

I

Ibsenian Drama and Psychology: An Introduction

In the entire history of drama, there are few figures like Henrik Ibsen having overwhelming global acclaim. Particularly his whole life and energies were devoted to the theatrical art that have changed the history of the stage as well. His life as an artist can be seen as a singularly long and hard struggle leading to victory and fame-- a hard road from poverty to international success.

Ibsen began his dramatic career with the composition of a verse tragedy called *Catiline* (1850) while he left home and moved to the small town Grimstad to become an apprentice pharmacist. Though published under the pseudonym Brynjulf Bjarme it remained unperformed. His first play to see production, *The Burial Mound* (1850), received little attention. He spent the next several years employed at the Norwegian Theatre in Bergen, where he was involved in the production of more than 145 plays as a director and producer. During this period, he did not publish any new play of his own. Despite his failure to achieve success as a playwright, he gained a great deal of practical experience at the Norwegian Theater that was to prove valuable in the days to come. In 1864, he left Norway and went to Italy in self-imposed exile not to return to his native land for the next 27 years, and when he returned, it was to be as a noted playwright known throughout the world.

Since Ibsen's early attempts to establish himself as a playwright remained fiasco, his persistent effort gradually got its credit since 1860s, especially after *Brand* (1865) and *Peer Gynt* (1867). This is the point from which Ibsen's productive life begins and lasts till his death. Based on the very ground, we can conveniently divide the productive life of Ibsen into three periods: the first consists of romantic plays

beginning from *The Vikings at Hekligoland*, the second is marked with social dramas with the appearance of *A Doll's House*, and the third consists of symbolic and psychological plays, of which *The Master Builder* was the first and *When We Dead Awaken* the last, with *Little Eyolf* and *John Gabriel Borkman* coming in between.

St. John's Eve (1851) and *The Feast at Solhaug* (1855) were two early romantic verse-and-prose comedies by Ibsen though without a success. The following two plays *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* endowed him with financial success and international acclaim. With success of these romantic plays, he became more confident and began to introduce more and more his own beliefs and judgments into the drama and thus emphasized his subjective ideas in romantic vein. His next series of plays are often considered his 'golden age', when he entered the height of his power and influence, becoming the center of dramatic controversy across Europe.

His second phase was regarded controversial, along with the publication and performance of *A Doll's House*, for its treatment of the traditional roles of men and women in Victorian social structure. Ibsen followed *A Doll's House* with *Ghosts*, another scathing commentary on Victorian morality, in which a widow reveals to her pastor that she has hidden the evils of her marriage for its duration. In *An Enemy of the People*, Ibsen went even further. In earlier plays, controversial elements were important and even pivotal components of the action, but they were on the small scale of individual households. In *An Enemy*, controversy became the primary focus, and the antagonist was the entire community. One primary message of the play is that the individual, who stands alone, is more often right than the mass of people, who are portrayed as ignorant and sheep like.

Interestingly, late in his career Ibsen turned to a more introspective drama that had much less to do with denunciations of Victorian morality. In such later plays as

Hedda Gabler and *The Master Builder*, Ibsen explored psychological conflicts that transcended a simple rejection of Victorian conventions. The playwright's final work, *When We Dead Awaken*, like *The Master Builder* chiefly portrayed an old sculptor, Arnold Rubek, who had achieved fame, though neglecting his personal happiness. These psychologically motivated characters in his later plays were persistently in conflict with themselves and the hostile world around them and that because of their obsession with some invisible outside force, they felt themselves anxious, vulnerable, and handicapped ultimately resulting in their tragedy. Thus, while analyzing and interpreting Ibsenian plays, especially the later ones, avoidance of psychological insight will be a prejudice.

Literary work deals with the mind of its character, where as psychoanalysis deals with human mind itself. Since a writer endows his literary character with flesh and blood, he is a subject to psychoanalysis. In this ground, no literary work can escape the domain of psychoanalytic insight whatever apathetic its creator may be towards the psychology of his character. However, Henrik Ibsen's characters, especially in his later plays, are psychologically motivated ones-- his protagonist is beset with conflict either with himself, or society, or the individuals around him.

In the work of the aging writer we meet a number of people experiencing or suffering similar psychological conflicts. The title character in *John Gabriel Borkman* sacrifices his love for a dream of power and honour. Master builder Solness wrecks his own and family's lives in order to be regarded as an 'artist' in his trade. And Hedda Gabler resolutely changes the fates of others in order to fulfill her own dream of freedom and independence. These examples of protagonists, who pursue their own goals, involuntarily trampling on the lives of others, are all drawn from the playwright's last decade of writing. In Ibsen's psychological analyses, he reveals the

negative forces--‘demons’ or ‘trolls’-- in the minds of these people. His human characterization in these latter dramas is extremely complex-- a common factor shared by all his last works, starting with *The Wild Duck* in 1884.

In his last 15 years of writing, Ibsen developed his dialectical supremacy and his distinctive dramatic form where realism, symbolism, and deep-digging psychological insights interact. It is this phase of his work that has prompted people to call him, rightly or wrongly, a ‘Freud of the theatre’. In any case, Freud and many other psychoanalysts have made use of Ibsen’s human portraits as a basis for character analysis or even to illustrate their own theories. Especially well known is Freud’s analysis of Rebekka West in *Rosmersholm*, a portrayal he discussed in 1916 together with other character types who collapse under the weight of success. Freud sees *Rebekka* as a tragic victim of the Oedipus complex and an incestuous past. The analysis reveals perhaps more about Freud than about Ibsen. But Freud’s influence and the sway of psychoanalysis in general, have had a considerable effect on the way the Norwegian dramatist has been regarded.

Literature Review

The protagonist in Ibsen’s *The Master Builder* is a self-learned architect. This figure has caught attention for diverse spheres of critics since its publication and performance alike but almost all of them have realized the bitter fact that Mr. Solness is one of the most difficult characters to discern into Ibsen has ever depicted in his dramatic oeuvre. The play, especially through the protagonist, exposes innumerable questions and leaves them to be answered by individual members of the audience in a variety of ways. It may mean different things to different people: to youth, it is wonderfully thrilling, and evokes a mood of fanatical idealism. To a mature artist, it serves as a kind of warning and has elements of terror and bitter disillusionment. To

others again, it is merely a verbose and incomprehensible. Therefore, it becomes natural for critics to perceive the hero of the play from diverse viewpoints.

Some of the critics identify Mr. Solness with Ibsen himself. E. W. Gosse claims that the writer himself in his age was as much vulnerable and pathetic an artist as the Masterbuilder himself: "The Master Builder is one who constructs, not houses, but poems and plays. It is himself who gives expression, in the pathetic and erratic confession of Solness, to his doubts, his craven timidities, his selfish secrets, and his terror at the uniformity of his luck" (210).

Critics interested to read the protagonist in terms of Ibsen point out that the three phases in the Masterbuilder's work: churches, homes for human-beings and castles-in-the-air directly correspond most accurately with there periods in Ibsen's own creative process--his early romantic, social, and spiritual metaphysical dramas (*The Master Builder* belonging to the latest).

Raymond Williams looks at the artist's fall from the point of view of his fate: "Solness is the agent of his own fate; he climbs himself to the tower from which he falls" (87). In much the same light Eva Le Gallienne, another theatre artist and critic, illustrates the inevitability of his fall i.e. predestined: "The fate of the Masterbuilder is irrevocably sealed. He will not be saved by 'Youth matched against Youth' -- it is that very conflict that will destroy him. The Youth that doubts him and the Youth that passionately believes in him, unwittingly combine to bring about his fall" (73).

The fact that Solness is in pathological fear of the younger generation is further illustrated by another critic Allardyce Nicoll: "Halvard Solness is a builder, a man of late middle years, hearty yet feeling the effects of age, and terrified by the thought that youth will come and supersede him" (542).

John Bemrose, another critic, looks at the power the protagonist has acquired through devastating almost every body in his contact as the cause of his blindness and fall. He writes:

For years, Solness has mercilessly dominated his employees and his melancholic wife, Aline [. . .]. Solness has put his feelings (and the feelings of others) aside, in order to become the pure instrument of his own professional success. But his feelings persist nonetheless, in a paranoid moodiness that is tinder to the inflammatory attractions of Hilde. When she batters down his defenses and enters his inchoate, infantile emotional life, he quickly becomes a prisoner of her fantasized vision of him. (61)

The review of literature, thus, shows us diverse views of critics on the protagonist but none of them has tried to look at his state of mind and the dynamics behind his downfall in psychoanalytical light. Hence the proposed thesis tries to study the abnormal behaviour and its cause and consequences in the protagonist in terms of psychoanalysis with the view of discovering the crux still unexplored.

For this purpose, the thesis has been divided into four chapters—‘Ibsenian drama and psychology: an introduction’, ‘psychoanalysis and neurosis: a discussion’, ‘psychoanalytical reading of the protagonist’s fall: a textual analysis’, and ‘conclusion’ respectively. The first chapter, as we already know, deals in general with the dramatic as well as psychological aspect of the playwright and the literature review on the protagonist. The second chapter is the methodology or the way based on which our problems will be dealt in psychoanalytical light. Based on the ideas of Freud and Horney, it is to provide the clinical picture of neuroses and their dynamic centers. Similarly, the third chapter deals with the neurotic properties of the protagonist in terms of textual evidences and proves him a neurotic patient. While

illustrating cause and effect of his neurosis, it also talks about Solness's neurotic needs responsible for his tragic fall. Restating the finding of our research, the 'conclusion' extracts the whole thesis into a nutshell.

II

Psychoanalysis and Neurosis: A Discussion

Psychoanalysis, initially developed as a therapeutic technique for the treatment of hysteric patient, expanded further as a technique for the psychological study of the psycho-sexual development of human personality, the unconscious mental activities, and as psychotherapy for the treatment of neurotic, psychotic, perverse, and psychopathic patients. These three ideas were originated during the last decades of the nineteenth century by the Viennese-Jewish physician, Sigmund Freud, whose revolutionary discoveries brought a new-fangled self-awareness that permanently altered the virtuous 'image' of humankind. These bodies of thought have been evolving, branching, and proliferating since their inception. D. James Page describes the three-fold meaning of psychoanalysis as follow:

It is, first, a school of psychology that emphasizes the dynamic, psychic determinants of human behavior, and the importance of childhood experiences in molding the adult personality. Secondly, psychoanalysis refers to a specialized technique for investigating unconscious mental activities. Finally, psychoanalysis is a method of interpreting and treating mental disorders, especially the psychoneurosis. (179)

Sigmund Freud, one of the great thinkers to 'disturb the sleep of the world', vehemently challenged the hitherto internalized rational and compassionate human image and exposed to the world the bleak side of human psyche that was dominant in his actions and behaviour but remained undiscovered up to his time. His tripartite personality structure is regarded still today as one of the land-marking and even scientific modern personality theories. According to Freud, the personality can be divided into three parts: the 'id', the 'super-ego' and the 'ego'. The id is guided by the

pleasure principle, and is characterized by a tendency to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Regardless of future consequences, it is in search of immediate gratification of emotional needs. It is timeless and out of contact with reality, and therefore, logic has no place in the id. Freud says: "Id is the source of all desires and aggression. It is lawless, asocial and amoral. Its function is to gratify our instincts" (35). Since id stands for the untamed passion, it definitely affects our behavior: "The id is the main reservoir of both the life and the death instincts. It is the source of most psycho-biological energy" (Burt, 163).

The super-ego is the equivalent of what is more commonly known as the conscience. It is partly conscious but mainly unconscious and consists of inherited moral inclinations intensified by culturally acquired ethics, taboos, and ideals. Super-ego is regulating agent and its primary function is to protect society depriving individual instincts of direct access. By ego, similarly, Freud means what we ordinarily call the self or the conscious intelligence. It is regarded as the executive of personality that seeks middle path between demands of instinctual urges and the restriction of moral principles. According to Freud: "Ego regulates the instinctual drives of the id so that they may be released in non destructive behaviour patterns" (130).

For ego is in closest contact with physical reality, it is not as blind as id appears to be. But it may also be defined as that part of the id that has been converted to the 'reality principle' by its proximity to the outer world. The id is the energy source of the ego, and functions of ego are to satisfy the nutritional needs of the body and protect it against injury, to adjust the wishes of the id to the demands of reality, to enforce repression, and to co-ordinate the antagonistic strivings of the id and the superego.

Since Freud was a biological scientist, he believed that man has acquired, somewhere in his phylogenetic history, certain innate unlearned strivings or instincts. These urges are modified by the life experiences of the individual, but in their essence they remain biologically determined. Since these urges of a biological nature underlie all that an individual does and thinks about, biological and psychological developments are inseparably interconnected. The modifications in the force and direction of the instinctual urges are brought about in a social environment. Freud, thus, considers all behaviour conditioned socio-psycho-biologically. Roughly speaking, tripartite personality structure—super-ego, ego and id are representatives of societal, psychological and biological constitutions, respectively.

Freud recognizes two fundamental motivating forces: the constructive 'life urges' and the destructive 'death urges'. Drawing upon Greek mythology, he christened the life forces 'eros' and the death forces 'thantos.' The life instincts serve the purpose of individual survival and racial propagation. Hunger, thirst, and sex fall in this category. The form of energy by which the life instincts perform their work is called 'libido'. The sex instinct is not one instinct but many. That is, there are a number of separate bodily needs that give rise to erotic wishes. Each of these wishes has its source in a different bodily region referred to collectively as 'erogenous zones'. Death instincts, on the other hand, perform much less conspicuously than the life instincts, and for this reason little is known about them. An important derivative of death instincts is the aggressive drive. A person fights with himself and with others consciously or unconsciously owing to his urge to destroy himself or others. The aim of the death urges is to injure, destroy, and kill. To be specific, the goal of life is, according to Freud, death.

So far we know, life and death instincts are separate entities having opposite goals, however, this assumption can be challenged:

The life and death instincts and their derivatives may fuse together, neutralize each other, or replace one another. Eating, for example, represents a fusion of hunger and destructiveness (. . .) love, a derivative of the sex instinct, can neutralize hate, a derivative of the death instinct. Or love can replace hate, and hate love. (Sullivan, 43)

The life drives are further divided into two groups: the 'ego drives' that subserve the organic needs of nutrition and self preservation, and the 'sex drives' that find expression in pleasurable and affectional pursuits. Ego impulses play an insignificant role in Freudian psychoanalysis, and that major importance is attached to the sex and aggression drives. These two drives are not antagonistic, but compatible and coexisting. The fusion or the conflicting coexistence of these two drives is termed as 'ambivalence' in psychoanalysis.

Another important aspect of psychoanalysis lies in its abstract division of mind into three levels: the 'conscious', the 'preconscious', and the 'unconscious'. State of mental events and memories concerned with immediate awareness is called conscious. According to Freud, it occupies a scant telling space in mental processes. Similarly, that segment of mind where the readily recallable memories reside is called preconscious. It is also called the storehouse of memories and desires that may appear in consciousness. The unconscious is consisted of materials which we can not recall at our will. It is the repository of buried thoughts and impulses. Freud claims that our mental processes are essentially unconscious.

Freudian psychoanalysis, thus, can evidently be described as the theory of human mind that deals with the dynamics of human behaviour. Moreover, Freudian

theories are directly or indirectly concerned with the nature of the unconscious mind, suggesting that the powers motivating individuals are mainly unconscious. Since I am concerned here only with the theoretical concepts of psychoanalysis, I will forsake hereby the therapeutic aspect. The aim here is to study the fall of the protagonist in Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder* in terms of Freudian psychoanalysis. To widen the understanding and support my research I have included ideas particularly on neurosis and neurotic needs from Karen Horney, an influential Freudian psychoanalyst. More specifically, I have brought ideas from Freud and Horney simultaneously while analyzing the protagonist and chosen the middle path so as to reconcile them and draw a convincing conclusion. This research paper, for example, reconciles Freud and Horney over the question of germination and development of anxiety in Solness. The textual analysis of the thesis implicitly intends division into two parts—the first one proves the protagonist neurotic in terms of his symptoms; the second part deals with the causes that make the neurotic fall permanently. In both cases, their ideas keep on going actively side by side despite the fact that Freud seems dominant in the first part and Horney in the second.

Repression

Freud opines that the essence of repression lies in the function of rejecting or keeping something out of consciousness. Therefore, repression is viewed as the inability of impulses to pass out of conscious system. Elucidating its functioning as a defense mechanism, Cameron Norman puts:

[Repression] reduces the tensions of need and anxiety by preventing the occurrence of a tension- provoking reaction or by inhibiting its development, in the presence of previously adequate stimulation.

Repression is neither a conscious nor an unconscious force. It is simply the

name we give to behavior - called out recurrently in certain situations - whose effect is to cancel, alter or deflect an impending or a developing reaction. (175)

Repression is probably the best defense mechanism because it can keep in check extremely intense impulses while other defenses are impotent. It is a process of ignoring or forgetting anxiety-charged psychic contents for they are not in the help of the society or the subject himself if given direct access. These impulses are stored, being repressed, on the unconscious mind and are manifested in the 'psychological errors,' creative activity, neurotic behaviour, dreams, etc. According to Freud, these repressed materials are very likely to emerge in dreams in distorted form. This is the reason why he calls dreams the royal road to the unconscious.

Normality and Abnormality

In a quite literal sense, 'normality' and 'abnormality'-- contrastive as they are in nature-- can be defined respectively as the state of conduct or behavior that is norm-oriented, and the state that is deviated from the very norm or standard.

If we are to examine the life records of some individuals taken as random from the general population, we will find a common pattern running through the great majority. These people are essentially law-abiding citizens. They respect and adhere to the rules and conventions of their cultures. Although they have their share of frustrations, conflicts, and hardships, their lives are not greatly disrupted by their misfortunes. We use to call these people normal. As Page writes:

During moments of stress, they proved to be fairly resilient and adaptable. Their inner mental life was, more often than not, one of tranquility. These commonplace men and women who exhibited at least ordinary

competence in self-management and got along reasonably well with themselves and their associates constitute the *normal* group. (1-2)

Abnormality, on the other hand, is an unusual and spectacular case deviated from the normality in an unfavourable or pathological direction. Individuals marked by limited intelligence, emotional instability, personality disorganization, and character defects can be labeled as abnormal. These people, for the most part, lead wretched personal lives and are social misfits or liabilities. Such abnormal deviants are usually classified into four main categories: psychoneurotic, psychotic, mentally defective, and antisocial.

According to Paul J. Stern, there are two ways of establishing a standard of normality. One is the statistical way which defines normality in terms of what is usual or average. The other is the normative or the pathological approach which tries to set some qualitative norm. Although the statistical criterion is useful and in many respects sound, it is based on the questionable assumption that all human variants can be expressed as quantitative deviations. We can call ninety degrees Fahrenheit a normal body temperature, but it is difficult or almost impossible to define pathology, e.g., emotional or mental disturbances, in statistical measures.

Neurosis

Also called 'psychoneurosis,' 'neurosis' is a mild form of nervous disorder with no apparent organic cause. It is, therefore, a 'functional' mental disorder arising from inner conflicts, emotional stress, and frustration that may produce a variety of symptoms. It is so called functional for the functions rather than the structures of nervous system are impaired.

Freud, who originated the term psychoneurosis, believes that the casual factors behind it can be found roughly in the first six years of life, when the personality, or

ego, is weak and afraid of censure. He attributes psychoneurosis to the frustration of infantile sexual drives. Severe eating, toilet habits, and other restrictions become taboos and are parentally imposed. These infantile conflicts, remaining unresolved, appear in adulthood under conditions of stress as neurotic symptoms. Freud's explanation of the origin of neurosis has been tersely summarized by Hendrick:

Freud discovered that all factors contributing to a neurotic reaction are intimately associated with the sexual life of the patient, and the sexual life of his childhood as well as adulthood. In addition, Freud has always recognized heredity as one of the etiological factors (. . .) But it is also apparent that individuals whose heredity and infantile experiences are not unusually unfavourable may be made neurotic by exceptional emotional strain. (27)

For Freud, repression of sexuality, especially of infantile nature, and unfavourable heredity can lead a person to neurosis.

Classification of Neuroses

Freud classifies neuroses into two broad categories: 'actual neuroses' and 'psychoneuroses'. The actual neuroses include neurasthenia and anxiety neurosis whereas conversion hysteria, anxiety hysteria, and obsessive-compulsive neurosis fall into the category of psychoneuroses. Horney, similarly, talks about 'character neuroses' and 'situation neuroses'. Other psychoanalysts have also typified neuroses in terms of their own perspectives and criteria. This variation results not from the lack of well-defined symptom patterns that form the basis for division, rather from the fact that many patients have symptoms that fall into two or more clinical groups. This paper will, however, discuss briefly about five most generally recognized types of

neuroses: anxiety neurosis, hysteria, traumatic neurosis, obsessional neurosis, and phobia.

Anxiety neurosis is the most common form of psychoneurosis occurring among individuals possessing above average intelligence. Ross defines it as: “a series of symptoms, which arise from faulty adaptations to the stresses and strains of life. It is caused by overaction in an attempt to meet these difficulties” (11). According to Freud, anxiety is thought of as a signal which warns the ego of impending danger and mobilizes its defensive apparatus. Symptoms of anxiety neurosis may include diffuse tension, feelings of insecurity, restlessness, insomnia, palpitation, excessive sweating, dizziness, trembling, upset stomach, etc.

Because of continuous frustration and different conflicting situations, anxiety may appear even in a normal individual in much the same way it does in a neurotic. There are, however, certain crucial points of distinction between the anxiety of the normal and the neurotic. The normal individual realizes the cause of his anxiety and soon gets over it. The anxiety patient is usually only dimly aware of the true nature of the conflicts, frustrations, and difficulties that beset him, and his symptoms persist over long periods. This is due to the fact that the source of normal anxiety is to be found primarily in some specific external danger or thwarting situations, whereas the more exacerbating anxiety of the neurotic arises from inner dangers and frustrations. Frequently, the source of the neurotic’s anxiety is traceable to some disturbing childhood experience. Symptoms originally arising from such an experience may reappear years later when the individual is exposed to a situation that contains some element in common with the original disturbing experience.

Similarly, hysteria is characterized by a loss of function. Typical hysteria symptoms are psychogenic paralysis of the limbs, deafness, blindness, insensitivity,

and loss of memory. Weakened by the loss of nervous strength, the mind gives up some of its functioning. For our convenience, hysteria can be distinguished between two subtypes: conversion hysteria and dissociated states. Somatic symptoms as hysterical paralysis of arms and legs, functional blindness and tunnel vision, anesthesia etc. are example of conversion hysteria. Similarly, the dissociated state of affairs is most pronounced in multiple personality in which two or more separate and markedly different personalities dwell in the same person and manifest themselves in alternation.

Traumatic experience in some stage of life of a person also may have strong influence to the causation of neurosis. Traumatic neurosis is distinguished by the manner in which they are precipitated. It is neurotic reaction to unusually severe stress, with varying symptomatology. War neuroses precipitated by exposure to stressful combat duty are exemplary. In *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, Freud gives account on traumatic neurosis and writes: “The traumatic neuroses demonstrate very clearly that a fixation to the moment of the traumatic occurrence lies at their root. These patients regularly reproduce the traumatic situation in their dreams” (180).

In psychoanalysis, unusually obsessive thought and compulsive behaviour are also classified as neurosis. Also known as obsessive-compulsive neurosis, the characteristic feature in obsessional neurosis is the person’s feeling forced to think certain thoughts and to execute certain acts, which strike him as absurd, but whose compelling power he can not escape. According to Freud, in obsessional neurosis the patient’s mind is forced to think certain things which are not only tedious but painful as well. His thoughts are obsessive and the actions compulsive or ritualistic.

The final of the neurotic types in our discussion, phobia, is a peculiar fear which is quite irrational. Some of the more common fears of the environment include acrophobia, agoraphobia, claustrophobia, nyctophobia and the like. The difference between the normal and neurotic fear is one of degree on one hand and the basis of his fear on the other.

An individual drowned in a pond in his early life may fear or avoid swimming in the shallowest water. Similarly, a person trapped in a tiny room may avoid his presence in any close space. But these simple, direct, and understandable fears are not to be classed as neuroses. A person suffering from neurotic phobia has no idea about the cause of his fears. His reactions to them are often violent, and they are greatly inconvenienced by them.

Etiology of Neuroses

Individuals who in later life become psychoneurotic are often tense, fretful and anxious as children. It is because of the underlying constitutional instability and hypersensitivity which is ultimately responsible for the development of the psychoneurosis in later years. These childhood maladjustments are often provoked by disturbing and unfavourable influences in the early home life. The more important of these influences are maternal overprotection, rejection, excessive fondling, pathological parental attachments, strict puritanical upbringing, domineering parents etc. Freud holds similar opinion but focuses mostly on the parental influences on the restriction of infantile sexuality.

Study of the life histories of psychoneurotic patients usually reveals that the onset of symptoms was preceded by some distressing emotional experience or mental conflicts. Disappointing love affairs, financial reverses, death in the family, terrifying accidents, interfamilial discord, and occupational maladjustments are some common

examples. Since the symptoms follow the emotional trauma, there is a temptation to regard the trauma as the cause of the psychoneurosis. But it is a faulty assumption. Freud writes: "Every neurosis contains such a fixation [fixation of traumas], but not every fixation leads to a neurosis" (233).

If emotional disturbances and mental conflicts were themselves capable of producing a psychoneurosis, almost everyone would be a psychoneurotic for everyone at some time encounters a bitter disappointment or failure, is beset with burdensome responsibilities, frustrations etc. Furthermore, no statistics shows that upsetting experiences occur with any greater frequency among the psychoneurotic than among the healthy population. The significant difference is that the more rugged normal individuals take these experiences in their strides, but the potential psychoneurotics are incapable of successfully adapting themselves to the rigors of life. Thus the cause for the psychoneurosis is to be found in the individual rather than in his life experiences. Emotional traumata and mental conflicts produce temporary instability in persons having robust psychological constitution but for the weaker ones they may lead to neurosis.

Association or conditioning may also play a vital role to lead a person to psychopathology. The main idea of conditioning is that emotions, impulses, and sensations experienced under certain conditions may become so strongly associated that the chance occurrence in the future of some element of the original situation will reinstate the original reaction. Thus, a person who suffers from nausea, headache, and dizziness following a rail road accident may experience the same symptoms for months afterward whenever he rides on a train. So, according to these criterions, individuals habitually react inappropriately to present stimuli because of past associations. Hollingworth, an ardent supporter of the doctrine of association in

psychopathology, writes: "To be neurotic is not merely to have established an unserviceable habit adjustment. To be neurotic is above all to be the kind of person who is always forming such unserviceable or unsagacious habits, even under circumstances or in a world where other people form useful ones" (362).

Similarly, the constitutional factors can not be ignored. They include heredity, early environment, and training. When unfavorable, they prevent the development of a well integrated, sturdy personality and thus facilitate the appearance of psychoneurotic reactions when the individual is confronted with some disturbing or intolerable situation. Freud clearly establishes in his writings that heredity plays a vital role to the causation of psychoneurosis. Studies reported by Gillespie indicate that approximately twenty percent of the parents of psychoneurotic patients have similar psychoneurosis, and an additional twenty percent of the parents are unstable or sufferer from other forms of neurotic ills or nervous disorders. Psychoneuroses were noted in fifty-one percent of the parents of eight hundred and ninety psychoneurotic patients studied by Paskind. These data set the limits of heredity; nevertheless, it positively supports the statement that heredity plays a vital role in neurosis.

Since mind and body are closely interdependent, we can not deny the role of physical factors in the development of psychoneurosis as well. Physical exhaustion may weaken the mental resources of the individual to facilitate the appearance of the neurotic symptoms. However, such instances are rare because psychoneuroses are psychological disorders. They do not result from physical injuries. In terms of physical health, psychoneuroses do not differ significantly from normal individual.

Many neurotic patients erroneously think that their symptoms are due to physical condition produced by overwork or excessive application to studies. A person harassed by a distressing psychological problem may seek escape in his work

or studies and if these tension-reducing activities fail, he may develop a psychoneurosis. On the surface it may now appear that over work caused the neurosis, whereas, in reality, overwork was itself an early symptom. The mental turmoil that precedes the onset of symptoms may be accompanied by loss of sleep, poor appetite and other reactions that unfavorably affect the physical health of the individual.

Fantasy/Phantasy

It is an activity of thinking pleasant situation which is unlikely to happen in real life situation. According to Houghton Mifflin: “Fantasying is a habitual adjustive technique which reduces the tensions of need and anxiety by restricting behaviour to more or less stereotyped daydreams” (181).

Also known as daydreaming or reverie, fantasy is one of the most common mechanisms. Almost every individual of every age-group admit daydreaming frequently, adolescence is the period of highest frequency. Fantasy reflects our wishes, hopes and even frustrations. In fantasy, we escape the hardships and unpleasant aspects of real life and gratify our frustrated situations or distant ambition. The central figure in the fantasy is the dreamer himself: an orphan communicates with his parents; a physically disabled person becomes superman, and the like. As long as these fantasies do not interfere functioning of mind, it is harmless, and sometimes even motivating with renewed energy, but if they become “overluxuriant and overpowerful,” Freud says, “the conditions are laid for an onset of neurosis or psychosis” (714).

Guilt Feeling

Guilt feeling arises out of the sense of responsibility for the action that one has done in the past and which he regards as evil. Here, the yardsticks to distinguish between evil from good is the conscience, a part of super-ego. The fear of the internal

(conscience) and the external (environment) authorities is the source of the sense of guilt. Freud believes that the fear for those authorities is implanted in one by the “earliest form of religion and morality” (25). So the person who is upbrought in a strict puritanical environment and is neurotic at present is frequently beset with the excruciating sense of guilt. It is so because his strong conscience awakens his past evil actions which were latent and forgotten for the time being. For Freud, such people whose aggressivity are overcome and are made weak by the strong internal authority is restless and his acute sense of guilt manifests in his attempt for self-retribution. He says: “[. . .] This (sense of guilt) manifests itself as a need for self-punishment. In this way civilization overcomes the dangerous aggressivity of the individual, by weakening him, disarming him and setting an internal authority to watch over him, like a garrison in conquered town” (77).

Karen Horney: Neurosis and Neurotic Needs

Karen Horney, who believes her ideas based on Freudian ground, retains the concepts of repression and unconscious mind but has rejected the Freudian concept of libido and heredity. According to Horney, the crucial factor behind the causation of neurosis lies in insecure childhood experiences. But she does not deny the fact that conflict in later life can contribute to the molding of neurotic personality.

Horney points out how a child acquires feelings of isolation and insecurity as a result of exposure to such adverse environmental influences as absence of affection, parental domination, and overprotection. Referring to Horney, Page writes:

In attempting to get along in a potentially hostile world, the child may (a) move toward people and obtain security and a sense of belonging by being submissive and dependent; (b) move against people and aggressively fight his way in the world; or (c) move away from people and live in an isolated

private world. Normal people combine and integrate these three attitudes and thus achieve a balanced, unified personality. (195)

Horney maintains that a neurotic has rigid personality and is unable to achieve this unity. These contradictory attitudes remain irreconcilable. It is this conflict between contradictory and incompatible attitudes that constitutes the basic core of neuroses. Here, her ideas remain quite contrary with that of Freud for she believes that the important factor responsible for the constitution of neurosis lies not in the presence of the conflict but the nature of the conflict itself.

In *Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, Horney presents a number of needs that are acquired as a consequence of trying to find solutions for the problem of disturbed human relationships. She calls these needs 'neurotic' because they are irrational solutions to the problem.

Horney believes that basic anxiety i.e., the feeling that the world around him is hostile and dangerous, is the dynamic centre of neurosis. Thus, a person having anxiety is helpless, irrational and beset with the thought that something within him is out of gear that controls his freewill. In such a condition he feels jeopardy both in his profession and life as a whole. For these reasons it becomes inevitable for him to take refuge in some defensible mechanisms so that it can help him revive reassurance against his anxiety: "The more unbearable the anxiety the more thorough the protective means have to be. There are mainly four principle ways in which a person tries to protect himself against the basic anxiety: affection, submissiveness, power, withdrawal" (96).

First, securing affection in any form may serve as a powerful protection against anxiety. The motto is that if someone loves him, he will not be hurt. In the case of submissiveness, the individual represses all demands of his own, represses criticism

of others, is willing to let himself be abused without defending himself and is ready to be indiscriminately helpful to others. He is of the opinion that if he gives in he will not be hurt. Similarly, a third attempt at protection against the basic anxiety is through power—trying to achieve security by gaining factual power or success, or intellectual superiority. This striving for power actuates in him the confidence that if he is powerful no one can harm his security. The fourth means of protection is withdrawal. The preceding groups of protective devices have in common a willingness to cope with the world in one way or another. Here the patient finds protection withdrawing from the world. This does not mean going into a desert or into complete seclusion; it means achieving independence of others as they affect either his external or internal needs.

Since these neurotic needs are unrealistic and impractical, they are unable to give the subject reassurance against his weakness. These needs, in turn, lead him to more pathogenic situation for these needs are either incompatible to each other or actuate him to complying attitude and emotional dependence. He may, for example, impose his power to the person he utterly seeks affection from. Therefore, as the neurotic sees flaws in his own weakness, he ultimately develops the tendency of self-recrimination. Thus, the only need he is satiated with is the need of self-retribution that sometime motivates him to suicide.

III

Psychoanalytical Reading of the Protagonist's Fall: A Textual Analysis

Halvard Solness, the protagonist in Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, is a renowned professional builder, a self-learned artistic genius. Born as a poor country lad, he attains the highest of his professional status but meanwhile seeks flaws within his own success with the view of belittling achievements he has gained so far. Not only that he seeks fault within himself, such a eulogized artist is ashamed of his own creation people admire as ravishingly outstanding. Endowed with material prosperity, this 'lucky' hero feels without any convincing ground insecure and miserable and deprives himself of any hope and enjoyment. He is all the time beset with fear i.e. fear of the younger generation who believes they will come one day knocking at his door to make an end to master builder Solness and his career. He feels basically inadequate, vulnerable and insecure in his profession and the world he perceives as dangerous and hostile. Moreover, he is so much obsessed with the thought of the 'troll' that he feels his behaviour and actions get impetus out of this strange devil in the stead of his freewill. It is also the manifestation of his psychic vulnerability. If a person is thus haunted with unwanted feelings and fear of an object or situation without any reasonable premise we call him beset with anxiety, and such psychic disturbance as anxiety disorders.

A person feeling anxious tries, consciously or unconsciously, different defensive maneuver so as to protect the self from anxiety, which we call 'defensive mechanism' in psychoanalysis. Anxiety and the individual's efforts to control it are viewed as key factors in the development of neurotic problems. In the anxiety disorders either of these two factors is the central feature of the clinical picture. Anxiety disorders are,

thus, neurotic categories and included in our discussion of anxiety disorders will be anxiety state, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and phobic disorder.

Anxiety State

Halvard Solness is plagued with fleeting fears of impending doom and disgrace which is a crucial symptom in anxiety-neurotic patient. While talking about his anxiety, it will be beneficial to distinguish it from fear so that our discerning will be sound. In the case of fear the danger involved is transparent, objective and proportionate, where as in anxiety, to relate it with Solness, his fear is hidden and subjective one. His state obviously is that of fear, but imagined one that comes from within. Since Solness feels utterly helpless against his anxiety it becomes excruciating for him to bear the burden and seeks way out to escape this anxiety through rationalization i.e. the legalization of anxiety as rational fear which is evident in conversation below with Dr. Herdal:

DR. HERDAL: [. . .] started out as a poor country lad, and now look at you--at the top of your profession. Yes indeed, Mr. Solness, you certainly have had all the luck.

SOLNESS: Yes. That's what makes me feel so horribly afraid.

DR. HERDAL: Afraid? Because you have all the luck?

SOLNESS: Night and day it terrifies me . . . terrifies me. Some day you see, that luck must change.

DR. HERDAL: Nonsense! What is going to change it?

SOLNESS: Youth is. (I, 18-19)

Instead of accepting a challenge to change something within himself, he goes on shifting the responsibility to the outside world. The price he has to pay for these momentary advantages is that he is incapable of getting rid of these worries

permanently. Whether reasonable or not to his context, he is convinced to this mechanism because the source of this rationalization directly goes back to his act of kicking Knud Brovik off his post. This old Brovik, once the boss, was overthrown from the post by Solness and since then took him and his son into his employ. The younger generation or the youth Solness is referring here is particularly Brorik Ragner who works as a draftsman in his office. If seen through our perspective there is nothing as such in Ragner that Solness imagines as a threat. What he expects from Solness is just the encouragement and the confidence he has lost in Solness's company so that he can undertake a commission of his own and become independent.

Though he feels lucky finding himself at the top of his profession, he is worried about keeping his luck within himself lest the youth come and confiscate it. This is the reason he has become a real tyrant for his employees. He does not want to give any room for them but wants them help him without any condition and rebellion. For the very reason Solness is so rigid to give a commission to Ragner lest it becomes the beginning of the youth and the end of master builder Solness. This fact becomes evident in his talk with Hilde, a young girl in her early twenties who inspires him to revive his hope, strength and happiness:

SOLNESS: Once Ragnar Brovik gets started, he'll have me down in the dust.

He'll break men . . . just as I broke his father. [. . .] He represents youth standing there ready to beat upon my door. Ready to finish off Master Builder Solness.

HILDE: And yet you wanted to shut him out. For shame, master builder!

SOLNESS: It's cost me enough already, this battle I've fought. Besides, I'm afraid the helpers and servants might not obey me any more.

HILDE: Then you'll just have to manage on your own. Nothing else for it.

SOLNESS: Hopeless. Hilde. My luck will turn. Sooner or later. Retribution is inexorable. (II, 60)

Solness's restlessness clearly shows us that he does not only feel helpless and hopeless against Ragner for he represents the youth but that he is also aware of his tyrannical conduct against Brovik family as exploitation and hence sin. Even as Ragner's father is dying pleading with Solness to give his boy a chance to fly on his own as an architect, Solness persists in stripping Ragner of self-confidence. Deep down inside him is lurking the sense of guilt for the maltreatment towards Broviks that accentuates retribution as inevitable. His helplessness and vulnerability, purely psychic, is evident in this fear of retribution. Moreover, he is also sure that his luck, which he calls 'helpers and servants' will not be of any help for he is weak from within. Once, he believes, when he was still on ground called those helpers and servants and they heard him and drove him at the top but the old Brovik didn't know how to call them and thus he fell down rightly on his feet.

I think no further explanation is needed to prove the protagonist an anxiety patient. But the question may arise how such an anxiety gets generated in him. So far as I have explained about the notion of subjective fear or anxiety, two factors-- an overpowering danger and defenselessness against it-- are unmistakably present on the foreground. While talking about the formation of anxiety (or neurotic anxiety) Freud traces back its origin early in childhood of the patient and its dynamics in the repression of sexual impulses especially during the oedipal phase when the child is beset with castration fear. Similarly Karen Horney, who believes anxiety as the dynamic center of neuroses, disagrees with Freud's excessive emphasis on libidinal impulses and opines that hostile impulses form the main source from which neurotic anxiety springs. She is of the opinion that anxiety as a whole is not an infantile

reaction, it may be generated and develop in later phase of life. I will talk about it in detail in the chapters to come, and try to accommodate Solness's situation and behavioural pattern available to us according to our framework.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Since anxiety is partly involved in obsessional thought it is not quite easy to separate these two aspects and distinguish them to view the whole picture. Threatened with the fear of younger generation, Solness is also haunted by the thought of 'troll,' the presence of which makes him feel overpowered with: "There you are! There you are, Hilda! There's a troll in you, too. Just as in me. And it's the troll within us, you see, that calls on the powers outside. Then we have to give in whether we like it or not" (II, 52).

Mr. Solness is often aware of what he is doing, even if it is not an appropriate act and that his action may cause a great damage to others. He feels that he is operated from the outside force that is so strong within him that he can not get rid of it in his will. This is one of the reasons, another being the anxiety, why he denies Ragner a single commission despite the persistent pleading of old Brovik who wants to see "faith and confidence" in Ragner before he dies: "Don't you understand? There is nothing else I can do! I am what I am! And I can't change myself!" (I, 7).

In his neurotic compulsive disorder, Solness feels compelled to perform the act which seems absurd to him and which he does not want to perform. Since certain compulsive behaviour does exist in normal people as well they do not use it as a means to escape certain problem of life nor does it interfere with effective living as in the case of Solness. For this reason his obsessive thought and compulsive behaviour are classified as neurotic.

It is usual that individuals suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder defend themselves from anxiety by persistently thinking something so that the unpleasant thoughts do not enter their minds. Since it is mostly unconscious activity they try to substitute the unwanted thought with pleasant fantasy. Solness's fantasy of building 'castles in the air' is nothing more than this tricky mechanism to avoid the thought of 'troll' that guides him day and night.

Solness's trolls are devils, certainly some evil forces which hold him in grips mercilessly. He finds God responsible for his miserable condition for He let loose this troll within him so that he himself sacrificed his home for the sake of His churches:

SOLNESS: [scornfully]. He pleased with me! How can you say things like that, Hilde? He who has let loose this troll within me to rampage about as it will? He who bade them all be ready night and day to minister to me . . . all these . . . these . . .

HILDE: Devils . . .

SOLNESS: Yes. Oh no, I was soon made to realize that He wasn't pleased with me. In fact, you know, that's why He let the old house burn down. (III, 82) God, for whom Solness made magnificent and lofty churches, endowed him with building talent so that he can serve His purpose. Realizing the very fact he invested his talent in building churches for he thought that it was the worthiest thing he could do for God. Though he offered God his creation with "honesty and sincerity and devotion" He was not happy with him, else He would not have destroyed his home and taken his children away from him (III, 82). In fact, burning of his home was the making of Solness as a builder.

Solness's rivalry with God suggests his dissatisfaction with Him for He destroyed his home for the sake of His churches. Moreover, He let loose those

overpowering trolls in him that certainly checked his freewill. Here, these trolls imply Solness's fragile conscience that he inherited through his God-fearing home environment of which he has strong antipathy.

Phobia

Like anxiety state and obsessional disorder, Halvard Solness is also beset with phobic disorder. It is a persistent fear of some object or situation that presents no actual danger to the person but it is magnified disproportionately to its actual seriousness. In this respect it appears in close proximity with anxiety and obsession but it is different, though it is also a kind of disproportionate fear, from them for the phobic fear is manifested only while confronted with the real object or situation concerned. Here, Solness also can not stand height and that he is unaware of the basis of this peculiar fear:

HILDE: But I've seen him myself right at the top of a high church tower.

MRS. SOLNESS: Yes, I've heard people say that. But it's quite impossible.

SOLNESS: impossible . . . yes, impossible! But I did it, all the same.

MRS. SOLNESS: How can you say that. Halvard? You can't even bear to go out on to the first floor balcony here. You have always been like that. (II, 64)

It was an old practice to hang a wreath on the weathercock of newly built churches and that Solness himself ten years back had climbed up the church tower to perform that 'impossible' act. It is not, in fact, impossible to do the job though it certainly involved danger. By this very expression we can assume that for him climbing a tower was something not viable. Moreover, in ten years his psychic health has gone so deteriorated that he is afraid of going to the first floor balcony.

Solness couple is moving toward their newly built magnificent home containing a high tower on it. Hilda, extremely fond of such high towers, insists him

to climb up and perform the ritual once more since it is her pleasure to see her ideal hero high up at the top so that people below feel dizzy merely at a sight. Though he does not want to appear coward before her, this time he accepts that he has acrophobia:

HILDE: You seem pretty afraid altogether!

SOLNESS: You think so?

HILDE: Yes people are saying that you are afraid of climbing . . . up the scaffolding, for stance.

SOLNESS: Well, that's a different matter.

HILDE: Then you are afraid to do it?

SOLNESS: Yes, I am. (III, 81)

The state of fear in Solness is generated by his anxiety and guilt feeling and that his sense of guilt springs from his strict puritanical upbringing and his exploitation to his employees and wife herself. Mr. Solness is so stricken with the sense of guilt and anxiety that any unusual symptom dominant on him should not be taken in isolation. Because of anxiety and sense of guilt he has grown so weak and morally depressed that he has unconsciously developed the wish to die in order to get rid of his sufferings. But it does not mean that he gives up hope of life completely. Such a situation presents to him, or stir up in him, a conflict between the wish to live and the temptation to jump down from the height.

Solness's Neurotic Fantasy

Solness's psychic reality grows so poorer and weaker that his suffering becomes unbearable and that it demands a remedy. And the remedy as such he finds in fantasy i.e. the fantasy of building castles in the air:

HILDE: You owe me a kingdom, don't you?

SOLNESS: That's what you keep telling me.

HILDE: Well then! You owe me this kingdom. And surely any kingdom carries
a castle with it, doesn't it? [. . .] Then build it for me! Quickly. [. . .]

Castles in the air. (III, 74-75)

Ten years ago when Hilda was just twelve years of age, Solness had done a little mischief to her. She says that he kissed her many times and called her 'princess' and even promised to “buy a kingdom” (I, 27). He also promises then to come back to fetch her after ten years but he does not keep his words and therefore she has come knocking at his door demanding her kingdom there and then "on the table" (I, 31). But he had forgotten that particular moment of promise, a selective forgetfulness, may be because of its possible unpleasant consequence. Since Solness wants to use her as a means of getting reassurance against anxiety thinking that he can match “youth against youth”, he can not deny offering her a castle in the air:

SOLNESS: Castles in the air?

HILDE: [nods]. Yes, castles in the air! Do you know what a castle in the air is?

SOLNESS: From what you say, it's the loveliest thing in the world.

HILDE: [Rises abruptly and makes a gesture of repudiation *with* her hand]. Yes,
of course! Castles in the air-- they're so easy to take refuge in. So easy to
build, too . . . particularly for master builders with . . . weak nerves. (III, 75
- 76)

Master builder initially begins his career with building sacred churches, for reasons develops strong antipathy against God and invests his talent in building homes for human beings where they can live together secure and happy. But again he realizes that as an artist he himself sacrificed his own ‘home’ and happiness for the sake of others. Moreover, their homes do not help them to be happy and is again

assured that building homes for the people is not “worth a brass farthing” (III, 83). Here, we can see master builder’s persistent frustration towards his profession. Since his real life situation is marked with continuous frustration and dissatisfaction, he now as an ultimate attempt tries to build not any physical construction but rather a loveliest thing in the whole world, fantasy, where he can live with his princess in peace and pleasure.

Fantasy, thus becomes a very simple way out for the master builder to get rid of his troubles. It is simple in that it is easy to build and to take refuge in. What you have to do is just detach yourself from the external world and immerse into the thought you like most. To cope with different inner and outer conflicts one needs robust nerves, but for a person with fragile conscience who can do nothing against his conflict, building castles in the air is a handy solution because in doing so neither he has to compete with anyone nor does there exist any fear of failure.

Solness’s fantasy allows him to feel important without entering into any competition and to build up a fiction of grandeur far beyond any attainable goal. It is this blind-alley value of grandiose fantasies that makes him dangerous. If fantasies become overluxuriant and overpowerful, Freud opines, the conditions are laid for an onset of neurosis or psychosis. From such fantasies a broad bypath branches off into pathology. Here, in the case of Solness, the same principle is applicable and that his fantasy evidently is that of neurotic nature. These fantasies, in the case of normal person, remain decorative arabesques, and he does not take them too seriously. The psychotic person at the other end, with such grandeur and overluxurious ideas is convinced that he is a genius and that the evidence of reality does not exist for him. Mr. Solness, a neurotic, is somewhere between these two extremes. His grandiose

fantasy though he consciously takes as unreal, but at the same time seriously, has for him an emotional reality-value.

Neurotic Sense of Guilt

Guilt feeling is the tendency to seek and find fault within oneself. If anything goes wrong such persons assume that it was their fault. In many respects, even if he has not done any wrong to others, he still manages to blame himself for it. But for our convenience, it is better to distinguish between moral guilt and neurotic guilt that stem from two different sources. In moral guilt something objectively wrong has been done and a feeling of guilt is therefore justified, where as in neurotic guilt, the subject himself is not responsible for the wrong done yet he stamps himself as a sinner. In our context, Solness possesses both sort of guilt feelings-- he has moral guilt feeling, though unconscious, concerning his exploitation to his employees, and the neurotic guilt feelings on account of the destruction of his happy home.

Mr. Solness is all aware that burning down of his old home was the making of him as a builder. Though he was not renowned and economically sound then, he had a happy home-- a loving wife and healthy twin sons. But he wanted his home burn down because he wanted to divide the villa into plotting sites and build some structures of his own on them. Since he was lucky, the house burnt down but on the cost of his two children and their own happiness. After that traumatic moment, burning of the home Aline inherited from her mother, he never had to turn back in his profession, but deep down he was crushed with immeasurable debt to Aline:

SOLNESS: I feel as if I'm cracking up under this terrible burden of debt . . .

Mrs. SOLNESS: Debt, you say? But you're not in debt to anyone, Halvard!

SOLNESS: Endlessly in debt to you . . . to you . . . to you, Aline.

MRS. SOLNESS: What is behind all this? You might as well tell me at once.

SOLNESS: There's nothing behind it. I've never done you any wrong. Never knowingly, never deliberately, that is. And yet-I feel weighed down by a great crushing sense of guilt. (II, 40)

Aline, once beautiful and happy has completely lost her physical charm and has turned into a dejected soul. The presence of private doctor in their home as well as her black mourning outfit in acts I and II unmistakably suggests her deteriorating physical as well as psychical health. During the night the house burnt down, she suffers a terrible shock. The freezing night air causes her a fever that infects her milk and as she shucks the twins her breast they die. The fever does not only prove fatal to her children, but also that she remains barren all her life. Solness feels himself guilty and indebted for these desolating effects.

According to Solness, Aline also had a vocation in life, the vocation of building human souls. But she has been deprived of her natural gift for the sake of his success as an architect. His immergence was marked by her ruin. This is the reason why he feels guilty, and "enjoy[s] the mortification of letting Aline do [him] an injustice" (I, 16). He wants Aline to punish him so as to reduce his sense of guilt which is like "paying off a tiny installment on a huge immeasurable debt" (I, 16).

As a matter of fact Solness is not responsible for the causation of the fire, he just "wanted it to be" (II, 54). But he wanted it so insistently and so ruthlessly that he ultimately got it in the end for he was "signaled out, specially chosen, gifted with the power and the ability to *want* something, to *desire* something, and to *will* something" (II, 55). Since he was lucky and knew the idea to call those helpers and servants, he blames himself for having to lose those two little boys and Aline's happiness, desire and craft:

SOLNESS: Who called on the helpers and servants? I did! And they came and did my bidding. That's what people call being lucky. But let me tell you what that sort of luck feels like! It feels as if my breast were a great expanse of raw flesh. And these helpers and servants go flaying off skin from other people's bodies to patch my wound. Yet the wound never heals . . . never! Oh, if only you knew how it sometimes burns and throbs. (II, 56)

The analogy of the wound, very touchy, suggests how much Solness is tormented and crushed by the sense of guilt. These 'helpers and servants' persistently flays off skin from his employees and wife herself so that he could reach at the top, but in vain. Mr. Solness, once so enthusiastic to call upon these 'helpers and servants', now abhors them for they are incapable of healing his own wound even at a great expense. He thus concludes that his success stems on his own misdeed.

Our discussion evidently provides ample ground based on which we can call Solness a guilt gilded neurotic patient. But we are still to discern into the source of his sense of guilt from which it springs. Freud asserts that as two prominent aspects of civilization, religion and culture play the crucial role to implant the sense of guilt in human beings, especially in children. It is either religion or culture that sets or imposes rules in the community and undertakes the authority so as to punish those who break the law. The person (child) takes these make believe laws to be true and feels guilty if they are violated.

A person, thus, feels guilty because of his early childhood social mores and religious indoctrinations. Since Solness was brought up in a "God-fearing" home environment, it is not difficult for us to hold the root of his guilt feelings (III, 82). Similarly, Karen Horney holds that guilt feeling is the manifestation of anxiety

because if a neurotic person feels himself weak he sees flaws in his own weakness and develops the tendency of self recrimination. A more intimidated child does not dare to show any resentment to others and gradually does not even venture to think that the socio-cultural norms, religious doctrines and the parents may be wrong. He feels, however, that someone must be wrong, and thus comes to the conclusion that, since parents and other norms are always right, it must be he who is at fault. In such guilt there is the fear of disapproval. And such threat of disapproval as such comes either from the outside world or from inside himself.

Dynamics Behind Solness's Neurosis

Some of the most frequent psychoneurotic symptoms that we are familiar with in Solness are anxiety, frustration, inability to concentrate or make decisions, memory disturbance, heightened irritability, obsession, irrational fear, inability to enjoy home and social relations etc. On the basis of such clinical evidences, we have no difficulty to declare him a neurotic personality. But here, in this chapter, the main concern is to look at the dynamics that actuate him to neurosis.

Almost all the psychoanalysts are in consensus regarding the fact that early home environment of a person remains determinant in molding his adult personality. As a child grows and passes through different stages he has to go through certain basic frustrations as well, but if any frustration remains unresolved it may prove fatal to his psychic health. Besides, emotional traumata and mental conflicts, heredity, and unfavourable early environment and training may play vital role in the implantation and development of psychoneurosis. Among all these factors, unfavourable early home environment i.e., the strict puritanical upbringing, remains crucial behind the causation of Solness's neurosis which is evident in his confession to Hilda: "You see, I was brought up in a God-fearing home out in the country. That's why I thought

building churches was the worthiest thing I could do [. . .], that I [thought] He should have been pleased with me” (III, 82).

If Solness was brought up in a God-fearing home, we can easily assume what sort of religious mores he was imbued with. They must have taught him that God was all-powerful having the power to punish him even in hell if he went against His law. They must have taught him that the aim of life should be His service so that he can get redemption from the inborn sin. From the very childhood they must have taught him to subdue his impulses and that acts like sex, masturbation were strictly forbidden for they were against His will. This is not merely a hypothesis, it stands on a solid foundation: because of these religious indoctrinations he kept aside all his boiling impulses and built humble little churches with "honesty and sincerity and devotion” so that He could be “pleased with [him]” (III, 82). This is the reason why he thought the idea of building churches the worthiest thing he could do.

It is thus clear that Solness, from the very beginning of his childhood, is deprived of discharge to his libidinal impulses. He pushes those objectionable urges away from the consciousness or into the regions of unconscious through the defense mechanism known as ‘repression’. According to Freud these repressed materials, product of the id and resident of the unconscious, are so powerful that until and unless they get proper outlet they persistently put pressure on the ego, which bears the responsibility of discharging them in proper reality. If the ego can not remain influential to subdue these instincts convincingly or denies the discharge, the relation between the id and the ego is broken down and a person is subject to neurosis.

Now we will look at the same issue-- dynamics behind Solness's neurosis-- as Horney would have looked at it, and then come to a meeting point if possible. According to her, repression of hostile impulses of various kinds forms the main

source from which neurotic anxiety springs. She is of the opinion that anxiety, the root cause of neurosis, itself is incapable of pushing a person to neurosis, but the defensive attempts to allay anxiety and its failure. If the impulses are of libidinal nature for Freud, they are of hostile nature for Horney. Hostile impulses do not only mean aggressive ones but those the pursuit of which may involve external danger. The important point here is that Freud's libidinal impulses can also be accumulated into hostile impulses.

The conflict Solness undergoes since his early childhood is between his pleasure seeking hostile impulses and the religious demands and indoctrination imposed to him by his family. Since his ego remains influential and overpowerful, he can not satiate the instincts. So he represses his hostility and keeps them away from entering awareness without the remotest idea that he was hostile. He represses those hostile impulses against parents and God because he is afraid of his parents and as a child he realizes that he needed them. Another reason behind is that he will be a bad child if he feels hostile and will lose love from them. This complying tendency and vulnerability help germinate anxiety in him.

The repression of hostile impulses in Solness ultimately bursts out in the form of rebellion against God: “[. . .] listen to me, Almighty one: From this day forward, I too will be free. A master builder free in his own field, as you are in yours. Never again will I build churches for you” (III, 83). Even when he grows and becomes successful in his profession, he represses hostile impulses against Broviks because if he becomes hostile to them he will lose the company of such learned and talented architects and his business will be collapsed. Thus he is at the same time driven imperatively towards dominating his employees and wanting to be helped by them, towards

wanting others to comply him and imposing his interest on them. It is this utterly irreconcilable conflict which is an important dynamic center in Solness's neurosis.

There is no quarrelling between Freud and Horney that anxiety is the dynamic center of neuroses. Freud has propounded two views concerning anxiety. The first is that anxiety results from a repression of impulses i.e. sexual impulses. Second, anxiety results from fear of that impulse of which the discovery would involve an external danger. In the first view Horney differs from Freud for his physiological interpretation, because it was based on the belief that if sexual energy is prevented from discharge it will produce tension in the body which is transformed into anxiety. The second interpretation she discards only because Freud is not at all concerned about the repression or non repression of impulses. If we discard 'sexuality' from the first and add 'repression' into the second view, Freud and Horney come up to a meeting point: anxiety in general results from a fear of our repressed impulses.

The above discussion leads us to the conclusion that Solness's early home environment imbued him with the all-fearful image of God, encouraged him to feel tiny and helpless creature and compelled to repress those hostile impulses against God which ultimately resulted in his neurosis.

Neurotic Needs: Power, Affection and Self-Retribution

The neurotic is invariably a suffering person. To get rid of his suffering he develops certain tendencies so that he can get reassurance but such means are so impractical that, on the long run, they prove fatal to the subject himself. Therefore, these tendencies which we call neurotic needs are the ways of protecting one's self against anxiety, but the pursuit of which inevitably marks his downfall. Though momentarily beneficial, Solness also develops strong striving for power, affection and self-retribution that gradually leads him to his tragic fall.

It is a natural human desire to obtain power but Solness's striving for power is of neurotic nature because the normal striving for power is born of strength, the neurotic of weakness. Then why Solness, being weak, so much earnest to possess power? It is because power can give him a feeling of greater security. This striving for power serves not only as a protection against anxiety but also as a channel through which repressed hostility can be discharged. This hostility takes the form of a tendency to domineer. In this regard, he discharges his hostility towards God by imposing his will to his employees.

His striving for power is not merely manifested in the exploitation of Broviks' talent but also in the deprivation of the delegation of authority:

HILDE: [gets up, half in earnest, half laughingly]. Oh, no master builder!

What's the point of that! Nobody but you should be allowed to build. You should do it all alone. Do everything yourself. Now you know.

SOLNESS: [. . .] Here alone . . . in my own secret thoughts . . . I am myself obsessed by that very same idea. (II, 44)

Delegation of authority means providing chance to your subordinates so that they can exercise higher level of responsibility and accelerate their work efficiency. Since Solness realizes his authority and the position as the source of his power he is unyielding to share his power to others. Solness's denial to give Ragner a commission is also motivated by the very tendency. He wants to deprive Ragner of any opportunity that may build in him confidence and independence so that he can be a threat for him. Therefore, in his attempt to protect himself against anxiety, which Horney calls basic anxiety, he conceals the power within himself trying to achieve security by not losing factual power or success and intellectual superiority.

Solness's need of help or affection and imposition of power collides simultaneously at the same persons. He needs Broviks' help because they are extraordinarily clever in designs, stress-bearing, strains and cubic contents, but at the same time fears their talent and does not give them free reigns: "Stay on here with me, Ragner. You can have everything just the way you want it. Then you can marry Kaja. Live without a care. Perhaps even happily. Only don't think of building on your own" (II, 52).

Here, Solness is completely unaware how much his hostilities and exacting demands interfere with his own relationships. Neither is he able to judge the impression he makes on others or their reaction to him. He wants reassurance from a great underlying anxiety not in one way only i.e., power, but also in help or affection which are incompatible with one another. Thus he is at the same time driven imperatively towards dominating Broviks and wanting to be helped by them. The final result is that both of his hands are empty. Neither he can succeed to reserve his power by dominating them nor can he keep them in his service and take their help.

Here, two terms "affection" and "help" have been used interchangeably. The neurotic wants affection or love from others only because he expects help from them. His motto is that he can get their help only when they love him. Need of affection is so important to Solness that his feeling of security in life depends on it. Therefore, he craves the affection from Kaja, a young bookkeeper in his office who is engaged to Ragner, so that she can help stay Ragner in his office:

SOLNESS: [. . .] Yet you are going to leave me? Leave me sitting here, alone
with everything.

KAJA: [. . .] Oh, I don't see how I *can* be separated from you. It seems so
utterly impossible!

SOLNESS: Then see if you can't get Ragner to drop these stupid ideas. Go and marry him as much as you like . . . [changes his tone]. Well, what I mean is-- get him to stay on in this good job he's got with me. Because then I'll be able to keep you too, Kaja my dear. (I, 17)

Solness wants Ragner to drop his stupid ideas of building on his own. Since Ragner is in love with Kaja, and Kaja in turn with Solness, he takes advantage of this triangular affair pretending that he is utterly in love with her. He believes that if he loves her she will remain with him and that Ragner will also hang with her and will not give up his job. Though Solness loves, or pretends to love Kaja, it is incompatible with our idea of love.

Solness uses Kaja only as a means to achieve his goal. But what he feels as spontaneous love is nothing but a response of gratitude for the kindness shown to him or a response of hope or affection aroused by Kaja. For him the primary feeling is the need for reassurance, and illusion of loving is only secondary. If a neurotic realizes that the loved one is of no help in guaranteeing his security, his love automatically turns into repulsion. The same is the case with Kaja, too. When he had to lose Broviks, Kaja is also expelled from the post for she becomes "no more use" for him (II, 63). Since his fear of the youth was more intensified, he seeks reassurance from another source, Hilda, who herself represents the youth:

SOLNESS: [. . .] Youth brings retribution. It is in the vanguard of change . . .

Marching under a new banner.

HILDE: Can you use me, master builder.

SOLNESS: Yes, I can indeed! For you too seem to be marching under a new banner. Youth against youth . . . ! (I, 33)

The above conversation between Hilde and Solness shows us how helpless and insignificant he feels himself. Psychically he is so weak that he is incapable of doing anything by himself and therefore takes refuge in Hilde so that this “bird of prey” having robust conscience would fight the battle for him against the youth (II, 59). This is why she was the one “[he] had needed most” (I, 34).

Since getting affection is of vital importance for Solness, it follows that he is ready to pay any price for it, mostly without realizing that he is doing so. Solness pays this price by developing an attitude of compliance and an emotional dependence. As he develops an attitude of compliance and an emotional dependence, he does not dare to disagree Hilda and shows her nothing but devotion, admiration and docility. Solness’s promise to offer her a kingdom and the castles in the air is based on the very ground. Here we can see give-and-take relationship between them. Hilde, on one hand, guarantees his security so that he can get reassurance against his own weakness, and Solness on the other, being her ideal hero, promises her the “loveliest thing in the world” (III, 75). His complying attitude goes so far that he extinguishes all tendencies towards self-assertion and finally makes a huge sacrifice. Hilde wants to see him standing on high again and persistently insists on climbing the tower of his new home. Terribly afraid of the height he confesses before her that “[he] can’t do a thing like that every day” (III, 84). But finally she is victorious; Solness climbs up the tower, falls down and is smashed to death. This terrible sacrifice Solness did was certainly the result of emotional dependence and complying attitude he developed out of his psychic vulnerability.

Solness’s two major ways of getting reassurance i.e., imposition of power and striving for help or affection, not only remained failure but also proved fatal ultimately taking his own life. It is already stated that he climbed up the tower

because of his complying attitude towards Hilda, but it may not be the sufficient reason. Since he is gilded with guilt and stricken with the fear of retribution, we can not deny in him the secret wish to die, hence the presence of death instinct. When each step he takes in order to allay his anxiety becomes failure and each defensive attempt in turn generates in him new conflict and frustration, he comes to the conclusion that withdrawing from everything is the best way handy because he has no more strength and hope left in life. Therefore he moves on to justify his guilt feelings and retribution: “You see, Hilda ... I am actually the one who’s to blame for those two little boys having to pay with their lives. And perhaps I’m to blame too for Aline never becoming what she could and should have been. And what she most of all wanted to be” (II, 55-56).

When Solness feels that he is responsible for the breaking of their home and the present miserable condition of his wife, the sense of guilt germinates and develops gradually. He feels guilty because his success stems on the death of his sons and Aline’s inability to build children’s souls. Though his assumption does not hold any water, he keeps on believing it. Furthermore, though he is not conscious, he had kicked Brovik out of his post and kept him into his feet. He also exploits young Ragner’s talent, makes him timid and denies free reign. These all conscious or unconscious factors contribute to generate guilt feeling and fear of retribution in Solness.

According to Freud, sense of guilt expresses itself as a need for self-punishment. He opines that our culture obtains mastery over the individual’s pursuit for instinctive drives by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it. So the God-fearing home environment certainly endowed him with

such a fragile conscience that it could not deceive the agency within him and therefore developed a need for punishment:

HILDE: Then you are afraid to do it?

SOLNESS: Yes, I am

HILDE: Afraid you might fall and dash yourself to pieces?

SOLNESS: No, not that.

HILDE: What, then?

SOLNESS: I am afraid of retribution, Hilda. (III, 83)

The fear of retribution creeps into Solness because of his guilt feeling. When he feels guilty he is already convinced that he has done something wrong and therefore the punishment is justified. Here the fear of retribution as such does not come from outside but from within. He has perpetual anxiety about being revenged, but at the same time because of his suffering, he has a secret wish to be punished. The same principle holds true to his fear of high places.

A great deal of discussion has already been made in the previous chapters regarding his fear of the height. He is terrified when he finds himself near a high place. Here too, from without the fear reaction seems to be disproportionate. But such a situation creates in him a conflict between the wish to live and the temptation to jump down from the heights. Another evidence that he actually wanted to jump down and destroy himself can be seen into the meaning of his recurring dream where he sees himself “falling over a terribly high, steep cliff” (II, 40). We have learned from Freud that dreams, even anxiety ones, are wish fulfillment and thus his fall from the cliff justifies his wish to fall down and kill himself.

Still another reason to prove his self-destructive act a wish, we have the Freudian idea on death instinct i.e., contrary to life instinct, in every organism such an

instinct is directed against the organism itself. Such destructive drive is directed either outward or inward to the self and its sway human beings can never escape from. We also find such death instinct dominant in Solness. His aggression or destructiveness is first directed against the external world-- his wife, the old home that Aline inherited from her mother, and his employees. But, since he was a neurotic and felt himself beset with anxiety, weakness, and guilt feeling, he could not actually discharge his aggression by keeping them into his grip. In other words, his aggressiveness could not find satisfaction in the external world because Ragner and even his wife came up as real obstacle on the way. This aggression, in turn, increases the amount of self destructiveness holding sway into the self.

Thus we can conclude that since Solness's two vital sources of getting reassurance against anxiety-- power and affection-- remained failure, he further developed the striving for self-retribution as an ultimate weapon to get rid of his existing anxiety and for reasons succeeded in his own destruction.

IV

Conclusion

The Master Builder, one of the masterpieces the modern playwright Ibsen produced on the verge of his dramatic career, is well remembered for its psychological content. Most of the readers find the play puzzling and obscure having so many things to think about but lacking a central issue. We have now ample premises to assert that such misunderstanding resulted in them not from the confusing and esoteric subject matter of the play itself but from the lack of psychoanalytical orientation. We have thus applied the very method while making an all-inclusive study to the downfall of protagonist in the present play.

Brought up in a God-fearing home environment, we find the seed of neurosis implanted in Solness early in childhood. At the very stage, he realizes his instinctual desires sinful as they went against the will of God. This is the very point where two opposing forces-- social demands and primitive drives-- collide on each other which we call 'conflict' in psychoanalysis. Because of the impression of the environment he is living in, he takes social and religious mores to be true but at the same time his primitive desires are so strong and persistent that he can not ignore them as non-existent. In such case there may be three ways out to settle down the conflict-- follow the drives regardless of forthcoming danger from the outside world, keep such objectionable impulses away from consciousness via repression, or sublimate them i.e., detouring of the impulses through socially acceptable channels. Among these three ways of dealing with conflict, the first two involve danger. In the first case, the direct discharge of the impulses may involve external danger for it is against the generally accepted rule. In the case of repression, the blocked of the impulses may create anxiety in the subject and he is more liable to psychopathology. The third one

being sublimation, is the most proper and decent way of tackling the conflict in terms of psychic health.

The similar nature of conflict and the maltreatment on the way to its settlement branches off in Solness a bypath to psychoneurosis. Because of the fear of God he is forced to repress his impulses i.e. the hostile ones boiling up into his flesh. The fear of such repressed impulses, which he perceives as sinful, helps generate anxiety in him and the defense mechanism is automatically at work, the failure of which is inevitable entrance to neurosis. It is notable that once the neurosis is implanted in a child, it may remain latent in his later life until and unless it gets impetus in favourable environment to resume its previous link. So, Solness's neurosis can directly be traced back to his childhood, though the role of conflict in his later life can not be denied. But the most important aspect in his conflict is the lack of sublimatory activities. Being an artist he could have discharged his impulses, more or less, through the means of art but it springs out of compulsion i.e., he is incapable of enjoying his own creation.

Thus it becomes quite natural for Solness to do something that could help him revive reassurance against his anxiety and the means as such he finds in the imposition of power and striving for help. His denial of the delegation of authority and craving for Ragner's help utterly stand incompatible for one can not impose his will and power and be loved from them at the same time. Similarly, he is so hopeful to Hilda, as she represents the youth and assures him to march against the youth itself, that she becomes the "early dawn" for him (II, 59). This striving further develops into complying attitude and emotional dependence which do not only prove fiasco in coping with the existing anxiety but also contribute to his fall from the tower he himself built. The final neurotic need our protagonist develops out of his anxiety is

the need of self-retribution that is manifest in his act of climbing the tower he is terribly afraid of. In fact, the sense of guilt he is possessed with accentuates in him the feeling of self-punishment. Moreover, his reluctant but determined ascend and the fall from the tower compels us to believe in the Freudian hypothesis of the death instinct and its turn-back to the interior which is also evident in his dream of falling down from a lofty hill, a revelation of the unconscious wish to take his own life from the height.

Since Solness is a neurotic, it becomes imperative for him to develop reassuring attitudes to allay out his inexorable psychic vulnerability, but unfortunately these needs are either incompatible to each other or actuate him to emotional dependence and complying attitude proving itself not only a failure to save his self from the anxiety but also pushing him to take the final step towards self-retribution that marks the fall of his status and character as a whole. His fall from the tower, thus, justifies his fall from the status of master builder the architect.

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