

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

7816685

HODESS, KENNETH MARK
IN SEARCH OF THE DIVIDED SELF: A
PSYCHOANALYTIC INQUIRY INTO SELECTED PLAYS OF
LUIGI PIRANDELLO.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, PH.D., 1978

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. ZEEB ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106

© 1978

KENNETH MARK HODESS

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

IN SEARCH OF THE DIVIDED SELF
A Psychoanalytic Inquiry
into
Selected Plays of
Luigi Pirandello
by
KENNETH M. HODESS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1978

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

5/12/78
date

Charles Gattnig
Chairman of Examining Committee

5/12/78
date

Stanley A. Waren
Executive Officer

Albert C. Bermel

Charles J. Gattnig

Stanley A. Waren

Supervisory Committee

Abstract

IN SEARCH OF THE DIVIDED SELF

A Psychoanalytic Inquiry

into

Selected Plays of

Luigi Pirandello

by

Kenneth M. Hodess

Advisor: Professor Charles Gattnig

An attempt has been made to develop a new critical approach to the interpretation of a selection of Pirandello's plays, employing contemporary psychoanalytic theory. The theories of R.D. Laing, regarding the development of the schizoid and schizophrenic personalities, and Albert Rothenberg, regarding the dynamics of creative thinking, have been examined in relation to Pirandello's creative process. New theories of identity, identification and self-image have been integrated with those of Laing and the concepts of the false self and the fragmented self in order to arrive at a new aesthetic vision of Pirandello's works.

A number of key incidents in Pirandello's life have been examined in relation to the playwright's creative process so as to provide some sense of the roots of his creative imagination. Various aspects of the socio-cultural climate in which Pirandello lived have been dealt with as well as the influence of his psychotic wife. These stimuli have been integrated with elements of Laing's theory of schizophrenia in the modern world.

The plays dealt with are: Right You Are (If You Think You Are), Six Characters in Search of an Author, Henry IV, To Clothe the Naked and When Someone Is Somebody. An effort was made to select a group of plays that would represent a cross-section of Pirandello's dramatic art, with regard to his chronological development as a playwright as well as the range of thematic material dealt with in the plays.

In conclusion, an effort was made to relate the specific new insights obtained through this reading of Pirandello via Laing's radical psychoanalytic approach to the concerns of the theatre practitioner and the audience member, so as to develop a lively theatrical environment for contemporary productions of the plays.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Undertaking a project of this nature is never a single-handed proposition. Before I proceed, a word of thanks is due those whose support and assistance were invaluable to the successful completion of this study--

To Professor Gino Rizzo, for introducing me to Pirandello's world, and for his advice and support in the effort to arrive at a valid, essential point of view from which I could explore the plays;

To Professor Charles Gattnig, whose objectivity, vision and generosity of spirit led to major shifts in emphasis and greater clarity of purpose; and for his assistance in the translation of key passages;

To Professor Albert Bernel, who made sure I did not lose sight of the importance of theatre as theatre, emphasizing the relationship of my work to that of the theatre practitioner;

To Professor Stanley Waren, for his endless patience and constant support through years of work and study;

To Dr. Alan Roland, for affording me the opportunity of participating in several interdisciplinary symposia relating psychoanalytic theory to the arts and Pirandello, in particular; and for serving as a sounding board for my own theoretical pronouncements on a subject that was close to both of us;

And finally, to my wife, Marie, whose consummate artistry and fierce dedication to the theatre as the most universal of the arts served as a constant inspiration and source of new vigor for my own ever-flagging energies. In a very real sense, this dissertation could not have been completed without her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: FREUD, CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SOCIOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES.....	23
III. ANALYSIS OF EVENTS IN PIRANDELLO'S LIFE IN RELATION TO HIS PLAYS.....	58
IV. <u>RIGHT YOU ARE, IF YOU THINK YOU ARE</u>	104
V. THE MIRROR IMAGES OF <u>SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR</u> AND <u>HENRY IV</u>	131
VI. STUDIES IN LONELINESS: <u>TO CLOTHE THE NAKED AND</u> <u>WHEN SOMEONE IS SOMEBODY</u>	166
VII. CONCLUSION.....	207
APPENDIX.....	215
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	219

It is surprising how little has been said as yet of
Pirandello's art.

Even against it.

Eric Bentley

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the first productions of Luigi Pirandello's plays, modern drama has acquired a new dimension. While O'Neill's drama delved into the minds of his characters in a personally introspective way, it was Pirandello's dramaturgy that brought psychological exploration to the fore. Indeed, Pirandello's far-reaching influence on the modern theatre has received authoritative critical acknowledgment. Robert Brustein notes specific parallels between twentieth-century drama and elements of psychological exploration when he explains:

Pirandello's influence on the drama of the twentieth century is immeasurable. In his agony over the nature of existence, he anticipates Sartre and Camus; in his insights into the disintegration of personality and the isolation of man, he anticipates Samuel Beckett; in his unremitting war on language, theory, concepts, and the collective mind, he anticipates Eugene Ionesco; in his approach to the conflict of truth and illusion, he anticipates Eugene O'Neill (and later, Harold Pinter and Edward Albee); in his experiments with the theatre he anticipates a host of experimental dramatists, including Thornton Wilder and Jack Gelber; in his use of the interplay between actors and characters, he anticipates Jean Anouilh; in his view of the tension between public mask and private face, he anticipates Jean Giraudoux; and in his concept of man as a role-playing animal, he anticipates

Jean Genet. The extent of even this partial list of influences marks Pirandello as the most seminal dramatist of our time.¹

Martin Esslin draws yet another parallel:

Among the creators of the modern theatre, Luigi Pirandello stands in the very first rank, next to Ibsen, Strindberg and Shaw. And even though his plays may be less frequently performed in the English-speaking world today than those of Shaw or Ibsen (Strindberg is neglected equally unjustly), his influence on the work of the dramatists of our own age is far stronger, far more active, than that of those two giants.²

It is truly ironic, then, that a closer examination of the literature reveals that Pirandello has received a minimum of attention in English-speaking countries. In The Contemporary Drama of Italy,³ Lander MacClintock, who examines the drama of Italy prior to 1917, does not seem very impressed with Pirandello. The only book written in English devoted exclusively to the Italian theatre between World War I and World War II is The Age of Pirandello by MacClintock.⁴ However, despite the fact that the title bears his name, Luigi Pirandello occupies but one chapter and is reduced to being labeled, "the perfect pessimist." As of 1954, there were only two American doctoral dissertations which

¹Robert Brustein, The Theatre of Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964), p. 316. (Emphasis mine.)

²Martin Esslin, "Author in Search of Pirandello," New York Times, 25 June 1967, sec. 2, p. 1.

³(Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1920).

⁴(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1951).

named Pirandello in their titles. Prior to this date there is no record of any scholarly work having been done on Pirandello in the United States. In the twenty years following, there have been a scant nineteen doctoral dissertations dealing with various aspects of Pirandello's literary output. Of these, four are in Italian and one is in Spanish. Of the remaining fourteen texts, two are devoted specifically to Pirandello's short stories; the other twelve do deal with his dramatic output, but largely as an element of a wider comparative study or in terms of his influence on later works. There is no attempt to place Pirandello or his works into some sort of psychological framework. This study will be the first critical inquiry into the works of Pirandello from the point of view of the psychoanalytic theoretician.¹

But why should it be necessary to establish the credentials of Luigi Pirandello, one of only six dramatists ever to win the Nobel Prize for Literature?²

¹See Comprehensive Dissertation Index, 1861-1972 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1973). See also 1973 Supplement to Comprehensive Dissertation Index (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1974). See also 1974 Supplement to Comprehensive Dissertation Index (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975).

²Pirandello was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature on December 10, 1934. Other playwrights who have been awarded the prize are George Bernard Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, Jean Paul Sartre (who did not accept the prize), Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett.

Indeed, Shaw has described Pirandello's innovative Six Characters in Search of an Author as the "strongest and most original work for the stage, ancient and modern."¹

Eric Bentley seems to have been sensitive both to Pirandello's value as an innovative force in modern drama and to the obstacles that prevented a full appreciation of his work in America. Seventeen years before Esslin placed Pirandello in the first rank of the creators of the modern theatre, Bentley had already said of him that "the total body of his work places him with Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, and Shaw as one of the five masters of the modern stage."² According to Bentley, Pirandello's lack of popularity in America was largely due to the preponderance of poor productions and poor translations of his plays. In addition, Bentley feels that "strongest prejudice against Pirandello . . . takes the form of the view that he is 'dated' belonging to the idea-mongering, talkative twenties. . . ." ³

Bentley, in 1952, edited five of Pirandello's plays under the title Naked Masks. Of this collection, Liola was a first translation into English; It Is So! (If You Think So), Henry IV, Six Characters in Search of an Author, and Each In His Own Way were making their first

¹George Bernard Shaw, quoted in "Luigi Pirandello," Scholastic, XXIX (January 9, 1937), 7.

²Eric Bentley, "We Need Pirandello Today," Theatre Arts, XXXVI (May, 1952), 23-24.

³Ibid., p. 24.

appearance in English in twenty-five years.¹ At that time, almost half of Pirandello's forty-five plays had not been translated into English. Bentley reported that there were only two books on Pirandello in English: Walter Starkie's Luigi Pirandello² and Domenico Vittorini's The Drama of Luigi Pirandello.³ There were numerous magazine articles during the twenties and thirties, but these dealt largely with the productions of his plays or incidents in his personal life.

Since 1952, other significant works on Pirandello have been published in English: Thomas Bishop's Pirandello and The French Theatre⁴ and Oscar Büdel's Pirandello.⁵ Pirandello is dealt with in considerable detail by F.L. Lucas in The Drama of Chekhov, Synge, Yeats and Pirandello⁵ and by Robert Brustein in The Theatre of Revolt. Olga Ragusa has contributed an excellent monograph entitled Luigi Pirandello⁶ and, more recently, chapters on Pirandello

¹Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo, (Roma: Casa Editrice Le Maschere, 1961), VIII, 172.

²(London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1926; London: John Murray, 1937 [3d rev. ed.: Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965]).

³(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935; New York: Dover Publications, 1957 [New York: Russell and Russell, 1969]).

⁴(New York: New York University Press, 1960).

⁵(New York: Hillary House, 1966).

⁶(New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

have appeared in Albert Bermel's Contradictory Characters¹ and Richard Gilman's The Making of Modern Drama.² Mention should also be made of the standard Italian sources used in varying degrees to provide background material for all of the above: Gaspare Giudice's Luigi Pirandello³ and F.V. Nardelli's seminal biography, L'uomo segreto.⁴

Esslin, in an attempt to crystallize Pirandello's influence, has said: "Pirandello, more than any other playwright, has been responsible for a revolution in man's attitude to the world, in its way as significant as the revolution caused by Einstein's discovery of the concept of relativity."⁵ A parallel analogy might be drawn between Pirandello and another revolutionary thinker of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud. While there is no clear evidence that Pirandello ever had any formal training in psychoanalytic theory, it is our point of view that his dramatic works were way ahead of their time in terms of his psychoanalytic awareness of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. In order to elaborate this notion, we must first provide some background as to the history and development of psychoanalysis. in

¹(New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1973).

²(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974).

³(Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1963).

⁴(2nd ed. Milano: Mondadori, 1944).

⁵"Author in Search of Pirandello," p. 1.

relation to the creative arts.

As the underlying principles of psychoanalysis became more completely a part of the cultural fabric of the modern world, it was only a matter of time before the creative arts came to be scrutinized under the Freudian microscope. In fact, psychoanalysis sought corroboration of its early hypotheses in literature because sufficient clinical evidence was not yet available. Literature was thought to have a homogeneity of themes similar to the universal fantasies of mankind and this similarity was felt to be particularly evident in the drama.¹

The theoretical framework for the application of psychoanalytic principles to the arts, and especially literature, was laid by Freud in two seminal papers--the first on Jensen's Gradiva (1906) and the other on "The Relationship of the Poet to Daydreaming" (1908).² Here the literary work was viewed as analogous to the daydream and dream, in giving disguised expression to forbidden wishes and impulses from the oral, anal, phallic and genital psychosexual stages of development. Thus the task of the traditional psychoanalytic critic has been to penetrate through art's manifest aesthetic expression to deeper psychological meanings. With this assumption as the basis for further examination, the psycho-

¹ Philip Weissman, Creativity in the Theater: A Psychoanalytic Study (New York: Delta Books, 1965), p. 1.

² See Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, vol. IX: "Jensen's 'Gradiva' and Other Works," ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 7-94 and pp. 141-153.

analytic critic has developed three basic approaches to literature.

The first and most familiar approach has been to elucidate the universality of unconscious fantasies derived from the psychosexual stages of development. A classic example would be Ernest Jones' analysis of Hamlet in light of the Oedipus complex.¹

A more recent preoccupation with universal unconscious fantasies in literature is found in the English schools of Freudian psychoanalysis, particularly in Melanie Klein and her followers.² Here unconscious fantasy is viewed as stemming from the interaction of a person's libidinal and aggressive drives with early familial interpersonal experiences or object-relations.³ According to the Kleinians, there are clearly defined psychosocial or object-relations stages of development in the infant's and young child's relationship with the parents (particularly the mother). These stages tend to parallel psychosexual development and give rise to particular types of unconscious fantasy.

The second major direction taken by psychoanalytic literary criticism has been to investigate the unconscious

¹See Ernest Jones, Hamlet and Oedipus (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1949).

²Alan Roland, "Toward a Re-Orientation of Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism," paper presented at the Association for Applied Psychoanalysis, New York, June, 1973, p. 2.

³In Freudian psychoanalytic theory, interpersonal relations are conceptualized as object-relations. The term object comes from the Cartesian philosophical distinction between self and other (object).

motivation or psychopathology of a character in order to penetrate to the underlying meanings of a literary work. Thus Philip Weissman, in a chapter of his book, Creativity in the Theatre, analyzes Tennessee Williams' prostitute heroines in terms of problems of early object-relations as well as Oedipal difficulties.¹ Kurt Eissler, in his recent work, On Hamlet and "Hamlet",² also adds considerable refinement to our view of the dynamics of Hamlet's superego³ and ego-ideal⁴ and the effect of these on dramatic action. Moreover, not only did Eissler use his understanding of Hamlet as a key to the exigencies of plot, but he saw the character as the embodiment of universal laws of the psyche.

¹Weissman, pp. 173-189.

²See K.R. Eissler, Discourse on Hamlet and "Hamlet": A Psychoanalytic Inquiry (New York: International Universities Press, 1971).

³Freud described the superego as that part of the total personality consisting of the ego-ideal and the conscience; i.e., the goal toward which the individual strives and those incorporated inhibitory forces from the outer world that have been internalized. See Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis, ed. Ludwig Eidelberg (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 422.

⁴Freud first used the term ego-ideal to describe the function of watching the ego and measuring it by an ideal; later Freud defined the ego-ideal as one aspect of the superego; he considered the superego to be a largely unconscious mechanism consisting of the conscience and a vehicle by which the ego could measure itself (ego-ideal). See Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis, ed. Ludwig Eidelberg (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 122.

This approach is in direct contrast to the earlier work of Ernest Jones, in which Hamlet was seen as a completely real, living person.

The third direction in which the psychoanalytic critic has ventured, beginning with Freud's work on Leonardo da Vinci,¹ has been to relate the hidden psychological meanings in the work of art (either the unconscious fantasies or the character analysis) to the author's life.² At its worst, treating the work of art as a chapter in its creator's psychobiography has led to the reductionistic position that art is a manifestation of psychopathology, and can be understood simply by examining the vicissitudes of an author's childhood. Realistically, such an approach could not be wholly satisfactory, yielding an extremely limited sense of the value and meaning of the work. We must not lose sight of the fact that while personality aberrations may be apparent in the study of any artist's development, talent is quite separate from neurosis. The creative self is an adaptive, positive energy source and the informed critic should temper his eagerness to merely label the creative artist with just so much diagnostic jargon.

¹See Sigmund Freud, Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood, trans. Alan Tyson (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1964).

²A recent example of this is Kligerman's work relating Six Characters in Search of an Author to Pirandello's life and personality. See Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 10, No. 4 (October, 1962), 732-743.

whichever of these three basic approaches the psychoanalytic critic has taken, he has been guided by the underlying principle that art is analogous to the dream and manifest aesthetic form must be translated into latent psychological meaning.

Almost fifty years after the publication of Freud's initial inquiries into the realms of art and the mind of the artist, his analogy between the dream (or daydream) and the work of art was amplified by Ernst Kris.¹ The result of Kris' broader investigations was the formulation of a psychoanalytic theory of creativity. Kris reinforced the bond between artwork and dream-work by equating artistic ambiguity with the overdetermination² of the primary process.³ Poetic metaphor,

¹See Ernst Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).

²Overdetermination refers to the economic way in which the unconscious attaches a variety of meanings and feelings to a particular image or symptom. The condensed image in a dream is a similar phenomenon. The process by which such non-logical imagistic thinking takes place in the unconscious is known as primary.

³Freud used the term primary process to refer to a means of using thought as a medium of wish fulfillment; being swayed by the pleasure principle, the individual (creative artist) can entertain all sorts of contradictions and can transcend, in fantasy, any limitation or obstacle that may stand between himself and the desired object. Words and thoughts may be imbued with a magical significance and the mere articulation of a thought may be tantamount to the execution of the deed it represents or the materialization of the objects for which the individual has yearned.

As the ego develops, the primary process yields increasingly to what Freud termed the secondary process: to coherent and logically compelling thought which takes into account the requirements of reality. Although the primary process ceases to play such a prominent role in the individual's mentality, it continues, in particular, to serve his unconscious motives. Hence, for the adult, the primary process

an integration of different levels of experience, was also equated to the metaphorical expression of dream imagery, where elements and objects in the dream are analogous to others in the individual's constellation of "real" experiences. The artist was seen as regressing in the service of his ego to the imagery of the primary process with its ambiguity of meaning and then progressing to the rational ego where his secondary process thinking would mold derivatives from his primary process into an aesthetic form.¹

Kris was then able to enlarge Freud's earlier conception of artistic form as disguise and distraction by seeing it as partly determined by the conventions of the culture and also as a means of socially adaptive expression. He felt that ambiguity in works of art was related to socio-cultural stability, increasing in times of rapid social change and decreasing in periods when change was minimal.²

As an infant science, psychoanalysis has undergone a striking metamorphosis since the time of Freud. Our discussion, so far, has touched upon a number of divergent points of view, all of which are enclosed under the generalized umbrella of traditional psychoanalytic thought. With the theories of R.D. Laing, however, we move completely out of the traditional sphere. Laing, a contemporary psycho-

can usually be detected only in the fabric of the dream.

See Irving Sarnoff, Personality Dynamics and Development (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), pp. 132-133.

¹Kris, pp. 13-63.

²Ibid., pp. 303-320.

analyst working in England and Scotland, has been responsible for a radical departure in psychoanalytic thinking. His approach is existential and phenomenological. He does not address himself to the psychosexual stages of development or other aspects of classical, Freudian psychoanalytic theory. In a sense, his inquiry into man's nature begins where Ernst Kris' ends--with man's place in his society and the various ways in which he deals with the socio-cultural forces impinging on him. Laing is concerned with man's place in the world and his relationship to other men. Indeed, a crucial factor in Laing's theory is the quality of the relationship between the individual and others in his environment. Personal relatedness can exist only between individuals who are separate and yet not isolated from one another. The inherent paradox here is that man's relatedness to others is an essential aspect of his being, as is his separateness from others.¹

In Laing's approach to the problem of the etiology of psychosis lies the iron that forges the link between modern psychoanalytic thought and the drama of Luigi Pirandello. It is the notion that the concept and experience that a man may have of his own being (i.e., his self-image) may be very different from the concept and experience that others may have of his being. He may see himself in a totally different light than that through which he is seen by others. Pirandello, nearly half a century earlier, made this notion the

¹R.D. Laing, The Divided Self (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 26.

focal point of his drama.

Over the years, critics and audiences have attempted to discover the deeper levels of meaning in the enigmatic, profoundly psychological dramas of Pirandello. Despite these attempts, a fully cogent explanation has been continually elusive. It is not surprising, then, that several of the playwright's better known works (e.g., Six Characters in Search of an Author and Henry IV) have recently undergone critical re-evaluation based on the principles of a sophisticated psychoanalysis, not readily available to an earlier generation of Pirandello critics.

This new critical approach was initiated by Charles Kligerman, a psychoanalyst, in a 1962 paper entitled "A Psychoanalytic Study of Pirandello's 'Six Characters in Search of an Author.'"¹ Kligerman's study was followed, in 1965, by Eric Bentley's article, "Father's Day,"² incorporating elements of Kligerman's earlier work along with the theoretical orientations of R.D. Laing.³ In January, 1974, three other analysts presented their views at a meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. The first of these, Martin Wanh,⁴ juxtaposed the thematic content of Six Char-

¹Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 10, No. 4 (October, 1962), 732-743.

²The Drama Review, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Fall, 1968), 57-72.

³See R.D. Laing, The Divided Self (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 43ff.

⁴Martin Wanh, "Underlying Motivations in Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author: A Psychoanalytic View" (Unpublished paper presented at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, January, 1974).

acters and Henry IV, while his colleague, Theodore Jacobs,¹ in discussing Wangh's paper, put forth a psychoanalytic interpretation of Six Characters at odds with those of Kligerman, Bentley and Wangh. Martin Bergmann,² the third speaker, offered a viewpoint incorporating principles related to theories of identity, identification and self-image. This approach has been amplified by Alan Roland and Gino Rizzo in a soon-to-be published study of Six Characters and Henry IV.³

Kligerman distinguishes between playwrights such as Shakespeare and Tolstoy, who are engaged in the portrayal of universal human conflicts, and others for whom art is essentially a projection of their inner life. Thus, in Six Characters, he sees Pirandello's attempt to communicate intense and unconscious infantile conflicts to the audience. Wangh expands this hypothesis to include audience bewilderment and confusion, the effects of the ambiguity of form and ending and their failure to resolve the unconscious conflicts aroused by the play.

Kligerman's study follows the traditional approach of psychoanalytic literary criticism in attempting to relate aspects of Six Characters to Pirandello's personal conflicts

¹Theodore Jacobs (Discussion of Martin Wangh's paper on Pirandello at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, January, 1974).

²Martin Bergmann (Notes on Pirandello and Psychoanalysis, New York Psychoanalytic Institute, January, 1974).

³Alan Roland and Gino Rizzo, "Psychoanalysis In Search of Pirandello: Six Characters and Henry IV" (unpublished paper, 1975).

and biography. Wangh attempts to relate the thematic structures of Six Characters, Rules of the Game, and Henry IV in a more comprehensive look at dramatic content.

Kligerman, in his examination of the inner plot of Six Characters, was influenced by Ernest Jones' analysis of the play-within-the-play in Hamlet. Jones' study reflects the importance of the dream-within-the-dream, a structure which classical psychoanalysis interprets as yielding the fullest expression of infantile fantasies and conflicts. In their studies, Wangh and Jacobs followed Kligerman in directing their attention almost exclusively to the analysis of the inner plot. They did examine Six Characters in terms of structure and form, but their frame of reference was psychoanalytic rather than artistic. Their studies adhered to the premise that form in literature is a defense,¹ a generally accepted assumption in contemporary psychoanalytic criticism.

Kligerman's analysis of the play-within-the-play suggests the presence of deep-seated psychological material reflected in themes of omnipotence, pathological jealousy, latent homosexuality, father/daughter incest, mother/son conflict, sibling murder and suicide. He finds both plot and characters reflective of the dream-like qualities of primary process rather than the full personality development and rational characteristics of secondary process. Further

¹Norman Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 237-241.

evidence of primary process is cited in elements such as splitting by displacement--in which the father and sons of various ages represent different layers of the playwright's mind; condensation--when the step-daughter equates her father with all seducers; and the perception of time in the play as an indeterminate.

Wangh analyzes Six Characters in terms of disguised Oedipal conflict. This is expressed in the play's depiction of incestuous desires (father towards step-daughter), pathological jealousy (father towards secretary), filicidal wishes (father's banishment of his two-year-old son) and patricidal wishes (son towards his father). These drives are all laced with unconscious guilt.

Jacobs' analysis stresses the themes of abandonment and deprivation, the pre-Oedipal dynamics which account for the pathological jealousy and guilt described by Wangh as well as the play's pervasive anger and bitterness.

Bentley cites Kligerman's discussion of the primary process nature of the six characters and adds that their indeterminate quality is echoed in the play's lack of precise location in time and place. He argues against Kligerman's undue emphasis on the inner plot and moves from the classical psychoanalytic interpretation, dealing with early familial fantasies, to the more radical psychoanalytic interpretation of R.D. Laing.¹ Bentley sees the Father

¹Laing, The Divided Self, "Ontological Insecurity," pp. 39-61.

as a fully developed, three-dimensional character beset by Laingian schizophrenia. The Father's long philosophical discourses are interpreted as desperate schizophrenic maneuvers that are, simultaneously, attempts at self-preservation and expressions of profound despair. When the Father speaks of the phenomenon of multiple personality (that we are different people at different times), his behavior is interpreted as a schizophrenic defense against the acceptance of incestuous feelings and desires. The Father yearns for intimacy and closeness; but he is caught in Laing's schizophrenic paradox and his actions only serve to destroy his family and alienate all those around him.

In his conclusion to the article, Bentley stresses the dialectical relationship that exists between the indeterminate nature of character and temporal and spatial context on the one hand, and the concrete nature of actors and Director moving within specificity of time and place on the other. He does not explore the relationship of characters to actors on which the structural unity of the play depends. He simply notes that as indeterminate as the six characters are, they are ironically far less one-dimensional than the supposed "real" acting company drawn from life.

Roland and Rizzo open their discussion with the premise that Six Characters is not a play about schizophrenia, as Bentley implies, but a more profound exploration into man's nature that goes beyond individual forms of psychopathology.

The characters are seen as projections of psychological processes rather than three-dimensional personalities suffering from specific pathological conditions. The study concerns itself with elements of the identification process and the effects of deprivation, repudiation and rejection on the formation of positive self-image.

In a way, Bentley's essay has provided the germ for our current study in that he was the first to link Pirandello with Laing. It seems to us that Pirandello was indeed years ahead of his time in that his plays dealt with the very same concepts and processes confronted by Laing. Bentley's study falls short because there is no direct application of Laing to Pirandello, the creative artist, but only to the plays (specifically, Six Characters). Ernest Jones stresses the importance of extending the applications of psychoanalytic criticism to the artist in these words:

A work of art is too often regarded as a finished thing-in-itself, something almost independent of the creator's personality, as if little would be learned about the one or the other by connecting the two studies. Informed criticism, however, shows that a correlated study of the two sheds light in both directions, on the inner nature of the composition and on the creative impulse of its author. The two can be separated only at the expense of diminished appreciation, whereas to increase our knowledge of either automatically deepens our understanding of the other.¹

¹Ernest Jones, Hamlet and Oedipus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1949), p. 12.

Thus the main thrust of this study will be to draw a parallel between Pirandello's own schizoid process¹ as seen via Laing's theory and the schizoid characters and structures of his plays as related to the concepts of false self, identity and self-image. We feel it incumbent upon us to stress the notion that it is not our intent to diagnose Pirandello as schizophrenic (or any other pathological state, for that matter) but merely to suggest that many aspects of his personality and life history closely parallel the schizoid personality structures and personal relationships that he portrays in his drama.

We would question the interpretations of Kligerman, et al., because, we believe that "psychological [criticism] fails . . . when the characters are too clinically drawn and when their unconscious motivations are given over-specific labels such as incestuous love, parental death wishes, homosexuality, and the like."² Kligerman, et al., seem to be guilty of "an excessive adoration of man's unconscious. Whereas the science of psychoanalysis emphasizes

¹In this study, the term schizoid refers to a special strategy that an individual resorts to in order to live in an unlivable situation. It is with this meaning that the term appears in Laing's lexicon. The implications here are not pathological but rather, existential and phenomenological. The schizoid sees himself as split in various ways. Perhaps he exists as two or more selves, or as a mind and body that are held together only tenuously. The schizoid is, in one sense, the individual who has been unable to resolve the conflict between the demands of conformity and the demands of his instinctive energies.

²Philip Weissman, Creativity in the Theatre: A Psychoanalytic study (New York: Delta Books, 1965), p. 233.

the role of the unconscious as sowing the seeds of our cultural produce, the more careless enthusiasts of psychoanalysis often mistake the roots for the fruits."¹

The justifying principles underlying this study have been summed up incisively by Philip Weissman:

Inherent in the [modern] era of art is the condition that the artist will continue to create works of art that will represent man's dreams and fantasies. Psychoanalytic supplementation to a critic's armamentarium is essential to the current cultural trend of art. In a cooperative effort, psychoanalysis and criticism may then evolve a more systematized psychology of creation and appreciation. The critic who has intuitive psychoanalytic insight, reinforced by a psychoanalytic education, will not only be in a better position to comprehend the artist's content and its relationship to the artist's personality and his life, but can also deepen our appreciation of art through his greater psychological insight and aesthetic connoisseurship.²

Toward this end, Chapter II of this study will examine the contemporary psychoanalytic theories of R.D. Laing and Albert Rothenberg in relation to Pirandello's creative process. New theories of identity, identification and self-image based on the works of Weil and Lichtenstein will be integrated with those of Laing and the concept of the "false self." The entire theoretical framework will then be applied to a selection of Pirandello's plays in order to set guidelines for a psychoanalytically-oriented critical discussion.

¹Weissman, p. 255.

²Ibid., p. 223.

Chapter III will theorize about events in his life relative to Pirandello's creation of the plays. We will draw upon several key incidents in Pirandello's life that have been given special attention by his principal Italian biographers, Nardelli and Giudice. Some key questions for this chapter are: What aspects of the socio-cultural climate in which he lived are projected in the plays? How are we to assess the undeniable influence of his psychotic wife on his work and how can we integrate these stimuli with elements of Laing's theory of schizophrenia in the modern world? How are we to define the scope of our inquiry? What criteria are we to use in an effort to isolate a select group of Pirandello's plays for study?

Chapter IV will initiate our interpretive discussion with an examination of Right You Are (If You Think You Are).

Chapter V will continue with a discussion of Six Characters in Search of an Author and Henry IV.

Chapter VI will offer a parallel view of To Clothe the Naked and When Someone Is Somebody.

Chapter VII will attempt to synthesize the preceding material into a formal conclusion, noting the specific new insights which have been made available through this reading of Pirandello via Laing's radical psychoanalytic approach.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: FREUD, CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SOCIOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Psychoanalysis, as a broad scientific discipline, offers a number of theoretical positions, all of which are applicable in varying degrees to an examination of the relationship between the individual and his society and how this relationship is projected in the creative artist's work. The plays of Pirandello may therefore be studied from a combined psychological viewpoint. While Freud's ventures into the literary sphere undeniably set the stage for subsequent psychoanalytic inquiry in the area of literary criticism, his methodology was inherently self-limiting in that classical Freudian psychoanalytic theory tends to reduce all stimuli and symbolic elements to the psychosexual dimension. While recognizing the value of such an approach, we have found it more profitable to go beyond Freudian psychoanalysis and enlarge the scope of our investigation to include the contemporary psychoanalytic orientations of: R.D. Laing, on the development of the self and on the

problem of schizophrenia in the modern world;¹ Albert Rothenberg, on the concept of "Janusian" thinking as a creative process;² Edmund Weil, on the origins of the self-image;³ and Heinz Lichtenstein, on identity and sexuality.⁴ These, then, are the major theorists to be used in this study. Of the above, Laing will be central to our developing psychoanalytic awareness of Pirandello's drama and will be covered last. The works of the others will be used to introduce, supplement and enlarge upon our basic Laingian orientation. In support of our contention that the more limited, classical (Freudian) psychoanalytic approach to literary criticism leaves many vital areas unexplored, we have also drawn upon the works of Kenneth Burke and Alan Roland.

Initially, Freud saw a direct connection between dreams and daydreams and the creative work of the artist. The artist or poet was seen as a communications link between forbidden feelings in himself and in his viewers or audience.

¹See R.D. Laing, The Divided Self (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 65-93.

²See Albert Rothenberg, "The Process of Janusian Thinking in Creativity," Archives of General Psychiatry 24 (March, 1971): 195-205.

³See Edmund Weil, "The Origins and Vicissitudes of the Self-Image," Psychoanalysis and The Psychoanalytic Review 45 (1958): 57-73.

⁴See Heinz Lichtenstein, "Identity and Sexuality: A Study of their Interrelationship in Man," American Psychoanalytic Association Journal 9 (1961): 179-240.

Since such socially and consciously unacceptable material really concealed the fulfillment of forbidden wishes, the work of art served the therapeutic or cathartic function of releasing deeply suppressed or repressed tensions in an acceptable, even public (in the case of the performing arts), manner.¹

Despite the fact that Freud goes to great lengths to distinguish the different genres of art, it is always from the standpoint of how different levels of erotic feelings or defenses against them are evoked or what conflict area in the psychic structure is chosen for depiction; or to what degree the form is able to distance the artist and spectator from a too direct view of desirable but shameful material. Freud felt that the psychological function of artistic form was to disguise the true emotional (repressed) content of the work of art, and thus served to make this content communicable on a conscious level in a public setting.²

Kenneth Burke was one of the first critics to note the limitations of the Freudian psychoanalytic approach to literature. In his essay, "Freud--And the Analysis of Poetry," Burke distinguishes between the "essentializing strategy" of psychoanalysis, which reduces all elements to the psychosexual dimension, and the "proportionalizing strategy" of a more universal approach which would incorporate psycho-

¹See Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, vol. IX: "Jensen's 'Gradiva' and Other Works," ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 141-153.

²Ibid.

analysis with other points of view.¹

Burke sees the work of art, for the explicit purposes of literary criticism, primarily as a form of communication rather than a wish or dream. This classification resists the Freudian tendency to overplay the psychological (psychosexual) factor. Instead, literature is viewed as an act of communion, in a quasi-religious sense, as well as a contribution to an informal dictionary of ideas, in which the artist or poet finds an experience or relationship significant enough to define or describe in literary terms.²

Exemplifying Burke's concept of avoiding the characteristic pitfalls of Freudian psychoanalysis, the quality of creative impulses has been examined in a new light by Albert Rothenberg in his research on the creative process that he has termed "Janusian" thinking. This process is defined as "the capacity to conceive and utilize two or more opposite or contradictory ideas, concepts, or images simultaneously."³ This notion seems to have fascinated Pirandello. Gattnig cites the fact that Bruno's maxim: In tristitia hilaris, in hilaritate tristis. ("In sadness there is laughter; in laughter,

¹In Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1941), pp. 261-262.

²Ibid., p. 282.

³Rothenberg, p. 195. In Roman mythology, Janus was the god who was guardian of portals and patron of beginnings and endings; he is shown as having two faces, one in front, the other at the back of his head, symbolizing his powers.

sadness.") became Pirandello's motto.¹ This image seems to complement Pirandello's definition of umorismo (humor) as put forth in his essay entitled, L'umorismo. Humor is defined as il sentimento del contrario (the feeling of incongruity or opposites; a "design of incongruity").²

Rothenberg's research has shown that Janusian thinking may enter into basic plot ideas, specific metaphors, or early formulations of the overall structure of a work of art. It may or may not be apparent or remembered by the artist himself and it may or may not lead to clear oppositions in the completed work. Within the classical model of psychoanalytic thought, the process of Janusian thinking must be considered a secondary process mechanism.

Pirandello's works appear to fall well within the bounds of the Janusian thought process, since the juxtaposition of logical contradiction and basic truth makes up the core of his thematic structure (e.g., Right You Are). These relationships will be explored in greater detail in later chapters. Suffice it to note here that, in literary creation, paradox or opposition plays an important role in the construction and appeal of various types of literature. To be sure, the creation of metaphor is a process based on verbal opposition since, by definition, metaphor refers simultaneously to disparate aspects of experience. In these terms, Janusian thinking

¹Charles J. Gattnig, "Pirandello, Umorismo, and Beckett" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1967), p. 61. Bruno was burned at the stake (1600). The church claimed his behavior to be socially unacceptable.

²Ibid., pp. 102-103.

would clearly play a large role in the creation of metaphor and the importance of metaphor as a crucial component in all literature suggests that Janusian thinking is fundamental to the entire process of literary creation.

The areas of identity, identification and self-image appear to provide another theoretical orientation which may be applicable to Pirandello's drama. Questions as to identity and self-image constantly recur in his works and, in this sense, the relationship seems to be a rather obvious one. Aside from this fact, critical analysis by other theorists (notably, Roland¹) has indicated that identity, identification and self-image are the most relevant bridges in psychoanalytic theory to the social sciences and the arts. Touching on the intrapsychic and the interpersonal, these areas may be considered more relevant to evaluations of socio-cultural reality than the psychosexual or object relations (psychosocial) phases of development. With specific regard to the arts, internalization processes are intrinsically related to symbol formation and the primary process, which in turn are both clearly related to creative work in the arts.

Internalizations are a distinct factor in the process of identity formation and are uniquely related to symbol formation and the primary process. In the classical

¹See Alan Roland, "Contributions and Controversies in the Areas of Identity, Identification and Self-Image," Psychoanalytic Monographs 1 (December, 1970): 25-39.

psychoanalytic literature, symbolism is viewed as a substitute formation of the id¹ while the primary process functions in a drive-related, random manner to disguise consciously unacceptable drives and wishes, as in a dream. However, on the basis of a model in which internalization and identification basically serve the growth and development of ego functions in the child in reciprocal mutual relationships, symbol formation must be viewed as a crucial evolutionary human process to bridge the inner world and the outer world.

By the same token, primary process may be regarded as serving the function of integration and expression of internalizations into the psyche. Roland's research on dreams has indicated that primary process serves two functions in a dream: (a) to provide disguised expression of wishes or drives to evade the superego, as in the classical model; and (b) to provide superior symbolic or metaphorical expression to various aspects of psychic structures and internalization processes.²

Roland concludes, therefore, that internalizations and symbol formation are intrinsically interwoven; and, that internalizations through image representations gain superior symbolic expression through the primary process in dreams and art (rather than through the secondary process). This

¹Freud described the id as that portion of the unconscious devoted exclusively to the individual's instinctual gratification.

²Roland, "Contributions and Controversies . . . ," p. 30.

conclusion runs counter to the point of view expressed by Rothenberg, that secondary process functions, in their relationship to the Janusian thought process, play a greater role in artistic creativity than primary process functions. We should note, however, that Roland tempers his own theoretical position when he adds, "Of course, both in art and deciphering dreams, creative and integrative forces of the secondary process are also crucially at work."¹

In his discussion of the relationship of identity, identification and self-image to the arts, Roland makes a point of specifying that a great deal of modern drama, from Pirandello to Pinter, is clearly related to this very subject matter.² In addition, two of Pirandello's major works, Six Characters in Search of an Author and Henry IV, are primarily concerned with the incongruities, discontinuities and fragmentation of the self, as well as with mirroring processes very similar to those described by two other modern psychoanalytic theorists, Weil and Lichtenstein.

Weil's research deals with an exploration of the mirroring processes that exist in the mother-child relationship that result in the child's internalization of the mother's value systems and personality traits. Here, the mother gives her approval or disapproval, sanction and recognition or rejection of a whole range of the child's attitudes, expressions and actions. Within the reciprocal

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Ibid.

relationship, the child is constantly looking to see what effect he has on the mother. From the mother's responses, reflected back to the child, the child begins to build up a self-image reflective of his measure of self-esteem.¹

This notion seems very close to Burke's suggestion that literary criticism has the potential to provide new insights in terms of "matriarchal symbolizations" rather than the all too familiar viewpoint of Freud's "patriarchal bias."²

Weil's elaboration of self-image is a far more specific analysis of a certain kind of internalization process than the mere description of imitated self-representations that would characteristically occur in the experiential interaction of child and adult. In other situations, where the mirroring process is very weak because of a highly withdrawn or schizoid mother, the individual's positive self-definition becomes very difficult to attain.³

Lichtenstein, in a more radical approach, has completely done away with the whole Freudian theory of identification.

¹Weil, pp. 57-73.

²Burke, pp. 261-262.

³Weil provides the clinical example of a female patient who had great difficulties in making even the most normal demands on her husband and others. Her self-image was one of a voracious, manipulative person. This self-image was found to be the product of interactions with her mother, wherein the latter reacted to any needs and demands of her daughter as being far too extravagant, thus transmitting the message: "You are greedy and manipulative."

He has substituted the concept of identity thema, based on the mother's conscious and unconscious fantasies, expectations and attitudes toward her child begun in the prenatal state. These conscious and unconscious fantasies and expectations are believed to be internalized by the child from earliest infancy, in interaction with his own potentialities, through maternal handling and emotional development, and thus form a basic ground plan that is maintained throughout his life. As an adult, it is postulated that a person will unconsciously seek out a variety of situations and relationships to confirm these basic identity thema. To a great extent, the adult sexual relationship is seen as serving just such a function. The identification process, viewed as a basic ego function for adaptation, and taking place within patterned reciprocal relationships, can be seen as complementary to Lichtenstein's formulation of identity thema.¹

Perhaps what is really needed is to conceptualize internalization processes as taking place in two basic modes: one would be on the model of identification, where the characteristics of the other person and the patterns of the relationship are actively imitated and assimilated into the psyche; the other would be the reaction to and assimilation of a variety of attitudes, expectations and fantasies (conscious and unconscious) of parental figures and would include identity thema and the self-image. This

¹See Lichtenstein, pp. 208-230.

second mode of internalization would reflect Lichtenstein's formulation of identity thema and Weil's concept of the function of mirroring processes in the development of the self-image.

In order to measure how far Pirandello's plays go as projections of the social environment, we must differentiate between normal and pathological modes of taking in the social environment to become a working part of the personality. This question is directly related to the development of self-image and must be integrated with a descriptive evaluation of the various modes and patterns of internalizing the environment at different stages of development. We can see that, in early childhood, there are emotional attitudes, empathy, and emotional relatedness that develop the kind of inner security, sense of self and inner support necessary for further development. Growth-enhancing internalizations take place within the context of healthy mother-child relationships. From the standpoint of psychopathology of early internalization processes, there are two potentially damaging situations: (a) there is an insufficiency of an internalized good maternal presence; and (b) there is considerable internalization of destructive maternal attitudes and ways of relating to the child.

Normal identification processes aid in both the development of an identity and individuality on the one hand, while enabling the person to see his interpersonal

environment more clearly on the other; while abnormal identification processes both hinder identity formation and distort object relations through projection. To a certain extent we may hypothesize that it is just such distortions that are reflected in Pirandello's drama.¹

The psychoanalytic concept of "splitting," vital to our understanding of the development of and relationships between Pirandello's characters, may be elaborated in several different directions. One well-known definition refers to the splitting of a single character into two or more other characters. This particular operation involves the use of the primary process mechanism of displacement, resulting in sharper characterization by way of the isolation and refinement of a particular personality trait into a total character exemplifying that trait. Kenneth Burke, in "Freud--And the Analysis of Poetry," provides an early example of the way in which a psychoanalytically oriented critic may apply the notion of "splitting" to character study.²

Splitting of characters by displacement may occur, not merely for fuller dramatic effect, but as the result of strategic implementation of defense mechanisms by the creative artist. For example, one particular character may display the socially approved facets of a given personality structure, while any number of other characters may

¹Roland, "Contributions and Controversies . . .," p. 35.

²Burke, p. 277.

express its reprehensible and blameworthy aspects. This interpretation views splitting as a primary process device associated with the use of defense mechanisms to disguise and distort images, thus making them consciously acceptable.

Another important interpretation of splitting is associated with concepts of identity and the self. Although this type of splitting may manifest itself in a number of different ways, they all involve crucial defects in the achievement of an adult identity that synthesizes vital aspects of the self with the social role.

Identity must be understood as being a major psychological achievement of adulthood related to an inner continuity and integration of the self that is achieved through adult commitment to meaningful social roles (in both love and work) and a positive system of values. The beginnings of an identity originate within the reciprocal relationship between mother and child. The realization of an identity is sustained only through subsequent reciprocal relationships where reactions of others are mirrored back in varied socio-cultural contexts such as love, work and friendship.

During periods of rapid historical change, it is reasonable to assume that the socio-cultural contexts of adolescence and adult life often represent a reality that is quite different from the earlier inner self built up in the course of internalization of social reality during childhood.

Lichtenstein believes that when the major patterns of socio-cultural life begin to disintegrate and little or

no mirroring from others is experienced by the individual in his effort to reaffirm an identity, further splitting is experienced between the adult social role and the inner self.¹ Laing has speculated that splitting occurs when a society insists on the maintenance of rigid social roles and codes that prove to be inappropriate to changing needs.²

These viewpoints have been augmented by another contemporary psychoanalytic theorist, D.W. Winnicott, whose research suggests that the splitting process can begin in early childhood, when overly rigid social expectations lead to the development of a "false self," the forerunner of the social facades which may become, during adulthood, the substitute for a true inner self. Thus, in a society or historical era where inner identity or personality integration proves difficult to achieve, and where little sense of a true self is experienced by the individual, a sociology is evolved in which masks and roles are seen as constituting the self.³

That Pirandello himself was well aware of this unique relationship between society and functional identity seems amply apparent when we consider that his major theoretical effort, the essay On Humor (L'umorismo),⁴ stresses the

¹Lichtenstein, pp. 208-230.

²Laing, pp. 39-61.

³D.W. Winnicott, The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment (New York: International University Press, 1965), pp. 143-150.

⁴Luigi Pirandello, Saggi, poesie, scritti vari (Milano and Verona: Mondadori, 1960), pp. 17-160.

point that life in society demands dissimulation and falsehood from us. Furthermore, Pirandello observes that we are often forced to behave in a manner that is contrary to our actual desires and will. We may therefore postulate that an examination of the relationship between the intrapsychic reality of Pirandello's characters and their own social reality would enable us to assess the plays as images stemming from the society of the playwright, thus evaluating his dramatic works both as an expression of his personal psyche and of tensions common to his society.

The special quality of Pirandello's loneliness, the unique sensation of void that became the focal point of all his existential questioning, had been defined by him in an indirectly autobiographical manner in L'umorismo, originally published in 1908, then revised and expanded in 1920.

In the following passage, we hear echoes of many of the characters and images that would fill Pirandello's plays years later:

During certain moments of inner silence, during which our soul sheds all its habitual pretenses, and our eyes become sharper and more penetrating, we see ourselves in life and we see life in itself, naked. Disconcerted, we feel as if seized by a strange impression, as if, in a flash, a different reality from the one we usually perceive stood bright and clear before us, a living reality beyond human vision, beyond the forms of human reason. Very clearly, at such a time, the phenomena of daily existence, as though suspended in the vacuum of our inward silence, appear meaningless and without scope. And reality, so different,

appears horrible in its impassive and mysterious crudeness because in it all our accustomed artificial relationships, both of feelings and images, have split and disintegrated. The interior void expands, goes out beyond the limitations of our body, becomes a vacuum surrounding us, a strange vacuum like a cessation of time and life, as if our inner silence were plunging into the abyss of mystery.¹

Here the playwright has provided us with a unique and highly personal analysis of the process of fragmentation of the self. What follows is his description of the individual's (in this case, his own) attempt at restructuring the shattered self, and the lasting effects of this experience:

In one supreme effort we try, at that stage, to recapture the normal sense of things, to tie the usual relationships together again, to reassemble our ideas, to feel alive in the usual way as before. But we cannot trust this normal consciousness of ours, these reconnected ideas, this old accustomed sense of being alive, any more because we know now that these desperate measures are a deliberate mistake on our part to keep ourselves alive, and that underneath there is something else, that we dare not look upon, on pain of death or madness. It was an instant, but the impression of it will be, as a perpetual dizziness, forever with us and contrasting with the stability, quite specious, of things, ambitions, and miserable appearances. Life, now, going on round and round as usual, in its pettiness, among all these appearances, seems to us almost as if it actually were no more. It seems a mechanical phantasmagoria. How can one give importance to it? How can one respect it?²

¹Luigi Pirandello, *L'umorismo*, trans. Charles J. Gattnig in "Pirandello, *Umorismo* and Beckett" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1967), pp. 237-238. (Emphasis mine.)

²Ibid., p. 238. (Emphasis mine.)

It is the intent of Pirandello's theatre to depict loneliness and the more or less explicit madness that is the result of such loneliness. We see this madness in such diverse characters as Ersilia, a wretchedly suffering victim of her social destiny, in To Clothe the Naked, and as Henry IV, the false hero of a fictitious life in the play that bears his name. To begin with, Pirandello accepts the singular tension of the socially excluded character, his/her solipsistic¹ vision of society, and the margin of security where he/she seeks refuge. The plays unfold from this heretofore unquestioned psychological dimension. Pirandello's plays are filled with a profusion of socially excluded characters: Signora FONZA, in Right You Are; the Six Characters; Henry IV, himself; Ersilia, in To Clothe the Naked; and ***, in When Someone Is Somebody.

It would be natural for us to view Pirandello's theatre solely as a reflection of his inner solitude, but this would serve to negate its social and cultural value as a cathartic force. We must not lose sight of the fact that the playwright may, as Benjamin Nelson has observed, function as an alienist, an analyst and a sometime therapist.²

¹Solipsism describes the theory that the self can be aware of nothing but its own experiences and states, therefore that nothing exists or is real but the self. Clearly, this theory becomes rather untenable in instances where fragmentation of the self has occurred. Pirandello and other such writers have been criticized for their solipsistic approach.

²Benjamin Nelson, "Avant-Garde Dramatists from Ibsen to Ionesco," The Psychoanalytic Review 55 (1968): 508.

As an alienist, the dramatist struggles to recreate the alienated state of his public so that it might be experienced consciously. Such a description is indeed applicable to Pirandello who, in his works, has clearly attempted to structurally analyze his own cultural situation.

Pirandello could not have expected to effect a dissolution of his society's alienated state without also causing the playgoer to struggle with his own conscience. As a playwright, his goal was to drive the audience to attempt to enter into a new reality that was being constructed through the dramatic activity itself.

For Pirandello, success in the alteration of his audience's perceptions of reality was dependent upon his involving them in a cross-grained relationship, comprising an apparent alliance and an opposing barrier. Right You Are, If You Think You Are exemplifies this approach in that the plot situation is mundane enough to be universally appealing while the unresolved conflict leaves the audience questioning their own societal stereotypes. A prime requirement for the achievement of such a dual situation is the uninterrupted maintenance of a productive tension between reality and appearance in the dramatic relationship. It was this very tension between appearance and reality that became a cornerstone of Pirandello's drama. This quality seems to be entirely consistent with Rothenberg's notion of the Janusian thought process leading to the creation of

elements of simultaneous opposition in literature. In Pirandello's dramaturgy, simultaneous opposition was reflected in the diametric opposition of appearance and reality. From Nelson's psychoanalytic view of the playwright as a therapist, the plot structures and characters of the plays reflect, in this sense, some rather ingenious tactics developed by Pirandello to be contrapuntally related to the defensive tactics and role images projected by his public.

Nelson synthesizes Pirandello's view of his society, as reflected in the plays, as follows: "Ego in the sense of reasonableness is not the remedy but the sickness. Everyday conscienceless reason, which makes up the daily round, is exposed as Everyman's folly, and contemporary society is depicted as a Ship of Fools drifting aimlessly to an unmarked grave."¹ The world which Pirandello called upon his audience to experience in the very depths of their souls and then to disavow was a world, "without cosmic horizon, robbed of enchantment, without transcendental vista or ultimate concern, the world without God and without the Devil."²

In a way, the world described by Nelson is quite close to that of the schizoid or schizophrenic as delineated by Laing. The entire question of formation of the self-image is dealt with in considerable detail by Laing in his innovative theoretical work, The Divided Self. Laing's analysis of the self in relation to societal pressures and

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

stimuli provides an excellent theoretical basis from which to view Pirandello's work. His study and definition of the concept of schizoid personality and schizophrenic behavior may be utilized in a constructive evaluation of Pirandello's characters.

According to Laing, the term schizoid refers to an individual whose total life experience is split in two crucial areas: first, there is a tremendous gap in his relation with the world and, perhaps of even greater import, there is an extreme disruption of his relation with himself. Such a person is not able to experience himself as sharing an existence with others or feeling at ease in the world. On the contrary, his feelings of isolation and loneliness approach desperate proportions. "Moreover, he does not experience himself as a complete person but rather as 'split' in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, or two or more selves. . . ." ¹ Any number of permutations and combinations of these feelings may also occur.

Laing concerns himself specifically with people who conceive of themselves as robots, bits of machinery, or even animals. Such individuals are accurately perceived as crazy, but Laing is quick to point out that psychopathology, by the very nature of its basic approach, precludes the possibility of understanding such an individual's disorganization as a failure to achieve a specifically personal

¹Laing, p. 17.

form of unity.¹

Laing makes another observation that echoes Firan-dello's questioning of truth and reality and his subsequent conclusion that reality is different for every individual. In Laingian terms, we should be able to see that the concept and/or experience that a man may have of his own being may be very different from another's concept or experience of that being. In such a situation, we must be able to orient ourselves, as people, to "the other's scheme of things rather than only to see the other as an object in one's own world."²

Let us attempt to formulate a concrete example of this structural relationship. When two sane persons meet, according to Laing, there seems to be a reciprocal recognition of each other's identity. There are two basic elements that form this mutual recognition process: first, person A recognizes person B as the person he takes himself to be; and, second, person B recognizes person A as the person he takes himself to be.³ Each person has his own autonomous sense of identity and a corresponding definition of who and what he is. Each is expected to be able to recognize the other. Person A is accustomed to expect that the identity person B takes him to have, and the identity that he

¹Ibid., p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 26

³Ibid., p. 35. Within the context of mutual sanity, there is quite a wide margin for conflict, error or misconception. There may be a marked disjunction between what person A is in his own eyes and what he is in person B's eyes, and conversely.

sees himself as having, will, for the most part, coincide. However, if there are sufficiently radical discrepancies remaining after attempts have been made to align the identities seen by the two persons, then there is no alternative but that one of the two persons involved in the encounter must be judged "insane."

In considering Laing's theory of the development of the schizoid personality structure, we have found surprising similarities to the position presented by Rothenberg. The schizophrenic, according to Laing, has been torn between the desire to reveal himself and the equally strong desire to conceal himself. This notion echoes Rothenberg's concept of simultaneous contradiction in Janusian thinking. We should note that Laing's concept of schizophrenic behavior is quite separate from Rothenberg's,¹ which is why the latter claims his theory does not extend to schizophrenic thought. The similarity, however, is there.

The problem that Laing presents is a universal one, and each of us has, in his own way, arrived at some sort of satisfactory solution. We may conceptualize the problem as the need to discover a suitable means of handling our relative transparency in the eyes of others. We may remember how, as children, adults were first able to look right through us, and into us, and what an accomplishment it was when we could tell our first lie, and make the

¹Rothenberg's view of schizophrenic thought and behavior is wholly pathological. Laing's definition and viewpoint will be discussed in greater detail below.

somewhat alarming discovery that we are totally alone in certain respects. This genuine privacy is, for Laing, the basis of genuine relationships.¹

The individual defined by Laing as schizoid never fully attains this position, and feels both more exposed, more vulnerable to others than we do, and more isolated. This is another condition which points to Rothenberg's concept of simultaneous contradiction. Thus, a schizophrenic may say that he is made of glass, of such transparency and fragility that a look directed at him splinters him into bits and penetrates straight through him. We must assume, indeed we must believe, that this is the reality of his existence.²

Laing's theoretical approach to the development of the self also provides us with some clarifying principles that relate directly to Pirandello's notion of masks and the fact that all of us wear many, according to the situation in which we find ourselves. For Laing, this phenomenon constitutes a structure he calls the "unembodied self."

¹Laing, p. 39.

²Laing uses the terms schizoid and schizophrenic for the sane and psychotic personalities respectively, but not in their clinical, psychiatric frame of reference. The usage, instead, is phenomenological and existential. The possibility of going schizophrenic from a schizoid starting point is indeed a very real one and the terms are used, in this study, sequentially. The schizophrenic condition spoken of here is a specific one, as opposed to Laing's concept of the generalized schizophrenia we all exhibit as a reflection of our social condition. Rothenberg, on the other hand, views schizophrenia solely as a psychotic condition.

In this position the individual experiences his self as being more or less detached or divorced from his body. The body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being. Instead of being the core of his true self, the body is felt as the core of a false self [herein lies the mask idea], which a detached, disembodied, inner true self looks on at with a mixture of tenderness, amusement and/or hatred, depending on the individual.

Such a divorce of self from body deprives the unembodied self from direct participation in any aspect of the life of the world, which is transmitted exclusively through the body's perceptions, feelings, and movements. The unembodied self, while looking on at all the body does, engages in nothing directly. Its functions come to be observation, control and criticism as opposed to engaging in what the body is experiencing and doing, and those operations which are usually described as purely mental.¹

According to Laing, the unembodied self becomes hyper-conscious. As a result, it develops a relationship with itself and the body which can become very complex. The levels of complexity are such that Laing deems it appropriate to refer to this structural phenomenon as a "false-self system." Laing has found such a system to be prevalent in individuals who show schizoid personality characteristics. The personality, false self or mask, if you will that such individuals wear may consist of a blend of various "part-selves," none of which is so fully developed as to have a comprehensive personality of its own. Close acquaintance with such a person reveals that his observable behavior may consist of quite deliberate impersonations

¹Laing, p. 69.

along with a wide variety of compulsive actions. In contrast to a single false self, one is evidently confronted with a number of only partially elaborated fragments of what might constitute a personality, if any single one had sufficient influence to assume total control. It seems best, therefore, to refer to such a structure as a "false-self system."¹

Laing's discussion of a system of false selves or partial selves is quite close to the Pirandellian concept that each of us wears many masks and plays many parts in our relationships with others. It is a rare man, indeed, who can honestly say, for example, that he shows the same face to his loved ones and family as he does to his employer. This notion is further related to the playwright's concept of multiple personality in the sense that all of us have, within us, many different "characters" that we allow to come to the fore as the situation dictates.²

A comparison of the "false-self system" set up by the schizoid, as defined by Laing, to Pirandello's formulations of the "masks" worn by all of us, produces several noteworthy parallels. The false-self system described by Laing exists as the protective armor of an inner self which is devoted to maintaining its identity (as it exists, internally) and freedom by being unembodied and thus never

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²For Pirandello, the body is merely the residing place for all the partial selves or "characters" contained within each of us and there is no clear self/body linkage, as proposed by Laing.

to be grasped, pinpointed or trapped. Its aim is to be a pure subject, without any objective existence. Thus, except in certain possibly safe moments, such an individual (the Laingian schizophrenic) tends to regard his entire objective existence as the expression of a false self. This seems to be a particularly apt description of the character structure evident in Pirandello's Henry IV, but this point will be discussed in greater detail below. Of course, as already indicated, a man who is only two-dimensional, i.e., who does not exist objectively as well as subjectively, having only a subjective identity (an identity-for-himself), cannot be real.¹

A particular kind of closeness seems to exist between Laing's theoretical position and Pirandello's own observations of the human condition, lending further credence to a reading of Pirandello in light of Laing's theories. For example, Laing finds that a "man without a mask" is, indeed very rare. He even doubts the possibility of such a man, as does Pirandello. For everyone, in some measure, wears a mask and there are many things we do not put ourselves into fully. In "ordinary" life, Laing finds it hardly possible to be otherwise.²

¹Laing, p. 94. This description may be seen to apply to Pirandello's characters as well as to the Laingian schizoid or schizophrenic.

²Ibid., p. 95.

In his discussion of the development of a false-self system, Laing notes that the false self arises out of the individual's need to comply with the intentions or expectations of others, or with what are imagined to be the intentions or expectations of others. This compliant component of the false self becomes evident in the individual's behavior through his acting according to other people's definitions of what he is as opposed to his own definition of whom or what he wishes to be. The individual concentrates on becoming what the other person wants or expects him to become while only being his true self in imagination.

These two forms of awareness of the self, as an object in one's own eyes and as an object in the eyes of others, are closely related to each other. In the schizoid individual, both forms of awareness are considerably heightened and assume a somewhat compulsive nature. According to Laing, the schizoid is frequently tormented by the compulsive sense of his body as an object in the world of others. This heightened sense of always being seen, or at least potentially "seeable," may refer principally to the body, but the preoccupation with being "seeable" may be condensed with the notion of the mental self being penetrable and vulnerable. Under these conditions, the individual may feel that one can look right through him, into his "soul," as it were.¹

¹Ibid., p. 106.

This mode of thought would account for all such behavior whose goal is the avoidance of being seen. Perhaps such a mode of thought was, in part, a component of Pirandello's "forgetting" to live.¹ Such a thought process would also account for the behavior of the nameless character who "becomes" Henry IV in Pirandello's play, for, in taking on the Emperor's character, he could avoid being "really" seen.

The most general expression of the above principle would be that, when the risk is loss of being (or self), the schizoid defense is to lapse into a state of non-being with the constant inner reservation that this lapsing into non-being is just a game, just a pretense. "Neurosis is the way of avoiding non-being by avoiding being."² The individual may find that the pretense is in the pretending. He may find that he has, in a more real way than he anticipated, lapsed into that very state of non-being he has dreaded so much, in which he has become stripped of his sense of autonomy and identity, and from which he may not find it possible to regain his foothold in life.

Shifting our focal point now, as we move from the psychological to the sociological end of the literary spectrum, we find, in the following notes by Irving Howe, a uniquely

¹See Chapter III, this study.

²Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (London: Nisbet, 1952), p. 62.

different assessment of the effects of environment and society on our playwright:

Pirandello is a writer strongly marked by the tone of his time, the tone of grayness that gradually suffuses the culture of Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The energy of the immediate past, a moment of bourgeois confidence, has begun to wane; the energy of the immediate future, a moment of experimental daring, has not yet quite appeared. It is remarkable how widespread is this mood of twilight sadness, this feeling of psychic depression. Pirandello, Chekhov, Gissing, Hardy, the early Mann, and a bit later Martin du Gard--these writers are very different from one another, yet all reflect in their work the feeling that a great century of hope, work, and progress has come to an end and that a littleness of spirit has overtaken European life.¹

The date of Pirandello's definite commitment to the theatre as his major creative medium, 1915, appears symptomatic.² He sensed the crisis of the bourgeois society, caught in the confusion that overwhelmed Europe during World War I. We may speculate that Pirandello's ultimate rejection of other literary forms, i.e., the short story and the novel, in favor of the theatre may have been motivated by a more systematic vision of life on his part, which tended to express itself by way of a search for a more direct form of communication with the public. It was the socio-cultural development of this society that

¹Irving Howe, Foreword to Luigi Pirandello, The Merry-Go-Round of Love and Selected Stories, trans. Frances Keene and Lily Duplaix (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 8.

²See Appendix.

Pirandello was to follow in his theatre. Howe offers the following description:

Perhaps this feeling is due to the intensified crisis of bourgeois society, perhaps to the triumph of scientific ideologies, perhaps to the decay of religious conviction, perhaps to the growth of our dismal modern cities. For the moment it hardly matters. What does matter is that in writer after writer who comes to maturity at this time there is a weariness of spirit, a shared conviction, as the great German sociologist Max Weber put it, of being witness to "the disenchantment of the world." The forms of social existence harden. Energy seems to run down. Values crumble. The spirit of denial and cold rationalization takes command. And Freud's dictum that civilization is purchased through the suppression of instinct and pleasure must be regarded not merely as a theoretic speculation or even a personal statement but as the expression of attitudes¹ common to many thoughtful men of the time.

The nature of the social crisis of his time is reflected in Pirandello's works by way of his rejection of the social mores of the bourgeois society as he knew it.²

Pirandello's rejection of the many elements of Sicilian folklore that were popularized by his contemporaries exemplifies his point of view. Clearly, Pirandello saw many facets of Sicilian society in a negative light, e.g., the sense of family, the cult of property, the "point of honor," the violent and all-exclusive passion and the taste for drama. Sicily serves as the setting of a number of Pirandello's early works, such as The Jar and The Other Son, but only as a scene of social brutishness and provincial deprivation.

¹Howe, p. 9.

²As seen in such works as The Late Mattia Pascal and The Outcast.

An inherent contradiction exists in the very nature of Pirandello's plays with regard to this last notion. While his negative attitude toward the social values of the Sicilian way of life is clear, it is impossible for him to create a dramatic world in which there is no suggestion of the texture, the tastes and smells, of Sicilian provinciality. In To Clothe the Naked, for example, the setting is supposedly Rome, but Signora Onoria, the landlady, is obviously taken right out of one of the early short stories, all of which were set in the playwright's native Sicily. Even Pirandello's description of the street outside the apartment which serves as the setting of the play, sounds more like a Sicilian village than a precinct of Rome.

Pirandello's plays reflect a society in which the unsaid and unseen dramas are blown up by the curiosity of those who would fit them into neat little categories of "normal" or "abnormal." It is a society that believes more in the certainty of facts than in the inner being of those who live the facts.¹ As a result, the social structure, by imposing its own apparent logic, magnifies the loneliness of the individual who remains misunderstood and therefore unknown. It is the society which perpetuates the cruel misunderstanding by which the "abnormal" is the product and, at the same time, the victim of the "normal." In this sense,

¹Pirandello exemplifies this situation in Right You Are, If You Think You Are; Ludovico Nota, the character who serves as Pirandello's spokesman in To Clothe the Naked, makes the same point.

Pirandello's drama parallels Laing's description of the development of the schizoid personality in that a key factor in this condition is a disjunction between the way the individual sees himself and the way he is seen by society. Owing to the false stability of a collective morality, social pressure brings about the real instability of the individual, who is forced to devote all his energies to a vain attempt at finding an answer to an insoluble contradiction. Howe comments:

Nowhere is this tone of things more seriously--or austerely communicated than in Pirandello's stories and plays. They are filled with glimpses of lonely city streets, barren provincial towns, sluggish middle-class homes, stuffy Sundays, and torn families. Pirandello is the poet of frustration, the kind of frustration that seems inevitable and pervasive in civilized existence. Few writers have ever dealt more honestly with the tiresomeness and boredom of daily life, not as the emblem of some "deeper" metaphysical condition but simply as an irreducible fact in itself. Finally, the vision of denial that dominates his work is more frightening than the visions of horror that would later appear in the work of the great twentieth-century modernists. To stay with a writer like Pirandello takes strong nerves, a gritted determination to see things as they are. The reward, however, is a penetration into truth, not¹ the whole truth, but a necessary fraction.

For Pirandello, it was life within society that naturally engendered a theatrical dimension. Perhaps it was his keen awareness of this notion, coupled with his

¹Howe, p. 9.

intense desire to communicate this awareness to the public, that served, ultimately, to turn him from other forms to playwriting as his chief creative outlet. People "play" at being themselves; in his dramatic art Pirandello simply attempted to transform what he saw as the inevitable "fiction of life" to the stage.

The plays reflect the fact that we must all live our inner dramas alone; but, at the same time, we must also live as members of society and attempt to maintain some measure of civilized rapport with others. As the Pirandellian character becomes increasingly more aware of himself, he immediately perceives the gap between what he is to himself, closed to others, and what he is forced to be within his social framework. It is this unique dichotomy that Pirandello portrays when he claims that society emanates madness; for it is indeed a form of madness that dictates that we are one person to ourselves and another to others. The result of living under this dichotomy is a very personal kind of suffering--a suffering that became the hallmark of Pirandello's drama.¹

The plays are suffused with the hopelessness of Pirandello's personaggi and the basic truth that it is impossible to keep them from being defeated by their social

¹We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that the social comedy itself is a necessity, for the madness of the paradoxes of Pirandello's characters could not be communicated without the existence of a common morality.

milieu. This state of being results from the development of a psychological condition that leads to the assumption of an inferior social position: since they cannot be completely true to themselves in their relations with others, the victims of a situation end up not even knowing who they are in relation to themselves.¹ Their drama is no more understandable than it is communicable, because the social milieu, in denying it, reduces it to a pathological condition, thereby depriving it not only of dignity but also of all meaning whatsoever.

Pirandello's drama reflects his firm conviction that the forthcoming generation promised no hope of political renewal. He sensed a great lack of self-confidence in the bourgeois class of Italian society. This led him to deny the possibility of a solution for the static social situation with which he was confronted. The glory of the past had been irrevocably lost; the future seemed uncertain. The present was dominated by a mood of deep depression, serving to lead the individual to withdraw into himself, to isolate himself from society, and to doubt everything.

Society produces its own particular brand of madness, be it latent or overt, and such insanity becomes inseparable from the human condition. The impact of society on the individual reveals the true conflict of Pirandello's drama, that of man with himself. The conflict exists between

¹Laing, p. 17.

man's social character, his collection of masks, and his inner self.

While Pirandello's characters reflect the various levels of this conflict, we may also see them as projections of his own state of solitude. The theatre, then, became a source of emotional compensation for Pirandello. This compensation took the form of an intense and illusory life, yet a life very close to reality. As a form of fiction in action, the theatre may have provided a more direct and authentic creative outlet for Pirandello, one that allowed him to experience, in writing, the life that, he claimed, he had "forgotten to live." Before turning to an examination of the plays in detail, it remains for us to explore that life in an attempt to measure the manner and degree to which the products of his creative energy reflect his own personal history.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF EVENTS IN PIRANDELLO'S LIFE IN RELATION TO HIS PLAYS

While Pirandello's plays exist very much on their own and may be evaluated in terms of their relationship to a specific set of psychological criteria (as in this study), it nevertheless seems incumbent upon us to consider his own life experiences in order to examine his individuality as an artist in greater detail and determine the nature and quality of the relationship that exists between important socio-cultural events in his life and his dramatic works. Following this brief examination of Pirandello's personal history, we will attempt to structure our discussion around Laing's theories of personality development and schizophrenia in relation to Pirandello's particular mode of characterization and the relationships between the characters that he creates in the plays. Simultaneously, we will attempt to demonstrate a certain parallel structure between events in Pirandello's own life, Laing's theories and the situations and relationships we encounter in the plays.

Little is known about the first years of Pirandello's life. He was born in Agrigento, Sicily, on June 28, 1867,

the oldest son, but not the oldest child, of Stefano Pirandello, a successful businessman who had made his fortune in sulphur mining. Luigi had an older sister, Rosalina, two younger brothers, Innocenzo and Giovanni, and two younger sisters, Annetta and Adriana (who died at the age of four). "He was a small, fragile child, constantly in need of affection."¹

This need went largely unsatisfied. His mother's love was felt to be insufficient and his father was a gruff, distant and violent-tempered man who rarely made any display of affection for his children. Luigi Pirandello grew up in the shadow of this overbearing and indifferent paternal figure.

Stefano Pirandello, Luigi's father, whose ancestry was a blend of Genoese and Sicilian, is known to have had an adventurous temperament and to have fought with Garibaldi in the Risorgimento.

The term Risorgimento Italiano [Italian Resurgence] generally applies to that period of Italian history which began with the French Revolution or, at the latest, in the year 1815, and concluded with the initial formation of the Italian Kingdom (1861). Yet, as no historical period can be circumscribed by precise dates, it would seem that . . . the risorgimento . . . preceded the French Revolution . . . and continued long after 1861, since its nationalistic aims were not obtained until the₂ war with Austria during the years 1915 to 1918.

¹Gaspare Giudice, Pirandello: A Biography, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 4.

²Giuseppe Prezzolini, L' Italia finisce ecco quel che resta, 2nd ed. (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1959), p. 313. (Translated by Charles Gattnig.)

In his ethics and morality, Stefano seems to have been quite different from the Ricci Gramitto family, Luigi's maternal ancestors. Rocco Ricci Gramitto, Stefano's future brother-in-law, had also fought with Garibaldi in Aspromonte. Stefano preferred to flee to Sicily rather than be taken prisoner by the soldiers of the king. The Ricci Gramittos, true Sicilians, prided themselves on the observance of a rigid formality in their political activity. Thus Rocco, fully aware of his formal responsibilities, had chosen to spend six months in the prison at San Benigno, in direct contrast to the actions of his future brother-in-law, who had fled. Caterina (Luigi's mother), outwardly a modest woman who suffered profound indignities at the hands of Stefano Pirandello, nevertheless retained a full measure of the Ricci Gramitto strength of character.¹

Luigi Pirandello developed a close relationship with his sister Rosalina. She was two years older than he and had been his playmate in childhood and his confidante during adolescence. Throughout his university years, in Palermo, Rome and Bonn, Pirandello wrote frequently to his sister. He remained deeply attached to her for many years thereafter, as evidenced by his voluminous correspondence.²

Through what mechanisms are an artist's life experiences transmitted to his works? Precise answers to this question

¹Giudice, p. 5.

²It is Rosalina to whom Pirandello sends his daughter, Lietta, following the latter's abortive suicide attempt after her mother accused her of incest with her father.

remain difficult to formulate, but certain unique episodes which are stressed by Vittorini, Nardelli and Giudice, shed considerable light on Pirandello's early life situation and suggest strong parallels between his life and his works. We have isolated several incidents that take on special interest in a retrospective study of his plays.

In the young Pirandello's life we find considerable evidence of his exceptionally precocious moral standards, his uncompromising trust, and his all-too-easily wounded sensitivity.

Employed in the Pirandello household was a maid-servant by the name of Maria Stella. It was from her that the young Luigi learned to believe in ghosts--not only in the abstract, but real, tangible visions--who could appear at any moment of the day or night ready to speak their minds. Once these superstitions had been exorcised by an aesthetic system based on idealistic thought, the ghosts were transformed into characters--characters that ultimately formed the cornerstone of Pirandello's creative process.

After a number of unsuccessful attempts, Maria Stella finally managed to take Pirandello to church. The experience was overwhelming and the young Luigi, having gone through some sort of mystical crisis, steadfastly attended mass every morning. The religious atmosphere of the church and the celebration of the sacraments corresponded to a cherished concept of his--perfection. He found himself believing in the precepts preached from the pulpit and he made every effort to model his life on the spirit and commandments of the Gospel.

The first of several great disillusionments in Pirandello's early life is cited by Nardelli in his description of the incident regarding Luigi's sailor suit. The boy left his house one morning dressed up in a new outfit just received from Palermo and returned home half naked after giving it to a child dressed in rags. It was a highly traumatic experience when he was forced to take it back.¹

Another important episode of this period is recounted by Pirandello himself in the short story, La Madonnina (The Wax Madonna). A synopsis of the story follows.

In the month of May, in the village of San Pietro, the faithful would cast lots for a little wax madonna kept under a crystal dome. The lottery tickets cost one penny each. The priest, hoping to ingratiate himself with the Greli (Pirandello) family, reads Guiduccio Greli's (Luigi Pirandello's) name on the winning ticket despite the fact that no ticket with his name had been entered. On hearing his name read, the youngster fled from the church, trembling convulsively. Later, when the parishioners attempted to deliver the madonna to his home, the enraged youngster caused such a commotion that his mother had the madonna returned to the church. Guiduccio Greli (Luigi Pirandello) never set foot in the church again.²

¹F.V. Nardelli, Vita segreta di Pirandello (Roma: Vito Bianco 1962), pp. 25-26. See also Domenico Vittorini, The Drama of Luigi Pirandello (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), pp. 14-15.

²Vittorini, p. 15.

Pirandello's discovery of hypocrisy and evil in the clergy was catastrophic. He was left with the feeling that, on every level, his search for coherence and perfection would lead to nothing but constant frustration. The door was slammed in the face of the madonna; the priest, in Pirandello's works, was to become a symbol of falsity.

Following his renunciation of the church, the young Pirandello was faced with the task of finding some substitute truth, something pure and unspoiled that he could be sure of; he turned to his parents with an almost desperate need for the love he felt was due him as their son. Consequently, Pirandello's aloof and undemonstrative father became the enemy. Whenever Pirandello spoke about his father in public, in later years, he was able to temper his opinion. He would speak of his father's good looks and his magnanimous, patriotic spirit. But within the scope of his art, his dramaturgy, he was less cautious. Here the father is portrayed as a totally unjust and incomprehensible figure. Pirandello described the relationship between his father and mother in his novel, The Outcast, written in 1893:

For many years she had learnt to judge every sorrow, every grief, not on its own terms but in terms of the rage it would arouse in her husband. . . . Sometimes all that was needed for the entire house to be plunged into mourning was that an object should be spoilt or broken--not even an object of any great value, but simply an object that could not be immediately replaced. . . .

In so many years of marriage she had managed to mollify him a little, by treating him gently, by forgiving him offences

which were not always slight, but without infringing on her own dignity and without making her forgiveness weigh on him. But still he would sometimes fly into a rage over a mere trifle . . . and since nobody dared breathe a word he would sink into a black silent fury for weeks on end. He suspected that many things were kept hidden from him--and if he ever found out that something had even if it were years later, he would give vent to his accumulated irritation without even thinking that he was being unjust and that everything had been done simply so as not to vex him.

He felt like an alien even in his own house; he thought his family regarded him as an alien¹ and he consequently dis-trusted them.

Pirandello remained actively rebellious throughout his adolescence. Initially, this rebelliousness was expressed in acts of disobedience to his father. Later, this element of antagonism became strictly repressed and was evident only in his written work in the qualities of antithesis, outrage and anarchy that became characteristic of his creative efforts. Even Pirandello's belated, somewhat half-hearted, but expedient, commitment to Fascism may have stemmed from the unresolved conflicts revolving around his difficulties with the acceptance of external authority.

Pirandello's strained relationship with his father was further aggravated by another serious incident. It is known that when Luigi was thirteen, his father became re-infatuated with an old sweetheart, his first cousin. The neglected mother was deeply and visibly hurt by her husband's

¹Luigi Pirandello, The Outcast quoted in Gaspare Giudice, Pirandello: A Biography, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 9.

actions and this filled Pirandello with a sense of overwhelming indignation. He learned that his father was meeting his lover in a convent, in the parlor of the obliging abbess, who actually was an aunt of the two cousins. Bursting in one day, Pirandello berated the woman furiously, blamed her for his mother's misery and spat in her face. During the encounter, Pirandello's father had hidden behind a curtain, but the boy noticed his father's shiny black shoes protruding from under the hem. He did not, however, confront Stefano, but left without exposing him. The cousin, who was pregnant at the time, was later married to a man whom Pirandello's father paid off.¹ Luigi and his father did not speak to each other for months after this incident.

In terms of personal experiences serving as background material for Pirandello's plays, Kligerman points to the events described above as forming the prototype, with several modifications, of the confrontation scene in Six Characters in Search of an Author, with the old abbess serving as the model for the ludicrous Madame Pace.²

Another crucial episode in Pirandello's childhood is described by Nardelli:

In those days Luigi had never seen a corpse but, one day, he heard that there was one in the tower used as a morgue. . . .

¹We believe that this aspect of the situation may have been incorporated into one of the early plays, Pensaci, Giacomino!

²Charles Kligerman, "A Psychoanalytic Study of Pirandello's 'Six Characters in Search of an Author,'" Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association 10 (October 1962): 741.

As he was walking along the Via delle Falde on his own, he couldn't resist the desire to see it, so he jumped down the slope and pulled open the huge grey door. When he was inside the tower, he made for the strip of blue sky behind the loophole and almost tripped over the coffin. Suddenly he saw the body! A pair of large shoes on its feet, it looked about forty years old. . . . But at the same time, in the silence of the hall, Luigi heard a soft noise, almost a rustle. . . . He held his breath. He heard the rustle again, not a rustle of wings, or of air, but a strange, continuous, live noise. . . . At that time and in that part of the country women wore a long petticoat under their skirts which ended in a stitched frill. . . . And sure enough it was a woman. Luigi peered through the twilight and gradually perceived two bodies, a woman and a man, entwined together and performing a slow strange, uninterrupted motion, as though they were rocking, impelled by a spasm or regulated by a spring. They held each other tightly and the woman's skirts were raised. The starched frill, rubbing between the two bodies, produced that unforgettable¹ rustle. Luigi watched them.

The critic, Leonardo Sciascia, writes that "in Pirandello's work love always retains a smell of death-- not the idea of death, but the physical, putrefying aspect of death. It is either tarnished by madness or poisoned by incomprehension and betrayal. Never do his characters abandon themselves to the emotions and the senses, and there is not one woman, however beautiful, to whom the

¹Nardelli, pp. 30-31.

author does not give some more or less repulsive characteristic."¹ The episode of the morgue thus assumes a symbolic value in the fabric of Pirandello's work.

Pirandello was engaged in a constant struggle with death--not as a concept but as an individual, a real person with physical and mental characteristics, a "character," if you will. In defense, he caricatured and mocked death, and attempted to formulate a theory to eliminate it from the intellect. He expressed the belief that everything stiffens and everything moves--an insoluble contradiction yet, at the same time, a philosophical transposition of what he had seen in the morgue.² He felt that birth was the beginning of death, but also that death did not exist because everything was constantly being set into motion again; he also felt that man loses himself in his existence. Here we find another aspect of Pirandello's thematic material whose origins are clearly biographical. We must consider these ideas as more a form of mysticism than true philosophy. Evidently, these are notions derived from his own personal struggle against any acknowledgment of death.³

Death for Pirandello was primarily his own death, and it was his own death which therefore had to be abolished.

¹Leonardo Sciascia, quoted in Giudice, p. 11.
(Translation by Alastair Hamilton.)

²It is just this kind of contradiction that exemplifies Rothenberg's Janusian thought process.

³Giudice, p. 11.

His written instructions regarding his death and funeral arrangements reflect this intense desire:

My last wishes which must be respected.

1. My death must be passed over in silence.

My friends and my enemies are begged not only not to write about it in the papers but not even to mention it. No announcements or invitations to the funeral.

2. Do not dress my corpse. Let me be wrapped naked in a winding sheet. And no flowers on the bed or lighted candles.

3. A pauper's hearse. Bare. No one to accompany me, neither friends nor relations. The hearse, the horse, the driver--that is all.

4. Burn me. And as soon as my body has been burnt the ashes must be thrown to the winds, for I want nothing, not even my ashes, to remain. But if this cannot be done the funeral urn must be taken to Sicily and walled into some rough¹ stone near Agrigento, where I was born.

The instructions specifying the scattering of his ashes were also a reflection of his desire to return his corpse to the universe. Pirandello's final wish was not merely his last, but had virtually become a life-long ambition. The fact that these instructions were written a full twenty-five years before his death appears to substantiate this premise.

Pirandello remained incapable of resolving the conflicts that arose within him relative to his inability to deal with external authority. Even in his young adult-

¹Pirandello, cited by Giudice, p. 207. Pirandello's instructions also reflect his rejection of the Fascist Party (which attempted to bury him in the symbolic Black Shirt) and of the Church (by way of his request for cremation).

hood, as a student at Rome University, his repressed desire to strike back at his father resulted in another important episode that would alter his life.

We learn, from the Giudice biography, that with very few exceptions, there were no brilliant professors at Rome University at the time Pirandello was a student there.¹ The Vice-Chancellor was the Venetian Onorato Occioni, who taught Latin literature. Despite the high regard that Gabriele D'Annunzio² had for Occioni, Pirandello felt that his course was too elementary. One day they had a quarrel that resulted in Pirandello's dismissal from the university.

Occioni was translating Plautus' Miles gloriosus during the course of a lecture, and made an error. He realized his mistake too late and made a clumsy effort to correct himself. Pirandello was seated in the first row of the lecture hall next to a young priest who knew Latin well. The two nudged each other at Occioni's slip and the priest was unable to suppress a slight smile. At this, the professor promptly lost his temper. He started shouting insults at the priest but refused to tell the other students why. Pirandello, who found such injustice completely intolerable, stood up, told the others why Occioni was so

¹Giudice, p. 34.

²D'Annunzio (1863-1938) made his appearance in Rome in 1881 and quickly became the most conspicuous and versatile literary figure in modern Italy. He was a poet, novelist, dramatist, journalist, politician, propagandist, popular orator and temporary dictator. See J.H. Whitfield, A Short History of Italian Literature (London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1962), pp. 248-255.

angry, and walked out of the room. He was never allowed to return. Occioni, exercising his authority as Vice-Chancellor, summoned all the professors of the faculty. Pirandello was forced to appear before a disciplinary committee and was ordered to leave the university.¹

This incident led to our scholar's decision to continue his studies at the University of Bonn, under the direction of Wendelin Foerster, professor of Romance philology. He completed his doctorate in 1891 with a dissertation entitled Laute und Lautentwicklung der Mundart von Girgenti (The Phonetic Development of the Agrigento Dialect).

In January, 1894, Luigi Pirandello married Antonietta Portulano, daughter of Stefano Pirandello's business partner. He then continued his literary career in Rome, where he settled following the completion of his studies, with progressive excellence but little financial reward. He and his wife were supported by her dowry and substantial financial assistance provided by the elder Pirandello. The couple had three children: Stefano, 1895; Lietta, 1897; and Fausto, 1899.

In 1897, Pirandello obtained a teaching post at the Magistero, a training college for future teachers. This job allowed him to devote the bulk of his energies to literature while providing a necessary financial supplement.

¹Giudice, p. 34.

Initially, Pirandello's literary efforts were devoted to short stories, novels and poems. He developed a close circle of literary friends with whom he could share his work.

For the first six years of their marriage, Antonietta's time was largely devoted to the nursing of her three children. Inherent in her personality structure, however, was a latent psychological instability which tragically altered Pirandello's life and ultimately brought about his unique vision of the development and structure of the human personality. The fatal year was 1903. Stefano Pirandello had begun developing a large sulphur mine, using not only his own funds, but Antonietta's dowry, as capital. The venture failed, the mine was flooded and all was lost. The shock of the failure of the mining business and the loss of her dowry left Antonietta semi-paralyzed for six months.¹

Kligerman's diagnostic interpretation describes the condition that subsequently developed as paranoia with delusional jealousy.² Nardelli describes Antonietta as experiencing episodes of wild fury, accusing Pirandello of all sorts of infidelities, pounding the door when he tried to write. She was so jealous of her husband that no woman was allowed to enter their home; even maid-servants had to be more than fifty years old and were not permitted

¹Ibid., p. 64.

²Kligerman, p. 737.

to live in the house. Pirandello had to hide his manuscripts because his wife suspected secret love letters in any pieces of paper with writing on them. He never went out without taking one of his children with him so that he would have a witness for every minute of his day.¹

Pirandello made every effort to remain at home whenever possible to allay his wife's jealous delusions, but clinical knowledge of paranoids indicates that this sort of behavior only serves to increase their suspicions. Pirandello lived this nightmare with his demented wife for fifteen years, stubbornly resisting the pleas of his children and other members of his family and friends to place her in an institution. There were occasional moments of intense passion between Luigi and Antonietta, but for fifteen years Pirandello was mainly subjected to an atmosphere of hateful suspicion and unpredictable outbursts of psychotic delusion. In addition, his children were subjected to this behavior during their crucial formative years. On one occasion his wife took the three children and fled to Sicily. This incident may well have been the model for the Mother in Six Characters who lives apart with her four children. The substance of these years is reflected in one way or another in practically everything Pirandello subsequently wrote.²

¹Nardelli, L'uomo segreto, cited in Martin Esslin, "Author in Search of Pirandello," New York Times, 25 June 1967, sec. 2, p. 1.

²Kligerman, p. 737.

While personal, intimate experiences such as those described above are reflected in his works in their own unique way, Pirandello also found himself responding to the social and political pressures of his time. In September, 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the First World War and shortly before Italy's intervention, Pirandello published a short story entitled "Un'altra vita" ("Another Life") in the Rassegna Italiana. It reflects his ambivalence with respect to the first phase of Italian neutrality. The current opinions appear as the views and feelings of the various characters in the story. We find the concept of useful neutrality, which was shared by the majority of the public; the passionate tone of the Irredentists; and the notion of public and private renewal which was supposed to result from the war. Referring to the explosion that was felt to be the inevitable culmination of the outbreak of hostilities, a character says:

And now it has taken place. Terrible.
 But at least we will have watched it. The
 anxieties, the unease, the anguish, the
 agitation of such a long and unbearable
 wait will have an end and a resolution.
 We shall see what becomes of it. Because
 everything will necessarily change and we
 shall certainly come out of this ghastly
 mess with a new spirit.¹

Pirandello's approach to the war was a highly subjective one. His apocalyptic visions often gave way to the most

¹Luigi Pirandello, "Un'altra vita," quoted in Giudice, p. 87.

banal, common scenarios as the result of the wretched predictability of his daily routine.

The sole character in the story remains on his own, beset by fears for the future:

. . . whether or not the map of Europe changed, one thing would never change, that was for sure: his wife's sullen spite and the regrets brought on by a life which was fading¹ away without any real memory of joy.

Pirandello does not seem to have allowed any of his forebodings of crisis to influence his feelings for his children. In his loneliness, his love for his children appears as a desperately needed outlet for his emotions. Giudice indicates that the war years clearly illustrate this aspect of his character. We may surmise, however, as Giudice implies, that it must have been extremely difficult for Pirandello to retain some measure of mental stability what with his wife's condition, his children, who were the objects of an all-too-desperate love, his teaching position with its predictable, daily routine, and his quite limited literary success.²

Kligerman raises a similar question as to whether or not Pirandello's reality sense was already disturbed, i.e., prior to the breakdown and illness of his wife. His

¹Ibid.

²Giudice, p. 89.

stubborn insistence on keeping Antonietta at home suggests a symbiotic relationship in which she fulfilled some urgent need. Psychoanalysis often reveals the inner dynamics of a marital situation in which the seemingly normal partner is able to preserve his own personality integration by projective identification with the overt psychosis of the spouse.¹ In addition to this suggestion of an apparently pathological dependence on his wife's unstable condition, Pirandello seems to have indicated a generally compulsive, rather strongly masochistic character profile with evidence of a markedly passive, dependent attitude toward his father as well as some occasional mildly paranoid behavior.²

Giudice hypothesizes the interrelationship between the current socio-political events and Pirandello's family situation as the motivating force behind the sudden burst of creative energy that launched his full blown career as a playwright. It was the blow of his son's departure for the front, the sudden awareness that his own distress coincided with that of the outside world, the correspondence of public agony with his own private pain coupled with the

¹An interesting corollary to this notion exists in the precepts of Laing concerning the effective treatment of psychotics. Laing would advocate maintaining the psychotic in the normal home environment so that he might benefit from "normal" interactions with other family members. This approach would allow the psychotic to be aware of reflections of his self emanating from familiar individuals. Thus, it may well be that Pirandello's decision to keep Antonietta at home may have been deeply insightful in terms of modern psychoanalytic thought.

²Kligerman, p. 738.

tremendous pressure of his wife's condition that served to liberate Pirandello's creative energies.¹

By August, 1915, Italy had entered the war and the playwright's son, Stefano, was fighting on the Austrian front. Because of overpowering feelings of paternal responsibility, Pirandello had wanted to go with Stefano when he left. Moreover, he somehow felt a responsibility to actively support Italy's entry into the war.²

Pirandello had an obstinate faith in the concept of heroism. However well he interpreted the crisis of the twentieth century, he retained a decisive nineteenth-century belief in the myths of the Risorgimento and heroic idealism. This accounts for his sudden surge of patriotism. In the house of his parents the value of the country, la patria, had never been doubted.³

Obviously, writing afforded Pirandello the fullest means of expressing his feelings about life. In his writings, he dramatized and parodied all his thoughts of volunteering for the army. Two of Pirandello's characters, Berecche, in "Berecche and the War," and Marco Leccio, in "An Episode in the Life of Marco Leccio and his War on Paper," are old and deeply grieved at not being able to leave for the war with their sons.

¹Giudice, p. 89.

²Ibid., p. 90.

³Ibid.

Stefano had not been gone long when Pirandello's mother died. The crushing impact of this loss was devastating and left the playwright in great need of consolation and comfort. Pirandello chose to yield to his loneliness, shutting himself into it and concentrating on the consoling evocation of his dead mother. Thus, the playwright's mother was transformed into one of the vivid characters with whom he discussed his most intimate problems. This was to be an extraordinarily important moment in his creative life-- a moment in which he gave himself over, totally, to these strange dealings with the creatures of his imagination.

The notion of splitting and loss of self through the creation of characters is a vital element in Pirandello's creative method. In his imagination, the author and the characters both became autonomous, independent of the self, clearly suggesting a schizoid personality structure.

One of the first references to this aspect of Pirandello's creative method is in a letter to Luigi Natoli in May, 1904. Pirandello writes:

If material cares and social commitments did not distract me, I think I would remain from morning to night here in my study at the beck and call of the characters¹ of my stories who are struggling within me.

¹Pirandello, cited by Giudice, p. 118.

Then, in 1911, in "La tragedia di un personaggio"

("A Character in Distress") he wrote:

I have two or three new visitors a week. And sometimes the crowd is such that I have to listen to more than one of them at the same time. And sometimes my mind is so split and dazed that it rebels against this double or triple uprising and shouts in exasperation that the characters must either appear slowly, one at a time, or must go¹ straight back to limbo, the three of them!

Here Pirandello speaks of the character as a separate entity, not a figment of his imagination, again suggesting a schizoid personality configuration. Within the scope of the creative process, we may look upon Pirandello's state of mind as being characteristically ambivalent and therefore open to the "conjuring up" of his characters. The following excerpt from Portraits and Self-Portraits, a small volume composed of autobiographical sketches of great twentieth-century figures in the arts and literature, captures this quality vividly:

You wish some biographical notes about myself and I find it is extremely difficult to supply you with them for the simple reason that I have forgotten to live; forgotten to the point of being able to say nothing, exactly nothing about my life, except perhaps that I do not live it, but write it. So that if you would like to know something about me I could answer you: "Wait a minute while I ask my characters. Maybe they will be able to give me some information about myself."

¹Ibid.

But not much is to be expected of them;
 almost all of them are unsociable people
 who have had little¹ or no reason to be
 pleased with life.

Thus, in 1915, when Pirandello resorts to his characters as a source of consolation at the death of his mother, the result is a collection of stories which he entitled Colloqui coi personaggi (Conversations with Characters).

Pirandello's mourning at the loss of his mother is connected biographically with his anxiety about his son. On two levels his own identity was being threatened. The loss of his son brought about his death as a father. The loss of his mother made him die as a son. Faced with such a dual loss of self, Pirandello turned to his characters, and they became his family. In Conversations with Characters, he refers to his constant anxiety about his son:

While I tortured myself helplessly
 and was obliged to wait and satisfy all the
 little material needs of life, he was risking
 his life up there; and every moment that
 elapsed could be his last, and I would² have
 to go on living this terrible life.

¹Luigi Pirandello, quoted in Georges Schreiber, Portraits and Self-Portraits (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936), p. 123. (Emphasis mine.) The evidence we have shows that Pirandello was capable of functioning "normally" in society. He achieved a Ph.D. and a Nobel Prize. This quotation is metaphorical, a poetic expression. It is not evidence that he was an "empty" person.

²Pirandello, cited by Giudice, p. 93.

Once Stefano had been taken prisoner (November, 1915) Pirandello was sure that his life was not in danger and felt he could stop worrying. His own life continued as before, writing and lecturing at the Magistero. He continued to take a keen interest in the war because his son's ultimate return to Italy was directly connected with the outcome. In the third year of the war, however, Pirandello felt his patriotism waning and in "Quando si comprende" ("When We Understand"), written in 1918, he wrote, "there is one's country, yes, but inside us there is something much stronger--our love for our children."¹

An essential part of Pirandello's vision of the absurdity of the world, undeniably, is Antonietta's madness. In the last years of the war her moments of sanity grew less frequent. Not only did Antonietta feel an aversion for her husband; she was in the firm grip of a persecution complex which involved everyone around her. Under her very eyes, she believed, an alliance had been formed between her husband and her daughter to insure her destruction. She convinced herself that Lietta wanted to replace her in everything, even in her physical person. One day Antonietta was explicit: she accused her daughter of committing incest with her father, and Lietta was so overcome that she tried to kill herself. When Pirandello learned what had happened, Lietta was sent away, first to a boarding

¹Pirandello, cited by Giudice, p. 98.

school and then to Florence, to live with her aunt Rosalina. Lietta remained there until Stefano's return from prison camp at the end of the war.

Pirandello was at a turning point. He was confronted with a choice between his need to have his wife remain a part of the family, however mad she was, and the responsibility for having sent his daughter away. By the end of 1918, the war had ended and Pirandello had taken a decisive step as far as his wife was concerned. He would await Stefano's return and then, in agreement with his children, he would have Antonietta interned in a neurological clinic in Viale Nomentano, not far from his home. Antonietta remained there until her death in 1959.¹

Antonietta had inspired Pirandello; she had forced him, in response to her continual onslaughts, to enclose himself still more within himself. For seventeen years he lived with a woman constantly on the verge of total psychotic deterioration.

The underlying principle in Laing's theory of psychopathology suggests "that sanity or psychosis is tested by the degree of conjunction or disjunction between two persons where the one is sane by common consent."² As his wife's psychological stability steadily deteriorated, Pirandello found that he was faced with daily accusations of

¹Charles Gattnig, "Pirandello, Umorismo, and Beckett" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1967), p. 58.

²See Laing, The Divided Self, p.36.

infidelity. His own sense of what he was, was challenged by his wife's perception and definition of what he was. Through his wife's eyes he was defined as a philanderer. Through his own eyes, he was defined as an honorable man. The result of the unresolved discrepancy between their viewpoints was the judgment that Antonietta was insane.¹

Laing stresses the fact that schizophrenia cannot be understood without understanding despair and this notion is of the utmost importance in understanding Pirandello's psychological development. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that his life was deeply shadowed by despair. Examining the roots of that despair, we find that they go back to his childhood: to his disillusionment with his tyrannical father, his painful awareness of his mother's yielding acceptance of his father's immoral conduct, his utter disillusionment with the Church as the supposed seat of moral justice and genuine charity. And later, his despair (or pessimism) was increased by the onset of his wife's illness, leading to her constant accusations of infidelity which, in turn, led Pirandello to question his own attitudes, feelings, even actions; the feeling of guilt which may have resulted from the natural desire to be free of the burden

¹This judgment was made by others besides Pirandello. We should note that, in Laing's theoretical discussion of factors affecting the identification of psychosis, it is society that "judges" insanity and sanity.

of his wife's illness despite the fact that his societal role dictated that he keep his family together; the love that was transferred from his wife to his daughter, albeit unconsciously. His despair must have grown deeper and deeper with time.¹

Applying Laing's definition of schizophrenia or schizoid personality development as resulting from an evaluative disjunction between self-image and other-image, we find that it is this disjunction, this schizoid characteristic, which becomes one of the major themes in Pirandello's works. This notion leads us to evaluate the author's creative process in terms of his own schizophrenic awareness and makes his literary works projections of that schizophrenic vision. While it would be wholly inappropriate for us to attempt to describe Pirandello's personality in diagnostic terms, we do sense a certain "schizoid vision" that pervades the plays and it is fair to assume that this is a projection of one aspect of his personality, i.e., that which is called upon by the playwright in his "creative" life. Projections such as these serve the psychodynamic function of reducing the tension present in the schizoid personality, thereby allowing for the re-integration of the individual's personality structure. Proceeding on this basis, Pirandello's

¹Placing this notion of despair in proper perspective, we should also note some of Pirandello's joys. He grew up as the son of a wealthy mine-owner. He attended the best schools and married a most beautiful woman. In 1923, he gained world fame with Six Characters in Search of an Author. In 1934 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

creative works may be looked upon as having an intensely salutary function.

Indeed, the same may be said of virtually all playwrights, in varying degrees. Philip Weissman speaks of the intensification of ego defenses within the playwright during the process of creativity and notes that the artist, during his creative periods, blocks any direct gratification of his instinctual impulses. Thus, whatever his personal traits and drives may be, in his artistic life any direct expression of the playwright's personal actions must take place through his dramatic creations.¹

Weissman describes the dual nature of the creative process and its goal of restoration of equilibrium as follows:

During any given creative task the dramatist consciously attempts to portray his special views, sensitive evaluations, and to devise original solutions for various aspects of his created world--aspects which may be psychological, philosophical, political or religious. Through this same creative effort, he is unconsciously driven by revived, forgotten, unresolved, traumatic and unpleasant experiences to re-create new solutions that aspire to restore an integrated equilibrium to the disturbing effects² of these lingering incidents and fantasies.

Laing provides a further basis for understanding Pirandello's creative personality in terms of a schizoid-like structure in the following description. In it he

¹Weissman, pp. 24-25.

²Ibid., p. 26.

conceptualizes the schizoid state of mind and, in so doing, draws many parallels to feelings that Pirandello expressed about himself, e.g., his statement concerning the life "I have forgotten to live."

The individual feels that, like a vacuum, he is empty. This emptiness is him. Although, in other ways, he longs for the emptiness to be filled, he dreads the possibility of this happening because he has come to feel that all he can be is the awful nothingness of just this very vacuum. Any contact with reality is then in itself experienced as a dreadful threat because reality, as experienced from this position, is necessarily implosive and thus . . . in itself a threat to what identity the individual is able to suppose himself to have.

Reality, as such, threatening engulf-₁ment or implosion is the persecutor.

Pirandello's keen awareness of what Laing would call schizoid plans of personality organization suggests the notion that the playwright's sensitivity to this type of character may have grown out of his own experiences with his wife's illness as well as other events in his earlier life.

Such a schizoid individual, in one sense, is attempting to assume omnipotence by enclosing within his own being, without recourse to a creative relationship with others, modes of relationship that require the effective presence of other people and the outer world. He would appear to be,

¹Laing, The Divided Self, pp. 45-46. While Pirandello had plenty of contact with reality and society, we may view the feelings described here by Laing as perhaps a small facet of Pirandello's total character structure, yet an important one in its relationship to the dynamics of his creative process.

in an impossible and unreal way, all persons and things to himself. The advantages of this type of existence would be safety for the true self, isolation, self-sufficiency and control.¹ This description appears to be quite apt with regard to what we know of Pirandello's creative process. Indeed, with little difficulty we may extend the parallel to playwrights in general. To say that Pirandello attempted to be all persons and things to himself would be quite accurate if we look upon his creations (his characters) as exemplary of this ideal. By creating his own others, within the scope of the process of creating a drama, he could avoid being threatened by others from the real world, the world outside his own psyche. Thus, his so-called "visits" with his characters take on a new meaning in the sense that they served as his means of relating to others without their effective presence. As in Laing's description of schizophrenic behavior, Pirandello's characters are often enclosed within themselves. In a parallel sense, Pirandello has enclosed within himself, through these "visits" with characters of his own creation, all of the modes of relationship to others that he would have had to utilize in the effective presence of others had he not had the schizoid recourse of creating his own others to provide him with an immeasurable sense of freedom.

¹Laing, The Divided Self, p. 75. (Emphasis mine.)

This freedom proved to be a creative boon, allowing Pirandello, in later years, to deal more directly, in play form, with the problem of his own identity crisis as a world-famous literary figure. This he does with the creation of When Someone Is Somebody (1933). The main character in this play is a literary figure with no name, owing to the fact that his sense of identity has been so depleted. It seems clear that Pirandello has transferred his own awareness of identity crisis to the stage in an attempt to mitigate its devastating effects. It may very well have been that the author was writing of a situation with which he was intimately familiar. Indeed, there appear to be strong autobiographical overtones. Notably, the situation in the play encompasses an author who has lost his sense of identity, his sense of self, because he has always been what the others wanted him to be.¹

Such a response may be seen to develop out of an intense fear. According to Laing, the schizoid individual finds himself living in a terrifying world in which fear is unmitigated by love. The individual is, literally, afraid of the world. The sense of this fear is that any impingement will be total: implosive, penetrating, fragmenting and engulfing. He is afraid of letting himself go, of coming out of himself, of losing himself in any experience because he believes he will be depleted, exhausted and drained of all substance, all self-fibre as it were.²

¹The play will be discussed in greater detail below.

²Laing, The Divided Self, p. 83.

As part of this defensive posture, the schizoid individual maintains a strict separation between fantasy and reality. The self avoids being related directly to real persons but relates itself to itself and to objects created by itself. "The self can relate itself with immediacy to an object of its own imagination or memory but not to a real person."¹ This analysis by Laing coincides with the view put forth by Kligerman in his analysis of Pirandello's motivations for creating Six Characters in Search of an Author. According to Kligerman, the burst of psychic energy that Pirandello drew upon to create Six Characters was triggered by the marriage of his twenty-four year old daughter, Lietta. It was after Lietta had brought her fiance home for the first time, that Pirandello was "struck" with the inspiration to write Six Characters in Search of an Author. Kligerman associates this reaction with his belief that Pirandello suppressed incestuous wishes toward his daughter and proposes that it was through the writing of the play that the author was, in some way, able to come to terms with his own guilt.²

Let us explore Pirandello's behavior through Laing's eyes. Laing might say that the author's self was unable to relate to the reality of his daughter's impending marriage because this was a highly threatening situation in that many

¹Ibid., p. 86.

²Kligerman, pp. 738-740.

guilts (existing on an unconscious level) were brought to the fore. Although he was not able to confront the reality of this situation (i.e., his daughter's impending marriage), he was able to relate to the objects of his own imagination (i.e., the characters of his play). We know that the play was written in a matter of several weeks and that during this entire period the author would lock himself in his study, skip meals with his family and, in general, associate with no one in order to devote himself completely to the work of finishing his play.

Naturally, since he was inspired to write a play, he needed quiet and isolation to complete his work. However, within the context of examining the motivational dynamics of his creative energy, we may view Pirandello's actions as being those of an individual seeking to avoid any confrontation with the real world, his real world, and the individuals who populated that world (his family).

This avoidance response, then, on an unconscious level, may have served as the creative impetus to the writing of the play. Indeed, Pirandello may have found relative safety and relief in the world of his fantasy, a world created out of his own imagination, a world that he could relate to with immediacy without fear of loss of self.

While it would be wholly inaccurate to assert that all artists operate creatively within what we have described as a schizophrenic framework (in Laingian terms), in Pirandello's case, there are suggestions of a schizoid-like

behavior pattern behind his creative use of fantasy and imagination. We may, therefore, look upon Pirandello's plays as singular expressions of his true self and, as such, Laing's remarks concerning the schizoid's attitude toward action become quite pertinent.

According to Hegel, the act is "simple, determinate and universal. . . ." ¹ But the "self wishes to be complex, indeterminate and unique. The act is 'what can be said of it,' but he [the schizoid] must never be what can be said of him. He must remain always ungraspable and elusive, transcendent." ² The self withholds itself from the objective element, according to Laing, with respect to both action and perception. The schizoid wishes to remain perpetually uncommitted to the objective element. ³ For him, there can be "no spontaneous action as there is no spontaneous perception. And just as commitment in action is avoided, so perception is felt as an act of commitment that endangers the freedom to be nothing" but that which is possessed by the self. ⁴ Perhaps we have here the psychological rationale for Pirandello's conclusion that there is no reality other than that which is perceived by each individual for himself. As long as

¹G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J.B. Baillie (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949), pp. 349-350.

²Ibid.

³We know that Pirandello did not remain perpetually uncommitted. We cannot be sure he ever was.

⁴Laing, p. 88.

there is no reality other than that which is perceived by each individual, there can be no objective element with which to deal. Perception cannot be concretized and therefore precludes all commitment.¹

The self, as long as it remains uncommitted to the objective element, is free to dream and imagine anything and therein lies the germ of Pirandello's creativity. Without reference to the objective element, the self can be all things to itself--it has unconditional freedom and creativity. This freedom and omnipotence, however, are exercised in a vacuum and the creative capacity of the self is only the capacity to produce "phantoms." The inner honesty, freedom and creativity to which the inner self clings as its ideals are cancelled by a co-existing sense of self-duplicity, impotence and the lack of any real freedom.²

Laing's concern is to follow the initial formation of the schizoid behavior pattern into psychosis and not to describe the inherent possibilities that may lead in other directions. We must bear in mind, however, that deterioration and disintegration are only one outcome of the initial schizoid personality organization. It is quite clear, taking Pirandello as our example, that authentic versions of freedom, power and, especially, creativity can be achieved and lived

¹We are aware that there are many who claim that there is no objective reality; they believe that reality is subjective. These individuals are not necessarily schizoid.

²Laing, p. 89.

out under the schizoid's personality structure. According to Laing, "Many schizoid writers and artists who are relatively isolated from the other succeed in establishing a creative relationship with things in the world, which are made to embody the figures of their phantasy."¹

Perhaps this is the situation in which Pirandello found himself. When he claims he has "forgotten to live," this seems to imply a lost sense of reality, life and identity. Pirandello's position is exemplary of the individual who has fallen into the defensive state of non-being and can no longer extricate himself from this posture. The sense of his statement is that he is relatively comfortable in this depersonalized way of non-living (insofar as his creative work is concerned) and does not wish it to change. He has "forgotten to live" because he does not need to remember.

The schizoid individual depersonalizes his relationship with himself. That is, according to Laing, he turns the spontaneous life of his being into something dead and lifeless by inspecting it. He relates to others in this way and fears their doing the same, thus petrifying him in their eyes.² This psychodynamic evaluation seems applicable to the types of schizoid responses evident in Pirandello's creative work. Many critics have expressed discontent with his "intellectual" approach to his characters, complaining

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 46ff.

that such an approach essentially dehumanizes them. Perhaps a more appropriate point of view would be that Piranello's mode of relating to his characters is exemplary of his mode of relating to all others, be they products of his own imagination or not. The notion of turning the spontaneity of his being into something lifeless by inspection captures the very essence of Pirandello's creative method. In addition, we may postulate a conditional loss of affect in Pirandello's relationships with the other in order to preserve some sense of his own being. The fact that this same mode of behavior is transferred to his characters, who are the creations of his own imagination and with whom he should feel relatively at ease, indicates how deeply rooted is the schizoid tendency in his personality.

Theoretically, in the schizoid individual, the self, in order to develop and sustain its identity and autonomy, and in order to be safe from persistent threats from the outside world, has cut itself off from direct relatedness with others and has endeavored to become its own object: to become, in fact, related directly only to itself. As a result, its primary functions become fantasy and observation. One might say that these are also the primary functions of the playwright. The playwright uses his powers of observation to gain insights into the behaviors of himself and others, and then uses the element of fantasy to create characters and situations that reflect this insight.

In such an individual, the true self experiences a loss of vital contact with the world, and the self never really meets reality. Instead, relationship with others and the world is delegated to a false-self system whose perceptions, feelings, thoughts and actions are relatively devoid of any real value. The unreality which permeates all perception and the falsity of purposes of the false-self system culminate in deadened feelings that pervade the shared world as a whole. Laing finds that all interactions become subject to this deadness and that these feelings infiltrate to the true self as well. Perhaps it was this state of mind that Pirandello was reflecting in his statement, "I have forgotten to live."¹

So much that the schizoid person does is in its very nature inextricably ambiguous. The same sense of ambiguity may be seen to exist in Pirandello's writings, lending further credence to the postulated relationship between his creative process and Laing's model of schizoid behavior. Laing explains that in the schizoid individual, the self finds imaginary objects to fulfill the functions of relationships with the other. These objects of fantasy usually obey magical laws; they have magical relationships, not real relationships. As the self becomes more of a participant in fantasy relationships and less of a direct

¹Laing, The Divided Self, p. 138.

participant in real relationships, it tends to lose its own sense of reality.¹

Such references to magic and magical relationships call to mind certain aspects of Pirandello's works. For example, in Six Characters in Search of an Author, the entire appearance, behavior and disappearance of the characters themselves have a distinctly magical quality, not to mention Madame Pace whose appearance and disappearance is magical even in relation to the other characters. In Right You Are, If You Think You Are, the entire Ponza-Frola family relationship of husband, wife and mother-in-law is mysterious, and remains so throughout the play. Pirandello's Sunday morning "audiences" with the characters of his plays were clearly of a magical nature as well.

According to Laing, in this type of situation, the self relates primarily to objects of its own fantasy; in this sense, we find Pirandello, as a playwright, relating primarily to characters of his own creation.² Furthermore, Laing notes that it is not uncommon for depersonalized patients, whether or not they are schizophrenic, to speak of

¹Ibid., p. 141.

²We may view these created characters as serving the purpose of being "people" the playwright can relate to in a relatively direct way with only a minimum sense of threat from the outside world. This is not to imply that Pirandello was unable to function in real situations with real people. We believe that it was only during the creative process that a schizoid-like mode of relating to objects of fantasy (characters) was allowed to operate.

having murdered their selves or of having been robbed of their selves. It would be a fair assumption to consider the concept of a "stolen" self equivalent to the concept reflected in Pirandello's image of "forgetting" to live.¹

The psychodynamics of the divorce of the self from the body are complex and contradictory. While the divorce between self and body is utilized as the basic means of defense, it is also a condition which the schizophrenic desperately longs to resolve. The essential dilemma is that the self wishes to be embedded in the body yet is constantly afraid of being subjected to dangers which it cannot escape. At the same time the self finds that there are distinct advantages to its position outside the body. Laing summarizes the changes in the self structure brought about by this situation as follows:

- (1) Its orientation is a primitive, oral one, concerned with the dilemma of sustaining its aliveness, while being terrified to "take in" anything. . . .
- (2) It becomes charged with hatred of all that is there. The only way of destroying and of not destroying what is there may be felt to be to destroy itself.
- (3) The attempt to kill the self may be undertaken intentionally. It is partly defensive ("If I'm dead, I can't be killed"); and partly an attempt to endorse the crushing sense of guilt that oppresses the individual. This guilt is manifested in the individual's feeling that he has no right to be alive.

¹Although much has been made of this single image, we feel justified in having done so in the sense that this notion seems to run through much of his drama and other writings, in varying degrees.

- (4) The "inner" self becomes split itself, and loses its own sense of identity and integrity.
- (5) It the self loses its realness and direct access to realness outside itself.
- (6) a--The place of safety of the self i.e., hiding behind a false-self system becomes a prison. Its would-be haven becomes a hell.
b--It ceases to have even the safety of a solitary cell. Its own enclave becomes a torture chamber. The inner self is persecuted within this chamber by split concretized parts of itself or by its own phantoms which have become uncontrollable.¹

This last phase leads directly into a total dissociative response. When the delicate balance of the self-body duality fails, neither self-experience nor body-experience can retain identity and integrity and the individual moves into a state that Laing has described as "chaotic nonentity."²

In order to provide a more detailed account of schizophrenic process, the following passage from Laing will be quoted in its entirety. It appears to be particularly applicable to our study of Pirandello and seems to relate directly to one of the main precepts of his writing and one of the most influential of the creative stimuli with which he was confronted, i.e., the lack of desire for a life in which he could relate freely and openly with others:³

¹Laing, The Divided Self, pp. 161-162.

²Ibid.

³Again, we must stress our belief that this particular element of Pirandello's personality was operative only within the creative process. We believe this notion to be directly related to his creation of personaggi (characters).

We have referred to the desire to be dead, the desire for non-being, as perhaps the most dangerous desire that can be pursued. In the schizophrenic, two main motives form into one force operating in the direction of promoting a state of death-in-life. There is the primary guilt of having no right to life in the first place, and hence of being entitled at most only to a dead life. Secondly, it is probably the most extreme defensive posture that can be adopted. One no longer fears being crushed, engulfed, overwhelmed by realness and aliveness (whether they arise in other people, in "inner" feelings or emotions, etc.), since one is already dead. Being dead, one cannot die and one cannot kill. The anxieties attendant of the schizophrenic's fantastic omnipotence are undercut by¹ living in a condition of fantastic impotence.

To further elaborate on the precise psychodynamics associated with Laing's concept of the schizophrenic separation of the self from the body, let us turn to another of his works, The Politics of the Family. Here Laing deals more specifically with the effects of the social milieu on the development of schizophrenic process. Here, too, we find a unique parallel to what may be described as Pirandello's sense of lack of identity:

I am outside my skin, but I may feel outside what is inside me and outside all I am not inside. Where, then, am I? Not quite inside anything? Not quite outside anything? What do I want to be inside? What do I want to be outside? What do I want to be inside me? What do I want to be outside me?

¹Laing, The Divided Self, p. 176. See also Luigi Pirandello, The Late Mattia Pascal, trans. William Weaver (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964). The main character of the novel is a man who attempts to escape the false social relationships of life by having himself declared dead and then assuming another identity. He is unsuccessful and discovers the impossibility of any escape.

Do I want to be inside what is inside me?
 Do I want to be outside what is inside me?
 Do I feel inside what is outside me? Is
 what is inside me, what I would like outside
 me? Is what₁ is outside me, what I would like
 inside me?

The inside-outside model employed here by Laing is one of the distinctions which helps to provide us with a feeling that our experience makes sense. It belongs to the familial-social order of things. In the schizophrenic, however, inside-outside distinctions are skewed so as to reflect the self-body split in such a way that they imply the existence of two separate entities that exist within the personality structure of one human being.

According to Richard Gilman, one of the last entries in the journal that Pirandello kept during most of his life as a writer states the following: "There is somebody who is living my life and I know nothing about him."² This assumption of an unknown self, an other who fills the same physical and personal space as one's own, carries with it the same implications as Laing's formulation of the dynamics of the self-body split. We find that, in Pirandello's works, this notion becomes central, obsessive and one of the major principles of his creative procedure.

¹R.D. Laing, The Politics of the Family (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 93. (Emphasis mine.) The italicized phrases appear to be a valid description of Pirandello's status, within the context of the creative process.

²Luigi Pirandello, quoted in Richard Gilman, The Making of Modern Drama (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), p. 157.

Thus, we believe that a clearly demonstrable relationship exists between Pirandello's creative process, his own unique vision of the world (imbued with schizoid overtones) and his wife's psychological deterioration. Many critics point to Pirandello's marital relationship as a sufficient explanation for his point of view and his literary works. We should note, however, that Pirandello acquired the skill of observing people and events both through his own hard and somewhat matter-of-fact eyes and through the distorted vision of his wife. He felt that her insight was, at times, remarkable.¹ This is not surprising since paranoid behavior does carry with it a degree of super-sensitivity to the drives and motivations of all those around the individual. The perception of these motivations may sometimes be skewed to the extreme, but, nevertheless, do contain some measure of accuracy.

In Pirandello's drama nothing seems stable; his heroes have no sense of any purpose in life, and are, indeed, disgusted with the future that confronts them. His characters are men and women without balance, convinced of the unreality of everything and of the impossibility of knowing even themselves.² One of his characters says:

For the drama lies all in this--in the
conscience that I have, that each one of us has.

¹Irene di Robilant, "Concerning the Author of As You Desire Me," Theatre Guild (May, 1931).

²This would reinforce the notion that his works are solipsistic.

We believe this conscience to be a single thing, but it is many-sided. There is one for this person, and another for that. Diverse consciences. So we have this illusion of being one person for all, of having a personality that is unique in all our acts. But it isn't true. We perceive this when, tragically perhaps, in something we do, we are as it were, suspended, caught up in the air on a kind of hook. Then we perceive that all of us was not in that act, and that it would be an atrocious injustice to judge us by that action alone, as if all our¹ existence were summed up in that one deed.

Here it is the Father, in Six Characters, who is speaking for Pirandello, revealing his unique concept of personality and the self. His firm belief in the unreality of everything outside subjective reality was systematic, and therefore almost became an intellectual game. Yet, for Pirandello, this may have been a game in which the stakes, at least on a creative level, were the survival of his own integrated personality.

Antonietta, Pirandello's wife, had been the obsessive stimulus to his creative process. She had insisted on the reality of countless things that did not exist. In a sense, his plays, the creative output of a tortured psyche, would stand as an affirmation of her vision. Right You Are, Six Characters and the other works dealt with in this study were all, in some way, inspired by this woman who helped him to see himself, Luigi Pirandello, as another, very different

¹Luigi Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of an Author in Naked Masks, Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello, ed. Eric Bentley, trans. Edward Storer (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1952), pp. 231-232.

person, but a very real person whose existence (however transitory) was decidedly threatening as far as she was concerned.¹

In determining the scope of our study, it seemed the best course of action to limit our interpretative discussion to a selected sample of works from the body of Pirandello's dramatic output. While it certainly would have been possible to examine most, if not all, of Pirandello's plays employing the psychoanalytic framework set forth in the preceding chapters, a representative sample seemed adequate. The purpose of the study is not to examine all of Pirandello's plays but to isolate certain elements in his life and apply them to the plays in order to lay a possible foundation for a psychoanalytic interpretation of his dramatic works.

In the belief that the best approach is to isolate the important plays in Pirandello's dramaturgy having the greatest applicability to this unique point of view, I have reached the following conclusions: (1) in order to pursue this thesis by means of contemporary psychoanalytic theory, the plays finally selected were best suited to examination by way of their relationship to Pirandello's background, chronological development as a playwright, and life history; (2) these plays have received considerable critical attention as the strongest examples of Pirandello's unique vision of personality

¹Giudice, p. 101. In this discussion of several noteworthy incidents in Pirandello's life (as well as his relationship with his wife) in relation to his plays, the intention has not been to minimize Pirandello's dramatic creations, dismissing them as the ravings of a near-madman. Instead, an effort has been made to develop an understanding

and character development, dramatic structure and imagery.¹

With the foregoing considerations in mind, the plays to be dealt with in detail in this study are: Right You Are, If You Think You Are (1917), a mysterious, wickedly sardonic social commentary on the petty intrigues of small-town life; Six Characters in Search of an Author (1921), an engrossing and unique theatrical experience in which the personal tragedy of the family of the inner drama is portrayed against the backdrop of Pirandello's incisive comments on the theatre as an art form; Henry IV (1922), a tragically moving portrait of creative madness, with historical overtones; To Clothe the Naked (1922), Pirandello's sensitive, delicately beautiful study of woman as the victim of society; and When Someone Is Somebody (1933), a highly personal statement of the tragedy of literary greatness and the anonymity of being a public figure.

of the roots of those dramatic creations.

While we should not lose sight of the fact that certain parallels do seem to exist between key incidents in Pirandello's life and a selection of his plays, we cannot help but acknowledge his skills as an artist, his creative imagination and his perception of the kinds of inner torment we all are faced with, in varying degrees, with regard to our awareness of our "selves," and the ramifications of that knowledge and its effect on our struggle for existence. The various forms of madness that confront us in Pirandello's plays find their source in his artistry, not his psychopathology.

¹See the works of Robert Brustein, Walter Starkie, Eric Bentley and Martin Esslin.

CHAPTER IV

RIGHT YOU ARE, IF YOU THINK YOU ARE

On the surface, Pirandello's Right You Are, If You Think You Are (Così è, se vi pare) seems to be typical of a familiar genre of domestic melodrama. The atmosphere is one of gossip and intrigue with the plot centering on the mystery of the identities of the central characters. The structure of the play seems to be conventional in its attempt to make this mystery suspenseful. According to the conventions of domestic melodrama, the ultimate action of the play would be the clearing up of the mystery, the revelation of the truth hidden beneath the surface. The audience's pleasure would lie in the satisfaction of its desire that there be just such a revelation, that there is a truth to be found. However, this expectation is frustrated in the play's final scene. Pirandello leaves us with the perplexing notion that while facts about human beings may be obtainable, truth is not. This conclusion carries with it the implication that truth is relative, that for each of us the truth is colored by our own perceptions, attitudes and prejudices.

The play opens in the parlor of the provincial prefect, Signor Agazzi, where the women of the household are discussing the fact that they have been slighted by their new neighbor, the mother-in-law of Agazzi's assistant, Signor Ponza. She has refused to invite them into her house, even though, in deference to Agazzi's superior social station, she should have called on them to pay her respects. With a little pointed, but friendly, prodding by Laudisi, Signora Agazzi's brother, the women (including friends who have dropped in out of curiosity) admit that they have been gossiping about Ponza's strange family arrangements: for his mother-in-law, he has found an expensive apartment next to that of the Agazzis, while his own wife lives on the edge of town, in an inexpensive walk-up. Moreover, he keeps Signora Frola from her daughter, allowing the two to greet one another only at a distance. We learn that Signora Frola visits her daughter twice a day, looking up at the window from the courtyard. They exchange notes by means of a basket which is raised and lowered from the balcony.

Signora Frola arrives, explaining that she could not receive the ladies earlier because her son-in-law would be upset. She informs them that he has suffered a serious breakdown; when her daughter Lina (Signora Ponza) was taken ill and had to be placed in a nursing home, Ponza almost went mad. When Lina's health was restored and she returned to him, he refused to believe that she was his wife. According to Signora Frola, he was convinced that his wife had died.

A second marriage had to be "performed" in order to restore Lina to her husband. In short, Signora Frola tells them, Ponza is mad. She adds, reassuringly, that he is not at all dangerous; rather, he is most considerate and tender.

Soon after she leaves, Ponza arrives. His version of the facts is very different. He convinces the group that it is his mother-in-law, not he, who is mad; he keeps mother and daughter apart because Signora Frola believes her daughter to be alive, when in fact she has died. The woman who is now his wife is another, not Lina.

The Agazzis and their friends accept this story. But under Laudisi's relentless questioning, the others conclude that the only way to learn the truth is to have the two confront each other. When this happens, Signora Frola defers to her son-in-law who, greatly agitated, orders her to return to her apartment. After she has gone, he suddenly grows calm and explains that his anger was a ruse to humor the old woman.

With this, the Agazzis are determined to have the facts. "Evidence" arrives from the little town where the newcomers had lived--but it is ambiguous and, because of an earthquake, what little is known cannot be corroborated. At this point, at Agazzi's request, the Chief of Police orders Ponza to bring his wife to them. When the woman arrives, she is heavily veiled. Under questioning, she says simply: "I am Signor Ponza's second wife and Signora Frola's daughter." Laudisi's skeptical probing of "reality" thus leaves the ultimate question unanswered.

In a larger sense, how can one ever hope to penetrate another's identity? This very point is made by Laing in his discussion of our ultimate arrival at the realization that each of us is completely alone. The self is never a totally distinct entity, thereby minimizing the value of prying beneath the assumed self. To get at what? Ponza and his family had managed to maintain their illusions peacefully. Society, i.e., the townspeople, in insisting on the "truth" and invading the inner privacy of their self-isolation, becomes absurdly cruel and worthy of Pirandello's rather derisive laughter, as expressed by Laudisi.

In what must be termed the resolution of the play's conflict, the wife negates herself, having been caught between two truths and society's insistence on clarification. She thus becomes a sacrifice to the social lie.

The playwright's concern here is the proposition that every human being is a whole entity unto himself (despite a myriad of fragmentary or false selves) and that we are unable to penetrate into the mystery of another. We are able to sense the outside world, men and things, in a subjective way, thus providing ourselves with a reality of our own. Our reality, however, is certain to stand in sharp contrast to the results of another's contact with the same stimuli.

Given only an unyielding moment to adhere to reality, its accepted qualities fragmented, the human personality, in Pirandello's drama, becomes, like the plays themselves,

a combination of spirits in conflict with different parts of itself. Thus, the fragmentary characters in Right You Are, the collection of part-selves and false-selves, become reflections of a fragmented reality.¹

The one overriding principle projected in Right You Are is that things are not either illusion or reality, but both. It is this simultaneous apprehension of contradictory levels of experience that infuses Pirandello's drama with the element of uncertainty or doubt. Moreover, the development of the play clearly shows that illusion and reality are not mutually exclusive. Rather, illusion is seen as an aspect of reality, a means of expressing reality's insufficiency.

At this point it seems worthwhile to demonstrate how Winnicott's notion of the false self may be seen to function in Pirandello's drama. We can equate the above concept of illusion with Winnicott's appraisal of the defensive nature of the false self. Its defensive function is to protect the true self, whatever that may be. Observers tend to think of the false self as a real person, and therein lies the illusion. However, in living and working relationships the false self begins to fail.² Right You Are, as seen through Winnicott's eyes, provides us with a number of false selves. The most immediate parallel may be seen in Signora

¹Allan Lewis, The Contemporary Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), p. 142.

²D.W. Winnicott, The Maturation Processes and The Facilitating Environment (New York: International Universities Press, 1965), p. 142.

Ponza, the character with no identity (i.e., no clear identity). She might be considered the false self "personified."

Yet both Signor Ponza and Signora Frola may also be seen to exercise elements of the false self defensive structure. Winnicott's dictum that the false self serves as a protector can then lead us in two different directions. On the one hand, Signor Ponza may be seen as serving a false self function in his protective posture regarding his wife's identity. On the other hand, we may also suspect that it is Signor Ponza's own personality that constitutes the false self structure and that there is a true self lying somewhere beneath the surface. In this sense, his behavior concealing his wife's identity may serve only to mask his true self and prevent exploitation by the outside world.

The character of Signora Frola may take on added significance in relation to Winnicott's false self system in terms of her role as the mother of Ponza's wife. Part of the theoretical basis of Winnicott's false self system involves the importance of the infant-mother relationship to the development of the false self structure. If we operate on the assumption that such a relationship exists between Signora Ponza and Signora Frola, we may use Winnicott's theory to postulate the etiology of the false self condition. The true self does not become a living reality except as a result of the mother's repeated success in meeting the infant's spontaneous gesture or sensory hallucination. When this situation obtains, the infant begins to believe in

external reality. In the absence of such parental response, a false self personality structure will limit both development of awareness and responsiveness to external stimuli. In contrast, the true self, in the process of formation, has a spontaneity which is joined to the world's events.¹

The true self is the theoretical position from which come the spontaneous gesture and the personal idea. The spontaneous gesture is the true self in action. The true self has the ability to be creative and can feel real. Such a true self quickly develops complexity and begins to relate to external reality by natural processes. The infant then comes to be able to react to a stimulus without trauma because the stimulus has a counterpart in the individual's inner, psychic reality.

In normal development, the equivalent of the false self is that element of the personality which develops into a social manner, something which is adaptable in the child. In the healthy personality, this social manner represents a compromise. In such a personality, however, this compromise is disallowed when the issues become crucial. When this occurs, the true self is able to override the compliant or social self.²

The behavior and personality structure of Signora Ponza may thus be seen, in light of Winnicott, to be exemplary of a false self system etiologically related to an unresponsive mother in infancy.

¹Ibid., p. 146.

²Ibid., p. 150.

Edoardo Weiss echoes Winnicott's concern for the identification process, but takes a slightly different point of view. There is no mention of a false self concept. Instead, Weiss' findings indicate that the child's ego acquires its own characteristics through his various identifications with other persons. Their autoplasmic reproductions become real features of the child's own ego and are felt as such.¹

Weiss stresses the fact that the ego is extremely dependent on contacts with other egos in order to maintain its own individual existence. This observation throws additional light on the difficulties in Right You Are with regard to lack of identity.

The most essential factor in interpersonal relationships is the ego's need for survival and self-assertion. The ego, as a member of a group, is motivated in its behavior by two sets of urges. On the one hand, the self-preservation drive or protective behavioral mode, expressing itself in a new form, induces the ego to assert itself. The ego feels its own existence more strongly when it is noted and acknowledged by the group.

In the case of Signora Ponza, who has remained outside the group, outside society, the ego's existence is not strongly conceptualized, allowing her the option of assuming two identities simultaneously at the end of the play. Thus the notion of simultaneous apprehension of contradictory levels

¹Edoardo Weiss, The Structure and Dynamics of the Human Mind (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1960), p. 26.

of experience is reinforced by Weiss' theoretical discussion of the process of identity formation.

By virtue of his acknowledgment by the group, the individual develops in his mind a concept of an ideal figure, the "ego ideal."¹ The more closely he approaches this ideal, the more he feels gratified in his narcissism.

The self-preservative drive acquires yet another aspect in that the "ego feeling" also extends to a "we feeling." This grows to include a drive for preservation of the group, society and mankind. According to Weiss, in extreme cases an individual may sacrifice himself to save the group.² We may view Signora Ponza's self-negation as precisely this form of sacrifice. Her action preserves both the illusions and identities of Ponza and Frola. In a larger sense, Pirandello may be seen to have taken just such an action in the course of creating his plays. Indeed, such a sacrifice need not be a literal one. The playwright, in devoting himself wholly to his work, is exercising a form of self-sacrifice in order to save the group (i.e., society) via the cathartic value of his plays.

On the other hand, Weiss' theoretical position provides us with an alternative means of viewing the characters (i.e., the three sufferers) of Right You Are. Signor Ponza and Signora Frola may be seen as partial reflections of the same

¹See p. 9, this study.

²Weiss, The Structure and Dynamics of the Human Mind, p. 29.

character or personality in that the existence of both is determined, in part, by the way in which they relate to and/or view Signora Ponza. In a sense, they both exist as reflections of her identity.

There are many ways in which we find portions of ourselves in others. This phenomenon results from the natural extension of the self-preservative drive to other persons. Toward this end, the process of externalization plays the most important role.¹ Thus, it is a commonplace that we may see various aspects of our own personalities reflected by the personalities of those close to us and vice versa.

Carrying the entire process a step further, we may conclude that Signora Ponza does not exist at all, but is merely the embodiment of various aspects of the personalities of the other two characters. Taken in this sense, the family situation in Right You Are appears as a structural foreshadowing of the relationship linking the family in Six Characters. The principle is even more applicable to the mysterious appearance of Madame Pace. When Madame Pace makes her appearance in Six Characters, it is almost as though she has been conjured up by the collective energies of the characters. With the above proposition regarding Signora Ponza in mind, we note a distinct similarity to Madame Pace's lack of existence and/or reality in Six Characters.

¹Externalization refers to the process of directing the personality outward in social relationships.

In any event, the alternative between the only two possible solutions offered to the townspeople by Signor Ponza and Signora Frola is far too simple. In point of fact, the solutions are infinite. The young woman may be neither the daughter of Signora Frola nor the second wife of Signor Ponza. She may be trying to keep two equally disturbed minds from further deterioration. Or, she herself may be suffering from a form of insanity which makes it necessary for her to think that both characters she embodies must coexist. We are faced with a multiple system of delusions which is kept in precarious balance and each of these delusions undermines the foundations of the other two. It is a closed system without an exit: each character's illusions are his/her reality.¹

On another level, the theme of identity crisis is reflected in the person of Laudisi, the character generally thought of as Pirandello's spokesman in the play. The action and characters of Right You Are may be thought of as operating and existing in two different dimensions. The three sufferers exist in one dimension while the townspeople exist in quite another. Laudisi operates in both dimensions, thus placing his own identity in questionable terms relative to either of the two groups of characters in the play.

The townspeople reflect a collective social identity in that the forces of societal pressure that are impinging

¹Martin Esslin, Reflections: Essays on Modern Theatre (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969), p. 50.

on the self-imposed isolation of the three sufferers originate in the insatiable desire of the people for some sort of truth regarding the lives of Ponza, his wife and Signora Frola. Laudisi shares in this activity insofar as he suggests a search for documents that will reveal the "real" truth and calls for the Prefect to confront Signora Ponza in order to determine her "true" identity.

At the same time, Laudisi may be seen to operate in the same dimension as the three sufferers in that he is clearly of the belief that identity is a completely relative quality and he attempts to have the townspeople accept this position:

Laudisi. Don't you believe him, governor. On the contrary. I've been doing my best to bring these people to common sense.

Sirelli. Common sense! And do you know what he calls common sense? According to him it is not possible to discover the truth; and now he's been suggesting that Ponza is living not with a woman, but with a ghost!

Prefect. That's a new one! Quite an idea! How do you make that out, Laudisi?

Agazzi. Oh, I say! . . . You know how he is. There's no getting anywhere with him!

Laudisi. I leave it to you, governor. I was the one who first suggested bringing you here.

Prefect. And do you think, Laudisi, I ought to see the old lady next door?

Laudisi. No, I advise no such thing, governor. In my judgment you are doing very well in depending on what Ponza tells you.

Prefect. Ah, I see! Because you, too, think that Ponza . . .

Laudisi. No, not at all . . . because I'm also satisfied to have all these people stand on what Signora Frola says, if that does them any good.

Agazzi. So you see, eh, governor? That's what you call arguing, eh?

Prefect. Just a moment! Let me understand! So you say we can also trust what the old lady says?

Laudisi. Of course you can! Implicitly! And so you can₁ depend upon what Ponza says. Implicitly!

Laudisi's motivation in this seems to be a sincere desire to allow the sufferers to live in peace, reflecting a recognition of the damage being done by the townspeople in their attempt to destroy the privacy of the sufferers.

Laudisi's apparent vacillation from one camp to another renders him a character completely lacking a clear-cut identity, thereby echoing the thematic statement of the play. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Laudisi does not stand at the center of the action. Pirandello has reserved that place for his three sufferers. On another level, Laudisi is a commentator. His statements derive from his ironic interaction with the main business of the play. Laudisi may be thought of as a spectator-character and, as such, Pirandello's symbol of the spectator at the drama of life. This image reinforces a distinctly Laingian schizoid element in Pirandello's works in that it is part of the schizoid nature to remain isolated from life's interactions; and it is this very isolation which leads to fragmentation of the self and the development of false-self structures.

¹Luigi Pirandello, It Is So! (If You Think So) in Naked Masks, Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello, ed. Eric Bentley, trans. Arthur Livingston (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1952), p. 126.

Laudisi's satirical manner gives rise to yet another point of view. He may be seen as a catalyst attempting to force the townspeople to redefine their concept of "the facts" and see the world through eyes that accept the elusiveness of truth, realizing the error of their desire for the easy and "acceptable" answers. Laudisi presents himself as the devil's advocate in the case of the three sufferers but, in the final analysis, he is incapable of bringing about a resolution to the conflict. All he can do is destroy the ready-made notions of the townspeople with regard to the reliability of evidence and their belief that there has to be a simple answer to every problem. In this sense, Laudisi prepares us, from the beginning, for the "revelation" at the end of the play.

Mirror images abound in Right You Are, with Laudisi the focal point of all the reflections. Yet, in spite of his daring skepticism, reflective of his instinctive drive for truth, he seems to be trapped in a limbo of his own. His questions provoke the repudiation of external facts, yet he does not affirm anything in their place. In the play's final resolution, if we can call it that, Laudisi takes his place with his sister and her family and friends. He remains a double image, always out of focus. He is on the outside looking in and his very skepticism seems to be symbolic of

his inability to recognize the truth. This notion carries with it the implication that there is no truth. The extent of his commitment includes seeing the difficulty and forcing the others to see it, and nothing more.

In the following monologue, Laudisi is addressing his own image in the mirror in an attempt to articulate the nature of the problem both to himself and to the audience.

Laudisi. So there you are! I say, old man, who is mad, you or I? Of course, I understand! I say it's you, and you say it's me. You--you are mad. No? It's me? Very well! It's me! Have it your way. Between you and me, we get along very well, don't we! But the trouble is, others don't think of you just as I do; and that being the case, old man, what a fix you're in! As for me, I say that here, right in front of you, I can see myself with my eyes and touch myself with my fingers. But what are you for other people? What are you in their eyes? An image, my dear sir, just an image in the glass! They're all carrying just such a phantom around inside themselves, and here they are racking their brains about the phantoms in other people; and they think all that is quite another thing!¹

In playing his role as critic of the others, Laudisi creates the illusion that the answer to the play's problem rests with him. This is not the case. The true image and the reflected image are not fused into an organic whole by way of his insight. It is, instead, the three sufferers who represent the last true phase of consciousness. For

¹Pirandello, It Is So! (If You Think So), pp. 101-102.

Pirandello, it is only within them that the duality of internal and external reality is resolved into inner certainty.¹

The play ends with Laudisi's laughter, a laughter that decisively pervades the proceedings. Laudisi's laughter is exemplary of Pirandello's brilliant use of dramatic imagery, indicative of his profound understanding of human nature and symbolic of the human need to externalize emotional experience. In Right You Are, the laughter becomes a kind of grotesque humor, an image of our need to laugh at the expense of someone else. This sort of laughter quickly turns against us, however, and becomes an outlet for our own pain. Our social masks are stripped away through the externalization of emotion revealing the exaggerated contradictions that seem to exist, in varying degrees, in all of us. Laudisi's laughter captures the notion that communication in Pirandello's plays is rarely successful, as when the townspeople attempt to solve the riddle of the Ponza-Frola triangle. The dramatic articulation of this unsuccessful attempt to communicate provides Pirandello with a means of visualizing one of his central themes, the impossibility of expressing the inexpressible realities that exist for each of us, alone.²

¹Anne Paolucci, Pirandello's Theater: The Recovery of the Modern Stage for Dramatic Art (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 70.

Speculation as to the etiology of the situation presented to us by the playwright offers a number of diverse explanations. Perhaps Signora Ponza, in attempting to cope with the deranged personalities of the other two characters, is isolated by her own feelings of shame at their predicament. The notion of shame as a determinant in the process of identity formation has been explored by Helen Lynd, an English psychoanalyst. According to Lynd, difficulty in communicating experiences of shame can lead to protection of the exposed self at all costs, covering the isolating effect of shame through depersonalization.¹

The identity crisis revealed by the play may also be seen as a reflection of the effects of the cultural upheaval in Italy during this period. Lynd stresses the fact that searching for a coherent personality presents special difficulties at a time when the unexpected is continually happening, when the dangers involved in certain kinds of deviation from the norm are great, and when it is difficult to know where or in whom one can put one's trust. A natural response to this situation is seeking some sort of external protection which may develop into a depersonalization, offering protection from exposure at the cost of diminished personal identity.²

The evidence seems to indicate that it is almost impossible for an individual to develop a sure sense of him-

¹Helen Merrell Lynd, On Shame and The Search for Identity (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 71.

²Ibid., p. 185.

self unless he can find aspects of his social situation with which he can clearly identify. In a time of extreme social and cultural disintegration and restructuring, the difficulties in such an effort would seem obvious.¹

The cultural and social disintegration that accompanied Italy's involvement in World War I presented just such a situation. One aspect of Pirandello's work whose roots lie in the social climate that developed out of Italy's involvement in the war is his intense concern for the quality of suffering in his characters. The basis for this concern with suffering is explained by the Italian critic, Silvio D'Amico:

As a matter of fact, the symptoms of bewilderment were evident in the late pre-war period . . . this recognition of the uselessness of life assumed the form of a very different exasperation when, after the tremendous eruption of the World War, man, overpowered, and the poet who represented him, seemed to lose not only the taste for life, but . . . whatever explanation he had for life. We were not what we believed ourselves to be. . . . Life as a whole was nothing but a melancholy farce, in which we recited more or less ignorantly our different parts,² poor puppets in the hand of a blind destiny.

This description of the social climate in Italy bears a strong resemblance to theoretical discussions of schizophrenic outlook and behavioral attitudes as outlined by Laing in The Divided Self.

¹Ibid., p. 215.

²Silvio D'Amico, quoted in Thomas H. Dickinson, The Theatre in a Changing Europe (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1937), p. 228.

Placing Pirandello's drama in the context of the theatre of the grotesque reveals a unique relationship between the plays and the psychoanalytic theories of Laing. Pirandello mirrors Laing's theoretical construct relative to the individual's fear of engulfment or implosion from the outside world. To Laing's schizophrenic, the world has become an alien place, full of unseen terrors. This is equally true for Pirandello's characters.

In placing Pirandello's drama in the realm of the theatre of the grotesque, we have borrowed the following notion of grotesque theatre from Charles Gattnig: the plays of Pirandello may be thought of as grotesque in that they both reflect the incongruities of the world and attempt to subdue and invoke its demonic aspects.¹ The schizophrenic also attempts to subdue the demonic aspects of the world in that his modes of dealing with reality constitute various ingenious means of avoiding contact with life's real demons.

Although Pirandello did not actively seek to avoid contact with the real world, he was skeptical of reality as determined by his society. In Right You Are, he exemplifies the difficulties in communication and the absurdities of social conventions that were so much a part of the bourgeois social structure that he knew so well.

As noted above, Helen Lynd deals with aspects of

¹Charles Gattnig, "Pirandello, Umorismo, and Beckett," (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1967), pp. 53-54.

communication difficulties specifically related to experiences of shame and their effect on the individual's capacity to develop a clearly defined identity. Lynd's research serves to clarify our discussion of the concept of shame by way of a definition that addresses itself to the individual's social situation. Shame, in this context, may be described as the sudden awareness of incongruity between the self and the social situation; and of exposure, in which an unexpected light is thrown on who one is. Values, ways of life that one has accepted without question, may appear in this new light to be cruel or destructive. Hence, the feeling, "If this is my society, then the world is not good, I do not belong here, I want none of it,"¹ which then leads to further isolation.

The existence of attitudes such as this in post-war Italy may be easily understood. We are dealing with a process that is closed and circular, since openness to relationships with other people is bound to the search for self-identity. As one develops more relationships with other people, one discovers more of oneself; and conversely, lack of relatedness to others results in further loss of identity. This is the situation we find in Right You Are. The more complete the isolation of the three sufferers, the more questionable their relative identities become.

Ernest Schachtel, in his psychoanalytic study of amnesia, provides a particularly illuminating account of the way in

¹Erik H. Erikson, quoted in Helen Lynd, On Shame and The Search for Identity, p. 215.

which language (and, consequently, literature) inevitably reflects the dominant preoccupations and limitations of a society. Through such reflection it restricts perception and experience. Certain kinds of experience may be buried or lost because the culture provides no language through which they can be expressed. Schachtel goes on to imply that normal amnesia, consisting of failure in mental recall, is an illuminating index to the quality of any given culture and society.¹ Thus, when Signora Ponza declares that she is nobody, this may be construed as a psychologically graphic indictment of Pirandello's society by the playwright, through his characters.

Erik Erikson relates loss of identity to psychosocial stimuli in a way that provides us with yet another psycho-analytic viewpoint of Right You Are. The play may be seen as the reflection of an unstable social and cultural situation whose conflicts and cross-currents lead to the choice of a negative identity, as seen in the person of Signora Ponza.

Children at different stages of their development identify with those partial aspects of people by which they themselves are most immediately affected, whether in fantasy or reality. Identifications with parents, for example, revolve around certain overvalued and ill-understood body parts, capacities and role appearances. Moreover, these

¹Ernest Schachtel, "Memory and Childhood Amnesia," quoted in Lynd, p. 247.

partial aspects are stressed and favored, not because of their social acceptability, but due to the very nature of infantile fantasy, which only gradually gives way to more realistic judgment as the level of maturity increases.

Cultural and historical change, Erikson posits, can prove highly traumatic to identity formation.¹ Italy was undergoing a process of intense disillusionment as a result of its involvement in World War I. The war had broken out in August, 1914 with Italy initially subscribing to a position of useful neutrality. The nation, as a whole, apparently had a sincere belief in the idea of public and private renewal which was to be the supposed result of the war. This position was rather short-lived, giving way to a kind of patriotic infatuation and a strong desire for intervention. The desire became reality ten months after the initial outbreak of hostilities when Italy declared war on Austria, May 24, 1915. Pirandello found himself caught up in this intense wave of patriotic feeling as much as anyone else.

The war had devastating effects on the Italian national psyche in that the new spirit that was supposed to emerge from the conflict never materialized. By the third year of the war, the nation felt its patriotic infatuation waning and its once-fiery passions gave way to an overwhelming sense of emptiness. It is this feeling of purposelessness and lack of direction that is crystallized in the above quote from

¹Erik H. Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1968), p. 158.

D'Amico. Changes such as these can break up the inner consistency of an individual's hierarchy of expectations. This, in turn, would interfere with the development and/or maintenance of a fully integrated inner self.

In the overall developmental process, the ego (the self) grows in increasingly more mature interplay with available models by way of a three-step process: introjection, identification and identity formation.¹

Neurotic and psychotic crises in identity formation may be defined by an increasing waste of defensive energy and a deepening psychosocial isolation. These forms of behavior tend to become self-perpetuating. Such a state

¹Introjection, according to Erikson, refers to the primitive incorporation of another's image and depends on satisfactory mutual communication between the mothering adult(s) and the mothered child. It is only this experience which provides a safe basis of self-feeling from which the child can reach out for his first love objects.

Identifications depend on the child's satisfactory interaction with trustworthy representatives of a meaningful hierarchy of roles as provided by the generations living together in some form of family structure. The term identity, in Erikson's lexicon, has multiple connotations: referring to unconscious and conscious strivings for continuity of personality, a tendency toward synthesis, and a maintenance of congruence with the ideals and identity of one's social group.

Identity formation arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new personality structure, which, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society identifies the young individual, recognizing him as someone who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted (accepted). See Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, p. 159.

of acute identity confusion usually becomes manifest at a time when the young individual finds himself exposed to a combination of experiences which demand his simultaneous commitment to physical intimacy (not always overtly sexual) and psychosocial self-definition. One circumstance in which a condition of identity confusion would be evident might involve the individual's entrance into some sort of love relationship.

Laing's findings relative to the intense fear of love relationships evidenced by schizophrenics would seem to support Erikson's feeling that, in individuals lacking a strong self-image, fusion with another is equated with identity loss. The individual experiences a sudden collapse of all capacity for mutuality followed by a desperate wish to start all over again. Under these conditions, the individual is ready to destroy, repudiate and/or ignore those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to his own.¹

Thus, when Signora Ponza reveals herself to be both the daughter of Signora Frola and the second wife of Signor Ponza, she concludes with ". . . and, for myself, I am nobody!"

¹Such an individual is apt to experience great strain and/or anxiety, as if such a tentative engagement (friendship, love, competition, sex) might turn into an interpersonal fusion amounting to loss of identity. A tense inner reservation would therefore be required as a defense. Where these feelings remain unresolved, the individual may isolate himself and enter only stereotyped and formalized interpersonal relations; or he may seek intimacy with the most improbable partners. Where an assured sense of identity is missing, even friendships and affairs become desperate attempts at delineating the fuzzy outlines of identity by mutual narcissistic mirroring.

We may examine this statement of negative identity with Erikson's theoretical formulations in mind.

Such loss of a sense of identity is often expressed as hostility toward the roles offered as proper or desirable in one's family or immediate community. This condition, the choice of negative identity, may manifest itself in the choice of an identity perversely based on all those identifications and roles which, at critical stages of development, had been presented as most undesirable or dangerous.

In other cases the negative identity is dictated by the necessity of finding and defending a niche of one's own against excessive ideals either demanded or actualized by one's parents. Such choices of negative identity represent a desperate attempt at regaining some mastery in a situation in which the available positive identity elements cancel each other out.

The history of such a choice often reveals a set of conditions in which it is easier for the individual to derive a sense of identity out of a total identification with that which he is least supposed to be than to struggle for a feeling of reality in acceptable roles which are unattainable given his inner means.

Given the circumstances surrounding the three sufferers in the play, a clear attempt has been made to effectively isolate Signora Ponza from all aspects of society. Perhaps she has found her role as Ponza's wife untenable, fearing the loss of her own identity as a consequence of being absorbed

by his. In her attempt to repudiate her husband and start all over again, as it were, she has turned to her mother, Signora Frola, as an initial love object and source of primary introjections. However, she has found herself unable to accept the "proper" role of Signora Frola's daughter, with the attendant commitments this implies. She is therefore required to repudiate her own identity either as a wife or a daughter since there seems to be no area of safety in which either of these personality structures exists for her. We may therefore postulate Signora Ponza as a personified victim of the cultural and historical changes that affected Pirandello as an individual and Italy as a nation, attributing the inconsistencies in her hierarchy of expectations to the psychosocial tenor of the playwright's world.

It is this world, lacking in ideological commitment, to which Erikson addresses himself. Without some such ideology, however implicit in a way of life, Erikson warns of youth suffering a confusion of values which can be specifically dangerous to individuals and, on a larger scale, assuredly dangerous to the fabric of society. The result, as illustrated by Pirandello in his plays, is the creation of a humanity lacking in identity.¹

¹See Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, p. 188. In the same sense that Erikson's youth suffers a confusion of values, Pirandello found himself the victim of conflicting ideologies at the outbreak of the war, as Giudice has amply demonstrated.

In conclusion, we may view Pirandello's creation of Right You Are, If You Think You Are as a reflection of his awareness of the fact that the technological and economic developments of the twentieth century encroached upon all traditional group identities to such an extent that what seemed to result was the loss of a sense of personal wholeness and solidarity. This, in turn, could only lead to the inevitable fractionalism and fragmentation of the self and personality.

CHAPTER V

THE MIRROR IMAGES OF

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

AND

HENRY IV

As the title of this chapter implies, we will devote ourselves to a discussion of two plays acknowledged to be Pirandello's most noteworthy. Although the works will be dealt with individually, an effort will be made to substantiate the commonality of thematic material as well as psychoanalytic overtones.

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

"Theatre exists everywhere around us and it is the purpose of the formal theatre to remind us that this is so."¹ This description of the function of theatre, as articulated by John Cage, is clearly applicable to Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author on several different levels.

The play, in metaphoric terms, may be understood as a symbol for modern society in which socio-cultural contexts (i.e., the products of rapid social change, the disjointedness

¹John Cage, quoted in Richard Gilman, The Making of Modern Drama (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974), p. 180.

and disintegration characteristics of many industrial/ technological urban societies) interfere with the ability of the inner self to realize itself through an identity integrated with meaningful social roles.¹

On another level, Six Characters is a play about the stage, about the human impulse to construct replicas of ourselves. As such, it is clearly related to the Pirandellian concept of costruirsi (to construct oneself) and to the notion of the development of a false self structure as a defensive measure in dealing with the implosion of the outside world. Brustein sees the process of costruirsi as a reflection of the notion that the self is created by man according to predetermined roles or behavior patterns.² This definition applies to that element of the personality we may describe as the social self. This concept, in turn, relates directly to Laing's notion that we tend to mold ourselves to conform to our perceptions of the expectations of others. On a symbolic level, the play, representing theatre (understood as a metaphor for society) is unable to accept and tolerate the deeper manifestations of the inner self.³

The curtain rises on a rehearsal of one of Pirandello's earlier plays, The Rules of the Game. The actors are soon

¹Alan Roland and Gino Rizzo, "Psychoanalysis in Search of Pirandello: Six Characters and Henry IV" (unpublished ms., 1975), p. 19.

²Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), p. 289.

³Roland and Rizzo, p. 20.

interrupted by the mysterious appearance of a family of six who tell the Director that they are looking for an author to induce him to dramatize their story. They explain that they are characters conceived by another author who has now left them on their own. Initially, the Director is annoyed at the interruption, but is ultimately persuaded to allow the visitors to "act out" parts of their story. He instructs his actors to study their performances closely, while he attempts to write down some of their lines. The actors try to take over, but their performances leave much to be desired. The strangers insist that the drama is in them and cannot be "acted." By dint of their sheer determination, they manage to piece together their story, taking full possession of the stage.

We learn that the Father had encouraged a liaison between his wife and one of his employees. He claims he did this out of pity because he felt the two were well-suited to each other. When his only Son was still very young, he forced his wife to leave with her lover and move to another city. Years passed and three children were born to the Mother in her new union. Then her lover died and poverty forced her to return to the city in which she had made a home with her husband. Poverty also led her eldest daughter to secretly become a prostitute. One day, the Father, succumbing to his physical needs, went to a brothel run by Madame Pace to meet, by arrangement, with a young prostitute. While he is there, the Mother arrives. She is horrified to learn that

her daughter is a prostitute and that the man embracing her is her husband.

The Father is overwhelmed with shame. Condemning himself for the lust that had brought him to Madame Pace, he is determined to salvage all that he can by bringing everyone (Mother, grown daughter, and two younger children) back home to live with him and his Son. But it cannot work. The daily confrontations of Father, Stepdaughter, Mother and Son are a perpetual agony. In the final scene, the Girl drowns and the Boy shoots himself. The adult characters, obsessed with the knowledge of what has brought them together, abandon themselves to utter despair. In the end, it is impossible to tell whether they are playing their parts or living them, and whether they are to "enact" their tragedy again and again, as in a play, or only once, as in life.

The failure of the actors to successfully enact the roles of the characters illustrates the impossibility of entering into genuine communication with the inner self of another. Moreover, in establishing a perpetual tension between the characters, who seek a form of incarnation on the stage and represent the aesthetic imagination, and the acting company, that represents life or reality, Pirandello succeeds in forcing us to a conscious acceptance of both the alienation from and the need for others.

The comic incongruity of the play reveals the enormous split between the masks worn by modern man and his inner, true self. The theme of the split between social role and

inner self is clearly developed in those speeches where the Father confronts the Director with the illusory nature of his existence and where he ultimately challenges the Director to tell him whether he really knows who he is. Note the following speech, in which the Father points up the transitory quality of the reality of our day-to-day existence:

The Father. But only in order to know if you, as you really are now, see yourself as you once were with all the illusions that were yours then, with all the things both inside and outside of you as they seemed to you--as they were then indeed for you. Well, sir, if you think of all those illusions that mean nothing to you now, of all those things which don't even seem to you to exist any more, while once they were for you, don't you feel that . . . the very earth under your feet is sinking away from you when you reflect that in the same way this you as you feel it today . . . is fated¹ to seem a mere illusion to you tomorrow?

It is valid to view each of the characters, in and of themselves, as well as the group as an interrelated whole, as fragments of a single psyche or state of mind subjected to splitting as a displacement process. This view is put forth by Charles Kligerman in his psychoanalytic study of the play.² Roland and Rizzo, however, point out that while this material is of a primary process nature it need not be related directly to the author's constellation of neurotic responses, but simply considered as a unit of its own, indicating the state of mind being conveyed by the drama.³

¹Luigi Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of an Author in Naked Masks, Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello, ed. Eric Bentley, trans. Edward Storer (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1952), p. 265.

²See Kligerman, pp. 732-734

³Roland and Rizzo, p. 23.

In Six Characters in Search of an Author, Pirandello has dramatized the tortured dissolution of character that results from an obsessive concern with the question of identity and reality. In addition, by way of the play's very structure the playwright has shattered the illusion of the stage as a mirror of everyday life. Instead, the audience is forced to look upon the stage as a reality in itself. Thus the stage drama becomes an extension of life rather than a reflected image. Through the play Pirandello reveals the work of the author, the work of the actors and the "other side" of the scenery, as it were. What he is really confronting, it seems, by way of this ingenious theatrical device, is the "other side" of human nature.

The characters who invade Pirandello's empty stage during a rehearsal are, obviously, not an interruption but the heart of the matter. The six are the most alive and the most articulate characters on the stage, in contrast to the relatively "lifeless" actors. Furthermore, the sei personaggi are not, as the title and opening scene suggest, "unfinished." The characters have sprung full-blown onto the stage and follow their own inexorable life force from beginning to end.

The Son, for example, claims that he has not been fully defined, dramatically, as a character, yet his stubborn aloofness becomes the cornerstone of his dramatic

life. He, like the other personaggi, is driven to take part in the preconceived script since it is the only life that exists for him. In this sense, the characters are all driven by an uncontrollable desire for self-definition. It is as though their identities cannot be affirmed without their participation in and re-living of "their" drama.

If the play is examined in Laingian terms, what evolves is an image of the characters as schizoid personalities whose entire motivation is the preservation of a self that is precariously structured around a single moment of existence.¹ In their fierce determination to strip away everything but that one moment of recognition, the six characters dramatize the dissolution of the self, or personality. This notion is consistent with Laing's position concerning the schizoid's defensive narrowing of his universe and withdrawal into a singular self-concept.

The notion of structuring an entire existence around a single event is related to the pervasive presence of the incest theme in the inner drama of the six characters. Pirandello intended this to be an element high in shock value. The shock is multiplied by way of the manner in which the incestuous relationship unfolds, e.g., that the Father is unaware that his partner in the liaison is his Stepdaughter.

¹The idea of a self structured around a single moment of existence is, in itself, contradictory, since we know that our personalities are products of exposure to a variety of stimuli, experiences and other people. This contradiction recalls the Rothenberg concept of Janusian thinking as an element in the creative process.

Perhaps the most horrifying aspect of the incest theme is the Father's repudiation of self that leads him to seek companionship in a brothel, and the subsequent acknowledgment of that repudiation as a consequence of his being discovered by the Mother. Here the thematic content reflects Roland's concern with repudiation and rejection as determinants of inadequate identity formation.

The inner drama of the six characters may also be seen as a kind of morality play, with the theatre providing the means by which Pirandello shares this lesson with us. Thus it is the theatre itself that provides Pirandello with the medium of his play, "for the theatre is the very act of creation which, for a moment, makes us gods."¹ It is intentional, on Pirandello's part, that this lesson should come about on the stage, "where actors are striving to strip away the confusion of life for the eternal moment each of us harbors in himself."²

By virtue of the play's structure, i.e., the play-within-a-play, Pirandello forces us to operate on three different levels of insight--that of the characters, the actors and the audience. The six characters force their way into the consciousness of the actors. They must find a way to reach the actors and, by implication, the audience. Thus, the dissolution of character is suggested in immediate and visual terms, within accepted stage conventions, in the confrontation of the actors and the characters.

¹Paolucci, Pirandello's Theater, p. 45.

²Ibid., p. 50.

The inner drama, of the six characters themselves, does present traditional Freudian themes, e.g., the Father's "incestuous" feelings toward the Stepdaughter, the Mother/Son conflict, and the murderous impulses of the younger siblings toward one another. Strong feelings of guilt and remorse may be seen to accompany these states.

There are, however, noteworthy underlying themes of repudiation and deprivation, i.e., the Mother's repudiation by the Father, as seen in his sending her away with her lover; while the relationship between the Father and Stepdaughter is clearly marked by deprivation. We may also view the relationship between the Mother and the Son in terms of a duality of repudiation and deprivation. The Son is responding to what he senses as complete repudiation on the part of the Mother (since he was separated from her as a child); while the Mother must suffer under the deprivation of being unable to communicate with her Son.

The conflict of the Father may be conceived as a problem in ego psychology. His ego must be fed by those of others in order to survive. His acute feelings of loneliness are seen in contrast to his need for human contact. He attempts to resolve this situation in a very artificial way, by seeking companionship at Madame Pace's, and is unwittingly trapped into a fundamentally incestuous relationship.

The Father's persistent self-justification and suffering results from a condition of low self-esteem, an emotional

state in which rejection and deprivation are key factors. This sense of threatened existence is easily identifiable in many of Pirandello's most articulate characters, e.g., Henry IV in the play of the same name, Signor Ponza and Signora Frola in Right You Are, and the Father in Six Characters.¹

In Laing's terms, the Father is talking to live, to avoid being killed. His self-justification is an act of self-preservation; he is fighting off the implosion of the outside world. His visit to Madame Pace's is a further example of the desperate measures he is taking against the outside world on behalf of his inner world. The Father's own commentary on his actions is reflective of his inner desperation:

The Father. But the drama culminated unforeseen and violent on their return, when I was impelled by my miserable flesh that still lives . . . Ah! what misery, what wretchedness is that of the man who is alone and disdains debasing liaisons! Not old enough to do without women, and not young enough to go and look for one without shame. Misery? It's worse than misery; it's a horror; for no woman can any longer give him love; and when a man feels this . . . One ought to do without, you say? Yes, yes, I know. Each of us when he appears before his fellows is clothed in a certain dignity. But every man knows what unconfessable things pass within the secrecy of his own heart. One gives way to the temptation, only to rise from it again, afterwards, with a great eagerness to re-establish one's dignity, as if it were a tombstone to place on the grave of one's shame, and a monument² to hide and sign the memory of our weaknesses.

¹Eric Bentley, "Father's Day," The Drama Review 13 (Fall 1968), 63.

²Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of an Author in Naked Masks, p. 229.

Such behavior would be deemed schizophrenic by Laing.¹

On another level the play exists as the tragedy of those who have not yet lived out their lives, those who are pathetically trying to escape from disaster and are searching for the means to do so. The characters are all people who are severed from their family.² As such, they do not exist. The lack of identity results from the lack of mirroring from others as experienced by the individual, beginning with the reciprocal relationship between mother and child.³ Bentley notes, quite correctly, that a nostalgia for some kind of "togetherness" seems to pervade the play. Another pervasive thematic element involves the notion of the modern, isolated individual longing for a social community. The longing, however, is directed toward the past and not toward a new society of the future.⁴

The isolated individual, as described above, is exemplified by the Father and Son and their behavior, which may be seen to proceed from defense mechanisms associated with conditions of deeply wounded narcissism or low self-esteem. The Father's behavior in sending off his wife, after noting the unspoken attachment on her part for his secretary, is exemplary of one kind of narcissistic defense resulting

¹The experience and behavior that Laing labels as schizophrenic is a special strategy that a person resorts to in order to live in an unlivable situation.

²Allan Lewis, The Contemporary Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), p. 134.

³See Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, p. 159.

⁴Bentley, "Father's Day," p. 68.

from a state of deprivation: "If I can't have everything, I shall take nothing." In the Son, his persistent aloofness is a clear attempt to punish his Mother for having sent him away as a child. This form of narcissistic behavior is typical of the thinking: "Since you rejected me once, I shall continue to punish you for the rest of my life regardless of what you now have to offer me."¹

Another aspect of the Son's motivations is his intense desire to do away with the younger siblings so as to enjoy the exclusive attention of the parents. Such a desire is greatly magnified when the parents themselves are emotionally deprived and depriving.

Through his unusual detachment and withdrawal, the son is implicitly revealing the avoidance of his deep-seated feelings of rage. As such, his behavior serves as an example of splitting by displacement as a defensive function. The fragmentation serves a defensive need.

Roland and Rizzo postulate that the inner drama of the six characters thus expresses a basic wish to eliminate the three younger siblings, i.e., the Stepdaughter, the Boy and the Girl.² They do not, however, relate this wish directly to the psychic needs of the author. Kligerman, on the other hand, presents a case for a strong relationship between the themes of the inner drama and Pirandello's own life experiences. Although this viewpoint is less universal in nature and

¹Roland and Rizzo, p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 28.

applicability in aesthetic terms, it is still deserving of consideration.

According to Kligerman, Pirandello's psychic relationship to his mother is evident in Six Characters, but the incestuous, Oedipal element is covered by other elements having strong factual bases in Pirandello's life experience. In the play, the Mother, after the family reconciliation, pursues the older Son in an attempt to win back his love. This, it appears, is impossible. He cannot relate to her. The Son feels bitter toward the Mother for her having let him go as a child. She has become a stranger. Moreover, the vehement wishes of the oldest Son to be left out while the Father brashly proclaims his actions with the Step-daughter seems to be a symbolic indication that the Father/Daughter conflict of the play is really a screen for the Mother/Son conflict. On this point, it is not known whether Pirandello was ever sent away from his mother as a child; but there definitely were other forms of estrangement. Primarily, his mother lost her milk and he was fed by a wet nurse. Although this may not appear to be an event of major significance, Pirandello emphasized it as an important facet of his early years in telling his life story to Nardelli. In addition, in the play (Six Characters) he makes it the main cause of the Son's separation from the Mother--he required a wet nurse in the country.¹

¹Kligerman, pp. 740-741.

The birth of Pirandello's younger sister, Anna, probably played an even more important role in effecting his estrangement from his mother. In psychoanalytic terms, the loss of the breast is often associated with the birth of a younger child. The mother's attention was lost because she was preoccupied with a new child. The conclusion that Pirandello felt a severe sense of estrangement from his mother as a result of the birth of younger siblings seems to be substantiated by the fact that, in his conversations with Nardelli, these siblings are hardly ever mentioned. We are told only that the younger sister suffered a nervous breakdown on entering puberty due to the father's philandering activities. The playwright's older sister and two younger brothers do not seem important in his memories.¹

At this juncture, Kligerman's analysis of certain plot and character structures of the play is deeply insightful. We agree that no child fails to feel betrayed at the birth of a younger sibling. The earliest and most violent forms of envy and jealousy occur at this early stage of childhood; the rivalry for the mother's nurturing love and the wish for complete possession are paramount. When these wishes have been poorly mastered by the infant they leave tendencies for reactions of violent jealousy at later levels of development, notably the Oedipal level. It is clear that the passions in Pirandello's drama are full of very primi-

¹ Federico Vittore Nardelli, Vita segreta di Pirandello (Roma: Vito Bianco, 1962), pp. 46-47.

tive feeling. Some critics have observed that his passions seem to feed more on hatred than on love. Rather than real tenderness, his lovers display a kind of elemental fury that bears all the earmarks of infantile ambivalence.

On another level, Norman Holland explores the nature of the audience response to such expressions of raw emotion. Holland proposes that every valid literary work is constructed on an underlying emotional fantasy evoking a deep personal response in the audience. We may understand the quality of the audience response by way of the notion that every play, as it involves us in itself, blurs the line between the self and the work of art confronted by the self. We internalize the impulses acted out objectively by the play and subjectively make them our own. The form, action and meaning of the play then serve as ways for us to deal with the conflicts aroused in us by those impulses.¹

The metatheatrical² nature of the plays themselves determines the intensity of the response in that such plays create a deeper, inner sense of uncertainty in the audience. The feeling is an eerie, unnatural one. In the sense that we fuse with a work of art, to call its reality into question is to question our own. Because these effects make us

¹Norman Holland, Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 176.

²Metatheatre is a form of theatre that tends to create, in the audience, a state approximating schizophrenia, characterized by loss of affect, concretized metaphors, Klang associations (hallucinated sounds), depersonalization and an unclear relation of self to object. Plays within plays are characteristic of metatheatre. See Holland, p. 177.

uncertain as to whether we are confronting a reality or a fiction, we tend to alienate ourselves from the reality of the stage. Consequently, we find our own position in reality called into question.¹

Underlying emotional fantasies, such as those discussed by Holland, would include those emotional states deriving from the internalization of early childhood experiences, particularly close family relationships. The repudiation of a child by his mother, with all the pain attendant upon such a rejection, would exemplify this type of experience. The young child's identity and very existence depend on the enjoyment of a reciprocal relationship with the mother. As Winnicott has observed, it is impossible to speak of the infant alone, but only of the infant and the mothering figure. Couple this repudiation with the repudiation of the inner self by modern society and the repudiation of overly rigid theatrical conventions by our playwright (by way of Six Characters) and the total effect charges the play, on all levels, with intense emotion. This emotion evokes a deeper, more personal response on the part of the audience. On all three levels, the individual experiences the loss of a firm social context through which he can establish his slowly unfolding identity.²

In a sense, Pirandello's contribution in this context remains unfulfilled in that the audience to whom he addressed

¹Holland, p. 99.

²Roland and Rizzo, p. 29.

himself was pictured, quite accurately, in his works, as an amorphous gathering of anonymous beings (reflecting the anonymity of the bourgeoisie), incapable of understanding themselves and even less the desires and personalities of others.

Pirandello's ideas should have precipitated a tremendous upheaval in our family and social relationships. However, to individuals who exist within a given social framework, the rules of the social game seem as matter of fact and natural as the air they breathe. The world that Pirandello confronted was willing to live and act at the cost of allegiance to man-made idols and mass produced "truths."¹

Our playwright's success, in Six Characters, is to be found in his innate ability to mold past experience and inner conflict into metaphoric expression (by way of the inner drama of the six characters). Moreover, it is our feeling that the creation of such a metaphor was designed to further Pirandello's artistic vision rather than produce a necessary catharsis (as in Kligerman).²

HENRY IV

In Six Characters, Pirandello presents us with characters who are searching for an author. By contrast, in Henry IV, we encounter a man who has rejected life to become a character, a man in search of a character, substituting form for being.³

¹Aureliu Weiss, "The Remorseless Rush of Time," Tulane Drama Review 10 (Spring 1966), 31.

²Roland and Rizzo, p. 30.

³Richard Gilman, The Making of Modern Drama (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), p. 181.

From the beginning, Pirandello's Henry IV is a mirror of creative madness, imbued with the kind of excitement that induces the playwright to create a drama. Indeed, a successful production of Henry should be a fast-moving, eccentric, utterly absorbing experience for it is a play that has literally been created by the protagonist. The entire structure of the play is a conscious and deliberate piling up of roles and spanning of time. We are confronted with a series of masks that are put on and taken off in a matter of seconds. Identities are exchanged by way of a change in tone of voice, and the plot constitutes a stratified series of plays-within-plays.

Paolucci has theorized that Pirandello wrote Henry as a means of explaining the concept of madness to himself and his audience.¹ His motivation in this effort may lie in his own mixed feelings regarding his decision to have his wife placed in an institution. Whatever the source of his creative impetus, Pirandello attempts to explore the theme of madness in all its paradoxical implications. The whole play consists of compulsive attempts to piece together broken continuities of time, love relationships, historical fact and modern fiction. The greatness of the play lies in the juxtapositions of time, distance and roles; of the living dead (Belcredi, Matilda, et al.) with the mad who claim life for themselves (Henry); of the disintegration of experience with intimate personal drama.²

¹Paolucci, Pirandello's Theater, p. 92.

²Ibid., p. 101.

Richard Gilman's evaluative description of Henry touches upon a number of key aspects relative to our discussion:

Henry is not meant to be judged as a "real" person, but as a locus of possible attitudes toward existence, one of these being the histrionic, the mode of pretending to be someone else, which we employ because our finiteness and narrow identity become unbearable. He . . . is a creature designed to exhibit, in his exacerbated intellectual passion, an inconsolable state of consciousness about human change and the consequent thirst for a way out toward the infinitely seductive, but impossible permanence of art.¹

Here we find elements of the false self structure, the schizophrenic defensive/protective posture, the quality of repudiation and rejection and, ultimately, the tendency toward self-destruction as the only defense against implosion and engulfment.

Pirandello's drama explores the theme of madness with elements of psychosis being interspersed with those of psychic masochism, the assault on the self, and Henry's repeated self-abasement in his ongoing relationship with Matilda.

The play is set in the "throne room" of a villa reconstructed to look like an eleventh century German imperial castle. We learn, from the conversation of the servants, that the master of the house is insane; he thinks he is the

¹Ibid., p. 186. While Henry may believe that his salvation lies in the permanence of art, the idea of existing as a fixed form repels him. His motivation in assuming the Emperor's identity is his singular desire to become unknowable. As Emperor, he places himself above all others, thereby accomplishing exactly what he has set out to do.

German Emperor Henry IV, enemy of Pope Gregory VII. His entire staff has been hired to sustain the fiction, and all visitors are obliged to pretend that they are historical personalities of the eleventh century.

The action begins with the arrival of Carlo Di Nolli, the "emperor's" nephew, who has assumed full responsibility for his uncle's welfare. He is accompanied by his fiancée Frida, her mother the Marchesa Matilda Spina, the mother's lover, Belcredi, and Dr. Genoni. With the exception of Carlo, they are all visiting the castle for the first time.

The doctor has proposed a shock treatment for Di Nolli's uncle. Twenty years before, the Marchesa Matilda had dressed as Matilda of Canossa, friend of Pope Gregory VII, and the play's protagonist had dressed as Henry IV, so that he could "go to Canossa" as a penitent. During the actual masquerade, he fell from his horse and was knocked unconscious. The result was a mental derangement that left him frozen in the role he had assumed.

After a preliminary meeting, to allow the doctor to study Henry's reactions to a variety of "eleventh century" visitors, the scheme calls for two versions of his beloved Matilda of the Mardi Gras masquerade, dressed as Matilda of Tuscany (Canossa). One will be the actual Matilda, manifestly advanced in age, and the other will be Frida, her daughter, dressed in the very costume she had worn twenty years before. The expectation is that the contrast will force Henry's mind back into the present.

But then we learn that Henry is really no longer insane; his full recovery took place eight years before, but he has decided to continue in his role as Henry IV because he felt it would be too painful to try to cope with a world that had moved on without him for twelve years. Although he intends to tell his visitors the truth, when he is confronted with the contrasted Matildas, it seems as though the proposed shock treatment backfires. Pirandello, as usual, supplies us with contradictory implications. Perhaps Henry is not cured; or, perhaps his visitors are more insane than he ever was.

His old love for Matilda is passionately revived at the sight of the young Frida in Matilda's dress. In a heated confrontation, he reveals that he had not fallen off his horse accidentally twenty years before; Matilda's lover, Belcredi, even then his rival, made the horse rear. We sense that the clock has really been turned back. In one final moment of utter abandon, Henry stabs Belcredi. The blocked deed has been done. Belcredi cries: "He is not insane! He is not insane!" But the play ends with Henry's realization that his vengeful act has served to seal him in his "role," perhaps forever.

Any attempt to assess or evaluate Henry's personality and behavior necessitates a consideration of his past history, i.e., prior to the time of his fall from the horse and subsequent assumption of a new "identity." Both Matilda and Belcredi reveal that even before the accident Henry was already something of an eccentric, delighting in role-playing

theatricals in a way that seemed to compensate for his lack of inner warmth. Belcredi speaks of him as a man suffering from a strange exaltation and always watching his own exalted state; a sufferer who had fits of rage against himself and who, through his acting, lost touch with himself. His improvisations and play-acting are so exaggerated, we are told, that they become completely ridiculous.¹

This is a key point, since Henry's expressed aim in life is nothing less than to attain to tragic seriousness, as he makes quite explicit in the speech about the priest who returns to priestliness from the truancy of a frivolous dream. Furthermore, Henry's philosophy is completely in keeping with the dramatic depiction of splits in the self and the conflict between self-actualization and the need for masks.

Henry IV. Look here, doctor! I remember a priest, certainly Irish, a nice-looking priest, who was sleeping in the sun one November day, with his arm on the corner of the bench of a public garden. He was lost in the golden delight of the mild sunny air which must have seemed for him almost summery. One may be sure that in that moment he did not know any more that he was a priest, or even where he was. He was dreaming . . . A little boy passed with a flower in his hand. He touched the priest with it here on the neck. I saw him open his laughing eyes, while all his mouth smiled with the beauty of his dream. He was forgetful of everything . . . But all at once, he pulled himself together, and stretched out his priest's cassock, and there came back to his eyes the same seriousness which you have seen in mine;

¹Eric Bentley, "Il tragico imperatore," Tulane Drama Review 10 (Spring 1966), 73.

because the Irish priests defend the seriousness of their Catholic faith with the same zeal with which I defend¹ the sacred rights of hereditary monarchy!

In the play, Henry's wish to be serious, to be taken seriously, stems from a feeling that he is not serious, that people do not take him seriously. What he comes back to again and again is the danger of being ridiculous--of his tragedy being reduced to a comedy. This is noteworthy in light of Belcredi's description of his previous behavior. Apparently, Henry is the very incarnation of incongruity since, by virtue of his behavior, he is achieving the very thing he is trying so desperately to avoid.

In point of fact, a character like Henry, no matter how tragically he views his own predicament, automatically assumes a comic status when he destroys himself merely to avoid appearing ridiculous. The play tends toward the absurd and the grotesque in that no viable alternatives are open to Henry. Even if he succeeds in eliminating Belcredi as a rival, he will be faced with nothing but the certainty of another rejection by Matilda.

Themes of rejection and deprivation play an important part in Henry IV. We meet the character, initially, at an especially unfortunate time in his existence. The sister, who had been something of a mother to him, has just died. This great loss is duplicated on a lower level by the loss of the servant, Tony, who had played the role of the Bishop of

¹Luigi Pirandello, Henry IV in Naked Masks, ed. Bentley, trans. Edward Storer, p. 205.

Bremen. While suffering from the depriving effects of the loss of these key figures, he is arbitrarily confronted with the one woman he has loved and the man who stole her from him, thus envisaging another rejection.

We can equate the loss of Henry's sister to the effects of maternal deprivation, which would, we postulate, repeat an earlier maternal deprivation situation that was the initial determining factor in Henry's condition. Winnicott, as noted above, finds a direct link between the development of the false self and the infant-mother relationship. The true self does not become a living reality except as a result of the mother's repeated success in meeting the infant's spontaneous gesture or sensory hallucination.¹

In extreme cases, the truly split-off compliant false self can be mistaken for the whole person. This false self defense can form the basis for a kind of sublimation, as when a child grows up to be an actor. There are those who can be themselves and also act, whereas there are others who can only act, and who are completely at a loss when not in a role and when not being applauded (acknowledged as existing). This latter condition may be seen to apply to Henry.²

Henry became, at least in his own mind, what he presumed to be. His choice of entering a realm of fictive and unchanging existence brings to mind a condition described

¹Winnicott, The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment, pp. 144-145.

²Ibid., p. 150.

quite aptly by Erikson:

In extreme cases of delayed and prolonged adolescence [an assumption consistent with Henry's behavior and personality], an extreme form of a disturbance in the experience of time appears which consists of great urgency and yet also of a loss of consideration for time as a dimension of living. The individual may feel simultaneously very young and in fact¹ baby-like, and old beyond rejuvenation.

Such a failure of the ego's function in maintaining perspective and expectancy is a clear regression to a time in early infancy when time did not exist. In Henry the symptoms of this condition are manifest on a highly sophisticated, grand scale. Nevertheless, at their base they form the prototype for the state described by Erikson.

Henry also exhibits symptoms of a condition described by Erikson as "identity consciousness." This is a specific form of painful self-consciousness in which the individual dwells on the discrepancies between his self-esteem, his aggrandized self-image as an autonomous person, and his appearance in the eyes of others.²

The obligation to commit oneself to one's autonomous identity can arouse a painful over-all ashamedness. This feeling may manifest itself as the seemingly trivial incident that arouses overwhelming and almost unbearably painful emotion, a threat to the core of identity, the loss of trust in expectations of oneself, of other persons, of one's society,

¹Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, p. 169.

²Ibid., p. 183.

and a reluctantly recognized questioning of meaning in the world. These factors combine to make experiences of shame impossible to communicate and lead to the protection of the exposed self at all costs, with the covering of the isolating effects of shame through depersonalization.¹ It seems apparent that the above description is clearly applicable to Henry. In his case, the depersonalization takes the form of withdrawal into the character of Henry IV.

Integration of the structural aspects of the play, as a whole, with the themes of psychosis, masochism and deprivation, as they pertain to Henry, provides an added dimension to our analysis. The unusual nature of the play's temporal structure is emphasized by the characters' changing names and roles. The unnamed one who assumes the name and role of Henry IV is known by no other name, despite the fact that during the second half of the play he exists consciously within the present. There are four characters whose names are only of the present--Frida, Di Nolli, Dr. Genoni and Belcredi--though each plays a role in the past. Matilda's name is a link between the present and the past. The four counsellors each have a double set of names--Harold/Frank, Landolph/Lolo, Ordulph/Momo, and Berthold/Fino. These relationships serve to illustrate the paradox that "life-of-madness is madness-of-life." This characteristic appears rather close to the Laingian view of sanity-in-madness and madness-in-sanity.

¹Helen Merrell Lynd, On Shame and the Search for Identity, p. 64.

This is particularly evident if Laing's position is understood in metaphoric rather than literal terms. Tremendous irrationality exists in so-called normal life while the profound madness of the schizophrenic presents a highly rational and adaptive element to an impossible family environment. A more literal reading of Laing insists that the schizophrenic is considerably less disturbed and more rational than the "normal" man of our time. It is reasonable to conclude that, in *Henry*, Pirandello sees madness as a function of rationality, rather than something diametrically opposed to it.

On quite another level, an examination of the literal meanings of the names of key characters in Henry IV provides us with clues to their symbolic function in the play. As noted above, Henry is nameless, aside from the role he is playing, suggesting the absence of a fully realized identity. Spina (Matilda) is suggestive of thorn in Italian, entirely in keeping with her character in the drama. Belcredi suggests believe, while Di Nolli implies of nothing and Frida calls to mind a Teutonic frigidity, a coldness. Dr. Genoni's name is Dionysius, suggesting the god of drama. This is altogether in keeping with his function in the play in that he is the author of the highly theatrical ruse that, supposedly, will shock Henry into the twentieth century and "sanity." In addition, the presence of this character in the play serves to remind us that Henry IV, too, is a play about the theatre.

Pirandello's choice of the German Emperor Henry IV as his protagonist in this piece is also noteworthy in that history shows that the Emperor Henry came from Bonn--the city in which Pirandello completed his doctoral studies.

Pirandello's theoretical pronouncements on the art of writing reflect a concern for the importance of names of characters as a creative dimension. Comparing Six Characters and Henry IV, we note that in the former all names are expressionistically used to contrast familial relations with social, public functions (e.g., Father, Stepdaughter vs. Director, Leading Man) while in Henry IV, each character has at least one given name.

An important metaphor in Six Characters, that of role-playing as theatre, becomes transformed in Henry IV into the wearing of masks in life. Pirandello uses this metaphor to portray his perception of the splits in the self.¹

Masks, mirrors and portraits are the transparent symbols of the play. Early in the first act, the portraits are described as "reflections" in a mirror. But Matilda, on seeing her portrait, recalls Pirandello's suggestion of the infinite reflections of a double mirror. "That's not me, it's you," she says, referring to Frida. The opinions expressed by the others mirror the confusion of the false identity and the mirror image echoes the masked images of the carnival. Endlessly, we are confronted with masks beneath masks and images superimposed on images. As in Laing, Pirandello suggests that true communication is possible only when the isolated self has come to recognize itself in the images reflected back to it by others.

¹In Six Characters, the underlying meaning was focused on the impossibility of the inner self to find realization within a social context. Henry IV, by contrast, hinges upon the tragic assumption of masks in social roles, masks which ultimately destroy any chance for inner realization.

We may judge the compulsion to don masks to be a clear sign of madness, just as the unconscious choice of masquerading through life is a clear sign of Laing's madness-in-life. Thus, the play's true conflict begins, not with the accident, but twelve years later when Henry realizes he is not the emperor and his profound needs force him to remain frozen behind a mask of which he is fully conscious. His only context for reality and identity, at this point, is to abide as Henry IV.

Henry admits that he has played his part consciously, knowing that civilization fears the madman who shakes the foundations of convention and logic. But it is a logic that "flies like a feather," whose truths are mere illusion. As a child, he says, he knew other truths from other appearances. He lived in the world of his imagination and to him the image of the moon in the pond was real. His society has forced conventional truths on him and torn him from his dreams. He is determined to expose these imposed truths.¹

Henry has no reason to return to the real world--to friends who have deceived him and a woman who has rejected him. Because of the lack of true social bonds in the real world, he chooses to remain in his "constructed" world. Those who come to "cure" him are the real madmen, for they have submitted to being part of his pretense. Laing would say that it is the "sane" people who are really mad. In this sense, the situation in Henry IV parallels that of Right You Are. In Henry IV, the schizoid solution is a starting point; then the "sane" people attempt to break it to pieces. The same is true of Right You Are.²

¹Allan Lewis, The Contemporary Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), p. 139.

²Eric Bentley, "Father's Day," The Drama Review 13 (Fall 1968), 60.

The opening of Act II, where the visitors to the Emperor's "villa" discuss the possibility that Henry may have recognized Matilda, recalls the notion of the inadequacy of "facts," as expressed in Right You Are. Like Laudisi, Henry destroys the complacency of the others by asking them whether or not he is mad. Henry concludes that madness results from our imagining that we can look into the eyes of another and really find our way into his inner sense of reality.

The reversals of personality in Henry IV, the gradual dissolution of character and fragmentation of self as the play moves from certainty to uncertainty and back to certainty, reflects a more complex structure than the other works we have dealt with. The townspeople in Right You Are remain unchanged and unshaken at the end of the play; the actors and Director in Six Characters are only briefly drawn into the drama of their mysterious visitors; but the intruders and retainers in Henry IV, as well as Henry himself, are forced to see themselves at close range, as false masks, false selves, actors who are merely playing assigned parts.

Pirandello's exploration of the human psyche in Henry IV leads him to the threshold of the existential dilemma of modern man: his need for masks even at the price of his own self-fulfillment. In order to explore this notion more fully, we must examine the motivating forces that underlie Henry's need to remain circumscribed behind a mask, no matter how destructive and unfulfilling the rôle. Roland and Rizzo note that this paradoxical situation touches upon three

psychological phenomena that are frequently related: wounded or damaged narcissism, masochism and depression. These, together with the universal human need for an identity, constitute the motivational forces underlying Henry's personality.¹

It seems clear that Henry's relationship with Matilda is characterized by rejection, repudiation and deprivation. In this sense, the play reflects the same thematic elements found in Six Characters. That Henry was attracted to a woman seemingly incapable of loving him indicates the extent to which masochism forms an integral part of his personality. This type of masochism is motivated, psychoanalytically, by the child's urgent need to sustain a love relationship with a rejecting, neglectful or sadistic mother that, at best, is extremely tenuous. The individual is unconsciously drawn to similar masochistic love relationships because he inwardly experiences such relationships as being the only ones he is capable of having.²

Henry's actions as a character are motivated by deeply wounded narcissism or highly fragile self-esteem, another by-product of early maternal neglect and rejection. This situation results in the development of a self-image characterized by extreme feelings of worthlessness. Against this severely negative self-image, the individual contrives a system of defenses intended to make his life at least minimally endurable.

¹Roland and Rizzo, p. 48.

²Ibid., pp. 49-50.

Individuals with severely limited ego development tend to create idealized images of themselves which are gradually implemented by the roles around which their adult identities crystallize. This would account for Henry's need to cling to the grandiosity of his imperial role even after his "return to sanity."¹

Bernard Hart, in a relatively early work exploring the psychoanalytic contexts of insanity, provides a particularly apt description of the way in which this defense mechanism operates within the individual's psyche:

In the second type the patient has immersed himself in his imaginary world even more completely and efficiently. The fantasy created by his own mind acquires the tang of actual reality; he believes that he is the conquering hero or the multi-millionaire, and that the pleasant pictures he once imagined have become the facts of life. He has crossed the barrier which, in the normal man, separates day-dreams from the dreams that accompany sleep, and the creations of an idle fancy have become the delusions of insanity. A further degree of dissociation has been attained, and the complexes achieve a luxuriant expression undisturbed by the flagrant contradictions which² experience everywhere presents to them.

Henry's actions are motivated by a last, desperate attempt to preserve the vestiges of a narcissistic compensation for feelings of utter worthlessness. His murder of Belcredi must be understood as an action taken to recompense

¹Ibid., p. 52.

²Bernard Hart, The Psychology of Insanity, 4th ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 160.

his profoundly wounded narcissism. In his retreat into the world of the Emperor, he displays one of the most self-destructive forms of defense, frequently adopted when considerable rejection and deprivation have occurred, "If I can't have everything, I'll take nothing."¹

Perhaps the actor preparing the role of Henry might find the following hypothetical psychological profile helpful. Perhaps Henry was aware, at the time of the accident, that it was Belcredi who had made his horse rear. His impulse may have been to kill him on the spot. However, due to the strongly internalized moral evaluation of murder as a reprehensible deed, Henry was forced to repress his impulses. Unable to cope with the reality of having not defended his honor, he assumes the character of Henry IV, Emperor of Germany, and is thus able to live free of the unbearable tension and anxiety that would have emerged as the consequences of his lack of action. Over a period of time, his psyche adjusts and his awareness returns.

At this juncture, however, Henry is keenly aware that he is an individual at odds with his society. He aspires to the creation of his own world; he senses the need for his own domain since he cannot be contained within ordinary boundaries.² The intruders reflect the inability of the average man to accept otherness in his fellow man. Henry's awareness of this notion and his understanding of his own otherness lead him to

¹Roland and Rizzo, p. 53.

²Thomas Bishop, Pirandello and the French Theater (New York: New York University Press, 1960), pp. 23-30.

conclude that there is no place for him in the corrupt, egotistical and foolish world that confronts him. He confesses that, at the very time of his "awakening," he was afraid to venture into the real world for fear of the ridicule that would greet him. This recalls Laing's proposition that the schizophrenic is willing to destroy himself in order to avoid being destroyed by the outside world.

This thought leads to a paradoxical view of Henry's murder of Belcredi at the end of the play. On the one hand, Henry has boldly swept all pretense aside with his impulsive show of retributive justice; the blocked deed has been done. On the other, the murder results in Henry's exclusion from the outside world; he is sealed in the identity of Henry IV, which underscores the intuition of his tremendous aloneness.¹

In Henry IV, we may view the need to don masks and to structure one's entire existence around an assumed role as a response to acute ego destruction brought on by repeated narcissistic wounds. On a more universal level, the play is a mordant view of man. Reality, Pirandello tells us, is too painful to endure. Behind the mask of Henry IV lies a human being suffering a terrified, anguished loneliness. All interpersonal relationships are seen as mired in deceit and misunderstanding. Henry's story is the story of a life not lived in a world of people incapable of living.

¹Olga Ragusa, Luigi Pirandello (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 30-34.

For Pirandello, we are all masked, in our daily lives, in much the same fashion as Henry. Herein lies a striking parallel between this play and Six Characters: if we are all masks, if we are all Henry IV, then the dividing line between the actor on the stage and the spectator in the audience becomes so blurred as to be non-existent.

CHAPTER VI

STUDIES IN LONELINESS:

TO CLOTHE THE NAKED

AND

WHEN SOMEONE IS SOMEBODY

In this chapter we will deal with two works by Pirandello that, outwardly at least, appear to be very different. Yet in the underlying thematic values of these works, we do find a measure of parallelism. Thematically, the point at which the two plays, To Clothe the Naked and When Someone Is Somebody, converge is the utter loneliness of their protagonists. The similarity, however, is qualified by the contradictory circumstances in which we find these two characters. The one has been relentlessly pushed aside, deserted and rejected, while the other is surrounded by a "loving" family and the object of international acclaim. Yet the similarities in the loneliness suffered by these two very opposite souls are striking.

TO CLOTHE THE NAKED

Turning our attention first to Pirandello's To Clothe the Naked (Vestire gli ignudi) we find, distilled in the

character of Ersilia Drei, the very essence of an individual's desperate search for identity, even while she is being actively destroyed by external stimuli in the form of individuals who are the products of the society in which she operates.

The themes of repudiation and rejection, as suffered by Ersilia, echo those of Henry IV. We find Ersilia rejected by both her lovers, Grotti and Laspiga. On another level she suffers repudiation by her supposed benefactor, Ludovico Nota. In many of Pirandello's plays there is, inevitably, a character who speaks directly for the author, explaining and commenting on the action, even though he may be directly involved in it. This character must operate on two levels: on the one hand he is an integral part of the drama, on the other he helps to elaborate the inner meaning of the work.¹ Both Laudisi, in Right You Are, and the Father, in Six Characters, may be seen to serve this function.

In To Clothe the Naked, it is Ludovico Nota, who begins the play by bringing Ersilia home to live with him, but, as soon as life becomes too complicated and intrudes noisily into the peace and quiet of his rooms, he also attempts to remove himself, proclaiming himself a disinterested bystander, and spending the remainder of the play off to one side, commenting on the action.

¹The notion of a character operating on two completely different levels within the fabric of a given drama serves to reinforce Rothenberg's concept of simultaneous contradiction as an integral part of the creative process.

Ersilia, who was employed as a governess, had been dismissed without notice by her employers, Consul Grotti of Smyrna and his wife, because of an accident that brought about the death of their daughter, the child in her charge. She arrived in Rome, penniless, only to discover that the man who had promised to marry her in Smyrna is now to be married to another woman. In a moment of self-humiliation, she gives herself to the first stranger she meets on the street. Then she goes into a park and takes poison. She is rescued. This action precedes the opening of the play.

The interest of the press in Ersilia's circumstances results in a highly publicized newspaper account of her attempted suicide. The story leads to a wave of curiosity and sentimentality among the public. Nota, a well-known writer, is moved by the story and takes Ersilia into his house, ostensibly to use her as the heroine of a novel or play. But it soon becomes apparent that she cannot escape her past. Franco Laspiga, the erstwhile fiance, and Grotti, the consul, force their way into Nota's home and ultimately destroy his preconceived notions about Ersilia.

Laspiga is obsessed with the idea that he must put everything right and make it all up to Ersilia. Grotti, on the other hand, accuses her of being a murderer. We learn that he had been Ersilia's lover and that the child had fallen from the terrace while they were in each other's arms.

Nota is, at first, angered by all these interruptions and contradictions. Ultimately, he comes to view Ersilia's

story as the comedy of a lie exposed. Ersilia, on the other hand, is destroyed by the attempts of Nota, Grotti and Laspiga to turn her into an object of their imagination. She is able to see through the lies of the others who, in their vain attempt to justify themselves, thrust roles on her in which she does not recognize herself. For her part, she had been lying in order to acquire "a beautiful dress to die in," as she describes it.

Ersilia longs for truth--some truth, any truth; but truth seems to be continually changing in her encounter with the others. She takes poison for the second time in order to die without lies, for she feels that it is only in death that she can show herself as she really is. In this regard, Ersilia, too, may be seen as a character in search of an author. When we first meet her she is a cipher, a piece of raw material for Nota to formalize and realize dramatically by creating a story for her. He fails in this, in much the same way that the Director fails in meeting the needs of the six characters.

Ersilia is actively, desperately engaged in the process of costruirsi. She is attempting to construct, or have constructed for her, a more acceptable personality, a more acceptable self-concept (i.e., more acceptable to herself, as well as others). In this sense, Ersilia is most sensitive to Nota's imagination or, more precisely, Nota's concept of her "self." We should be aware that this is, to begin with, an external process, that Ersilia is chiefly concerned with her

appearance in the eyes of others. If this is positive, it will in turn, provide her with a stronger self-concept. In Act I, Nota tells her that the newspaper story of her attempted suicide started his mind working on a fictional concept of her. It is so vital to her to be precisely what he had imagined her to be, that she attempts to match her actuality against his construct. When she elicits from him that she is entirely different from the figure he had imagined, she becomes distraught and wishes to leave. Thus, it is his imagination that causes her the deepest pain, that is, her anxiety about what she is in the eyes of others. Laing finds this to be a typical schizophrenic response. In addition, Ersilia's knowledge that Nota's imagination has the very power to clothe makes her aware that he must sense the worst of secrets concerning her self: that she is shopping for clothes.¹

In Ersilia's reply to Ludovico's question as to whether she feels she is being cheated out of a life story, we see her need to find an acceptable self if she is to stay alive.

Ersilia. Yes. Out of all the events, out of my very life itself. I no longer wanted to live; I suffered it all until I couldn't stand any more. And now I think I have a right at least to live in the story you'll make out of it--which will be beautiful, so beautiful,

¹William Herman, "Pirandello and Possibility," Tulane Drama Review 10 (Spring 1966), 107.

like that other novel I read of yours . . .
 wait . . . what was it called? . . . Ah,¹ The
Outcast. Yes, The Outcast. That's it!

Here, Pirandello depicts the woman's desperate attempt to make herself seem better than she is in order to be able to continue her existence in the world.

This attempt, i.e., to make oneself seem better than one really is, is fraught with built-in self-destructive elements. Winnicott tells us that the very existence of a False Self results in the individual's feeling unreal or being virtually destroyed by a sense of overwhelming futility.²

The underlying purpose of the False Self is to search for conditions which will allow the True Self to come into its own and be openly expressed. If such conditions cannot be found, then the individual must organize a new defense against the exploitation of the True Self. If there is doubt as to the integrity of this new defense against the onslaught, then the clinical result is suicide. It is in this position that we find Ersilia as the play opens.

We may also view Ersilia's behavior as exemplary of identification responses which are decidedly infantile. Edoardo Weiss, in his psychoanalytic inquiry into the structure of the human mind, finds that the infant instinctively tries to make

¹Luigi Pirandello, To Clothe the Naked, trans. William Murray (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1962), p. 18.

²Winnicott, The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment, p. 143.

himself identical with the perceived persons that make up his world. Ersilia, in her reaction to Nota's expressed concept of her, is really behaving in a similar manner.¹

Ersilia's approach to achieving an identity for herself is obviously an inadequate one. She has played a part in a number of psychologically damaging situations that have been hazardous to the maintenance of a positive self-concept. Her exposure to the world has greatly increased her impulsive desire for protection. The search for a coherent personality presents special difficulties at a time when the unexpected is continually happening; when the dangers of certain kinds of deviation from the norm are great, and when it is not easy to know where, or in what or whom, one can put one's trust. A natural response to a situation such as this is the seeking of some sort of external protection. Reliance on this type of external protection may develop into a generalized depersonalization response which can take on any one of a number of related forms: adoption of a pose, or of a socially approved role, or adherence to a prescribed right side of a cause. Each of these forms of externalization offers protection from exposure, but, for most people at least, at the cost of diminished personal identity.²

¹Edoardo Weiss, The Structure and Dynamics of the Human Mind (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1960), p. 25.

²Evidence seems to show that it is almost impossible for an individual to develop a sure sense of himself unless he can find aspects of his social situation with which he can clearly identify. In order to maintain the feeling of its own individual existence, the ego is very dependent on contacts with other egos.

Openness to relatedness with others and the search for

By contrast, a positive ego feeling or sense of self would preclude the individual's desperate search for a form of external protection. Instead, the individual might exhibit tendencies toward the preservation of others, a giving of oneself and the ability to make some sort of positive contribution to society. This feeling is totally absent in Ersilia. While our discussion here has been psychoanalytically oriented, an effort has been made to underscore the overwhelming sense of being lost and alone that dominates Ersilia's psyche.

Pirandello presents us with a flood of empty passions in the painfully sordid life of Ersilia, the banal social standards of Laspiga and the shoddy urges of the whining Grotti, symbol of the hemmed-in and the middle-aged. Even Nota attempts to make a pass at Ersilia, which contradicts the fact that he is, supposedly, outside the action.

Indeed, desire may be seen as the source of all rejection in the play. This notion is, in itself, a contradiction in terms and, as such, reflects both Laing's concept of the dynamics of schizophrenic thought and Rothenberg's vision of simultaneous contradiction as an integral part of the creative process. Grotti has betrayed both Ersilia and his wife; Laspiga has betrayed both his fiancée and Ersilia; and Ersilia has been betrayed by both.¹

self-identity are not two problems but one dialectical process; as one finds more relatedness to others, one discovers more of oneself; as the sense of one's own identity becomes clearer, one can go out to others more completely. Seen in this light, Ersilia's behavior is decidedly self-defeating.

¹Herman, p. 103.

This desire, this passion, if you will, however great in magnitude, does not grow out of a deep personal commitment or a strong sense of interpersonal communication or desire for closeness. Instead it is the result of a lack of personal relatedness, symbolized by the perfunctory relations enjoyed by Laspiga/Ersilia, Grotti/Ersilia, and Nota/Ersilia--all of whose involvements were in no way restrained by the short acquaintances each pair had enjoyed.¹

The play unfolds very slowly, almost as if Pirandello were engaged in the meticulous dissection of a living organism, cell by cell, in order to discover the secret of its existence. What is revealed, instead, is Ersilia's pathetic secret, which, the playwright tells us, is also everyone's secret--we all want to appear better than we are.

A picture of Ersilia is drawn for us, as a woman whose life has consisted of an attempt to create an image of herself with which she could live. The picture, it seems, was continually destroyed by others. Ultimately, she tried to create a picture of herself with which she could die, but this, too, was not to be. Ersilia is excluded until there is nothing left for her to do but repeat the act of suicide. Again and again, we find Pirandello returning to the central notion of repudiation and rejection as a crucial factor affecting the lives of his characters and their relationships in the plays.

In this sense, there are decided similarities between To Clothe the Naked and Right You Are. In both plays we find society bent on invading the inner privacy of self-isolation.

¹Ibid.

In addition, the audience tends to find itself in the same position with both plays, constantly asking, "Who is telling the truth.?"

A closer examination of Ersilia's personality leads us to postulate a distinct lack of maternal affection for her as an infant, accounting for her singular lack of identity as an adult. Moreover, her unfulfilled and unfulfilling relationships with Grotti and Laspiga lead us to the assumption that this type of negative relationship was the only one she felt herself capable of having. Early maternal rejection seems to be an important consideration in assessing Ersilia's personality. Rejection, deprivation and repudiation lead to the development of a highly fragile sense of self-esteem which, in turn, may result in decidedly masochistic behavior.

The overriding result of early maternal rejection and neglect is the development of a self-image characterized by intense feelings of worthlessness. A child acquires his sense of self-esteem initially from those attitudes of his being valued which are communicated to him by the mother or other maternal figures, and subsequently from those of the father. When such attitudes are largely absent, the child's sense of self-worth becomes extremely poor, and his narcissism thus profoundly wounded. Against this wounded narcissism or painfully low self-esteem, the individual contrives a system of defenses intended to make his life at least minimally endurable.¹

¹Roland and Rizzo, p. 51.

The circumstances of Ersilia's life lend themselves to a consideration of the problem of identity by way of Lynd's model of shame and its relationship to identity formation. Experiences of shame may be described as experiences of exposure of particularly vulnerable aspects of the self. Shame is an experience that affects and is affected by the whole self. This whole self involvement is one of its distinguishing characteristics and one that implies a distinct connection to identity.

Loss of trust, exposure, failure, a feeling of hopelessness--these terms, characteristic of Lynd's model of shame, are significantly descriptive of Ersilia. Moreover, feelings such as these tend to become more and more unbearable with the passage of time. The loss of trust in expectations of oneself, of others, of one's society and a questioning of meaning in the world all combine to make experiences of shame almost impossible to communicate. At this point the individual's personal situation tends to deteriorate rapidly into an almost paralytic state.¹

Difficulty in communicating experiences of shame can lead to the protection of the exposed self at all costs. The individual, in effect, refuses to recognize the wound, and covers the isolating effect of shame through depersonalization.

¹According to Lynd, in an experience of shame, trust is seriously jeopardized or destroyed. Emphasis may fall on the questioning of one's own adequacy or on the questioning of values in the real world which contradict what one has been led to expect. See Lynd, p. 43.

It is Erikson's belief that one's final identity as fixed at the end of adolescence, is not the result of any single identification with individuals in the past. Instead, it includes all significant identifications, altering them to make a unique and reasonable coherent whole. Thus, from a genetic point of view, the process of identity formation emerges as an evolving configuration, gradually established by successive ego syntheses and resyntheses throughout childhood. Erikson suggests that psychotic crises in identity formation are characterized by an ever-deepening psychosocial isolation. Ersilia's behavior fits neatly into this descriptive mold.¹

We may parallel the state of acute identity confusion that exists in Henry IV and Ersilia in that both of them, in their youth, find themselves exposed to a combination of experiences demanding simultaneous commitment to physical intimacy, decisive occupational choice, energetic competition and psychosocial self-definition. For Henry, this state exists just prior to his fall from the horse. With Ersilia, the situation is evident at the time she assumed her duties as governess to Grotti's daughter.

An interesting area of common ground exists for Henry and Ersilia in that both manifest a schizoid mistrust of themselves, a disbelief in the possibility that they could ever complete anything of value. Although both feel

¹ Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis, p. 163. The actress approaching the role of Ersilia might find the foregoing discussion helpful in defining the character's personality.

that the immediate social environment does not have a niche for them, the manner in which they manifest this feeling differs decisively.

Ersilia expresses these feelings quite directly while Henry's mode of expression is equally covert. Indeed, his psychological makeup is such that the defense mechanisms are far more sophisticated. In Henry's case, we can only infer this self-mistrust after a careful examination of his behavior.

While Henry attempts to create an idealized image of himself on a grandiose scale in order to compensate for his minimal sense of self-worth and limited ego development, Ersilia's desire is to create an idealized image of herself in death, since she admits the fact that her life has come to naught. Her behavior reflects a more common species of sentimentality, but one that holds the promise of beautifying a life made up of commonplace events, vain aspirations and shame.

Both Henry and Ersilia are motivated by desperate attempts to preserve the vestiges of narcissistic compensation for feelings of utter worthlessness. Both have experienced a lack of relationships affording meaningful existence and identity, a dearth of love relationships with family and later lovers, a feeling of inner emptiness and worthlessness, and a resulting desire for a semblance of existence and a semblance of self and self-worth.

Both choose the masquerade as a means of achievement. Ersilia's desire is to masquerade in death while Henry's masquerade results in a death-in-life.

While Henry's madness serves to distance him from the audience, Ersilia's essential reality provides for close audience identification. In addition, there is a decidedly comic element in Henry in that his behavior, as he says himself, is motivated by an intense desire to avoid appearing ridiculous. The irony in this is obvious. To Clothe the Naked lacks any such comic element with respect to the main character, and, therefore, has the potential of evoking a more deeply personal response from the audience.

Examining Pirandello's use of metaphor, we can follow a line of transformation as follows: in Six Characters, Pirandello provides us with the key metaphor of role-playing as theatre; in Henry IV, this becomes transformed into the masquerade or the wearing of masks in life; in To Clothe the Naked, the metaphor becomes transformed into the wearing of masks in death.

In To Clothe the Naked, then, we see yet another aspect of what may be described as the core of Pirandello's interest and concern: the nature of human consciousness of itself, or reality as reflected in our minds. Ersilia is conscious of herself only as a negative entity. This leads her to attempt a reorganization of consciousness with the goal of providing herself with a lasting

positive self-image. Death, in this case, would insure the permanence of this positive self-image, however artificial its true origins.

Alienation is the singular aspect of the human condition that is stressed in the play. The various characters are clearly alienated from each other and, more importantly, from the central character. Ersilia, consistent with Laing's model of the schizophrenic personality, is alienated from herself. Indeed, in this sense, there exists a strong parallel with Signora Ponza in Right You Are who proclaims, "And for myself, I am nobody! Nobody at all."

The quality of alienation that pervades the play also finds expression in the existence of an element of cold calculation that colors the dramatic events.

We see this calculating element in Ersilia, who did not try to die for love; she simply could no longer bear the burden of her life and death was the expedient way out. Death provides her with a positive solution, and she simply takes advantage of that fact. We see the same calculation in Franco Laspiga, who does not wish to marry Ersilia because she is a heroine who has suffered greatly; he has been jilted by his fiancée. We see it in Ludovico Nota, whose interest in Ersilia has not been prompted by a feeling of compassion; he has dreamt of a gay romance with her.

Pirandello stresses the change that even a brief period of time has wrought in Ersilia. The sharp contrast between present and past is determined by contradictory emotional states unrelated to each other and representing two distinct moments in the life of the character.

With reference to Laspiga, how can she say that she hardly recognizes a man whom she has loved? Ersilia sees Franco in a light that is markedly different from the one in which he was enveloped at Smyrna. That light was created out of sentiment. Now she sees him with objectivity.

In the confrontation between Grotti and Ersilia, each accuses the other of responsibility for their illicit relationship. In what Ersilia calls her revolt at being contaminated, Grotti sees a scheming means of exciting him. Their relationship, one that might have appeared sentimental at one time, now generates disgust. Grotti, like the Father in Six Characters, rebels at Ersilia's attempt to summarize his entire life in that one foolish episode of his existence. As many of Pirandello's characters do, Grotti tries to excuse his profligacy on the ground that he was unhappy with his wife. Both Ersilia and Grotti are emphatic in their accusations. Pirandello, by contrast, accuses neither of anything, but attributes their actions to the blind force of instinct.

Pirandello, through the play, succeeds in transforming our concept of reality in human relations. He presents us with the notion that personality is not a fixed, static entity but is, rather, an infinitely fluid, blurred and relative concept.¹

¹Martin Esslin, Reflections: Essays on Modern Theatre (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1969), p. 49.

This notion of personality as a relative entity recalls Laing's description of the process whereby individuals "recognize" each other and, thereby, reinforce each others' self-concept.¹ It has already been noted that, within the context of mutual sanity, there is quite a wide margin for conflict, error or misconception insofar as one person's evaluation of another's identity or personality is concerned. Each person has his own autonomous sense of identity and a corresponding definition of who and what he is. However, the way in which his personality is perceived by others is another matter entirely. Person A may not be perceived by person B as having the identity that person A sees himself as having. Any one individual will be perceived differently by different people and those perceptions will all differ from that individual's perception of himself. This is the very point that is made by Laudisi in Right You Are.

In To Clothe the Naked, Ersilia is perceived very differently by Nota, Laspiga, Grotti and even Signora Onoria. Furthermore, during the course of the play the perceptions of these individuals are subject to alteration and reversal. In addition, Ersilia's perception of herself differs radically from all of these, and it is that very difference which leads to her desperate attempt to formulate, at any price, an "illusion of personality" that she, herself, would find acceptable.

¹See Laing, The Divided Self, p. 35 and p. 43, this study.

Her choice of death to reinforce and enhance the illusory existence she created for herself merely emphasizes the fact that illusion must be acknowledged as an aspect of reality, a means of expressing reality's insufficiency.¹

The plot of To Clothe the Naked is short and uneventful. Interest is centered in the human pathos of Ersilia and the incisive analysis that allows Pirandello to disclose the various aspects of unthwarted intentions, the hidden motives and the actual deeds of the characters. This is most evident in the development of the relationship between Ersilia and Consul Grotti. Pirandello shows us that Grotti's intense desire to bring happiness into the lives of others was no less real and true than the intense passion he subsequently felt for Ersilia. In this sense, the character of Grotti becomes a study in contradiction, thus reinforcing what we have described as the schizoid characteristic of the play. Pirandello skillfully depicts his conflicting emotions and motivations in the following speeches:

Grotti. Because the more I suffered from the dreariness of my own life, the more I felt a need to be kind to others, to shift the whole weight of life onto my own shoulders so they at least could breathe a little more freely. Because of this need to bring happiness to

¹Richard Gilman, The Making of Modern Drama, p. 188.

others. That way, at least, I could share in it--I, who could never be happy myself. And when Laspiga stopped off there on his cruise, how did I depict you in his eyes? What didn't I tell him about you in order to be good to you, to make him fall in love with you? I even tried to be more affectionate than ever with my wife, so she'd be pleased and disposed to look favorably on your romance, the happy outcome of which I'd planned for your own good, planned only for the pleasure I would have derived from knowing I had¹ been responsible for your happiness.

Initially, then, Grotti portrays himself as doing everything to foster the romance between Ersilia and Franco. He goes on to describe what brought about the marked change in his feelings and the ultimately contradictory nature of their relationship.

Grotti. You . . . I don't know . . . the way you looked at me one evening as we left the table . . . Because you didn't believe! I felt you didn't believe I could be so kind to you only because I wanted to make you happy! Yes, that's it! And because you didn't² believe it, you ruined everything.

He goes on to express his need for Ersilia to have faith in him and points to her lack of faith as the source of his desire:

Grotti. But if you had believed in my disinterest, if you had really trusted in my kindness, that animal lust would never have been aroused in me, suddenly³ like that, in all its desperate hunger.

¹Luigi Pirandello, To Clothe the Naked, p. 55.

²Ibid., pp. 55-56.

³Ibid., p. 56.

Pirandello indicates a deep understanding of human frailty in drawing this picture of the subtle distinction between such divergent emotions as the intense desire to show kindness to others and the intense desire to satisfy one's own physical urges.

In Ersilia, too, we note the same sense of the character operating on two different levels that has already been discussed with regard to Nota and Grotti. At the outset we are met with a lost waif, the incarnation of vulnerability, who has somehow found her way into Nota's life and home. In Act II, however, there appears to be a marked alteration in her character. Ersilia deals with the intrusions of Laspiga and Grotti with great inner strength and a determination to meet every confrontation head-on. In addition, while we still perceive elements of the waif, we learn that Ersilia is also a woman of the world, having carried on an affair with her employer in the household shared by him and his wife.

Finally, the one overriding quality that seems to cling to Ersilia is her utter loneliness. She enters the play alone and through all her dealings with the other characters, however intimate her involvements have been, she remains alone. At the final curtain, she reaffirms this sense of loneliness by asking all the characters to leave, so that she may "die in silence--naked."

On another level, we see a similar mode of contradictory behavior reflected in the character of Signora Onoria, Nota's landlady. Pirandello also intends her to symbolize the transitory nature of reality. He even has Nota comment on her all-too-abrupt changes in attitude toward Ersilia as the play progresses.

Ludovico. Take her, for instance. First, she was all scorn and fury. Then all honey. And now nothing but bitterness and hatred--
Onoria. And why shouldn't I be?
Ludovico. Oh, no reason at all! You're quite right! But it's¹ a marvelous touch, you can't deny that!

Pessimism forms a gloomy background to the play. Since the characters are all conscious of their moral frailties, they are compelled to attempt to clothe themselves with dignity while inwardly they are aware of their miserable existences. This, however, is not a case of hypocrisy. For Ersilia was lying to adorn herself in death in the same way that corpses are washed and dressed before burial. She did not lie to and for others, she lied to and for herself. While Ersilia was conscious of her lie, she felt that restitution for this small sin would be accomplished by her death.²

Another motif that runs through the play is the power of a lie. Life would be virtually unbearable without the

¹Luigi Pirandello, To Clothe the Naked, pp. 66-67.

²Pirandello viewed clothing as symbolic of the masks we are all forced to wear. This image was so deeply internalized in his psyche that, in his burial instructions, we have noted his request that his body be wrapped naked in a sheet prior to cremation, thus insuring the absence of all masks.

ornaments and trappings of imagination, without the social lie. We try, desperately, to maintain the natural color of our hair and the freshness of our complexion, fighting against the destructive power of time and death. These deceptions, these lies, if you will, have become virtual necessities for our survival in society. One could almost speak of the whole of civilization as being a compassionate lie.

In his play, Pirandello has portrayed the realities of human existence and human suffering. The only thing his characters can do is attempt to cover the shame into which they have fallen as a result of their having allowed themselves to be ruled by instinct. When the shame of these characters is uncovered, despair and death follow. Had Ersilia died with the romantic image of a suicide for love, the event might have been sentimentally beautiful. But society, in the form of Ludovico Nota and the others, insists on discovering the truth, and the result is tragic.

In Pirandellian terms, the precise boundaries between goodness and hypocrisy, between heroism and necessity are characteristically indeterminate. They seem to merge into each other when one considers that Franco Laspiga, Signora Onoria and even Ludovico Nota move so readily from exaltation to condemnation of Ersilia. Pirandello, for himself, as in all his works, seems to be pleading for human compassion.

WHEN SOMEONE IS SOMEBODY

When Someone Is Somebody (Quando si e qualcuno), coming as it does near the end of Pirandello's career (1933), stands, in a sense, as the culmination of his exploration of the themes dealt with in the earlier plays. The play is at once a more personal and more universal treatment of the problem of identity crisis and fragmentation of the self.¹ Here, Pirandello offers us an intimate portrait of the misery of literary fame, obviously derived from his own experience. His mode of dealing with the questions of identity and self-image in this play is, in its own way, more sophisticated than any of the earlier works, their artistic merits notwithstanding.

Pirandello deftly reverses the question of identity crisis and gives us, in Quando si e qualcuno, not an Ersilia Drei who is desperately searching for a self that will be acceptable both to her and others; not a Henry IV, a nameless one who feels that his true identity must be superseded by the character of an historic personage in order to survive in the world; but, instead, a tragically suffering anonymous soul--suffering not because of rejection, but as a result of his universal acceptance. It is, indeed, a portrait of the misery of greatness--in this case, literary greatness--wherein the author's family, admirers and generalized cultural following have immobilized him in a given image that has been superimposed on him like a death mask.

¹The fact that all the plays deal with the problem of identity crisis and fragmentation of the self places a tremendous responsibility on the actor in a Pirandello production. It is almost as if he must work against the very precepts of his craft. Instead of searching out ways of internalizing another identity, the actor must deal with the fact that the character he is portraying has no clear-cut identity, that the very idea that there is some question as to who he really is becomes the key to his existence on stage.

As the play opens, we find the celebrated writer, ***, resting at the house of his American nephew, Pietro, who has come from the United States to publish the poems of a new young poet, Delago. With them is Natascia, Pietro's wife, and her sister Veroccia, with whom *** is infatuated. In their youthful company, *** feels himself to be rejuvenated.

The outside world, however, soon forces itself back into his life in the form of his wife Giovanna, his two children, his publisher and Giaffredi, an influential friend, who come to encourage him to return home. *** realizes that he must go with them; it is not possible for him to begin again. He leaves his young friends and his nephew Pietro and returns to the death-like legend he has helped to create around him. We learn that the new poet, Delago, had been his own creation, a new style of poetry, which might have led to a new literary career. His family, on learning the truth, will not permit the publication of the poems, arguing that their appearance could undermine the established fame of ***.

Surrounded by his family and admirers, *** agrees to a public announcement admitting the authorship of the poems as a huge joke. Public honors are conferred on him, in the midst of which his nephew and the two young women arrive in a desperate attempt to force him to reconsider. They are too late. *** is no longer accessible; their pleas fall on deaf ears. The curtain comes down on *** seated in a

throne-like chair, immobile, a kind of statue of himself, his own public image rendered lifeless.

We get an inkling of the magnitude of ***'s problem rather early in the play. In the following speech, he provides us with a graphic explanation of the meaning of feeling frozen in a given identity as a result of his literary acclaim.

***. I'd like to see you. With eyes all around you, like so many mirrors. The great man goes by and they stare at you--stiffly--causing you to stiffen, reminding you of your "celebrity." You're just a statue, don't you see? When you have something else on your mind and would like to give in for a moment to what you think and feel! When you'd like to lose your composure, to writhe with the pain that is within you. Good Lord, can't you aspire to the right to feel yourself a poor, mortal man? No, this right is denied you. . . . You can't be a poor man, because you're a great man.

The imagery of this speech is characteristic of Pirandello's drama and exemplary of an element that he has conceptualized as teatro dello specchio (theatre of the mirror). The implication is that all of us accept an identity that is really superimposed on us by our perceptions of our selves as reflected in the eyes of others. This notion must be considered one of Pirandello's central thematic elements, "since the image of the mirror occurs in almost every one of his plays."² We find the same notion to be central to Laing's

¹Luigi Pirandello, When Someone Is Somebody in The Mountain Giants and Other Plays, trans. Marta Abba (New York: Crown Publishers, 1958), p. 213.

²Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 288.

discussion of self-concept and identity, since he addresses himself specifically to the degree of conjunction or disjunction between self-image and other-image.¹

It becomes apparent that *** must remain isolated from the society in which he lives by virtue of the identity, or false self structure, that the social recognition of his work has forced upon him.

***. . . . Because from now on I must not think--or imagine--or feel anything else. No, no! I've thought what I have thought (according to them) and that's all there is to it. No other pictures of me are allowed. . . . I've expressed what I felt, and it's all right there. . . . I can't be any different. . . . Too bad if I should try . . . They wouldn't recognize me any longer. . . . I must not move from a certain concept, every detail of which they have decided₂ upon: There I am, motionless, forever!

What has occurred may be conceptualized as an inverse costruirsi process. A self, a personality, has been manufactured, not by *** himself, but by his society. His literary activity as the legendary Delago may be viewed as an effort to construct, for himself, a new personality (i.e., a more "real," because unrecognized, personality).

As the conflict of the play is elaborated, Pirandello causes the question of identity to resonate through the action in that there is a constant reversal of meaning and situation.

¹R.D. Laing, The Divided Self, p. 35.

²Luigi Pirandello, When Someone Is Somebody, p. 215.

*** begins to speak of Delago as a false self, thus contradicting the image initially presented to us by the playwright.

***. Because I'm not Nobody; I'm Somebody, as I've already told you. That's what my "self" means to the public, and I can't be anything else. If I reveal myself to be Delago, if I shout it to the whole world, then good-bye! Delago is done for! He's just a mask, don't you see? A mask of youth that I've put on for a joke. . . . I can't have any flesh and blood; I can't have any life of my own; I can't have even what belongs to me. You, Veroccia, my own living thing, my living youth! No, no! You must belong to Delago, not to me! Now do you understand?¹

Pirandello continues to invert the true self/false self image and the contradictions continue to reverberate. The Cabinet Minister, Giaffredi, refers to ***'s status as an acknowledged literary master as his true self.

Giaffredi. He must come back to be his real self! Be serene in his established and well-defined celebrity. If he still has something more to say, then he must say it₂ in words that can be sculptured in stone!²

Giaffredi is only one of the characters who force this social image upon ***. Modoni, the publisher, is pleased that *** is finally revealed as Delago. "This is your crowning glory," he exclaims. Later, he voices concern that, "They'll launch an attack on all your work, and on your reputation." It is clear that, for Modoni, ***'s reputation is worth more

¹Ibid., p. 223.

²Ibid., pp. 230-231.

than his reality. It is more important for him to satisfy his public than it is for him to satisfy himself.

Giovanna, ***'s wife, refuses to accept the fact that Delago and her husband are one in the same person. In the following lines she comments on Delago's poems.

Giovanna. As far as I'm concerned, that's what I prefer to believe. I can't begin to imagine how a man like you, and at your age, could seriously write them. I can only accept them as a joke, and even then I think they're unworthy of you. It's unbelievable¹ that you should suffer over them.

In essence, we are faced with a situation very reminiscent of Right You Are. In the earlier play, the townspeople, representing society, attempt to force an identity on the three sufferers merely to assuage their own intense desire for social stability and propriety. In Somebody, *** is locked into the identity chosen for him by society, that of a classically predictable literary giant.

The notion of simultaneous contradiction, elaborated by Rothenberg in his examination of the Janusian thought process, becomes an important structural element in the play insofar as ***'s relationship to Veroccia is concerned. By its very nature, this contradiction results in a loss of identity for ***. The essence of the contradiction also suggests an element of self-denial on the part of ***. While his relationship with the youthful Veroccia has served

¹Ibid., p. 249.

to rekindle his creative fires, the relationship remains platonic, unconsummated. *** is unable to give of himself in this way and it is this self-denial that reflects a loss of identity.¹ Pirandello cleverly embellishes the notion of simultaneous contradiction in the person of Veroccia herself. She first appears in the play with scissors in hand (ready to cut ***'s hair), presenting an image that is simultaneously loving and threatening.

In the curtain speech at the end of Act II, ***, profound in his tenderness, speaks to an already departed Veroccia of the implications of his position:

***. . . . You can still change from one moment to the next, and I can never do that again. You didn't stop to think that I couldn't change;² you wanted me to be still alive . . .

Here Pirandello returns to the major theme of the diametric opposition of life and art. While life is fluid and mobile, art, by its very nature, must capture a moment and freeze it in time. This is what has happened to ***. He continues:

***. When somebody is alive, no one sees him. You saw me because to you I was not somebody important, but a man whom you wanted to see alive, detached from his self in a moment of time that belonged to you. And I myself, as I was, I the

¹See pp. 126-128 , this study.

²Pirandello, When Someone Is Somebody, pp. 259-260.

important somebody, what was I to you?
A puppet,¹ such as I was when you cut my
hair.

The image of the puppet is important here, as Pirandello uses it to objectify the notion of splitting of the self. We may also see it as reflecting a visible false self.

***. As a matter of fact, you never even saw me as somebody; you couldn't bear to see me that way and asked me irritably: "Why do you suffer?" Now you know why I suffer and you don't care to know it. You have seen me as somebody, and for you I am no longer alive. When one is somebody, then at the opportune moment, one must decree one's own death and remain² locked up, mounting guard over one's self.

Pirandello's equation of social identity to death is an image that recurs throughout the play. While this metaphor may be universally applicable to society in general, the precise way in which the metaphor is developed in the play implies the author's specific intention to comment on Italian society in particular.

In order to elaborate this point, we must examine Pirandello's use of a structural device that is common, in varying degrees and forms, to all of the plays dealt with in this study. In each of the plays, there are always two groups in apparent conflict. In Right You Are, it is the sufferers versus the townspeople; in Six Characters, it is the actors versus the characters; in Henry IV, it is Henry

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

and his courtiers versus Matilda, Belcredi, et al; and, in Somebody, it is the "foreigners" versus the Italians.

The proponents of Delago, voices who speak for the true self, are Pietro, the nephew from America, Natascia, his wife and Veroccia, her sister (both Russian). This choice was obviously not an idle one on Pirandello's part and constitutes an incisive comment on Italian society. "Pietro, Veroccia and Natascia represent youth, the youth of a new continent where races, by intermingling, are creating a new human type."¹

Pirandello may have felt that he was being stifled by the social structure in Italy, that his creative energies could not be liberated from a preconceived set of expectations that had grown along with his fame and stature in the literary world. Perhaps he felt that he must look elsewhere to find the sense of creative freedom that was missing in his own country. On another level, the perception of having a limit imposed on one's creative energies from the outside is simply one of the prices of fame. Our notoriety dictates that we must do what is expected of us, as it were. In this sense, the play is a dramatization of Pirandello's awareness that most literary artists have very definite "biographical" existences apart from their works, and that these existences are unalterable in the eyes of the public.

An interesting corollary, postulated by Vittorini, is that, with respect to the character of Veroccia, the play was written as an expression of Pirandello's true relationship with Marta Abba, the actress who originated the role and for whom it was written. Moreover, the character's name translates as the

¹Domenico Vittorini, The Drama of Luigi Pirandello, p. 331.

root word for truth and this would be entirely in keeping both with her function in the fabric of the play and her symbolic relationship to Marta Abba and thereby to Pirandello.¹

The thematic elements of repudiation and rejection operate, in this play, on a more profound level than they do in the earlier works. Instead of a condition of wounded narcissism or low self-esteem resulting from repudiation or rejection, in Somebody we find that ***'s fame and stature as a literary figure have resulted in the development of an iron-clad image in the eyes of the public. *** resents being frozen into a fixture in the eyes of others and comes to hope that the poetry of the "young" Delago will succeed in eclipsing the fame of the old Somebody, thus providing him with a new sense of life. The rejection of Delago is the result of society's attempt to eliminate the incongruity between its own image of *** and the new qualities presented by *** as Delago.

Veroccia induces *** to strip away the reality of his years and embark upon a new career as a fresh "young" poet. For ***, the creation of Delago is, in Laingian terms an act of self-preservation, a means of fighting off the implosion of the outside world that has forced him to remain imprisoned within the cubicle of his literary identity. In addition, ***, through the character of Delago, attempts to use Pietro, Natascia and Veroccia to construct an authentic family structure for himself.

For Pirandello, the creation of Delago is a means of symbolizing the notion of splits in the self. Our nameless literary figure is part *** and part Delago. The notion

¹Vittorini, p. 335.

of splitting is further brought out by way of the opposition between ***'s role as an author and his role as a husband and father. *** also speaks of Delago's being imprisoned within him, further exemplifying the concept of splits in the self.

The creation of Delago may also be viewed as Pirandellian teatro dello specchio. In this context, we find ourselves confronted with the image of Delago as a reflection of the youthful ***. Through the play, Pirandello attempts to deal with the writer's view of his inner self. In so doing, he sets up another writer as a reflection corresponding to his inner self as a youth. The source of this image appears to be autobiographical, since we know that Pirandello's eldest son, Stefano, wrote poetry that was published under the pseudonym of Stefano Landi.

Pirandello employs the imagery of the opening Scene of Act II to visually objectify the split self. *** is depicted dreaming of four literary masters of old: Dante, Ariosto, Foscola and Leopardi. It is as though *** is a part of each of them and they of him. He speaks of them in a way that describes himself: "Four natures which, all unconsciously, had to obey the necessities of their time."¹

Placing When Someone Is Somebody in context with Six Characters and Henry IV, we may observe a thematic metamorphosis. Pirandello first presents us with the image of characters searching for an author, searching for life on the stage. Then, in Henry IV, the image is altered to describe a man who is rejecting life to become a character, a man in search of a character. In Somebody, Pirandello alters the

¹Pirandello, When Someone Is Somebody, p. 239.

image again, giving us ***, a character in search of his true essence as a man. The conflict here takes the form of the struggle between ***'s image as an acknowledged literary figure and his acclaim as Delago, with his tremendous impact on the "new" generation.

*** exhibits definite tendencies toward self-destruction. What is being destroyed, in this instance, is his social identity as a literary figure (his false self structure). The ultimate irony of the play is that *** himself speaks of the character of Delago as a mask that he has put on. We, as members of the audience, are more inclined to view his other identity as a mask, but this is a point that Pirandello cleverly leaves unclarified. The metaphor of the wearing of masks is nevertheless once again used to evoke an image of the splits in the self. The ultimate question of which identity reflects the true self, i.e., *** or Delago, remains unanswered. The real solution probably lies in the fact that neither identity reflects the author's true self. Act III serves to illustrate this idea by way of ***'s symbolic withdrawal from the world of both Delago and his family. Ever true to the characteristic ambivalence of his works, Pirandello avoids the central issue of the play in that he never really gives us a sense of what Delago's poetry is all about or why it is valuable.

In a sense, the resolution of the play's conflict is similar to that of Right You Are. In both plays we find

a character caught between two truths with society insisting on clarification. *** becomes as much a sacrifice to the social lie as does Signora Ponza in the earlier work. Signora Ponza is forced to reject both of the possible solutions proposed by the townspeople. The two possible roles are determined by her particular circumstances, but it is the pressure of society that makes her a nobody. The same is true for ***, who masochistically withdraws into the frozen statue of himself, thereby completing his rejection of Veroccia's love. He thus rejects life in favor of the death-in-life symbolized by the statue.

In another ironic reversal, we find that Winnicott's appraisal of the defensive nature of the false self is not applicable here. ***'s identity as a literary figure does not serve as a false self, as described by Winnicott¹, but is to be thought of simply as a reputation. It is this reputation that serves as the major obstacle to his attempts at expressing a new sense of life, through the poetry of Delago. One of the ideas that Pirandello is attempting to communicate, by way of this dramatization of the artistic experience, is that a reputation does not correspond to a felt self, be it true or false.

The single most important aspect of the development of interpersonal relationships is the ego's need for survival and self-assertion. Earlier, this element of psychological growth was examined in relation to Right You Are. In Somebody, we find yet another parallel. The human drive for self-preservation induces the ego to assert itself. The ego is more strongly aware of its own existence when it is noted and acknowledged

¹D.W. Winnicott, The Maturation Processes and The Facilitating Environment, p. 142.

by the group (society). Although the notion of personifying the ego is typical of discussions of motivational psychology, the technique may also be useful in describing particular aspects of a personality in stage terms, in order to clarify images or production values.

Applying this notion to ***'s personality, we find an unusual dichotomy. On the one hand, his early literary career may be considered a form of ego assertion and his great acclaim may quite logically be viewed as group acknowledgment. Accordingly, this pattern would normally lead to the development of a strong ego structure and an attempt to approach an "ego ideal" based on these group responses. With ***, however, the exact antithesis occurs. His acknowledgment by the group does not enhance his narcissism.¹ Instead, he feels more isolated, more apart from them (in this case we may view his family as a symbolic representation of the group). The only situation in which ***'s ego seems to flourish is one that includes acknowledgment by Veroccia (the foreigner, the outsider). Veroccia's age is the essential point here; *** wants to "live anew" through her. It is only her acknowledgment and approval (along with that of Pietro and Natascia) that serves to enhance ***'s ego development. In effect, the response is so great that it leads to the creation of another identity, that of Delago.²

¹The same is true for Pirandello, who clearly disapproved of his reputation. Note the remarks of the Director in Six Characters: "Is it my fault if France won't send us any more good comedies, and we are reduced to putting on Pirandello's works, where nobody understands anything, and where the author plays the fool with us all?"

²The theme of age drawn to youth is common to many of our greatest writers, e.g., Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov, Tolstoy.

With regard to ***'s ego development as Delago, Weiss has found that one's developing "ego feeling" usually extends to a "we feeling" and this grows to include a strong drive for the preservation of the group (i.e., society).¹ In this regard, the characters meant to symbolically represent the group would be Veroccia, Pietro and Natascia as opposed to Giovanna, Tito and Valentina (***'s wife and children). Pirandello dramatizes ***'s lack of interest in his family and the intensity of his involvement with Veroccia. The drama is one of forward movement, of the conflict that arises when one attempts to leave behind the old and embrace the new. *** finds himself in the tenuous situation of defending a niche of his own against excessive ideals being demanded, not only by his family, but by society as a whole. ***'s withdrawal into the statue of himself at the end of the play may be thought of as a manifestation of negative identity choice. Such a choice usually represents a desperate attempt at regaining some mastery in a situation in which the available positive identity elements cancel each other out. In ***'s case, the possibility of achieving new fame as Delago has been eliminated while the alternative of assuming his rightful place as Somebody holds no promise at all. We have noted the existence of a similar set of circumstances with regard to Signora Ponza in Right You Are.²

¹See Weiss, The Structure and Dynamics of the Human Mind, p. 29.

²See p. 128, this study.

Either directly or by implication, in each of the plays under consideration here, we have become aware of the fact that society tends to produce its own unknowns and, at the same time, hunts down, in a vain attempt to "classify" them, the victims of its own alienation. *** seems to exemplify this phenomenon. It is for precisely this reason that Pirandello has chosen not to give his protagonist a name. *** is a living paradox, a human being that society has recognized as an important literary figure and yet, it is as a result of this very recognition that his identity is lost. We are faced with a situation in which there is a disjunction between the way society views him and the way he views himself. *** knows himself to be animate, full of life, an exuberant "nobody." Society, on the other hand, views him as petrified, a frozen personification of literary greatness, a Somebody. The man lives; the image or mask is inert.

On another level, we may view the impossibility of dialogue between *** and his wife and family as the factor that engenders his "role-playing" behavior as Delago. In addition, there is an element of mischief in ***'s creation of Delago, a new self, a new identity to present to the world. Indeed, there is a touch of humor in the fact that the poster of Delago is really a picture of ***, twenty years younger. The same is true for the scene in which Scelzi, the young literary critic, and the others arrive in search of Delago since he is rumored to have returned from America.

In essence, ***'s dilemma serves as a graphic demonstration of how, in a bourgeois society, a "character" is born. As he becomes aware of himself, through the catalytic mirror of Veroccia's eyes, *** immediately perceives the gap between what he is to himself, closed to others, and what he is forced to be within his social framework.

***. Oh yes, Delago, of course. . . . Delago. But neither you nor anyone else made me come to life again as Delago, you must know. It's I that am still alive, that think and feel! (He takes Veroccia's face in his hands.) Yes, because from the first instant these impertinent eyes brazened mine, so magically enkindling--(blowing) Phhh on the ashes: "Are you an old man? What are you trying to put over? You're still afire!" And your lips laughed in a way that I alone could see! One second was enough for you to search my eyes and find out that I was alive. Isn't that so? And if you were able to awaken me, that means there were alive in me thoughts and feelings, which I began immediately to express as if they were new, as if in a dream I had no right to believe in unless you believed it. You did believe, and now they are my whole life.¹

This latter identity, i.e., that of Somebody, is judged to be unsatisfactory, hence the metamorphosis into the character of Delago, with all its attendant creative exuberance and youthful intensity. It is almost as though, given the existence of a static and immobile society, the individual can function as a "character," i.e., as a conscious individual, only by making time stand still. There is an additional irony in this, since Pirandello implies that ***'s new vitality is merely a reflection of Veroccia's youthful qualities rather than a genuine rebirth of youth.

¹Pirandello, When Someone Is Somebody, p. 216.

Despite his attempts at doing so, *** is unable to resist the pressures of his environment. Indeed, it is impossible to prevent him from being defeated by the social milieu, and this fact becomes a major theme of the play. A distinct relationship exists between this theme and important elements of the process of identity formation. We have already noted that the ego thrives on reciprocal relationships with other egos. Since *** cannot completely be himself in relation to others, there is no accurate identity information being reflected back to him as a result of interaction with other egos. This leads to a marked lack of internal consistency in his personality structure. And so it goes, a deadly, circular process that renders our hero helpless. ***'s personal form of madness, his "duality" of personality, if you will, is a product of the very society under whose judgment he suffers.

From another viewpoint, ***'s behavior reflects the perfectly normal desire to revive one's youth. Through Veroccia, *** perceives in himself a vivacity that others do not see in him. Through the play, Pirandello struggles with the discovery of self and the rejection of the image others have of us.

Truly, *** is completely stifled by his environment. He finds himself condemned to the inescapable living death of being Somebody. Initially, he will not submit; he will not remain silent. Through Delago, he attempts to resist society's imprisonment. Ultimately, he succumbs, and the final scene of the play provides a striking visual image, that of *** turning into a statue, symbolizing the devastating effects of the social structure under which he is forced to exist.

We must also recognize that without this same social structure, *** cannot exist at all. Pirandello, as a true proto-existentialist, hypostatizes alienation without suppressing the need for the individual's relation to others and, by extension, to the outside world. The complex and contradictory nature of the play incorporates this notion with a study of our idolization of success (in this case, literary success) and the timeless vision of age attempting to recapture youth. These elements are blended with a touch of satire in the playwright's spoof of the cult of literati that had grown up around him. Pirandello seems to be reminding his audience not to lose sight of his essential human qualities, his vulnerability, his imperfections--and their own.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

I have attempted, in this psychoanalytic inquiry into the drama of Luigi Pirandello, to establish a more or less common ground between the creative impulses of the playwright and the inner nature of his works. The research and writings of the contemporary psychoanalyst, R.D. Laing, have served as the key to the establishment of this common ground.

I have noted indisputable points of convergence in the works of Pirandello and Laing. This is all the more important when we consider that most of Pirandello's major works pre-date Laing by at least fifty years. His sensitive awareness of psychological processes whose theoretical bases had not even been conceived, much less proven, was truly remarkable.

In a variety of situations--all of which are triggered by crises verging on paranoia, sexual aberrations, morbid desires, death and psychological obsessions of one kind or another--he explores the difficult moment of self-consciousness when the soul comes to know itself and rejects the conventional notions about itself. ¹

In his dramatic works, Pirandello deals with the transitory nature of day-to-day reality, his awareness of the concept that each of us will appear to be different in the

¹Paolucci, Pirandello's Theater, p. 107.

eyes of others, the notion that we must struggle to maintain some sort of integrated sense of identity and that in this struggle we must engage our society itself in order to avoid being destroyed by the commonplace social values under which we all must live. Laing, we find, has made the very same points the focus of his psychoanalytic orientation. He deals with the degree of conjunction and disjunction between self-image and other-image, the problem and meaning of schizophrenia in the modern world, the notion that many schizophrenics are more "sane" than the so-called "normal" members of society, the defensive nature of the false self and the resultant fragmentation of the personality into a number of false selves and the problem of cohesive identity formation. In Laing's terms, the avant-garde aspects of a dramatist, such as Pirandello, can be seen as born of the necessity to embody new artistic visions and underlying emotional states in their full complexity and ambiguity. In works of this nature, themes of identity, identification and self-image become far more relevant than the more traditional aspects of psychoanalysis.

In my examination of the plays, I have made use of the works of other psychoanalytic theorists, in addition to Laing, notably: Erikson, with regard to identity formation; Lynd, with regard to the concept of shame relative to identity formation; Rothenberg, with regard to the contradictory nature of the creative thought process he has termed Janusian and how this process relates to the concepts of Laing; and,

Roland, who drew the first parallels between rejection, repudiation and deprivation as determinants to identity formation. I have also noted key aspects of Pirandello's socio-cultural situation that have been expressed in the plays and have had a direct effect on identity formation and fragmentation of the self.

I have speculated, openly, as to the impact of the playwright's wife's psychotic condition on his creative output and I have noted several areas in which Pirandello's behavior and functioning seemed to suggest processes and modes of reaction that are very close to what Laing has described as schizoid.

I have chosen to limit my examination of Pirandello's dramatic works to a total of five plays that both represent a cross-section of his creative output, chronologically, and, lend themselves most easily to a psychoanalytically-oriented examination. The five plays: Right You Are, Six Characters, Henry IV, To Clothe the Naked and When Someone Is Somebody have each provided significant contributions toward fostering a deeper understanding of Pirandello's works from a psychoanalytic viewpoint.

In the theatre, however, a work of art is no longer the work of the writer, much less the psychoanalyst. Insofar as a play is a literary work that is complete as conceived by the author, the place for its preservation might be the book shelf. But dramatic art requires a stage, actors and audience as much as it requires the creativity of the playwright. In the theatre,

the play becomes a living entity, with its own moment-to-moment reality interacting with the reality of the audience.

What the theatre offers is the current translation of the text into fresh, updated language, adapted to contemporary taste and habits, revitalized so as to make possible communication with a living audience reflecting a living and immediate reality.¹

Perhaps the incorporation of these new psychoanalytic insights will result in added depth and sharper production values for the plays as pieces of living theatre.

Pirandello's distinct lack of popularity in the United States is attributable to a dearth of adequate translations and competent productions. Given this fact one could hardly hope for more. The plays are, at best, extremely difficult to bring to life on the stage. Part of the problem is that they are, in a sense, almost too real, too commonplace, too ordinary, too close to our own reality, so that we, as actor and audience, spontaneously erect barriers that prevent our being touched by Pirandello's truth. Structurally, Pirandello's drama is complex, convoluted with images and symbols constantly clashing and reverberating. One finds constant reversals in the dichotomies and simultaneous contradictions of the plot situations and characters.

On reading the plays, one senses a unique tension that lies just beneath the surface of the action. Capturing this tension on stage seems to be the greatest obstacle to mounting

¹Paolucci, pp. 135-136.

a successful Pirandello production. Perhaps this psycho-analytic investigation will bring us closer, in some way, to capturing the Piranellian essence in the theatre. What may be derived from this study is a possible new approach to the creation of a living theatre for the production of Pirandello's works.

Perhaps the director can use the notion of multiple false selves as an image for his production of To Clothe the Naked. Perhaps the actor can attack the role of Henry using the concepts of repudiation, rejection and deprivation as the etiological determinants of a schizoid condition. Perhaps the actress can approach the role of Ersilia by way of Lynd's model of shame and its relationship to the development of a cohesive identity. Perhaps the imaginative designer can employ the image of the fragmented self in arriving at a stage environment for Six Characters.

Similarly, an examination of Pirandello's settings for the plays dealt with brings us closer to the concept of a living, breathing theatre as an aspect rather than a reflection of life.

In Right You Are, the script specifies only that the action takes place in a small Italian town, the capital of a province. As audience members, we sense a common environment in this play and To Clothe the Naked, despite the fact that the latter is supposedly set in Rome. My discussion of Naked touched on the distinctly Sicilian flavor of the work, and I must return to that now in drawing the parallel with Right You Are. Indeed, this element is to be found, to a greater or lesser degree, in all of the plays. Paolucci

accurately points out that

Pirandello's men, women and children . . . his Agazzi family in It Is So (If You Think So) . . . have about them the very essence of the real Sicilian character, in which sensuous obsession is one with religious exaltation, and attachment to property, instead of being the materialistic obsession it seems, becomes an apprehension and acceptance of death. Death's musty smell is ever-present in the straining for security, in the accumulation of family heirlooms, old chests and bedposts, and of sons who will give their parents a proper burial. Pirandello's plays reject the external aspect of that Sicilian show of values, but not the spirit throbbing beneath it, of which those₁ values are a mere local encrustation.

Unquestionably, Pirandello's art is rooted in the life of Sicily, and it is from this source that the special theatrical quality of his plays is derived.

The setting for Six Characters is, in a way, the most purely theatrical of all the works I have dealt with, for it is nothing more than an empty stage. Here we have an environment for genuine dramatic art, not to be confused with the theatrical trappings (costumes, scenery, music) of another era. In the play it is the works and actions of the characters that contribute to the effect of a fully conceived world, however more vibrant it can be made to appear on an empty stage. It is a world no less real "than the life that is to be observed, daily, in the villas, palazzi, pensioni, humble dwellings, and bourgeois living rooms across the length and breadth of Sicily and Italy."²

¹Paolucci, p. 141.

²Ibid.

In Henry IV, we find a mirror image, as it were, of the environment in Six Characters. Instead of an empty stage Henry has turned life into theatre. His home has become the villa of the German emperor, his retainers members of the imperial court. He even imposes his "theatre" on visitors from the outside, thus extending the impact of his "performance" to the audience, as well.

Pirandello's descriptions of the settings required for Somebody reflect, in their specificity and detail, the highly theatrical nature of the work. It is through his immersion of the audience into this environment, the world of the theatre, the universe of the theatre, that Pirandello is able to create a transparent society, through which we can see the false hopes, the false dreams, the pretenses, the masks of our everyday existence.

It is my sincere hope that, by way of this study, I have extended the range of critical exploration into the drama of Luigi Pirandello and have provided a broader base from which to examine more of the plays in the near future. My study has resulted in a new vision of the works of Pirandello, one closely linked to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, in which the plays may be seen as skillfully created variations on the schizoid and schizophrenic personality structures, in terms of plot, character and setting. In addition, an effort has been made to relate these new insights to the concerns of the theatre practitioner and audience member, so as to develop a lively theatrical environment for contemporary productions of the plays.

We are still learning to become Luigi Pirandello's contemporaries, to understand the voice that cried out for light.

William Herman

APPENDIX

Dramatic Works of Luigi Pirandello

Dates given refer to year of first publication. Parenthetical dates refer to year of first Italian performance. When a play has been published in English, the English title is also given.

- La Morsa, 1898 (under title L'epilogo) (1910) (The Wise)
- Lumie di Sicilia, 1911 (1910) (Sicilian Limes)
- Il dovere del medico, 1912 (1913) (The Doctor's Duty)
- Liola, 1917 (Sicilian text; Italian text, 1928) (1916)
- Pensaci, Giacomino!, 1917 (1916)
- Il berretto a sonagli, 1918 (1917) (Cap and Bells)
- Il piacere dell'onesta, 1918 (1917) (The Pleasure of Honesty)
- La patente, 1918 (1919)
- Così e (se vi pare), 1918 (1917) (Right You Are, If You Think You Are)
- Ma non è una cosa seria, 1919 (1918)
- Il giuoco delle parti, 1919 (1918) (The Rules of the Game)
- Tutto per bene, 1920 (1920)
- La ragione degli altri, 1921
- Come prima, meglio di prima, 1921 (1920)
- L'innesto, 1921 (1919)
- Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore, 1921 (1921)
(Six Characters in Search of an Author)
- Enrico IV, 1922 (1922) (Henry IV)
- L'uomo, la bestia, e la virtù, 1922 (1919)

- La signora Morli, una e due, 1922 (1920)
- Vestire gli ignudi, 1923 (1922) (To Clothe the Naked)
- La vita che ti diedi, 1924 (1923)
- Ciascuno a suo modo, 1924 (1924) (Each in His Own Way)
- La giara, 1925 (1917) (The Jar)
- L'altro figlio, 1925 (1923) (The House With the Column)
- Sagra del Signore della Nave, 1925 (1925) (Our Lord of the Ship)
- Cece, 1926 (1920) (Chee-Chee)
- All'uscita, 1926 (1922) (At the Gate)
- L'imbecille, 1926 (1922) (The Imbecile)
- L'uomo dal fiore in bocca, 1926 (1923)
- (The Man With the Flower in His Mouth)
- Diana e la Tuda, 1927 (1927)
- L'amica delle mogli, 1927 (1927)
- La nuova colonia, 1928 (1928) (The New Colony)
- O di uno o di nessuno, 1929 (1929)
- Lazzaro, 1929 (1929)
- Come tu mi vuoi, 1930 (1930) (As You Desire Me)
- Questa sera si recita a soggetto, 1930 (1930) (Tonight We Improvise)
- Trovarsi, 1932 (1932)
- Quando si e qualcuno, 1933 (1933) (When Someone Is Somebody)
- Non si sa come, 1935 (1935)
- Sogno (ma forse no), 1936 (1936) (Dream, But Perhaps Not)
- Bellavita, 1937 (1927) (Bellavita)
- La favola del giglio cambiato, 1938 (1934)
- I giganti della montagna, 1938 (First act with title I fantasmi,
1931; second act, 1934) (1937) (The Mountain Giants)

N.B.

Appendix compiled from

Giudice, Gaspare, Pirandello: A Biography, trans.
Alastair Hamilton (London: Oxford University Press, 1975),
pp. 224-225.

Naked Masks: Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello, ed.
Eric Bentley (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1952),
pp. 382-383.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Bentley, Eric. The Genius of the Italian Theatre. New York: The New American Library, 1964.
- _____. (ed.) Naked Masks: Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1952.
- _____. The Playwright as Thinker. New York: Meridian Books, 1955.
- Bermel, Albert. Contradictory Characters: An Interpretation of the Modern Theatre. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1973.
- Bishop, Thomas. Pirandello and the French Theatre. New York: New York University Press, 1960.
- Bonarni, Francesco. Pirandello Poeta. Napoli: Morano Editore, 1966.
- Bouchard, Donald F. Milton: A Structural Reading. London: Butler and Tanner, Ltd. and Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1974.
- Brustein, Robert. The Theatre of Revolt. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964.
- Budel, Oscar. Pirandello. New York: Hillary House Publishers, Ltd., 1966.
- Burke, Kenneth. Perspectives by Incongruity. Edited by Stanley Edgar Hyman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.
- _____. The Philosophy of Literary Form. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1941 [2nd ed.: Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1967].
- Cambon, Glauco (ed.). Pirandello: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.
- Cantoro, Umberto. Luigi Pirandello e il problema della personalita. Bologna: Nicola Ugo Gallo, 1954.
- Clark, Barrett H. European Theories of the Drama. New York: Crown Publishers, 1947.

- Cole, Toby (ed.). Playwrights on Playwriting. New York: Hill and Wang Dramabook, 1961.
- Crews, Frederick. Out of My System: Psychoanalysis, Ideology and Critical Method. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- David, Michel. Letteratura e Psicanalisi. Milano: U. Mursia and Company, 1967.
- Dickinson, Thomas H. The Theatre in a Changing Europe. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937.
- Eidelberg, Ludwig (ed.). Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis. New York: The Free Press, 1968.
- Eissler, Kurt R. Discourse on Hamlet and "Hamlet": A Psychoanalytic Inquiry. New York: International Universities Press, 1971.
- Erikson, Erik H. Identity, Youth and Crisis. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1968.
- Ferrante, Luigi. Pirandello. Firenze: Parenti, 1956.
- Freedley, George and Reeves, John A. A History of the Theatre. New York: Crown Publishers, 1941.
- Freud, Sigmund. The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud. Translated and edited by A.A. Brill. New York: The Modern Library, 1938.
- _____. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, vol IX: "Jensen's 'Gradiva' and Other Works." Edited and translated by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1959.
- _____. The Interpretation of Dreams. London: Hogarth Press, 1953.
- _____. Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood. Translated by Alan Tyson. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1964.
- _____. Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia. London: Hogarth Press, 1958.
- Garin, Eugenio. Italian Humanism. Translated by Peter Munz. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
- Gassner, John. Masters of the Drama. New York: Random House, 1940.

- Gilman, Richard. The Making of Modern Drama. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974.
- Giudice, Gaspare. Luigi Pirandello. Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1963.
- _____. Pirandello: A Biography. Translated by Alastair Hamilton. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1959.
- Gorelik, Mordecai. New Theatres for Old. New York: Samuel French, 1957.
- Hart, Bernard. The Psychology of Insanity. 4th ed. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931.
- Hegel, G.W.F. The Phenomenology of Mind. Translated by J.B. Baillie. London: Allen and Unwin, 1949.
- Holland, Norman N. The Dynamics of Literary Response. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Janner, Arminio. Luigi Pirandello. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1948.
- Jones, Ernest. Hamlet and Oedipus. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1949.
- Kluckhohn, Clyde and Murray, Henry A. Personality in Nature, Society and Culture. 2nd ed. Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.
- Kris, Ernst. Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art. New York: International Universities Press, 1952.
- Laing, R.D. The Divided Self. Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1965.
- _____. The Politics of the Family. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Lauter, Paul (ed.). Theories of Comedy. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1964.
- Lewis, Allan. The Contemporary Theatre. New York: Crown Publishers, 1971.
- Lindauer, Martin S. The Psychological Study of Literature: Limitations, Possibilities and Accomplishments. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., 1975.

- Lucas, F.L. The Drama of Chekhov, Synge, Yeats, and Pirandello. London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1963.
- Lynd, Helen Merrell. On Shame and the Search for Identity. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.
- MacClintock, Lander. The Age of Pirandello. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1951.
- _____. The Contemporary Drama of Italy. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1920.
- Maritain, Jacques. Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry. New York: Meridian Books, 1955.
- Matthei, Renate. Luigi Pirandello. Translated by Simon and Erika Young. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1973.
- Nardelli, Federico Vittore. L'uomo segreto. 2nd ed. Milano: Mondadori, 1944.
- Nicoll, Allardyce. World Drama. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950.
- Paolucci, Anne. Pirandello's Theater. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974.
- Passenti, Eligio. Teatro Italiano. Milano: Nuova Accademia, 1962.
- Phelps, Ruth Shepard. Italian Silhouettes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924.
- Pirandello, Luigi. The Late Mattia Pascal. Translated by William Weaver. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1964.
- _____. The Merry-Go-Round of Love and Selected Stories. Translated by Frances Keene and Lily Duplaix. New York: The New American Library, 1964.
- _____. The Mountain Giants and Other Plays. Translated by Marta Abba. New York: Crown Publishers, 1958.
- _____. Naked Masks: Five Plays. Edited by Eric Bentley. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1952.
- _____. Opere di Luigi Pirandello. 6 vols. Milano and Verona: Mondadori, 1956-1960.

- _____. Saggi, poesie, scritti vari.
Milano and Verona: Mondadori, 1960.
- _____. Pirandello's One-Act Plays.
Translated by William Murray. New York: Anchor Books,
1964.
- _____. To Clothe the Naked and Two Other
Plays. Translated by William Murray. New York:
E.P. Dutton and Company, 1962.
- Prezzolini, Giuseppe. L'Italia finisce ecco quel che resta.
2nd ed. Firenze: Vallecchi, 1959.
- Pullini, Giorgio. Cinquant'anni di teatro in Italia.
Bologna: Cappelli, 1960.
- Ragusa, Olga. Luigi Pirandello. New York: Columbia
University Press, 1968.
- Roberts, Vera Mowry. On Stage. New York: Harper & Row,
1962.
- Ruitenbeek, Hendrik M. (ed.). Psychoanalysis and Literature.
New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1964.
- Sarnoff, Irving. Personality Dynamics and Development.
New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962.
- Schreiber, Georges. Portraits and Self-Portraits. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936.
- Seltzer, Daniel (ed.). The Modern Theatre: Readings and
Documents. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1967.
- Sherman, Murray H. (ed.). Psychoanalysis in America:
Historical Perspectives. Springfield, Illinois:
Charles C. Thomas and Company, 1966.
- Starkie, Walter. Luigi Pirandello. 3rd ed. revised.
Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California
Press, 1965.
- Tillich, Paul. The Courage to Be. London: Nisbet, 1952.
- Tilgher, Adriano. Studi sul teatro contemporaneo. Roma:
Libreria di Scienze e Lettere, 1923.
- Vittorini, Domenico. The Drama of Luigi Pirandello.
New York: Dover Publications, 1957.

- Weiss, Edoardo. The Structure and Dynamics of the Human Mind. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1960.
- Winnicott, D.W. The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment. New York: International Universities Press, 1965.

ARTICLES

- Arlow, J. "Ego Psychology and the Study of Mythology," Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 9 (1961), 371-393.
- Barzini, Luigi. "How Pirandello Became Pirandellian (And Other Things)," New York Times, March 25, 1973, sec. 2.
- Bentley, Eric. "Father's Day," The Drama Review, 13 (Fall, 1968), 57-72.
- _____. "Il Tragico Imperatore," Tulane Drama Review, 10 (Spring, 1966), 60-75.
- _____. "We Need Pirandello Today," Theatre Arts, XXXVI (May, 1952), 23-24.
- Esslin, Martin. "Author in Search of Pirandello," New York Times, June 25, 1967, sec. 2, pp. 1,3.
- Fabrizi, Diego and Alberto Moravia, Guido Piovene, Edoardo Sanguineti, Luigi Squarzina. "Pirandello, ieri, oggi, domani," La Fiera Letteraria, XLII (November 30, 1967). The text of this round table discussion was translated by A. Richard Sogliuzzo and Joseph Siracuse.
- Gilman, Richard. "Pirandello to Perfection," Commonweal, LXXVIII (April 15, 1963), 105-106.
- Goiten, P.L. "The Phantasy of the Naked Truth, A Note on Così è," The Psychoanalytic Review, 16 (1929), 121-142.
- Herman, William. "Pirandello and Possibility," Tulane Drama Review, 10 (Spring, 1966), 91-111.
- Kligerman, Charles. "A Psychoanalytic Study of Pirandello's 'Six Characters in Search of an Author,'" Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 10 (October, 1962), 732-743.

- Lichtenstein, Heinz. "Identity and Sexuality: A Study of their Interrelationship in Man," Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 9 (1961), 179-240.
- "Luigi Pirandello," Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo, VIII, Roma: Casa Editrice Le Maschere, 1961, 152-172.
- "Luigi Pirandello," Scholastic, XXIX (January 9, 1937), 7ff.
- Nelson, Benjamin. "Avant-Garde Dramatists from Ibsen to Ionesco," The Psychoanalytic Review, 55 (1968), 505-511.
- Pirandello, Luigi. "On Humor," translated by Teresa Novel, Tulane Drama Review, 10 (Spring, 1966), 46-59.
- di Robilant, Irene. "Concerning the Author of As You Desire Me," Theatre Guild, (May, 1931).
- Roland, Alan. "Contributions and Controversies in the Areas of Identity, Identification and Self-Image," Psychoanalytic Monographs, 1 (December, 1970), 25-39.
- Rosenberg, Marvin. "Pirandello's Mirror," Modern Drama, VI (Spring, 1964), 331-345.
- Rothenberg, Albert. "The Process of Janusian Thinking in Creativity," Archives of General Psychiatry, 24 (March, 1971), 195-205.
- Simon, John. "Rexecution," (a review of Rex Harrison's Henry IV) New York Magazine, 6 (April 16, 1973), 88.
- Squarzina, Luigi. "Directing Pirandello Today: An Interview with Gino Rizzo," Tulane Drama Review, 10 (Spring, 1966), 76-85.
- Weil, Edmund. "The Origins and Vicissitudes of the Self-Image," Psychoanalysis and the Psychoanalytic Review, 45 (1958), 57-73.
- Weiss, Aureliu. "The Remorseless Rush of Time," Tulane Drama Review, 10 (Spring, 1966), 30-45.

OTHER SOURCES

Bergmann, Martin. "Notes on Pirandello and Psychoanalysis," (remarks presented at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, January, 1974).

Comprehensive Dissertation Index, 1861-1972. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1973.

1973 Supplement to Comprehensive Dissertation Index. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1974.

1974 Supplement to Comprehensive Dissertation Index. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975.

Eco, Umberto. "Crises of Western Culture Between the World Wars," (seminar held at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, May 8, 1973).

_____. "Pirandello Ridens," (paper presented at the Pirandello Society section of the Modern Language Association, December, 1968).

Gattnig, Charles J. "Pirandello, Umorismo, and Beckett," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1967).

Huss, Roy. "Freud's Early Views on Art, Creativity and the Mind of the Artist," (paper presented at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, 1974).

Jacobs, Theodore. "Discussion of Martin Wanhg's Paper on Pirandello," (at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, January, 1974).

Roland, Alan. "Psychoanalysis and Avant Garde Drama: Pirandello to Pinter," (paper presented at the Mid-Winter Meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association, December, 1972).

_____. "Toward a Re-orientation of Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism," (paper presented at the Association for Applied Psychoanalysis, June, 1973).

_____ and Rizzo, Gino. "Psychoanalysis in Search of Pirandello: Six Characters and Henry IV," (paper not yet published, New York, 1975).

Wangh, Martin. "Underlying Motivations in Pirandello's
Six Characters in Search of an Author: A Psychoanalytic
View," (paper presented at the New York Psychoanalytic
Institute, January, 1974).