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Pirandello's Henry IV [a production book]

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Boston University
PIRANDELLO'S HENRY IV

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For the Master Degree
School of Fine & Applied Arts
Boston University

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PIRANDELLO'S **HENRY IV:** THE IDEA OF THE PLAY

In the first of October, 1960, I wrote the Graduate Committee of the Theatre Division a letter explaining my concept of *Henry IV* and outlining my general intention. Although six months have passed between that first letter and the writing of this essay, the letter still reflects substantially what I had in mind; and so I reprint it here in its entirety.

Boston University
School of Fine and Applied Arts
Theatre Division

Attention: The Graduate Committee

Gentlemen:

As partial fulfillment of the requirements for a M.F.A. in directing, I respectfully submit as my thesis *Henry IV* of Pirandello. It is my feeling that in this play, Pirandello has integrated his philosophic meanings into the fabric of the action more successfully than in many others of his plays. I see *Henry IV* as the tragic hero of our time, even in the Aristotelian sense: A noble soul who suffers and ought not to. *Henry IV* is noble because he perceives the superficialities of the world, while most of us are deceived by them. He hopes to escape this terrifying vision by creating one of his own, a world of whose falsity he is equally aware, but which, since it springs from his imagination will never change, and thus be more real than reality. Up to now, *Henry IV* would appear to be a Quixotic figure, but his modern day hyper-sophistication denies him the serenity of grace through which Don Quixote moves. It is Henry's agony to run from the real world by creating one of his own, whose evanescent walls cannot entirely obscure that horror he has tried to escape. Finally, it is Henry's tragedy to be the actor who has so mastered a role, and has played it for so long, that he cannot slough it when he wants to.

*Henry IV* is a tragic hero, but the play in which he appears is less than a tragedy. Perhaps the main reason for this is that Pirandello is more interested in unveiling a spectacle of suffering, than in laying down an orderly plot. The passion is there, but the purpose
is incidental, and the perception is left up to the audience. But although *Henry IV* is not a tragedy, with a little help from the director, the play can have the impact of tragedy. This is what I propose to do.

Before the opening of the play, Henry has worked twenty years to establish the mood of the eleventh century Germany. For this reason, I want to ensure for the sets and costumes not so much an historical authenticity, which is impossible for us anyway, but rather the re-creation of the atmosphere of those times, a paradox of vibrant color and hollow darkness, of intense spiritualism and superstition. These qualities should not be evident at their height all at once, but should grow, even as Henry grows in his determination to enact revenge on Belcredi.

The tone of the play is quite melodramatic, and I expect to guide the players into a quite presentational style of delivery, as opposed to the naturalistic, without forgetting truth. There is much poetry, some of it quite ravishing, in this play, and I would like both players and audience to relish it. My task is made easier because in this play Pirandello never uses poetry for its own sake, but rather as the vehicle most congenial to making his points. He does not apologize for it, so I will not. Similarly, the progression of rhythms in *Henry IV* is quite musical and reinforces the dramatic line. For instance, in the first act, the rhythms are rapid and brittle of texture, but by the end of the first act, they have become lyric and sonorous. These rhythms and textures can help sustain the play, if they are contrasted with each other and reinforced with the action.

The role of *Henry IV* himself is exceptionally difficult, because it requires someone to portray someone acting. So far I have not decided on any one approach to the problem, nor should I until I work with the actor, and then it should be a product of both of us. Nevertheless, it occurs to me at this stage that one possible approach to the problem would be for the actor to master the role of the play within the play first, and then work backwards. Pirandello never really tells us much about his tragic hero, he merely calls him by the name of the role that he has in fact become. Whoever our tragic hero once was, it has become evident that he has now become *Henry IV* in the flesh, and that all his reactions must now come through the mask that will not come off.

The play seethes with a virile, almost violent energy that characterizes Pirandello in all his works. However, there are places where this energy submits to a keenness of compassion expressed by Henry for the sorry lot of modern man. Partly because these episodes lie in the parenthesis of contrasting scenes, and partly because this sympathy is expressed by the one character most deserving of our pity, these passages are ravishing. I hope to reinforce them with a musical theme, which shall recur throughout
the production. I'm looking for the lyric dolour of the twentieth century, verging on dissonance. Maybe Bartok would do.

Finally, there are many converging dramatic lines in the play, notably the Cure, the Revenge, and the Love elements. These need to be articulated quite clearly through physical arrangements, since they are interwoven into an almost confusing complexity. And there are, of course, the philosophical considerations, namely the nature of change, the essence of reality, the onus of words, which Pirandello is quite conscientious in exemplifying, at least in this play. Thus, Henry beats down his servants with words, not only to advance the plot, not only to reveal himself more to the audience, but also to explicate the argument. The reason I have chosen this play of Pirandello rather than Six Characters, for instance, is that the responsibility of the director toward the argument need not diverge too far from his responsibility toward the theatrical values.

I hope that this may give some idea of my intention in directing Henry IV. I should be glad to clarify this intention at any time should this prove inadequate.

I should like to be allowed to present Henry IV this semester, if it is possible.

Yours respectfully,

Paul R. Cooper

It should be pointed out at once that the aims described above were by no means completely realized, nor did my conception of the play remain entirely the same. However, even the small degree in which my original intention may have been realized is a source of growing wonder to me. For the fact that we fall short of our ideals is a circumstance all too common in the Theatre.

The Dramatic Key to the Idea

...may be found by asking the question, "What does Henry do?" What does he want, what is his action? There is a welter of possibilities: As Eric Bentley pointed out recently, Henry is an old man
pinning for his youth. A theologian friend of mine points out quite astutely that Henry is the doubting Catholic begging for the Marian intercession. Another possibility is that Henry is a saint grappling with the Kierkegaardian Absurd. Many of my friends insist that Henry is struggling to free himself from his bondage of fantasy, while there are others who point out quite correctly that Henry does in fact place himself irretrievably in the prison of his imagination. All of these possibilities are correct, and taken together they represent the inner truth of experience for which we value the play. Yet they merely talk about Henry IV, the core of the play is not to be found in them, for not one of these descriptions is supported by enough dramatic action to focus the play or give it direction. They merely afford different ways to view the essential predicament of Henry: That of a man caught between two worlds, and at home in neither. It is the despair of a man in Limbo, too agonized to cease wishing for the haven of one world or the other; too wise to believe his wishes will come true. The answer to "What does Henry do? would seem to be, he suffers.

But a tale of mere suffering is like a passion play with no point, no redemption to endorse the agony. Let us remember the Aristotelian formula, that passion must grow out of purpose, in order that the whole be infused with perception. It was this train of thought that led me to search for a cohesive purpose in Henry IV, and to believe that Henry's purpose or action which gives the play its point was Revenge. Just as the complexity of Hamlet is dramatized by his incapacity to achieve his revenge, so too the predicament of Henry IV would be

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heightened by his failure to enact his revenge on Belcredi— until, again as in Hamlet the deed is done in the end, almost as an after-thought.

The key then, to the dramatic idea I resolved would lie in the melodramatic love-revenge triangle. Henry must desire to expose and avenge himself on Belcredi, for having stolen from him in effect his love and twenty years. As for the Marquesa, Henry must try to effect a rapprochement with her. That the Marquesa represents his past, and Belcredi his despair is for the moment beside the point. To my way of thinking at the start of the production, it would be enough if the personal relationships were adumbrated: Pirandello would be well served.

That this triangle exists on the philosophical plane should not be forgotten. The Marquesa, Belcredi, and Henry are related by their attitudes toward life. Both Henry and Belcredi see the essential absurdity of life, but while Henry takes it very seriously, Belcredi just laughs. The Marquesa is torn between the two attitudes much in the way she is torn between the two men: her relationship with Belcredi she has begun to outgrow; she wants something better.

The Theatrical Realization

...of the idea consists in delineating the conflict between two worlds or world views: the so-called "real" world of Henry's visitors, and the so-called "make-believe" world of Henry himself. The real world of the Marquesa is plain; unlyrical, lacking in romance. The heady abandon of a heedless affair has degenerated into endless bickering.
It is partly to escape this world that the Marquesa seeks out Henry, only to find that there is even more suffering in his world as in hers. Henry's real sufferings lie not in his excommunication by Gregory VII, but rather in the knowledge that since the whole situation is make-believe, his sufferings are in vain.

Thus, when the visitors arrive at the villa, they are clearly alien to it. Within the very first beat, the secret counselors are initiating a new recruit into their world of extravagant fantasy; he in turn finds the whole experience very bewildering and not a little frightening. The entire idea is analogous to that of the beat which follows: The visitors soak up the atmosphere of the new world, and glimpse the terror which lies behind it. The two pictures on the wall stare down balefully from their sockets, as if they were the eyes of Henry himself. Although he is not physically present in the second scene, Henry is very much in evidence. His empty throne speaks eloquently of him, when people refer to him they unconsciously refer to it. Under scoring the eerieness of this fantastic world are the echoes of a music so strange and sad, that when we hear it time seems to stop, attitudes seem to freeze; and we dimly sense the inconsequentiality of our world of appearances because of the world that lies behind it. Eventually, all the visitors seem to go a little mad themselves, save for Belcredi, who can observe with ironical detachment: "This is catching, this madness!"

The role of the Marquesa is as difficult in a way as is the role of Henry. For in both cases, the actor must act somebody acting. The Marquesa is a fallen woman, she no longer has the right to the mantle
of dignity she wears out of habit; the decadence and discord of her present life gives the lie to her masquerade. We may sympathize with her because we sense she sees herself all too well, and tries to cover for it.

Belcredi is an enigmatic figure, whose ironic unconcern for life we suspect may cover a basic insecurity. Before the action of the play, he has played a practical joke on Henry with fine disregard for the consequences, let alone the moral implications. His laughing at life is in its way a retreat from life, from his sense of sin. That life, and sin, and death catch up with him tumultuously at the end is appropriate to the Catholic cosmology which, though Pirandello may disown it, invests the play.

Belcredi also provides Henry with the specific theatrical realization of his over-all action. Henry's basic, over-all desire is to re-enter the "real" world after a twenty year absence, a longing to communicate once again with the outside world. This longing is most specifically represented in his desire to avenge himself upon Belcredi, which is in turn symptomatic of the paranoia which fore-shadowed Henry's madness. Henry does not realize at the beginning of the play that it is impossible for him to re-enter the real world: He has been abstracted from it too long. It takes the violence of accidental murder to get Henry to accept his tragedy.

Peripheral to the essential triangle of relationships in the play are the other characters, who in their almost stereotypical simplicity reflect the exegesis of the play. The Doctor is a cousin of the
Commedia's Il Dottore, similarly Charles and Frida occupy the same place as the Commedia's Amorosi, and are just as shallow. "DiNolli" means "of nothingness", "Frida" means "always afraid" in Italian. Their relationship to the core of the play is radial; they do not exist for themselves, but rather to point up different facets of truth about the central story.

If all these ideas seem too complex and too many to be explicitly stated in one play, it is because the play is a stage poem, and like all poems, says much more than can ever be stated explicitly. It does so through physical pictures whose import is meant to be leading and somewhat ambiguous. I felt that my task in this production was to give it a physical theatricality which would reflect the truth that lies beneath it. Discussion of the philosophy of the play was discouraged; I aimed to externalize the meanings of the play in the blocking, and let that, not philosophical discussion, guide the actors.

The acting style was to be animatedly presentational, with vigorous speech. Movements were to be sweeping and wide, leading to pictorial representations of what Pirandello was talking about at any particular moment. At any event, I wanted the production to sing, to make music. I hoped to do this by heightening the action through the exploitation of contrasts, vivid colors, suggestive and mysterious lighting, and finally, a recurring motif: The Unanswered Question by Charles Ives. For Better or for Worse, in such an intellectual play as Henry IV, I wanted to seduce the audience away from intellectuality through physical, theatrical charm.
Alienation

...that modern bugaboo, is not really modern at all; it exists
as early as Aeschylus. That alienation is a common characteristic
of modern theatre cannot be denied; the question is, What to do with
it? Pirandello, for instance, takes grim satisfaction out of
alienating his audiences from his characters, in order that they may
see their predicaments more dispassionately. And yet much of the
strength of Henry IV lies in the fact that the audience may identify
with Henry, is less alienated than in other plays. The approach I
took to the problem was to view the difficulties of the visitors with
brutal humor, whenever possible. This would jar the audience I hoped,
and yet foster sympathy for Henry. I am not confident, however, that
the solution is completely right, since half way through the production
I discovered that the version I was using, that of Edward Storer, made
Henry much more sympathetic than appears to be the case in the original
Italian.
Outside Research

This production of *Henry IV* was introspective, that is, it was an expression of the internal experience of the director in reaction to it. I do not claim that this was the best approach to the problem, indeed I now feel that my independent approach was a bit too much of a good thing: More about that later. It remains, however, that the main function of the research I carried out was to verify my instincts, to see that they were on the right track. These investigations took two directions, Historical and Critical.

The former took most of my time. I wanted to know exactly what function the actual history of *Henry IV* has in the Play. Henry continually talks in terms of the period, and it was important to learn exactly what the relationship was between Period and Play.

The answer is complex. The main thing to realize is that Henry is not really *Henry IV* of history; he thinks he is. The historical *Henry IV* had a different personality, according to most accounts. He was brash, impetuous and rash, an upstart. He was vindictive and conniving. Altogether a different picture from the almost masochistic martyrdom of Pirandello's Henry. Further, the historical Henry's hatred of the Pope was purely political; there seemed to be no mystical or religious fear as there is in the stage Henry. In other words, my researches made it clear that my task was not to re-create the story, times, and character of *Henry IV*, but rather to investigate what there was in the stage character that would lead him to interpret history the way he did.
A valuable discovery was the reason behind the original Henry's reaction to Gregory VII's edict against lay investiture, and further, the necessity for the humiliation at Canossa. That Henry had to humble himself, hypocritically, for political reasons gives point to his ambivalence towards the Pope. In other words, knowledge of the original history helped us piece out the masquerade, so that it made sense to us. I had no intention of making a one-to-one correlation between what Henry says and historical significance. I am sure that the fact that Henry cannot help talking in terms of a by-gone era is significant not because of the era, but because of Henry himself.

For the edification of those who may chance upon this in the future, here is a capsule of essential history: Henry IV was born at a time of great moral interregnum, which is always the harbinger of the death of an old age, and the birth of the new. In Henry's case, the dying age was the age of simple medieval faith, and the sway of the Holy Roman Empire. The new age ahead was to be one of secular nationalism. In other words, the battle developing was state against clergy. Early in his life, the clergy abstracted Henry from the court of his mother, who was becoming too powerful. This kidnapping must have weighed heavily on his mind, for it seems to have influenced his attitudes toward the clergy from then on. As a young King Henry became known as an ambitious reformer, an angry-young-man-type. This did not endear him to the nobles, whose power Henry wanted to consolidate in the crown. Now, up to that time, the power of the Holy Roman Emperors had been largely based on lay investiture of Bishops,
since the King, in handing out lands, could secure loyalty of the recipients. Further, since the Bishops had no legal heirs, their properties reverted back to the crown at their death, and the whole process began again. Gregory VII, another reformer, objected to this lay investiture of Bishops, arguing quite logically that this prerogative ought to belong to the papacy. His political power thus threatened, Henry called the Pope "an unholy man" whereupon the Pope in turn excommunicated Henry. Henry decided to wage war against the Pope, and wasn't doing too badly when his own rebellious nobles, still smarting from Henry's behavior to them, took the opportunity to revolt against him. Henry could not fight on two fronts at once, and was reduced to the dreadful humiliation of begging the pardon of a man whom he had termed a devil. This was accomplished at Canossa, at the instigation of the Duchess Mathilda, of Tuscany, an outstanding figure in her own right. Her beauty, nobility, bravery, piety, wealth, and shrewdness make her just about the most lauded of medieval heroines. The ally of the Pope was a paragon of women. After receiving the Pope's pardon, Henry returned to subdue his rebellious nobles. Eventually, he avenged himself on Gregory VII by removing him from the Papal seat and installing a new Pope.

As for my critical investigations, they were merely an attempt to ensure that in my particular way of presenting Henry IV, I was not diverging too far from what Pirandello may have had in mind. Particularly in regard to symbolism, I wanted to find out how allegorical Pirandello intended his play to appear. The answer is nowhere more
succinctly stated than by Pirandello himself in his Preface to Six
Characters in Search of An Author:

"I hate symbolic art in which the presentation loses all sponta­
neous movement in order to become a machine, an allegory... made for the demonstration of some moral truth..."

I had to beware, therefore, of becoming too obviously philosophical or pregnant with meaning.

In an introductory essay to the volume, Naked Masks, Eric Bentley has made a remark which greatly influenced my thinking on the practical problems of producing Henry IV: "Henry IV has an expository first act of such cumbersome explanatoriness one would think the author a plodding mediocrity or a careless hack."

This statement although it is an exaggeration for the sake of dogmatic clarity, nevertheless points to a very real difficulty in the play. The explanations given by the Marquesa and Belcredi are as involved as they are lengthy, and not much seems to happen on the surface to articulate the plot. Such observations at the early stages of production fostered an obsession with me: I had to make sure that lengthy monologues or seemingly pointless dialogue were "interesting". I began to look at much of the work as an obstacle to overcome.

In my search for a fitting style for the play, the following excerpt from Eric Bentley's The Playwright as Thinker influenced my approach as much as anything I did. It is in the form of advice to the prospective director of Right You Are, but what it says is germane also to Henry IV:

"Accentuate then--do not soften--the clashes of sound and color of which the play is composed. If you let it work, you will find the whole
thing ultra-theatrical. I should say: if you let them work, for a Pirandello play is makeup of actors, not of props and scenery. That must be why our friend Mr. Nathan thought it was written for blind men. But remember that actors—especially the actors of the commedia dell'arte whose skill Pirandello wished to revive—once were, and can be again, the main part of the show. Tell your actors to let go. Have them shout, swagger, gesticulate— at least in the earlier rehearsals. For you have to get them to act and talk instead of strolling and muttering like mannequins with a pin loose. And if they perform their roles from outside instead of pretending to be the people who are not people, Pirandello would be better served. As you know, he called all his plays Naked Masks—not naked faces. Let your actors remember that. Naked Masks—a violent oxymoron indeed! Is not such a figure of speech a pointer, for you and and rest of us, to the strange genius of its author?
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PRODUCTION LOG

Tuesday, March 14  3:30

The whole cast met briefly to discuss the rehearsal schedule for the week. All were asked to get familiar with the play as we will start blocking on Saturday. Landolph and Ordulph stayed and we started discussing Pirandello's idea of life and illusion. We read part of Act I Scene 1.

7:30

The four counselors have been dubbed the Marx Brothers and shall probably remain so. The three we have cast, Landolph, Ordulph, and Harold, worked on Act I Scene 1 with Judy Ackerman walking in for Berthold. This first scene is the most important as it sets the mood of madness for the whole play.

We all live in illusion.
We call this illusion reality, since we have come to believe in it.
Hence, we are all mad.

This first scene will be in "Commedia" style, very alive and fast-moving. Ordulph is having trouble staying light on his feet.

Wednesday, March 15  3:30

Worked with Henry IV on his overall basic actions. He is used to external technique and must get the meanings for what he does. We stressed the schizophrenic qualities of Henry--who knows when he is or is not mad? Phil must decide some of this for himself.

7:30

Three of the four Marx Brothers again--worked on specific blocking now that we have a better idea of what the set will be like. Started stressing style and use of gestures. Changed some of yesterday's hand motions--now that the action is more free, the gestures seem tied down.

Thursday, March 16  3:30

Conference with Phil Robb about more specific actions. Stressed importance of simple reality of encounter with Marquesa of whom he's dreamed so long.... "Oh, how she's changed!" Vengeance on Belcredi. Thinks the Doctor is funny. Phil is just reading words. Vocal technique is good, but without feelings all is false. After harangue to this effect things went a little better. If I can get Phil to merely believe in what he is doing with his whole self, that will be an
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achievement in itself....

Friday, March 17 3:30

We read through Act I up to Henry's entrance, stressing the quickness of Pirandello. Everyone is looking good. Aldo needs more professionalism as the Doctor. The Marx Brothers are working well together--without Berthold--but need even quicker pick-up lines and faster internal pace.

Saturday, March 18 10:00

We blocked the first part of Act I Scene 2. It has been difficult to get the cast together, with Mother Courage, acting class scenes, the Opera, and jobs. Relationships now are beginning to be established between the Marquesa and Belcredi; the rivalry between the Marquesa and Frida; the love between Frida and Di Nolli, in addition to which Frida wants to be free from her mother.

The Marquesa has great potential--she thinks deeply.

1.00

Read through Act I up to the entrance of Frida. The Marquesa needs to be a little less soupy; she needs more steel wool. Discussed the illusion vs. reality idea in the Doctor's speeches.

Everyone has a different idea of what Henry IV is. Pirandello leaves this question open.

I blocked Act II up to Frida's entrance. The actors feel the parts so well that they almost block themselves. The Doctor keeps coming between the Marquesa and Belcredi, who relate to each other. He humors them all... they are all sick except him, he thinks. The Marquesa thinks Belcredi is trying to make her ashamed to be there.

Sunday, March 19 1:30

We used the tape recorder--invaluable aid--makes people conscious of their speech characteristics which in this play is very good. Taped Henry, 1, 2, -- wanted to show idea that he needs childlike simplicity in places, he is like a kid who plays house--she can jump in and out of the game of madness -- but it can take him over too. For the first time Phil senses he needs increased energy level.

Monday, March 20 3:30
Met with the cast to get their schedules for the remaining rehearsal time. Holy Week will be a slight problem.

7:30

Sara worked with the Marx Brothers on setting the blocking in their minds. The dance step is causing a problem, especially with Ordulph, who seems to have three left feet. If it doesn't work very well it will have to be cut, but it will be most effective if it comes off. Run the lines for the truth in them, not for pace. They are starting to find out what they are saying.

Tuesday, March 21  7:30

Blocked Act I Scene 2a-- the putting on of the costumes before Henry’s entrance. We can only get the idea of this until we have some sort of costumes to work with. Began blocking Act Scene 3--from Henry’s entrance. He needs work on the entrance before he opens his mouth--we must get a proper first impression as he comes through the door.

Henry’s entrance should be eloquent of the strength that comes from suffering, should be that of a Lear bearing dead Cordelia. Phil’s is merely facile. So much of this show depends, paradoxically, not on speech, but on bodily expression. It should be danced.

Wednesday, March 22  3:30

This is a show where the blocking must come first--the situation must be set up for the actors. And yet it looks as if we are going to have to change the blocking as fast as our ideas mature. There ought to be an easier way to do this!

6:30

Finished with Act I and went through Scene 3 twice. Although this is hard for Henry, as he must be constantly talking and adjusting his beats, it is hard for the people who must listen to him and react in silence. Myrna must decide when the Marquesa thinks that Henry recognizes her.

Thursday, March 23  3:30

An improvisation. Phil is supposedly sick and dying; Myrna, a former girlfriend visits out of pity. Should Phil reveal the truth? Improvisation failed; done too early in production--improvisation not congenial to Myrna and Phil.
Read through Act III and discussed it. Didn't use the Marx Brothers for this as they mostly stand around.

Tonight we blocked Act III. This was not a final blocking but a sort of improvised job to get people on their feet and moving, to see what they feel is the point of the act. This is not very successful with several of them—Phil, Myrna, and Don King are used to being told exactly what to do and when to do it. I am going to have to prepare blocking more.

Darn good rehearsal. Act II, I twice. Getting terrific things from Jim Haney as Belcredi. He is so defensive as Belcredi, he's aggressive! Myrna getting good things from him, he really shakes her up. Myrna and Jim really are beginning to have something working for them. They play well together. Everybody is working hard and is excited. The Doctor is coming right along. His racial heritage makes him just perfect for the role, but he also gives it quite a deal of sympathy. He must tone down eventually, but I am not going to do it for a long time. It is much easier to get someone to tone down than to bring someone up. Vocal and gesticulatory extravagance is just fine. Myrna is working a good bit with picture, with the pride that Henry IV has recognized her. I hope this doesn't get too sentimental.

Hurrah! Phillip got through Act I Scene 3 without his book fairly well—making it much easier for Myrna to react to him. Once he gets free of his script he can do much more with his lines, even if they have to be fed to him.

Act III inspiration: At the opening, all the visitors should gesticulate run around and scream like crazy, as if they were the mad ones. Point: who is mad after all?

Line rehearsal at Phillip's apartment. Spring is here and everyone is distracted by it. A very lacadaisical attitude on the part of the Marx Brothers especially. Since not everyone knows all their lines, we worked on interpretation too, but it was not really a successful day.
Act II Scene I several times. The more evil and snide Belcredi becomes, the more the Marquesa takes it to heart, feels sorry for herself, sentimentalizes, and makes the whole thing soupy. She needs to be brittle, needs to have an outward shell that she has built up through the years. Don't quite know how to get through to Myrna yet.

1:30

Scene 2 of Act II this afternoon. Lines are getting better, but we can't work with reactions until the lines are secondary.

Act II from Henry's entrance falls—he doesn't know yet when he is mad in this scene and when he is only pretending. We talked about it again.

We discovered that sackcloth symbolizes weight of illusion, and sackcloth speech—("Ah, this sackcloth here...")—marks major beat in scene, in which Henry's madness catches up with him. The more form we can give this aria, the better it will be for Phil.

Tuesday, March 28 9:30

Act I until Henry's entrance, working on the Marquesa for brittleness and on the Marxes for communication. They are all style now, and saying their lines as if to a blank wall. Crosses are not motivated, emotional outbursts are not prepared for. Worked on idea that they are perpetrators and safe keepers of a huge unearthly joke. Berthold is dupe. Joel must learn to act the specific objective reality instead of generalizing. Landolph is begging to Ham in earnest, which is all right with me.

1:30

Act I Scene 3—Myrna must give Phillip more to react to. He is free of his book now and can play the scene, but they are not relating much of anything at all.

Act III not progressing well.

Wednesday, March 29

Finally we get on the set. Ran the first of Act Scene 2—before the costume bit. The set is of course devilish to adjust to, but it will come with practice. Actually, 210 is giving us something—the right mood for Henry IV.

Act II-1. I am still adjusting the blocking! Blocking does not work yet because actors don't know really what they are doing yet, what
their actions are. Particularly Myrna, her action is unclear. Now that we're in 210, a lot of things just don't work the way they did in the Admiral Building. Doctor progressing well, or will, once he understands the point of that which he is spouting. Pirandello puts his greatest truths often into the mouth of his greatest fools! The Doctor has correctly analyzed Henry's psychological situation, but because of the metaphysical context, and because of his professional expertise, the Doctor seems absurd to us.

For the first time I am getting questions from Phil. He objects to certain blocking--I'm glad to change it! Hope he will keep it up.

Thursday, March 30 9:30

As far as Phil is concerned, what it all boils down to is a question of strength. Henry has suffered great pangs, yet bears up despite of them. Up to today, at the sackcloth beat, Phil had been collapsing on the ground like a soggy noodle. Today, I told him to try and withstand falling down, to try and keep standing at whatever cost. Then, I got behind him, seized his shoulders and forced him down with all my strength. It was the best thing I'd ever done to him. All of a sudden, irradiated by the power he exerted, he carried on the role, filled the room with power, nearly knocked us flat. A similar strategem got him to really try and strangle Belcredi, instead of just making a necklace with his hands. He has got it, if he can concentrate on it....

1.30

ActIII. The decisive rehearsal, which decides the fate of the show, has come this afternoon, I think. We had blocked the third act, and although it had run well in spots, it had never worked as an act. Today we went through it, everything was right, timing, blocking, motivations, etc., but it was as phony as Hell. I said so afterwards, told the cast that we couldn't afford a rehearsal which was just a "run-through". They had to give everything, everytime, otherwise they were only fooling themselves. A rehearsal which is not painful is a waste of time. Evidently they decided to work, because when we ran the third act again it staggered us. We now feel we have a show in us...too bad we have to break for Holy Week.

This vacation week of rehearsal has saved us. Not only have we got most of the show under our belts, but we are coming to a greater understanding of the play. For example, we have figured out that Henry's action is to try and communicate with the outside world that has left him behind, and we have articulated the whole first scene with Henry as a series of abortive attempts at communication, the cumulative effect of whose failure leads to madness. Nanci is gaining--greater stage energy and pace. She was cast because she could make fear believable, and she surely does that. She is a little soupy, which is fine for her.
We've worked a few good vocal patterns, such as the entrance of Berthold in I-2 and the opening of Act III. We re-arranged responses so that it would seem as if people were interrupting each other to continue speeches someone had interrupted a moment before.

We all seem to have the sense of the thing, and have done everything well at least once.

Saturday, April 1

Individual conferences with Myrna and Aldo. Tried images and "as-ifs" with Myrna. Tallulah Bankhead walking into a room. Fire and Ice. Gloria Swanson. The career woman. "Too-too-too." Papier mache face, she applies make-up with a trowel. With Aldo, worked on long speeches, deciphering their literal meaning so that he could make sense of them. Doctor must be more professional, exercise the restraint he feels concomitant with his position.

Monday, April 3 7:30

Having been away from the play since Thursday has done great damage. We ran it and it sort of fell apart. Reactions were off and timing was bad. This, I suppose, is to be expected after such a long break at a bad time.

Tuesday, April 4

Lighting rehearsal tonight. Went much better than I thought it would. Our main effects are to dim areas in order to point attention to other ones. Contrasts slightly stronger than subliminal. Lights dim over music cues---erect scenes. Strong lighting on throne and pictures to cast influence over scene. Good effect: The council chamber scene, with strong back-lit amber motivated by lantern; lavender "moonlight" from right. Moonlight is preternatural, takes whole effect from here and now. transcends the room its preternatural, takes whole effect from here and now, transcends the room its played in.

Wednesday, April 5 7:30

Runthrough tonight. Phil is gaining some control over the role. He has a pianissimo which is beautiful, his best vocal quality—ought to be encouraged. Giving the role much more variety. The rest of his performance was, of course, marred by the fact that he hasn't learned the lines yet—(sob, sob!!!!!!) Getting all kinds of good things from Belcredi, who, although he has a diction problem, is giving one of the nicest of performances I've seen around here. A real, rounded performance. Problems of costume adjustment.
Thursday, April 6  7:30

Problem with the costume scene--Act I Scene 2a--there isn't enough time or dialogue to cover the change. Ad lib tonight until all were ready. Then with the opening of Act III everyone fell over skirts and feet and steps. After the runthrough we rehearsed those parts again and it is more smooth now.

Technical problems--lights and sound--just about ironed out.

Friday, April 7  7:30  Critique Performance

First Act went nicely as a whole. Diction and nervousness problems with Belcredi. Same with Henry. Conflict between Marquesa and Belcredi seems sharper tonight--also the accident remembering sequence seemed more dramatically pointed tonight--we have worked on it for so long! The putting on of costumes scene still screws us up. Play seems to fall in second act--particularly Henry's entrance and after where he seemed to rewrite the play! II-1 not pointed enough yet. Di Nolli's impatience good, people building from it...Di Nolli and Frida relationship needs pointing. Last act fell all to pieces.

Critique Comments

.....were generally kind, with certain objections. Blocking was thought workmanlike, but marred by certain "traffic jams". People felt that I-2 confusing, let down after I-1. Costume change scene criticized, ad-libs not necessary, just feeling of nervousness and anticipation which is already there should be intensified. Mr. Hirsch commented on the theatricalization of intention, thought it was to a certain extent achieved; said audience not intended to get involved with the plot, rather, Pirandello aims for alienation from plot; liked idea of twentieth century characters taking on madness; hoped we would work on it--in this respect Doctor good. Actors should be given more space, set should be utilized more, especially platform area. Doctor should sit during much of I-2, to aid focus. Mr. Kazanof thought show was "strikingly effective" but that devices change style throughout the play. For instance, he was too much aware of music, which was sometimes for mood, sometimes leitmotivic. Mr. Thommen would have liked more emphasis on the play within the play.

It was also pointed out that articulation of Henry's decision to remain in imaginary world in third act not clear. We see him step into the picture, but how does he get there?

Saturday, April 8  9:30
We know what was wrong with last night, and now we have to fix it. I-2 heavily re-worked: Entrance amplified, taking time to let Henry's strange throne room affect them in various ways, thus showing their characters. Marquesa more brittle and aggressive, worked out ways for her to play up to the Doctor. Ironed out ambiguity of Di Nolli's presence on the scene: He wants to get things going, but the personal bickering of Marquesa and Belcredi; and their reminiscences, get in the way, so Di Nolli becomes very impatient. Worked out parallelisms between Marquesa-Belcredi and Frida-Di Nolli: Love interest. We've seated Doctor through part of I-2, works good. Tried to sharpen conflict between Myrna and Jim. Tried to make Doctor more believable, more professional, in a condescending way.

Went over Henry's role, I-3. Reduced his action to the ultimate over simplification: Henry tries to communicate as the man behind the mask, inevitably ends up by talking as the mask, Henry IV that is. This frustrates him, makes the urge to communicate even stronger, the mask even tighter, and so on ad crisis, catharsis, serenity. I hate to thus formulize the role, it takes so much of the mystery out of it, but I feel that without this formulization Phil will flounder. Work is very slow, but will be worth it, I hope.

Rework I-2.

Sunday, April 9 1:30

Went over the pertinent critique notes and the Faculty notes. Worked on the costume bit and it is better--no more ad libbing. Actually, the putting on of costumes is a characteristic Pirandellian moment, practically every play has a similar scene in one place or another. The secret of doing this one smoothly is having the costumes prepared correctly before they are brought on stage.

Worked on Act III. Crisis of Act III, and thus whole play, we discovered to be immediately antecedent to Henry's line, "Well, what does it matter who it was?" Henry has challenged Belcredi with his villainy indirectly, but cannot come right out and accuse him. Frustration from this draws him down.

Council chamber scene was choreographed. Four secret councillors must flow, rise and fall, or cower before the excitement of the vision which Henry presents to them. Was surprised over resistance on the part of the cast to this. Choreography seemed artificial to them, but actually it is an intensification of the mood which they all should be feeling. The scene should be danced, although of course, nobody except Henry ever leaves his seat.

Monday, April 10 Performance

Controlled performance from Phil the first act, but either heat, fatigue or both worked on him in the second and third acts, because
he forgot more and more of his lines, and fainted momentarily near the close of the third act. Nobody knew it, he stumbled against the stairs upon ascending them, righted himself after a woozy moment, and went on. Because of the situation in the play, it was very natural for him to do so at that particular moment. Breaks. Performance generally down and disappointing. All were uneasy and nervous, lacked punch and flair, which is of the essence in this play.

Tuesday, April 11 Performance

Best job so far. Lines, cues, responses, motivations. Don King wanted to change his image from frustrated active to insouciant passive, and like a fool, I agreed. His lack of anger or frustration in the expected moments had a tendency to throw the whole cast off. I should have left him where he was, and not have tampered with a good thing.

In this performance, Phil began to experiment with the role, to try things out, in short—to play it. There was a spontaneity and freshness which was fascinating to watch. The Marx Brothers gave their usually fine performances; these boys are really beginning to act as a unit. Third act articulation worked fine, although the beginning of that act was down.

I wonder where we can go from here? The show is not perfect, and yet we have the feeling that we have mastered it. What we have mastered, I'm afraid, is the externals of the show. If I had two more weeks, I think I'd try some improvisations or something to draw the cast deeper into this work. I'd change the set; alter the situation, anything to get them to think. I'd try to get Phil to relax, to throw away everything I've told him, and play the thing by ear, to take his time. For my main impression is, concerning the Marquesa, the Baron, and Henry, that we have gone as far as we could go, along the road we have taken. The road we have taken towards putting on this show may have been a short cut, but it will not take us as far as the longer way round....
Boston University  
School of Fine and Applied Arts  
Division of Theatre Arts  
*Graduate Thesis Production  
HENRY IV  
by  
LUIGI PIRANDELLO  
Directed by  
PAUL R. COOPER  
APRIL 10 and 11, 1961  
CAST  
Henry IV  
The Marchioness Mathilda, Spina  
Her Daughter Frida  
The Young Marquis Charles di Nolli  
Baron Tito Belredi  
Doctor Dimostes Genoni  
The Four Private Counsellors  
Harold (Frank)  
Landolph (Lolo)  
Orduph (Momo)  
Berthold (Tina)  
John, the old waiter  
ACT ONE  
In The Forenoon  
ACT TWO  
Scene 1. Late Afternoon and Evening  
Scene 2. Later in the Evening of the Same Day  
A Solitary Villa In Italy In Our Own Time  
PRODUCTION STAFF  
Production Manager  
Stage Manager  
Assistant Stage Manager  
Set Designer  
Costume Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Properties Mistress  
Crew Chief  
Jacques Maynard  
Sara Jane Woodward  
Judith Ackerman  
Cara Shubin  
Frank Childs  
Donald Knaub  
Jane Edelstein  
Stephen Cenci  
TECHNICAL STAFF  
Rowena Balos, Gloria Fricke, Sheila Walsh, Joan Rollins, Karen  
Rosenblatt, Tanya Comparetti, Barbara Buleff, Judy Goldman,  
Elizabeth Weeks, Myra Yaffee, Richard Tirrell, Frances Smith,  
Harry Hallenbeck, Dennis Allen, Jeanne Parker, Susan Casey,  
Aldo DelVecchio, Suzanne Houle, Kathleen Sullivan, Ellen Dix.  
*As partial fulfillment for the Master of Fine Arts degree requirements.
0 = Sit
↑ = Rise
DM = Donna Matilda

Unless indicated, UL refers to upstage below the platform. A, fa above, refers to the platform area.
HENRY IV
(Enrico IV)
A TRAGEDY IN THREE ACTS
English version by
EDWARD STORER

CHARACTERS

HENRY IV
THE MARCHIONESS MATILDA SPINA
FRIDA, her daughter
CHARLES DI NOLLI, the young Marquis
BARON TITO BELCREDI
DOCTOR DIORYSIUS GENONI

HENRY IV
THE MARCHIONESS MATILDA SPINA
FRIDA, her daughter
CHARLES DI NOLLI, the young Marquis
BARON TITO BELCREDI
DOCTOR DIORYSIUS GENONI

The four private counselors (The names in brackets are nicknames)

A Solitary Villa in Italy in Our Own Time

ACT I

Salon in the villa, furnished and decorated so as to look exactly like the throne room of Henry IV in the residence at Goslar. Among the antique decorations there are two modern life-size portraits in oil painting. They are placed against the back wall, and mounted in a wooden stand that runs the whole length of the wall. (It is wide and protrudes, so that it is like a large bench.) One of the paintings is on the right; the other on the left of the throne, which is in the middle of the wall and divides the stand.

The Imperial chair and Baldachin.
The two portraits represent a lady and a gentleman, both young, dressed up in carnival costumes: one as "Henry IV" the other as the "Marchioness Matilda of Tuscany." Exits to right and left.

When the curtain goes up, the two valets jump down, as if surprised, from the stand on which they have been lying, and go and take their positions, as rigid as statues, on either side below the throne with their halberds in their hands. Soon after, from the second exit, right, enter Harold, Landolph, Ordulph and Berthold, young men employed by the Marquis Charles Di Nolli to play the part of "Secret Counsellors" at the court of "Henry IV." They are, therefore, dressed like German knights of the XIth century. Berthold, nicknamed Fino, is just entering on his duties for the first time. His companions are telling him what he has to do and amusing themselves at his expense. The scene is to be played rapidly and vivaciously.

Landolph [to Berthold as if explaining]. And this is the throne room.
Harold. At Goslar.
Ordulph. Or at the castle in the Hartz, if you prefer.
Harold. Or at Wurms.
Landolph. According as to what's doing, it jumps about with us, now here, now there.
Ordulph. In Saxony.
Harold. In Lombardy.

One of the Valets [without moving, just opening his lips]. I say
Harold [turning round]. What is it?
First Valet [like a statue]. Is he coming in or not?
[He alludes to Henry IV.]
Ordulph. No, no, he's asleep. You needn't worry.
Second Valet [releasing his pose, taking a long breath}
and going to lie down again on the stand]. You might have told us at once.

First Valet [going over to Harold]. Have you got a match, please?

Landolph. What? You can't smoke a pipe here, you know.

First Valet [while Harold offers him a light]. No; a cigarette. [Lights his cigarette and lies down again on the stand.]

Berthold [who has been looking on in amazement, walking round the room, regarding the costumes of the others]. I say, this room these costumes Which Henry IV is it? I don't quite get it. Is he Henry IV of France or not? [At this Landolph, Harold, and Ordulph, burst out laughing.]

Landolph [still laughing; and pointing to Berthold as if inviting the others to make fun of him]. Henry of France he says: ha! ha!

Ordulph. He thought it was the king of France!

Harold. Henry IV of Germany, my boy; the Salian dynasty!

Ordulph. The great and tragic Emperor!

Landolph. He of Canossa. Every day we carry on here the terrible war between Church and State, by Jove.

Ordulph. The Empire against the Papacy!

Harold. Antipopes against the Pope!

Landolph. Kings against anti-kings!

Ordulph. War on the Saxons!

Harold. And all the rebels Princes!

Landolph. Against the Emperor's own sons!

Berthold covering his head with his hands to protect himself against this avalanche of information. I understand! I understand! Naturally, I didn't get the idea at first. I'm right then, these aren't costumes of the XVIth century?
NAKED MASKS

Harold. XVIth century be hanged!

Ordulph. We're somewhere between a thousand and eleven hundred.

Landolph. Work it out for yourself: if we are before Canossa on the 25th of January, 1071

Berthold [more confused than ever]. Oh my God! What a mess I've made of it!

Ordulph. Well, just slightly, if you supposed you were at the French court.

Berthold. All that historical stuff I've swatted up!

Landolph. My dear boy, it's four hundred years earlier.

Berthold [getting angry]. Good Heavens! You ought to have told me it was Germany and not France. I can't tell you how many books I've read in the last fifteen days.

Harold. But I say, surely you knew that poor Tito was Adalbert of Bremen, here?

Berthold. Not a damned bit! How on earth should I?

Landolph. Well, don't you see how it is? When Tito died, the Marquis Di Nolli

Berthold. Oh, it was he, was it? He might have told me.

Harold. Perhaps he thought you knew.

Landolph. He didn't want to engage anyone else in substitution. He thought the remaining three of us would do. But he began to cry out: "With Adalbert driven away..." because, you see, he didn't imagine poor Tito was dead, but that, as Bishop Adalbert, the rival bishops of Cologne and Mayence had driven him off

Berthold [taking his head in his hand]. But I don't know a word of what you're talking about.

Ordulph. So much the worse for you, my boy!

Harold. But the trouble is that not even we know who you are.
"We're small, devoted vassals, a bit dissolute, but very gay."

Berthold, Landolph, and Harold have learned they must always laugh to keep from crying.
Berthold. What? Not even you? You don't know who I'm supposed to be?

Ordulph. Hum! "Berthold."

Berthold. But which Berthold? And why Berthold?

Landolph [solemnly imitating HENRY IV]. "They've driven Adalbert away from me. Well then, I want Berthold! I want Berthold!" That's what he said.

Harold. We three looked one another in the eyes: who's got to be Berthold?

Ordulph. And so here you are, "Berthold," my dear fellow!

Landolph. I'm afraid you will make a bit of a mess of it.

Berthold [indignant, getting ready to go]. Ah, no! Thanks very much, but I'm off! I'm out of this!

Harold [restraining him with the other two, amid laughter]. Steady now! Don't get excited!

Landolph. Cheer up, my dear fellow! We don't any of us know who we are really. He's Harold; he's Ordulph, I'm Landolph! That's the way he calls us. We've got used to it. But who are we? Names of the period! Yours, too, is a name of the period: Berthold! Only one of us, poor Tito, had got a really decent part, as you can read in history: that of the Bishop of Bremen. He was just like a real bishop. Tito did it awfully well, poor chap!

Harold. Look at the study he put into it!

Landolph. Why, he even ordered his Majesty about, opposed his views, guided and counselled him. We're "secret counsellors"—in a manner of speaking only—because it is written in history that Henry IV was hated by the upper aristocracy for surrounding himself at court with young men of the bourgeoisie.

Ordulph. Us, that is. Berthold.

Landolph. Yes, small devoted vassals, a bit dissolute and very gay
Berthold. So I've got to be gay as well?
Harold. I should say so! Same as we are!
Ordulph. And it isn't too easy, you know.
Landolph. It's a pity; because the way we're got up, we could do a fine historical reconstruction. There's any amount of material in the story of Henry IV. But, as a matter of fact, we do nothing. We have the form without the content. We're worse than the real secret counsellors of Henry IV. Because certainly no one had given them a part to play—at any rate, they didn't feel they had a part to play. It was their life. They looked after their own interests at the expense of others, sold investitures and—what not! We stop here in this magnificent court—for what?—Just doing nothing. We're like so many puppets hung on the wall, waiting for someone to come and move us or make us talk.
Harold. Ah, no, old sport, not quite that! We've got to give the proper answer, you know. There's trouble if he asks you something and you don't chip in with the cue.
Landolph. Yes, that's true.
Berthold. Don't rub it in too hard! How the devil am I to give him the proper answer, if I've swatted up Henry IV of France, and now he turns out to be Henry IV of Germany? [The other three laugh.
Harold. You'd better start and prepare yourself at once.
Ordulph. We'll help you out.
Harold. We've got any amount of books on the subject. A brief run through the main points will do to begin with.
Ordulph. At any rate, you must have got some sort of general idea.
Harold. Look here! [Turns him around and shows him the portrait of the Marchioness Matilda on the wall.] Who's that?
Landolph: "...Go on and touch them! Pictures, all right; but for him, who never touches them...."

Berthold's initiation to the mystery that laughs behind the walls...
Landolph: "...Go on and touch them! Pictures, all right; but for him, who never touches them....!

Berthold's initiation to the mystery that laughs behind the walls...
BERTHOLD [looking at it]. That? Well, the thing seems to me somewhat out of place, anyway: two modern paintings in the midst of all this respectable antiquity! HENRY IV. You're right! They weren't there in the beginning. There are two niches there behind the pictures. They were going to put up two statues in the style of the period. Then the places were covered with those canvases there.

LANDOLPH [interrupting and continuing]. They would certainly be out of place if they really were paintings! BERTHOLD. What are they, if they aren't paintings? LANDOLPH. Go and touch them! Pictures all right, but for him! [Makes a mysterious gesture to the right, alluding to HENRY IV.] who never touches them! BERTHOLD. No? What are they for him? LANDOLPH. Well, I'm only supposing, you know; but I imagine I'm about right. They're images such as well—such as a mirror might throw back. Do you understand? That one there represents himself, as he is in this throne room, which is all in the style of the period. What's there to marvel at? If we put you before a mirror, won't you see yourself, alive, but dressed up in ancient costume? Well, it's as if there were two mirrors there, which cast back living images in the midst of a world which, as you well see, when you have lived with us, comes to life too.

BERTHOLD. I say look here I've no particular desire to go mad here.

HAROLD. Go mad, be hanged! You'll have a fine time! BERTHOLD. Tell me this: how have you all managed to become so learned? LANDOLPH. My dear fellow, you can't go back over 800 years of history without picking up a bit of experience.
Harold. Come on! Come on! You'll see how quickly you get into it!

Ordulph. You'll learn wisdom, too, at this school.

Berthold. Well, for Heaven's sake, help me a bit! Give me the main lines, anyway.

Harold. Leave it to us. We'll do it all between us.

Landolph. We'll put your wires on you and fix you up like a first-class marionette. Come along! [They take him by the arm to lead him away.]

Berthold [stopping and looking at the portrait on the wall]. Wait a minute! You haven't told me who that is. The Emperor's wife?

Harold. No! The Emperor's wife is Bertha of Susa, the sister of Amadeus II of Savoy.

Ordulph. And the Emperor, who wants to be young with us, can't stand her, and wants to put her away.

Landolph. That is his most ferocious enemy: Matilda, Marchioness of Tuscany.

Berthold. Ah, I've got it: the one who gave hospitality to the Pope!

Landolph. Exactly: at Canossa!

Berthold. Pope Gregory VII!

Harold. Our bête noire! Come on! come on! [All four move toward the right to go out, when, from the left, the old servant John enters in evening dress.]

John [quickly, anxiously]. Hss! Hss! Frank! Lolo!

Harold [turning round]. What is it?

Berthold [marvelling at seeing a man in modern clothes enter the throne room]. Oh! I say, this is a bit too much, this chap here!

Landolph. A man of the XXth century, here! Oh, go away! [They run over to him, pretending to menace him and throw him out.]

Ordulph [heroically]. Messenger of Gregory VII, away!

Harold. Away! Away!
HENRY IV

John [annoyed, defending himself]. Oh, stop it! Stop it, I tell you! Landolph & Berthold

Ordulpn. No, you can't set foot here! Harold. Out with him!

Landolph [to Berthold]. Magic, you know! He's a demon conjured up by the Wizard of Rome! Out with your swords! [Makes as if to draw a sword.

John [shouting]. Stop it, will you? Don't play the fool with me! The Marquis has arrived with some friends

Landolph. Good! Good! Are there ladies too?
Ordulpn. Old or young?
John. There are two gentlemen.
Harold. But the ladies, the ladies, who are they?
John. The Marchioness and her daughter.
Landolph [surprised]. What do you say?
Ordulpn. The Marchioness?
John. The Marchioness! The Marchioness!
Harold. Who are the gentlemen?
John. I don't know
Harold [to Berthold]. They're coming to bring us a message from the Pope, do you see?
Ordulpn. All messengers of Gregory VII! What fun!
John. Will you let me speak, or not?
Harold. Go on, then!
John. One of the two gentlemen is a doctor, I fancy
Landolph. Oh, I see, one of the usual doctors.
Harold. Bravo Berthold, you'll bring us luck!
Landolph. You wait and see how we'll manage this doctor!

Berthold. It looks as if I were going to get into a nice mess right away.

John. If the gentlemen would allow me to speak they want to come here into the throne room.

Landolph [surprised]. What? She? The Marchioness here?
Harold. Then this is something quite different! No play-acting this time!

Landolph. We'll have a real tragedy: that's what!

Berthold [curious]. Why? Why?

Ordulph [pointing to the portrait]. She is that person there, don't you understand?

Landolph. The daughter is the fiancée of the Marquis. But what have they come for, I should like to know?

Ordulph. If he sees her, there'll be trouble.

Landolph. Perhaps he won't recognize her any more.

John. You must keep him there, if he should wake up.

Ordulph. Easier said than done, by Jove!

Harold. You know what he's like!

John. —even by force, if necessary! Those are my orders. Go on! Go on!

Harold. Yes, because who knows if he hasn't already wakened up?

Ordulph. Come on then!

Landolph [going towards John with the others]. You'll tell us later what it all means.

John [shouting after them]. Close the door there, and hide the key! That other door too. [Pointing to the other door on right.]

John [to the Two Valets]. Be off, you two! There! [Pointing to exit right.] Close the door after you, and hide the key!

[The Two Valets go out by the first door on right.]

John moves over to the left to show in: Donna Matilda Spina, the young Marchioness Frida, Dr. Dionysius Genoni, the Baron Tito Belcredi and the young Marquis Charles Di Nolli, who, as master of the house, enters last.

Donna Matilda Spina is about 45, still handsome, although there are too patent signs of her attempts to remedy the ravages of time with make-up. Her head
HENRY IV

is thus rather like a Walkyrie. This facial make-up contrasts with her beautiful sad mouth. A widow for many years, she now has as her friend the BARON TITO BELCREDI, whom neither she nor anyone else takes seriously—at least so it would appear. What TITO BELCREDI really is for her at bottom, he alone knows; and he is, therefore, entitled to laugh, if his friend feels the need of pretending not to know. He can always laugh at the jests which the beautiful Marchioness makes with the others at his expense. He is slim, prematurely gray, and younger than she is. His head is bird-like in shape. He would be a very vivacious person, if his ductile agility (which among other things makes him a redoubtable swordsman) were not enclosed in a sheath of Arab-like laziness, which is revealed in his strange, nasal drawn-out voice.

FRIDA, the daughter of the Marchioness is 19. She is sad; because her imperious and too beautiful mother puts her in the shade, and provokes facile gossip against her daughter as well as against herself. Fortunately for her, she is engaged to the MARQUIS CHARLES DI NOLLI.

CHARLES DI NOLLI is a stiff young man, very indulgent towards others, but sure of himself for what he amounts to in the world. He is worried about all the responsibilities which he believes weigh on him. He is dressed in deep mourning for the recent death of his mother.

DR. DIONYSIUS GENONI has a bold rubicund Satyr-like face, prominent eyes, a pointed beard (which is silvery and shiny) and elegant manners. He is nearly bald. All enter in a state of perturbation, almost as if afraid, and all (except DI NOLLI) looking curiously about the room. At first, they speak sotto voce.
"Come Frida. Don't you see yourself in me, there?"

To Pirandello, each of these three figures is nothing more than a reflection of an inner reality of the others...
Di Nolli [to John]. Have you given the orders properly?

John. Yes, my Lord; don't be anxious about that.

Belcredi. Ah, magnificent! magnificent!

Doctor. How extremely interesting! Even in the surroundings his raving madness—is perfectly taken into account!

Donna Matilda [glancing round for her portrait, discovers it, and goes up close to it]. Ah! Here it is! [Going back to admire it, while mixed emotions stir within her.]

Yes. [Calls her daughter Frida.]

Frida. Ah, your portrait!

Donna Matilda. No, no look again: it's you, not I, there!

Di Nolli. Yes, it's quite true. I told you so, I

Donna Matilda. But I would never have believed it! [Shaking as if with a chill. What a strange feeling it gives one! [Then looking at her daughter] Frida, what's the matter? [She pulls her to her side, and slips an arm round her waist.] Come: don't you see yourself in me there?

Frida. Well, I really

Donna Matilda. Don't you think so? Don't you, really? [Turning to Belcredi.] Look at it, Tito! Speak up, man!

Belcredi [without looking]. Ah, no! I shan't look at it.

For me, a priori, certainly not!

Donna Matilda. Stupid! You think you are paying me a compliment! [Turning to Doctor Genoni.] What do you say, Doctor? Do say something, please!

Doctor [makes a movement to go near to the picture].

Belcredi [with his back turned, pretending to attract his attention secretly].—Hs! No, Doctor! For the love of Heaven, have nothing to do with it!

Doctor [getting bewildered and smiling]. And why shouldn't I?
Donna Matilda. Don't listen to him! Come here. He's insufferable!

Frida. He acts the fool by profession, didn't you know that?

Belcredi [to the Doctor, seeing him go over]. Look at your feet, Doctor! Mind where you're going!

Doctor. Why?

Belcredi. Be careful you don't put your foot in it!

Doctor [laughing feebly]. No, no. After all, it seems to me there's no reason to be astonished at the fact that a daughter should resemble her mother!

Belcredi. Hullo! Hullo! He's done it now; he's said it.

Donna Matilda [with exaggerated anger, advancing towards Belcredi]. What's the matter? What has he said? What has he done?

Doctor [candidly]. Well, isn't it so?

Belcredi [answering the Marchioness]. I said there was nothing to be astounded at—and you are astounded! And why so, then, if the thing is so simple and natural for you now?

Donna Matilda [still more angry]. Fool! fool! It's just because it is so natural! Just because it isn't my daughter who is there. [Pointing to the canvas.] That is my portrait; and to find my daughter there instead of me fills me with astonishment, an astonishment which, I beg you to believe, is sincere. I forbid you to cast doubts on it.

Frida [slowly and wearily]. My God! It's always like this rows over nothing

Belcredi [also slowly, looking dejected, in accents of apology]. I cast no doubt on anything! I noticed from the beginning that you haven't shared your mother's astonishment; or, if something did astonish you, it was because the likeness between you and the portrait seemed so strong.

Donna Matilda. Naturally! She cannot recognize her-
self in me as I was at her age; while I, there, can very well recognize myself in her as she is now!

Doctor Quite right! Because a portrait is always there fixed in the twinkling of an eye: for the young lady something far away and without memories, while, for the Marchioness, it can bring back everything: movements, gestures, looks, smiles, a whole heap of things

Donna Matilda. Exactly!

Doctor [continuing, turning towards her]. Naturally enough, you can live all these old sensations again in your daughter

Donna Matilda. He always spoils every innocent pleasure for me, every touch I have of spontaneous sentiment! He does it merely to annoy me.

Doctor [frightened at the disturbance he has caused, adopts a professorial tone]. Likeness, dear Baron, is often the result of imponderable things. So one explains that

Belcredi [interrupting the discourse]. Somebody will soon be finding a likeness between you and me, my dear Professor!

Di Nolli. Oh! let's finish with this, please! [Points to the two doors on the right, as a warning that there is someone there who may be listening.] We've wasted too much time as it is!

Frida. As one might expect when he's present. [Alludes to Belcredi.]

Di Nolli. Enough! The Doctor is here; and we have come for a very serious purpose which you all know is important for me.

Doctor Yes, that is so! But now, first of all, let's try to get some points down exactly. Excuse me, Marchioness, will you tell me why your portrait is here? Did you present it to him then?

Donna Matilda. No, not at all. How could I have given it to him? I was just like Frida then—and not...
HENRY IV

even engaged. I gave it to him three or four years after the accident. I gave it to him because his mother wished it so much [Points to Di Nolli.]

Doctor. She was his sister? [Alludes to Henry IV]

Di Nolli. Yes, Doctor; and our coming here is a debt we pay to my mother who has been dead for more than a month. Instead of being here, she and I [Indicating Frua.] ought to be traveling together

Doctor. taking a cure of quite a different kind! [Di Nolli. —Hum! Mother died in the firm conviction that her adored brother was just about to be cured.]

Doctor. And can't you tell me, if you please, how she inferred this?

Di Nolli. The conviction would appear to have derived from certain strange remarks which he made, a little before mother died.

Doctor. Oh, remarks! . . Ah! It would be extremely useful for me to have those remarks, word for word, if possible.

Di Nolli. I can't remember them. I know that mother returned awfully upset from her last visit with him. On her death-bed, she made me promise that I would never neglect him, that I would have doctors see him, and examine him.

Doctor. Um! Um! Let me see! let me see! Sometimes very small reasons determine . . and this portrait here then?

Donna Matilda. For Heaven's sake, Doctor, don't attach excessive importance to this. It made an impression on me because I had not seen it for so many years!

Doctor. If you please, quietly, quietly .

Di Nolli. —Well, yes, it must be about fifteen years ago.

Donna Matilda. More, more: eighteen!

Doctor. Forgive me, but you don't quite know what I am trying to get at. I attach a very great importance to
these two portraits. They were painted, naturally, prior to the famous—and most regrettable pageant, weren't they?

_Donna Matilda._ Of course!

_Doctor._ That is when he was quite in his right mind—that's what I've been trying to say. Was it his suggestion that they should be painted?

_Donna Matilda._ Lots of the people who took part in the pageant had theirs done as a souvenir. _Belcredi._ I had mine done—as "Charles of Anjou!"

_Donna Matilda._ As soon as the costumes were ready.

_Belcredi._ As a matter of fact, it was proposed that the whole lot of us should be hung together in a gallery of the villa where the pageant took place. But in the end, everybody wanted to keep his own portrait.

_Donna Matilda._ And I gave him this portrait of me without very much regret since his mother—[Indicates Di Nolli.]

_Doctor._ You don't remember if it was he who asked for it?

_Donna Matilda._ Ah, that I don't remember. Maybe it was his sister, wanting to help out.

_Doctor._ One other thing: was it his idea, this pageant? _Belcredi_ [at once]. No, no, it was mine!

_Doctor._ If you please.

_Donna Matilda._ Don't listen to him! It was poor Belassi's idea.

_Belcredi._ Belassi! What had he got to do with it?

_Donna Matilda._ Count Belassi, who died, poor fellow, two or three months after

_Belcredi._ But if Belassi wasn't there when

_Di Nolli._ Excuse me, Doctor—but is it really necessary to establish whose the original idea was?

_Doctor._ It would help me, certainly!

_Belcredi._ I tell you the idea was mine! There's noth-
ing to be proud of in it, seeing what the result's been. Look here, Doctor, it was like this. One evening, in the first days of November, I was looking at an illustrated German review in the club. I was merely glancing at the pictures, because I can't read German. There was a picture of the Kaiser, at some University town where he had been a student. I don't remember which.

_Doctor_ Bonn, Bonn!

_Belcredi._ —You are right: Bonn! He was on horseback, dressed up in one of those ancient German student guild-costumes, followed by a procession of noble students, also in costume. The picture gave me the idea. Already someone at the club had spoken of a pageant for the forthcoming carnival. So I had the notion that each of us should choose for this Tower of Babel pageant to represent some character: a king, an emperor, a prince, with his queen, empress, or lady, alongside of him—and all on horseback. The suggestion was at once accepted.

_Donna Matilda._ I had my invitation from Belassi.

_Belcredi._ Well, he wasn't speaking the truth! That's all I can say, if he told you the idea was his. He wasn't even at the club the evening I made the suggestion, just as he [Meaning _Henry IV._] wasn't there either.

_Doctor_ So he chose the character of _Henry IV_?

_Donna Matilda._ Because I thinking of my name, and not giving the choice any importance, said I would be the Marchioness Matilda of Tuscany.

_Doctor_ I don't understand the relation between the two.

_Donna Matilda._ —Neither did I, to begin with, when he said that in that case he would be at my feet like _Henry IV_ at Canossa. I had heard of Canossa of course; but to tell the truth, I'd forgotten most of the story; and I remember I received a curious impression when I had to get up my part, and found that I was the faithful and zealous friend of Pope Gregory VII in deadly enmity
Marquesa: "There is nothing quite so funny—if men could only see themselves with that eternal fidelity look in their faces..."

If Frida is wondering why Di Nolli no longer is gazing soulfully into her eyes, it is because he is embarrassed by what his future mother-in-law has just observed about the likes of him.
with the Emperor of Germany. Then I understood why, since I had chosen to represent his implacable enemy, he wanted to be near me in the pageant as Henry IV.

**Doctor** Ah, perhaps because.

**Belcredi.** —Good Heavens, Doctor, because he was then paying furious court to her! [Indicates the Marchioness.] And she, naturally

**Donna Matilda.** Naturally? Not naturally at all

**Belcredi** [pointing to her]. She shouldn't stand him

**Donna Matilda.** —No, that isn't true! I didn't dislike him. Not at all! But for me, when a man begins to want to be taken seriously, well

**Belcredi** [continuing for her]. He gives you the clearest proof of his stupidity.

**Donna Matilda.** No, dear; not in this case; because he was never a fool like you.

**Belcredi.** Anyway, I've never asked you to take me seriously.

**Donna Matilda.** Yes, I know. But with him one couldn't joke. [Changing her tone and speaking to the Doctor.] One of the many misfortunes which happen to us women, Doctor, is to see before us every now and again a pair of eyes glaring at us with a contained intense promise of eternal devotion. [Bursts out laughing.] There is nothing quite so funny. If men could only see themselves with that eternal look of fidelity in their faces! I've always thought it comic; then more even than now. But I want to make a confession—I can do so after twenty years or more. When I laughed at him then, it was partly out of fear. One might have almost believed a promise from those eyes of his. But it would have been very dangerous.

**Doctor** [with lively interest]. Ah! ah! This is most interesting! Very dangerous, you say?

**Donna Matilda.** Yes, because he was very different
from the others. And then, I am well what shall I say? . a little impatient of all that is pondered, or tedious. But I was too young then, and a woman. I had the bit between my teeth. It would have required more courage than I felt I possessed. So I laughed at him too—with remorse, to spite myself, indeed, since I saw that my own laugh mingled with those of all the others—the other fools—who made fun of him.

Belcredi. My own case, more or less!

Donna Matilda. You make people laugh at you, my dear, with your trick of always humiliating yourself. It was quite a different affair with him. There's a vast difference. And you—you know—people laugh in your face!

Belcredi. Well, that's better than behind one's back!

Doctor. Let's get to the facts. He was then already somewhat exalted, if I understand rightly.

Belcredi. Yes, but in a curious fashion, Doctor.

Doctor. How?

Belcredi. Well, cold-bloodedly so to speak.

Donna Matilda. Not at all! It was like this, Doctor! He was a bit strange, certainly; but only because he was fond of life: eccentric, there!

Belcredi. I don't say he simulated exaltation. On the contrary, he was often genuinely exalted. But I could swear, Doctor, that he saw himself at once in his own exaltation. Moreover, I'm certain it made him suffer. Sometimes he had the most comical fits of rage against himself.

Doctor. Yes?

Donna Matilda. That is true. And why? [To the Doctor. Evidently because that immediate lucidity that comes from acting, assuming a part, at once put him out of key with his own feelings, which seemed to him not exactly false, but like something he was obliged to give the value there and then of what shall I say—of an act for which he was obliged to substitute. Then and then.
of intelligence, to make up for that sincere cordial warmth he felt lacking. So he improvised, exaggerated, let himself go, so as to distract and forget himself. He appeared inconstant, fatuous, and—yes—even ridiculous, sometimes.

_Doctor._ And may we say unsociable?

_Belcredi._ No, not at all. He was famous for getting up things: _tableaux vivants_, dances, theatrical performances for charity— all for the fun of the thing, of course. He was a jolly good actor, you know!

_Di Nolli._ Madness has made a superb actor of him.

_Belcredi._—Why, so he was even in the old days. When the accident happened, after the horse fell ...

_Doctor._ Hit the back of his head, didn’t he?

_Donna Matilda._ Oh, it was horrible! He was beside me! I saw him between the horse’s hoofs! It was rearing!

_Belcredi._ None of us thought it was anything serious at first. There was a stop in the pageant, a bit of disorder. People wanted to know what had happened. But they’d already taken him off to the villa.

_Donna Matilda._ There wasn’t the least sign of a wound, not a drop of blood.

_Belcredi._ We thought he had merely fainted.

_Donna Matilda._ But two hours afterwards

_Belcredi._ He reappeared in the drawing-room of the villa— that is what I wanted to say

_Donna Matilda._ My God! What a face he had. I saw the whole thing at once!

_Belcredi._ No, no! that isn’t true. Nobody saw it, Doctor, believe me!

_Donna Matilda._ Doubtless, because you were all like mad folk.

_Belcredi._ Everybody was pretending to act his part for a joke. It was a regular Babel.

_Donna Matilda._ And you can imagine, Doctor, what
terror struck into us when we understood that he, on the contrary, was playing his part in deadly earnest.

Doctor. Oh, he was there too, was he?

Belcredi. Of course! He came straight into the midst of us. We thought he'd quite recovered, and was pretending, fooling, like all the rest of us, only doing it rather better; because, as I say, he knew how to act.

Donna Matilda. Some of them began to hit him with their whips and fans and sticks.

Belcredi. And then—as a king, he was armed, of course—he drew out his sword and menaced two or three of us. It was a terrible moment, I can assure you!

Donna Matilda. I shall never forget that scene—all our masked faces hideous and terrified gazing at him, at that terrible mask of his face, which was no longer a mask, but madness, madness personified.

Belcredi. He was Henry IV, Henry IV in person, in a moment of fury.

Donna Matilda. He'd got into it all the detail and minute preparation of a month's careful study. And it all burned and blazed there in the terrible obsession which lit his face.

Doctor. Yes, that is quite natural, of course. The momentary obsession of a dilettante became fixed, owing to the fall and the damage to the brain.

Belcredi [to Frida and Di Nolfi]. You see the kind of jokes life can play on us. [To Di Nolfi] You were four or five years old. [To Frida] Your mother imagines you've taken her place there in that portrait; when, at the time, she had not the remotest idea that she would bring you into the world. My hair is already grey; and he—look at him—[Points to portrait]—ha! A smack on the head, and he never moves again: Henry IV for ever!

Doctor [seeking to draw the attention of the others, looking learned and imposing]. —Well, well, then it comes, we may say, to this
[Suddenly the first exit to right, the one nearest footlights, opens, and Berthold enters all excited.]

Berthold [rushing in]. I say! I say! [Stops for a moment, arrested by the astonishment which his appearance has caused in the others.]

Frida [running away terrified]. Oh dear! oh dear! it's he, it's he. 

Berthold. I say! I say! [Stops for a moment, arrested by the astonishment which his appearance has caused in the others.]

Frida [running away terrified]. Oh dear! oh dear! it's he, it's he.

Di Nolli. No, no, what are you talking about? Be calm! 

Berthold. Yes, sir, but I can't stand it any longer, and I ask you to let me go away this very minute.

Di Nolli. Oh, you're the new valet, are you? You were supposed to begin this morning, weren't you?

Berthold. Yes, sir, and I can't stand it, I can't bear it.

Donna Matilda [to Di Nolli excitedly]. What? Then he's not so calm as you said?

Berthold [quickly]. —No, no, my lady, it isn't he; it's my companions. You say "help him out with his madness," Marquis; but they don't do anything of the kind. They're the real madmen. I come here for the first time, and instead of helping me

[Landolph and Harold come in from the same door, but hesitate on the threshold.] 

Landolph. Excuse me? 

Harold. May I come in, my Lord?
Di Nolli. Come in! What's the matter? What are you all doing?

Frida. Oh God! I'm frightened! I'm going to run away. [Makes towards exit at left.]

Di Nolli [restraining her at once]. No, no, Frida! [Indicates Berthold.]

Landolph. My Lord, this fool here [Indicates Berthold.]

Berthold [protesting]. Ah, no thanks, my friends, no thanks! I'm not stopping here! I'm off!

Landolph. What do you mean—you're not stopping here?

Harold. He's ruined everything, my Lord, running away in here!

Landolph. He's made him quite mad. We can't keep him in there any longer. He's given orders that he's to be arrested, and he wants to "judge" him at once from the throne: What is to be done?

Di Nolli. Shut the door, man! Shut the door! Go and close that door! [Landolph goes to close it.]

Harold. Ordulph, alone, won't be able to keep him there.

Landolph. —My Lord, perhaps if we could announce the visitors at once, it would turn his thoughts. Have the gentlemen thought under what pretext they will present themselves to him?

Di Nolli. —It's all been arranged! [To the Doctor.]

If you, Doctor, think it well to see him at once.

Frida. I'm not coming! I'm not coming! I'll keep out of this. You too, mother, for Heaven's sake, come away with me!

Doctor —I say I suppose he's not armed, is he?

Di Nolli. —Nonsense! Of course not. [To Frida.] Frida, you know this is childish of you. You wanted to come!
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Frida. I didn't at all. It was mother's idea.
Donna Matilda. And I'm quite ready to see him.
What are we going to do? Belcredi. Must we absolutely dress up in some fashion or other?
Landolph. —Absolutely essential, indispensable, sir. Alas! as you see [Shows his costume], there'd be awful trouble if he saw you gentlemen in modern dress.
Harold. He would think it was some diabolical masquerade.
Di Nolli. As these men seem to be in costume to you, so we appear to be in costume to him, in these modern clothes of ours.
Landolph. It wouldn't matter so much if he wouldn't suppose it to be the work of his mortal enemy.
Belcredi. The Pope a pagan? Not bad that! Landolph. —Yes, sir,—and a man who calls up the dead! He accuses him of all the diabolical arts. He's terribly afraid of him.
Doctor. Persecution mania!
Harold. He'd be simply furious.
Di Nolli [to Belcredi]. But there's no need for you to be there, you know. It's sufficient for the Doctor to see him.
Doctor. —What do you mean? I? Alone?
Di Nolli. —But they are there. [Indicates the three young men.]
Doctor. I don't mean that. I mean if the Marchioness.
Donna Matilda. Of course. I mean to see him too, naturally. I want to see him again.
Frida. Oh, why, mother, why? Do come away with me, I implore you!
Donna Matilda [imperiously]. Let me do as I wish!
I came here for this purpose! [To LANDOLPH.] I shall be "Adelaide," the mother. XDL

LANDOLPH. Excellent! The mother of the Empress Bertha. Good! It will be enough if her Ladyship wears the ducal crown and puts on a mantle that will hide her other clothes entirely. [To HAROLD.] Off you go, Harold! HAROLD. Wait a moment! And this gentleman here? [Alludes to the DOCTOR.] DOCTOR — Ah yes we decided I was to be the Bishop of Cluny, Hugh of Cluny!

LANDOLPH. — He's often been here before!

DOCTOR [amazed]. — What? Been here before?

LANDOLPH. — Don't be alarmed! I mean that it's an easily prepared disguise.

HAROLD. We've made use of it on other occasions, you see!

DOCTOR But

LANDOLPH. Oh, no, there's no risk of his remembering. He pays more attention to the dress than to the person.

DONNA MATILDA. That's fortunate for me too then.

DI NOLLI. Frida, you and I'll get along. Come on, XL Tito!

BELCREDI. Ah no. If she [Indicates the Marchioness.] stops here, so do I!

DONNA MATILDA. But I don't need you at all.

BELCREDI. You may not need me, but I should like to see him again myself. Maybe it?

LANDOLPH. Well, perhaps it would be better if there were three.

HAROLD. How is the gentleman to be dressed then?

BELCREDI. Oh, try and find some easy costume for me.

LANDOLPH [to HAROLD]. Hum! Yes he'd better be from Cluny too.

BELCREDI. What do you mean—from Cluny?
Landolph. A Benedictine's habit of the Abbey of Cluny. He can be in attendance on Monsignor. [To Harold.] Off you go! [To Berthold.] And you too get away and keep out of sight all today. No, wait a bit! [To Berthold.] You bring here the costumes he will give you. [To Harold.] You go at once and announce the visit of the “Duchess Adelaide” and “Monsignor Hugh of Cluny,” Do you understand? [Harold and Berthold go off by the side door on the right.]

Di Nolli. We'll retire now. [Goes off with Frida, left.]

Doctor. Shall I be a persona grata to him, as Hugh of Cluny?

Landolph. Oh, rather! Don’t worry about that! Monsignor has always been received here with great respect. You too, my Lady, he will be glad to see. He never forgets that it was owing to the intercession of you two that he was admitted to the Castle of Canossa and the presence of Gregory VII, who didn’t want to receive him.

Belcredi. And what do I do? Xc

Landolph. You stand a little apart, respectfully; that's all.

Donna Matilda [irritated, nervous]. You would do well to go away, you know.

Belcredi [slowly, spitefully]. How upset you seem!

Donna Matilda [proudly]. I am as I am. Leave me alone!

[Berthold comes in with the costumes.]

Landolph [seeing him enter]. Ah, the costumes: here they are. This mantle is for the Marchioness

Donna Matilda. Wait a minute! I’ll take off my hat. [Does so and gives it to Berthold.]

Landolph. Put it down there! [Then to the Marchioness, while he offers to put the ducal crown on her head. Allow me!}
Donna Matilda. Dear, dear! Isn’t there a mirror here?
Landolph. Yes, there’s one there [Points to the door on the left.] If the Marchioness would rather put it on herself
Donna Matilda. Yes, yes, that will be better. Give it to me! [Takes up her hat and goes off with Berthold, who carries the cloak and the crown.]
Belcredi. Well, I must say, I never thought I should be a Benedictine monk! By the way, this business must cost an awful lot of money.
The Doctor. Like any other fantasy, naturally!
Belcredi. Well, there’s a fortune to go upon.
Landolph. We have got there a whole wardrobe of costumes of the period, copied to perfection from old models. This is my special job. I get them from the best theatrical costumers. They cost lots of money. [Donna Matilda re-enters, wearing mantle and crown.]
Belcredi [at once, in admiration]. Oh magnificent! Oh, truly regal!
Donna Matilda [looking at Belcredi and bursting out into laughter]. No, no! Take it off! You’re impossible. You look like an... dressed up as a monk.
Belcredi. Well, how about the Doctor? XR
The Doctor. I don’t think I look so bad, do I?
Donna Matilda. No; the Doctor’s all right. but you are too funny for words.
The Doctor. Do you have many receptions here then?
Landolph. It depends. He often gives orders that such and such a person appear before him. Then we have to find someone who will take the part. Women too.
Donna Matilda [hurt, but trying to hide the fact]. Ah, women too?
Landolph. Oh, yes; many at first.
Belcredi [laughing]. Oh, that’s great! In costume, like the Marchioness?
Landolph. Oh well, you know, women of the kind that lend themselves to
Belcredi. Ah, I see! [Perfidiously to the Marchioness.]
Look out, you know he's becoming dangerous for you.
[The second door on the right opens, and Harold appears making first of all a discreet sign that all conversation should cease.] [Landolph X U R]
Harold. His Majesty, the Emperor!
[The Two Valets enter first, and go and stand on either side of the throne. Then Henry IV comes in between Ordulpf and Harold, who keep a little in the rear respectfully.
[Henry IV is about 50 and very pale. The hair on the back of his head is already grey; over the temples and forehead it appears blond, owing to its having been tinted in an evident and puerile fashion. On his cheek bones he has two small, doll-like dabs of color, that stand out prominently against the rest of his tragic pallor. He is wearing a penitent's sack over his regal habit, as at Canossa. His eyes have a fixed look which is dreadful to see, and this expression is in strained contrast with the sackcloth. Ordulpf carries the Imperial crown, Harold, the sceptre with eagle, and the globe with the cross.]
Henry IV [bowing first to Donna Matilda and afterwards to the Doctor]. My lady Monsignor
[Then he looks at Belcredi and seems about to greet him too; when, suddenly, he turns to Landolph, who has approached him, and asks him sotto voce and with diffidence.] Is that Peter Damiani?
Landolph. No, Sire. He is a monk from Cluny who is accompanying the Abbot.

Henry IV [looks again at Belcredi with increasing mistrust, and then noticing that he appears embarrassed and keeps glancing at Donna Matilda and the Doctor, stands upright and cries out]. No, it's Peter Damian! It's no
use, father, your looking at the Duchess. [Then turning quickly to Donna Matilda and the Doctor as though to ward off a danger.] I swear it! I swear that my heart is changed towards your daughter. I confess that if he [Indicates Belcredi] hadn't come to forbid it in the name of Pope Alexander, I'd have repudiated her. Yes, yes, there were people ready to favour the repudiation: the Bishop of Mayence would have done it for a matter of one hundred and twenty farms. [Looks at Landolph a little perplexed and adds.] But I mustn't speak ill of the bishops at this moment! [More humbly to Belcredi.] I am grateful to you, believe me, I am grateful to you for the hindrance you put in my way!—God knows, my life's been all made of humiliations: my mother, Adalbert, Tribur, Goslar! And now this sackcloth you see me wearing! [Changes tone suddenly and speaks like one who goes over his part in a parenthesis of astuteness.] It doesn't matter: clarity of ideas, perspicacity, firmness and patience under adversity that's the thing. [Then turning to all and speaking solemnly.] I know how to make amend for the mistakes I have made; and I can humiliate myself even before you, Peter Damiani. [Bows profoundly to him and remains curved. Then a suspicion is born in him which he is obliged to utter in menacing tones, almost against his will.] Was it not perhaps you who started that obscene rumor that my holy mother had illicit relations with the Bishop of Augusta?

Belcredi [since Henry IV has his finger pointed at him].

No, no, it wasn't I

Henry IV [straightening up]. Not true, not true? Infamy! [Looks at him and then adds.] I didn't think you capable of it [Goes to the Doctor and plucks his sleeve, while winking at him knowingly.] Always the same, Monsignor, those bishops, always the same!

Harold [softly, whispering as if to help out the doctor].

Yes, yes, the rapacious bishops!
The Doctor [to Harold, trying to keep it up]. Ah, yes, those fellows ah yes.

Henry IV Nothing satisfies them! I was a little boy, Monsignor... One passes the time, playing even, when, without knowing it, one is a king.—I was six years old; and they tore me away from my mother, and made use of me against her without my knowing anything about it... always profaning, always stealing, stealing! One greedier than the other Hanno worse than Stephen! Stephen worse than Hanno.

Landolph [sotto voce, persuasively, to call his attention]. Majesty!

Henry IV [turning round quickly]. Ah yes this isn't the moment to speak ill of the bishops. But this infamy against my mother, Monsignor, is too much. [Looks at the Marchioness and grows tender] And I can't even weep for her, Lady. I appeal to you who have a mother's heart! She came here to see me from her convent a month ago. They had told me she was dead! [Sustained pause full of feeling. Then smiling sadly.] I can't weep for her; because if you are here now, and I am like this [Shows the sackcloth he is wearing.] it means I am twenty-six years old!

Harold. And that she is therefore alive, Majesty!

Ordulphe. Still in her convent!

Henry IV [looking at them]. Ah yes! And I can postpone my grief to another time. [Shows the Marchioness almost with coquetry the tint he has given to his hair] Look! I am still fair [Then slowly as if in confidence.] For you there's no need! But little exterior details do help! A matter of time, Monsignor, do you understand me? [Turns to the Marchioness and notices her hair.] Ah, but I see that you too, Duchess... [As much as to say "false"; but without any indignation, indeed rather with malicious admiration.] Heaven forbid that I should show disgust or surprise!
"My God! One day... how was it, how was it you were able to commit this or that action? Yes, that particular action, that very one! We understand each other!"

Through the pangs of remembered sin, the Marquesa experiences a flash of joy: "He remembers me; he knows me!"
Nobody cares to recognize that obscure and fatal power which sets limits to our will. But I say, if one is born and one dies—Did you want to be born, Monsignor? I didn't! And in both cases, independently of our wills, so many things happen we would wish didn't happen, and to which we resign ourselves as best we can!

Doctor [merely to make a remark, while studying Henry IV carefully]. Alas! Yes, alas!

Henry IV It's like this: When we are not resigned, out come our desires. A woman wants to be a man an old man would be young again. Desires, ridiculous fixed ideas of course—But reflect! Monsignor, those other desires are not less ridiculous: I mean, those desires where the will is kept within the limits of the possible. Not one of us can lie or pretend. We're all fixed in good faith in a certain concept of ourselves. However, Monsignor, while you keep yourself in order, holding on with both your hands to your holy habit, there slips down from your sleeves, there peels off from you like a serpent—something you don't notice: life, Monsignor! [Turns to the Marchioness.] Has it never happened to you, my Lady, to find a different self in yourself? Have you always been the same? My God! One day how was it, how was it you were able to commit this or that action? [Fixes her so intently in the eyes as almost to make her blanch.] Yes, that particular action, that very one: we understand each other! But don't be afraid: I shall reveal it to none. And you, Peter Damiani, how could you be a friend of that man? Landolph. Majesty!

Henry IV [at once]. No, I won't name him! [Turning to Belcredi.] What did you think of him? But we all of us cling tight to our conceptions of ourselves, just as he who is growing old dyes his hair. What does it matter that this dyed hair of mine isn't a reality for you, if it is, to some extent, for me?—you, you, my Lady, certainly
"Tomorrow, twenty seven Bishops will sign with me the act of deposition of Gregory VII. No Pope at all—just a false monk!"

Frustrated by his impotence to deal with these visitors on their own terms, Henry resorts to his twenty year old fiction.
don't dye your hair to deceive the others, nor even yourself; but only to cheat your own image a little before the looking-glass. I do it for a joke! You do it seriously! But I assure you that you too, Madam, are in masquerade, though it be in all seriousness; and I am not speaking of the venerable crown on your brows or the ducal mantle. I am speaking only of the memory you wish to fix in yourself of your fair complexion one day when it pleased you—or of your dark complexion, if you were dark: the fading image of your youth! For you, Peter Damiani, on the contrary, the memory of what you have been, of what you have done, seems to you a recognition of past realities that remain within you like a dream. I'm in the same case too: with so many inexplicable memories—like dreams! Ah! There's nothing to marvel at in it, Peter Damiani! Tomorrow it will be the same thing with our life of today. [Suddenly getting excited and taking hold of his sackcloth.] This sackcloth here [Beginning to take it off with a gesture of almost ferocious joy while the Three Valets run over to him, frightened, as if to prevent his doing so.] Ah, my God! [Draws back and throws off sackcloth.] Tomorrow, at Bressanone, twenty-seven German and Lombard bishops will sign with me the act of deposition of Gregory VII! No Pope at all! Just a false monk!

Ordulph [with the other three]. Majesty! Majesty! In God's name!

Harold [inviting him to put on the sackcloth again]. Listen to what he says, Majesty!

Landalph. Monsignor is here with the Duchess to intercede in your favor [Makes secret signs to the Doctor to say something at once.]

Doctor [foolishly]. Ah yes...yes...we are here to intercede

Henry IV [repenting at once, almost terrified, allowing the three to put on the sackcloth again, and pulling it
Woe unto him who does not know how to wear his own mask, be he King or Pope. Henry’s way of warning Belcredi that he sees through Belcredi’s disguise. The sword promises vengeance.
HENRY IV

[ down over him with his own hands]. Pardon yes . . . yes . . . pardon, Monsignor: forgive me, my Lady . . . I swear to you I feel the whole weight of the anathema. [Bends himself, takes his face between his hands, as though waiting for something to crush him. Then changing tone, but without moving, says softly to LAN DOLPH, HAROLD and ORDULPH. ] But I don’t know why I cannot be humble before that man there! [Indicates BEL CREDI.]

Landolph [sotto voce]. But why, Majesty, do you insist on believing he is Peter Damiani, when he isn’t, at all?

Henry IV [looking at him timorously]. He isn’t Peter Damiani?

Harold. No, no, he is a poor monk, Majesty.

Henry IV [sadly with a touch of exasperation]. Ah! None of us can estimate what we do when we do it from instinct . . . You perhaps, Madam, can understand me better than the others, since you are a woman and a Duchess. This is a solemn and decisive moment. I could, you know, accept the assistance of the Lombard bishops, arrest the Pope, lock him up here in the castle, run to Rome and elect an anti-Pope; offer alliance to Robert Guiscard—and Gregory VII would be lost! I resist the temptation; and, believe me, I am wise in doing so. I feel the atmosphere of our times and the majesty of one who knows how to be what he ought to be! a Pope! Do you feel inclined to laugh at me, seeing me like this? You would be foolish to do so; for you don’t understand the political wisdom which makes this penitent’s sack advisable. The parts may be changed tomorrow. What would you do then? Would you laugh to see the Pope a prisoner? No! It would come to the same thing: I dressed as a penitent, today; he, as prisoner tomorrow! But woe to him who doesn’t know how to wear his mask, be he king or Pope!—Perhaps he is a bit too cruel! No! Yes, yes, maybe!
—You remember, my Lady, how your daughter Bertha, for whom, I repeat, my feelings have changed [Turns to Belcredi and shouts to his face as if he were being contradicted by him.]—yes, changed on account of the affection and devotion she showed me in that terrible moment.

[Then once again to the Marchioness.] Then you remember how she came with me, my Lady, followed me like a beggar and passed two nights out in the open, in the snow? You are her mother! Doesn't this touch your mother's heart? Doesn't this urge you to pity, so that you will beg His Holiness for pardon, beg him to receive us?

Donna Matilda [trembling, with feeble voice]. Yes, yes, at once.

Doctor. It shall be done!

Henry IV. And one thing more! [Draws them in to listen to him.] It isn't enough that he should receive me! You know he can do everything—everything I tell you! He can even call up the dead. [Touches his chest.] Behold me! Do you see me? There is no magic art unknown to him. Well, Monsignor, my Lady, my torment is really this: that whether here or there [Pointing to his portrait almost in fear.] I can't free myself from this magic. I am a penitent now, you see; and I swear to you I shall remain so until he receives me. But you two, when the excommunication is taken off, must ask the Pope to do this thing he can so easily do: to take me away from that; [Indicating the portrait again.] and let me live wholly and freely my miserable life. A man can't always be twenty-six, my Lady. I ask this of you for your daughter's sake too; that I may love her as she deserves to be loved, well disposed as I am now, all tender towards her for her pity. There; it's all there! I am in your hands! [Bows.] My Lady! Monsignor!

[He goes off, bowing grandly, through the door by which he entered, leaving everyone stupefied, and the Marchioness so profoundly touched, that no sooner]
HENRY IV

has he gone than she breaks out into sobs and sits down almost fainting.]

ACT II

Another room of the villa, adjoining the throne room. Its furniture is antique and severe. Principal exit at rear in the background. To the left, two windows looking on the garden. To the right, a door opening into the throne room.

Late afternoon of the same day.

DONNA MATILDA, the DOCTOR and BELCREDI are on the stage engaged in conversation; but DONNA MATILDA stands to one side, evidently annoyed at what the other two are saying; although she cannot help listening, because, in her agitated state, everything interests her in spite of herself. The talk of the other two attracts her attention, because she instinctively feels the need for calm at the moment.

Belcredi. It may be as you say, Doctor, but that was my impression.

Doctor I won't contradict you; but, believe me, it is only an impression.

Belcredi. Pardon me, but he even said so, and quite clearly [Turning to the MARCHIONESS.] Didn't he, Marchioness?

Donna Matilda [turning round]. What did he say?

[Then not agreeing.] Oh yes but not for the reason you think!

Doctor. He was alluding to the costumes we had slipped on Your cloak [Indicating the MARCHIONESS.] our Benedictine habits But all this is childish!

Donna Matilda [turning quickly, indignant]. Childish? What do you mean, Doctor?
Doctor. From one point of view, it is—I beg you to let me say so, Marchioness! Yet, on the other hand, it is much more complicated than you can imagine.

Donna Matilda. To me, on the contrary, it is perfectly clear!

Doctor [with a smile of pity of the competent person towards those who do not understand]. We must take into account the peculiar psychology of madmen; which, you must know, enables us to be certain that they observe things and can, for instance, easily detect people who are disguised; can in fact recognize the disguise and yet believe in it; just as children do, for whom disguise is both play and reality. That is why I used the word childish. But the thing is extremely complicated, inasmuch as he must be perfectly aware of being an image to himself and for himself—that image there, in fact! [Alluding to the portrait in the throne room, and pointing to the left.]

Belcredi. That's what he said!

Doctor. Very well then—An image before which other images, ours, have appeared: understand? Now he, in his acute and perfectly lucid delirium, was able to detect at once a difference between his image and ours: that is, he saw that ours were make-believes. So he suspected us; because all madmen are armed with a special diffidence. But that's all there is to it! Our make-believe, built up all round his, did not seem pitiful to him. While his seemed all the more tragic to us, in that he, as if in defiance—understand?—and induced by his suspicion, wanted to show us up merely as a joke. That was also partly the case with him, in coming before us with painted cheeks and hair, and saying he had done it on purpose for a jest.

Donna Matilda [impatiently]. No, it's not that, Doctor. It's not like that! It's not like that!

Doctor. Why isn't it, may I ask?
HENRY IV

Donna Matilda [with decision but trembling]. I am perfectly certain he recognized me!

Doctor. It's not possible—it's not possible!

Belcredi [at the same time]. Of course not!

Donna Matilda [more than ever determined, almost convulsively]. I tell you, he recognized me! When he came close up to speak to me—looking in my eyes, right into my eyes—he recognized me!

Belcredi. But he was talking of your daughter!

Donna Matilda. That's not true! He was talking of me! Of me!

Belcredi. Yes, perhaps, when he said

Donna Matilda [letting herself go]. About my dyed hair! But didn't you notice that he added at once: "or the memory of your dark hair, if you were dark"? He remembered perfectly well that I was dark—then!

Belcredi. Nonsense! nonsense!

Donna Matilda [not listening to him, turning to the Doctor]. My hair, Doctor, is really dark—like my daughter's! That's why he spoke of her.

Belcredi. But he doesn't even know your daughter!

He's never seen her!

Donna Matilda. Exactly! Oh, you never understand anything! By my daughter, stupid, he meant me—as I was then!

Belcredi. Oh, this is catching! This is catching, this madness!

Donna Matilda [softly, with contempt]. Fool!

Belcredi. Excuse me, were you ever his wife? Your daughter is his wife—in his delirium: Bertha of Susa.

Donna Matilda. Exactly! Because I, no longer dark—as he remembered me—but fair, introduced myself as "Adelaide," the mother. My daughter doesn't exist for him: he's never seen her—you said so yourself! So how can he know whether she's fair or dark?
Belcredi. But he said dark, speaking generally, just as anyone who wants to recall, whether fair or dark, a memory of youth in the color of the hair! And you, as usual, begin to imagine things! Doctor, you said I ought not to have come! It's she who ought not to have come!

Donna Matilda [upset for a moment by Belcredi's remark, recovers herself. Then with a touch of anger, because doubtful]. No, no he spoke of me. He spoke all the time to me, with me, of me.

Belcredi. That's not bad! He didn't leave me a moment's breathing space; and you say he was talking all the time to you? Unless you think he was alluding to you too, when he was talking to Peter Damiani!

Donna Matilda defiantly, almost exceeding the limits of courteous discussion. Who knows? Can you tell me why, from the outset, he showed a strong dislike for you, for you alone? [From the tone of the question, the expected answer must almost explicitly be: "because he understands you are my lover." Belcredi feels this so well that he remains silent and can say nothing.]

Doctor. The reason may also be found in the fact that only the visit of the Duchess Adelaide and the Abbot of Cluny was announced to him. Finding a third person present, who had not been announced, at once his suspicions

Belcredi. Yes, exactly! His suspicion made him see an enemy in me: Peter Damiani! But she's got it into her head, that he recognized her.

Donna Matilda. There's no doubt about it! I could see it from his eyes, doctor. You know, there's a way of looking that leaves no doubt whatever. Perhaps it was only for an instant, but I am sure.

Doctor. It is not impossible: a lucid moment.

Donna Matilda. Yes, perhaps. And then his speech seemed to me full of regret for his and my youth—for the horrible thing that happened to him, that has
held him in that disguise from which he has never been able to free himself, and from which he longs to be free—he said so himself!

Belcredi. Yes, so as to be able to make love to your daughter, or you, as you believe—having been touched by your pity.

Donna Matilda. Which is very great, I would ask you to believe.

Belcredi. As one can see, Marchioness; so much so that a miracle-worker might expect a miracle from it!

Doctor. Will you let me speak? I don’t work miracles, because I am a doctor and not a miracle-worker. I listened very intently to all he said, and I repeat that that certain analogical elasticity, common to all systematized delirium, is evidently with him much what shall I say?—much relaxed! The elements, that is, of his delirium no longer hold together. It seems to me he has lost the equilibrium of his second personality and sudden recollections drag him—and this is very comforting—not from a state of incipient apathy, but rather from a morbid inclination to reflective melancholy, which shows a . . . a very considerable cerebral activity. Very comforting, I repeat! Now if, by this violent trick we’ve planned . . .

Donna Matilda [turning to the window, in the tone of a sick person complaining]. But how is it that the motor has not returned? It’s three hours and a half since

Doctor. What do you say?

Donna Matilda. The motor, Doctor! It’s more than three hours and a half

Doctor [taking out his watch and looking at it]. Yes, more than four hours, by this!

Donna Matilda. It could have reached here an hour ago at least! But, as usual

Belcredi. Perhaps they can’t find the dress
The Doctor: "You remember he said: 'One can't always be twenty six, My Lady...!""

The Doctor is being clinical, Belcredi is being cynical, and the Marquesa is being emotional.
Donna Matilda. But I explained exactly where it was! [Impatiently.] And Frida where is Frida?
Belcredi [looking out of the window]. Perhaps she is in the garden with Charles.
Doctor He’ll talk her out of her fright.
Belcredi. She’s not afraid, Doctor; don’t you believe it: the thing bores her rather.
Donna Matilda. Just don’t ask anything of her! I know what she’s like.
Doctor Let’s wait patiently. Anyhow, it will soon be over, and it has to be in the evening. It will only be the matter of a moment! If we can succeed in rousing him, as I was saying, and in breaking at one the threads—already slack—which still bind him to this fiction of life, giving him back what he himself asks for—you remember, he said: “one cannot always be twenty-six years old, madam!” if we can give him freedom from this torment, which even he feels is a torment, then if he is able to recover at one bound the sensation of the distance of time.
Belcredi [quickly]. He’ll be cured! [Then emphatically with irony. We’ll pull him out of it all!]
Doctor Yes, we may hope to set him going again, like a watch which has stopped at a certain hour just as if we had our watches in our hands and were waiting for that other watch to go again.—A shake—so—and let’s hope it’ll tell the time again after its long stop. [At this point the Marquis Charles Di Nolli enters from the principal entrance.]
Donna Matilda. Oh, Charles! And Frida?
Where is she?
Di Nolli. She’ll be here in a moment.
Doctor Has the motor arrived?
Di Nolli. Yes.
Donna Matilda. Yes? Has the dress come?
HENRY IV

Di Nolli. It's been here some time.
Doctor. Good! Good!
Donna Matilda [trembling]. Where is she? Where's Frida?
Di Nolli [shrugging his shoulders and smiling sadly, like one lending himself unwillingly to an untimely joke]. You'll see, you'll see! [Pointing towards the hall.]
Here she is! [BERTHOLD appears at the threshold of the hall, and announces with solemnity.]
BERTHOLD. Her Highness the Countess Matilda of Canossa! [FRIDA enters, magnificent and beautiful, arrayed in the robes of her mother as “Countess Matilda of Tuscany,” so that she is a living copy of the portrait in the throne room.]
FRIDA [passing BERTHOLD, who is bowing, says to him with disdain]. Of Tuscany, of Tuscany! Canossa is just one of my castles!
Belcredi [in admiration]. Look! Look! She seems another person.
Donna Matilda. One would say it were I! Look!—Why, Frida, look! She's exactly my portrait, alive!
Doctor. Yes, yes . . . Perfect! Perfect! The portrait, to the life.
Belcredi. Yes, there's no question about it. She is the portrait! Magnificent!
FRIDA. Don't make me laugh, or I shall burst! I say, mother, what a tiny waist you had? I had to squeeze so to get into this!
Donna Matilda [arranging her dress a little]. Wait! Keep still! These pleats . . . is it really so tight?
FRIDA. I'm suffocating! I implore you, to be quick!
Doctor. But we must wait till it's evening!
FRIDA. No, no, I can't hold out till evening!
Donna Matilda. Why did you put it on so soon?

Frida. The moment I saw it, the temptation was irresistible.

Donna Matilda. At least you could have called me, or have had someone help you! It’s still all crumpled.

Frida. So I saw, mother; but they are old creases; they won’t come out.

Doctor. It doesn’t matter, Marchioness! The illusion is perfect. [Then coming nearer and asking her to come in front of her daughter, without hiding her.] If you please, stay there, there . . . at a certain distance . . . now a little more forward.

Belvedere. For the feeling of the distance of time

Donna Matilda [slightly turning to him]. Twenty years after! A disaster! A tragedy!

Belvedere. Now don’t let’s exaggerate!

Doctor [embarrassed, trying to save the situation].

No, no! I meant the dress . . . so as to see . . .

Belvedere [laughing]. Oh, as for the dress, Doctor, it isn’t a matter of twenty years! It’s eight hundred! An abyss! Do you really want to shove him across it [Pointing first to Frida and then to Marchioness.] from there to here? But you’ll have to pick him up in pieces with a basket! Just think now: for us it is a matter of twenty years, a couple of dresses, and a masquerade. But, if, as you say, Doctor, time has stopped for and around him: if he lives there [Pointing to Frida.] with her, eight hundred years ago . . . I repeat: the giddiness of the jump will be such, that finding himself suddenly among us [The Doctor shakes his head in dissent.] You don’t think so?

Doctor. No, because life, my dear baron, can take up its rhythms. This—our life—will at once become real also to him, and will pull him up directly, wresting from him suddenly the illusion, and showing him that the eight
hundred years, as you say, are only twenty! It will be like one of those tricks, such as the leap into space, for instance, of the Masonic rite, which appears to be heaven knows how far, and is only a step down the stairs.

Belcredi. Ah! An idea! Yes! Look at Frida and the Marchioness, doctor! Which is more advanced in time? We old people, Doctor! The young ones think they are more ahead; but it isn't true: we are more ahead, because time belongs to us more than to them.

Doctor. If the past didn't alienate us.

Belcredi. It doesn't matter at all! How does it alienate us? They [Pointing to Frida and Di Nollì] have still to do what we have accomplished, Doctor: to grow old, doing the same foolish things, more or less, as we did.

This is the illusion: that one comes forward through a door to life. It isn't so! As soon as one is born, one starts dying; therefore, he who started first is the most advanced of all. The youngest of us is father Adam! Look there: [Pointing to Frida] eight hundred years younger than all of us—the Countess Matilda of Tuscany. [He makes her a deep bow.]

Di Nollì. I say, Tito, don't start joking.

Belcredi. Oh, you think I am joking?

Di Nollì. Of course, of course all the time.

Belcredi. Impossible! I've even dressed up as a Benedictine.

Di Nollì. Yes, but for a serious purpose.

Belcredi. Well, exactly. If it has been serious for the others for Frida, now, for instance. [Then turning to the Doctor. I swear, Doctor, I don't yet understand what you want to do.

Doctor [annoyed]. You'll see! Let me do as I wish. At present you see the Marchioness still dressed as .

Belcredi. Oh, she also has to masquerade?

Doctor. Of course! Of course! In another dress that's
in there ready to be used when it comes into his head he sees the Countess Matilda of Canossa before him.

Frida [while talking quietly to Di Nolli notices the doctor's mistake]. Of Tuscany, of Tuscany!

Doctor It's all the same!

Belcredi. Oh, I see! He'll be faced by two of them...

Doctor Two, precisely! And then

Frida [calling him aside]. Come here, doctor! Listen!

Doctor Here I am! [Goes near the two young people and pretends to give some explanations to them.]

Belcredi [softly to Donna Matilda]. I say, this is getting rather strong, you know!

Donna Matilda [looking him firmly in the face]. What?

Belcredi. Does it really interest you as much as all that—to make you willing to take part in . . . ? For a woman this is simply enormous!...

Donna Matilda. Yes, for an ordinary woman.

Belcredi. Oh, no, my dear, for all women,—in a question like this! It's an abnegation.

Donna Matilda. I owe it to him.

Belcredi. Don't lie! You know well enough it's not hurting you!

Donna Matilda. Well, then, where does the abnegation come in?

Belcredi. Just enough to prevent you losing caste in other people's eyes—and just enough to offend me!

Donna Matilda. But who is worrying about you now?

Di Nolli [coming forward]. It's all right. It's all right. That's what we'll do! [Turning towards Berthold.] Here you; go and call one of those fellows!

Berthold. At once! [Exit.]

Donna Matilda. But first of all we've got to pretend that we are going away.
HENRY IV

Di Nolli. Exactly! I’ll see to that . . . [To Belcredi, you don’t mind staying here?
Belcredi [ironically]. Oh, no, I don’t mind, I don’t mind!
Di Nolli. We must look out not to make him suspi-
cious again, you know.
Belcredi. Oh, Lord! He doesn’t amount to anything!
Doctor. He must believe absolutely that we’ve gone
away. [Landolph followed by Berthold enters from the
right.]
Landolph. May I come in?
Di Nolli. Come in! Come in! I say—your name’s
Lolo, isn’t it?
Landolph. Lolo, or Landolph, just as you like!
Di Nolli. Well, look here: the Doctor and the Mar-
chioness are leaving, at once.
Landolph. Very well. All we’ve got to say is that they
have been able to obtain the permission for the recep-
tion from His Holiness. He’s in there in his own apar-
tments repenting of all he said—and in an awful state
to have the pardon! Would you mind coming a minute?
If you would, just for a minute put on the
dress again
Doctor. Why, of course, with pleasure
Landolph. Might I be allowed to make a suggestion?
Why not add that the Marchioness of Tuscany has in-
terceded with the Pope that he should be received?
Donna Matilda. You see, he has recognized me!
Landolph. Forgive me I don’t know my his-
story very well. I am sure you gentlemen know it much better!
But I thought it was believed that Henry IV had a secret
passion for the Marchioness of Tuscany.
Donna Matilda [at once]. Nothing of the kind! Noth-
ing of the kind!
Landolph. That’s what I thought! But he says he’s
loved her . . . he’s always saying it . And now he fears that her indignation for this secret love of his will work him harm with the Pope.

Belcredi. We must let him understand that this aversion no longer exists.

Landolph. Exactly! Of course! XL to Belc.

Donna Matilda [to Belcredi]. History says—I don’t know whether you know it or not—that the Pope gave way to the supplications of the Marchioness Matilda and the Abbot of Cluny. And I may say, my dear Belcredi, that I intended to take advantage of this fact—at the time of the pageant—to show him my feelings were not so hostile to him as he supposed.

Belcredi. You are most faithful to history, Marchioness.

Landolph. Well then, the Marchioness could spare herself a double disguise and present herself with Monsignor [Indicating the Doctor.] as the Marchioness of Tuscany.

Doctor [quickly, energetically]. No, no! That won’t do at all. It would ruin everything. The impression from the confrontation must be a sudden one, give a shock! No, no, Marchioness, you will appear again as the Duchess Adelaide, the mother of the Empress. And then we’ll go away. This is most necessary; that he should know we’ve gone away. Come on! Don’t let’s waste any more time! There’s a lot to prepare.

[Exeunt the Doctor, Donna Matilda, and Landolph, right.]

Frida. I am beginning to feel afraid again.

Di Nolli. Again, Frida?

Frida. It would have been better if I had seen him before.

Di Nolli. There’s nothing to be frightened of, really.

Frida. He isn’t furious, is he?

Di Nolli. Of course not! He’s quite calm.
Belcredi [with ironic sentimental affectation]. Melancholy! Didn't you hear that he loves you?

Frida. Thanks! That's just why I am afraid.

Belcredi. He won't do you any harm.

Di Nolli. It'll only last a minute

Frida. Yes, but there in the dark with him

Di Nolli. Only for a moment; and I will be near you, and all the others behind the door ready to run in. As soon as you see your mother, your part will be finished.

Belcredi. I'm afraid of a different thing: that we're wasting our time.

Di Nolli. Don't begin again! The remedy seems a sound one to me.

Frida. I think so too! I feel it! I'm all trembling!

Belcredi. But, mad people, my dear friends—though they don't know it, alas—have this felicity which we don't take into account.

Di Nolli [interrupting, annoyed]. What felicity? Nonsense!

Belcredi [forcefully]. They don't reason!

Di Nolli. What's reasoning got to do with it, anyway?

Belcredi. Don't you call it reasoning that he will have to do—according to us—when he sees her [Indicates Frida.]

Di Nolli. Nothing of the kind: no reasoning at all! We put before him a double image of his own fantasy, or fiction, as the doctor says.

Belcredi [suddenly]. I say, I've never understood why they take degrees in medicine.

Di Nolli [amazed]. Who?

Belcredi. The alienists!

Di Nolli. What ought they to take degrees in, then?

Frida. If they are alienists, in what else should they take degrees?

Belcredi. In law, of course! All a matter of talk!
more they talk, the more highly they are considered. "Analogous—elasticity," "the sensation of distance in time!" And the first thing they tell you is that they don't work miracles when a miracle's just what is wanted! But they know that the more they say they are not miracle-workers, the more folk believe in their seriousness.

Berthold [who has been looking through the keyhole of the door on right]. There they are! There they are! They're coming in here.

Di Nolli. Are they?

Berthold. He wants to come with them. Yes! He's coming too.

Di Nolli. Let's get away, then! Let's get away, at once! [To Berthold.] You stop here!

Berthold. Must I?

[Without answering him, Di Nolli, Frida, and Bel- credi go out by the main exit, leaving Berthold surprised. The door on the right opens, and Landolph enters first, bowing. Then Donna Matilda comes in, with mantle and ducal crown as in the first act; also the Doctor as the Abbot of Cluny. Henry IV is among them in royal dress. Ordulph and Harold enter last of all.]

Henry IV [following up what he has been saying in the other room]. And now I will ask you a question: how can I be astute, if you think me obstinate?

Doctor. No, no, not obstinate!

Henry IV [smiling, pleased]. Then you think me really astute?

Doctor. No, no, neither obstinate, nor astute.

Henry IV [with benevolent irony]. Monsignor, if obstinacy is not a vice which can go with astuteness, I hoped that in denying me the former, you would at least allow me a little of the latter. I can assure you I have great need of it. But if you want to keep it all for yourself . . .
Doctor. Pardon! Do I seem astute to you?

Henry IV. No, Monsignor! What do you say? Not in the least! Perhaps in this case, I may seem a little obstinate to you [Cutting short to speak to Donna Matilda.]

With your permission: a word in confidence to the Duchess. [Leads her aside and asks her very earnestly.] Is your daughter really dear to you?

Donna Matilda [dismayed]. Why, yes, certainly.

Henry IV. Do you wish me to compensate her with all my love, with all my devotion, for the grave wrongs I have done her—though you must not believe all the stories my enemies tell about my dissoluteness!

Donna Matilda. No, no, I don't believe them. I never have believed such stories.

Henry IV. Well, then are you willing?

Donna Matilda [confused]. What?

Henry IV. That I return to love your daughter again? [Looks at her and adds, in a mysterious tone of warning.] You mustn't be a friend of the Marchioness of Tuscany!

Donna Matilda. I tell you again that she has begged and tried not less than ourselves to obtain your pardon.

Henry IV [softly, but excitedly]. Don't tell me that! Don't say that to me! Don't you see the effect it has on me, my Lady?

Donna Matilda [looks at him; then very softly as if in confidence]. You love her still?

Henry IV [puzzled]. Still? Still, you say? You know, then? But nobody knows! Nobody must know!

Donna Matilda. But perhaps she knows, if she has begged so hard for you!

Henry IV [looks at her and says]. And you love your daughter? [Brief pause. He turns to the Doctor with laughing accents.] Ah, Monsignor, it's strange how little I think of my wife! It may be a sin, but I swear to you that I hardly feel her at all in my heart. What is stranger
is that her own mother scarcely feels her in her heart. Confess, my Lady, that she amounts to very little for you.

[Turning to Doctor.] She talks to me of that other woman, insistently, insistently, I don't know why!

Landolph [humbly]. Maybe, Majesty, it is to disabuse you of some ideas you have had about the Marchioness of Tuscany, [Then, dismayed at having allowed himself this observation, adds.] I mean just now, of course.

Henry IV. You too maintain that she has been friendly to me?

Landolph. Yes, at the moment, Majesty.

Donna Matilda. Exactly! Exactly!

Henry IV. I understand. That is to say, you don't believe I love her. I see! I see! Nobody's ever believed it, nobody's ever thought it. Better so, then! But enough, enough! [Turns to the Doctor with changed expression.]

Monsignor, you see? The reasons the Pope has had for revoking the excommunication have got nothing at all to do with the reasons for which he excommunicated me originally. Tell Pope Gregory we shall meet again at Brixen. And you, Madame, should you chance to meet your daughter in the courtyard of the castle of your friend the Marchioness, ask her to visit me. We shall see if I succeed in keeping her close beside me as wife and Empress. Many women have presented themselves here already assuring me that they were she. And I thought to have her—yes, I tried sometimes—there's no shame in it, with one's wife!—But when they said they were Bertha, and they were from Susa, all of them—I can't think why—I started laughing! [Confidentially.] Understand?—in bed—I undressed—so did she—yes, by God, undressed—a man and a woman—it's natural after all! Like that, we don't bother much about who we are. And one's dress is like a phantom that hovers always near one. Oh, Monsignor, phantoms in general are nothing more than trifling disorders of the spirit: images we cannot contain.
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within the bounds of sleep. They reveal themselves even when we are awake, and they frighten us. I ah.
I am always afraid when, at night time, I see disordered images before me. Sometimes I am even afraid of my own blood pulsing loudly in my arteries in the silence of night, like the sound of a distant step in a lonely corridor!

But, forgive me! I have kept you standing too long already. I thank you, my Lady, I thank you, Monsignor.

[DONNA MATILDA and the DOCTOR go off bowing. As soon as they have gone, HENRY IV suddenly changes his tone.]

Buffoons, buffoons! One can play any tune on them! And that other fellow Pietro Damiani! Caught him out perfectly! He's afraid to appear before me again. [Moves up and down excitedly while saying this; then sees BERTHOLD, and points him out to the other three valets.]

Oh, look at this imbecile watching me with his mouth wide open! [Shakes him.] Don't you understand? Don't you see, idiot, how I treat them, how I play the fool with them, make them appear before me just as I wish? Miserable, frightened clowns that they are! And you [Addressing the VALETS.] are amazed that I tear off their ridiculous masks now, just as if it wasn't I who had made them mask themselves to satisfy this taste of mine for playing the madman!

Landolph—Harold—Orduls [bewildered, looking at one another]. What? What does he say? What? [mean.]

HENRY IV [answers them imperiously]. Enough! Enough! Enough! Let's stop it. I'm tired of it. [Then as if the thought left him no peace.] By God! The impudence! To come here along with her lover! And pretending to do it out of pity! So as not to infuriate a poor devil already out of the world, out of time, out of life! If it hadn't been supposed to be done out of pity, one can well imagine that fellow wouldn't have allowed it. Those people expect others to behave as they wish all the time. And, of course, there's nothing arrogant in that! Oh, no! Oh, no!
It's merely their way of thinking, of feeling, of seeing. Everybody has his own way of thinking; you fellows, too. Yours is that of a flock of sheep—miserable, feeble, uncertain. But those others take advantage of this and make you accept their way of thinking; or, at least, they suppose they do; because, after all, what do they succeed in imposing on you? Words, words which anyone can interpret in his own manner! That's the way public opinion is formed! And it's a bad look out for a man who finds himself labelled one day with one of these words which everyone repeats, for example “madman,” or “imbecile.” Don't you think it is rather hard for a man to keep quiet when he knows that there is a fellow going about trying to persuade everybody that he is as he sees him, trying to fix him in other people's opinion as a “madman”—according to him? Now I am talking seriously! Before I hurt my head, falling from my horse [Stops suddenly, noticing the dismay of the four young men.] What's the matter with you? [Imitates their amazed looks.] 'What? Am I, or am I not, mad? Oh, yes! I'm mad all right! [He becomes terrible.] Well, then, by God, down on your knees, down on your knees! [Makes them go down on their knees one by one.] I order you to go down on your knees before me! And touch the ground three times with your foreheads! Down, down! That's the way you've got to be before madmen! [Then annoyed with their facile humiliation.] Get up, sheep! You obeyed me, didn't you? You might have put the strait jacket on me! Crush a man with the weight of a word—it's nothing—a fly! all our life is crushed by the weight of words: the weight of the dead. Look at me here: can you really suppose that Henry IV is still alive? All the same, I speak, and order you live men about! Do you think it's a joke that the dead continue to live?—Yes, here it's a joke! But get out into the live world!—Ah, you say: what a beautiful sunrise—for us! All time is before us!—Dawn! We
HENRY IV

will do what we like with this day—. Ah, yes! To Hell with tradition, the old conventions! Well, go on! You will do nothing but repeat the old, old words, while you imagine you are living! [Goes up to BERTHOLD who has now become quite stupid.] You don't understand a word of this, do you? What's your name?

BERTHOLD. I? What? BERTHOLD

HENRY IV Poor BERTHOLD! What's your name here?

BERTHOLD. I—I my name in Fino.

HENRY IV [feeling the warning and critical glances of the others, turns to them to reduce them to silence]. Fino?

BERTHOLD. Fino Pagliuca, sire.

HENRY IV [turning to LANDOLPH]. I've heard you call each other by your nick-names often enough! Your name is Lolo, isn’t it?

LANDOLPH. Yes, sire . [Then with a sense of immense joy.] Oh Lord! Oh Lord! Then he is not mad

HENRY IV [brusquely]. What?

LANDOLPH [hesitating]. No I said .

HENRY IV Not mad, any more. No. Don’t you see? We’re having a joke on those that think I am mad! [To HAROLD.] I say, boy, your name’s Franco [To ORDULPH] And yours ?

ORDULPH. Momo.

HENRY IV Momo, Momo A nice name that!

LANDOLPH. So he isn’t

HENRY IV What are you talking about? Of course not! Let’s have a jolly, good laugh! [Laughs.] Ah! Ah!

ORDULPH—HAROLD—ORDULPH [looking at each other half happy and half dismayed]. Then he’s cured! he’s all right!

HENRY IV Silence! Silence! [To BERTHOLD.] Why don’t you laugh? Are you offended? I didn’t mean it especially for you. It’s convenient for everybody to in-
sist that certain people are mad, so they can be shut up.
Do you know why? Because it's impossible to hear them speak! What shall I say of these people who've just gone away? That one is a whore, another a libertine, another a swindler . . . don't you think so? You can't believe a word he says . . . don't you think so?—By the way, they all listen to me terrified. And why are they terrified, if what I say isn't true? Of course, you can't believe what madmen say—yet, at the same time, they stand there with their eyes wide open with terror!—Why? Tell me, tell me, why?—You see I'm quite calm now!

Berthold. But, perhaps, they think that

Henry IV. No, no, my dear fellow! Look me well in the eyes! . . . I don't say that it's true—nothing is true.
Berthold! But . . . look me in the eyes!

Berthold. Well . . .

Henry IV. You see? You see? . . . You have terror in your own eyes now because I seem mad to you! There's the proof of it! [Laughs.]

Landolph [coming forward in the name of the others, exasperated]. What proof?

Henry IV. Your being so dismayed because now I seem again mad to you. You have thought me mad up to now, haven't you? You feel that this dismay of yours can become terror too—something to dash away the ground from under your feet and deprive you of the air you breathe! Do you know what it means to find yourselves face to face with a madman—with one who shakes the foundations of all you have built up in yourselves, your logic, the logic of all your constructions? Madmen, lucky folk! Construct without logic, or rather with a logic that flies like a feather. Voluble! Voluble! Today like this and tomorrow—who knows? You say: "This cannot be"; but for them everything can be. You say: "This isn't true!" And why? Because it doesn't seem true to you, or you, or you . . . [Indicates the three of them in succession]. . . .
and to a hundred thousand others! One must see what seems true to these hundred thousand others who are not supposed to be mad! What a magnificent spectacle they afford, when they reason! What flowers of logic they scatter! I know that when I was a child, I thought the moon in the pond was real. How many things I thought real! I believed everything I was told—and I was happy! Because it's a terrible thing if you don't hold on to that which seems true to you today—to that which will seem true to you tomorrow, even if it is the opposite of that which seemed true to you yesterday, and you would never wish you to think, as I have done, on this horrible thing which really drives one mad: that if you were beside another and looking into his eyes—as I one day looked into somebody's eyes—you might as well be a beggar before a door never to be opened to you; for he who does enter there will never be you, but someone unknown to you with his own different and impenetrable world. [Long pause.

Darkness gathers in the room, increasing the sense of strangeness and consternation in which the four young men are involved. HENRY IV remains aloof, pondering on the misery which is not only his, but everybody's. Then he pulls himself up, and says in an ordinary tone.] It's getting dark here.

Ordulph. Shall I go for a lamp?

Henry IV [ironically]. The lamp, yes the lamp! Do you suppose I don't know that as soon as I turn my back with my oil lamp to go to bed, you turn on the electric light for yourselves, here, and even there, in the throne room? I pretend not to see it!

Ordulph. Well, then, shall I turn it on now?

Henry IV No, it would blind me! I want my lamp!

Ordulph. It's ready here behind the door. [Goes to the main exit, opens the door, goes out for a moment, and returns with an ancient lamp which is held by a ring at the top.]
"What do you say? Doesn't it seem serious to you?"

The Council Chamber scene.
Henry IV. Ah, a little light! Sit there around the table, no, not like that; in an elegant, easy, manner!

[To Harold.] Yes, you, like that! [Poses him.] [Then to Bertold.] You, so! and I, here! [Sits opposite them.] We could do with a little decorative moonlight. It's very useful for us, the moonlight. I feel a real necessity for it, and pass a lot of time looking up at the moon from my window. Who would think, to look at her that she knows that eight hundred years have passed, and that I, seated at the window, cannot really be Henry IV gazing at the moon like any poor devil? But, look, look! See what a magnificent night scene we have here: the emperor surrounded by his faithful counsellors! How do you like it?

Landolph [softly to Harold, so as not to break the enchantment]. And to think it wasn't true!

Henry IV True? What wasn't true?

Landolph [timidly as if to excuse himself]. No . . . I mean I was saying this morning to him [Indicates Bertold.]—he has just entered on service here—I was saying: what a pity that dressed like this and with so many beautiful costumes in the wardrobe and with a room like that [Indicates the throne room.]

Henry IV Well? what's the pity?

Landolph. Well . . . that we didn't know

Henry IV That it was all done in jest, this comedy?

Landolph. Because we thought that

Harold [coming to his assistance]. Yes that it was done seriously!

Henry IV What do you say? Doesn't it seem serious to you?

Landolph. But if you say that

Henry IV I say that—you are fools! You ought to have known how to create a fantasy for yourselves, not to act it for me, or anyone coming to see me; but naturally, simply, day by day, before nobody, feeling yourselves alive
in the history of the eleventh century, here at the court of your emperor, Henry IV! You, Ordulph [Taking him by the arm.], alive in the castle of Goslar, waking up in the morning, getting out of bed, and entering straightway into the dream, clothing yourself in the dream that would be no more a dream, because you would have lived it, felt it all alive in you. You would have drunk it in with the air you breathed; yet knowing all the time that it was a dream, so you could better enjoy the privilege afforded you of having to do nothing else but live this dream, this far off and yet actual dream! And to think that at a distance of eight centuries from this remote age of ours, so colored and so sepulchral, the men of the twentieth century are torturing themselves in ceaseless anxiety to know how their fates and fortunes will work out! Whereas you are already in history with me.

_Landolph._ Yes, yes, very good! _Henry IV._ Everything determined, everything settled!

_Ordulph._ Yes, yes! _Henry IV._ And sad as is my lot, hideous as some of the events are, bitter the struggles and troublous the time—still all history! All history that cannot change, understand? All fixed for ever! And you could have admired at your ease how every effect followed obediently its cause with perfect logic, how every event took place precisely and coherently in each minute particular! The pleasure, the pleasure of history, in fact, which is so great, was yours.

_Landolph._ Beautiful, beautiful! _Henry IV._ Beautiful, but it's finished! Now that you know, I could not do it any more! [Takes his lamp to go to bed.] Neither could you, if up to now you haven't understood the reason of it! I am sick of it now. [Almost to himself with violent contained rage] By God, I'll make her sorry she came here! Dressed herself up as a mother-
in-law for me...! And he as an abbot...! And they bring a doctor with them to study me...! Who knows if they don't hope to cure me? Clowns! I'd like to smack one of them at least in the face: yes, that one—a famous swordsman, they say! He'll kill me... Well, we'll see, we'll see... [A knock at the door.]

Who is it?

The Voice of John. Deo Gratias!

Harold [very pleased at the chance for another joke]. Oh, it's John, it's old John, who comes every night to play the monk.

Ordulph [rubbing his hands]. Yes, yes! Let's make him do it!

Henry IV [at once, severely]. Fool, why? Just to play a joke on a poor old man who does it for love of me?

Landolph [to Ordulph]. It has to be as if it were true.

Henry IV. Exactly, as if true! Because, only so, truth is not a jest [Opens the door and admits John dressed as a humble friar with a roll of parchment under his arm.]

Come in, come in, father! [Then assuming a tone of tragic gravity and deep resentment.] All the documents of my life and reign favorable to me were destroyed deliberately by my enemies. One only has escaped destruction, this, my life, written by a humble monk who is devoted to me. And you would laugh at him! [Takes effectually to John, and invites him to sit down at the table.] Sit down, father, sit down! Have the lamp near you! [Puts the lamp near him.] Write! Write!

John [opens the parchment and prepares to write from dictation]. I am ready, your Majesty!

Henry IV [dictating]. "The decree of peace proclaimed at Mayence helped the poor and the good, while it damaged the powerful and the idle. [Curtain begins to fall.] It brought wealth to the former, hunger and misery to the latter."

Curtain.
The throne room so dark that the wall at the bottom is hardly seen. The canvases of the two portraits have been taken away, and, within their frames, Frida, dressed as the "Marchioness of Tuscany" and Charles Di Nollì, as "Henry IV," have taken the exact positions of the portraits.

For a moment, after the raising of curtain, the stage is empty. Then the door on the left opens, and Henry IV, holding the lamp by the ring on top of it, enters. He looks back to speak to the four young men, who, with John, are presumably in the adjoining hall, as at the end of the second act. Positions as at close of Act II.

Henry IV

No, stay where you are, stay where you are. I shall manage all right by myself. Good night! [Closes the door and walks, very sad and tired, across the hall towards the second door on the right, which leads into his apartments.]

Frida [as soon as she sees that he has just passed the throne, whispers from the niche like one who is on the point of fainting away with fright]. Henry.

Henry IV [stopping at the voice, as if someone had stabbed him traitorously in the back, turns a terror-stricken face towards the wall at the bottom of the room, raising an arm instinctively, as if to defend himself and ward off a blow]. Who is calling me? [It is not a question, but an exclamation vibrating with terror, which does not expect a reply from the darkness and the terrible silence of the hall, which suddenly fills him with the suspicion that he is really mad.]

Frida [at his shudder of terror, is herself not less frightened at the part she is playing, and repeats a little more loudly]. Henry! [But, although she wishes to act
the part as they have given it to her she stretches her head a little out of the frame towards the other frame.

Henry IV [gives a dreadful cry; lets the lamp fall from his hands to cover his head with his arms, and makes a movement as if to run away].

FRIDA [jumping from the frame on to the stand and shouting like a mad woman]. Henry! Henry! I'm afraid! I'm terrified! ...

[And while Di NOLLI jumps in turn on to the stand and thence to the floor and runs to FRIDA who, on the verge of fainting, continues to cry out, the DOCTOR, DONNA MATILDA, also dressed as "Matilda of Tuscany," TITO BELCRETI, LANDOLPH, BERTHOLD and JOHN enter the hall from the doors on the right and on the left. One of them turns on the light: a strange light coming from lamps hidden in the ceiling so that only the upper part of the stage is well lighted. The others without taking notice of Henry IV, who looks on astonished by the unexpected inrush, after the moment of terror which still causes him to tremble, run anxiously to support and comfort the still shaking FRIDA, who is moaning in the arms of her fiancé. All are speaking at the same time.]

Di NOLLI. No, no, Frida Here I am . . . I am beside you!

Doctor [coming with the others]. Enough! Enough! There's nothing more to be done!

DONNA MATILDA. He is cured, Frida. Look! He is cured! Don't you see?

Di NOLLI [astonished]. Cured?

BELCRETI. It was only for fun! Be calm!

FRIDA. No! I am afraid! I am afraid!

DONNA MATILDA. Afraid of what? Look at him! He was never mad at all!

Di NOLLI. That isn't true! What are you saying?

Cured?
HENRY IV

Doctor. It appears so. I should say so. [Pointing to the four young men.]

Belcredi. Yes, yes! They have told us so.

Donna Matilda. Yes, for a long time! He has confided in them, told them the truth!

Di Nolli. But what does it mean? If, up to a short time ago.

Belcredi. Hum! He was acting, to take you in and also us, who in good faith.

Di Nolli. Is it possible? To deceive his sister, also, right up to the time of her death?

Henry IV. [remains apart, peering at one and now at the other under the accusation and the mockery of what all believe to be a cruel joke of his, which is now revealed. He has shown by the flashing of his eyes that he is meditating a revenge, which his violent contempt prevents him from defining clearly, as yet. Stung to the quick and with a clear idea of accepting the fiction they have insidiously worked up as true, he bursts forth at this point]. Go on, I say! Go on!

Di Nolli. Go on! What do you mean?

Henry IV. It isn't your sister only that is dead!

Di Nolli. My sister? Yours, I say, whom you compelled up to the last moment, to present herself here as your mother Agnes!

Henry IV. And was she not your mother?

Di Nolli. My mother? Certainly my mother!

Henry IV. But your mother is dead for me, old and far away! You have just got down now from there. [Pointing to the frame from which he jumped down.] And how do you know whether I have not wept her long in secret, dressed even as I am?

Donna Matilda. [dismayed, looking at the others]. What does he say? [Much impressed, observing him.]

Quietly! quietly, for Heaven's sake!


Henry IV What do I say? I ask all of you if Agnes was not the mother of Henry IV? [Turns to Frida as if she were really the "Marchioness of Tuscany."] You, Marchioness, it seems to me, ought to know.

Frida [still frightened, draws closer to Di Noll]. No, no, I don't know. Not I!

Doctor It's the madness returning. Quiet now, everybody!

Belcredi [indignant]. Madness indeed, Doctor! He's acting again!

Henry IV [suddenly]. I? You have emptied those two frames over there, and he stands before my eyes as Henry IV

Belcredi. We've had enough of this joke now.

Henry IV Who said joke?

Doctor [loudly to Belcredi]. Don't excite him, for the love of God!

Belcredi [without lending an ear to him, but speaking louder]. But they have said so [Pointing again to the four young men], they, they!

Henry IV [turning round and looking at them]. You?

Landolph [timid and embarrassed]. No, really we said that you were cured.

Belcredi. Look here! Enough of this! [To Donna Matilda.] Doesn't it seem to you that the sight of him, [Pointing to Di Noll.] Marchioness, and that of your daughter dressed so, is becoming an intolerable puerility?

Donna Matilda. Oh, be quiet! What does the dress matter, if he is cured?

Henry IV Cured, yes! I am cured! [To Belcredi.] ah, but not to let it end this way all at once, as you suppose! [Attacks him.] Do you know that for twenty years nobody has ever dared to appear before me here like you and that gentleman? [Pointing to the Doctor.]
Belcredi. Of course I know it. As a matter of fact, I too appeared before you this morning dressed as a monk, yes!

Henry IV. And you took me for Peter Damiani! And I didn’t even laugh, believing, in fact, that...

Belcredi. That I was mad! Does it make you laugh seeing her like that, now that I am cured? And yet you might have remembered that in my eyes her appearance now... [Interrupts himself with a gesture of contempt.] Ah! [Suddenly turns to the Doctor.] You are a doctor, aren’t you?

Doctor. Yes.

Henry IV. And you also took part in dressing her up as the Marchioness of Tuscany? To prepare a counter-joke for me here, eh?

Donna Matilda [impetuously]. No, no! What do you say? It was done for you! I did it for your sake.

Doctor. To attempt, to try, not knowing...

Henry IV [cutting him short]. I understand. I say counter-joke, in his case [Indicates Belcredi] because he believes that I have been carrying on a jest.

Belcredi. But excuse me, what do you mean? You say yourself you are cured.

Henry IV. Let me speak! [To the Doctor.] Do you know, Doctor, that for a moment you ran the risk of making me mad again? By God, to make the portraits speak; to make them jump alive out of their frames.

Doctor. But you saw that all of us ran in at once, as soon as they told us...

Henry IV. Certainly! [Contemplates Frida and Di Nollis, and then looks at the Marchioness, and finally at his own costume.] The combination is very beautiful. Two couples. Very good, very good, Doctor! For a madman, not bad! [With a slight wave of his
hand to Belcredi. It seems to him now to be a carnival
out of season, eh? [Turns to look at him.] We'll get rid
now of this masquerade costume of mine, so that I may
come away with you. What do you say?

Belcredi. With me? With us?

Henry IV. Where shall we go? To the Club? In dress
coats and with white ties? Or shall both of us go to the
Marchioness' house?

Belcredi. Wherever you like! Do you want to remain
here still, to continue—alone—what was nothing but the
unfortunate joke of a day of carnival? It is really incred-
ible, incredible how you have been able to do all this,
freed from the disaster that befell you!

Henry IV. Yes, you see how it was! The fact is that
falling from my horse and striking my head as I did, I
was really mad for I know not how long

Doctor. Ah! Did it last long?

Henry IV [very quickly to the Doctor]. Yes, Doctor, a
long time! I think it must have been about twelve years.
[Then suddenly turning to speak to Belcredi.] Thus I
saw nothing, my dear fellow, of all that, after that day
of carnival, happened for you but not for me: how things
changed, how my friends deceived me, how my place was
taken by another, and all the rest of it! And suppose my
place had been taken in the heart of the woman I loved?
. . . And how should I know who was dead or who had
disappeared? . . . All this, you know, wasn't exactly a
jest for me, as it seems to you . . .

Belcredi. No, no! I don't mean that if you please. I
mean after

Henry IV. Ah, yes? After? One day [Stops and ad-
dresses the Doctor.]—A most interesting case, Doctor!
Study me well! Study me carefully! [Trembles while
speaking.] All by itself, who knows how, one day the trou-
ble here [Touches his forehead.] mended. Little by little,
I open my eyes, and at first I don't know whether I am
asleep or awake. Then I know I am awake. I touch this thing and that; I see clearly again. Ah!—then, as he says [Alludes to Belcredi] away, away with this masquerade, this incubus! Let's open the windows, breathe life once again! Away! Away! Let's run out! [Suddenly pulling himself up.] But where? And to do what? To show myself to all, secretly, as Henry IV, not like this, but arm in arm with you, among my dear friends?

Belcredi. What are you saying?

Donna Matilda. Who could think it? It's not to be imagined. It was an accident.

Henry IV. They all said I was mad before. [To Belcredi.] And you know it! You were more ferocious than any one against those who tried to defend me.

Belcredi. Oh, that was only a joke!

Henry IV. Look at my hair! [Shows him the hair on the nape of his neck.]

Belcredi. But mine is grey too!

Henry IV. Yes, with this difference: that mine went grey here, as Henry IV, do you understand? And I never knew it! I perceived it all of a sudden, one day, when I opened my eyes; and I was terrified because I understood at once that not only had my hair gone grey, but that I was all grey, inside; that everything had fallen to pieces, that everything was finished; and I was going to arrive, hungry as a wolf, at a banquet which had already been cleared away...

Belcredi. Yes, but, what about the others?

Henry IV [quickly]. Ah, yes, I know! They couldn't wait until I was cured, not even those, who, behind my back, pricked my saddled horse till it bled.

Di Nolli [agitated]. What, what?

Henry IV. Yes, treacherously, to make it rear and cause me to fall.

Donna Matilda [quickly, in horror]. This is the first time I knew that.
Henry IV. That was also a joke, probably! Donna Matilda. But who did it? Who was behind us, then? Henry IV. It doesn't matter who it was. All those that went on feasting and were ready to leave me their scrapings, Marchioness, of miserable pity, or some dirty remnant of remorse in the filthy plate! Thanks! [Turning quickly to the Doctor.] Now, Doctor, the case must be absolutely new in the history of madness; I preferred to remain mad—since I found everything ready and at my disposal for this new exquisite fantasy. I would live it—this madness of mine—with the most lucid consciousness; and thus revenge myself on the brutality of a stone which had dinted by head. The solitude—this solitude—squalid and empty as it appeared to me when I opened my eyes again—I determined to deck it out with all the colors and splendors of that far off day of carnival, when you [Looks at Donna Matilda and points Frida out to her]—when you, Marchioness, triumphed. So I would oblige all those who were around me to follow, by God, at my orders that famous pageant which had been—for you and not for me—the jest of a day. I would make it become—for ever—no more a joke but a reality, the reality of a real madness: here, all in masquerade, with throne room, and these my four secret counsellors: secret and, of course, traitors. [He turns quickly towards them.] I should like to know what you have gained by revealing the fact that I was cured! If I am cured, there's no longer any need of you, and you will be discharged! To give anyone one's confidence... that is really the act of a madman. But now I accuse you in my turn. [Turning to the others.] Do you know? They thought [Alludes to the Valets.] they could make fun of me too with you. [Bursts out laughing. The others laugh, but shamefacedly, except Donna Matilda.]
HENRY IV

Belcredi [to Di Nolli]. Well, imagine that...
That's not bad.

Di Nolli [to the Four Young Men]. You?
Henry IV We must pardon them. This dress [Plucking his dress.] which is for me the evident, voluntary caricature of that other continuous, everlasting masquerade, of which we are the involuntary puppets [Indicates Belcredi.], when, without knowing it, we mask ourselves with that which we appear to be...ah, that dress of theirs, this masquerade of theirs, of course, we must forgive it them, since they do not yet see it is identical with themselves...[Turning again to Belcredi.] You know, it is quite easy to get accustomed to it. One walks about as a tragic character, just as if it were nothing [Imitates the tragic manner] in a room like this. 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; because the Irish priests defend the seriousness of their Catholic faith with the same zeal with which I defend the sacred rights of hereditary monarchy! I am cured, gentlemen: because I can act the madman to perfection, here; and I do it very quietly, I'm only sorry for you that have to live your
madness so agitatedly, without knowing it or seeing it.

Belcredi. It comes to this, then, that it is we who are mad. That's what it is!

Henry IV [containing his irritation]. But if you weren't mad, both you and she [indicating the Marchioness.] would you have come here to see me?

Belcredi. To tell the truth, I came here believing that you were the madman.

Henry IV [suddenly indicating the Marchioness]. And she?

Belcredi. Ah, as for her I can't say. I see she is all fascinated by your words, by this conscious madness of yours. [Turns to her] Dressed as you are [speaking to her.], you could even remain here to live it out, Marchioness.

Donna Matilda. You are insolent!

Henry IV [conciliatingly]. No, Marchioness, what he means to say is that the miracle would be complete, according to him, with you here, who—as the Marchioness of Tuscany, you well know.—could not be my friend, save, as at Canossa, to give me a little pity

Belcredi. Or even more than a little! She said so herself!

Henry IV [to the Marchioness, continuing]. And even, shall we say, a little remorse!

Belcredi. Yes, that too she has admitted. 

Donna Matilda [angry]. Now look here... 

Henry IV quickly, to placate her. Don't bother about him! Don't mind him! Let him go on infuriating me—though the Doctor's told him not to. [Turns to Belcredi.] But do you suppose I am going to trouble myself any more about what happened between us—the share you had in my misfortune with her [indicates the Marchioness to him and pointing Belcredi out to her.] the part he has now in your life? This is my life! Quite a different thing from your life! Your life, the life in which
"She has lived these years! She has enjoyed them, and has become—look at her!—a woman I can no longer recognize!

The Marquesa has lost.
you have grown old—I have not lived that life. [To DONNA MATILDA.] Was this what you wanted to show me with this sacrifice of yours, dressing yourself up like this, according to the Doctor's idea? Excellently done, Doctor! Oh, an excellent idea:—"As we were then, eh? and as we are now?" But I am not a madman according to your way of thinking, Doctor. I know very well that that man there [Indicates Di NOLLI.] cannot be me; because I am Henry IV and have been, these twenty years, cast in this eternal masquerade. She has lived these years! [Indicates the MARCHIONESS.] She has enjoyed them and has become—look at her!—a woman I can no longer recognize. It is so that I knew her! [Points to FRIDA and draws near her] This is the Marchioness I know, always this one! You seem a lot of children to be so easily frightened by me [To FRIDA.] And you're frightened too, little girl, aren't you, by the jest that they made you take part in—though they didn't understand it wouldn't be the jest they meant it to be, for me? Oh miracle of miracles! Prodigy of prodigies! The dream alive in you! More than alive in you! It was an image that wavered there and they've made you come to life! Oh, mine! You're mine, mine, mine, in my own right! [He holds her in his arms, laughing like a madman, while all stand still terrified. Then as they advance to tear FRIDA from his arms, he becomes furious, terrible and cries imperiously to his VALETS. Hold them! Hold them! I order you to hold them!]

[The Four Young Men amazed, yet fascinated, move to execute his orders, automatically, and seize Di NOLLI, the DOCTOR, and BELCREDI.]

Belcredì [facing him] Leave her alone! Leave her alone! You're no madman! [Drives sword into him. A cry of horror
"It was an image that wavered there and they've made you come to life! Oh, mine! You're mine, mine, mine, in my own right!"

Henry's irrevocable commitment to his fantasy.
NAKED MASKS

goes up. All rush over to assist Belcredi, crying out together.

Di Nolli. Has he wounded you?
Berthold. Yes, yes, seriously!
Doctor I told you so!
Frida. Oh God, oh God!
Di Nolli. Frida, come here!
Donna Matilda. He's mad, mad!
Di Nolli. Hold him!
Belcredi while THEY take him away by the left exit,
He protests as he is borne out. No, no, you're not mad!
You're not mad. He's not mad!
[THEY go out by the left amid cries and excitement.
After a moment, one hears a still sharper, more
piercing cry from DONNA MATILDA, and then,
silence.]

Henry IV [who has remained on the stage between
Landolph, Harold and Ordulph, with his eyes almost
starting out of his head, terrified by the life of his own
masquerade which has driven him to crime.] Now, yes
we'll have to [Calls his VALETS around him as if to
protect him.] here we are . together . for ever!

Curtain.
Faculty Critique

The consensus of the Faculty criticism was, that although I had captured much of the theatricality of the piece, a lack of organized research and scholarship impeded my access to some of the deeper values.

Mr. Thommen thought that the masks of these characters' affectations should be more pronounced. He also thought that the idea of false and true love, or the fallaciousness of both, was a theme that needed to be stressed more.

Mr. Kazanov observed that my use of music was cinematographic, that the actors had a tendency to rely on it rather than make their own music, and that the music carried parts of the play that otherwise would not have carried.

Mr. Hirsch pointed out that Pirandello places wonderful images at the disposal of the director and actor as far as characterization is concerned, and that these indications ought not be neglected. He thought that I had arrived at much of the play's values by instinct.

Mr. Nicholson wanted to know why I had termed my style operatic, particularly in the light of the fact that Pirandello was supposed to have detested operatic bombast. I replied that I meant "operatic" not in the bombastic sense, but in the lyric. Many of the scenes I had staged as Arias, with soloist in the foreground and chorus in the rear. Further, I favored sweeping lateral movement in the forestage or apron, which is a common disposition of singing actors in opera.

Mr. Kazanov wished that more in the play were clear to him, the backgrounds of the characters, the historical analogies, personal
interdevelopment.

Dr. Ehrenspeeger then pointed out that certain inconsistencies and confusions were inherent in the play itself.

Dr. Macklin pointed out that diction was better than average in our production, and what variety in speech there was went well. However, actors had a tendency to generalize a certain speech pattern, rhythm, and tone, and use it constantly. Further, none of them could handle fortissimos because they had not enough training. Dr. Macklin concurred with the opinion of several of the faculty that Myrna was the most stylish of the troupe. Nevertheless, she thought our vocal treatment of Pirandello quite respectable.

Mr. Watts thought the production generally admirable, but was surprised that I had not done more etymological research, said that it was indispensable to the show: If Pirandello has a philosophical message, one must discover what it is before attempting to stage the show.

Mr. Thommen suggested that Pirandello's *The Man With The Flower In His Mouth* and the film, *The Blue Angel* were valuable as correlative examples of the way these philosophical ideas are theatricalized.
Hindsight Conclusions

On looking back, I observe that there was much more of my own personal outlook in the production than I had suspected, and much less of Pirandello's. Unwittingly I had sentimentalized the whole thing. Much of the cause of this I attribute to the translation by Edward Storer, which is much more a version than a translation. In the version by Storer, the first act ends with Henry IV exiting, bowing grandly. In time we had interpreted what we thought was Pirandello's first act close by having Henry leave on a note of exaltation. Then, too late to do anything about it, it was brought to our attention that the original Pirandello finale went this way: Henry starts to walk off, then, remembering something, he breaks his regality, rushes back to the throne where he has deposited his imperial regalia, picks it up, hugs it jealously to his breast as if afraid someone would steal it, and scuttles off. One can imagine our dismayed astonishment when we discovered that our interpretation for the closing beat was entirely off the track. The Marquesa collapses in tears not because the man whom she had once passed off as eccentric was really nobler than them all--this being the way we were playing it; but rather because the man whom she had idealized as being nobler than the rest of them, was really pathetic. By taking Henry at his own evaluation, we had sentimentalized the whole thing.

In other words, I think that it was not completely right to try and make a tragic hero out of Henry IV. Or if it was right, then Henry is not tragic because he makes us weep--he is tragic like the clown, because he makes us laugh. The basic stumbling block in my inter-
pretative equipment was a tendency to sentimentalize, to romanticize, to try and make moments engage the sympathy of our emotions when by their incongruity they should have alienated the emotions. Hence the Marquesa started out impossibly worth while in our production, she was too good. But day by day we discovered that to make the play work, the Marquesa would have to have become much shallower, full of artifice and jaded coyness, which was more along Pirandello's ideas anyway.

Before I damn myself utterly I should state that our interpretation did not completely exclude this element of bitter humor, nor is the play so straightforward that it precludes all but one interpretation: I should say in fact, that the measure of the play lies in that it will tolerate in production not just one but many interpretations; my humble offering being no exception.

I do think, however, that more extensive research into the life and works of Luigi Pirandello would make it much easier to arrive at the same things into which I blundered by instinct. The reason I did not so avail myself stems, I confess, from that same sort of false artistic pride which is the undoing of many a director. For in the final analysis, who in the audience cares whether my exegesis of the play stemmed from my own native brilliance or careful scholarship? I only wish that this had occurred to me at the beginning of the production: In learning this lesson, I have progressed further in one step than I ever have in my quest after art.

In vague reference to all the foregoing, my reactions to some of the worthwhile criticisms offered me begin to make more sense.

For example, I was especially interested in Mr. Thommen's idea
that one of the main faults of the production was the fact that it was not clearly discernible which was the difference between masked and unmasked, between truth and illusion, between role playing and real life. This remark seemed all the more curious to me at the time, because it was precisely to confuse the audience that Pirandello's series of the theatre within theatre was written. The welter of confusing ambiguities in the first act of Henry IV, for instance, where the audience has difficulty in knowing precisely what century is being referred to, is certainly no accident on Pirandello's part. It most certainly is not "hack work" as Bentley would suggest. And I am pleased that so many of the audience told me later that they were not merely confused, but rather felt that there was something behind all this confusion which gave it a point. If the audience could not make up its mind who was acting, and when, so much the better.

Yet if all this seems to indicate that I felt Mr. Thommens's objections groundless, I should point out at once that they pointed to a much deeper fault within the production. For the trait which unites all of Pirandello's characters in the world of Henry IV is the fact that they are all pretending, they are all trying to fool themselves and others into believing that they are something they are not. In other words, they exist in more than one level.

The fault in the production seemed to be that the Marquesa and Belcredi had not cloaked their natural selves with enough artificiality-the unmaskings had less point because there was less to unmask. And the point of the whole thing seems to be that if I had done greater research I might have seen the direction the characterizations ought
I look back with considerable speculation on whether I handled Phil Robb correctly. Remarkable as his performance was, it was not up to the show—it indeed was the weak link. It is perhaps unfair to Phil to say this, because the excessive demands of this particular role render average acting resources inadequate. Further, when I cast him, I thought he might have a Henry IV in him, albeit very latent without considerable work. It worked out that his performances were compulsive, and that he did not grasp the quintessential absurd of the existentialist terror, that fearful paradox which would have made him not merely pathetic, but great, as Don Quixote is great. True, there was madness in his performance, but there was little method in it.

What had happened in those three weeks of rehearsal, was that all of us had become panicked by the slow progress. Rather than let Phil progress at his own pace, rather than let him understand his role in his own terms and in his own speed, rather than merely hope that the technique of impersonation would descend on him in the antepenultimate moment; I determined to cram them down his throat. The circumstances extenuating this ruthless unprofessionalism I plead were substantial: Phil was new to this type of acting, his discipline, concentration, and attitude were not suited to it. Therefore, I thought, if he can't master the content of the thing, better at least give him the form. And what he ended up with and doing was to give an unfortunate imitation of the way I myself might have played Henry IV, an imitation of a dubious original at best.

This is not to say that I always said, "do this, do that", and
pushed him around the stage. We always worked for a mutual understanding of the actions. Nor was his performance all me. Indeed, he gave it many personal touches which enriched the role. For instance, Henry's falling to his knees on the line "This sackcloth here, Oh my God..." (see photograph) was entirely Phil's idea, and it gave form to the whole act. Similarly his exaltation on his exit was all his. At the end, Phil and I seemed to establish a considerable rapport, and the characterization became a product of our mutual interaction. This was partly due to the fact that Phil had some control over his lines for the first time, and was now ready to work on the role at the time when his experiments should have come to a halt, during the performances. I conclude then, that while my approach to Phil might have been justified by our pressed circumstances, yet under ideal circumstances the approach would have proved too limiting on the actor and the show.

If I learned one thing in directing *Henry IV*, it was not to underestimate the intelligence of the audience—I am convinced that modern producers sell their audiences short. My whole attitude towards the show was characterized by a fear that the audience would not understand what was happening, or they would get bored. It was partly for this reason that I had a tendency to overblock the show, particularly in the second scene of the first act. If things were kept moving, I thought, nobody would lose interest. But the result of the thing was that the scene lost focus, because the eye did not know where to look. We had to reblock the scene.

Another practical lesson was the subliminal use of music. I myself
love music to an extent that I am willing to let it interfere with the drama. The criticisms of the critique performance taught me to subordinate the music so that it would work on the audience without their being overly aware of it.

There is a final hindsight conclusion that should be made. The vision that I had in mind when directing Pirandello's work is not precisely the same as that of Pirandello. I do not consider this to be a fault of the production; the production is not definitive. Where-as the Pirandellian Absurdity is bright, clear, well defined and sharp, brutally honest; the vision I had in my mind was more mysterious, dark in tone, sombre. It comes more from Strindberg and Maeterlinck, the terror in it is not so much the terror of confrontation, but the terror of shadows. My Henry IV turned out to be much more Gothic than I had suspected.