

The 'inner self' is occupied in phantasy and in observation. It observes the processes of perception and action. Experience does not impinge (or at any rate this is the intention) directly on this self, and the individual's acts are not self-expressions. Direct relationships with the world are the province of a false-self system. It is the characteristics of this system that must now be examined.

One must be clear that the description of the false-self system given below is intended to relate specifically to the problem of the particular schizoid mode of being in the world under discussion. Every man is involved personally in whether or to what extent he is being 'true to his true nature'. In clinical practice, the hysterical and the hypomanic person, for instance, have their own ways of not being themselves. The false-self system to be described here exists as the complement of an 'inner' self which is occupied in maintaining its identity and freedom by being transcendent,

* The false self is one way of not being oneself. The following are a few of the more important studies within the existentialist tradition relevant to the understanding of the false self, as one way of living inauthentically: Kierkegaard, *The sickness unto death* (1954); Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1953); Sartre's discussion on 'bad faith' in *Being and Nothingness* (1956); Binswanger, *Drei Formen missglückten Daseins* (1952) and 'The Case of Ellen West' (1958); and Roland Kuhn, *La Phénoménologie de masque* (1957). Within the psycho-analytic tradition the following are among the most relevant studies: Deutsch, 'Some forms of emotional disturbances and their relationship to schizophrenia' (1942); Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic studies of the personality* (1952); Guntrip, 'A study of Fairbairn's theory of schizoid reactions' (1952); Winnicott, *Collected papers* (1958) (passim); Wolberg, 'The "borderline" patient' (1952); and Wolf in *Schizophrenia in psycho-analytic office practice* (pp. 135-9, 1957).

unembodied, and thus never to be grasped, pinpointed, trapped, possessed. Its aim is to be a pure subject, without any objective existence. Thus, except in certain possible safe moments the individual seeks to regard the whole of his objective existence as the expression of a false self. Of course, as already indicated, and as will be seen in more detail later, if a man is not two-dimensional, having a two-dimensional identity established by a conjunction of identity-for-others, and identity-for-oneself, if he does not exist objectively as well as subjectively, but has only a subjective identity, an identity-for-himself, he cannot be *real*.

'A man without a mask' is indeed very rare. One even doubts the possibility of such a man. Everyone in some measure wears a mask, and there are many things we do not put ourselves into fully. In 'ordinary' life it seems hardly possible for it to be otherwise.

The false self of the schizoid individual differs, however, in certain important respects from the mask worn by the 'normal' person, and also from the false front that is characteristically maintained by the hysteric. It will avoid confusion if we briefly discriminate between these three forms of false self.

In the 'normal' person a good number of his actions may be virtually mechanical. These areas of virtually mechanical behaviour do not, however, necessarily encroach on every aspect of everything he does, they do not absolutely preclude the emergence of spontaneous expressions, and they are not so completely 'against the grain' that the individual seeks actively to repudiate them as foreign bodies lodged in his make-up. Moreover, they do not assume an autonomous compulsive way of their own, such that the individual feels that they are 'living' or rather killing him, rather than he living them. The issue, at any rate, does not arise with such painful intensity that he must attack and destroy this alien reality within himself as though it had an almost separate (personal) existence. By contrast, however, these characteristics, absent in the 'normal', are very much present in the schizoid false-self system.

The hysteric characteristically dissociates himself from much that he does. The best description of this technique of evasion in action that I know is in Sartre's chapter on 'bad faith' in *Being and Nothingness*, where he gives a brilliant phenomenological account

of ways of pretending to oneself that one is not 'in' what one is doing - this is a form of evasion of the full personal implication of one's actions which the hysterical character erects as a whole way of living. Sartre's concept of 'bad faith' is, of course, much more extensive than this.

Now, the hysteric is seeking to achieve gratification through his actions, the significance of which he is denying. The actions of the hysteric afford him 'gains' in the gratification of libidinal and/or aggressive wishes towards other persons, the significance of which he cannot acknowledge to himself. Hence the *belle indifférence*, the casual detachment from the implications of what he says or does. One sees that this state of affairs is very different from the split in the schizoid individual's being. *His false self does not serve as a vehicle for the fulfilment or gratification of the self.* In the schizoid individual, the self may remain hungry and starved in a most primitive sense while the false self may be apparently genitally adapted. The actions of the false self do not, however, 'gratify' the 'inner self.

The hysteric *pretends* that certain highly gratifying activities are just pretending, or do not mean anything, or have no special implications, or that he is merely doing such and such because he is being forced to, while secretly his own desires are being fulfilled in and through these very activities. The false self of the schizoid person is compulsively compliant to the will of others, it is partially autonomous and out of control, it is felt as alien; the unrealness, meaninglessness, purposelessness which permeate its perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions, and its overall deadness are not simply productions of secondary defences but are direct consequences of the basic dynamic structure of the individual's being.

For instance, a patient recalled that at school he was fond of mathematics but had a contempt for literature. A performance of *Twelfth Night* was given at school and the boys had to write an essay on the subject. At the time he felt he hated the play but wrote a most appreciative essay about it, by imagining what would be expected of him by the authorities and slavishly adhering to it. This essay won a prize. 'Not one word of it was the expression of how I felt. It was all how I felt I was expected to feel'. Or so he thought at the time. In fact, as he admitted to himself later, he had *really*

enjoyed the play, and had *really* felt about it as he had described in the essay. But he had not dared to admit this possibility to himself because it would have precipitated him into a violent conflict with all the values that had been inculcated into him and entirely disrupted his own idea of who he was. This, however, was a neurotic and not a schizoid incident. This patient continued in other ways to do what he secretly wanted, while persuading himself he was only doing what other people wanted. In this way he succeeded in carrying through his desires, although he always had difficulty at the time in admitting this to himself. The neurotic may, therefore, pretend that he has a false-self system superficially resembling the schizoid's, but on closer inspection we see that the circumstances are, in fact, widely different.

The hysteric often begins by pretending he is *not* in his actions while really actualizing himself through them. If he is threatened with this insight in the face of too intense guilt, his actions are inhibited, e.g. he develops 'hysterical' paralysis, which prevents the guilty gratifying actions from being executed.

Particularly clear examples of schizoid false selves can be seen in the cases of James (p. 140), David (p. 69), and Peter (p. Ch.8).

In any one person, the false-self system is always very complex and contains many contradictions. We shall try in this chapter to make statements that are generally applicable, but in doing so we must build up the picture by considering one component of this system of many components at a time.

James, we remember, said that he was not a person in his own right. In his behaviour he had allowed himself to become a 'thing' for other people. His mother, he felt, had never recognized his existence. One can say, I suppose, that one can recognize the existence of another person perfectly well in Woolworth's, but this was quite clearly not what he had in mind. He felt that she never recognized his freedom and right to have a subjective life of his own from out of which his actions would emerge as an expression of his own autonomous and integral self-being. On the contrary, he was merely her puppet, 'I was simply a symbol of her reality'. What had happened was that he had developed his subjectivity inwardly without daring to allow it any objective expression. In his case, this was not total, since he could express his 'true' self

very clearly and forcibly in *words*. He knew this: 'I can only make sounds.' There was, however, hardly anything else 'he' did, for all his other actions were ruled not by his will but by an alien will, which had formed itself within his own being; it was the reflection of the will of his mother's alien reality operating now from a source within his own being. The other, of course, must in the first instance always be the mother, that is, the 'mothering one'. The actions of this false self are not necessarily imitations or copies of the other, though its actions may come to be largely impersonations or caricatures of other personalities. The component we wish to separate off for the moment is the initial compliance with the other person's intentions or expectations for one's self, or what are felt to be the other person's intentions or expectations. This *usually* amounts to an excess of being 'good', never doing anything other than what one is told, never being 'a trouble', never asserting or even betraying any counter-will of one's own. Being good is not, however, done out of any positive desire on the individual's own part to do the things that are said by others to be good, but is a negative conformity to a standard that is the other's standard and not one's own, and is prompted by the dread of what might happen if one were to be oneself in actuality. This compliance is partly, therefore, a betrayal of one's own true possibilities, but it is also a technique of concealing and preserving one's own true possibilities, which, however, risk never becoming translated into actualities if they are entirely concentrated in an inner self for whom all things are possible in imagination but nothing is possible in fact.

We said that the false self arises in compliance with the intentions or expectations of the other, or with what are imagined to be the other's intentions or expectations. This does not *necessarily* mean that the false self is absurdly good. It may be absurdly bad. The essential feature of the compliant component in the false self is expressed in James's statement that he was 'a response to what other people say I am'. This consists in acting according to other people's definitions of what one is, in lieu of translating into action one's own definition of whom or what one wishes to be. It consists in becoming what the other person wants or expects one to become while only being one's 'self' in imagination or in games in

front of a mirror. In conformity, therefore, with what one perceives or fancies to be the *thing* one is in the other person's eyes, the false self becomes that thing. This thing may be a phoney sinner as well as a phoney saint. In the schizoid person, however, the whole of his being does not conform and comply in this way. The basic split in his being is along the line of cleavage between his outward compliance and his inner withholding of compliance.

Iago pretended to be what he was not, and indeed *Othello* as a whole is occupied with what it means to 'seem one thing and to be another'. But we do not find in that play or elsewhere in Shakespeare a treatment of the dilemma of seeming and being as lived by the type of person upon whom we are here focusing. The characters in Shakespeare 'seem' in order to further their own purposes. The schizoid individual 'seems' because he is frightened not to seem to further what he imagines to be the purpose that someone else has in mind for him. Only in a negative sense is he furthering his own purpose in so far as this outward compliance is to a large extent an attempt to preserve himself from total extinction. But he may 'get his own back' by attacking his own compliance (see below p. 102).

The observable behaviour that is the expression of the false self is often perfectly normal. We see a model child, an ideal husband, an industrious clerk. This façade, however, usually becomes more and more stereotyped, and in the stereotype bizarre characteristics develop. Again, there are a number of strands that can only be followed through one at a time.

One of the aspects of the compliance of the false self that is most clear is the fear implied by this compliance. The fear in it is evident, for why else would anyone act, not according to his intentions, but according to another person's? Hatred is also necessarily present, for what else is the adequate object of hatred except that which endangers one's self? However, the anxiety to which the self is subject precludes the possibility of a direct revelation of its hatred, except, we shall see later, in psychosis. Indeed, what is called psychosis is sometimes simply the sudden removal of the veil of the false self, which had been serving to maintain an outer behavioural normality that may, long ago, have failed to be any reflection of

the state of affairs in the secret self. Then the self will pour out accusations of persecution at the hands of that person with whom the false self has been complying for years.

The individual will declare that this person (mother, father, husband, wife) has been trying to kill him; or that he or she has tried to steal his 'soul' or his mind. That he/she is a tyrant, a torturer, an assassin, a child murderer, etc. For present purposes it is much more important to recognize the sense in which such 'delusions' are true than to see them as absurd.

This hatred, however, is revealed in another way which is quite compatible, up to a point, with sanity. There is a tendency for the false self to assume *more and more of the characteristics of the person or persons upon whom its compliance is based*. This assumption of the other person's characteristics may come to amount to an almost total impersonation of the other. The *hatred of the impersonation* becomes evident when the impersonation begins to turn into a *caricature*.

The impersonation of the other by the false self is not entirely the same as its compliance with the will of the other, for it may be directly counter to the other's will. The impersonation may be deliberate, as with some roles played by David. But, as also in David's case, the impersonation may be compulsive. The individual may not be aware of the extent to which his actions constitute an impersonation of someone else. The impersonation may be of a relatively constant and permanent nature or it may be quite transitory. Finally, the personality acted out may be more that of a figure of phantasy than of any actual person, just as the compliance may also be compliance with a figure of phantasy much more than with any real person.

Impersonation is a form of identification whereby a part of the individual assumes the identity of a personality he is not. In impersonation, the whole of the impersonator is not necessarily implicated. It is usually a sub-total identification limited to assuming the characteristics of another person's behaviour - his gestures, mannerisms, expressions; in general, his appearance and actions. Impersonation may be one component in a much more total identification with the other but one of its functions seems to be to

prevent more extensive identification with the other (and hence a more complete loss of the individual's own identity) from occurring.

Referring back again to David, his actions seem from the beginning of his life to have been in almost total compliance and conformity with his parents' actual wishes and expectations, i.e. he was a perfect model child who was never a trouble. I have come to regard such an account of the earliest origins of behaviour as especially ominous, when the parents sense nothing amiss in it all, but on the contrary mention it with evident pride.

Following his mother's death when he was ten, David began to display an extensive identification with her; he dressed himself up in her clothes in front of the mirror and kept house for his father just as his mother had done, even to the extent of darning his socks, knitting, sewing, doing embroidery, tapestry, selecting chair covers and curtains. Although it is quite obvious to an outside observer, to neither the patient nor the father was it apparent to what an extent he had become his mother. It is also clear that in doing so the boy was complying with a wish on his father's part that had never been directly expressed and of whose existence his father was quite unaware. The false self of this schoolboy was already a most complex system by the time he was fourteen. He was unaware of the extent of his identification with his mother but he was intensely aware of his compulsive tendency to act in a feminine way and of his difficulty in shaking off the part of Lady Macbeth.

To keep himself from lapsing into one or other female persona, he had deliberately to set about cultivating others. Although he tried very hard to sustain the impersonation of a normal schoolboy whom people would like (which is the simple ideal of the compliant false self), his false self was now a whole system of personas, some 'possible' socially, others not, some compulsive, others deliberately developed. But over all there was a persistent tendency for the impersonation to be difficult to sustain without some disquieting element intruding.

In general, into the original appearance of perfect normality and adjustment there creeps a certain oddity, a certain compulsive excessiveness in unwonted directions which turns it into a

caricature and creates in others a certain disquiet and unease, and even hatred.

For instance, James in some respects 'took after' his father. One of his father's irritating characteristics was a way of asking people at table if they had had enough to eat, and a tendency to press them to have more, even when they had said quite clearly that they were satisfied. James 'took after' his father in this respect: he always made a point of politely inquiring this of guests at table. At first it appeared as no more than a generous concern that others should have enough. But his solicitations then came to be compulsive and to be carried past all tolerable bounds, so that he made himself a complete nuisance and occasioned general embarrassment. In this, he took up what he sensed were the aggressive implications in his father's actions, and exposed these implications, through exaggerating them in his own adaptation, to general ridicule and anger. He, in fact, evoked from others the feelings he had towards his father but was unable to express directly to his face. Instead, he produced what amounted to a satirical comment on his father through the medium of a compulsive caricature of him.

Much of the eccentricity and oddity of schizoid behaviour has this basis. The individual begins by slavish conformity and compliance, and ends through the very medium of this conformity and compliance in expressing his own negative will and hatred.

The false-self system's compliance with the will of others reaches its most extreme form in the automatic obedience, echo-praxia, echolalia, and *flexibilitas cerea* of the catatonic. Here obedience, imitation, copying, are carried to such excess that the grotesque parody produced becomes a concealed indictment of the manipulating examiner. The hebephrenic frequently employs guying and mimicry of the persons he hates and fears as his preferred and only available means of attacking them. This may be one of the patient's private jokes.

The most hated aspects of the person who is the object of the identification come to the fore by being exposed to ridicule, scorn, or hatred through the medium of the impersonation. David's identification with his mother turned into a compulsive impersonation of a vicious queen.

The 'inner' secret self hates the characteristics of the false self.

It also fears it, because the assumption of an alien identity is always experienced as a threat to one's own. The self fears being engulfed by the spread of the identification. To some extent, the false-self system would seem to act analogously to the body's reticulo-endothelial system, which walls off and encapsulates dangerous intruding foreign matter and thus prevents these alien intruders from spreading more diffusely throughout the body. But if such is its defensive function it must be judged a failure. The inner self is not more true than the outer. David's inner secret self turned into a most controlling manipulating agency which used his false self very much like the puppet he felt he had been for his mother. That is, the shadow of his mother had fallen across his inner self as well as his outer self.

An instructive version of this problem occurred in a girl of twenty whose complaint was of being 'self-conscious' because she had an ugly face. To her face she applied white powder and bright red lipstick, giving it, if not an ugly appearance, at least a startlingly unpleasant, clownish, mask-like expression, which decidedly did not exhibit to advantage the features she had. In her mind, she did this to cover up how ugly she was underneath her heavy make-up. On further examination it became evident that this girl's attitude to her face contained in nuclear form the central issue of her life: her relationship with her mother.

She was much addicted to scrutinizing her face in the mirror. One day it came to her mind how hateful she looked. It had been in the back of her mind for years that she had her mother's face. The word 'hateful' was pregnant with ambiguous meanings. She hated the face she saw in the mirror (her mother's). She saw, too, how full of hate for her was the face that looked back at her from the mirror; she, who was looking at the mirror, was identified with her mother. She was in this respect her mother seeing the hate in her daughter's face: that is, with her mother's eyes, she saw her hate for her mother in the face in the mirror, and looked, with hatred, at her mother's hatred of herself.

Her relationship with her mother was of over-protection on her mother's part, and over-dependence and compliance on her part. She could not tolerate the possibility, in reality, of hating her mother, nor could she allow herself to recognize the presence of

hatred for herself in her mother. All that could not find direct expression and open acknowledgement in her was condensed in her presenting symptom. The central implication seemed to be that she saw her true face to be hateful (full of hate). She hated it for being so like her mother's. She was frightened of what she saw. In covering up her face she both disguised her own hatred and made a surrogate attack upon her mother's face. A similar principle operated throughout the rest of her life. In her, the child's normal obligingness and obedience not only turned into passive acquiescence in every wish of her mother, but became the complete effacement of herself and went on to become a parody of anything her mother consciously could have desired of her daughter. She turned her compliance into an attack, and exhibited for all to see this travesty of her true self, which was both a grotesque caricature of her mother and a mocking 'ugly' version of her own obedience.

Thus, the hatred of the other person is focused on the features of him which the individual has built into his own being, and yet at the same time the temporary or prolonged assumption of another's personality is a way of not being oneself which seems to offer security. Under the mantle of someone else's personality the person may act so much more competently, smoothly, 'reliably' - to use Mrs D.'s expression, the individual may prefer to pay the price of incurring the haunting sense of futility which is the necessary accompaniment of not being oneself, rather than hazard the frank experience of frightened helplessness and bewilderment which would be the inevitable start to being oneself. The false-self system tends to become more and more dead. In some people, it is as though they have turned their lives over to a robot which has made itself (apparently) indispensable.

Besides the more or less permanent 'personality' displayed by the false-self system, it may be, as we mentioned, the prey to innumerable *transitory identifications* on a small scale. The individual suddenly discovers that he has acquired a mannerism, a gesture, a turn of speech, an inflection in his voice that is not 'his' but belongs to someone else. Often it is a mannerism that he consciously particularly dislikes. The transitory acquisition of small fragments of other people's behaviour is not exclusively a schizoid problem, but it does tend to occur with particular insistence and

compulsiveness on the basis of the schizoid false-self system. The whole behaviour of some schizophrenics is hardly anything else than a patchwork of other people's peculiarities made more peculiar by the incongruity of the setting in which they are reproduced. The following example is of a quite 'normal' person.

A girl student whose name was Macallum developed intensely ambivalent feelings towards a male lecturer called Adams. On one occasion she found to her horror that she had signed her name 'Macadams'. 'I could have cut off my hand with disgust.'

Such little fragments of others seem to get embedded in the individual's behaviour as pieces of shrapnel in the body. While maintaining an apparently happy smooth relationship with the outer world, the individual is for ever picking at those alien fragments which (as he experiences it) are unaccountably extruding from him. These behavioural fragments fill the subject very often with disgust and horror, as in the case of the girl student, and are hated and attacked. 'I could have cut my hand off.' But, of course, this destructive impulse is directed, in fact, against her own hand. This little 'introjected' *action fragment* or particle cannot be attacked without violence to the subject's own being. (Jean effaced her own features in attacking her mother-in-her-face.)

If all the individual's behaviour comes to be compulsively alienated from the secret self so that it is given over entirely to compulsive mimicry, impersonating, caricaturing, and to such transitory behavioural foreign bodies as well, he may then try to strip himself of all his behaviour. This is one form of catatonic withdrawal. It is as though one were to try to cure a general skin infection by sloughing off one's whole skin. Since this is impossible the schizophrenic may pick and tear away, as it were, at his behavioural skin.