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# FOUR MASTER TROPES

By KENNETH BURKE

I REFER to metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. And my primary concern with them here will be not with their purely figurative usage, but with their rôle in the discovery and description of "the truth." It is an evanescent moment that we shall deal with — for not only does the dividing line between the figurative and literal usages shift, but also the four tropes shade into one another. Give a man but one of them, tell him to exploit its possibilities, and if he is thorough in doing so, he will come upon the other three.

The "literal" or "realistic" applications of the four tropes usually go by a different set of names. Thus:

For *metaphor* we could substitute *perspective*;

For *metonymy* we could substitute *reduction*;

For *synecdoche* we could substitute *representation*;

For *irony* we could substitute *dialectic*.

We must subsequently try to make it clear in what respects we think these substitutions are justifiable. It should, however, be apparent at a glance that, regardless of whether our proposed substitutions are justifiable, considered in themselves they do shade into another, as we have said that the four tropes do. A dialectic, for instance, aims to give us a representation by the use of mutually related or interacting perspectives — and this resultant perspective of perspectives will necessarily be a reduction in the sense that a chart drawn to scale is a reduction of the area charted.

Metaphor is a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else. It brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of

a this. If we employ the word "character" as a general term for whatever can be thought of as distinct (any thing, pattern, situation, structure, nature, person, object, act, rôle, process, event, etc.,) then we could say that metaphor tells us something about one character as considered from the point of view of another character. And to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a *perspective* upon A.

It is customary to think that objective reality is dissolved by such relativity of terms as we get through the shifting of perspectives (the perception of one character in terms of many diverse characters). But on the contrary, it is by the approach through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality. If we are in doubt as to what an object is, for instance, we deliberately try to consider it in as many different terms as its nature permits: lifting, smelling, tasting, tapping, holding in different lights, subjecting to different pressures, dividing, matching, contrasting, etc.

Indeed, in keeping with the older theory of realism (what we might call "poetic realism," in contrast with modern "scientific realism") we could say that characters possess *degrees of being* in proportion to the variety of perspectives from which they can with justice be perceived. Thus we could say that plants have "more being" than minerals, animals have more being than plants, and men have more being than animals, because each higher order admits and requires a new dimension of terms not literally relevant to the lower orders.

By deliberate coaching and criticism of the perspective process, characters can be considered tentatively, in terms of other characters, for experimental or heuristic purposes. Examples may be offered at random: for instance, human motivation may, with varying degrees of relevance and reward, be considered in terms of conditioned reflexes, or chemicals, or the class struggles, or the love of God, or neurosis, or pilgrimage, or power, or movements of the planets, or geography, or sun spots, etc. Various kinds of

scientific specialists now carry out the implications of one or another of such perspectives with much more perseverance than that with which a 17th Century poet might in one poem pursue the exploitation of a "conceit."

In *Permanence and Change* I have developed at some length the relationship between metaphor and perspective. I there dealt with such perspectives as an "incongruity," because the seeing of something in terms of something else involves the "carrying-over" of a term from one realm into another, a process that necessarily involves varying degrees of incongruity in that the two realms are never identical. But besides the mere desire not to restate this earlier material, there is another reason why we can hurry on to our next pair (metonymy and reduction). For since the four pairs overlap upon one another, we shall be carrying the first pair with us as we proceed.

## 2.

Science, concerned with processes and "processing," is not properly concerned with substance (that is, it is not concerned with "being," as "poetic realism" is). Hence, it need not be concerned with motivation. All it need know is correlation. The limits of science, *qua* science, do not go beyond the statement that, when certain conditions are met, certain new conditions may be expected to follow. It is true that, in the history of the actual development of science, the discovery of such correlations has been regularly guided by philosophies of causation ("substantial" philosophies that were subsequently "discredited" or were so radically redefined as to become in effect totally different philosophies). And it is equally true that the discovery of correlations has been guided by ideational forms developed through theology and governmental law. Such "impurities" will always be detectible *behind* science as the act of given scientists; but science *qua* science is abstracted from them.

Be the world "mind," or "matter," or "both," or "several,"

you will follow the same procedure in striking a match. It is in this sense that science, *qua* science, is concerned with operations rather than with substances, even though the many inventions to do with the chemistry of a match can be traced back to a source in very explicit beliefs about substances and motivations of nature — and even of the supernatural.

However, as soon as you move into the social realm, involving the relation of man to man, mere *correlation* is not enough. Human relationships must be *substantial*, related by the copulative, the "is" of "being." In contrast with "scientific realism," "poetic realism" is centered in this emphasis. It seeks (except insofar as it is affected by the norms of "scientific realism") to place the motives of action, as with the relation between the seminal (potential) and the growing (actualized). Again and again, there have been attempts to give us a "science of human relations" after the analogy of the natural sciences. But there is a strategic or crucial respect in which this is impossible; namely: there can be no "science" of substance, except insofar as one is willing to call philosophy, metaphysics, or theology "sciences" (and they are not sciences in the sense of the positive scientific departments).

Hence, any attempt to deal with human relationships after the analogy of naturalistic correlations becomes necessarily the *reduction* of some higher or more complex realm of being to the terms of a lower or less complex realm of being. And, recalling that we propose to treat *metonymy* and *reduction* as substitutes for each other, one may realize why we thought it necessary thus to introduce the subject of metonymy.

The basic "strategy" in metonymy is this: to convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible. E.g., to speak of "the heart" rather than "the emotions." If you trail language back far enough, of course, you will find that all our terms for "spiritual" states were metonymic in origin. We think of "the emotions," for instance, as applying solely to the realm of consciousness, yet obviously the word is rooted in the

most "materialistic" term of all, "motion" (a key strategy in Western materialism has been the reduction of "consciousness" to "motion"). In his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Richards is being quite "metonymic" in proposing that we speak not of the "emotions" aroused in the reader by the work of art, but the "commotions."

Language develops by metaphorical extension, in borrowing words from the realm of the corporeal, visible, tangible and applying them by analogy to the realm of the incorporeal, invisible, intangible; then in the course of time, the original corporeal reference is forgotten, and only the incorporeal, metaphorical extension survives (often because the very conditions of living that reminded one of the corporeal reference have so altered that the cross reference no longer exists with near the same degree of apparentness in the "objective situation" itself); and finally, poets regain the original relation, in reverse, by a "metaphorical extension" back from the intangible into a tangible equivalent (the first "carrying-over" from the material to the spiritual being compensated by a second "carrying-over" from the spiritual back into the material); and this "archaizing" device we call "metonymy."

"Metonymy" is a device of "poetic realism" — but its partner, "reduction," is a device of "scientific realism." Here "poetry" and "behaviorism" meet. For the poet spontaneously knows that "beauty *is as beauty does*" (that the "state" must be "embodied" in an actualization). He knows that human relations require actions, which are *dramatizations*, and that the essential medium of drama is the posturing, tonalizing body placed in a material scene. He knows that "shame," for instance, is not merely a "state," but a movement of the eye, a color of the cheek, a certain quality of voice and set of the muscles; he knows this as "behavioristically" as the formal scientific behaviorist who would "reduce" the state itself to these corresponding bodily equivalents.

He also knows, however, that these bodily equivalents are but part of the *idiom of expression* involved in the act. They are

"figures." They are hardly other than "symbolizations." Hence, for all his "archaicizing" usage here, he is not offering his metonymy as a *substantial* reduction. For in "poetic realism," states of mind as the motives of action are not reducible to materialistic terms. Thus, though there is a sense in which both the poetic behaviorist and the scientific behaviorist are exemplifying the strategy of metonymy (as the poet translates the spiritual into an idiom of material equivalents, and may even select for attention the same bodily responses that the scientist may later seek to measure), the first is using metonymy as a *terminological* reduction whereas the scientific behaviorist offers his reduction as a "real" reduction. (However, he does not do this *qua* scientist, but only by reason of the materialist metaphysics, with its assumptions about substance and motive, that is implicit in his system.)

## 3.

Now, note that a reduction is a *representation*. If I reduce the contours of the United States, for instance, to the terms of a relief map, I have within these limits "represented" the United States. As a mental state is the "representation" of certain material conditions, so we could — reversing the process — say that the material conditions are "representative" of the mental state. That is, if there is some kind of correspondence between what we call the act of perception and what we call the thing perceived, then either of these equivalents can be taken as "representative" of the other. Thus, as reduction (metonymy) overlaps upon metaphor (perspective) so likewise it overlaps upon synecdoche (representation).

For this purpose we consider synecdoche in the usual range of dictionary sense, with such meanings as: part for the whole, whole for the part, container for the contained, sign for the thing signified, material for the thing made (which brings us nearer to metonymy), cause for effect, effect for cause, genus for species, species for genus, etc. All such conversions imply an integral re-

lationship, a relationship of convertibility, between the two terms.

The "noblest synecdoche," the perfect paradigm or prototype for all lesser usages, is found in metaphysical doctrines proclaiming the identity of "microcosm" and "macrocosm." In such doctrines, where the individual is treated as a replica of the universe, and vice versa, we have the ideal synecdoche, since microcosm is related to macrocosm as part to whole, and either the whole can represent the part or the part can represent the whole. (For "represent" here we could substitute "be identified with.") One could thus look through the remotest astronomical distances to the "truth within," or could look within to learn the "truth in all the universe without." Leibniz's monadology is a good instance of the synecdochic on this grand scale. (And "representation" is his word for this synecdochic relationship.)

A similar synecdochic form is present in all theories of political representation, where some part of the social body (either traditionally established, or elected, or coming into authority by revolution) is held to be "representative" of the society as a whole. The pattern is essential to Rousseau's theory of the *volonté générale*, for instance. And though there are many disagreements within a society as to what part should represent the whole and how this representation should be accomplished, in a complex civilization any act of representation automatically implies a synecdochic relationship (insofar as the act is, or is held to be, "truly representative").

Sensory representation is, of course, synecdochic in that the senses abstract certain qualities from some bundle of electro-chemical activities we call, say, a tree, and these qualities (such as size, shape, color, texture, weight, etc.) can be said "truly to represent" a tree. Similarly, artistic representation is synecdochic, in that certain relations within the medium "stand for" corresponding relations outside it. There is also a sense in which the well-formed work of art is internally synecdochic, as the beginning of a drama contains its close or the close sums up the beginning, the parts all



thus being consubstantially related. Indeed, one may think what he will of microcosm-macrocosm relationships as they are applied to "society" or "the universe," the fact remains that, as regards such a "universe" as we get in a well-organized work of art, at every point the paradoxes of the synecdochic present themselves to the critic for analysis. Similarly, the realm of psychology (and particularly the psychology of art) requires the use of the synecdochic reversals. Indeed, I would want deliberately to "coach" the concept of the synecdochic by extending it to cover such relations (and their reversals) as: before for after, implicit for explicit, temporal sequence for logical sequence, name for narrative, disease for cure, hero for villain, active for passive. At the opening of *The Ancient Mariner*, for instance, the Albatross is a *gerundive*: its nature when introduced is that of something *to be* murdered, and it implicitly contains the future that is to become explicit. In *Moby Dick*, Ahab as pursuer is pursued; his action is a passion.

Metonymy may be treated as a special application of synecdoche. If, for instance, after the analogy of a correlation between "mind and body" or "consciousness and matter (or motion)" we selected quality and quantity as a "synecdochically related pair," then we might propose to treat as synecdoche the substitution of either quantity for quality or quality for quantity (since either side could be considered as the sign, or symptom, of the other). But only *one* of these, the substitution of quantity for quality, would be a metonymy. We might say that representation (synecdoche) stresses a *relationship* or *connectedness* between two sides of an equation, a connectedness that, like a road, extends in either direction, from quantity to quality or from quality to quantity; but reduction follows along this road in only *one* direction, from quality to quantity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, we must modify this remark somewhat. Reduction, *as per scientific realism*, would be confined to but one direction. Reduction, that is, as the word is now generally used. But originally, "reduction"

Now "poetic realism," in contrast with "scientific realism," cannot confine itself to representation in this metonymic, one-direction sense. True, every art, in its nature as a medium, reduces a state of consciousness to a "corresponding" sensory body (so material that it can be reproduced, bought and sold). But the aim of such *embodiment* is to produce in the observer a corresponding state of *consciousness* (that is, the artist proceeds from "mind" to "body" that his representative reduction may induce the audience to proceed from "body" to "mind"). But there is an important difference between representing the quality of an experience thus and reducing the quality to a quantity. One might even "represent" the human body in the latter, reductive sense, by reducing it to ashes and offering a formula for the resultant chemicals. Otto Neurath's "isotypes" (see his *Modern Man in the Making*, or our review of it, "Quantity and Quality," in the appendix of *The Philosophy of Literary Form*) are representations in the latter, reductive sense, in contrast with the kind of representation we get in realistic portrait-painting.

Our point in going over this old ground is to use it as a way of revealing a tactical error in the attempt to treat of *social* motivations. We refer to the widespread belief that the mathematico-quantitative ideal of the physical sciences can and should serve as the ideal of the "social sciences," a belief that has led, for instance, to the almost fabulous amassing of statistical surveys in the name of "sociology." Or, if one insisted upon the right to build "sciences" after this model (since no one could deny that statistics are often revealing) our claim would be that science in this restricted sense (that explains higher orders by reduction to lower

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was used in ways that make it closer rather to the margin of its overlap upon "perspective," as anything considered in terms of anything else could be said to be "reduced" — or "brought back" ("referred") — to it, so that the consideration of art in terms of morality, politics, or religion could have been called "the reduction" or art to morality, or politics, or religion.

orders, organic complexities by reduction to atomistic simplicities, being by reduction to motion, or quality by reduction to number, etc.) could not *take the place* of metaphysics or religion, but would have to return to the role of "handmaiden."

Let us get at the point thus: *A terminology of conceptual analysis, if it is not to lead to misrepresentation, must be constructed in conformity with a representative anecdote — whereas anecdotes "scientifically" selected for reductive purposes are not representative.* E.g., think of the scientist who, in seeking an entrance into the analysis of human motivations, selects as his "informative anecdote" for this purpose some laboratory experiment having to do with the responses of animals. Obviously, such an anecdote has its peculiarly simplificatory ("reductive") character, or genius — and the scientist who develops his analytic terminology about this anecdote as his informative case must be expected to have, as a result, a terminology whose character or genius is restricted by the character or genius of the model for the description of which it is formed. He next proceeds to transfer (to "metaphor") this terminology to the interpretation of a different order of cases, turning for instance from animals to infants and from infants to the acts of fully developed adults. And when he has made these steps, applying his terminology to a kind of anecdote so different from the kind about which it was formed, this misapplication of his terminology would not give him a representative interpretation at all, but a mere "debunking." Only insofar as the analyst had not lived up to his claims, only insofar as his terminology for the analysis of a higher order of cases was *not* restricted to the limits proper to the analysis of a lower order of cases, could he hope to discuss the higher order of cases in an adequate set of terms. Otherwise, the genius of his restricted terminology must "drag the interpretation down to their level."

This observation goes for any terminological approach to the analysis of human acts or relationships that is shaped in conformity with an unrepresentative case (or that selects as the "way in"

to one's subject an "informative anecdote" belonging in some other order than the case to be considered). For instance, insofar as Anton Korzybski really does form his terminology for the analysis of meaning in conformity with that contraption of string, plugs, and tin he calls the "Structural Differential," his analysis of meaning is "predestined" to misrepresentation, since the genius of the contraption itself is not a representative example of meaning. It is a "reduction" of meaning, a reduction in the restricted sense of the term, as Thurman Arnold's reduction of social relations into terms of the psychiatric metaphor is reductive.

What then, it may be asked, would be a "representative anecdote?" But that takes us into the fourth pair: irony and dialectic.

#### 4.

A treatment of the irony-dialectic pair will be much easier to follow if we first delay long enough to consider the equatibility of "dialectic" with "dramatic."

A human rôle (such as we get in drama) may be summed up in certain slogans, or formulae, or epigrams, or "ideas" that characterize the agent's situation or strategy. The rôle involves properties both intrinsic to the agent and developed with relation to the scene and to other agents. And the "summings-up" ("ideas") similarly possess properties derived both from the agent and from the various factors with which the agent is in relationship. Where the ideas are in action, we have drama; where the agents are in ideation, we have dialectic.

Obviously, there are elements of "dramatic personality" in dialectic ideation, and elements of dialectic in the mutual influence of dramatic agents in contributing to one another's ideational development. You might state all this another way by saying that you cannot have ideas without persons or persons without ideas. Thus, one might speak of "Socratic irony" as "dramatic," and of "dramatic irony" as "Socratic."

*Relativism* is got by the fragmentation of either drama or dia-

lectic. That is, if you isolate any one agent in a drama, or any one advocate in a dialogue, and see the whole in terms of his position alone, you have the purely relativistic. And in relativism there is no irony. (Indeed, as Cleanth Brooks might say, it is the very absence of irony in relativism that makes it so susceptible to irony. For relativism sees everything in but one set of terms — and since there are endless other terms in which things could be seen, the irony of the monologue that makes everything in its image would be in this ratio: the greater the *absolutism* of the statements, the greater the *subjectivity* and *relativity* in the position of the agent making the statements.)

Irony arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a *development* which uses all the terms. Hence, from the standpoint of this total form (this "perspective of perspectives"), none of the participating "sub-perspectives" can be treated as either precisely right or precisely wrong. They are all voices, or personalities, or positions, integrally affecting one another. When the dialectic is properly formed, they are the number of characters needed to produce the total development. Hence, reverting to our suggestion that we might extend the synecdochic pattern to include such reversible pairs as disease-cure, hero-villain, active-passive, we should "ironically" note the function of the disease in "perfecting" the cure, or the function of the cure in "perpetuating" the influences of the disease. Or we should note that only through an internal and external experiencing of folly could we possess (in our intelligence or imagination) sufficient "characters" for some measure of development beyond folly.

People usually confuse the dialectic with the relativistic. Noting that the dialectic (or dramatic) explicitly attempts to establish a distinct set of characters, all of which protest variously at odds or on the bias with one another, they think no further. It is certainly relativistic, for instance, to state that any term (as per metaphor-perspective) can be seen from the point of view of any

other term. But insofar as terms are thus encouraged to participate in an orderly parliamentary development, the dialectic of this participation produces (in the observer who considers the whole from the standpoint of the participation of all the terms rather than from the standpoint of any one participant) a "resultant certainty" of a different quality, necessarily ironic, since it requires that all the sub-certainties be considered as neither true nor false, but *contributory* (as were we to think of the resultant certainty or "perspective of perspectives" as a noun, and to think of all the contributory voices as necessary modifiers of that noun).

To be sure, relativism is the constant *temptation* of either dialectic or drama (consider how often, for instance, Shakespeare is called a relativist). And historians for the most part *are relativistic*. But where one considers different historical characters from the standpoint of a total development, one could encourage each character to comment upon the others without thereby sacrificing a perspective upon the lot. This could be got particularly, I think, if historical characters themselves (i.e., periods or cultures treated as "individual persons") were considered never to begin or end, but rather to change in intensity or poignancy. History, in this sense, would be a dialectic of characters in which, for instance, we should never expect to see "feudalism" overthrown by "capitalism" and "capitalism" succeeded by some manner of national or international or non-national or neo-national or post-national socialism — but rather should note elements of all such positions (or "voices") existing always, but attaining greater clarity of expression or imperiousness of proportion at one period than another.

Irony is never Pharisaic, but there is a Pharisaic temptation in irony. To illustrate the point, I should like to cite a passage from a poet and critic who knows a good deal about irony, and who is discussing a poet who knows a good deal about irony — but in this particular instance, I submit, he is wrong. I refer to a passage in which Allen Tate characterizes the seduction scene in *The*

*Waste Land* as "ironic" and the poet's attitude as that of "humility." (I agree that "humility" is the proper partner of irony — but I question whether the passage is ironic enough to embody humility.)

Mr. Tate characterizes irony as "that arrangement of experience, either premeditated by art or accidentally appearing in the affairs of men, which permits to the spectator an insight superior to that of the actor." And he continues:

The seduction scene is the picture of modern and dominating man. The arrogance and pride of conquest of the "small house agent's clerk" are the badge of science, bumptious practicality, overweening secular faith. The very success of this conquest witnesses its aimless character; it succeeds as a wheel succeeds in turning; he can only conquer again.

His own failure to understand his position is irony, and the poet's insight into it is humility. But for the grace of God, says the poet in effect, there go I. There is essentially the poetic attitude, an attitude that Eliot has been approaching with increasing purity.

We need not try to decide whether or not the poet was justified in feeling "superior" to the clerk. But we may ask how one could *possibly* exemplify an attitude of "humility" by feeling "superior"? There is, to be sure, a brand of irony, called "romantic irony," that might fit in with such a pattern — the kind of irony that did, as a matter of fact, arise as an aesthetic opposition to cultural philistinism, and in which the artist considered himself *outside of* and *superior to* the rôle he was rejecting. And though not "essentially *the* poetic attitude," it is essentially *a* poetic attitude, an attitude exemplified by much romantic art (a sort of pamphleteering, or external, attitude towards "the enemy").

True irony, however, irony that really does justify the attribute of "humility," is not "superior" to the enemy. (I might even here rephrase my discussion of Eliot in *Attitudes Toward History* by saying that Eliot's problem in religion has resided precisely in his attempt to convert romantic irony into classic irony, really to replace a state of "superiority" by a state of "humility" — and

*Murder in the Cathedral* is a ritual aimed at precisely such purification of motives.) True irony, humble irony, is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him, is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him *within*, being consubstantial with him. This is the irony of Flaubert, when he recognizes that Madame Bovary is himself. One sees it in Thomas Mann — and in what he once called, when applying the term to another, “Judas psychology.” And there was, if not the humility of strength, at least a humility of gentle surrender, in Anatole France.

In *The Waste Land*, the poet is not saying “there but for the grace of God go I.” On the contrary, he is, if not thanking God, at least congratulating himself, that he is not like other men, such other men as this petty clerk. If this was “humility,” then the Pharisee is Humble Citizen No. 1. With Newton, on the other hand, there was no “superiority” in his exclamation as he observed the criminal. He did not mean that that man was a criminal but he, Newton, thank God, was not; he meant that *he too was a criminal, but that the other man was going to prison for him*. Here was true irony-and-humility, since Newton was simultaneously both outside the criminal and within him.

“Superiority” in the dialectic can arise only in the sense that one may feel the need of *more characters* than the particular foolish characters under consideration. But in one sense he can *never* be superior, for he must realize that he also *needs this particular foolish character as one of the necessary modifiers*. Dialectic irony (or humility) here, we might even say, provides us with a kind of “technical equivalent for the doctrine of original sin.” Folly and villainy are integral motives, necessary to wisdom or virtue.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I would consider Falstaff a gloriously ironic conception because we are so at one with him in his vices, while he himself embodies his vices in a mode of identification or brotherhood that is all but religious. Falstaff would not simply rob a man, from without. He *identifies himself* with



A third temptation of irony is its tendency towards the simplification of literalness. That is: although *all* the characters in a dramatic or dialectic development are necessary qualifiers of the definition, there is usually some one character that enjoys the rôle of *primus inter pares*. For whereas any of the characters may be viewed in terms of any other, this one character may be taken as the summarizing vessel, or synecdochic representative, of the development as a whole. This is the rôle of Socrates in the Platonic dialogue, for instance — and we could similarly call the proletariat the Socrates of the Marxist Symposium of History, as they are not merely equal participants along with the other characters,

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the victim of a theft; he *represents* the victim. He would not crudely steal a purse; rather, he *joins forces* with the owner of the purse — and it is only when the harsh realities of this imperfect world have imposed a brutally divisive clarity upon the situation, that Falstaff is left holding the purse. He produces a new quality, a state of synthesis or merger — and it so happens that, when this synthesis is finally dissociated again into its analytic components (the crudities of the realm of practical property relationships having reduced this state of qualitative merger to a state of quantitative division), the issue as so simplified sums up to the fact that the purse has changed hands. He converts "thine" into "ours" — and it is "circumstances over which he has no control" that go to convert this "ours" into a "mine." A mere thief would have directly converted "thine" into "mine." It is the addition of these intermediate steps that makes the vital difference between a mere thief and Falstaff; for it is precisely these intermediate steps that mark him with a conviviality, a sociality, essentially religious — and in this *sympathetic* distortion of religious values resides the irony of his conception.

We might bring out the point sharply by contrasting Falstaff with Tartuffe. Tartuffe, like Falstaff, exploits the coöperative values for competitive ends. He too would convert "thine" into "mine" by putting it through the social alembic of "ours." But the conception of Tartuffe is not ironic, since he is pure hypocrite. He uses the religious values simply as a swindler. Tartuffe's piety, which he uses to gain the confidence of his victims, is a mere deception. Whereas Tartuffe is all competition and merely *simulates* the sentiments of coöperation, Falstaff is genuinely coöperative, sympathetic, a synecdochic part of his victim — but along with such rich gifts of identification, what is to prevent a purse from changing hands?

but also represent the *end* or *logic* of the development as a whole.

This "most representative" character thus has a dual function: one we might call "adjectival" and the other "substantial." The character is "adjectival," as embodying one of the qualifications necessary to the total definition, but is "substantial" as embodying the conclusions of the development as a whole. Irony is sacrificed to "the simplification of literalness" when this duality of rôle is neglected (as it may be neglected by either the reader, the writer, or both). In Marxism as a literally libertarian philosophy, for instance, slavery is "bad," and is so treated in the rhetoric of proletarian emancipation (e.g., "wage slavery"). Yet from the standpoint of the development as a whole, slavery must be treated ironically, as with Engel's formula: "Without the slavery of antiquity, no modern socialism." Utilization of the vanquished by enslavement, he notes, was a great cultural advance over the wasteful practice of slaying the vanquished.

##### 5.

Irony, as approached through either drama or dialectic, moves us into the area of "law" and "justice" (the "necessity" or "inevitability" of the *lex talionis*) that involves matters of form in art (as form affects anticipation and fulfilment) and matters of prophecy and prediction in history. There is a level of generalization at which predictions about "inevitable" developments in history are quite justified. We may state with confidence, for instance, that what arose in time must fall in time (hence, that any given structure of society must "inevitably" perish). We may make such prophecy more precise, with the help of irony, in saying that the developments that led to the rise will, by the further course of their development, "inevitably" lead to the fall (true irony always, we hold, thus involving an "internal fatality," a principle operating from within, though its logic may also be grounded in the nature of the extrinsic scene, whose properties contribute to the same development.)

The point at which different casuistries appear (for fitting these "general laws of inevitability" to the unique cases of history) is the point where one tries to decide exactly what new characters, born of a given prior character, will be the "inevitable" vessels of the prior character's deposition. As an over-all ironic formula here, and one that has the quality of "inevitability," we could lay it down that "what goes forth as A returns as non-A." This is the basic pattern that places the essence of drama and dialectic in the irony of the "peripety," the strategic moment of reversal.