies should be swallowed up in the public sentiments which he is content to reverence....

In Richard II and Henry IV he claims a new breadth for his expanding genius; and the myth must perforce co-exist with other things. This he could do without disloyalty, for the myth itself was not very exacting in its details during this stretch of history. He was not offending against it when he enlarged a slender tradition into the massive creations of Falstaff and his fellows....

⁶⁷ Bethell, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

The process Shakespeare had gone through was not only that of discarding the need to rely on a myth; it was also that of learning to make myths. Already through Shylock he had added to the stock of his country's mythology. Another addition, Falstaff, was not only an addition but the means of a new freedom.⁶⁸

In emphasising Shakespeare's position between ritual and realism Tillyard has here given us an important clue to the range of problems we have to bear in mind in thinking about the nature of acting. Shakespeare was far closer to the popular rituals of his day and of the middle ages than we, who have lost almost all touch with those rituals, can easily comprehend. It is one facet of Shakespeare's fascination that he spans the whole range from ritual to realism, so that his audiences participate in the action of a ritual which the actors call to mind while at the same time watching from outside the development of a plot which seems to presuppose as sharp a separation between actor and audience as that imposed by the cinema.

That this tension between ritual and realism is central to the dramatic tension between Prince and Falstaff was made clear over thirty years ago by William Empson. In his book *Some Versions of Pastoral*⁶⁹ he has a chapter on 'Double Plots' in which he investigates the imaginative effectiveness of the contrast between Heroic against Pastoral, High against Low, which the Double Plot makes possible. In the case of Falstaff he relates this effect, through the Miracle Plays, with some of the central paradoxes of the Christian tradition.

Probably the earliest form of double plot is the comic interlude, often in prose between serious verse scenes. Even here the relation between the two is neither obvious nor constant; the comic part relieves boredom and the strain of belief in the serious part, but this need not imply criticism of it. Falstaff may carry a half secret doubt about the value of the Kings and their quarrels, but the form derived from the Miracle Plays

and Empson instances, as comparable with the way Falstaff plays with the King-*in-potentia*-in Hal, a Miracle Play theme:

to hide a stolen sheep in the cradle and call it a new-born child is a very detailed parallel to the Paschal Lamb, hidden in the appearance of a new-

⁶⁸ *Some Mythical Elements*, *op.cit.* pp. 57-6, 61-2.

⁶⁹ Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London, 1935).

born child, open to scandal because without a legal father (Henry IV as usurper, not legal king), and kept among animals in the manger. The Logos enters humanity from above as the sheep does from below, or takes on the animal nature of man which is like a man becoming a sheep, or sustains all nature and its laws so that in one sense it is as truly present in the sheep as in the man.⁷⁰

It is worth quoting such a critical passage at length, in order to bring home the effort of imagination needed if we are to recapture today the extent to which Shakespeare's original audiences participated in the action of the play. But I find the chief interest in Empson's emphasis on the Double Plot lies in what he has to say on Irony, that quality of imagination without which we cannot hope to

stretch our minds round the whole character (of Falstaff) , and learn to take him, though as the supreme expression of the cult of mockery as strength and the comic idealisation of freedom, yet as both villainous and tragically ill-used.⁷¹

The Double Plot is pre-eminently a dramatic device for bringing together two incommensurable levels of reality. In Henry IV, the Prince belongs to both, to Court and Tavern. In the Rejection Scene he chooses one at the expense of the other. One way of describing the audience's reaction is that since we can participate *in imagination* in both

⁷⁰ Empson, *op. cit.*, p.28.

⁷¹ Empson, *op. cit.*, p.109. On Irony as a quality of mind necessary for understanding Falstaff one could write a book; Irony is indeed a concept around which it would be possible to organize much of the matter of this thesis. The word itself has its roots in the origins of the Greek theatre, just as has hypocrite. The confrontation of Alazon and Eiron in the comedies of Aristophanes has precisely that quality of 'caricature parody and travesty directed against people and objects which lay claim to authority and respect' which Freud saw as one of the characteristics of the comic (cp. Thomson, *Irony, an Historical Introduction* (London, 1926). While in terms of Falstaff, the peculiarly Christian nature of the ironic contrasts involved in the dichotomies of his all-embracing nature have been emphasized by Farnham in his essay on the Mediaeval Comic Spirit in the English Renaissance (*op. cit.*)

The reason (for the Feast of Fools, etc.) seems to be that the Middle Ages found it good for man's soul to be taken down a peg whenever it started to soar. They seem to have been keenly aware that man's soul can soar much too cheaply and easily and to have felt that man in the flesh must never forget the natural lout that is in him, ready to make him ridiculous or even to mark him for Hell ... Shakespeare may or may not have had something of the medieval religious faith. But it is certain that he inherited a medieval comic impulse to check man's soaring pride by using the art of the grotesque ... It is in Falstaff that we find the most complex figure of comedy created by the medieval side of Shakespeare's genius. No matter how much of the *miles gloriosus* has filtered into him, Falstaff is primarily a medieval grotesque figure. He is much more than an ordinary fool, much more than an ordinary clown (pp. 434-5).

levels of reality, it is difficult to sympathize with the need *in reality* to choose. In the 'field' defined by action, actor and audience, the actor is that part of the whole which makes relative the distinction between imagination and reality, or to realise ritual. The actor insists that the worlds of imagination and of reality are totally separate from one another and yet succeeds at the same time to remind us that it is our human nature to live in both these worlds and that to do so we must be prepared to deny the absolute claims of both imagination and of things.

The extent to which the Henry IV plays are concerned with just this problem has been brought out by Eric Auerbach in his great work *Mimesis*.⁷² Within the wider context of his magnificent 'investigation into the literary representation of reality in European culture' Auerbach devotes a chapter to the Hamlet-like scene in Part II in which the Prince talks alone with Poin. He discusses the mood of this scene in terms of that breakdown in the medieval Christian 'creatural view' of man which we have already noted in the imagery clustered round the consecrated and political King, a view of man which has lost its superstructure or extra-human scale of reference, with a resulting introjection of that scale of reference into man himself. The stylistic situation throughout the two plays, the mixture of a sublime and a low style (Empson's Double Plot)

Is rooted in popular tradition, and indeed first of all in the cosmic drama of the story of Christ. There are intermediate steps and it is also true that a variety of folkloristic motifs not of Christian origin have forced their way in. But the creatural view of man, the loose construction with its numerous accessory actions and characters, and the mixture of the sublime with the low cannot in the last analysis come from any other source than the medieval Christian theatre, in which all these things were necessary and essential ... Yet now, in the drama of the Elizabethans, the super-structure of the whole has been lost; the drama of Christ is no longer the general drama, is no longer the point of confluence of all the streams of human destiny. The new dramatized history has a specific human action as its centre, derives its unity from that centre, and the road has been opened for an autonomously human tragedy.⁷³

When Shakespeare lets Falstaff die, off stage, at the beginning of Henry V, it is almost as if something connecting him, and indeed us, to this medieval world of participation in a created and hierarchical universe, has gone. Falstaff as the incarnation of Vice, Misrule,

⁷² Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis*, English translation (Princeton, 1953).

⁷³ Auerbach, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

Folly could be allowed, and is indeed necessary in a universe which culminates in a creator. But in a universe that is ordered around man, centred on human choice, there is no place for him.

To sum up this section: in their various ways four very different critics, Bethell, Tillyard, Empson and Auerbach, all insist that in order to understand Henry IV we must forget our modern presuppositions as to 'character' and try to re-enter a world in which playwright and audience still participated in a common political and religious tradition that was closer to ritual than to realism. When the Prince questions his own identity alone with Poins, it is not only the historic Prince Hal we listen to: it is also the actor in Shakespeare himself, Shakespeare's own sense of what it can mean to act, to be an actor, questioning itself and through questioning moving away from the 'type' of ritual to a more modern loneliness. The actor is a reflector through whom society in transition seeks to see itself. We can define the actor only in terms of his audience and of that audience's reaction to the action on the stage.⁷⁴

Some of the wide implications of this view will appear when we compare the Elizabethan with the classical Greek theatre.

⁷⁴ The actor as 'reflector'. I take the idea from Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater* (New York, 1953), p. 133. This book has been one of the most influential in my background reading for this thesis. The contrast made between the actor-action-audience relationship in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Hamlet, and the experimental modern theatre supports my own submission that it is impossible to define 'acting' without reference to a particular historical context.

2. ACTION, ACTOR AND AUDIENCE IN CLASSICAL GREECE

The word 'hypocrite' (which was one of the starting points of this thesis) will serve as a connecting link between the two Shakespeare plays and the origins of the theatre in classical Greece. In the scene with Poinis in which the Prince's own uncertainty as to his identity is most manifest, the Prince's private and 'inward' feelings for his father are contrasted with his public and 'ostensible' behaviour in a passage which we have already quoted in another context.

Prince: But I tell thee, my heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick, and keeping such vile company as thou hath in reason taken from me all ostentation of sorrow.

Poinis: The reason?

Prince: What would'st thou think of me if I should weep?

Poinis: I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

Prince: It would be every man's thought, and thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks; every man would think me an hypocrite indeed.

(B 2.2.47 seq.)

The word hypocrite has an interesting history.⁷⁵ It derives from a verb meaning both 'to reply to, to answer' and also 'to interpret'. The noun was applied in the sixth century B.C. to the member of the chorus who stepped forth from the chorus to address both chorus and audience, as a kind of intermediary between the two. The standard English language work on the early Greek theatre has this to say:

There is substantial agreement That Thespis introduced speeches by a hypocrite into a performance which had hitherto been given by a chorus alone ... The tradition – that Thespis introduced an actor who impersonated a legendary or historical character, and gave him a prologue and one or more set speeches to deliver instead of leaving him to improvise his remarks – is in itself probable enough. The importance of the change is obvious; and if it was really Thespis who created the actor, the description of him as the first tragic poet or the inventor of tragedy is sufficiently explained and justified....

and goes on to hazard a guess that

⁷⁵ References from Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English dictionary*.

the word hypokrites does not mean 'one who answers the chorus' but rather the 'spokesman' who interprets the poet's text to the public, and that the term must have acquired this sense at the time when, but a division of labour, the poet left the acting to others, instead of being himself the performer of his pieces.⁷⁶

On the later application of the word to acting and actor, we read:

It seems fairly clear that while hypokrinesthai and hypokrites were used in Homer and at least down to Plato's time of the interpretation of dreams and omens, it is very difficult to get away from the meaning 'answer' even in Homer, and impossible afterwards. By the fourth century the meaning 'act', 'actor' (without any consciousness of either derivation) are regularly current; and there is nothing which can enable us to decide from which of the early senses – 'interpret' or 'answer' – the application of the word to the actor's part is derived.⁷⁷

This derivation of the Greek word for actor from a complex of meaning in which 'interpret' and 'answer' are not clearly distinguished from one another, is of extraordinary interest. We can only understand it if we are prepared to make the effort of imagination necessary to re-enter a world in which revelation through inspiration and ritual are taken seriously.

A classical use of the word hypocrites to mean 'interpreter' or 'expositor' is in this passage from Plato's *Timaeus*:

That divination is the gift of heaven to human unwisdom we have good reason to believe, in that no man in his normal sense deals in true and inspired divination, but only when the power of understanding is fettered in sleep or he is distraught by some disorder or, it may be, by divine possession. It is for the man in his ordinary sense to recall and construe the utterances, in

⁷⁶ Pickard-Cambridge, *Dythramb, Tragedy and Comedy* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 109-110. This very sober book subjects the more exciting theories as to the history of the early Greek theatre of such writers as Gilbert Murray, Jane Harrison and Conford, to careful criticism.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 110.

dream or in waking life, of divination or possession, and by reflection to make out in what manner and to whom all the visions of the seer betoken some good or ill, past, present or to come. When a man has fallen into frenzy and is still in that condition, it is not for him to determine the meaning of his own visions and utterances; rather the old saying is true, that only the sound in mind can attend to his own concerns and know himself. Hence it is the custom to set up spokesmen to pronounce judgement on inspired divination. These are themselves given the name of diviners by some who are quite unaware that they are the *expositors* of riddling oracle or vision and best deserve to be called, not diviners, but spokesmen of those who practice divination.⁷⁸

The word hypocrites is here translated expositor. It is at the level of interpretation of oracle, dream or ecstatic utterance that to interpret and to answer are the same. Two levels of human experience are recognized: that of shamanistic frenzy, and that of sound mind. In our sound mind we ask the meaning of the inspired vision, and the hypokrites answers us with an interpretation. (The hypokrites is thus filling in something of the function of the analytical dialogue in which we, while in our sound mind, see to elucidate the meaning of the dream).

What was it in the nature of the actor which made it possible for this same word hypokrites to be applied to him? In what sense was the actor seen as a mediator between two levels of experience, an ecstatic and an everyday? To answer that question we need to go more deeply into the ritual and indeed sacramental origins of the ancient theatre. We shall use as the central theme the nature of the Mask, and beginning with etymology of the word *Persona*, lead through shamanism back into the classical Greek theatre.

The accepted derivation of the Latin word 'persona' is from an Etruscan word 'Phersu'. Franz Altheim collected and summarized the evidence in 1929.⁷⁹ It is further discussed in the 1954 edition of Onians' *Origins of European Thought*.⁸⁰ Basing himself on a series of Etruscan tomb frescoes which represent the introduction of the corpse of the dead man to the gods of the underworld, Altheim argues that Persu was originally *die Verkörperung eines Unterweltgottes oder Dämons, der die Seele des Getöteten im Empfang zu nehmen und zum Hades zu geleiten hatte*, and that later this figure developed into a sort of overseer or leader

⁷⁸ Plato's *Timaeus*, 72B, Cornford translation (London, 1948), p. 288.

⁷⁹ *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 27 (1929) pp. 48 ff.

⁸⁰ Onians, *op. cit.* pp. 114, 429 (notes).

of a cruel 'corpse game' which was part of the Etruscan ritual with their dead. The man playing this role wore special clothing, including a head mask, similar to that used by the first Roman actors, and Altheim also makes a connection between this Etruscan ritual with the dead and the later Roman condemnation of criminals to death in battle with animals. The word 'Phersu' came to be applied to the entire clothing of the man playing the 'leader' role in the Etruscan ceremony, not only to the mask; it was only after the transition to Rome that the word *persona* came to be applied only to the mask.

In Rome the Etruscan tradition was joined in the second century B.C. by the Greek. Altheim sums up the contrast between the two, thus:

Während die griechische Komödie unter dem Zeichen des Dionysos steht, dem Gott des Rausches und der Verzückerung, dem Gott eines gesteigerten Lebens also – haben auf der anderen Seite der Totenkult und die Gottheiten der Unterwelt den Ausgangspunkt gebildet. Es ist der grundsätzliche Gegensatz des Etruskischen gegenüber allem Hellenischen, der auch in dem verschiedenen Ursprung ihres dramatischen Spieles seinen Ausdruck gefunden hat.⁸¹

In his discussion of the Phersu Onians emphasizes the significance of the head covering in the tomb fresco figure. He relates this with various other traditions in which the head had always to be covered in any situation involving contact with the dead, because the head was experienced as the seat of life. From this fact stemmed also the legal concept of *caput* in relation to a man's existence in the community, and the later legal conception of *persona* as 'that attribute in a man which renders him capable of the enjoyment of rights'. A freeman was controlled by his own 'genius', resident in his head; a slave, by the genius of another.⁸² This legal conception of *persona*, especially after it had come into contact with Christian theological ideas was to have a long history of development.⁸³

⁸¹ See also Pauly's *Real. Encyklopadie* (1938), (38) col. 2057, for a refinement of Altheim's case, with some criticism of detail.

⁸² Onians, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-6.

⁸³ The Roman legal position is expounded in such a textbook as Schulz, *Classical Roman Law* (Oxford, 1951).

The term *persona* is used by the classical lawyers as an equivalent to *homo* and in no other sense. All human beings, including slaves, are styled *personae* In post-classical times slaves were excluded from the calls of *personae* and on the other hand corporations were called *personae vice*. But this new conception of *persona* remained in the background in antiquity, and it was not before the scholasticism of the Middle Ages that the idea of legal persons became current in legal science (p. 71). Something of the process by which the linguistic meeting of Christian theology with Roman Law helped to develop the later use of the word *persona* is given in Schlossmann, *Persona und Prosopon im Recht und im christlichen Dogma* (Kiel., 1906). He shows how the Church Fathers, and in particular Origen, began to use the word *Prosopon* not only for human beings but also for Angels; not only for single human beings, but also for

The Greek word for mask, the word which the Romans translated with *persona*, is *prosopon*. In Homer it is always in the plural, even of single persons, to mean face, countenance, with something of the extra sense of the English plural use of 'features'. The area of the face etymologically referred to is the space between and over the eyes. In the phrase *kata prosopon* – in the face of, fronting – we have the sense of 'that which is over against' my face. The association with eye brings the word into connection with the whole series of ideas that group themselves round the eye's quality as both actively emitting a ray, a look, a meaning, and also receiving light, seeing understanding. In the Greek of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. the word came to be used of the actor's mask, then for the person both in the grammatical sense and also in the sense of outer appearance. But to understand the significance of this extension of meaning we must look more closely at the development of the Greek theatre.

Before the emergence of the hypocrites in the sixth century, we have to deal with the role of the mask in communal ritual. After the emergence of the hypocrites, we are concerned with what the theatre meant to the classical Greeks.⁸⁴

To understand how the mask was used in ritual we need to turn to social anthropology. In his book *Shamanism*, Eliade writes on the shamanic mask:

In this connection it would be well to remember that the custom of anointing the face with fat is fairly widespread among 'primitives' and that its meaning is not always so simple as it seems. A disguise or defence against spirits is not always in question, but, rather, an elementary technique for magical participation in the world of spirits. So we find that, in many parts of the world, masks represent ancestors and their wearers are believed to incarnate these. Daubing the face with fat is one of the simplest ways of masking oneself, that is, of incarnating the souls of the dead. Elsewhere masks are connected with men's secret societies and the cult of ancestors ... For wherever it is used the mask manifestly announces the incarnation of a mythical personage (ancestor, mythical animal, god). For its part, the

such collectives as the Church, for invisible as well as visible things. He traces this back to the influence of the Hebrew vocabulary of the Old Testament in which the Hebrew word for face is used not only of people, but of animals, cities, lands, earth, river, elements, winds. *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁸⁴ Besides Pickard-Cambridge, I have used Arnott, *Introduction to the Greek Theatre* (London, 1959); Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy* (London, 1914); Harrison *Ancient Art and Ritual* (London, 1919); also Fergussons' book cited above.

costume trans-substantiates the shaman, it transforms him, before all eyes, into a superhuman being.⁸⁵

In a more philosophical mood, Leeuw writes:

The mask removes human differentiation from the realm of the accidental and raises it to the divine, eternal and meaningful world of the ritual. It transforms that which is into that which should be ... Through the mask, human actions receive a new dimension. It opens a world in which anarchy and possession like in wait. Whoever puts on a mask is no longer absolutely certain of himself. It might happen that he asks himself which is his true countenance, the mask or his own face,

and commenting on the mask in Japanese No plays, van der Leeuw quotes another writer as saying,

The stiffness of death is mimetically more vital than life: therein lies the secret of the mask.⁸⁶

The Eliade quotation takes us into something of the same world as we glimpsed behind the Etruscan phersu, and the comment on the mask in the No play may give us a psychological clue as to why the word phersu could come to develop the later meaning of the Latin persona. But through van der Leeuw's phenomenological approach to religion we can see deeper into the world view necessary for a full understanding of the role of the mask in primitive worship.

In his great work⁸⁷ van der Leeuw has shown how some of the most common words in our vocabulary take on a new, or forgotten, meaning when used in relation to the one central

⁸⁵ Eliade, *Shamanism* (London, 1964), p. 166. The shamanistic background to the development of Greek thought is discussed by Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae* (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 88-106.

⁸⁶ Van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty*, op. cit. p. 84.

religious experience common to all: that of Power. Once we accept the presence of Power in the sense postulated by van der Leeuw, then the horizontal world of meaning of contemporary 'common sense' is shattered at every point and every moment of time by the vertical penetration of this Power which is both the subject and object of religious experience. Indeed, in our experience of this Power, 'subject; and 'object' seem to take on an entirely new dimension of meaning, a meaning no longer derived from man, but rather which defines man. It is this level of experience that we must try to understand in order to grasp the full significance of the mask in the rituals from which Greek tragedy arose.

In the cult the actual agent is not man nor the human community, but sacred Power, whether this is merely the sacred common element or a sacred will. In worship, therefore, to do, to act is always sacramental. Something different or something more is done than what is actually performed. Things are manipulated to which man himself is not superior; he stands *within* a sacred activity and not above this ...only thus can we understand why costume and mask are indispensable in cult activities It converts the man who is acting in the cult into the *representative*.

and he explains that by 'representation' he means:

an official action and existence, which very clearly illuminates the relationship between Objectivity and Subjectivity in religious. Man places himself before God; but this is not merely his subjective attitude; much more is it an objective action, or being appointed. The relation to Power, then, whether as mere approach, subjection, acquisition or any other relationship, always rests only on the possession of Power. The man who seeks God is himself impelled by God... But he is impelled as a *representative*: not, that is, as an individual and still less as a 'personality' but simply as the bearer of power. In him is completed the apportioning of power to the totality, to the community. *In him: through him merely in the instrumental sense.*⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (Harper Torchbook, ed., 1963). References are to chapter and sub-section.

⁸⁸ *Op. cit.* 53:1, 25:1.

There is no suggestion here of the mask as in any sense a pretence or a deception. It is much more a converter of a Power, which in its essence would be intolerable to both man and community, into a form in which it can be 'carried'. Power and Meaning are felt as present in some world that is Other and Beyond, and it is a matter of life and death that man should appropriate this Power to himself through ritual action. The mask is the means through which Power moves from There and the Not-now into the Here and Now. As such the mask is more 'real' than the man wearing it, and the man's own existence is heightened through the fact that he is allowed, or called on, or chosen, to wear the mask.

We now turn to the second level at which we try to answer the question: What psychological function did the mask of the Greek actor serve? – that level which comes chronologically after the emergence of the hypocrites to stand between chorus and onlookers. It is plain that we have here a cultural level with a more differentiated sense of individuality than at the more primitive level we have been discussing.

The first stage in differentiation is when the whole community no longer participates in the ritual. Cornford wrote many years ago in his *Origins of Attic Comedy*:

We must first allow for the difference between a dramatic performance in presence of a body of spectators and a religious ceremony, in which all who are present take part and the mere onlooker is altogether left out of account. A rite needs no audience; and when a rite passes out of the purely religious stage into the dramatic or spectacular, the performers acquire a new relation to the body of spectators, who have now gathered to watch, but not take any part in, the proceedings.⁸⁹

Bruno Snell has caught and analysed just such a moment of differentiation in his essay on *Myth and Reality in Greek Tragedy*. He quotes a choral poem written by the Caen poet Bacchylides in which the return of Theseus to Delos is celebrated. In this he shows how the identification of the chorus with the mythical youths and maidens round Theseus slips spontaneously into recognition of themselves as Caens of 'today' and he writes:

The song of the mythical chorus becomes the song of the performing chorus. Here is the germ of drama, the source of impersonation: the transformation of myth into present reality. It leads us into the darkest recesses of the remote past. On the other hand, the actual representation of the Crane Dance has

⁸⁹ Cornford, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

given way to the reproduction of Theseus' talk in song. The epic element which thus enters in to the choral presentation completely alters the function of the myth. The original myth can no longer be duplicated in the ritual act; instead of a reality which might again and again be conjured up in the sacred ritual of the festival, we now have a myth transfixed into singularity, a unique event reported in terms of 'history'.⁹⁰

The worlds of myth and reality have been divided, and for the first time it is possible to consider the action of the ritual as 'referring to' another level of reality instead of 'being' that reality. But we are still worlds apart from the modern stage. By the time of Aeschylus and Sophokles and Euripides, when the word *Prosopon* was firmly established as referring to the actor's mask, Greek drama had moved some way from the original identity of ritual with myth: but the actor remained someone vastly different from the figure we know today, as can be seen at once when we struggle to understand the strange paradoxes of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

An interesting attempt has recently been made to reconstruct the dramatic significance of Greek tragedy by working backwards from the *Poetics*.⁹¹ It is accompanied by the negative assertion that Tragedy does not imitate human beings. What does this mean? In order to explain, Jones discusses the relation between plot (*muthos*) and character (*ethos*). He quotes Aristotle's statement that 'character in a tragedy is that which reveals moral choice' and insists that for Aristotle the human self was something quite other than that 'Ideal and no doubt transient self of the modern world.' We see action as revealing an 'inner' self. But for Aristotle 'the essence of action is that it is out there – an object for men to contemplate.'

He goes on:

The gulf between our preconceptions and the express doctrine of the *Poetics* can only be bridged through the recovery of some of the lost human

⁹⁰ Snell, *Discovery of the Mind* (Oxford, 1953), p. 91. See also on the social and political background of this process of emergence from ritual Little, *Myth and Society in Attic Drama* (New York, 1942).

The most noticeable fact in the history of Greek tragedy is the gradual secularization of myths which were originally invested with all the religious mystery of belief. Each dramatist, in bringing his myths into line with the state of public credulity and conscience in his day, is contributory to a destructive process ... one cannot lay too much stress upon this fact, for it is the key to the evolution of Greek tragedy. By its aid the sum of what the group accepted as a matter of belief became in the course of one century material for the exercise of the individual's judgement. (p. 19).

This same process is discussed from the point of view of Dionysus as the 'Master of Magical Illusions' in Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (California, 1951), pp. 76-7.

⁹¹ Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London, 1962)

relevances of action. Aristotle is assaulting the now settled habit in which we see action issuing from a solitary focus of consciousness – secret, inward, interesting – and in which the status of action must always be adjectival: action qualifies; it tells us things we want to know about the individual promoting it ... Moreover, this inward version of ours aspires to an ideal of perfect stability and conservation; hence our talk of the real self underlying, persisting through, action and suffering.⁹²

Over against this modern view, Jones sees Aristotle setting up the picture of ‘the expressive vitality of the discrete and centrifugal self’, in which man is only man in action, and pre-eminently in the moment of moral choice.

Aristotle’s statement that Tragedy is not an imitation of human beings, is balanced by his confidence in the ability of tragic action, his praxis, to sustain all relevant human interest. He feels this confidence because he apprehends the reality of the thing as outward and discrete and centrifugal, a continuous dying into the full life of the self through the self’s dissipation in action⁹³

Prosopon, the Greek word for mask, also means face, aspect, person and stage figure; we should allow mask and face to draw semantically close together; and then we should enrich the face far beyond our own conception, until it is able to embrace (as it did for Greeks from the time of Homer) the look of the man together with the truth about him .. To say that the mask is a kind of face is to take it very seriously indeed ... The ancient actor wore this object upon which the audience could read a few, simple, conventional signs determining rank and age and sex; the artefact surpassed nature in its lucid isolation of essentials. But mask and face were at one in their sufficiency; unlike the modern face and the modern mask, they did not owe their interest to the further realities lying behind them, because they declared the whole man. They stated; they did not hint or hide.⁹⁴

⁹² Jones, *op. cit.* p. 33.

⁹³ *op. cit.* p. 43.

⁹⁴ *op. cit.* p. 44.

Drama to the Greeks was not entertainment. Throughout the classical period it retained its connection with the Dionysiac religion. That which was to be enacted was already known by the audience, and the audience felt themselves to be bound together by the action in a way which has not been known in modern Europe since the medieval miracle or passion plays. Thus the actor does not 'impersonate his mythico-historical original'. It is the 'actor-mask' who appropriates to that original his share of the play's action.'

The task of the actors is to support the action by forming props on which it can be spread out for the audience to contemplate. Further, this modest office does not call for any suppression of histrionic potential; on the contrary, it taxes the actor to his limit because at the living heart of the tradition the actor is the mask and the mask is an artefact-face with nothing to offer but itself. It has – more important, it is known to have – no inside. Its being is exhausted in its features. To think of the mask as an appendage to the human actor is to destroy the basis of the ancient masking convention by inviting the audience to peer behind the mask and demand of the actor that he shall cease merely to support the action, and shall begin instead to exploit the action in the service of inwardness.⁹⁵

We are now in a position to attempt an answer to the question posed above: What was it in the nature of the actor which made it possible for the word hypocrites to be applied to him? Let us take what van der Leeuw has to say about 'representation' and relate it to the argument of the *Poetics*.

Van der Leeuw has discussed 'representation' in connection with the King, medicine man and priest, the speaker, the preacher, the consecrated. In all these cases we see instances of the incorporation of a power that does not belong to the ego. In his official, 'masked', role, 'man bows down before a power, residing within himself, which does not require his own self-confidence in order to be believed in.' Therefore, by observing such a man's actions, we learn nothing about the man himself. Such men, like the 'expositors' of the Timaeus text already quoted

 speak the word of someone other than themselves: from time to time, as it were, their own personality is totally switched off, so that they are

⁹⁵ *op. cit.* p. 45.

representatives absolutely and completely. The prophet is then a mere tool of Power, 'filled with the god' and emptied of himself.⁹⁶

But this concept of official man as 'representative' is what Aristotle is trying to get back to in the *Poetics* with what Professor Jones calls his assault on 'the now settled habit in which we see action issuing from a solitary focus of consciousness – secret, inward, interesting – and in which the status of action must always be adjectival.' To us, today, action tells us things about the individual promoting it. But to Aristotle, what Oedipus does is only that share of the original action of a plot grounded in ritual which the actor-mask Oedipus has appropriated to himself.⁹⁷ What man as representative, as actor, does, has nothing to do with portrayal of character in our modern sense. His action is a partial representation of a meaning wider, deeper and higher than any one human can ever 'be'.

It is one of the fascinations of Shakespeare's plays that his characters so often stand poised in a sort of field of tension between the ritual, Aristotelian experience of 'representation', and the modern portrayal of character. It is pre-eminently the situation of Hamlet, but it is also the situation of Prince Hal in the scene with Poins which we have quoted at the beginning of this section. One of the inherent tensions of the play is that the Prince must be seen to play his allotted role within the re-enactment of the national myth, he must turn from wastrel to hero-king however unlikely in terms of personal realism. But on the other hand, Shakespeare is enough of a modern to feel that the man must be a man in himself, and so we have the 'hypocrite' paralysed in inaction between his *inward* bleeding and the role which forbids all *ostentation* of sorrow.

If we now try to summarize the argument of this last section on Action, Actor and Audience in classical Greece, and bring it together with the previous section on the two Henry IV plays, we find that in Greek drama we can distinguish three elements: the thing done or *dromenon*, the actor and the audience. Originally, the three were one, at the level on which the whole community were re-enacting a ritual. The mask which the actor wore

⁹⁶ Van der Leeuw, *Religion, op. cit.*, 27:1

⁹⁷ Fergusson puts the point thus:

The action of the play (*Oedipus Rex*) is the quest for Laius' slayer. That is the overall aim which informs it – 'to find the culprit in order to purify human life', as it may be put. Sophocles must have seen this action as the real life of the Oedipus myth, discerning it through the personages and events as one discerns life in a plant through the green leaves. Moreover, he must have seen this particular action as a type, or crucial instance, of human life in general; and hence he was able to present it in the form of the ancient ritual which also presents and celebrates the perennial mystery of human life and action. Thus by 'action' I do not mean the events of the story but the focus or aim of psychic life from which the events, in that situation, result. *Op. cit.* p. 48.

was the necessary precondition for standing between the audience and the 'thing done', and with the appearance of the masked actor not only was the audience separated, as spectators, from the action in which they had previously participated, but also reality was separated from myth. This separation seems self-evident to us today, but Bruno Snell has emphasised how radically new it was in 5th century Greece, when the hypocrites first appeared on the European stage.

The drama is based on the ritual dance in which the divine world coincides with present temporal reality This reality is not something that has occurred in the past and may now be faithfully – or falsely – chronicled, but a mythical truth which is revived by being enacted. The play, for the performers and the audience, 'is' the mythical occurrence; but then again in a certain sense it is not, because everybody knows that the role of the hero is now taken by some other man ... If someone looking at a tragedy asked: Is this all true? the answer could only be in the negative. But does that mean that it is all a lie? Certainly not. The standard of truth and falsehood which was appropriate to the epic is wholly out of place here. An new perspective of reality appears to be in the making ... The new concept of reality which is thus brought into the world is not easily understood. It is an embarrassing fact that we are no longer able to apply to the arts such terms as 'true' and 'real' without running into complications. If we wish to designate the relationship between artefact and reality we must resort to terms as vague and shifting as: the work or art should be 'appropriate' to, or 'commensurate with' reality. Should we suspect that this idea of the 'real' is one which can be communicated *only* through play-acting.⁹⁸

The nature of the actor in Shakespeare is very different to Greek tragedy: but the similarities are still striking and much closer than most modern productions (deeply influenced by what a cinema-conditioned audience demands) suggest. Certainly in the history plays the individual actor is not progressively revealing an inner 'character' previously unknown to the audience: there is a real sense in which Henry IV must have been a collective re-enactment shared by audience and actors in which some reality was being communicated that could *only* be communicated through play-acting. In the morality plays, the man who played Vice was a member of the local or parish community

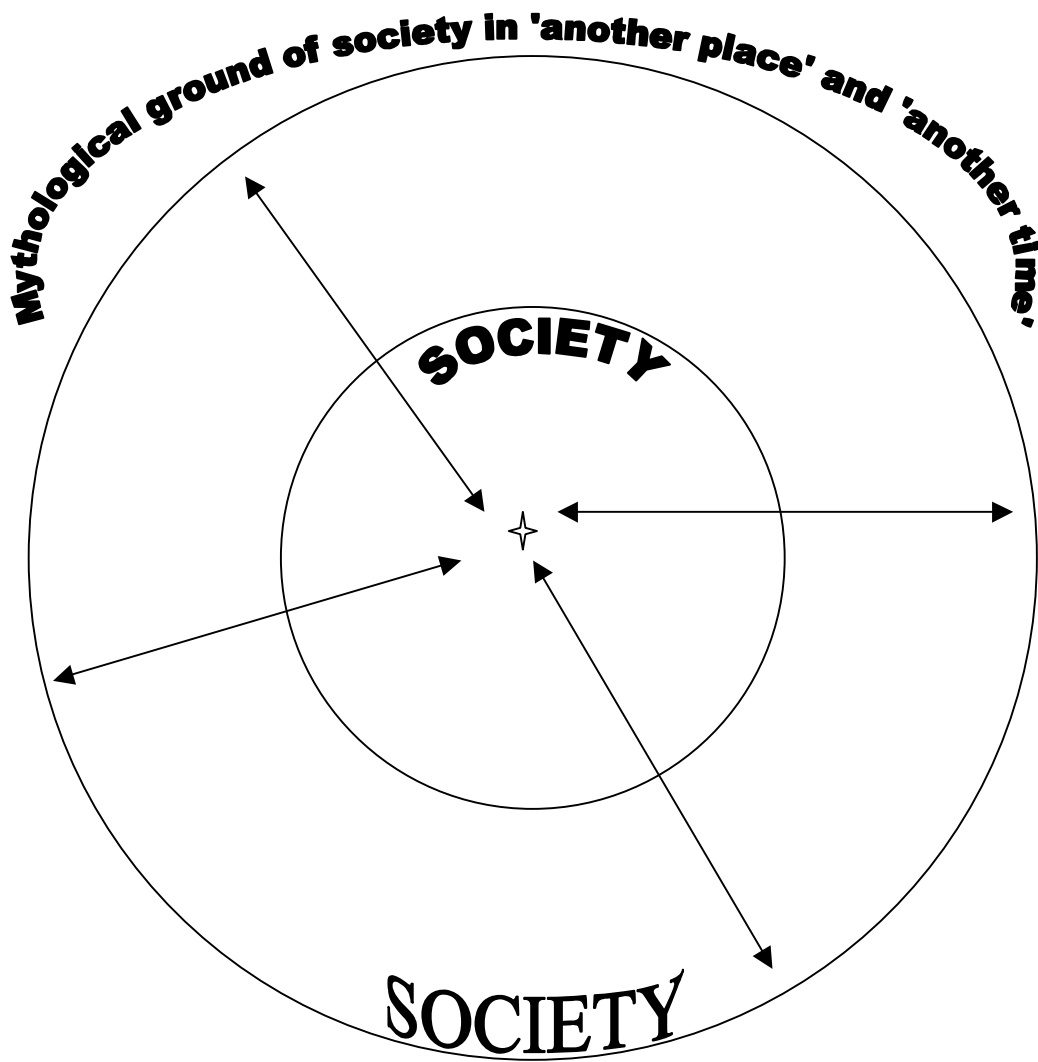
⁹⁸ Snell, *op. cit.* pp. 97-9.

who was chosen to fill a given role, a role already formed and endowed with meaning by the collective tradition. The men who first played Falstaff were closer to this tradition than to any modern idea of 'portraying character.'

If we try, therefore to understand the function of the actor within the sociological context of Elizabethan drama, we must think of society speaking to itself through the actor; society tries to say something about its own origin and nature to itself. But to speak to oneself, there must already be some separation between speaker and auditor. It is the actor and the play which achieve this act of social 'reflection'. Seen from the point of view of society the mask, the role, the paint, the clothes, which the actor wears have nothing to do with 'deception': they are what Tarlton or Hemminges or Quin or Kemble or Phelps⁹⁹ must wear in order that the audience can see and hear a reality which would be invisible and inaudible once the actors ceased to 'play'.

If we seek to illustrate the sociological role of the persona in the original European dramatic situation therefore, we must use some such picture as a circle to represent society: a society that is in some sense grounded in a mythological reality which is both past and present and future, a reality which is both 'extended' in terms of the historical past and future, and also concentrated in the immediacy of the present in which both profane and sacred time are united, the centre common to both circles. Within such a schema we must imagine the masked actor as 'playing' between the centre and the outer circumference so that in his 'play' society in some sense knows itself in relation to its mythical ground, thus:

⁹⁹ These are names of some of the earliest actors known to have played Falstaff.



Mythological ground of society in a 'here and now' society'

The arrows represent the 'play' of the actor between the extended and concentrated poles of the mythical ground of society. It is within this field of 'play' that society knows itself.

3. THE PERSONA

This section, which has proved the most difficult to write, will be more readily understood if I repeat and enlarge the summary of the argument which I gave at the beginning of Part II.

I conclude from the evidence submitted that the actor's impersonation of a role has nothing to do with pretence in the sense of deceit. There is no attempt to persuade the audience that what is untrue is true. On the contrary, the actor reminds us that reality is not something objective which we stand outside of, but something which we help to create through participation in ritual. Moreover, the actor is also a reminder of the interdependence of individual and society. He is one of our few remaining points of contact with that ritual level of experience on which we become aware that to experience ourselves most intensely as individuals is also to know ourselves as most fully social beings. On this level the antithesis between individual and society presupposed in some of Jung's definitions of the persona does not apply.

The argument by which I hope to demonstrate this conclusion is developed in three parts.

Firstly, I consider the various shades of value which Jung attributes to the persona. These range from what we can call the 'introverted pole', where the persona is seen as a deceitful mask concealing the true individuality, and individuality which is essentially 'inner', to a more 'extraverted pole' where the persona is defined as a function of relationship with the outer world, and as a necessary complement to the anima. I shall suggest that Jung's bias of interest is towards the introverted pole, a bias which may be connected to his original interest in the persona in connection with dissociated personalities.

Secondly, I will try to bring out some of the wide implications of these various values attached to the persona by showing how the meaning and value attached to the actor has varied. Further discussion of the word 'hypocrite' introduces the question of the different attitudes to the distinction between appearance and reality in Greek, and Hebrew-Christian culture and it is suggested that Jung's interpretation of the mask owes more to the Hebrew-Christian tradition. The argument is illustrated by reference to the Rejection Scene.

Thirdly, I take up the question of the relation between man and society which we have seen to be central to Jung's definitions of the persona. The distinction between education and individuation leads to discussion of society's attitude to acting, and of the two functions of the mask: that which imprisons and that which liberates. The political

implications of the various attitudes to the mask are illustrated with reference to Plato's hostility to the theatre, a hostility which is explained in terms of the Trickster figure. With the Trickster, we are once more with Falstaff.

(i) **Values attributed to the persona by Jung**

There is no separate definition of the persona in *Psychological Types*. It is discussed under the heading Soul (anima). Jung introduces the concept after a discussion of the possibility that some degree of dissociation of the personality exists within the range of normality. He argues that 'even in the normal individual, character splitting is by no means and impossibility' and goes on to insist that such a man (i.e. a man marked by character splitting) is not individual, but collective.

Were he an individual, he would have but one and the same character with every variation of attitude. It would not be identical with the momentary attitude, neither could it nor would it prevent his individuality from finding expression in one state just as clearly as another ... Through his more or less complete identification with the attitude of the moment, he at least deceives others, and also often himself, as to his real character. He puts on a mask ... this mask, viz. the ad hoc adopted attitude, I have called the persona.¹⁰⁰

Here we have the classical expression of the persona as deceitful. There is nothing in the persona itself which is regarded as negative. It is in identification with the attitude of the moment (the 'normal' version of dissociation of the personality) that deceit enters in. It is in the inability to distinguish a continuing and enduring ego from the changing and various personae of the moment that the negative aspect of our experience of the persona is to be found.

This negative aspect is expressed again in various passages in the Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious. For instance, when discussing the inflation that follows identification with an office or a title:

The office I hold is certainly my special activity, but it is also a collective factor that has come into existence historically through the cooperation of many people and whose dignity rests solely on collective approval. When, Therefore, I identify myself with my office or title, I behave as though I

¹⁰⁰ Jung, *Psychological Types* (London, 1946), Baynes translation, p. 589.

myself were the whole complex of social factors of which that office consists, or as though I were not only the bearer of the office, but also and at the same time the approval of society. I have made an extraordinary extension of myself and have usurped qualities which are not in me but outside me.¹⁰¹

But identification with the persona is not always such a purely negative phenomenon. At one stage of development, it can help to raise the individual from a state of participation with the collective psyche.

In primitives, development of personality, or more accurately, development of the person, is a question of magical prestige. The figure of the medicine-man or chief leads the way: both make themselves conspicuous by the singularity of their social roles. The singularity of his outward tokens marks the individual off from the rest, and the segregation is still further enhanced by the possession of special ritual secrets. By these and similar means the primitive creates around him a shell, which might be called a persona (mask). Masks, as we know, are actually used among primitives in totem ceremonies – for instance, as a means of enhancing or changing the personality. In this way the outstanding individual is apparently removed from the sphere of the collective psyche, and to the degree that he succeeds in identifying himself with his persona, he actually is removed. This removal means magical prestige. One could easily assert that the impelling motive in this development is the will to power. But that would be to forget that the building up of prestige is always a product of collective compromise: not only must there be one who wants prestige, there must also be a public seeking somebody on whom to confer prestige. That being so, it would be incorrect to say that a man creates prestige for himself out of his individual will to power; it is on the contrary and entirely collective affair. Since society as a whole needs the magically effective figure, it uses the needful will to power in the individual, and the will to submit in the mass, as a vehicle, and this brings about the creation of personal prestige.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 140.

¹⁰² *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 148

In this passage (which it is interesting to compare with Freud's Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego) Jung touches on the important question of the interdependence of the individual with society. Identification with the persona is not merely a question of the individual's power drive. It is thrust upon the individual by the collective, in the interests of the collective, and the result is one stage in the differentiation of the personality. It is this mutual dependence of individual and society which makes it impossible to grasp the nature of the persona if we start from the assumption of an a priori opposition between the two; because the persona is not only something with which the individual identifies himself, but also 'a more or less accidental or arbitrary segment of collective psyche'.¹⁰³

The paradoxical characteristics of the persona can perhaps be pointed by reference to the first and second parts of life, or to the distinction between education and individuation. The kind of process which Jung describes above as the primitive level, a process of personality emerging from a state of relatively total participation, is analogous to a child's development. In discussing the relation between the adult individual and society, Jung says: 'The element of differentiation is the individual.'¹⁰⁴ But for the child this is not true. In the process of educating a child 'differentiation' flows from society into the child, rather than vice versa. The whole Greek ideal of education, for instance, was rooted in the idea of society, of social life, as the active differentiating agent.

In the light of this acknowledged interdependence of individual and society we can now turn to the central question behind the various paradoxical values attributed to the persona: Is our 'being' to be thought of as essentially 'inner' or 'outer'?¹⁰⁵ There are plenty of passages in 'The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious' in which Jung speaks as if the further 'inside' we go, the nearer we come to the centre of the personality. Phrases like 'strip off the mask', 'to divest oneself of the false wrappings of the persona', 'hiding behind a mask', all suggest that the true, the real self is 'inner'. Individuation is defined as 'becoming a single, homogeneous being, and in so far as individuality embraces our

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 155.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 150.

¹⁰⁵ Considering the central position which the concepts of extraversion and introversion occupy in Jung's work, a study of his use of the adjectives 'inner' and 'outer' in relation to and in distinction from the nouns 'subject' and 'object' might prove valuable. The following passage, which forms part of the section in which he describes the interdependence of personal and anima, shows for instance interesting usages of the word 'subject'.

The relation of the individual to the outer object must be sharply distinguished from the relation to the u=subject. By the subject I mean those vague, dim stirrings, feelings, thoughts and sensations which have no demonstrable flow towards the object from the continuity of conscious experience, but well up like a disturbing, inhibiting, or at times beneficent, influence from the dark inner depths, from the background and underground of consciousness which, in their totality, constitute one's perception of the unconscious life. The subject, conceived as the 'inner' object, is the unconscious. (*Types*, p. 591).

innermost, last and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self.¹⁰⁶ But on the other hand, as in *Psychological Types*, the persona is also defined as complementary to the anima, and the ego is seen as existing in a field of tension between the demands of the outer world, as mediated by the persona, and of the inner world, as mediated by the anima. It would therefore be incorrect to say that for Jung individuality is *only* 'inner'; yet most readers would probably agree that for him the essence of individuality is inner rather than outer. Certainly his sense of the human personality is heavily conditioned by what we have seen described as the modern 'habit in which we see action issuing from a solitary focus of consciousness – secret, inward, interesting', and shows little awareness of the 'expressive vitality of the discrete and centrifugal self'. In Jung's own terms, the bias is probably to be explained in terms of the contrast between introversion and extraversion. But the bias remains. More stress is placed on the persona as a rigid and deceitful mask, identification with which inhibits the process of individuation, than as a function of relationship through which the individual can experience the differentiating processes of education and of social life.

It will be appreciated from what has been said earlier of the nature of the actor, that Jung's use of the word persona is related to only one, and a very limited, aspect of acting. Most of his analogies are taken from the professions, not from the stage. In the professions, the actor in us all is required always to play the same role. Thus the essence of the actor, which is the ability to change roles, is denied. The professional man who has identified with his role has the same relation to the true actor as the dissociated personality has to the healthy ego.

(ii) **Changing attitudes to the actor**

Some of the wider implications of the ambiguous value attributed by Jung to the persona will become apparent if we now turn to the word 'hypocrite'. So far we have traced the development of the word from an original sense of 'he who answers', 'interprets', into 'actor'. How did it come to have the modern meaning of conscious and deliberate deceiver?

The decisive change came with the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek and Latin. The word is used in the Septuagint version of Job 34:30, and Job 36:13, to render what in modern English is translated 'false-hearted'. But it is in the New Testament Greek

¹⁰⁶ *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 171.

that it is used most widely, in the three Synoptic Gospels. In Matthew chapter 6, for instance, the sense of 'play-actor' is still alive, but already strongly coloured by the further feeling of moral deceit.

When you pray, you are not to be like hypocrites, who love to stand praying in synagogues or at street corners, to be a mark for mens' eyes; believe me, they have their reward already. But when thou art praying, go into thy inner room and shut the door upon thyself, and so pray to thy Father in secret; and then thy Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward thee.

But in connection with the Pharisees, in famous passages such as Matthew 15:7, 23: 13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; mark 7:6; Luke 11:39, the word is used to mean concern for the outward show at the expense of the inner reality, to describe those who 'are content to cleanse the outward part of cup and dish, while all within is running with avarice and wickedness.'¹⁰⁷ It is from these passages that the word passed over into English with its first recorded use in 1225 to mean 'the assuming of a false appearance of virtue or goodness, with dissimulation of real character or inclinations, especially in respect of religious life or beliefs' (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

It is this sense of the deceitfulness of the actor's mask which Jung has tapped in phrases like 'stripping off the mask', 'the false trappings of the persona'. But this sense had no place in the original Greek conception of the actor. It originates in the Hebrew-Christian conception of the split between inner spiritual reality and the outward forms of behaviour.

This example of the word hypocrite serves to remind us that words like institutions have a history. As soon as Greek and Roman civilisation became penetrated by Jewish and Christian ways of looking at the world, the idea of 'acting' was changed for ever. But that must not lead us to forget the totally non-Jewish, non-Christian conception of the relation between appearance and reality that was present in the Greek hypocrites.

It is a truism that we are heirs of both a Greek and a Jewish Christian culture. But the fact needs emphasising in connection with the persona, precisely because Jung's own bias in his interpretation of the function of the mask is Jewish-Christian. This tension between these two streams within our culture is the central theme of Auerbach's great work *Mimesis*, which we have quoted above in discussing the scene between the Prince and

¹⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that in the Greek version of Matthew 16:3, and Luke 12:56, the verb is used with its (older) meaning of 'interpret'. My references are derived from Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, and the translation is that of the Revised Standard Version of 1952.

Poins. Auerbach sees two different styles of literary representation of reality in fruitful conflict with each other throughout European history. On the one hand the Homeric, Greek, which is external, horizontal. Here we have 'fully externalized description, uniform illumination, uninterrupted connection, free expression, all events in the foreground, displaying unmistakable meanings' and a literature which 'conceals nothing, contains not teaching and no secret second meaning'. On the other hand the Biblical, which is vertical, suggestive, symbolic, but above all many-layered in its representation of character. Whereas in Homer 'the complexity of the psychological life is shown only in the succession and alternation of emotions, the Jewish writers are able to express the simultaneous existence of various layers of consciousness and the conflict between them.'¹⁰⁸

It is the opposition between these two ways of looking at the world that the reason for the shift in the meaning of hypokrites lies. In the Greek world, the mask served to impose a fixed moment of reflection against the flux of external emotions and actions. In the Hebrew, the mask became inevitably an idol, a superficial layer of meaning concealing a deeper level of reality.

What this contrast implies in theatrical terms becomes apparent if we briefly consider Falstaff once again. Shakespeare wrote at a moment when the Renaissance imagination was rediscovering the external, horizontal tradition of the Greeks, and with it emerging from the inner, vertical world of the Christian Middle Ages. The two traditions meet in Falstaff. He is both a 'type' in the medieval sense, real only in so far as he typifies Vice, Folly, Misrule, Gluttony; and at the same time a realist, in that he knows he is what he defines himself as being, and no more. His role draws its meaning from deeper layers of enduring human types. He *is* what his mask says he is. And yet he laughs at every mask as only counterfeit. In his glory he is the triumphant enemy of every hypocrisy, because he refuses to allow Appearance the name of Reality. But even in so doing he destroys himself because he has forgotten that behind 'hypocrisy' stands ritual, and without ritual there is no life.

When the young King turns away from Falstaff it is possible for us to feel that he is 'identifying himself with his persona' and rejecting the wisdom that has seen behind the mask. But that is a partial reaction. When the King assumes his new role he bears witness to the fact that man lives not only in nature but also in society; that reality needs to be 'interpreted' through appearance and that that interpretation (the original function of the hypokrites) is an essential part of the reality which it interprets. To recognise the mask as

¹⁰⁸ Auerbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 23.

mask is wisdom. But to deny the need for the mask is to deny the ritual basis of society, to kill that indefinable moment of trust in which name and thing are married, to lose the ability to define one's own ego. Only Hermes needs no mask because he is himself the mask. In his inhuman refusal to accept the fact that the ego exists to interpret a role which is *given to it* and not *made by it*, Falstaff identifies himself with the God.¹⁰⁹

(iii) **Man and Society**

The question: does man exist for society or society for man? Goes back at least to the Greeks, and the fact that it is always alive, always unanswered, and yet always at the centre of political theory and of anthropology, suggests that it is unanswerable. But it is worth posing in connection with the persona, because to do so is to become aware how widespread are the issues raised by the word.

We have already touched on some of these issues in the distinction drawn between education and individuation. From the point of view of the child, society certainly came first. In comparison with the child, society is differentiated and education is (among other definitions) a process by which some of this differentiation or culture is imparted to the raw material of the child. But the adult is aware of a counter-polarity. In our society at least he chooses to believe that society exists in important ways for him, and not vice versa, and if society educated him then he must individuate himself in distinction to society.

Jung has described the adult situation thus:

The persona is a complicated system of relations between individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual. That the latter function is superfluous could be maintained only by one who is so identified with his persona that he no longer knows himself; and that the former is unnecessary could only occur to one is quite unconscious of the true nature of his fellows.¹¹⁰ Society expects, and indeed must expect, every individual to play

¹⁰⁹ Perhaps this is the right place to make it clear that I am fully aware that this discussion of the ritual origins and dramatic function of the mask in relation to Jung's concept of the persona does not include a full account of Jung's view of the human psyche. There is in particular no discussion of the relation between persona and Self. But see Conclusion.

¹¹⁰ It is a useful exercise in psychological understanding to consider how these two statements can be applied to Falstaff. On the one hand he sees through all forms of hypocrisy, and this can claim to be a thorough

the part assigned to him as perfectly as possible, so that a man who is a parson must not only carry out his official functions objectively, but must at all times and in all circumstances play the role of parson in a flawless manner. Society demands this as a kind of surety; each must stand at his post, here a cobbler, there a poet. No man is expected to be both. Nor is it advisable to be both, for that would be 'queer'. Such a man would be 'different' from other people, not quite reliable ... To present an unequivocal face to the world is a matter of practical importance: the average man – the only kind society knows anything about – must keep his nose to one thing in order to achieve anything worthwhile, two would be too much. Our society is undoubtedly set on such an ideal.¹¹¹

There are two thoughts here. While I agree with the first, I find that the second is an open question. I agree that between individual consciousness and society there is, and needs to be, complicated system of relations. But whether or not we need to limit ourselves to *one* such role, seems to be a question of political choice and there have certainly been societies in which the situation has not been as described by Jung. However, if we accept his picture as (sadly) true today, it must strike us at once that the actor is the one man whose role involves breaking society's basic rule: one man, one role. The actor is by definition he who changes his role. It is the actor's role to have no fixed role.

Now this is a very important point when we talk about the persona. The static, closed view of the relationship between society and individual implies that the persona must be rigid, that the ego must identify with the persona. But on the other hand the man really cultivates the persona, the actor, is the only free man in such a society. We are back again at the paradox at the heart of the mask. To wear a mask is to show oneself not as what one is but as what society wants one to be. But on the other hand the professional mask wearer, the actor, is the only member of society who can escape from society's attempt to define the individual in its terms, and not in those of the individual himself.

In the two-sided play between society and individual, the mask this has two functions, one which imprisons, one which liberates. In the extreme case of the closed totalitarian society

realist. Yet on the other hand he is revealed at the end as hopelessly out of touch with reality. The reverse side of his ability to see through hypocrisy is that he has not understanding of the need to 'make a definite impression on others' while in his misjudgement of the Prince, Falstaff shows himself 'unconscious of the true nature of his fellows.'

¹¹¹ *Collected Works*, Vol . 7, pp. 190-1.

in which man literally cannot leave his allocated role, the mask imprisons. In the ideal case of the open society, in which a man is free to choose and to change his role, the mask is the means through which the most mutually fruitful relationship between individual and society can be reached.

But if we consider the function of acting, of the theatre, within society as a whole, we get even more surprising and paradoxical insights into the nature of the mask. I have suggested above that there is a sense in which we can talk of fifth century Athenian society knowing itself through its theatre. I will now elaborate this point. When we sit, collectively together as audience, and watch valid contemporary theatre, there is a sense in which we recognise what we, in our collective capacity as society, do to the individual by imposing a particular role upon him; and in that moment of recognition we become conscious of, and thereby liberated from, the compulsion which as collective exercise upon 'I' as individual.

I suggest therefore that the activity and vitality of the theatre within society has a lot to do with the extent to which that society is 'free'. It is notorious that in the political philosophy of Plato, which has been regarded as the first blueprint for a totalitarian society, the dramatic poet is regarded as a dangerous threat to the state. The reasons which led Plato to this view have recently been examined in an interesting essay by Professor Diamond.¹¹² I shall close this section by considering some of these reasons, leading us as they do through the function of the dramatist in society back into the figure of the Trickster, and through him again into Falstaff.

Diamond has called his essay *Plato and the Primitive*. He is constantly concerned to contrast the intellectualised Platonic model of society with the primitive situation and much that he has to say is therefore apposite to one theme of this thesis: that to understand the psychological significance of the actor we must think not only of the modern actor, but also of the evolution of the drama out of primitive ritual.

He opens by contrasting the numerous different jobs which a primitive is expected to do with the one man, one job doctrine of Plato's *Republic* (which is similar to the society implied in Jung's description of the persona quoted at the beginning of this section).

A single family, as among the Hottentot or Eskimo, may make its own clothing, tools and weapons, build its own houses and so on. Even in a transitional society such as the Dahomean proto-state, it is expected that

¹¹² Diamond, *Plato and the Primitive* in *Culture in History: essays presented to Paul Radin* (New York, 1960).

every man, whatever his occupation, know three things well: how to cut a field, how to build a wall, and how to roof a house. Moreover, the average primitive participates *directly* in a wide range of cultural activities ... and he may move, in his lifetime through a whole series of culturally prescribed statuses. He plays, in short, many parts and his nature is viewed as manifold.¹¹³

With this primitive situation Diamond contrasts the *Republic*:

In the republic no man is to engage in more than a single task. Indeed the ultimate definition of justice...consists in each person doing the work 'for which he was by nature fitted', within the class to which he constitutionally belongs... Socrates emphasises: 'In our State human nature is not twofold or manifold, for one man plays one part only.' In other words, it is imagined that the identity of the individual is exhausted by the single occupation in which he engages. The occupational status, so to speak, becomes the man.

This is precisely the situation described by Jung as identification with the persona.

Diamond now turns to the significance of Plato's rejection of art and of drama in particular. The dramatists are to be exiled precisely because their art negates the central political assumption that 'in our State human nature is not twofold or manifold, for one man plays one part only', and that 'human nature appears to have been coined into yet smaller pieces, and to be incapable of imitating many things well.'

He then goes on to relate this argument to Radin's concept of the Trickster. Summarizing Plato's argument against poets, he writes:

There are three related reasons for Plato's antagonism to the poets. First they ascribe a dual nature to the gods, that is, the gods are the authors of good *and* evil. Secondly, they portray the gods as extravagantly emotional ... Thirdly they present the gods in a variety of shapes and deceptive appearances. I submit that Plato's objections converge to a direct antagonism against the

¹¹³ Diamond, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

transformer, or trickster, image of the gods, projected by the poets, but, in fact, 'one of the oldest expressions of mankind....' In his never ending search for himself Trickster changes shape, and experiments with a thousand identities ... He is the personification of human ambiguity. He is the archetype of the comic spirit, the burlesque of the problem of identity, the ancestor of the clown, the Fool of the ages. Inevitably, Trickster must be banished from the republic, wherein identity is a matter of pure, ideal, unambiguous forms.¹¹⁴

Just as Plato felt the need to banish this 'burlesque of the problem of identity' from his Republic, so did Hal banish Falstaff 'not to come near our person by ten mile'. No state that depends on the oneness of name and person, name and quality, name and thing, can afford to have the Trickster, the personification of human ambiguity, enthroned by the side of the King. But Plato's banishment was more absolute, more cold, more rigid than Hal's. He had never loved to 'play' as Hal had loved to play with Falstaff.

Diamond goes on to deepen his argument by showing how Plato's political vision can be understood as a reaction against that form of human experience expressed in primitive ritual drama, the experience in which personal identity is not lost, but rather crystallized in the experience of transformation. This is the experience of the mask at the original level of ritual. It has nothing to do with pretence. It is the medium by which personal identity is defined both *in nature* and *in society*.

Ritual was usually centred on a personal crisis of transformation – death, marriage, puberty, illness.

In primitive societies, such ordinary human events are rendered extraordinary, that is, they are made meaningful and valuable, through the medium of the dramatic ceremonies. Here we confront man raising himself above the level of the purely biological, affirming his identity, and defining his obligations to himself and his group ... At the same time, the ceremonials we are speaking of enable the individual to maintain integrity of self while changing life roles. The person is freed to act in new ways without crippling

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 130.

anxiety, or becoming a social automaton. That is, the person discharges the new status, but the status does not become the person.¹¹⁵

In ritual the opposition between man and society vanishes. The question: which came first? loses all meaning in the action, in the *dromenon*, in which both individual and society recognize themselves. The mask represents, among other mysteries, that moment in experience when individual and society recognize in each other not rivals for power, but the reflection and assurance of their own identity; the moment when I recognize that to be a person is not to cling to a momentary identification, but to submit to the restraint of ritual transformation.

CONCLUSION

The starting point of this thesis was my experience with one analysand for whom 'acting' seemed to have an importance which I could not explain in terms of the Jungian 'persona' as I then understood it. How has the work involved in the thesis helped with such a problem?

Even when we allow for the fact that the study of acting which I have undertaken is drastically incomplete (vitaly important theatrical movements have not been mentioned: the French classical dramatists, nineteenth century realist plays such as those of Ibsen and Chekhov, the opera, modern experimental theatre, these all involve different kinds of actor), I believe that I have shown that acting involves a far wider activity than anything which Jung has described under the 'persona'.

But Jung's work is as large as life, and if we cannot find the whole meaning of the theatre under his discussion of the person, it is very probable that it is nevertheless expressed elsewhere in his view of the human psyche. I believe the right clue here is in the earliest discussion of the persona in *Psychological Types*, in the constant emphasis on the complementary function of persona and soul set in the wider frame of reference provided by the interplay of extraversion and introversion. In the ritual origin of the mask and in theatrical tradition which is not completely cut off from ritual, it is not possible to distinguish persona from soul – both are present in the mask.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 135.

If I now try and describe in conceptual terms what was going on between me and this analysand I must do so not in terms of persona, but in terms of acting, ritual and realism. It is as if she were playing to me, needing the participation and reaction of an audience, to help her to distinguish within herself between ritual and realism. Perhaps it is not stretching words too far to suggest that there is an analogy between the mutual need that ritual and realism have for each other, and complementary role of soul and persona.

Acting, as an analogue to certain forms of mental disorder, is traditionally associated with hysteria – a word now as difficult to define as acting itself. Any standard description of hysteria uses theatrical metaphors.¹¹⁶ Recently, the meaning given to this active element in mental disease has been drastically extended by Szasz in America.¹¹⁷ Therapists in the existentialist tradition have also found the language of the stage provides them with an effective medium for describing their patients.¹¹⁸ But psychotherapy is not only

¹¹⁶ Cp for instance Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*. English translation (Manchester, 1962), p. 443:

The types of personality which are called hysterical are very varied. To characterize the type more precisely we have to fall back on *one basic trait*: far from accepting their given dispositions and life opportunities, hysterical personalities crave to appear, both to themselves and to others, as more than they are and to experience more than they are ever capable of. The place of genuine experience and natural expression is usurped by a contrived stage-act, a forced kind of experience. This is not contrived 'consciously' but reflects the ability of the true hysteric to live wholly in his own drama, be caught up entirely for the moment and succeed in seeming genuine.

¹¹⁷ Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (London, 1962). Starting from an historical discussion of hysteria, with particular reference to the work of Charcot and to Breuer and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*, Szasz undertakes a reconstruction of psychoanalytic theory in terms of the 'theory of games' as developed in America in the last twenty years. Much of what he says in respect to playing the rules of a game can be applied to a theatrical approach to mental illness: 'The notions of rule-following and role-playing are closely related (p. 173). The whole book is of great interest and has encouraged me to believe that research into and reflection on the nature and history of the theatre is relevant to the practice of psychotherapy, whatever one's particular training.

In terms of institutionalized patients, many of the ideas used by Szasz are deployed by Goffmann, *The Moral Career of the Mental Patient*, reprinted in *Asylums*, Doubleday Anchor Book, 1961.

¹¹⁸ From its beginnings, existentialism has been concerned with the problem of choice. Our brief references to the development of Greek theatre out of ritual have shown us how central the dilemma of choice was in that development. It is therefore not surprising that existentialism's chief literary successes have been on the stage.

R.D. Laing, whose studies in schizophrenia are enjoying a considerable success in England at present, is deeply indebted in his descriptive work to the dialectic methods of Sartre. Theatrical metaphors are essential in his two chief books, and in view of the effect of Genet's *Le Balcon* in stimulating this thesis, it is interesting to see Laing and his co-workers devoting considerable time to a psychiatric discussion of both *Le Balcon* and of Sartre's biography of Genet.

References in his books which have particular relevance to the relation between acting and mental illness are:

Laing, *The Divided Self* (London, 1960):

p. 76 Split between 'own self' and 'personality'

p. 101 Need for a mask: 'a man without a mask is indeed very rare. One doubts the possibility of such a man'.

p. 125 'being seen' as a stage in ego-development.

p. 151 Sense of identity dependent on another.

Laing, *The Self and Others* (London, 1961):

p. 28 Ways in which a person eludes himself through acting.

p. 83 Identity as a middle point between fantasy and reality.

p. 85 The 'family-romance' and the attempt to redefine the self through redefinition of other members of the family.

p. 98 Laing's concept of 'lusion' Cp. What we have written about the hypocrite.

p. 103 Genet's *Le Balcon*: theme of reality depending on an audience.

description: it is also concerned to achieve a situation in which the right thing may happen. The actor, who experiences his actions as happening *through* him and not as caused *by* him, can perhaps sometimes serve as a useful model for the therapist. A study of the analytical relationship, of the so-called transference and counter-transference, in terms of the theatre would be interesting.

p. 120 Liar, hysteric, actor, hypocrite, imposter 'are at the one time the exploiters and victims of the almost unlimited possibilities in self's relation to its own acts, and of the final lack of final assurance that one can attribute correctly the other's relations to his actions.'

Laing and Cooper, *Reason and Violence* (London, 1964), pp. 67-92. Sartre's biography of Genet explores the question of the two identities in a child's upbringing, his identity for himself, and his identity for others. In Genet's case, 'no family ceremony occurred to consecrate the union of his identity for himself with his identity for others' (p. 70).