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Rank, Ibsen, and O'Neill: Birth trauma and creative will in selected dramas

Voigt, Maureen Frances, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1992

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RANK, IBSEN, AND O'NEILL:
BIRTH TRAUMA AND CREATIVE WILL IN SELECTED DRAMAS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1992

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To my late father Charles McCarthy, who first told me about The Iceman Cometh, and to my dear husband Frank Voigt, who made it possible for me to write about it.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I see the creator impulse as the life impulse made to serve the individual will. (Otto Rank, Art and Artist 39)

I have been inspired by that which, so to speak, stood higher than my everyday self, and I have been inspired by this because I wanted to confront it and make it part of myself. (Henrik Ibsen, Letters 151)

I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself! (Eugene O'Neill, Long Day's Journey into Night 153)

The father of modern drama, Henrik Ibsen and his American counterpart, Eugene O'Neill believed that there is an elusive element in life that enhances one's spiritual awareness. As artists, they strove to express this element in their writings. In this way, they would capture the essence of this mysterious substance and use it to enhance their own lives. The workings of the unconscious mind may have been the "inscrutable force" that drove Ibsen
and O'Neill to creative expression. Often, the force would reveal itself in sea imagery as is seen in the above quote from O'Neill and in Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* (1886).

This study aims to show how Otto Rank's birth trauma and creative will theories are useful guides to exploring the psychology of the unconscious in selected dramas of Ibsen and O'Neill. In 1924, Rank published his work, *The Trauma of Birth*, in which he posits that human anxiety is caused by the psychological trauma which each individual experiences in the birth process. By this he means that we all suffer psychologically from being thrust into the world and outside the warmth and protection of the womb. Rank also believes, paradoxically, that throughout life individuals both yearn to return to the womb but because of their painful expulsion at birth, also fear regression to it. Torn between wanting to return to a pleasurable situation and fearing to repeat a traumatic event, the neurotic individual is often immobilized and cannot go forward to a normal life free of birth trauma anxiety. Nor can he or she go backwards to the womb either.

Rank divides birth trauma fear further by his classification of it into "life" and "death" fears. On the one hand, the individual fears "separation from the whole" or fear of life, which means "fear of individuation" or fear of standing on one's own (*Will Therapy* 124). Conversely, a person fears death or "being dissolved again into the whole"
and the loss of selfhood (WT 124). Rank thinks that in order to lead normal lives, people must solve the dilemma of being unable to move backward or forward psychologically. They must find a way to halt their regression toward a womblike state as well as relieve the painful memories associated with their withdrawal from it. They also must feel confident about their place in the world.

In Rank's view, a neurotic is someone whose psychic life transpires exclusively within his or her own ego (WT 154). Unlike "average," well-adjusted people, neurotics are unable to overcome their various innate fears because their psychical development was arrested at an infantile stage. Sometimes neurotics' unhappy recollections are repressed in the form of anxiety dreams and illusions (Rank, TR 54,69). However, neurotics often can surmount these subconscious reminders of the birth trauma through psychoanalysis, by which they relive the birth experience and project their anxieties onto a therapist. In effect, neurotics make conscious their unconscious regressive impulses and thus alleviate the mental anguish associated with the primal event. Previously, neurotics turned their worries inward on themselves; through therapy, they objectify them.

Primal memories are also re-enacted positively by sexual activity, which Rank considers as a "partial return" to the womb (TR 188). However, although sex "most nearly approaches the primal situation," it does not "completely
re-establish it in the infantile meaning" (TB 29). Rank also views sex as somewhat akin to death because it involves a giving of oneself (WT 128). In this he follows his mentor Sigmund Freud, who once saw an analogy between sex and death. Freud first thought that the sex instinct is one in which an organism tends "toward the restoration of an earlier state of things" (Beyond the Pleasure Principle 31). Unlike Rank's study, however, Freud's does not posit any longing for the primal mother in such regressions. Later in his study, Freud repudiated his position and declared he might have overemphasized the "significance" of instincts (BPP 33).

Because of her connection with pleasure, anxiety and with death (as that is the only way one can return to a womblike environment), Rank identifies "the mother as the original locus of both comfort (the womb) and of distress (birth)" (Lieberman 222). A negative result of fear of the mother has been the denigration of female power by patriarchal society. Because they practiced "the most intense repression of the mother principle," Rank blames the Greeks, the forerunners of Western civilization, for the father's displacement of the mother as an influential force in cultural development (TB 129).

The Greeks, unlike various matriarchal cultures of Asia Minor, not only failed to idealize the mother but saw in her "the evil Under-God who brings children into the world thus
compelling them continuously to endure the birth trauma" (Rank, *TR* 126). In addition, Rank recognizes Freud's theory put forth in *Totem and Taboo*, that "the father-God has been put in place of the primal mother," in order to "create and guarantee social organization" in other words, to prevent incest (*TR* 126). The modern post-Freudian, Jacques Lacan, also acknowledges "The Law of the Father" because "the child is disturbed in its libidinal relation with the mother, and must begin to recognize in the figure of the father that a wider familial and social network exists of which it is only part" (Eagleton 165). Moreover, Lacan accepts the female's role as one that merely "mirrors" the man's life, whereas Rank abhors the imposition of the "masculine way of life upon woman, both individually and collectively" (*Beyond Psychology* 235). According to Pauline M. Shereshefsky, "If they but knew it, modern feminists would "have a potentially useful and potent ally in Rank, who had so early seen the masculinization of our civilization and its impact on women" (71).

Despite Rank's feminist leanings, the Rank-Freud relationship was quite close for many years, and Rank felt that he had expanded rather than denied the master's theories. For example, Rank upheld the validity of the Oedipus complex as well as the role of the father in cultural development. He thought, however, that infantile anxiety developed much earlier than Freud did. In essence,
Rank believed the roots of anxiety do not derive from a sexual preference for the mother but rather from a basic need for her nurturing presence first felt in the womb. Because of his emphasis on the primary importance of the maternal rather than the paternal factor in psychoanalytic theory, Rank incurred the displeasure of Freud. When deserted finally by him, Rank became a pariah in the psychoanalytic community (Lieberman 227-60).

For Rank, projections that objectify the birth trauma and handle separation from the mother are creative "acts of will." By "will" Rank means "an autonomous organizing force in the individual which does not represent any particular biological impulse or social drive but constitutes the creative expression of the total personality and distinguishes one individual from another." (BP 50).

Yet individuals often ruin their lives because they feel guilty about asserting their wills (WT 9,29). This is because "creation implies separation, which for the human creature is always achieved at the expense of 'the other'" (Menaker, "Creativity as the Central Concept in the Psychology of Otto Rank" 9).

In Rank's opinion, artists are people who deal positively with their birth trauma anxieties. Instead of living within themselves they project their worries onto a book, a canvas or a sheet of music. In addition, artists achieve immortality because their creative works live on.
after them. Yet Rank's conception of an artist includes not only the career artist but also any "creative type" who projects his or her anxieties instead of retaining them in the individual psyche. Furthermore, creative people not only "objectify" the birth trauma, they also "idealize" it and thus make its remembrance bearable. Artists of all kinds soften the terrifying impact of painful memories associated with the primal situation. In Rank's judgment, the art of tragedy exemplifies this idea:

In the art of tragedy which like the dance, takes the living human being as its object, the frightful and primitive character of the repressed primal wish lives on in a milder form as tragic guilt, which every individual mortal spectator can re-enact by continuously re-experiencing it: whereas in epic poetry we see the attempts to overcome the primal wish by fictitious transformations. (TR 166)

In Rankian thought, tragedy is the highest "catharsis" of the birth trauma. By reproducing the trauma as in psychoanalysis, tragedy has a consoling and healing effect. As the neurotic experiences a rebirth of self with the aid of an analyst, so too does the dramatist discover his or her self by creating characters. Moreover, these characters often exhibit aspects of the artist's own life which he or she projects in a dramatic work. It is hoped that the audience too may experience a rejuvenation through the art of tragedy.

Although Rank never suggested that art should be a substitute for life, he had a keen interest in literature
and Ibsen was his favorite dramatist; in fact Rank changed his name from Rosenfeld to that of a character in *A Doll's House* (1879), (Lieberman 4-5). Rank especially liked Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* (1884) because Gina and Hjalmar's relationship resembled that of his own parents: his mother the long-suffering wife, his father the selfish, narcissistic husband (Lieberman 10).

Rank, Ibsen, and later Eugene O'Neill probably were all influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy about the primacy of the human will put forth in his book, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819). Ibsen expounded his ideas on will in *Brand* (1865) before Friedrich Nietzsche came to prominence with his will concepts in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). Rank and O'Neill, however, were influenced greatly by Nietzsche's optimistic philosophy of "Dionysian will--an exhuberant, creative affirmation of life" (Lieberman 30). The Nietzschean affirmation of will is an ideal that characters strive for in the dramas of Ibsen and O'Neill but one not often attained. Still, as O'Neill declares, the "struggle" itself is worthwhile (qtd. in Bigsby 43).

Both Ibsen and O'Neill present neurotic men and women who strive to overcome regressive feelings and delay death. Too often these characters fail because they cannot look beyond their own egos and act creatively. They are also immobilized by life and death fears and exist in a condition
of stasis. Sometimes, because they are unable to overcome their anxieties and act creatively, characters such as Don Parritt of *The Iceman Cometh* resort to suicide. In his mind, he is at least doing *something* to relieve his traumatic anxiety. Parritt's act illustrates the paradox of Rankian birth trauma theory wherein an individual both dreads and anticipates regression to the womb of death. Parritt resolves his own dilemma by choosing the dark, comfortable womblike void to his own miserable existence.

As artists, Ibsen and O'Neill had their own anxieties to project creatively. Ibsen was very reticent about his private life and his innermost thoughts. It is known, however, that he had a poor relationship with his family. His father Knud had lost much of his wealth when Ibsen was seven years old. As a result of the family's plight, Ibsen's mother became "bitter and introspective" (Thomas 3). In addition, there were rumors that Ibsen was illegitimate (Michael Meyer, *Ibsen* 14-15). In 1843, he left home for Grimstad where he became an apprentice for an apothecary. While working there Ibsen fathered his own illegitimate son by one of the maids. In 1850, Ibsen left Grimstad to take an entrance exam for the university at Christiana. On the way, he stopped off to see his parents, whom he had not visited in seven years. He never saw them again. Evidently the result "of these family tensions on the young Ibsen was deep and long lasting" (Thomas 2-3). Unconsciously, the
adult playwright then projected these tensions onto dramatic works of high artistic caliber.

O'Neill also had an unhappy home life which he projected into his plays. His father, James O'Neill, was not poor like Knud Ibsen but a successful and famous actor, who because of his itinerant profession, could never provide a proper home for his family. Furthermore, James was himself frustrated and was what Rank describes as a neurotic, failed artist or artist manqué (A and A 25). James really wanted to be a serious Shakespearean actor but was so successful in the title role of the nineteenth-century melodrama, The Count of Monte Cristo, that the public would have no one but him in the part.

As a result of following her husband on his constant travels and never having a real home, Ella O'Neill, like Ibsen's mother, became bitter and introspective. In 1885, Ella was to suffer deep sorrow and unmitigated guilt. On one of her trips with James, Ella left her two boys in the care of her mother and the older one, Jamie, contracted measles. He passed the disease on to his one and a half year old brother Edmund, and the baby died. Because she was not there to nurse him, Ella felt responsible for her son's death and she never forgave herself. Moreover, she also blamed Jamie, whom she accused of deliberately infecting his brother (Gelb 53).
Four years later, she had another son Eugene, who became the playwright. After his difficult birth, Ella became addicted to morphine. One time Eugene, Jamie, and their father prevented Ella from drowning herself in the Thames River near their summer home in Connecticut. James and Jamie were then forced to tell young Eugene about his mother's addiction (Sheaffer, *Son and Playwright* 89).

Throughout his life, O'Neill struggled to free himself from the guilt that it was he who had caused his mother's addiction, however inadvertently (Berlin, *Eugene O'Neill* 27-28). Because of his guilt, after he passed fifteen and discovered the awful family secret, O'Neill's life took a downward slide and for many years was essentially an existence of drunken depravity. He also lost his Catholic faith and for a while his faith in mankind. Not until 1913, when he began to project his anxieties and present them in dramatic form, did O'Neill experience some relief from his torments. Yet he never really overcame his anxieties. Much later, although he was wealthy and lavished with honors, because of infirmity and age he stopped writing plays. O'Neill then had all he could do not to yield to his severe regressive longings. According to Arthur and Barbara Gelb, "he often spoke of suicide and, sometime in 1949, formally joined the Euthanasia Society of America and permitted his name to be used on its letterhead" (900). As Brooks Atkinson once stated, O'Neill had an "infatuation with
oblivion" (qtd. in Sheaffer, S and P 14).

Besides their lives as artists who try to overcome anxieties through the creation of dramas and their presentation of characters who also strive to achieve psychological wholeness, Ibsen and O'Neill, along with Rank, often share similar thematic interests. These themes help clarify or highlight a character's actions as far as will assertion and regression are concerned. For example, all three men are interested in a person's past as a determinant of his or her present psychological state.

Rank posits that "we are able to see the past only in the light of the present" (WT 33). In his view, it is important how a patient's creative will is affected by his or her past, that is "whether the will affirms or negates the past, denies or accepts it" (WT 33). Often the neurotic wants to regress to the past and an infantile state.

In the plays of Ibsen and O'Neill, the characters' pasts are not merely resurrected for background material but are a vital part of the action. In one of her more lucid moments, Mary Tyrone, who is modeled after Ella O'Neill in Long Day's Journey Into Night (1956), declares that "The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future too" (87). For Mary, the memory of a supposedly happy girlhood is now much more meaningful her than is her present status as wife and mother. Charles R. Lyons points out the significance of the past in Ibsen's plays, but his observations apply to
O'Neill's works as well: "That exposure of the past only takes the form of disclosures of the past; the real revelation is of the quality of the present, and the action is the surfacing of information about the self which had been hidden or disguised in some way" (Critical Essays on Henrik Ibsen 155).

Besides their recognition of the importance of a person's past in his or her psychic life, Ibsen and O'Neill employ themes from religion and myth to emphasize or parody the heroic stature of their characters. Rank maintains that Greek tragedy "grew up from the mimic representations of the mythical rites, and symbolized the sufferings and punishments of the mythical hero on account of his 'tragic guilt'" (IB 165). In Brand (1865), however, by presenting the pastor with a self-image of a messiah or Christ figure, Ibsen is parodying Brand's sham pose as martyr, his exaggerated piety, and his heroic status. Similarly, in The Iceman Cometh (1946), O'Neill parodies the heroic stature of Hickey and Larry, who are really mock-heroes.

Ibsen and O'Neill also use demonic figures to bring down their guilt-ridden, tragi-comic heroes and heroines. In Rankian parlance, these satanic upstarts hamper a character's creative will and stimulate regressive feelings that may be brewing in the person's unconscious. Frequently the demons come to visit from the outside world yet are familiar with their special target's weak points. We see
this very clearly in *The Iceman Cometh* as Hickey brings up unpleasant memories to control his friends and destroy their already low self-esteem.

Because they are often concerned with the female psyche and its aspects of the mother image, many works of Ibsen and O'Neill are suitable for a Rankian focus. Strangely, in the dramas of both playwrights, there are few if any happy marriages. In any case, in Ibsen's plays female characters are more well-rounded and have more free choices than in O'Neill's. For example, in *The Lady from the Sea* (1888), we do not know if Ellida Wangel fits the stereotypical description of women as either madonnas or whores. We do know, however, that Ellida is a woman who makes a free choice about whether she stays married or not. In *Hedda Gabler* (1891), Hedda also takes charge of her own life by choosing to end it rather than live in a social environment she despises. Hedda does not fit any female stereotype and if anything, because of her love of guns, horses and violence, exhibits a personality of stereotypical masculinity.

On the other hand, O'Neill often places women in the specific roles of madonna and whore. Unfortunately, as Ann Hall posits, "Many of O'Neill's women are born into a world which defines them as 'women' but finally denies femininity because it assigns women to roles based on masculine desires" (25). In *Moon for the Misbegotten* (1947), Josie
Hogan pretends to be wanton but really is a nurturing mother figure for Jamie Tyrone. In fact, it is as if Josie has no other function in life but to serve her menfolk, who include not only Tyrone but her father Phil Hogan.

O'Neill also shows the audience the mother in her "dreadful" aspect as in the character of Christine-Clytemnestra in *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931). In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, ostensibly it is the father with his miserliness who causes the family's misery, but it is actually Mary the mother, who entraps her men with her vise-like grip and siren's call. In *The Iceman Cometh*, O'Neill presents his whorish characters onstage but not his maternal figures. Indeed the whores are portrayed much more sympathetically than are the mothers, who except for Rosa Parritt, are actually childless wives who act like mothers. O'Neill's "madonnas" are usually devilish figures, who in Rankian terms, aim to destroy the creative will of their men and drag them down to death.

Suzanne Burr feels that O'Neill is not a misogynist but merely shows the terrible plight of women and is basically sympathetic to it. According to Burr, the lack of female companionship is a factor in Mary Tyrone's terrible loneliness and despair (44). Mary is isolated in a world of men, and Burr thinks that O'Neill understands her pain. Although her flirtatious ways are an attempt to reach out to others and attain a sense of self, Mary still cannot assert
her creative will because her men patronize and smother her. In addition, her dope habit is symptomatic of her desire to regress and escape her prison.

In the plays analyzed here, as well as in many others (though there are exceptions), from Ibsen to O'Neill there is often a steady diminution of focus or an ever-narrowing spatial and cultural milieu. Although categories sometimes overlap, Ibsen's characters tend to confront their primal traumas in the context of society, and O'Neill's within the framework of a family group. It is not that the Ibsen characters lack families or the O'Neill characters know nothing of society, but that the characters handle their anxieties and act in relation to their membership in certain groups. For example, Mrs. Alving of Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1882) bases her life on society's codes, whereas the Tyrone family of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* act according to what transpires within their own little close-knit family group.

In its confrontations with society, the Ibsenian self is threatened by communities that thwart the individual's creative will. We see this in *Rosmersholm* as Rosmer and Rebecca are bombarded by pressure groups from the left and right of the political spectrum. Often an Ibsen character has no way to overcome society's demands but to escape through suicide or at least to flirt with death through foolhardy escapades. One may observe these occurrences not
only in *Rosmersholm* but also in *Brand* and *The Master Builder*. In essence, the protagonists of these plays handle their primal anxieties by facing them squarely and discovering through suicide the self which society has denied them. As noted previously (8), creative dying shows the basic paradoxes inherent in Rankian theory in which neurotic persons both fight against and seek through death "to re-establish the original condition [in the womb] and remain there" (*TB* 27).

In O'Neill, the fighting spirit of men and women against the world that is prevalent in an Ibsen play is muted significantly. Here the characters thrive on one another's misery with little concern for the outside world. Especially in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the characters' misery worsens because of the close proximity of the antagonists. In *The Iceman Cometh*, since the characters are not related and have had strong contacts with society, it would seem as if we are in the social atmosphere of an Ibsen play. Yet because they bond together and face their anxieties within the group without venturing outside it, the gang at Harry Hope's bar is a family unit in a very real sense.

Because they show neurotic characters trying to achieve a sense of selfhood in a hostile society, the verse drama *Brand* from Ibsen's early period and the plays *Rosmersholm* and *The Master Builder* (1892), shall be the subjects of this
study. *Brand* is about a proud overreacher who puts himself on a plane with a harsh, unloving God and believes that the exertion of one's will is the only value in life. When he fails to use his will creatively and overcome his anxieties, he regresses to the womb, which in this case is symbolized by an ice-covered, cleft-ridden mountain. *Brand* is also significant because it foreshadows the much less melodramatic *The Master Builder*. In between these two plays Ibsen also wrote several social issue dramas such as *Pillars of Society* (1877), which is about "ruthless entrepreneurs" (Thomas 15).

Beginning with *The Wild Duck* in 1884, Ibsen began writing plays that have a definite psychological thrust. *Rosmersholm* will be treated here because it has two leading characters who have disturbed psyches, probably as the result of mental and sexual abuse by their parents. Moreover, the male-female dichotomy in this play is a significant part of the action. Also, in the character of Rebecca West, Ibsen has created a female who is neither madonna nor whore but a woman who is a fully-developed person. Yet Rebecca's self-confidence and intelligence do not prevent her destruction by men. When their pasts finally overwhelm them, however, Rosmer and Rebecca find ultimately "an affirmation of self in the selfhood of the other . . . " (Durbach, *Ibsen the Romantic* 203).
The Master Builder is the final play of Ibsen's examined here. Of all Ibsen's characters, Halvard Solness is the one who strives hardest to attain selfhood, and the one who comes closest to achieving it. He is "the Ibsen hero," who "displays the greatest effort toward noble achievement among all of Ibsen's heroes" (Arestad, "The Ibsen Hero" 30). The Master Builder is also the play in which Ibsen defines most clearly the antithetical forces fighting for dominance within the human psyche. When the struggle to overcome them becomes unbearable, Solness confronts death to relieve his torment.

In discussing O'Neill's works, Desire Under the Elms (1924), is a play that is suitable for a biographical and Rankian interpretation. In Desire, there is an acute sense of homelessness, which echoes O'Neill's lifelong pain of belonging nowhere. This feeling is manifested in each one of the characters, even the minor ones, Simeon and Peter. Abbie, Eben, and Cabot all yearn to settle in some permanent abode of contentment wherein they are can achieve a sense of self. Yet no one can attain selfhood because Cabot prohibits creativity, even for himself. Because they cannot create meaningful selves, the characters often suffer from regressive feelings and life and death fears. Their rootlessness also indicates their unconscious desire for the primal home.
Desire Under the Elms is also noteworthy because it has relevance for feminist studies. In this play, the matriarchal and patriarchal forces are in constant warfare with each other. In addition, the pervasive maternal image is shown not only through the characters of Abbie and the offstage ghost of the first Mrs. Cabot, but also in aspects of the set and the ubiquitous presence of the cows. In essence, the maternal power struggles for dominance with the paternal force personified by Cabot and his hard and cold New England surroundings. At the end of the play, however, the maternal forces of life are overwhelmed, and Cabot is still in charge. Yet Abbie and Eben's "struggle" has been worthwhile because they have reached for the "unattainable." Although they do not die in the play, they face an uncertain future with equanimity. Especially Eben does a creative act of will when he joins Abbie in assuming guilt for their child's death.

The Iceman Cometh will be discussed here because it shows how a group, even in a limited way, functions as a family and sustains itself through the interaction of its members. Because of the camaraderie found there, the bums of Harry Hope's saloon have people on whom they can project their birth trauma anxieties. Of course, since the drunks are in severe states of regression, all the fellowship in the world cannot alleviate their agony.
The anguish of the denizens of Hope's bar is also somewhat lessened because they live in a world of illusions. As noted, Rank believes that illusions partially mitigate the anxiety of the birth trauma. Because of their focus on illusion, in an Ibsen and O'Neill study the resemblances between The Wild Duck and The Iceman Cometh are so significant that they are worthy of literary and psychological analysis.

These two plays are not the only ones that establish a thematic connection between the dramas of Ibsen and O'Neill. Rosmersholm and Desire Under the Elms are also similar because they each focus on young protagonists who are haunted by ghostly presences which represent not only dead women but also the primal mother figure. In The Master Builder and Long Day's Journey into Night, two characters again seem to be in touch with the supernatural. Journey also has connections with Ghosts two of which are "past guilt which has resulted in present illness," and "a secret illness" that "is not revealed until late in the plays" (Tornquist, "Ibsen and O'Neill: A Study in Influence" 232).

As in The Iceman Cometh, O'Neill again uses autobiography in Long Day's Journey into Night. Here, however, the play comes even closer to the facts of his own life. Still it is a work of art, not a biography. For example, Ella O'Neill was cured of her addiction, and James O'Neill was not as miserly as he is depicted in the play.
(Sheaffer, S and P 22, 280-81). Also, O'Neill, in his self-portrait as Edmund Tyrone, never mentions his own brief marriage or his cure from consumption. In any case, O'Neill felt so close to the work that he prohibited its publication until 25 years after his death (Sheaffer, S and P 560).

In this study, O'Neill's "play of old sorrow" will be discussed in the Conclusion rather than having a chapter of its own. One reason for this choice is that many of the themes and Rankian connections come together in Journey and an extensive treatment of them would be redundant. More important, however, Long Day's Journey into Night represents in the history of modern drama, the closing of one door and the opening of another. In O'Neill's early works, he experimented with and used many aspects of theater and drama to arrive at the height of his creativity. From his use of exotic locales in the Glencairn Cycle to his imitation of Strindberg's Expressionism in The Hairy Ape (1922), O'Neill strove to find the proper voice to achieve his own selfhood.

In Long Day's Journey into Night, he found that voice and "ended his search for identity" (Bogard 451). He also found something more. In a sense, by closing this work with a solitary individual staring into nothingness, O'Neill foreshadows the world of absurdist drama, one of the highest dramatic achievements of the twentieth century. In the plays of Samuel Beckett, the individual faces birth trauma anxiety in a confined space in which his or her
consciousness is the primary locus. Before Beckett's people appeared onstage, Mary Tyrone also faced the void.

There are few studies in literary criticism of the Rankian theories of birth trauma anxiety and the creative will. However, Stephen Watt has analyzed several of O'Neill's plays and feels that they support Rank's death-mother connections more than Freud's death-instinct theories (211-30). Travis Bogard also mentions demonic characters as Rankian doubles for a play's protagonist. For example, he perceives Jamie and Edmund Tyrone as demonic doubles for each other and for O'Neill himself (447-48). For Bogard, the demon "steps between the man and his achievement" (447). He also notes that Rank perceives the "fraternal rivalry" as competition for "the love of the mother" (448).

Despite the meager scholarship in Rankian theories and dramatic literature, an application of his theories to the dramas of Ibsen and O'Neill is worthwhile for several reasons. First, in a recent study of Rank, Peter L. Rudnytsky calls him "the patron saint of lay analysts," who "pioneered in the application of psychoanalytic ideas to mythology and literature" (xii). Secondly, many psychological investigations of literature often focus on Freud's Oedipus complex or more recently on the linguistic theories of Jacques Lacan. Rank is useful because he presents refreshing and unusual insights on the pre-natal, mother-child relationship rather than re-emphasizing the

In addition, because of his maternal rather than paternal psychological thrust, Rank is the forerunner of the 1970s object-relations school of psychoanalytic theory which has moved "away from a focus on relationships that are triangular and include questions of the role of the father, toward a focus on relationships that are dyadic and concern the mother-child interaction" (Kugler 174). From the perspective of literary analysis, object-relations theory is important because "the prototype for the aesthetic interaction both as regards the artist to his medium and the audience to the art-object is the (unconsciously) felt encounter between infant and mother" (Wright 84). It is also significant that "the paramount contribution of Rank's mature thought lies in its attention to art, play, and creativity, domains of experience largely neglected by psychoanalysis prior to object relations theory" (Rudnytsky 65). Lastly, Rank's theory of separation anxiety has anticipated the work of Melanie Klein, D.W. Winnicott, and Margaret Mahler, for whom "the issue of the mother-child relationship and of the separation between them as crucial for human development" has become "of paramount importance" (Menaker, Otto Rank: A Rediscovered Legacy 74).
Another reason for applying Rankian theory to drama is that it lends itself so well to feminist studies. The plays of Ibsen and O'Neill often have clear struggles between characters asserting their wills in a male-female context. In Ibsen, female characters such as Rebecca West and Hedda Gabler are frustrated because their considerable talents are wasted in a patriarchal society. In O'Neill's plays, women do not exhibit the strong personal attributes of an Ibsen woman. Rather they are stereotyped as either madonnas or whores. Moreover, as Ann Hall states about O'Neill, "Many of his male characters will only settle for women who will take the place of their mothers" (199).

Rank is also important for noting the affinity between the artist and his art. By projecting anxiety through the creative will, the artist's regressive feelings are lessened. Especially with O'Neill, creativity had a therapeutic effect, and when he ceased writing, he wanted to die. Because of his interest in the projections of artists like O'Neill, Rank's ideas apply particularly to modern drama in which there is not only a search for the self but also a pervasive fixation on death, which fosters "the urge to eternalize oneself in one's work" (A and A 386).
I only write about people. I don't write symbolically. Just about people's inner life as I know it—psychology, if you like. . . I draw real, living people. (Ibsen, qtd. in Michael Meyer 695)

During his long and active career, Henrik Ibsen produced twenty-nine plays and verse-dramas which may be classified into three distinct categories: those from Norwegian history and legend, those which treat contemporary social issues, and those which have a metaphysical or symbolic thrust. G. Wilson Knight, in comparing Ibsen's work to Shakespeare's, notes that "Both start with fairylore and history and move through problem plays and tragedies to dramas of mystic intimation" (107). Ibsen, however, believed that his work constituted a unified whole: "Only by comprehending my entire production as an interconnected, continuous whole will one receive the precise effect intended by the individual parts" (qtd. in Koht 449).
Ibsen's exploration of the psyche unifies his work. Even in his early poem, "The Miner" (1851), he probes the unconscious for the hidden causes of human behavior: "Downwards must I burrow pounding / till I hear the metals sounding" (Poems 27). In the mind's depths, the speaker will find an answer to the mysteries of life: "Earth's deep spirits will unravel / life's great maze that I must travel" (28). Later, George Bernard Shaw would view Ibsen as a social reformer. Shaw failed to see that although his people face social problems such as venereal disease and illegitimacy, Ibsen also looks beneath surface appearances and probes his characters' inner selves.

At an early stage of his career, Ibsen was influenced by the critic Hermann Hettner who in his short work, Das Moderne Drama (1851), "admonished playwrights to introduce psychological analysis into their historical plays" (Gassner 358). Ibsen followed Hettner's advice and in Lady Inger of Ostraat (1854), added "character analysis" to a historical drama (Gassner 359). The young Ibsen also wrote for the periodical Andhrimmer and despite his own frequent use of Scribean technique, "severely criticized the whole tendency of French drama to place too great a reliance on 'situation' at the expense of 'psychology'" (Williams 30). Thus a few years before Freud was born,
Ibsen was chipping away at "the secret heart of matter" (Poems 28).

Because they are good examples of the unity of Ibsen's oeuvre, the verse-drama Brand and the plays Rosmersholm and The Master Builder shall be discussed here. In these plays, the protagonists all have deep psychological problems. Furthermore, they are interesting from a Rankian standpoint. In Brand, we see how the will is used destructively; in Rosmersholm, two characters achieve psychological wholeness in a death-marriage that unites their hearts and wills. In The Master Builder, Solness tries to overcome his fears by attempting a heroic feat in the presence of a hostile community.

As stated, the birth trauma and creative will theories of Otto Rank will serve as guidelines for the psychological interpretation of these dramas. Also as noted, Rank was a fervent admirer of Ibsen's. In that sense, it may be useful to peruse Ibsen studies from the viewpoint of a psychologist who was well-versed in his works and who regarded Ibsen "as the writer 'who best understands and describes human beings'" (Lieberman 10). Also, in Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage (1912), Rank explores the incest motif in several of Ibsen's plays. In Rosmersholm, this motif is crucial to the action of the play, but it also is
significant in *Brand*. In his own article which explores the motif in *Rosmersholm*, Freud praises Rank's earlier critique of the play ("Some Character Types Met With in Psychoanalytical Work" 107).

More important than exploration of motifs, however, is the unique psychological relationship that Rank establishes between artists and their art. Although psychologists such as Freud and Carl Jung do not disdain the work of creative people—Freud writes frequently on art and artists, and Jung sees artistic creations as archetypal—it is Rank who perceives the artist as a psychological type who overcomes anxiety by projecting it on a creative act of will. For Rank, artists function as their own psychologists and achieve selfhood through personal effort.

Like Rank, Ibsen is interested in the self-creation of individuals through the exercise of the will; in *Brand* the will is the primary concept of the play. Although several of Ibsen's characters see themselves as creative (Hedda Gabler wants to remake Lovborg), and some are artists by profession, they are unable to act creatively because they have deep psychological problems. They are like one of Rank's neurotic patients "who expresses his creative will exclusively within his own ego" (WT 154).
In effect, the characters cannot overcome their separation anxieties and therefore suffer severe regression as their subconscious minds conjure up "dim memories of a lost and dreamlike childhood" (Durbach, IR 7). Their recollections are really the memories of their pleasurable existence in the womb. However, they also remember the pain of separation and because they cannot exert their creative wills and "reestablish, as it were, creatively the real primal condition" (Rank, TB 28), like Rank's patients, they reenact it on themselves in the form of headaches, hysteria, and breathing disturbances (TB 49-51). For example, Hedda Gabler is so neurotic that she becomes hysterical over Lovborg and Thea's relationship and burns his manuscript. Unable to enjoy a healthy mental life, such characters exist in a state of perpetual anxiety and despair because they cannot achieve a sense of self. Their desire to regress to the womb is so great that they wish to die. The memory of birth trauma pain is not as stressful as the pain they now suffer.

Often the Ibsen character, like the Rankian neurotic, experiences situations of unresolvable conflict. To submit to feelings of regression would mean a loss of self, especially since the characters are trying so hard to attain selfhood. This fear of regression is the Rankian "death fear" in which one's
personality disappears in a group (WT 124). This is evident in Rosmersholm as Rebecca strives to maintain her individuality in the face of societal and perhaps even supernatural forces. Conversely, a neurotic facing the world alone suffers the Rankian "life fear" or fear of standing on one's own (WT 124). John Rosmer is a cowardly character who suffers this fear when he is so unassertive against society's demands. Trapped between "these poles of fear," the Ibsen character, like the Rankian neurotic, is immobilized and cannot go forward or backward in life (WT 124).

Solness is so torn between his fears that he becomes unnerved and falls from a tower. Rank probably would view Solness's death as that of a neurotic who cannot handle "the ambivalent conflict of life fear and death fear" and by his efforts "only hastens and strengthens the process of destruction because he is not able to overcome it creatively" (WT 125). Rank calls such a person an artiste manqué or failed artist because he sometimes has "the productive force of dynamism" but because of a neurosis cannot express himself adequately (A and A 25-26). Initially, Solness's willed death seems like an extreme solution to his problems—but Ibsen believes in "creative dying" wherein there is "a willed union with death regarded less as self-destruction than as self-
assertion" (Knight 114). By dying creatively, Solness and other Ibsen characters achieve heroic stature. Even if they achieve individuation only in death, Ibsen gives them credit for at least trying to be creative against tremendous obstacles. In essence, Ibsen has infused his characters with "man's potentiality for heroism" (Northham, Ibsen 2).

Besides the burden of their own unstable psyches, very often Ibsen's heroes cannot act creatively because their societies are hostile to their innovative ideas or lifestyles. Moreover, their self-perception is often contrary to the image that society has of them. For example, Brand and Rosmer view themselves as saviors and reformers of their respective communities, but their bourgeois neighbors would rather keep the status quo and not have their lives changed.

In Europe, nineteenth-century middle class society was particularly conservative. Earlier, all the political upheavals fostered the preservation of traditional values. Later, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche were promoting ideas of the primacy of the individual will and its right to self-assertion. Ibsen felt the same way as these philosophers and desired "a revolution of the human spirit" (Letters 106-07). As a dramatist, it was his function "to present a portrait of modern society that is accurate
and lifelike but which shows it as operating as an inexorably powerful force upon the tragic hero" (Northam, "Ibsen's Search for the Hero" 93).

Ibsen's characters try to exercise their creative wills through what John Hurt aptly calls "projects of the will," which for the hero is "some goal to which he will devote himself" (8). However, these projects almost always collapse because of society's disapproval. The characters really create only the animosity of their communities, and they are forced to abandon their projects. Of course, these characters could defy society and be true artists (as Solness comes closest to being), but they suffer from "life fear," which imbues them with a severe lack of confidence in their own abilities.

In *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), Shaw portrays Ibsen inaccurately for the Norwegian did not use his plays as political platforms nor for the praise or blame of specific groups. Ibsen once told a women's rights group that if he had advanced its cause, he did so unintentionally, and his real purpose as a dramatist was to treat problems of "mankind in general" (*Letters* 337). It would be a mistake, then, to regard Ibsen as a political activist or one who believed in state interference in citizens' lives. Rather, he felt that it was the individual's obligation to reform society's
institutions and that "there is no better way in which you can benefit society than by coining the metal you have in yourself" (Letters 114). In 1871, Ibsen still burrowed for life's answers within the human psyche as he did twenty years earlier in "The Miner."

Rank also wants individuals to assert themselves over society's dictatorial rule. Esther Menaker relates that because of his vast knowledge of cultural values, Rank is aware "of the influence of social values and mores on the individual," and is "always alert to the conflict between the individual and the collective" (Legacy 4). Like Ibsen, he believes that society thwarts individual creativity. Essentially, the conflict arises because society has a collective mentality, whereas the artist "tries to save his individuality from the collective mass by giving his work the stamp of his own personality" (Rank, A and A 17). On the one hand, the individual's purpose is "self-realization" through "individual expression," and society, on the other hand, as an "aggregate of individuals, represents and expects a certain conformity in the name of the perpetuation of its traditions" (Menaker, Legacy 84). However, like Ibsen, Rank believes that individuals must make peace with society. The individual needs society in order "to objectify his inner conflicts," by which Rank means the
In his "mining" of the human psyche, Ibsen uses certain themes and motifs. These literary devices have not only dramatic relevance, but relate to Rankian theory. A prevalent and important theme is Ibsen's use of the characters' pasts to elucidate the present action of a play. Certain characters feel guilty about former real or imagined transgressions and decide to keep their pasts hidden from the world. However, their previous lives take on a strange new existence by coming back to haunt them. For example, in Rosmersholm, Rebecca's past is very relevant to her current situation at Rosmersholm. Because of their unsavory backgrounds, Rebecca and other Ibsen characters are not free to exert their creative wills and thus overcome their birth trauma anxieties and life and death fears. In an Ibsen drama, as in therapy, it is critical to know "how far the past is living, is still effective" (WT 205). The neurotic individual often lives in the past and wants to regress back to the infantile and even the pre-natal state.

Besides his use of the characters' pasts as determinants of present actions, Ibsen often utilizes mythical and religious images to clarify psychological profiles. He is interested particularly in the demonic or troll figure from Nordic myth and employs it
frequently. Moreover, "the troll is not a puck or a goblin; he is truly diabolic" (Bradbrook 56). The demon figures are symbols of repressed birth trauma anxieties in a character's unconscious as he or she attempts to fight regression and achieve individuation. By playing with their victims' unconscious, the demons force them to confront their birth trauma anxieties directly.

Such evil figures are related to the eiron of tragedy who is a "catalyzer of the action" and a "self-starting principle of malevolence," but who is not necessarily demonic (Frye 216). Often demonic characters demand a payment from the protagonist; this reparation is for some past real or imagined injury that the person inflicted on them or for a protagonist's unfulfilled promise. The character Gerd of Brand is an example of a troll figure in Ibsen.

Rank would agree with Ibsen that an individual's major battle is with the trolls within oneself, which Rank perceives as symbols of birth trauma anxieties and fears. Rank studied the demon figure in Greek mythology and views all such characters as "representatives of the primal mother; they portray the birth anxiety . . . " (TR 149-50). In Ibsen, the demons seem to desire the well-being of a protagonist, but they eventually destroy a character's creative will
and sometimes even his or her life.

In the three works studied here, besides the troll figure, Ibsen also presents figures and images from religion and classical mythology. Sometimes as in Brand, the protagonist's actions are evocative of those of Prometheus, Abraham and Christ. However, Brand's behavior is not on the level of these figures, and his character is in the mock-heroic rather than in the heroic mode of tragedy. Northrop Frye sees Brand as an alazon character or "impostor," who is "someone who tries to be something more than he is" (39).

When the Ibsen character is identified with mythical or religious figures, the connection emphasizes further his own human weakness and futile struggle to create himself. For John Chamberlain, Ibsen's dramatic purpose is to juxtapose "a heroic with an equally mock-heroic vision" (Ibsen: The Open Vision 17). For example, in a heroic reading of The Master Builder, we connect Solness's "mythic identity" with Prometheus as an "aspiring savior," because he suffers, presumably like the Greek hero, for mankind's good. Unlike those of Prometheus, however, Solness's torments just "bring more pain and more doubt to himself and others" (Chamberlain, OV 189). Ibsen's ambivalent treatment of Solness imbues the character's mythic identity with "suggestions of the ridiculous," and the
play foreshadows the modern dramas of Beckett and Pinter (Chamberlain, OV 198).

Rank is also interested in figures from classical mythology and religion because they "re-establish, as it were, creatively the real primal condition" (TB 28). In Rank's view, heroic figures overcome the birth trauma by great deeds. Prometheus "was worshipped by the Greeks because of their need of deliverance, as friend and savior. . . " (TB 155). Like the artist, Prometheus "brings forth his work in ever new, constantly repeated acts of birth" and therefore "brings forth himself amid the maternal pains of creation" (TB 156). Thus a mythical hero recreates himself by re-enacting the birth trauma creatively. However, the neurotic and his dramatic counterpart, the Ibsen character, cannot do this and each one "fails piteously" in the attempt (TB 28). In essence, both Rank and Ibsen are acutely aware that myth shows man's universality as well as the destructive and ambivalent forces welling up from his unconscious mind.

The plunging motif is a regular one in Ibsen's dramas, and it is also connected closely with a character's regressive tendencies. In The Master Builder, Hilde and Solness dream of falling in the fetal position. Rank interprets such dreams as reproductions of the birth trauma and the desire to
return to the mother (TB 79). Long after Ibsen and Rank, the falling motif has relevance in modern studies of the psyche. In "The Motif of Falling and the Loss of the Mother," Jeffrey J. Andresen believes a dream of falling represents a "separation from the mother" and is a "linchpin to fears of maternal loss, fears of heights, and fantasies of birth" (412).

Ibsen's use of these themes and motifs demonstrates his abiding interest in the human psyche. He is fascinated by how the inner self or "troll" directs the lives of his characters. His interest in psychology unifies not only his plays but his poems and verse-dramas as well. Like Rank, Ibsen is a fervent supporter of man's creative will as a method of attaining psychological wholeness.

Ibsen also studies his characters' outer lives and feels they cannot realize themselves in the sterile environment of their bourgeois, materialistic society. Ibsen's Victorian world left little room for individualism, and society was the stern guardian of the status quo. Despite their battles with society, however, Ibsen's characters make a valiant if futile effort at creativity. Ibsen, though he is aware of their limitations, applauds his characters' efforts to achieve individuation.
CHAPTER III

BRAND

Brand is myself in my best moments"
(Ibsen, Letters and Speeches 102)

Many years before Otto Rank posited his theory of the creative will, Henrik Ibsen fully understood the concept. When he says that Brand resembles him, he probably means that like his protagonist he tries to act creatively in the face of society's pressures and the anxieties emanating from his own psyche. In 1864, when Ibsen wrote Brand as an epic poem, he was in self-imposed exile in Italy, living on a foreign travel stipend from the Norwegian government. He was disgusted with Norway and Sweden because they did nothing when their neighbor Denmark was attacked by Prussia. Earlier, while in Berlin, Ibsen saw the return of "trophies and war booty" from the defeated Danes, and he recalled that it was in "those days that Brand began to grow in me like an embryo" (Letters 102).

Later, while reflecting further on the composition of Brand, Ibsen compares himself to a sick scorpion
that pours its venom into a piece of fruit and then recovers. He wonders, "Does not something of the same kind happen with us poets? The laws of nature also apply to the inner world of our spirit" (Letters 102). In Rankian terms, Ibsen uses his creative will to project his poisonous anger onto his poems and plays. He thus rids himself of it as the scorpion rids itself of its venom.

Unfortunately, his character Brand cannot conquer his angers and anxieties. Unlike normal people or artists like Ibsen who project their birth trauma anxieties creatively, Brand is a Rankian neurotic who lives within himself but "cannot really accept the self as given" and thinks of it "in terms of his own will" (WT 154). Moreover, when trying to assert their wills, neurotics do not have specific goals because a "goal is an end and the end is death for the neurotic . . ." (WT 154). This is evident as Brand attempts to lead his congregation up a mountain with no plan of action for when it arrives at the summit. When he alone finally reaches the "Black Peak," which is the "end" of his physical and spiritual ascent, death soon follows.

Ibsen's support for his protagonist is qualified. Brand is uncompromising and sees reality only through his own absolutist, Kierkegaardian code of "All or Nothing." He seldom recognizes love as a factor in
human relationships and spends his life promoting "will" as the supreme value with love "as a veil to cover weakness" (296). Brand's treatment of family and friends is deplorable, and Ibsen disapproves of it.

Yet Ibsen admires Brand's courage against a hostile society and his "unflinching dedication to absolute truth" (Deer 54). He also esteems Brand's fervent efforts at self-realization. These efforts are ultimately fruitless because Brand cannot project his will outside his own ego. In many of his other plays, however, Ibsen supports those characters who at least try to achieve selfhood. Per Schelde Jacobsen posits that every Ibsen play is "about the ability to be the most one can be" and that Ibsen's "focus is always on a character--usually, but not always a man--who has the potential for greatness" (117).

In terms of Rankian psychology, Brand is about a man who tries to overcome his birth-trauma anxieties through sheer force of will. After a career as a world missionary, he passes through his native village intending to take a ship bound for northern Norway. However, he is drawn to his birthplace and after a while decides to remain there and evangelize its inhabitants.

Actually, Brand is attracted to the village because it represents his primal home which he both longs for
and fears. Like one of Rank's neurotics, Brand "is not quite sure of his goal; he is conscious only of the compulsion that moves him unceasingly toward it" and "as it turns out, his goal is death" (Valency 126). Brand often has a positive view of death because he believes, as in the case of the starving peasant who commits suicide, that it left the man "calm," "peaceful," and "freed from pain" (279). Just before he dies, the dove of peace descends on Brand. However, he and others endure much anguish before that occurs.

In Brand's first appearance, Ibsen's stage directions set the scene for the pastor's progression toward death: "It is raining and nearly dark. BRAND, dressed in black, with pack and staff, is struggling toward the west" (256). Like a weary pilgrim, the priest approaches the sunset of his life and oblivion in the "womb" of an icy abyss. Brand's movement toward death stems from his compulsion to re-enact the birth trauma. Rank states that "with the thought of death is connected from the beginning a strong unconscious sense of pleasure associated with the return to the mother's womb" (TB 24).

Simultaneously, Brand's unconscious fights these inclinations because it remembers the painful separation from the womb and dreads repeating the agony. In essence, Brand is immobilized by the
conflicting tendencies of his unconscious and cannot go forward or backward in life because he is paralyzed by primal anxiety, "which is the nucleus of every neurotic disturbance" (Rank, TR 46). Brand compares man to an "owl frightened by darkness, and a fish / Afraid of water" (259). Like these animals, man fears his own nature but unlike them, he must also contend with the inner recesses of his unconscious mind, which harbors regressive thoughts that hamper creativity. In his desire to escape the depths and darkness of the mind, man struggles "in anguish towards the shore, stares at the bright / Vault of heaven, and screams: 'Give me air / And the blaze of day!'" (259).

Brand knows that being human, he must struggle to achieve selfhood; that is, he must conquer his buried fears by bringing them up to the light. But because his present and past are so interrelated, "we feel the constant tension between his conscious aims at any one moment and his unconscious responses to past experience" (Northam, Ibsen 74). Because of this tension, Brand is pre-occupied by will assertion. In Rankian theory, man's anxiety can be alleviated through his creative will; or in Brand's words: "It is not by spectacular achievements / That man can be transformed, but by will. / It is man's will that acquits or condemns him" (289).
Throughout the play, Brand asserts his will but because he is so self-absorbed, he does not do so creatively. Rank believes that the will should be tempered by love; then "the individual can accept himself, his own will because the other does, an other does" (MT 64). Like Rank's neurotic, uncreative patients, Ibsen's Brand distances himself from emotional ties. He attempts to force his will on others without regard for their emotional or material needs. After foregoing all personal happiness, Brand discovers too late that will alone is not sufficient for happiness.

From the outset of his homecoming, Brand realizes that asserting his will is a formidable task. He denounces the materialism of the villagers and the shallowness of the local officials, who are concerned merely with their own prestige rather than with the welfare of the community. In Brand's opinion, modern Christianity is weak because people ignore its strict tenets. They are too involved with mundane cares and unmindful of their own spirituality. Brand also thinks he is God's chosen delegate, who will mastermind the spiritual rejuvenation of the community. Because his will is so inflexible, however, Brand merely alienates local society.
More seriously, Brand also destroys his wife Agnes and son Ulf with his fanaticism. In addition, because his mother will not relinquish all her earthly goods, although he is a priest, Brand refuses to give her last rites. He so fears having his will undermined that he stands steadfastly against all shows of emotion or suggestions of compromise. Brand never sympathizes with his fellow humans, and his hardheartedness brings him little happiness.

Brand suffers life and death fears. For example, he thinks if he were to compromise with his family or society, he might lose his identity as a creative individual. He would then experience the death fear of losing one's selfhood. Conversely, when Brand arrives alone at the mountain's summit, he suddenly suffers the life fear of standing on one's own. Now he is at the Ice Church, a place he has always dreaded. Ostensibly, this is merely a "chasm" that has "a frozen mountain lake" as its floor and "a great piled snowdrift" as its roof (270). Symbolically, however, the Ice Church represents the hardness of Brand's absolute will as well as "the cold and grandiose emptiness of his life" (Michael Meyer, Ibsen on File 23).

Brand is alone on the mountain except for Gerd, the gypsy girl who considers the Ice Church her private domain. Suddenly, the idea of being independent has
lost its attraction, and Brand experiences severe life fear. He regrets his alienation from humanity and weeps with "tears of true repentance" (351). His warm surge of emotion melts the Ice Church. This occurrence, followed by Gerd's rifle shot, precipitates an avalanche which buries Brand, Gerd, and presumably the entire village as well. Yet for all his remorse, Brand still does not understand his failure to achieve individuation, and with his dying breath he asks God, "If not by Will, how can Man be redeemed?" Through the thunderous roar of the avalanche, a mysterious voice answers: "He is the God of Love" (352). Unhappily for Brand, he is already buried in the all-encompassing womb of snow and never hears the voice extolling love.

Before his soul-searching experience on the Ice Church, Brand sought the love he was denied as a child. Now he must attain self-confidence as well as withstand the regressive feelings emerging from his unconscious mind. To do this, he must find a mission or a "project of the will" (Hurt 12). Although he does not plan to stay in the village until he meets his mother, Brand begins formulating his "mission" at the end of Act One (271). His brainstorming results from meeting several villagers who for him represent a "triple enemy" or three kinds of people he must reform spiritually before "Man's sickness will be cured" (272).
Brand classifies his enemies as he wonders, "Which is best?" or "Who gropes most blindly?" Is it "The dull of heart, plodding and slow because / His neighbours are so?" (271). The local townspeople, including the petty bureaucrats and his own mother represent this group. Or is it "The light of heart / Who plays along the edge of the crevasse?" (271). Ejnar and Agnes (at first Ejnar's fiancée, later Brand's wife) are these enemies. Lastly, Brand challenges "the wild of heart, / In whose broken mind evil seems beautiful" (271). The gypsy Gerd, who eventually emerges as Brand's nemesis, is the final and most formidable of his enemies.

For Brand, it is worthwhile to conquer his triple foes, as then they will become "heirs of heaven" (272). His project will also lessen his own inner anxieties and fears. Yet he is so unbending in his demands for personal sacrifices that instead of uplifting people, he antagonizes them. In the last act, Brand achieves a Pyrrhic victory because although he defeats all his enemies, he also falls into the abyss with them.

At first it seems as if Brand can be a vital spiritual force in the community. Although he has not yet decided to stay, early in Act Two he acts bravely by aiding a man who is contemplating suicide. When they observe his courage, the usually dense and "dull"
villagers imagine that Brand has spiritual qualities which they lack, and they ask him to be their priest. He refuses because he feels that he belongs to the world and not to some obscure Norwegian village. In fact, Brand really wishes to leave because he is overcome by regression, and his choice of words shows that he is aware of it: "Where the mountains shut one in, a voice is powerless. / Who buries himself in a pit when the broad fields / beckon?" (280). If Brand can be pastor to the world, then he can recreate himself and never return to his hated origins. But that is not his destiny.

In one of his frequent and ironic uses of myth, Ibsen here portrays Brand as a failed Prometheus. After he refuses the job of priest, Brand is accused of leading the populace astray with false hopes of spiritual renewal. One man speaks for the crowd: "May you be cursed for the flame you lit, / As we are cursed, who, for a moment, saw" (281). Unlike Prometheus, however, Brand cannot summon any authentic firepower. As we see later in the Christmas scene, the "flame" of his creativity is quite feeble. Interestingly, Ibsen's name for his protagonist is ironic in two ways: Brand cannot bring the flame or firebrand of faith to the villagers and so does not leave his mark or brand on them.
Nevertheless, the peasants desperately need reformation. Their "slovenly minds" are uncreative and possibly only one of them, a doctor, has any conception of authentic selfhood. They are as Brian Johnston states, at "the lowest level of spiritual action; the level of material needs and social conformity" (To the Third Empire: Ibsen's Early Drama 130). Even if Brand had the capability to institute permanent reform, it is doubtful if he could override the influence of the local bureaucrats, who give the villagers bread and do not demand sacrifices from them. To the bureaucrats, the local people are merely "sheep" to be manipulated.

Prominent among the exploitative town officials are Mayor and Provost. They represent the Norwegian bureaucracy, which Ibsen castigated throughout his career. These officials do not ease the misery in their area because in Mayor's view, "Poverty's a necessity / In every society; we've got to accept that" (314). Mayor's heartlessness is apparent as he rations food to a man who has just lost a daughter through starvation: "You must take a quarter less than you had last time. / You've one less mouth to feed" (274). Also, in an inversion of the Good Samaritan parable, Mayor refuses to aid a man not of his district, unlike the Samaritan who cared for a stranger. Brand faults Mayor for creating the "dull of heart" villagers and
debasing "the good metal of their souls" (300). He promises to declare war on Mayor and everything he stands for.

Like Mayor, Provost also demeans the villagers; in another inversion of a biblical parable, he refers to himself as the people's "old shepherd" (342). In the parable, Christ searches for his lost lamb, which he wants to save from damnation; Provost, however, ignores the spiritual welfare of his "sheep" and wants only to stifle their wills: "You have your humble tasks allotted you; / To attempt more is presumptuous and wrong" (342). Provost also dislikes people like Brand who strive for self-realization. He believes such impulses must be curbed, for "the surest way to destroy a man / Is to turn him into an individual" (332). In his view, community needs come first, for that is where one's "duty" lies.

Provost thinks that Brand, as a clergyman, should be a servant of the state and improve the country's "moral tone" because that accomplishment is "the best insurance against unrest" (331). He completely denies the creative will, wants Brand to abandon his ideals, and thinks the pastor owes a debt to the state for its approval of his new church. But, in another biblical reference, Brand compares himself favorably to St. Peter; unlike Peter, however, he will not forsake
his principles in order to curry community favor. He tells Provost: "You are demanding that, at the cock­
crow of the state, / I shall betray the ideal for which I have lived" (332). Brand does not betray his ideals; indeed, he soon dies for them.

Brand is admirable in refusing to become the state's tool. Of course, his adamancy does not endear him to the local officials. Provost especially wants to destroy Brand's sense of self and believes that the priest, like every other man, should "humble himself, and not always be trying / To rise above his fellows" (332). Of course, the hypocritical Provost always belittles those he considers beneath him.

Furthermore, his sermons are deceptive because they are opposite to his actions. Provost tells Brand that he is leaving to preach a sermon on "the duality of human nature" (333). Provost knows nothing about the duality of human nature, since he recognizes man as only matter, with no spirit. Conversely, Brand often neglects man's material needs for his spiritual aspects.

In building the new church, Brand attempts to reconcile the spiritual and material needs of the community. He feels that a larger church will lead more people to spiritual awareness and at the same time fill a practical need for more room. Yet the church is
a failure because everyone forgets its spiritual purpose. The bureaucrats care only that the new church will bring the village "favorable attention in the highest circles," and even a "decoration" for Brand (333). As for the peasants, they come to the new church merely "to gape at the show" (337).

Brand is heartsick because his project has not brought spiritual harmony to local society. He now suffers severe regression. As he surveys all the gaudy garlands and decorations outside the church, he begs to go back to the womb: "God, give me light, or else bury me / A thousand fathoms in the earth" (328). In effect, Brand is mortified by all the ostentation on a supposedly religious occasion and cries out in anguish, "If I could hide myself. If only I could hide" (328).

At this phase in Brand's project, it is too late to hide from anyone. He should have done so before his mother appeared. Theirs is not the typical mother-son relationship, for as Brand tells her, "I have been no son to you, and you have been / No mother to me" (284). Yet although there is much animosity between them, he is drawn to her. In Brand's unconscious, his mother represents the primal environment he seeks. Sadly, she also "brings the darkness and cold that form so much of Brand's character" (Northam, Ibsen 44).
Brand's mother is another of the "dull of heart" villagers whom her son wants to destroy. Like them, she is uninterested in spirituality; her life is spent amassing wealth. She is confident that at the hour of her death, her son will provide for her spiritual needs. Actually, she cares much more that Brand preserve her money than that he save her soul. Yet in fairness, she is right when in Brand's presence, she asks a rhetorical question about the duality of human nature: "Why was my soul made flesh / If love of the flesh is death to the soul?" (287). Brand could not answer her even if the question were a direct one, for he has no more conception of physical realities than his mother has of spiritual essences.

In any case, because his mother refuses to give up all her possessions, Brand withholds his priestly ministrations from her, and they never meet again before she dies. As often happens in Ibsen, the past of the characters bears directly on the present action of the play. In Brand, it shows the protagonist's enduring love-hate relationship with his mother and how it still stifles his creativity. First, she gave up the man she loved to marry Brand's father, who was old and prosperous. Also, Brand's mother had the audacity to ransack her husband's deathbed as she searched it for hidden packets of money. Like Hilde Wangel of
Ibsen's later work, *The Master Builder*, Brand's mother is a "bird of prey" who swoops down on those who are unable to retaliate.

Besides her image as predator, Brand's mother also has ties with certain mythological figures who symbolize the "primal mother" in her worst aspects. These are such "feminine monsters" as Hecate, Gorgon, and the Furies who, according to Rank, symbolize the "birth anxiety" (*TB* 149). Like these creatures, Brand's mother hates the light (unlike Brand who seeks it) and much prefers her cold, dark, womb-like home in the valley. In fact, she resembles one of Ibsen's subterranean, diabolical trolls. This is evident in the power she wields over her son even after her death when Brand assumes the guilt for his mother's sins. He is thus unable to act creatively in his own behalf.

Nevertheless, despite all their differences, Brand and his mother have similar personalities. They both reject compromise as a tool for improving human relations and promote their own wills regardless of any other obligations. She rejects love for money, and her son rejects it for a religious fanaticism he tries to force on others. They are like the typical Ibsen protagonist who "fears love, despite its overpowering attraction for him, because it seems to involve the threat of being swallowed up, of ceasing to exist as a
separate person" (Hurt 34). In effect, Brand and his mother suffer from severe "death fear."

Also, because they are incapable of love, both of them are inferior spouses: "Brand exploits Agnes as mercilessly as his mother plundered her husband" (Hans Georg Meyer 27). They both are also deficient as parents; Brand had no love as a child and little Ulf loses his life because his father cares more for enforcing his own will than he does for his child's welfare.

Actually, Brand and his mother are two neurotics who live within their own egos. Neither can handle his or her birth trauma anxieties, and the mother particularly acts as if she is merely waiting for death rather than experiencing life. Yet she is extremely strong and has a powerful hold on her son. Not only does she symbolize the primal habitat for him, but she also imbues him with a strong sense of duty. After he decides reluctantly to remain in the village, he exclaims mournfully: "My Sunday song is over, my winged steed / Can be unsaddled. My duty lies here" (288). This is ironic because later Brand will despise the local bureaucrats who are motivated solely by "duty."

After the interview with his mother, Brand relinquishes his dream of traveling the world as "the chastiser of the age, / Striding in greatness above the
tumult" (288). Now he will remain in the village and "warm" his mother's "withered, freezing hand" (288). Of course, in the future he will not act so kindly towards his mother because he has a love-hate relationship with her.

Earlier in the play, Brand senses that he will regret his decision if he stays and he mournfully tells himself:

A heavy weight lies on me, the burden
Of being tied to another human being
Whose spirit pointed earthwards. Everything
That I desired so passionately before
Trembles and fades. My strength and courage
fail me, My mind and soul are numbed.
Now, as I approach my home, I find
Myself a stranger; I awake bound, shorn,
And tamed, like Samson in the harlot's lap.
(268-69)

Evidently Brand's mother is trying to pull him down to her troll underground so that her will, not his, shall be fulfilled. He recognizes that if he stays in the village, he is doomed. Yet he cannot resist her siren's call. The previous verse has overtones of incest as Brand sees himself and his mother as Samson and Delilah. Like Samson, Brand also becomes powerless because of a woman. Brand's oblique reference to his mother as a harlot refers both to their relationship, as well as the fact that she married his father for money.
Because he perceives his mother as an avaricious whore, Brand, in one of his frequent Christ poses, decides to expiate her debt to God by taking it on himself. He tells her that she has "debased God's coinage" and then reassures her that "God's corroded image / Shall be burnt clean in me" (286). In reality, Brand never helps his mother or himself. Like one of Rank's neurotics, he cannot free himself from the past "on which he is fixated by guilt feeling" (WT 73). He never truly believes that he has expiated his mother's sins and always feels guilty about them. At one point in the play, he cries out in anguish: "Will atonement never cease?" (317).

Through his mother's death, Brand achieves another of his Pyrrhic victories: he has the satisfaction of knowing that he did not bend by giving her the last rites; however, the new church he builds with her legacy gives neither him nor the community any spiritual satisfaction. Like Brand's mother, the parishioners are interested only in concrete matters, and to them the church is merely a magnificent edifice, not a house of God. Because of the community's shallow attitude toward the church, Brand realizes he should not have built it and tells everyone, "This was not what I dreamed" (337).
After the church fails to engender renewed spirituality in the villagers, Brand decides that what is needed now is a church that will "embrace, not just faith and doctrine, / But everything in life / Which God has given as a part of life" (337). Brand leads his congregation up a mountain, presumably to his imaginary church of life; however, his leadership is faulty. Since he lives so completely within himself, he ignores the people's real concerns about their physical needs and family obligations. His insensitivity and the crowd's lack of courage abort his "church of life" project before it begins. Brand's project also fails because it lacks a specific goal. For their part, "the villagers soon grow tired of a journey that leads nowhere" (Valency 125). Incited by Provost's falsehood that a shoal of fishes has entered the fjord, the mob deserts Brand, but not before it stones him as he flees up the mountain alone.

After all the torments he suffers at the hands of the local inhabitants, Brand finally defeats them because they are buried with him in the avalanche. Again like Samson, Brand pulls down his whole society with him. Actually, it is already spiritually dead. The villagers are so uncreative in overcoming their birth trauma anxieties that they may as well regress to the womb-tomb. They do not know the meaning of love or
will, and the avalanche covers them as well as the pastor they never quite accepted.

In effect, when Brand's project collapses, he suffers severe regression and repeats his birth trauma by plunging into an abyss. The plunging motif represents the "threat of annihilation and its promise of release from the struggle for ego-preservation" (Hurt 31). Both in dreams and in many of Ibsen's dramas, by plunging to their deaths neurotics cease the fight for selfhood and return to their primal home.

Even as Brand attacks the "dull of heart" villagers, he also wages war on his other enemy, the "light of heart." Because this enemy has a joie de vivre that he lacks, Brand's campaign against it seems rather petty. Besides, this group consists of his faithful wife Agnes and the artist Ejnar, who never did him any harm. When Brand first meets his targets, he notices that "the sun shines" and "the mist is lifting" (259). As John Northam observes, "Whatever else they may be, Ejnar and Agnes arrive as youngsters who dispel the terrifying gloom of the first scene" (Ibsen 36). Yet their joy is short-lived because like Brand, they are walking westward toward the sunset of their lives. They are also dancing on the edge of an abyss, which symbolizes their fateful encounter with Brand.
When they first encounter Brand, Agnes and Ejnar are going to their wedding. Soon after they meet him, however, their fortunes deteriorate because Agnes becomes totally infatuated with the priest. If the young couple could predict the future, they would flee from Brand since he is responsible for ruining their lives. To be fair to Brand, however, he does warn them of impending disaster: "Stop! You're on the edge of a precipice!" He then tells them to "Save yourselves before it is too late!" (260-61). Yet despite his warnings, Agnes and Ejnar are crushed by Brand's implacable will. This causes their severe regressive feelings and life and death fears.

Since he is an artist, it is plausible that Ejnar should have the potential for self-creation. He believes that as a painter, "it's a wonderful thing" to charm "dead colours into life" (261). His "masterpiece" is a painting of Agnes with "a blush on her cheek" and "two eyes bright with happiness"(261). Their pre-nuptial feast was like a Dionysian revel in which the guests had "leaves in their hats, singing all the way" (262). But Ejnar should be wary of Brand, whom he describes as an "icicle" (261). The men were former schoolmates, and Ejnar's memory of Brand was that he was rather withdrawn and "never played with us" (263). Brand could not partake of Ejnar's happy
childhood because he came from an unloving background and could not relate wholesomely to other people.

Brand is uninterested in interpersonal communication. He really wants to save Ejnar's soul because the young man and his generation want only to "flirt," "play," "laugh" and "dance," and they do not associate God with these activities (263-65). It is not for "love of pleasure" that Brand condemns them, but that they "separate / Life from faith and doctrine" and confine "God's kingdom" only "to the confines of the Church" (264-65). Ironically, although Brand wishes Agnes and Ejnar to experience life wholly and not live a "half and half" existence, he himself leads a very narrow life because he overdoes his disdain for worldly things.

At first, Brand does not bother Ejnar, but later he destroys the young artist by taking Agnes from him. Of course, Ejnar also loses Agnes by refusing to help her and Brand when they go to the aid of the suicidal man and undertake a dangerous journey over the storm-ravaged fjord. Ejnar loses his heroic stature in Agnes's eyes as he tells her: "I am young and life is dear. I cannot go" (277). Later, he makes her choose between him and the priest, and she chooses Brand.

Despite his cruel treatment of him, Brand made an impression on Ejnar and many years later, he returns as
a caricature of the priest. The artist is gone now and in his place is a puritanical missionary, "a distortion of the Brand persona" (Clurman 75). Moreover, Ejnar is suffering from severe regression tendencies as is shown by his somber clothing and emaciated state. He believes that he had too much faith in his own powers and not enough in God's. Brand is shocked by Ejnar's downfall but does not comprehend that he is the cause of it. Nor does he understand that this new Ejnar is a mirror-image of himself. Ejnar is now completely opposite from his earlier "light of heart" artistic, joyful self. In seeking his own "light" through his hardhearted religious fanaticism, Brand has destroyed someone else's chance to fulfill himself.

Even before she rejects Ejnar, Agnes believes that she can create herself by becoming Brand's handmaiden in his mission to convert the villagers. Unlike Brand, Agnes is motivated by love, not will. From her perspective, her involvement with Brand makes her feel as if she is present at the creation of the world:

It is like a new world at its birth
And I hear voices ring;
'Now shalt thou be lost or saved.
Thy task awaits thee; take up thy burden.' (282)

At this moment in her life, it does not matter to Agnes that Brand is a cold fanatic. To her, he is "teacher," "brother," and "friend" (289). Through him
and his project, a hidden voice promises her: "Now shalt thou create and be created" (282). Actually, Agnes believes that she can overcome her fears and anxieties through love of another person, and perhaps she could if Brand were not a neurotic.

Truthfully, Brand warns Agnes that life with him will be a "sad, October evening" (290). He explains that his stern "All or Nothing" code permits no compromises, and even her death may be required. Brand adopts his strict attitude because he fears if he compromises his principles in order to ingratiate himself with society or with loved ones, he cannot assert his will. If that occurs, he will be overcome by the guilt feelings and separation anxieties plaguing him since his return home and perhaps even before then.

For her part, Agnes is unconcerned about the future. Yet like Ejnar, she too has regressive inclinations. Somehow she feels that by regressing to the "night" of death, she will be 'reborn. She visualizes her rebirth taking place beyond dark death to where "the morning glows" (290).

After three years of marriage, Agnes and Brand seem reasonably happy. They have a little boy Ulf and are settled in as a respectable pastor and his family. But there is a disturbing element in their lives as shown in Ibsen's stage directions for their home. They have
a garden, but it is a small one surrounded by a stone wall; the garden symbolizes Agnes's love and joyfulness; whereas the wall denotes Brand's inflexible and hardhearted attitude. Ominous mountains "tower" over the parsonage and foreshadow Brand's eventual death on their heights.

In effect, by residing in the valley he despises, Brand is back in the kind of womb enclosure which he both desires and fears. The parsonage is eerily reminiscent of his childhood home which was also "dark" and "cold" (283). Yet the early dialogue of Act Three belies Ibsen's harsh description of the scene. Brand seems quite content with life and tells Agnes that she and Ulf "have given me light and peace in my work" and that with her "Love came like a sunny spring day to warm my heart" (293). This is in direct contrast to his description of the seasons when he lived with his mother: "At home I never saw the sun / From the leaves' fall to the cuckoo's song" (283).

Notwithstanding his paean to Agnes, when she tells him that "Many have shrunk from us, at your demand / Of All or Nothing," Brand completely reverses his positive attitude toward love and tells her: "What the world calls love, I neither know nor want / I know God's love, which is neither weak nor mild" (293). Evidently Brand perceives that his will project may be thwarted
by love because kindness will not evangelize the 
villagers: "But here, faced by a generation / Which is 
lax and slothful, the best love is hate" (296). Or 
perhaps he is using "the project of the will as his 
defense against love" because he perceives that love 
may hamper his quest for selfhood (Hurt 34).

Actually, the depth of Brand's love for his wife 
and child is tested and found shallow. For Rank, a 
neurotic like Brand is "incapable of surrender to the 
other, or to unity with himself, because in him the 
inner will conflict with its predominantly negative 
character is so intense that neither outer good fortune 
nor inner release can protect him from his own 
destructive reactions" (WT 58). No matter how blissful 
Brand's outer life is, his inner unconscious is 
tormented by birth trauma anxieties and fears, and his 
love for Agnes and Ulf must be rejected when it 
interferes with his own will assertion. Therefore, the 
"light of heart" happy family group must be sacrificed 
for Brand's creative efforts.

When Ulf's health requires his removal to a warmer 
climate, in a weak moment Brand decides to leave the 
congregation. However, after Ulf's doctor chastizes 
the pastor for being easy on himself and strict with 
other people, Brand reneges on his parental obligations 
for the sake of his mission. Like a modern Abraham,
Brand sacrifices his son in obedience to his own conception of God's will. But unlike Abraham's, "none of Brand's actions is commanded by God," (Downs 85). In other words, Abraham knew God's will, whereas Brand merely assumes it is in tandem with his own. The pastor's primary interest is in himself and his project; he proves this when he asks Agnes, "Was I not a priest before I was a father?" (307). The wise doctor wryly tells Brand that "in your ledger your credit account / For strength of will is full, but, priest, / Your love account is a white virgin page" (295-96).

Agnes has stifled her own creativity for the sake of Brand's and begins to suffer regressive tendencies which are aggravated by Ulf's death. Formerly, she could project her anxieties onto her son, who was essentially her project, but after Brand sacrifices the child, Agnes moves slowly toward her own womblike abyss of death, an abyss she avoided years ago on the mountain.

Agnes's longing for death is a vital component of Act Four. Ironically, Ibsen sets the scene on Christmas Eve, usually a time of joy. The happiness of the season is undercut because Agnes is seated at the parsonage window "staring out at the darkness" to which subconsciously, she longs to return (309). Ibsen's use
of light imagery here shows Agnes's former association
with joy and love. In addition, the images of light
contrast sharply with Brand's dark and gloomy nature.
For example, he can light only "a single candle, which
illuminates the room feebly," but Agnes, fighting against
her feelings of regression, puts lights everywhere
because she longs to be "where light and sunshine are"
(309, 312). By doing this, she also believes that
Ulf's spirit can look in the window and be warmed.

Brand makes Agnes close the shutters because she
has a "sinful longing for what is gone" (319). For
him, it is not enough that their son is dead; he must
stifle Agnes's grief as well. If she does not cease
grieving, she is not giving her "all." As with his
mother and her money, Brand demands that Agnes hold
back nothing from God, even mourning for the dead is
sinful. In Brand's mind, "unless you give all, you
give nothing" (319).

Agnes is immobilized by her life and death fears;
she cannot live with the memories of her son nor can
she die, for as she says, "Shut. Everything is shut. /
Even oblivion is shut to me" (320). Yet Brand's
insatiable will is never satisfied, and he forces her
to give all Ulf's clothes to a gypsy woman's child. In
essence, Brand "sacrifices his wife because he forbids
her to mourn and purges her of natural longing at the
cost of her physical existence" (Bradbrook 46). After Brand finally takes everything from Agnes, he tells her, "You shall devote yourself wholly to our calling" (320).

Serving Brand is no longer a creative project for Agnes. Since he has made her life empty and meaningless, she now wants to die. If she cannot act creatively, then she must regress to the womb. Strangely, she is freer now than when she first met Brand; in fact, she believes she has seen God. She reminds her husband that he once told her, "He dies who sees Jehovah face to face" (325). In a sense, by dying nobly, Agnes finally creates her authentic self and is reborn as the creature of light she truly is. In her mind, "The darkness is past. The mist has stolen away. / The clouds have gone. Through the night, beyond death, / I see the morning" (324).

Brand now has defeated his second enemy, the "light of heart," but his victory is a hollow one because he is soon "gnawed by loneliness" (327). Without Agnes, his new church is meaningless, and he fears that his creative project to "rebuild the Lord's house and make it greater" has been rejected by God Himself (328). Later, alone on the mountain, he weeps for Agnes and Ulf to come back to him because he is alone, cold, and haunted by "spectres" (346). Almost immediately, he is
visited by Agnes's phantom, or at least that is how he perceives the figure that emerges from the mountain mists.

In a Rankian interpretation of the scene, Brand is now immobilized by life and death fears, that is he cannot go forward or backward. He is afraid alone on the summit, but he cannot return to his old life either. Agnes's phantom beseeches him to return with her to a happier place where everything will be like the "good old days" (347). In his present state, Brand is tempted strongly to follow her because "her presence is still vital within Brand's consciousness. The fear and attraction of sexuality is still strong and must be ruled out of his being." (Lyons, *Henrik Ibsen: The Divided Consciousness* 19). But as Rank posits, sex is only a "partial gratification" of the birth trauma and does not "satisfy every individual" (TB 188). Rather, he thinks exerting the creative will is more successful than sex in dispelling anxieties.

When the phantom demands that Brand deny his "All or Nothing" way of life, of course he refuses because in his mind, his will assertion and potential for creativity are bound up in that code. He forgets that his implacable will, unrelieved by love, has brought him nothing. Yet if he denies his will, he will lose his selfhood and tremendously exacerbate his anxieties.
As a result, although he misses Agnes, Brand views her spirit as one of "compromise," and he must reject it.

This scene is puzzling for one wonders if the phantom really represents Agnes. It seems unlikely that it does, for in life Brand's wife never asked him to give up anything. Rather it was he who demanded everything from her and gave nothing in return. This ghostly Agnes is not the loving, ideal wife whom Ibsen presented earlier in the play. It is more likely that the spirit symbolizes Brand's guilt for his ill-treatment of the real Agnes.

It is also possible that the phantom Agnes is another of Ibsen's troll figures. According to Muriel Bradbrook, trolls "play much of the part that the devil does in Christian legend" (56). In other words, they are tempters of the protagonist. This is apparent as Agnes's apparition asks Brand to come with it. It really wants Brand to abandon his principles for a dubious future life.

In a Rankian sense, Agnes's phantom fosters Brand's death fear. This is because the pastor dreads losing his selfhood by following the specter into womblike oblivion. Rank believes that demons relate "to fear of the dead," and the "primal fear" is "directly linked up with the dead, representing the pre-natal situation" (TR 121-22). For once, Brand's will serves him well as
he resists the demon's temptation to return to the womb. It is also noteworthy that as he routs the phantom, it emits a birdlike scream, and he and Gerd define the spirit as a hawk; in Scandinavian myth, the mother goddess Freyja sometimes takes the form of a bird (Davidson 89,96). In Brand, she is not effective in that form because the hawk is killed, but later the mother goddess reclaims her own in the "womb" of the snow-covered valley.

Whether troll or mother goddess, Gerd effectively returns Brand to the primal state. Initially, however, it is he who sets out to conquer her, for Gerd is Brand's third enemy, the "wild of heart." Somehow, she "almost magically appears at each point in the play where Brand is faced with a fundamental decision," and there is a deep "psychological tie" between them (Hurt 46).

Another instance of the past's influence on the present is shown in Act Four as Mayor reveals Gerd's strange history and its relevance to Brand's life. The pastor is shocked when the official informs him that Gerd is the daughter of the man Brand's mother rejected; the fellow was so upset by the rejection that he married a gypsy girl and Gerd is their child. When Brand hears this news, he blames his mother's sin of greed for the mad girl's existence. Also, he blames
Gerd for Ulf's death, for it was her talk of trolls overthrowing the Church that made Brand choose to stay and not go south for Ulf's health (307, 317).

Brand believes that Ulf's death is a punishment from God because of the way Brand's mother treated Gerd's father. Now the "God of Justice" wants retribution (317). As an egocentric, Brand denounces his mother's past actions but refuses to take responsibility for his own cruel and inept deeds, past and present. As a neurotic Brand cannot free himself from the past, a past on which the neurotic "is fixated by guilt feeling" which is caused by the wish to separate from the mother (Rank, TB 72-74).

Somehow, Brand never connects Gerd with any of his problems. Yet she is essentially an evil character, perhaps even a revenge figure acting on her father's behalf to punish the Brand family. Her plan of revenge is successful because she effectively leads Brand away from his family and community and on to death in the Ice Church or "troll-church to which she has tried to lure him throughout the drama" (Anderson 356).

Actually, Gerd is an Ibsenian troll-person whose actions ultimately defeat a protagonist. Gerd accomplishes her purpose by fostering Brand's pride and encouraging him to ignore the function of love in human relationships. She accuses him of making an "idol" of
little Ulf and deserting the parish to take the boy south. Gerd tells Brand that he has given his priesthood to the "hawk of compromise." If he leaves the area, "cold and slimy" trolls will emerge from the sea, seize the souls of the parishioners, and overthrow the church (307-08). Thus Gerd intimidates Brand, who knows that if he nurtures his son instead of his parishioners, his project is doomed. Brand will then unconsciously suffer severe death fear, perhaps lose his selfhood and even his life.

Like Brand's mother and the phantom Agnes, Gerd has connections with the primal mother in her demonic aspects. Ibsen even named her after "the daughter of a giant from the underworld" (Davidson 89). Her purpose, like that of his mother and the phantom Agnes, is to lure Brand back to nothingness.

Gerd also assumes the persona of Satan to Brand's Christ. For example, she feeds Brand's pride by telling him that he is the "Big Man. The Biggest of all." His egotistical reply is that "I used to think I was" (349). In Act One, Gerd first tempts Brand when she invites him to her Ice Church where the "cataract and avalanche sing Mass," but Brand dismisses the girl as a "poor, broken instrument" (271). At this point he is ignorant of their mutual history but strangely, Gerd stays in his mind as someone to reform. Ironically, as
Brand plans Gerd's reformation, it is she who leads him to the place he fears most, the deadly Ice Church.

Brand's second temptation occurs when Gerd threatens him with invading trolls and accuses him of idolizing Ulf. On this try, unlike Satan, Gerd is successful with her victim because Brand denies his obligations to his family. Gerd is effective because she compels Brand to value will over love, removes him from all human contacts, and makes him retreat within his own ego. When his family dies, however, Brand's creativity erodes, and he suffers severe anxiety and life and death fears.

Gerd finally oversteps herself when she again "expresses Brand's own sense of himself as Christ and tempts him into full self-identification" (Northam, Ibsen 66). This occurs when she addresses him as the "Saviour Man." Even Brand realizes there is a limit to Gerd's blasphemy. He then professes to God that he is "the meanest thing that crawls on earth" (350).

At last, Brand is aware of his human frailty. His tears dispel the mists on the mountain and in his mind. He becomes "serene and shining as though young again" and proclaims that "My life was a long darkness. / Now the sun is shining" (351). As he stands on the Ice Church alone with Gerd, Brand realizes that he is not really Christlike, and his ideal of stringent piety is
not worth all the suffering he has endured. Ironically, Brand's new humility stems from Gerd's adoration of him; he never was influenced by the ministrations of his mother or Agnes. Perhaps Gerd is able to influence him because he sympathizes with her "outcast condition" which is a "more extreme version of Brand's own hostility to the alien social realm" (Johnston, TITE 158).

When Gerd shoots the hated hawk of compromise, the shot triggers the deadly avalanche. At the same time, the bird changes into a dove from which the gypsy "shrieks in fear" (352). In Christian theology, the dove represents the Holy Spirit from which the devilish Gerd naturally would flee. The white bird also symbolizes the onrushing snow that will soon encompass Gerd, Brand, and all the valley-dwellers. Gerd's plan to promote chaos and hatred is realized as she and Brand destroy the society they both despise. Although Brand dies in the avalanche, he effectively defeats the "wild of heart" Gerd because his "hot tears" of repentance have melted her Ice Church of absolute will.

With Gerd's death, Brand seemingly has defeated the last of his spiritual enemies. But has he really succeeded in vanquishing his various targets? His project of the will has physically destroyed its targets, the "dull," "light," and "wild" of heart, but
has it really reformed anyone? Except for Ejnar, who becomes a monstrous version of Brand, the pastor has not changed anyone spiritually. More important from a Rankian perspective, has Brand acted creatively in order to overcome his birth trauma anxieties and regressive inclinations?

Brand's will is a destructive rather than a creative force to him and to the objects of his mission. Most people reject his stern deity, "a rigorous God who demands the abnegation of vital human drives, the crippling of emotions" (Kaufmann 23). Brand ignores the villagers' material concerns in order to pursue his own absolutist creed and force it on them in an atmosphere of hate rather than of love. As Kaufmann further states, "Brand's search for absolute truth is doomed to failure, since transcendence must be universal oneness and harmony and therefore free of hatred" (24). Yet in fairness to Brand, because he was raised in a loveless home, he naturally is pessimistic and "religion can only be interpreted in the bleakest terms of sin and retribution" (Thomas 45).

Brand's efforts at reawakening communal spirituality are self-defeating because he assumes so much guilt that he is unable to act creatively. Besides the culpability for his mother's sins, he also feels guilty for asserting his creative will by
becoming a missionary; that is why he returns home. In essence, his neurotic guilt stems not only from his present attempts at creativity but also from his earlier desire to sever maternal or primal ties. By coming home, Brand compromises his vocation in order to assuage his guilt at leaving. However, his guilt remains because he continues to assert his will in creative projects. It is ironic that Brand, the enemy of compromise, has accommodated his calling to a misplaced sense of duty.

For Rank, the "will to independence and self reliance is bound up with guilt," and for the neurotic, separation from emotional ties is impossible (WT 82-83). We see this as Brand struggles to separate himself from his past. Rank further declares that for psychological wellbeing, one should be able to will "without getting guilt feeling on account of willing" (WT 9). In effect, Brand's neurotic guilt over exerting his will and conquering separation anxieties has hampered his creativity.

The conflict between love and will also exacerbates Brand's life and death fears. If he acts lovingly, as he is tempted to do with Agnes and Ulf, he fears losing his identity in a greater whole. However, when he is on his own as a world missionary or isolated in the eerie realm of the Ice Church, he feels inadequate and
afraid. As Raymond Williams notes, Brand is one "of those who come to 'stand in a tight place; he cannot go forward or backward.' It is, as Ibsen sees it, the essential tragedy of the human situation" (37). In effect, Brand is so immobilized by his fears that they overpower his will, and he regresses to oblivion. Brand's story is actually "a long-drawn-out suicide" (Knight 24).

In death, Brand returns to a pleasurable womblike environment. Like Prometheus in Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, he plunges through the earth for reunification with the primal mother who is symbolized here by the mountain's cleft as well as the enveloping blanket of snow. Brand also resembles Oedipus whose "final disappearance through a cleft rock into the Underworld expresses once again the same wish tendency to return into the mother earth" (Rank, *TB* 43).

Brand makes a valiant effort to fight regression and attain individuation, but he is only partly successful. Although he finally recognizes his own humanity, he never grasps the principle that human will must be tempered by love. Ignoring the love principle in human relationships, he never overcomes his birth trauma anxieties. As a symbol of love and light, Agnes tries to help him attain selfhood, but Brand refuses her loving support. Actually, Brand is a
neurotic whose self-absorption prevents him from acting creatively.

Ibsen critics often speculate about the ambiguity of Brand. For example, we never know if Brand is condemned or saved. Was he a good man or an evil one? How do we handle his inhumane treatment of his family? Arthur Ganz wonders if the God of Love "condemns the hero for lack of love or shows him mercy for having nobly striven. . . ." (151). Harold Clurman says that the play is misunderstood because critics overemphasize its opposing aspects. They view it as "a relentless jeremiad against a morally blemished world or as a mighty warning that the absolute severity which Brand personifies must be tempered by the forgiveness of love" (78). John Hurt perceives Brand as "a turbulent and romantic play, full of tensions and conflicts which are never resolved" (57).

The play Brand is ambivalent because Ibsen created Brand as a flawed hero, neither wholly good nor entirely evil. Like Ibsen's later character, Halvard Solness, Brand is flawed because he aspires to divinity and cannot attain it. In fact, like Solness he hears voices in the air. These voices tell him to stop trying to be like God for "You can never be like Him, for you are flesh" (346). Brand can only be human, "neither a villain-idealist nor a hero-reformer but a
tragic sufferer existing independently of moral judgments" (Brustein 55).

Yet Ibsen admires Brand's struggle to strive for creativity. As a neurotic, Brand does not reach his goal, but there is nobility in a character who strives valiantly, though fruitlessly. Besides, at the end of the play, he achieves a limited self-knowledge when he asks the question about will (352). At least he is no longer his own final authority. It is too late, however, for Brand to realize his great creative potential, and he regresses to a happier, more pleasurable existence than his present one. His final journey "to the peaks thus ends with joy, peace and release" (Hurt 20).

And what of his creator? Does Brand truly represent Ibsen's "best moments"? Most critics agree that Brand is a great work and a seminal one. Richard Gilman believes that it and Peer Gynt "remain at the center of any consideration of Ibsen," (56). Robert Brustein feels that not only is Brand "a storage house for all of Ibsen's future themes and conflicts," but that it is "his first, and possibly his greatest work of enduring power" (50).

These critics and many others attest to the artistic merits of Brand. From a Rankian viewpoint, Ibsen is also effective because he recreates himself by
projecting his own anxieties and anger onto his art. Like the scorpion with which he compares himself, he empties his "poisons" outward and thus protects his own psyche. The scorpion metaphor illustrates that Ibsen understood human psychology very well. Yet this understanding still does not encompass his total genius which developed as early as Brand. In this verse-drama, Ibsen not only analyzes the depths of human character but simultaneously satirizes and castigates current Norwegian society. In addition, he brilliantly infuses his text with mythical and religious motifs, which along with his psychological probing, give the play a universal appeal. Brand is truly one of Ibsen's "best moments" of which he would have many.
CHAPTER IV

ROSMERSHOLM

The call to work is undoubtedly one of the themes running through *Rosmersholm*. But the play is of course, first and foremost a story of human beings and human destiny. (Ibsen, *Letters* 265)

In 1886, twenty-one years after the publication of *Brand*, Ibsen wrote *Rosmersholm*. This play shares several characteristics with the earlier verse-drama, but there are also several important differences between them. Here again Ibsen shows his disgust and disillusionment with the political and social systems of his native Norway. Although he was a permanent resident of Italy, in 1885 he paid a short visit to his homeland and was appalled by the squabbles of the Liberal and Conservative parties. Ibsen wished fervently that there could be "an element of nobility" in Norwegian political life, and he wanted this nobility to be based on "character" and "will" (Michael Meyer, Intro., POI 4: 204-05).

As in *Brand*, the characters' will assertion or lack of it is an important component of the play, and the creative will and birth trauma theories of Rank are also very
August Strindberg, who was often hostile to Ibsen and his works, remarked that Rosmersholm was "unintelligble to the theatre public, mystical to the semi-educated, but crystal-clear to anyone with a knowledge of modern psychology" (qtd. in Michael Meyer, Ibsen on File 44). The character of John Rosmer, the protagonist of Rosmersholm, is a good subject for psychoanalytic study. Like Brand, he is neurotic and lives within his own ego. Yet Rosmer lacks Brand's courage and is unable or unwilling to act creatively. Because of Rosmer's cowardice, as with Brand's absolutism, Ibsen's support for his protagonist is qualified.

The action of Rosmersholm takes place on the estate of the same name, for over two hundred years the home of the aristocratic Rosmer family. The portraits of dead Rosmers hang from the living room walls, and the men portrayed in them were all achievers, who served Norway as priests, soldiers, and government officials. Here John Rosmer, an the last scion of the family, lives with a housekeeper, Mrs. Helseth and his dead wife Beata's former companion, a young, freethinking woman named Rebecca West. He and Rebecca are in love but never consummate their relationship because of their various psychological problems. The couple also has a hostile relationship with local society. Eventually their problems overwhelm them, and after performing their own liebestod or death marriage, they commit suicide by leaping
into the whirling millrace outside the Rosmer house. In death, especially, Rosmer shows a fortitude and decisiveness he lacked in life.

At the beginning of Act One, we discover that Rebecca was and is a tremendous influence on Rosmer and he on her. At the end of the play, however, it is Rebecca who has changed most significantly. Throughout the drama, Rosmer thinks he is assuming her liberal attitude toward life, but he really remains just as conservative as were his stodgy ancestors who have "served the institutions that for centuries have administered and dogmatized love, morality, and justice" (Hans Georg Meyer 112). In effect, he makes Rebecca a Rosmer.

In the family tradition, Rosmer was once a clergyman, but under the spell of Rebecca's secularism, he is now an apostate. Although he states that through his apostasy his eyes have been opened "into the great world of truth and freedom," he still retains absolutist political attitudes that are reminiscent of pastor Brand and religious fanaticism. Like Brand, Rosmer naively demands a perfect world full of saints. For example, Rosmer believes that "innocence" is "the one thing that makes life so wonderful to live" (274). He is too obtuse to realize that "innocence" is not often found in adults, nor is it always a desirable quality.
Rosmer knows little about adults because he is like one of Rank's neurotic patients who "show the regressive tendency in the form of a wish not to be grown up" (TB 67). We see this as Rosmer identifies with the children of his former brother-in-law Dr. Kroll and still acts the "boy" with his old tutor, Ulrich Brendel, whom he fails to recognize as a notorious wastrel. More important, Rosmer's relationship with Rebecca is devoid of sex, and he views their bond as an instance of "two children falling sweetly and secretly in love" (285).

Actually, Rosmer suffers from severe birth trauma anxieties and exists in a regressive state in the womblike atmosphere of Rosmersholm, living "peacefully" among his books (262). Unconsciously, because he cannot create a meaningful existence for himself, he yearns to rest with his distinguished ancestors and quit the struggle for individuation. His yearning for "childlike innocence" is a "regressive element," that really is "incompatible with the happiness that adults hope to achieve in an imperfect but mature existence" (Jacobsen and Leavy 185).

Unlike Brand, who lives to exert his absolute will, Rosmer is an impassive man who allows others to manipulate him. His father even chose the ministry for him, a choice that Rosmer detested. The young man then "went his own way," but what way that was will always be a mystery. John Chamberlain expresses the essence of Rosmer's character as
"a reserved, indecisive dreamer frequently shown in full flight from the social, political and personal difficulties he encounters" ("Tragic Heroism in Rosmersholm" 278).

Such flights from life show a person in the grip of a Rankian life fear, or fear of standing on one's own. Rosmer suffers from life fear, for as Kroll tells him, "You are not the kind of man who can stand alone" (249). As for death fear, or fear of losing one's identity, Rosmer experiences it when he is unable to cross the footbridge from which his wife committed suicide. He is afraid that if he is not careful, he too will lose his selfhood as she did.

Despite his unconscious feelings, Rosmer, through the influence of Rebecca, envisages a creative project for himself; this "task" is nothing less than "To make all the people in this country noblemen" (247). Like Brand with his project of evangelization, Rosmer is vague about how he will accomplish his mission as he plans his countrymen's ennoblement by "emancipating their minds and purifying their wills" (247). Actually, Rosmer will only "open their eyes"; they must do the real work of emancipation themselves. According to Rank, the "creative man creates first of all himself..." (WT 153). Rosmer has good intentions, but he cannot tell people to create themselves when his own sense of self is that which others have imposed on him.

Like so many of Ibsen's characters, Rosmer is burdened by his past, but unlike other characters he has a couple of
"pasts" to confront. The first is that of the Rosmer family itself, and although Rosmer states that his relatives have "created nothing but darkness and misery," they still haunt him. Otherwise, he would not sequester himself in the ancestral estate (261). As Rebecca observes astutely to Mrs. Helseth, "They cling to their dead here at Rosmersholm." Mrs. Helseth, who opens and closes the play and acts as its chorus figure, replies, "If you want my opinion, miss, it's the dead who cling to Rosmersholm" (227). Rosmer clings to his dead because he feels a "duty" toward upholding their traditions as Kroll would have him do (261). Actually, he may even feel some guilt over their transgressions. Like Brand, Rosmer is moved by an obligation to assume the sins of his family.

It is just as likely that he is bound to his ancestors because they represent the Rankian "paternal" or "force" principle which stifles the creative will (WT 65). This principle is shown clearly as Rosmer relates how his father attacked Brendel with a whip because the tutor had filled young Rosmer's head with "radical nonsense" (240). In effect, Rosmer cannot overcome his fears and anxieties because he cannot separate himself from his parents and by extension his ancestors and the womb. As a neurotic, Rosmer is "fixated on the past," and clings "to it in order to protect himself from experience, the emotional surrender to the present" (Rank, WT 27).
Besides the two hundred year old presence of his ancestors, Rosmer is haunted by his immediate past in which he feels he acted unethically toward Beata. Unlike Brand who thinks he is always right, Rosmer accepts his own culpability. His guilty conscience first manifests itself in Act Two as Kroll, Beata's brother, tells Rosmer that his sister killed herself eighteen months ago so that Rosmer could marry Rebecca and be happy. Kroll believes this because Beata had told him "how desperate and frightened she was" (258). She also went to a local newspaper publisher, Mortensgaard, and put the idea in his head that there were rumors of "sinful goings-on" at Rosmersholm.

Initially, Rosmer had thought his wife was a deranged, oversexed madwoman; now he is not so sure since she was lucid enough to instigate rumors about him and Rebecca. Yet Rosmer also suffers overwhelming guilt that Beata's suicide resulted from her unfounded suspicions, even though his relationship with Rebecca was and is a chaste one. For the rest of the play, Rosmer's guilt feelings remain since they are never assuaged by any strong exertions of his creative will, except through his death at the end of Act Four.

Even prior to Kroll's revelations, Rosmer failed to act creatively, and now his "ennoblement" idea never comes to fruition. As John Hurt observes about Rosmer's inaction, "He has made no move to pursue his plans; in the year or more since Beata's death he has remained completely secluded
and withdrawn from active life" (133). Perhaps Rosmer suffers from separation anxiety because of a neurotic attachment to his dead wife as well as to his ancestors: "The dead cling to the last living heir of Rosmersholm, both the ancestors in their moral uprightness and his unhappy wife accusing him of faithlessness" (Schwarz 200).

Rosmer's attachment to Beata is not caused by the unconscious influence of the aforementioned Rankian "force principle," but rather by the "maternal" or "love principle" of which he also must free himself in order to attain psychological wholeness. Since he rejected his wife's sensuality, Rosmer perceived her as a mother substitute whom, according to Rankian theory, "he will destroy in order to be able to free himself. . . " (WT 76). Even before Kroll's disclosures, Rosmer feels guilty over Beata's suicide. Whether his guilt is longstanding or current, however, he is suffering mightily from it, and he tells Rebecca, "Oh, all these dreadful speculations! I shall never be free of them . . . They will always haunt me, and remind me of the dead" (274).

Even in death, by directing her husband's every move, Beata still exercises maternal control over him. It is as if she is reaching out to Rosmer and bringing him to her. Like Brand with his mother, Rosmer recognizes Beata's strong hold on him, and consequently he experiences death fear. This is evident at the footbridge, which seems to have a
strange attraction for him. His fascination with the bridge shows Rosmer's unconscious longing to be reunited with the primal mother. In effect, he is immobilized by the footbridge: on the one hand he fears losing his selfhood, but conversely he really wants to return to the comfort and security of the womb, a security that eludes him in life.

Rosmer might be able to conquer his fears if he could go out into the world and assert his creative will. Unfortunately, his life and death fears paralyze him. As a result, he cannot move forward or backward either physically on the footbridge or psychologically in his own mind. If he were not neurotic and morbidly attached to Rosmersholm, he could leave the haunted place and start a new life with Rebecca. He is like someone "carrying out a ritual, he circles around the place in which the past is so oppressively localized, but he cannot exorcise its powers" (Hans Georg Meyer 113).

Like Rosmer, Rebecca West must assert her creative will in order to deal with her primal trauma anxieties as well as the outside pressures of an antagonistic society. In reality, her story is more tragic than Rosmer's as she has more self-knowledge than he does. Also, because she has been sexually abused, the obstacles to her individuation are more formidable than his. In any case, throughout most of the play, she fails to achieve the heights of authentic selfhood which she so desperately seeks.
In that sense, Rebecca is like Brand's saintly wife Agnes. Rebecca, however, is a more fully-developed character than Agnes because she has a background that defines her character and gives her specific motivations for her actions. And of course Rebecca is no saint but a sensual woman who initially stops at nothing to achieve her purpose, which is to capture Rosmer for herself. We know little about Agnes's previous life before she met Brand, except that she is now engaged to Ejnar. She exists primarily to serve her husband and son, and is like Beata who also lived only for her husband's happiness. Yet the self-confident Rebecca also is defeated when she loses her own identity through devotion to Rosmer.

As he does in Act One of Brand, Ibsen again sets the stage for the disaster to come, and in the opening scene of the play he presents Rebecca as its primary catalyst. The audience first observes her as the sun sets over the Rosmer estate. Rebecca does not yet realize that the Rosmer way of life and her own have both deteriorated; even her surname is indicative of declining fortunes. According to Mircea Eliade, the west "is the realm of darkness, of grief, of death, the realm of the eternal mansions of the dead . . . " (61-62). Like a latter-day Fate, Rebecca sits crocheting a shawl, which will eventually serve as her wedding veil and shroud. Even now she feels the approaching coldness of death as she asks Mrs. Helseth to shut the door
Of course, in this early stage of the play, Rebecca has no idea what is in store for her at Rosmersholm. She is an emancipated young woman who initially exhibits a joie de vivre symbolized by her love of flowers. She shares this love with Rosmer, who was unable to enjoy the "soothing" effects of flowers with Beata because she "couldn't stand their perfume" (229). Rosmer's statement seems to indicate that Beata was anti-life and anti-pleasure. This supposition is belied, however, by her desire for sex and children. As Orley I. Holtan explains, "Rosmer's prissy reaction to her sexuality indicates that he may have been responsible both for her barrenness and her nervous condition" (58).

Besides a love of flowers, Rosmer and Rebecca have a "pure comradeship" that evidently neither of them had before they met (275). Rebecca not only supports Rosmer's project to ennoble mankind; she has inspired it. Even when Beata was alive, the couple sat in the drawing room planning their lives and talking "about all these new ideas" (272-73).

When Rebecca first arrived at Rosmersholm, no one suspected her evil intentions, which were to usurp Beata's position and become the next Mrs. Rosmer. In order for them to take her to Rosmersholm, she had "bewitched" Kroll and Beata, both of whom became infatuated with her. Later,
Kroll realized that Rebecca used him "to gain admittance to Rosmersholm" (288). For her part, Beata "begged" and "prayed" for her to come there, but Rebecca repaid her friendship and trust by pursuing Rosmer and allowing Beata to think that they were having an affair, and that she, Rebecca was pregnant. After instigating Beata's death and freeing Rosmer from "the darkness of that dreadful marriage," Rebecca could now work on her own creative will project, which is to prepare Rosmer for the "new age that was dawning," when the two of them would go "forward together in freedom" (295).

Rebecca's fears and regressive tendencies, like Rosmer's, begin to develop in Act Two. Like him, she too must confront her dual pasts. The first is her personal past which like Rosmer's, concerns her relationship with her family. She grew up in northern Norway, the daughter of a midwife. After her mother died, Rebecca took her place with her mother's lover, Dr. West. Later, at Rosmersholm, Kroll tells her that Dr. West was really her natural father. Actually, as Freud posits, the real relationship of Rebecca and Dr. West does not matter because even "before the knowledge of her incest, conscience was in some sort awakened in Rebecca" ("Character-Types" 105). In her mind, since she has taken her mother's place with the lover, Rebecca has already committed incest.
It is also noteworthy that when Rebecca finally realizes what she has done, her guilt feelings exacerbate her regressive tendencies. Eventually these unconscious feelings cause her suicide or as Thomas R. Whitaker says about the result of Kroll's disclosure, "In effect, he tempts her toward death by inadvertently suggesting the possibility of incest" (44). Moreover, Rebecca is probably disturbed and horrified by Kroll's revelation because she viewed Dr. West as her mentor and friend. It is even more horrifying for Rebecca and the audience to ponder the idea that although she did not know that the doctor was her father, he almost surely knew that she was his daughter.

According to Freud, Rebecca repeats her usurping actions with Rosmer and Beata, who for her are father and mother substitutes respectively. She drives Beata to suicide to "get rid of the wife and mother, that she might take her place with the husband and father" ("CT" 106). In essence, Rebecca's action toward the Rosmers is "a compulsive replica of her relations with her mother and Dr. West" ("CT" 106). Rank also analyzed Rosmersholm and agreed with Freud's ideas about the character of Rebecca. For him, "Rebekka West loved not only her biological father but also loved the father type in her life" (Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage f.n. 600).

Rebecca is unaware that during her life at Rosmersholm she has developed a conscience. For example, to his credit
Rosmer tries to assert his will and overcome his various psychological problems when at the end of Act Two, he asks Rebecca to marry him. However, she recoils in horror that she should "take Beata's place" (276). Rebecca is now exposed to a different set of values than she was while living with Dr. West. With him, "she had become a freethinker and contemner of religious morality," and at Rosmersholm, "she is transformed by her love for Rosmer into a being with a conscience and an ideal" (Freud, "CT" 107). In other words, Rebecca thinks if she marries Rosmer she will repeat her incest, and the thought horrifies her.

In Act Two, as Rebecca begins to feel guilty over her role in Beata's death, she threatens to commit suicide if Rosmer keeps pressing her to marry him. She knows that she and Rosmer can never be happy because his idea of happiness is to "enjoy" a "sense of calm and happy innocence," and she is not innocent (274). She lost all semblance of innocence when she deliberately destroyed Beata. In addition, "she cannot be the child of Rosmer's child-love," because she committed incest and "as child, was not protected by her father but injured by him" (Lyons, H.I 111). From a feminist viewpoint it is interesting that Rebecca says she will stay at Rosmersholm "as long as Mr. Rosmer feels I can be any use and comfort to him" (230). No matter how hard she tries to act creatively and achieve authentic selfhood, Rebecca never fully reaches her goal because she views
herself as a thing to be used rather than as a woman to be loved. And of course, she has been used, first by her father and then by Rosmer, who is a father substitute to her. Instead of developing her own creative ideas, Rebecca has absorbed theirs: that is, her father's sybaritic liberalism and the outworn conservatism of the Rosmer tradition.

After Kroll tells Rebecca the truth about her parentage, she blurts out to him and Rosmer how she "lured" Beata to the millrace by hinting of a pregnancy. We must believe her because Kroll has already mentioned that Beata had come to him and urged that "John must marry Rebecca" at once (260). In addition, because of her guilt over her personal past and the new revelations, Rebecca realizes that her relationship with Rosmer is doomed. She then tries to destroy it altogether in order to return to Rosmer his "joyful innocence" (294). Rebecca succeeds because she reaffirms everything Kroll had said previously to Rosmer: "I know how easily you let yourself be influenced by the people you associate with" (260). In other words, Rosmer cannot act creatively because he believes everything people tell him without formulating his own opinions. By taking full blame for Beata's death and thus destroying his image of her, Rebecca can now free Rosmer from guilt. She does not yet realize however, that he has directed her life as much as she has his.
When Rosmer leaves, Rebecca suffers traumatic death fear that her selfhood has gone with him: "I don't care what happens to me. It doesn't much mattter" (298). She believes that the destructive forces of Rosmersholm are trying to vanquish her. These forces are symbolized by the mythical white horses that are always seen when someone dies on the estate. Rebecca believes rightly that the "Rosmer view of life" has "infected" and "poisoned" her will because it "ennobles" the soul, "but it kills happiness" (306).

To her credit, Rebecca bravely tries to overcome her fears, leave Rosmersholm, and return to her northern homeland. Often she attempts to overcome her life fear by standing on her own and facing new challenges. This is in direct contrast to Rosmer's cowardice, for until the end of the play, he never faces anything directly. It is almost comic how he comes scurrying home after all his old friends tell him that he is not up to the "task of making the world noble" (303). The scene anticipates Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh, wherein the denizens of Harry Hope's bar all run back to their safe haven after they, too, go out in the world and become frightened by it. Like Rosmer, they discover that they cannot stand alone.

Before she is overcome by guilt about her dual pasts, which worsens her regressive symptoms, Rebecca asserts her creative will quite effectively. No matter that her intentions are evil, she does mastermind Beata's destruction
and has attained her goal to be the mistress of Rosmersholm. She also exposes Rosmer to her liberal ways and attempts to help him politically. Furthermore, she believes that she can "carry on" the work of Rosmer's liberal tutor, Brendel (295). Rebecca fails to realize, however, that so far Rosmer has not implemented any of Brendel's teachings but stays buried in his own study at Rosmersholm. Yet she never loses faith in Rosmer and urges him to come out of his seclusion and develop "a new relationship to the world outside." She wants him to "live, work, act," and "not sit here brooding over insoluble riddles" (274). After all, Rosmer must be freed "from the grip of his tradition" and "the sterility of the Rosmer heritage" (Holtan 58).

Although she has removed Beata, Rebecca cannot pry Rosmer from his past, either his ancestral past or that which involves Beata. At the end of Act Three, as he leaves her and goes to town, Rebecca notices that he still cannot cross the footbridge (298). Therefore, all her efforts to create a new Rosmer have been in vain. Beata is still in control. Like the white horses of Rosmersholm, she comes "rushing out from the darkness. From the silence" (274).

From a Rankian perspective, Rebecca should have created herself before she undertook Rosmer's individuation. As she prepares to leave Rosmersholm, she tells him that when she first came there she "still had a free will" and "wasn't afraid of human relationships" (304). However, she
developed a "blinding, uncontrollable passion" for him, which she says "paralysed my will" (304). After Beata's death, the passion subsided, and Rebecca grew to love Rosmer in a non-sexual way. But now Rebecca herself has adopted the high standards of Rosmersholm, and her past makes it impossible for her to stay with Rosmer.

Now he is distraught not only because Rebecca refuses to marry him, but also because she has destroyed his faith in her and in himself. He realizes that his project of "ennoblement" is a "delusion" (307). Rosmer is wrong, however. He has at least "ennobled" Rebecca. She loves him so much and has such a desire to atone for her sins that she accepts his challenge to her courage to "go the way Beata went" (313). But since they both sinned against Beata, expiation must come from the two of them. They realize that in view of their pasts, they now must regress back to the womb and to Beata, their mother.

Thus the past associations of the characters and the effect such associations have on their present behavior are prominent elements in Rosmersholm as they are in Brand and The Master Builder. The past, as Ibsen presents it, destroys the characters' abilities for creative action because it evokes their hidden guilt feelings and thus fosters their regressive inclinations. In essence, the past reminds characters of the primal trauma they suffered at their initial separation from the mother. It also
aggravates their life and death fears: on the one hand, characters fear the isolation of individuation attained by separation from the past (life fear); on the other hand, they feel as if the past is smothering them and hampering their creativity (death fear).

Like his use of the past to determine present action, Rosmer and Rebecca's plunge into the millrace is another instance of Ibsen's popular motifs and themes. The protagonists' fall or plunge from a high position to a low or encompassing one is not necessarily a negative image for Ibsen. He once wrote a poem in which the speaker plunges like a seabird "in depths of dream's still, soothing sea" (Poems 146). The speaker begs God not to "disturb my trances, / up there means finis for me!" (146). In another poem, the speaker states that "In the depth, too, there is peace, / peace eternal, wilderness; (Poems 28).

For James Hurt, "Rosmer's and Rebecca's suicidal leap" is actually "a mystical and ecstatic experience" (19). The text reinforces that idea as the couple enacts their death-marriage ritual and yet show no trace of sadness. This sense of "joy, peace, and release," is also manifested in the endings of Brand and The Master Builder (Hurt 20). The suicidal "happy" deaths of Rosmer, Rebecca and other characters in Ibsen and O'Neill also emphasize the paradoxical nature of Rankian theory in which death and the return to the mother is both a sign of uncreative regression
and also a joyful anticipation of the peace and pleasure of the womb.

In Rankian terms, Rebecca and Rosmer's plunge into the swirling water is like a return to the amniotic fluid of the womb. Their descent is reminiscent of Brand's fall into the snow or that of Rubek and Irene in *When We Dead Awaken*, (1899). Rank believes that dreams of such regressions are reproductions of "one's own birth or interuterine situation (in water)" (TR 79). The psychologist Jeffry J. Andresen posits that the descent into the mother has "the purpose of procuring a treasure vital to some ambition" and "is the descent in pursuit of transformation" (408). In the case of Rebecca and Rosmer, the purpose of their plunge is to be reborn without guilt and transformed into their authentic selves.

Before their simultaneous regression and the synthesis of their wills in death, Rosmer and Rebecca, like Brand, are also hampered in the individuation process by the constraints of their nineteenth-century bourgeois society. It has been noted previously how the liberal and conservative traditions of their families have affected the lives of Rosmer and Rebecca, but they are also beset by the same strong and angry forces in the local government and the press.

The leader of the conservatives is Kroll, who is rector of the local school. He has not seen Rosmer and Rebecca
since Beata's death but now wants to use Rosmer for his own political ends, one of which is to root out the "vicious heresies" inherent in the liberalism that is now sweeping Norway. When Kroll asks Rosmer to edit the local conservative newspaper, the County Telegraph, the former pastor refuses because he is now a liberal. Besides, he has lost his faith so he is no one to root out heresies. Furthermore, though Rosmer unconsciously still embraces his familial ways, on the conscious level he supports the idea that "the Rosmer tradition, founded upon force," really is "a repressive order that has no right to deny the forces and passions raised against it" (Johnston, The Ibsen Cycle 217).

By embracing liberalism, Rosmer wishes to atone for the rigid and unfeeling politics of his forefathers. He will do this by creating a "little light and happiness" in the world (262). But he has no idea how to accomplish his mission because he is really childlike and "an ingenuous fool," as Kroll succinctly points out (262). Kroll understands well that Rosmer has no conception of his own selfhood so is not qualified to save mankind. As Derek Russel Davis states, "Rosmer's concept of ennobling seems to have been fantasy not defined in terms of realities or practicalities" (91).

For example, when hints of Rosmer and Rebecca's alleged affair appear in the County Telegraph, instead of fighting the allegations, Rosmer merely talks vaguely about awakening "dishonorable men," to "self-knowledge," and leading "every
will” to strive "forwards--upwards--each by its own natural and predestined path" (283). Immediately after that inspiring speech, Rosmer tells Rebecca that this glorious procession will not be led by him or "for" him (284).

Kroll also realizes that Rosmer's ideas have come from Rebecca and are not his own. He knows Rosmer's character better than anyone and tells him "You're so impressionable" (245). However, Kroll is not really crushed by Rosmer's refusal of the editor's post; he would be happy if he would just lend the Rosmer name to the conservative cause and its organ, the County Telegraph. This name, according to Kroll, has been held for two centuries by Rosmer's ancestors, who were "men of God and men of war, respected servants of their country," and "every one of them a man of honour who knew his duty" (238). Again, as in Brand and many of his other plays, Ibsen villifies the concept of "duty." He does so because he believes the concept hampers will assertion and is too often the province of martinets and pathetic people.

If he had not known it before, Kroll quickly surmises that Rebecca is the reason for Rosmer's renunciation of his heritage, and of course he is right. When Ibsen was once asked his advice on casting the play, he told the director that Rebecca does not "force Rosmer forward." Rather she "lures" him (qtd. in Michael Meyer, Ibsen 568). Kroll, no stranger to Rebecca's alluring qualities himself, castigates Rosmer for being "lured" into apostasy (261). Essentially,
Kroll's "dramatic function is to make Rosmer realize how deeply he has alienated himself from his background and how little he has realized his future" (Hans Georg Meyer 116).

To rescue Rosmer and return him to his rightful place in the bourgeois community, Kroll sets out to destroy Rebecca. He achieves his purpose when he tells her the facts about her background. He also ruins Rosmer and Rebecca by informing them about Beata's jealousy. By engendering their guilty feelings, Kroll is the real culprit in their deaths. Of course, Rosmer is a fool to reject Rebecca's love for Kroll's promise of a dubious position in local society. He looks even more foolish when he comes running back to her after local society rejects him.

Rosmer and Rebecca also have their troubles with the radical faction of society. Peter Mortensgaard, the editor of the liberal newspaper, the Morning Star, is supposedly the epitome of enlightenment and progress. Like Kroll, he also wants to use Rosmer as a front for his own views. He plans to announce in his paper that Rosmer, one of the conservative clergymen of the area, has now devoted himself "to the cause of liberalism." This endorsement will of course give Mortensgaard's party "a strong moral boost" (264-65). The editor is almost speechless when Rosmer informs him that he is no longer with the Church, either as a pastor or as a believer. It develops that Mortensgaard is not so liberal after all because he tells Rosmer that he
really cannot support "anyone or anything that's anti-Church" (266).

By enlisting Rosmer's aid, Mortensgaard is a shameless pragmatist. When Rosmer was practicing his ministry, he castigated the editor for an illicit liaison with a married woman, and Mortensgaard lost his job (237, 268). Now Rosmer rather sheepishly regrets his former harshness, especially since he himself is presently the target of town gossip. Evidently Mortensgaard is not disturbed by dealing with his former detractor. Now, however, he repays Rosmer by cautioning him that since he is no longer a member of the establishment, he should watch his own personal life, especially since he lives with Rebecca without being married to her.

Mortensgaard is a character who stands in direct contrast to Rosmer and Rebecca. At least they acknowledge their guilty consciences; he has no conscience. He is also not neurotic and will go through life without birth trauma anxieties getting in his way. Ibsen shows us that Mortensgaard will be successful and "lord and master of the future" because unlike Rosmer and Rebecca, "he never wants to do more than lies within his power." Moreover, he "knows how to live life without ideals" (310). As Robert Raphael explains, "Mortensgaard can always survive because he is not dependent on illusion of any kind" (126). Later Ibsen in The Wild Duck and O'Neill in The Iceman Cometh will posit
that illusion has some positive value in human psychological behavior. In Rankian terms, illusions help those people who, unlike Mortensgaard, cannot overcome anxiety.

Rebecca is also swept up in the Rosmer world of illusion, and she tries to maintain her selfhood in spite of it. Rebecca's attitude is opposite from Beata's who wanted the Rosmer way of life to survive even at the expense of her own. In that sense, even though she is not an actual character in the play, Beata anticipates the later Aline Solness of The Master Builder, who also invariably put her "duty" to society before any other consideration.

In Rosmersholm, Kroll and Mortensgaard are effective representatives of a society that thwarts the creativity of the protagonist. They are somewhat reminiscent of Mayor and Provost, society's advocates in Brand. They are, however, much more fully drawn than are those characters. For example, we know nothing about the backgrounds of Mayor and Provost, whereas Kroll and Mortensgaard have families and careers as well as names. Because they are fully-developed, strong characters in their own right, these figures are worthy foes of Rosmer and Rebecca and effectively manage their downfall.

Thus their success rate is better than that of the earlier pair, Mayor and Provost. Brand courageously defies his antagonists, but Rosmer allows them to bully him and Rebecca, and the villains almost destroy their relationship.
Yet at the end of any Ibsen play, no matter how bravely the protagonist fights society, it is always the winner. For example, in order to defy their oppressive community and maintain a semblance of selfhood, Rosmer and Rebecca must sacrifice their lives. Ibsen once said that "The state is the curse of the individual," and he supported that viewpoint throughout his career (Letters 108).

As in Brand, Ibsen uses myth quite often in Rosmersholm. From a Rankian standpoint, the myths highlight the characters' struggles with the birth trauma anxieties emanating from their unconscious minds. First, there are the white horses previously mentioned. According to Orley I. Holtan, "The horse as a warning of death is a common motif in Scandinavian folklore and mythology" (55). In Rosmersholm, the white horses foreshadow the deaths of Rosmer and Rebecca, but they also symbolize the dead of Rosmersholm as well as death itself and perhaps even the dead values of the Rosmer way of life. In addition, the churning foam of the millrace suggests the horses' flowing manes flying in the wind, and the horses' white color evokes images of sepulchers and bones. Even before the audience knows about the horses, Rebecca's white shawl is a symbol foreshadowing their imminent arrival.

In Norse mythology, the horse is also associated with the mother-goddess, who is named either Frigg or Freja. Although the goddess is also connected with a boar, her
equine "connection seems to be a more sinister one, linked with the goddess in her terrible aspect and with the darker side of her cult" (Davidson 89-93). In Rosmersholm, she appears beneath the rushing waters of the millrace as Beata waits to preside over the ritual sacrifice of Rosmer and Rebecca with the ghostly white horses as her acolytes.

When Rebecca is immersed finally in the haunting ambience of Rosmersholm, she too feels the presence of the white horses. But even before her arrival on the estate she has her own important connections with myth. First, according to Per Schelde Jacobsen, because of her sealskin trunk Rebecca can be grouped with a Norwegian seal-maiden "who is a close cousin of the mermaid to whom Ibsen compares Rebecca" (3). This comparison links Rebecca to the sea, an abode of the primal mother and thus a place of death as well as one of comfort. Rebecca's mermaid persona is also symbolic of her life and death fears because as mermaid she is "torn between land and sea longing, and her death is a symbolic enactment of the impossibility of reconciling her conflict" (Jacobsen and Leavy 193). In psychological terms, she cannot go forward or backward because she is immobilized by her conflicting longings to go both forward to creative self-assertion or backward into the dark void of the water.

Secondly, like Gerd in Brand, Rebecca is a troll figure. She is from Finnmark, a region in northern Norway which is for Norwegians "the home of demons, trolls, and witches"
(Holtan 56). Like other troll characters in Ibsen, Rebecca's dramatic function is to undermine the creative will of the protagonist. Rebecca comes to Rosmersholm in order to "bewitch" its inhabitants, especially Rosmer. Yet the estate and Rosmer bewitch her instead. Muriel Braddock makes an interesting remark about the situation when she characterizes the Rosmer-Rebecca romance as if "Cleopatra fell in love with Hamlet" (114). In other words, the erotic seducer has herself been seduced by the naive dreamer.

At least Rebecca has a modicum of self-knowledge because at one point in the play, she calls herself a "sea-troll" (314). She feels as if she is detrimental to Rosmer because, like some sea monster she holds back his "ship" or creative project, which would carry him forward toward self-development (314). Brendel agrees with her and calls her the "bewitching lady from the sea" (310). However, neither Rebecca nor Brendel realize that Rosmer's psychologically paralyzed state is the result of his own life and death fears and is really no fault of hers.

In the end, Rebecca loses her power as a troll figure "because Rosmersholm has crushed the troll within her by giving her a human conscience" (Anderson 361). Yet whether troll or ethical woman, Rebecca is responsible ultimately for the downfall of the house of Rosmer because she set in motion the events which caused Rosmer's guilt. If she had not come to Rosmersholm, perhaps Beata would still be alive.
Besides Rebecca, there are three other troll figures in
*Rosmersholm*, and they all wish to destroy her. First, there
is Kroll, whose name is very close to troll (Leavy notes the
importance of proper names in Ibsen, 180). According to
Brian Johnston, Kroll represents "the despotic force of
reaction and unenlightenment" as well as "a more primitive
development of consciousness. . ." (IC 231). Essentially,
he is a revenge figure who is determined to remove Rebecca
from Rosmer's life. One might think he hates Rebecca for
her treatment of his sister, but he never helped Beata
during her lifetime, so it is unlikely that he now would
avenge her memory. Also, Kroll himself is a spurned suitor
of Rebecca's so is possibly seeking revenge because of her
cold treatment of him.

Yet these reasons are not really the ones why Kroll acts
as an "agent of catastrophe" (Frye 216). He desires
Rebecca's downfall because he knows her liberal background
and sees it as a threat to everything represented by the
Rosmer tradition. According to Kroll, Rebecca's free-
thinking ideas have caused Rosmer's apostasy. Actually,
Kroll is more sympathetic and closer to the Rosmer way of
life than its scion ever was. The narrow-minded headmaster
refuses to allow venerable traditions to be usurped by an
upstart minx of a woman with an unsavory moral background.

Kroll achieves his demonic purpose by engendering
Rebecca's regressive tendencies. He does this by causing
her to have guilt feelings not about her illegitimacy but about her incestuous relationship with her father. From the point at which he reveals her past, Rebecca gradually loses her creative will, and she knows that at last Rosmersholm "has broken" her (302). What Kroll in his wickedness does not foresee is that the last of the Rosmers will also join Rebecca in her watery grave.

Brendel is another character whose demeanor suggests a "satanic or Mephistophelian identity" (Johnston, IC 235). Again, Ibsen uses names to denote the personalities of his characters. In Norwegian "brende" means heat, as does Brendel's nom de plume, Hetman since "hete" is also Norwegian for heat (Johnston, IC 219). Brendel's diabolic qualities are not immediately apparent. Like Kroll, he is hostile to Rebecca and also wants her removed from Rosmer's life, possibly because he thinks she will destroy his own good relationship with his former student. After years away from Rosmersholm, Brendel has fallen on hard times and needs Rosmer's admiration to fortify his own ego and fill his empty pockets.

Although Brendel gave him the benefit of his liberal teachings and tried to steer him away from the strict Rosmer tradition, Rosmer never acts on his tutor's advice but sits complacently within his family's estate. Actually, he cannot relate the two worlds of his existence: "the dark, inner, private womb-world of Rosmersholm" to "the light,
external public world" (Saari 110). Evidently Brendel is a failure as a teacher as he is at everything else he undertakes.

Brendel cannot achieve self-realization so he is in no position to help anyone else. His creative will is moribund if not dead. He suffers severe regression as shown by his longing "for the great void" (309). Like Ejnar in Brand, who is "the aesthete without intellect and later the evangelist with more bitterness than conviction, so Brendel is the quasi-revolutionary without moral stamina: both human wrecks" (Clurman 148). Actually, Brendel is an older version of Rosmer--much fancy talk and very little action.

Early in the play, Brendel is a rather comic figure as he appears in his old, tattered clothes and carrying a walking stick. He does not even recognize Rosmer but mistakes Kroll for his former student, showing that he is so detached from reality that he cannot even remember Kroll as an enemy from years ago. More important, by setting an example of laziness for Rosmer, Brendel stifled the young man's creative will and made him a daydreamer like himself. Although Brendel was formerly creative since Rebecca is familiar with his books, now his projects, like Rosmer's, are all in his head. As Brendel explains, "I have sated myself in secret dreams with a rapture that drugged my senses," but when asked why he did not share these dreams he replies, "The dull toil of the scribe has always repelled
me. And why should I profane my own ideals when I can enjoy them pure and undisturbed?" (243). Through his example, Brendel drags the admiring and impressionable Rosmer down to his uncreative standard of living. In reality, "his dream is void and so is Rosmer's" (Lyons, HI 114).

In Act Four, Brendel is no longer a comic figure and his true diabolical nature emerges. Having been thrown out of the University Debating Society or "virtuous assembly," he can be identified with "such archetypal figures as Hephaistos, Lucifer, and Loki, all associated with fire," (Johnston, IC 234). Now he is the catalyst of the action as he suggests to Rosmer the idea of Rebecca's suicide. Rosmer wants proof of her love, and Brendel's suggestion that she should mutilate herself gives Rosmer the idea of asking her to duplicate Beata's suicide (313). In addition, by using the sexual symbols of the ear and the finger, Brendel highlights the lovers' sexual dilemma: they cannot have a true sexual relationship because of their guilt over Beata's death, but because they are really in love, they cannot go on as companions either.

In essence, Brendel brings the couple's life and death fears to the fore. He appears from nowhere "like a figure out of an absurdist comedy by Samuel Beckett, to articulate thoughts at the back of their minds and flesh them out of the dialogue" (Davis and Thomas 96). Rosmer and Rebecca cannot go forward or backward in life so they must die to
relieve the torment of their immobility.

Brendel is Lucifer to Rosmer and Rebecca's Adam and Eve. Like their biblical counterparts, Rosmer and Rebecca cannot withstand temptation and so follow their tempter into the dark. After the satanic Brendel departs, Rebecca notes the changed atmosphere as she "takes a deep breath: Oh, how close and suffocating it is in here!" (311). In any case, Brendel's "lurid, 'satanic' rebellion is as redundant in the world of Mortensgaard, the man of utility, as is Rosmer's dream of ennobling mankind" (Johnston, LC 247). In their materialistic nineteenth-century world, both teacher and student are depressing failures.

Ibsen's use of myth shows the universality of his characters as well as the destructive, ambivalent forces welling up from their unconscious minds. His trolls and demons are also symbols of the mysterious forces that hover near Rosmersholm. Furthermore, Ibsen's interest in myth also relates nicely to the Rankian theory of birth trauma anxiety as an unconscious determiner of an individual's psychological behavior. In Rosmersholm, these actions depend on the close relationship Rebecca and Rosmer have with the mother figure.

By choosing to die and pass judgment on themselves, Rebecca and Rosmer finally assert their creative wills. No longer are they bound by society's restrictions or their own real or imagined guilt. Yet they do not realize that they
have already "ennobled" each other. Through the interaction of their wills and personalities, Rosmer and Rebecca transform each other: she gives him a sense of self; he gives her a conscience and a sense of responsibility for her actions. Rosmer now has the courage that eluded him all his life. This is apparent when he finally crosses the footbridge to join Rebecca in their death-marriage ritual.

Yet the marriage is undertaken "for the right reasons: to affirm love and joy in the meeting of two independent spirits, neither dominating the other, neither submitting to the demands of the other, neither dying as a sacrificial lure to the other" (Durbach, "Temptation to Err: The Denouement of Rosmersholm" 484).

At last, Rosmer and Rebecca can act creatively because now they are the sole judges of their actions. In a sense, their marriage is a merger of the nineteenth-century ideal of Apollonian order exemplified by Rosmer with Dionysian passion embodied in the character of Rebecca. Their spiritual marriage also recalls Rank's ideas about sexuality: "The ego no longer needs to split itself up, but can perceive its wholeness as part of the other, a solution which comes nearest to the original relation to the mother, and accordingly is so blessed, that is, free from fear" (WT 139).
CHAPTER V

THE MASTER BUILDER

Living is a war with the trolls.
In the depths of the mind and heart;
Writing means summoning oneself
To court and playing the judge's part.
(Ibsen, Letters 187)

Ibsen once said that Halvard Solness was "a man somewhat akin to me," but what did he really mean? (Michael Meyer, Ibsen 697). How alike are Solness and his creator? Of course we cannot ascertain how accurately the master builder reflects Ibsen's personality, but in a Rankian analysis of the play, the comparison is significant because it shows clearly the differences between a genuine artist like Ibsen, and a miscarried artist like Solness, who because he is neurotic, cannot act creatively.

It is true that like Solness Ibsen had a May-December romance, but unlike his character he was not destroyed by it. Although each man saw his sweetheart as a bird of prey, Ibsen used his friendship with Emilie Bardach to create The Master Builder ("I got hold of her for my play"), whereas Solness died because of Hilde Wangel's hysterical prodding.
Meyer, Ibsen 626). Like Rebecca West, Hilde is alluring, but unlike the unfortunate Rebecca, she escapes unscathed from her machinations.

The Master Builder is the story of Halvard Solness, a middle-aged builder who tries simultaneously to assert his creative will, recapture his youth, and assuage his guilt. Like John Rosmer, Solness feels guilty because he believes he is the cause of his wife's unhappiness. Just at the moment of his deepest despair, Hilde Wangel, a young woman with whom he had a romantic encounter ten years ago, re-enters his life. She renews his self-esteem by giving him courage to defy God by attempting an impossible feat. Solness believes that God is his enemy and caused his family's destruction because Solness would not devote his career to building churches. Like Brand, Solness views himself as the definitive interpreter of God's will, and also "like Brand before him, interprets God as wanting 'all or nothing'" (Elliott 367).

As David Thomas notes, "Hilde represents the impossible, for which Solness has always longed" (128). But she is not strong enough for him to overcome his anxieties. She pushes him too far in his quest for selfhood, and he dies trying to live up to her expectations of him. Like Brand and Rosmer, "his dramatic predecessors, Solness is precariously balanced on the edge of life" (Valency 207). Yet, as he attempts to achieve the impossible, he attains a victory of sorts.
Solness succumbs to Hilde's charms because he is a neurotic, "a personality denying its own will, not accepting itself as an individual" (Rank, WT 49). Like Brand and Rosmer, Solness has strong inferiority feelings and destructive reactions because he "cannot really accept the self as given" (WT 154). Actually, such an individual has severe birth trauma anxieties, which cause regressive tendencies and life and death fears. The outstanding Rankian connection between Ibsen and Solness is that Ibsen, the true artist, is able to project and transform his own fears and anxieties onto his neurotic characters. On the other hand, Solness and many other Ibsen protagonists are unable to overcome their various traumas and consequently are destroyed by them.

If not a portrait of the true artist Ibsen, The Master Builder represents the would-be artist Bygmester Solness. Solness created a successful career as a builder after his wife Aline's ancestral "castle" was destroyed by fire, a fire he did not cause but one he wished for secretly. He suffered greatly when his wish came true. Because he built a housing development on Aline's ruined property, Solness feels guilty about advancing himself professionally. According to Rank, such neurotic perceptions of guilt must be overcome before an individual can attain psychological wholeness (WT 9).
Like Rosmer with Beata and Rebecca, Solness is torn between guilt over his treatment of Aline and his desire for happiness with Hilde, who is a "troll" woman like Rebecca. However, the Solness-Hilde relationship is not as balanced as that of Rosmer and Rebecca, wherein the characters often exchange the roles of victim and predator. In the present action of *The Master Builder*, Hilde is the predator.

Solness fears Hilde because she is young and "Youth means retribution" (163). He also fears his young employee, Ragnar Brovik, who because he wants to further his own career, may want to destroy Solness professionally. These two young people personify Solness's fear of mortality, the Rankian "death-fear" which is essentially the fear of losing one's identity (*WT* 124).

Because he fears Ragnar's creativity, Solness loses confidence in his own abilities and suffers life fear or fear of individuation. It is noteworthy that Solness's first name Halvard means "halfness" (Hans Georg Meyer 142). The definition is apt because he is the victim of a divided self. He wants "to 'rise high,' but an unconquerable 'dizziness' drags him down into anxiety and fear which prevents him from living self-confidently--'lighthearted and free'" (Hans Georg Meyer 142). As a result, Solness becomes immobilized and unable to act because he is a neurotic who, "to an even greater degree suffers from this double fear," that is the life and death fears (Rank, *WT* 124). Thus
Solness experiences the neurotic's fear of "both going backward and of going forward," that is he is immobilized because he is torn between "these poles of fear" (WT 124).

All his fears finally overpower him when at Hilde's urging, although he suffers from vertigo, Solness attempts to place a wreath over the tower of his newly-completed house. After he successfully does so, however, he is aware suddenly of the crowd below, especially of the faces of Hilde and Ragnar staring up at him. Now Solness is completely overwhelmed by his life and death fears. He climbed the tower in order not to be dragged down and lose his creativity, but now that he is there, he realizes that he is all alone. He becomes immobilized by life fear, and his regressive tendencies cause his plunge into the womblike stonepit.

Before his fatal fall, however, Solness makes a determined effort to overcome his fears and anxieties and exert his creative will. Unlike the cowardly Rosmer, who never takes any meaningful action except when he commits suicide, Solness tries to create himself through his death-defying feat on the tower. This act should not be construed as a suicide because Solness intends to descend from the tower after the wreath-laying ceremony: "Then I shall wave my hat--and come down to the ground--and do as I told Him" (213). In other words, by defying God, he is going to prove himself to the world.
Solness is first inspired to assert himself by Hilde, who suddenly appears at his home and reminds him of a sexual experience they had on the occasion of another wreath-laying ceremony ten years ago at Lysanger. Solness seems to have no recollection of the moment when he kissed the nubile, thirteen-year old Hilde "many, many times" (158). Nevertheless, Hilde has now re-awakened his long buried sexual and spiritual emotions. In turn, she wants her "kingdom" or renewed sexuality, which Solness had aroused in her at Lysanger. He can also achieve his own selfhood, which he cannot realize in his present personal and professional life. However, Solness recognizes that Hilde is a "falcon" or bird of prey, who seeks a victim on whom she can objectify her own fears and anxieties and thus relieve them (187). Yet because she has such faith in his creative powers, Solness ignores her predation. He thinks that she can give him the youth which he both longs for and fears.

Here we see a clear example of birth trauma anxiety at work. Solness wants to regress to youth, and ultimately to the primal environment, yet he fears doing so because he remembers the pain involved at separation from it. Here again, the seemingly contradictory nature of Rankian birth trauma theory is apparent. In any case, Solness's feat on the tower is more Hilde's triumph than his because he dies, and she experiences such sexual ecstasy that she does not
even notice his tragic fall (216).

Hilde's first appearance foreshadows the end of the play. Attired in both mountainy and nautical gear, she visits Solness both to elevate and downgrade him. As Charles Lyons notes, "The freedom which Hilde offers her master builder is death: drowning in the depths and falling from the heights" ("The Master Builder as Drama of the Self" 336).

Solness establishes a relationship with Hilde partly because of his uneasy status in local society. Before her appearance, he felt that his successful career was about to disintegrate. His employees, the Brovik family, present a daily challenge to his ego. First, he is jealous of Ragnar's reputation as a builder with "new" and "original" ideas (139). Solness cannot accept Ragnar's creative projects because then people will think that he just builds "old-fashioned junk" (139). In addition, Ragnar evokes Solness's death fear of losing his individuality as well as his life fear or lack of confidence in his expertise as a builder. Solness also sexually exploits Kaja Brovik, his bookkeeper and Ragnar's fiancée. Ragnar (who knows what is going on) dares not leave Solness's shop and set up his own business (140).

Not only does he fear Ragnar but Solness is also intimidated by old Brovik who naturally wants his son Ragnar to succeed. Brovik is disheartened because although Ragnar
has worked many years for the master builder, Solness has never given the young man "a single word of encouragement" (137). Moreover, Ragnar is sought professionally by the local young bourgeois community which is impressed by his innovative building plans. Unlike Solness, who says "I don't want to have anything to do with people I don't know" (136), Ragnar has good rapport with the community for "he knows the family" with whom he is doing business (138).

Ironically, Solness owes part of his prosperity to Brovik who taught him a lot about the building business. Yet according to Brovik, Solness repaid his kindness by putting him out of business and "plenty of others" as well (137). Solness "sees his fate forecast in the career and the debility of the old builder he has dispossessed" (Durbach, LR 130). In essence, Brovik represents Solness's death fear because the master builder thinks he will lose his identity as the old man has lost his. Because he cannot re-create himself through his son, Brovik suffers severe separation trauma and retreats to primal oblivion by suffering a stroke.

In order to combat his own regressive tendencies, Solness has decided to please no one but himself. Ten years ago at Lysanger, as he placed a wreath high on the church spire, he told God that he would build no more churches after the family fire, for which, as noted previously, he blamed God. Instead he would build homes "for people to
live in" (211). However, that project did not satisfy his creative will either. According to Solness, all the local young families want in a home is really so much "rubbish" and "people have no use for the homes they live in" (135, 211). Torn between pleasing God and society, Solness realizes that despite everything he has done, "It all adds up to nothing. Nothing. Nothing" (211).

When his moribund creative will is rejuvenated by Hilde, Solness promises her that he will build her a "castle in the air" with "a true foundation" (204). These romantic dreamers do not understand that air is without foundation as are their own dreams. In this play, "with its empty nurseries and uninhabitable houses and illusionary castles, the impossibility of constructing such an innovative architecture underscores the tragedy of Solness's and Hilde's romanticism" (Durbach, I R 136).

Another factor in Solness's uneasy relations with society is his perhaps unconscious feeling about his own inferior social status. Dr. Herdal reminds him that "You began as a poor country lad, and here you are at the top of your profession" (150). Solness himself admits that his parents were "pious country people" and because of them he "thought building churches was the finest work a man could do" (209). Thus even as a young man, Solness was unable to act in accordance with his own creative will. Also, he probably feels a little sensitive about lacking any formal
architectural training, for when Hilde asks him why he does not call himself "an architect" as the other local builders do, he replies that "I've never really studied it properly" (177). Of course, Solness's neurotic insecurity prevents him from crediting old Brovik or anyone else for his success: "Most of what I know I've found out for myself" (177). According to Rank, a neurotic like Solness cannot accept himself as he is: "On the one hand he criticizes himself to excess, on the other he idealizes himself to excess. . ." (A and A 26).

In Act One, Solness's bravado is undermined gradually. When he first appears, his somewhat dandified apparel is a sharp contrast to the stained and shabby clothes of his former mentor Brovik, though not to those of his nemesis, the "well-dressed" Ragnar (133). Solness's sartorial efforts to play the successful businessman fail to hide his inner turmoil. His confidence erodes as old Brovik tells him that Ragnar could "get a commission right away" (137). Brovik intimidates him so much that at the end of the scene in Solness's office, the master builder tells the old man that there is nothing he can do for Ragnar because he, Solness, "can't create myself anew" (139). His life fear is so strong that he dreads new challenges. Then he would have to face the world and stand on his own merits, which he is deathly afraid to do.
Solness's confidence further disintegrates when Dr. Herdal reminds him that he has been very lucky, and Solness uncannily senses "that some time my luck must change" (150). Some young person may come to the door, displace him and "that will be the end for master builder Solness" (150). No sooner does he utter these words, when he and Herdal hear a knock at the door, and Hilde rather melodramatically enters the office. Before long she will demand her "kingdom" from Solness. She is the instrument of his destruction, but through her support she inspires him to create himself through an act of supreme courage.

Solness's sense of social inferiority may also stem from a marriage to a much wealthier person than himself. After all, the country bumpkin has bound himself to a woman who has inherited a "castle" (149). Solness lived in his wife Aline's "ancestral home," and as he tells Hilde, "To look at it from the outside, it was a dark ugly crate. But indoors it was nice and cosy enough" (176).

For Solness, and perhaps for Aline too, the house was a womb-symbol because houses are formed, like towns and forts "to imitate the womb" (Rank, TB 88). Perhaps Solness may have wanted Aline's house destroyed because it symbolized his wife's infantile ties to her parents, but also because it reminded him unconsciously of his own desire to regress. In essence, Solness wished the house's ruin so that he could conquer his birth-trauma fears and act creatively. He
failed to do so because the house's cosiness reminded him of his prenatal life in the womb. Therefore, he hoped that a fire would start from a crack he saw in the chimney, and the house would be consumed. Then he could "climb my way to the top" by carving up Aline's property into building lots (183). In Rankian terms, Solness escaped from the "womb" and was able to act creatively, at least temporarily. Because of his guilt, however, his creative phase was short-lived.

For her part, Aline upholds the values of the materialistic bourgeois society her husband supposedly despises even though he has made money from it. Before the fire, she enjoyed looking at "all the old portraits" and "the old silk dresses that had been in our family for generations" (198). Aline always upholds the nineteenth-century bourgeois concern for material objects as well as its overemphasis on "duty." Because she is more concerned with duty than with spiritual ideals such as love and kindness, she destroys the lives of her husband and children. When Hilde enters his life Solness, who "cannot live without joy," sees his chance to escape from the "corpse" who is Aline as well as from all the other societal relationships that plague him (201). He believes that with Hilde he can find the essence of his true self and be as creative as he was when he overcame his fears long ago at Lysanger.
Solness's fatal fall from the tower of his house into the womblike stonepit, like Rosmer and Rebecca's plunge into the millrace, is the outcome of many years of emotional tension. As in Brand and Rosmersholm, a strong focus in The Master Builder is the cumulative effect of the past on the present action of the play. Here there are two pasts which are significant: the pasts of Aline, Hilde, and Solness and their interrelationship, and the past of Nordic history and mythology. As in many of Ibsen's plays, the past is ambiguous. On the one hand, it is "the realm of tragic loss" and "of a paralyzing constraint upon the modern spirit's quest for spiritual freedom" (Johnston, IC 254). On the other hand, "the past also is the realm of recollected achievement" (254). Aline's past is her only reason for being, whereas Hilde and Solness try to use their pasts to re-create themselves as they did at Lysanger.

The burning of Aline's family home is a prior event that has a lasting effect on her present life and that of her husband. It is unclear if before the disaster the marriage was unduly troubled; after all it had produced twin sons. After the fire, however, it evidently disintegrated as rapidly as did Aline's charred and cherished possessions. The couple grew apart, and Solness was ready for romance when Hilde appeared exuding youth and sexuality. Now Solness feels guilty that when he put his own interests ahead of Aline's, he destroyed her creative abilities. As
he tells Hilde, Aline also had a talent for building—not for constructing edifices as he does but for building "the souls of children" (179). It is debatable whether or not Aline has a "talent" for motherhood; what is important is Solness's guilt about his treatment of her and that hampers his own creative will.

Although the fire broke out in a linen room and had nothing to do with a cracked chimney, Solness lives so much within his own ego that he believes that through his unique "grace and power" he was "singled out by fate" to have his wishes granted. Solness's case is a clear example of the creative will gone awry. According to Rank, the neurotic and creative types "suffer from a too strong individualization of the will and corresponding guilt reaction . . ." (WT 78). The only way such a personality "can redeem its individual guilt and thus justify itself and its own will is in creative work" (WT 78).

Solness is unable to project his guilt creatively, because like Rosmer, he cannot envision a clear and worthwhile project for himself. His wish came true when Aline's house burned down, but now his guilt is so overwhelming that his building endeavors never bring him career fulfillment. In short, Solness lives entirely within his own ego wherein his guilt reinforces his separation anxieties and regressive tendencies.
For Aline, the fire was the end of the world. Her reaction to it shows that her separation anxieties are very severe, and her psychological behavior is fixed in an infantile mode. Rank explains that everyone has anxiety stemming from the birth-trauma but "this may continue into adult life in the case of certain individuals, the neurotics, who therefore remain infantile . . . " TR 11). It cannot be determined if Aline's condition predated the fire, but it is certain that her childish behavior became the norm after the disaster.

First, there is her preoccupation with her toys—"nine beautiful dolls" that she keeps out of her husband's sight (198). To Aline, these dolls are like "little unborn children" (198). Yet it is abnormal that she grieves much more for their loss in the fire than she does for her two little babies who died afterwards from her negligence and misplaced sense of duty. Of course, Aline's "grievously troubled mind" may be displacing the real "traumatic experience" onto the "minor matter" of the burning of the dolls (Chamberlain, OV 184). As another neurotic, she also lives exclusively within her own ego and cannot experience "love" which is an "approbation and justification of the own will through another" (Rank, WT 60). In other words, Aline cannot really love anyone but herself, and the dolls are an extension of her own ego.
Through her neurotic behavior, Aline shows that at least since the fire, she will always remain her parents' little girl rather than Solness's wife or the mother of his children. She mourns for her material treasures because they are the last link with her parents and ultimately with the primal environment. Aline is like Rank's patients who "show the regressive tendency in the form of a wish not to be grown up" (TR 67). Although she tries to be creative as seen by her flower-watering, her black dress shows her real psychological thrust which is to regress to the womb. Her husband compares her to a corpse and after talking to her, Hilde feels as if she has "just come out of a tomb" (199).

Like so many of Ibsen's characters, Aline is paralyzed by her life and death fears. She cannot regress to her old life with her parents and perhaps be dissolved into nothingness and lose the modicum of selfhood she has. Yet she also has "a pronounced fear of life and of being grown up," which precludes any meaningful relationship with her husband (Rank, TR 68). It is no wonder that she appears corpse-like; she is one of Ibsen's living dead, who are in a state of immobility. Rank states that "between these two fear possibilities," such an individual "is thrown back and forth all his life . . . " (WT 124). As John Chamberlain notes, "Aline contemplates death and diverts all her vital impulses into nostalgic reverie rooted in her infancy" (OV 180).
Unlike other Ibsen characters such as Hedda Gabler and Nora Helmer, Aline would never choose suicide or separation from her husband as possible escapes from her misery. Aline has too much of a nineteenth-century bourgeois sense of duty to consider such alternatives. Duty is her only concern, but her overzealous sense of social obligation is really misplaced and almost criminal. When she contracts an infection after the fire, she dutifully nurses her babies and when they die, she cannot understand how she was negligent.

In Act Three, Aline shows the same misplaced sense of duty at the wreath-laying ceremony. She leaves it in order to greet the local ladies instead of remaining with Solness, who she knows is deathly afraid of heights. Her attention is focused on local bourgeois society and the material trappings of her past. As a result, her sense of duty toward her culture is so great that the house which Solness builds for her can never please her since then she may have to abandon her childish nostalgia for her parents' home, which is gone now. Unfortunately, because her behavior is rooted in the past Aline cannot overcome her regressive tendencies and must live a death-in-life existence while yearning for a return to nothingness.

Hilde and Solness's former relationship also affects present dramatic action. Hilde always wanted to escape her past and evidently is now very much on her own. She goes
and comes as she pleases without answering to anyone. Although she has no money and very little clothing, it does not bother her at all. This is in direct contrast to Aline's concern for material goods. Also, the truth about Hilde's life with her father is difficult to determine because at one point (although with a tremble round her mouth) she says that "Oh, it wasn't all that easy to leave Father. I'm frightfully fond of him" (185). Yet later she tells Solness that "I only had a cage" rather than a happy home (202).

Unlike Aline, Hilde yearns to escape from the primal environment and recreate herself. Yet she also experiences regressive tendencies as is shown by her sleeping in the Solnesses' nursery and awakening as if from a "cradle" (170). She even talks baby talk to Solness (204). There is an interesting parallel here between Hilde and Rebecca West, because they both see their lovers as father figures. However, if she has incestuous feelings, Hilde, unlike Rebecca, feels no guilt about them.

Hilde has a strong death fear of losing her individuality and freedom, so she fights vehemently against her regressive tendencies by boldly asserting her individuality. She also has no life fear because she has complete confidence when facing the world and absolute faith in her own capabilities. In short, Hilde has the ability to project her regressive tendencies and to create herself
through another person.

Even as a child at Lysanger, Hilde yearned to be free. When she meets Solness and he does the "impossible" by climbing the church tower, she plans to use him someday as a means of escape from the stifling atmosphere of her home, which is really a symbol of the primal state. In essence, she relieves her separation anxieties by projecting them onto Solness. The "kingdom" she hopes he will bestow on her is her own selfhood and renewed sexuality. She does not know or care about the heavy price he will pay for his generosity. Hilde is the bird of prey who devours the Promethean Solness till he is destroyed. Yet to be fair to her, Hilde does give the master builder one exquisite moment of glory.

Rank posits that at "the inception of sexual development," a person experiences "the reminiscence of the conditions so deeply sundered by the trauma of birth--the pleasurable intra-uterine life and the difficulties in adaption to the extra-uterine world" (TB 44). Furthermore, sex is "a partial gratification of the primal wish . . . " (41). At Lysanger, Hilde's sexual encounter with Solness awakened or perhaps reinforced her budding sexuality because now she tells him that at the time, she was not "such a little innocent" as he thought (160). In any case, her not so childish experience with Solness helped her overcome her birth trauma fears and now ten years later, she wants
another alleviation of those fears.

Unlike Aline, Hilde is not bound by society's conventions. She knows Solness is married, but she pursues him anyway. After Aline pours out her heart to her, Hilde has a momentary twinge of conscience, but then she returns swiftly to her project of seducing Solness. When she talks about her dirty underwear to two men, her frankness and lack of taste belie the stereotypical image of the young, unmarried nineteenth-century woman as angelic and sweet.

To her credit, Hilde does not have a materialistic bent, and when Solness asks her to try her hand at the ledger, she tells him that "there are better things here for me to do than that" (155). Hilde shows here that she rejects the bourgeois focus on business and wealth for the more exciting aspects of life such as sexual and spiritual fulfillment. To her the word "duty" is a "nasty, beastly word" (172) for "it is associated with conventional ethics and conventional religion which she despises" (Chamberlain, OV 185). Hilde further shows her contempt for local philistine society as she tells Solness about how it will be when she has her castle: "I want to stand up there and look down at the others--the ones who build churches! And homes for mothers and fathers and children" (203).

Because she overcomes her death fear and regressive tendencies, Hilde is the true artist of the play. Unlike Aline and Solness, she is not neurotic. Rather than living
with guilt and fears within her own ego, she projects herself outwardly as artists and other creative people do. That is not to say that Hilde is not selfish and destructive but that is how the creative will operates: "For the will tends to create negatively, that is, expresses itself as destroying counter will" which works "against the will of the other" (Rank, TB 32,74). In other words, if in order to attain individuation Hilde must destroy Solness and Aline that is the way it must be.

As well as its relation to the other two major characters and to society, Solness's past also affects his own present actions. In the building profession, he feels inferior and insecure because of his humble origins and lack of formal architectural training. He also feels somewhat guilty over his past treatment of Knut Brovik and fears that Brovik's son Ragnar will exact retribution someday: "If Ragnar Brovik gets started, he will break me to the ground. Just as I broke his father" (188). And as shown, Solness also bears overpowering guilt in wishing for the fire which had such a devastating effect on Aline's mental stability.

Although these past circumstances have intensified Solness's neurosis, it is his past relationship with Hilde that is crucial to the present action of the play. By recalling his triumph at Lysanger, Hilde resurrects Solness's creative will so that he can overcome all his guilts and fears once more. He cannot ascertain if she is
telling the truth about the events of ten years ago, but it is vital for him to believe her so that his will can triumph as it did at Lysanger, the place of "light" (Johnston, LC 260). As Rank states, "It is important that the neurotic above all learn to will, discover that he can will without getting guilt feelings on account of willing" (WT 9).

By climbing a tower again, Solness believes he can recapture his authentic self. He will also prove his worth to society by attempting a daring feat in full view of the public. More important, he will prove himself sexually to Hilde by placing the wreath on the phallic weathervane. Without her encouragement, however, it is doubtful if Solness can assert himself so strikingly for Hilde is another "catalyzer of the action" (Frye 216). For her own reasons, she makes it possible for him to do the "impossible" and he tells her: "You are the one I've been wanting" (164). Unfortunately, he dies as he reaches their mutual goal.

For Solness, the re-creation of himself is a formidable task. He not only suffers from life and death fears, separation anxieties, and various guilt feelings, but he is also terrified of God's retribution. At Lysanger, Solness openly defied God since he thought He had taken away his sons because they were distracting him from his real vocation, which was to glorify God by building magnificent churches. Now the master builder is very bitter towards
God, but unlike Rosmer who leaves his faith with no guilty conscience or fear of God's wrath, Solness expects divine retribution for his apostasy. As John Chamberlain posits, "Destruction awaits those who 'defile the temple,' as Solness seems to do in declaring himself a master builder with no allegiance to any deity" (OV 182).

When Hilde comes back into his life, Solness regains his courage, at least temporarily. All goes well as he places the wreath on the tower, and it seems as if he has conquered all his fears and guilts. However, when Hilde waves Aline's white shawl (a death symbol as in Rosmersholm), and the local ladies wave their handkerchiefs, Solness is immobilized. Dr. Herdal warns of the danger that Solness is in, but the ecstatic Hilde does not heed his warnings. Now the past intrudes dramatically on the present because it was at Lysanger that Hilde waved a flag and Solness "almost turned giddy watching it" (156). At the present time, his psyche is not strong enough to overcome his vertigo as well as the traumatic experience of watching Hilde and the hostile faces of society marshaled below.

Solness's creative or godlike powers desert him, and his life and death fears take over his distracted mind. He suffers death fear when he sees all the people staring up at him, that is the youth and bourgeois society who will swallow him up and cause the disintegration of his personhood. Yet Solness also realizes he is now completely
alone on the tower and suffers the life fear of standing on
one's own. Paralyzed by his fears, he cannot recreate his
former triumph, and he descends to the nothingness of the
stonepit, which is a symbol for the all-encompassing womb.
Like Rosmer, Solness is "generally ill-equipped for the
heroic tasks he sets himself" (Chamberlain OV 170).

Besides the interwoven pasts of Aline, Hilde and
Solness, there is a more universal past that informs the
present action of The Master Builder. This is the past of
Nordic mythology, which also has relevance to Rank's birth
trauma theory. Speaking of the weaning trauma, Rank
declares that "Authentic reminiscences of the two
experienced primal traumata are, therefore, at the bottom of
myths exactly as they are of neuroses" (TB 108).

Hilde as Valkyrie figure is an example often noted by
critics when explaining Ibsen's use of myth (Johnston, IC
269; Holtan 102). A Valkyrie is a warrior maiden who serves
the god Odin, "the god of death and battle" (Davidson 31).
The Valkyries have ambiguous personalities, for sometimes
they appear "as fearsome beings and sometimes as beautiful
maidens who offer love to the warrior" (Davidson 41). Often
they are depicted as "princesses" (Hilde is often referred
to as a princess), who "escorted the royal warriors who died
to Valhalla. . ." (Davidson 40). Valhalla is the great hall
of Odin wherein he welcomes his fallen hero warriors, but
"at the same time it represents the grave where the dead
rest..." (Davidson 42). In Rankian terms and in the context of *The Master Builder*, Valhalla is both a womb symbol and the place where Hilde as Valkyrie figure plans to bring Solness.

One of the most famous Valkyries is Brynhild who incurs the wrath of Odin by giving victory to Sigurd, "whom the god had condemned to death" (Davidson 41). When the audience first sees Hilde, she is dressed as a comic version of Brynhild. Her sailor hat is a mockery of Brynhild's helmet, and her alpenstock or walking stick is a ridiculous spear. As a modern Valkyrie however, her mission is still a very serious one, for she "is the guide that appears to urge the hero onward, to lead him through the dark regions" (Holtan 102). Her nautical garb also intimates the watery womb and the primal mother. In addition, her actions "are highly suggestive of the whole ambiguity of the Valkyrie figure" (Johnston, *IC* 269). Although Hilde brings new life to Solness by inspiring him to do a great deed, she also orchestrates his destruction because she causes him to overreach his capabilities.

In Nordic mythology, Brynhild is awakened by Sigurd as she sleeps within a wall of fire. Hilde is also reawakened "like a princess" when she emerges from the Solnesses' nursery, but Ibsen also brilliantly inverts the myth because Solness is really the one who rises most dramatically from a miserable existence, even if only for a little while. Like
Brynild, Solness is connected with fire.

Besides the Nordic myths, Viking sagas also have a pervasive influence on the present action of the play. Ibsen had used saga material before in his early play, *The Vikings at Helgeland*, (1857). He once wrote that in the sagas, he "encountered a personal, eventful, truly vital life" (*Letters* 19). In *The Master Builder*, the Viking theme is updated by its relevance to the nineteenth-century characters Hilde and Solness. Hilde thinks it was very "exciting" that the Vikings carried away women and fully understands why the women stayed with these warriors (186). The Viking code was to take what you want and Hilde as "a true heir of the Viking spirit" is more than "ready to take what she wants" (Tornquist, "Individualism in *The Master Builder*" 138). In another ironic inversion, Hilde's conception of herself is closer to that of the male predator than to that of the female victim.

As for Solness, he pretends to condemn the Vikings "as the worst kind of trolls," but he secretly admires them for the courage that he thinks he lacks (186). Unlike him, they exerted their creative wills without any guilt feelings. He also envies their infantile lifestyle: "When they came home they ate and drank and were as merry as children" (186). Like Aline, Solness is also tempted by the pleasure of the infantile mode of behavior, but to his credit he fights such regressive tendencies.
As in *Brand* and *Rosmersholm*, the troll motif is prevalent in *The Master Builder*, wherein the figure is shown again as an undermining force in the life of the protagonist, one which prevents the person from exerting his or her creative will. Knut and Ragnar Brovik represent the troll motif in society and are the first manifestations of the figure in this play. Although neither of them is the stranger or "unexpected visitor" kind of troll their mission still is to "demand something" of the hero, Solness (Schechner 158-59). He provokes their enmity, and they are like the avenger figure of tragedy, who "constitutes the catastrophe" for the hero (Frye 209). Knut and Ragnar feel justifiably that Solness has wronged them, and they want retribution from him. Old Brovik demands that Solness recognize Ragnar's professional talents, and he is also very bitter that he, too, is mistreated by the master builder who really owes him a lot: "That's right. Everything worked out nicely for you" (137). In a sense, Brovik recalls Ulrick Brendel of *Rosmersholm*. As Brendel foreshadows the failure that Rosmer may become, so too does Brovik presage a failed master builder. As Solness replaced Brovik, someday Ragnar may replace him. In any case, Brovik is "all that is negative--including the malevolent aspects of supernatural forces that seem to operate at subterranean levels in the play" (Chamberlain, *OV* 161). Such forces erode Solness's creative will (as they did Rosmer's), thus stimulating his
regressive tendencies and life and death fears.

Knut Brovik is too sick to topple Solness by himself, so Ragnar acts as surrogate avenger for his father. From the standpoint of Nordic myth, Ragnar is interesting because he bears the name of a mythological Scandinavian hero as well as the mythical battle of Ragnarok in which the world was destroyed (Davidson 41,60). After Hilde, Ragnar is the person most responsible for Solness's downfall. But Ragnar also has his own reasons for wishing to subvert his employer. Not only has Solness stifled Ragnar's creativity by forbidding him to build houses for the local community, he has sexually exploited Kaja and "taken possession of her mind" (206).

Ragnar also detests Solness for his supposed cowardice: "He's got this yellow streak--the great master builder!" (207). At the wreath-placing ceremony, Ragnar brings all his "fellow apprentices" to watch Solness make a fool of himself (214). Ragnar seeks revenge because Solness has destroyed his creative will, and "made me lose belief in myself" (205). Now Ragnar and his fellow workers "want to see him keeping himself down for a change" (214). Judging by his shock at the fall, however, Ragnar did not expect his revengeful wish to be fulfilled so drastically, which is reminiscent of Solness's own feeling after the fire. As a troll figure determined to weaken the protagonist, Ragnar's triumph is successful beyond his wildest hopes.
Besides being beset by troll figures himself, Solness is perceived as a troll by Hilde. She wishes that he would be "like a troll" and buy her a "kingdom" (157,160). "Discovering and encouraging the troll in Solness is what Hilde sets out to do. . . ." (Jacobsen and Leavy 227). As seen by her fascination with the rapacious Vikings, Hilde finds troll ravishers very exciting. For her, Solness's real or imagined demonic sexuality has positive connotations. Through him, she will create herself both as a woman and as an authentic individual.

For Solness, the troll image is a very negative one. Yet he knows it is a vital part of his psyche and blames his present situation on the trolls within his mind. They are the "occult powers" within him and the "serving spirits which he cannot control" (Beyer 171). They are also the "helpers" and "servers" whom he summoned when he wished Aline's house destroyed (184). Solness also blames God for bidding them to wait on him "day and night" (210).

Such demons foster "the indefinite anxiety" which "is to be explained as a continuance of the primal trauma" (TB 122-23). In other words, when Solness talks about his inner trolls, he is constantly reminding himself of his guilt feelings and strengthening his regressive tendencies. Therefore, he must climb the tower so that he can escape from the trolls that cause his guilt and from the tomb with which they tempt him. The tower represents freedom from
guilt and an "obligation to others, a boundless self-
satisfaction, a sense of the will as ultimate agency"
(Lyons, HI 126).

If Solness's creative will is undermined by the trolls
within his psyche, he is also destroyed by Hilde, another
exterior troll figure. Unlike Knut and Ragnar Brovik, she
is not from his immediate environment. Rather, she is one
of those "unexpected visitors" who "come to demand something
of the heroes" and "drive the hero to his final
achievement," and in the case of Solness and other Ibsen
heroes, "to death" (Schechner 159). From her hero, Hilde
demands nothing less than her own selfhood. Yet Solness
thinks that her only goal is their mutual happiness and that
she must "go on believing" in him (212).

If Hilde really loved him, she would not expect Solness
to undertake such a dangerous and fearsome exploit as
climbing the tower. However, "Hilde will hear nothing
against him that suggests her dream of him is greater than
the reality" (Johnston IC 301). She may or may not believe
in his capabilities; the important thing is that Solness
believe in them. He does so but only for an instant because
his dizziness is not only physical but psychological as
well: "Thus, even while Solness was defyng God from the top
of his tower, he was conscious of his own precarious
humanity," which is the Rankian fear of life (Holtan 108).
Ten years ago at Lysanger, the troll child or "little devil" Hilde, with all her waving and shouting, almost caused the master builder's fall while exerting her own creative will. She reminiscences to Solness how "it was so marvellously exciting to stand down there and stare up at you. Think--if he should fall now!" (156). However, Solness was much younger then and had such great confidence in his own powers that he did not fall off the tower at Lysanger. Now Hilde has returned "to tempt again" and "the second temptation is clearly a lure to death" (Lyons, HI 120). Like Gerd, the troll-woman in Brand, Hilde is not satisfied until her hero is destroyed.

It is as if these demonic women see in their men some artistic or godlike quality which they abhor and wish to obliterate. In Hilde's case, she returns to re-experience the thrill of exerting her own creative, though really evil powers, and for Solness, "she heralds the collapse of his project of the will, as the reappearance of Gerd foreshadows the collapse of Brand's" (Holtan 158).

Like Solness, Hilde recognizes the troll elements in her psyche and tells him that they also direct her life as they do his: "They have chosen for me. Once and for all " (187). Yet they are "blessed demons" who had urged her to flee from her father's house, seek freedom, and assert her creative will. In essence, Hilde is the former caged "falcon" who is now loosed on the world. Her object is to get her claws
into her prey (Solness), "bring it to the ground" and ultimately back to the womb of death (187).

Barbara Leavy suggests that at Lysanger, Hilde was the prey, and "Solness is destroyed by one of his own victims" (Jacobsen and Leavy 234). Perhaps it was through Solness that Hilde learned her troll habits, and "the world of the trolls" is the "symbolic realm in which Solness and Hilde confront each other" (Jacobsen and Leavy 225). It may be true that once she was the victim of the troll Solness, but now, "Hilde is the real troll of this play: she is ruthless and willful and seductive. She is youth knocking, like fate, on Solness's door--as he predicts it will--and she destroys him--as he also predicts" (Jacobsen and Leavy 147). By again placing a wreath on a tower Solness achieves the impossible, but his victory is short-lived. The demonic Hildebeckons him once again to look downward, and thus she prevents him from sustaining his creative will. Like his inner trolls, Hilde sabotages Solness's efforts to attain complete selfhood. The tower of his "castle in the air" has no real foundation in his psyche. Therefore, he succumbs to Hilde's demonic power, which pulls him down to the stonepit and back to the primal environment.

Besides the troll motif, the fantasies and dreams of Hilde and Solness are pervasive elements in The Master Builder. Rank sees "hallucinations" as "far-reaching regressions to the foetal state" (TR 69). Moreover, the
birth trauma "stands actually at the centre of mythical as of infantile interest and determines conclusively the content of phantasy formations" (TR 73). We have seen this work in Brand as the ghost of Brand's wife urges him to die because "The world has no use for you!" (349). In Rosmersholm, Rebecca sees the phantom white horses that presage death, and Rosmer declares that he and she "shall never escape them—we who live in this house" (299, 315).

In The Master Builder, however, the fantasies become dramatically real, or as James Hurt states about this play and the four that followed it, "The mythic structure of these plays emerges to assume an equal position with the realistic surface structure" (155). For example, at first Solness tells Hilde that their initial encounter in the club at Lysanger was "something you've dreamed" (158). Almost immediately he thinks that the incident may be true because he "wished it" (169). In any case, the "castle in the air" is a fantasy but the tower is a very real place above the ground, unlike the ghost of Brand's wife and Rebecca's white horses.

Still, Hilde and Solness are like two children as they indulge in the fairy-tale fantasy of having a mythical "kingdom," wherein Solness will make Hilde a "princess." No one knows what his role will be in this wonderful place since Hilde has resurrected the fantasy in order to further exercise her own creative will. However, she claims that at
Lysanger, Solness named their kingdom "Orangia," which suggests that he planned to have some role in the kingdom since the first half of his name is that of the orange-colored sun.

Now Hilde does not want the kingdom of Orangia because it is Solness's kingdom, not hers. She wants "a different kind of kingdom," a real kingdom in which she can attain sexual and spiritual fulfillment. When Solness says he wants her, she knows that she "almost" has her wish although "the tremble around her mouth again" suggests that she has not quite reached her goal (164). Until she does, her separation anxieties and regressive tendencies (shown by the tremble) still have power over her psyche.

Solness and Hilde experience their childish fantasies because they often regress to a Rankian infantile mode of behavior. Unlike the immobilized Solness, however, Hilde overcomes regressive tendencies by projecting her fantasies on him. She does not become giddy from standing on tower balconies as he does. At the end of the play, the fairy-tale fantasy takes on chilling repercussions because Hilde, who has attained her kingdom finally, can now look down on Solness and everyone else.

Another fantasy in the play is Solness's past conversation with God at Lysanger in which he told the deity that he wanted to be free to build as he chooses. But because he is so overwhelmed by guilt and fear of God's
retribution, Solness can never be free. Moreover, he fantasizes that God and the trolls are to blame for his misfortunes rather than attributing his troubles to his own weak will. In effect, Solness acts like the Rankian neurotics who idealize themselves. Ironically, near the end of the play Solness tells Aline that he "must be down below with the men," yet he attempts the "impossible" task of putting himself on a plane with God, whose intrinsic nature places him above men. Although one may admire Solness's ambition to emulate God, it is also apparent that the master builder's greatest fantasy is his misperception of himself as godlike, especially since his efforts at creativity have been largely unproductive. Despite his idealization of himself, he suffers death, the same fate as befell the other two men who fell from the tower.

As it was in Brand and Rosmersholm, the plunging or falling motif is also very significant in The Master Builder. In Rankian terms, it reproduces the "anxiety situation" associated with the birth trauma (TB 78-79). Brand is reunited with the primal mother by accidentally falling through a cleft in the ice, and Rebecca and Rosmer deliberately plunge into the millrace in order to be reunited with Beata who symbolizes the primal mother for them. In The Master Builder, the motif appears in Solness's fatal fall and subsequent plunge into the stone quarry, but it also has another dimension. Earlier, it had appeared in
the dreams of both Solness and Hilde and thus foreshadows the final outcome of the play.

Both Hilde and Solness dreamed of falling in the fetal position, and she found the experience "exciting," but it made him "go cold as ice" (170). The dream symbolizes both dreamers' desire to return to the womb. However, Hilde is rejuvenated by her dream, whereas Solness believes his dream signifies the icy hand of death upon him. For Solness, the plunging dream exemplifies his neurotic inability to overcome the birth trauma, and all his efforts at exerting his creativity will lead only to nothingness.

Hilde is exhilarated by her dream, and although she slept like a baby "in a cradle," on awakening she feels like the "princess" she yearns to be. She now appears as a grownup with her skirt lengthened "to her ankles" (170). Her adult attire symbolizes her status as a mature woman ready to confront society and flout its conventions. Her fetal dream also signifies her victory over birth trauma anxiety and the renewal of her creative will. Because she will eventually renew herself at Solness's expense, she can emerge from the womb and achieve individuation. Unlike Rebecca, she does not have to die to achieve selfhood. Solness is not so fortunate because his dream presages his ultimate defeat and inability to overcome the birth trauma. For Brian Johnston, "these dreams of falling more somberly predict Solness's final fall from the tower . . . Thus the
detail of falling combines the meanings of both birth and death—a condensed ambiguity typical of the verbal patterns of the play" (IC 285).

In The Master Builder, Ibsen reaches the height of his creative powers. Although Brand and Rosmersholm are also fine plays and explore the dimensions of human consciousness very thoroughly, The Master Builder does so to a much greater degree. For example, we feel as if we almost inhabit the psyche of Solness and understand the motivations for each of his actions. In addition, Brand and Rosmer in their final moments hide themselves from society, unlike Solness who displays his agony for all the world to see.

From a Rankian standpoint, Solness is also greater than the other two characters because he never compromises his will. Brand compromises his by building the church, and Rosmer does so by catering to his opponents and not acting out his project of ennobling mankind. In fact, of the three protagonists in this study, Solness comes closest to asserting his creative will and overcoming his birth trauma anxieties. Moreover, he never wavers in pursuit of his artistic ideal, and thus shows "the true greatness of man who determines to accomplish a task beyond his powers..." (Arestad, "Ibsen's Concept of Tragedy" 296).

Ibsen also makes Solness the consummate rebel, defying and lashing out at all the inner and outer forces that beset him. Like that of so many of Ibsen's heroes, Solness's fall
is ambiguous. One cannot ascertain if it was a victory or a defeat. Ibsen, however, sees his protagonist as merely human, neither all perfect nor all flawed. By "warring with God, he is finally conquered through overweening pride; but his defeat is a partial victory— he has also conquered God by attempting the deeds he feared most to do" (Brustein 78).

In The Master Builder, Ibsen explores very thoroughly societal themes such as youth's conflict with age and the desire of individuals to attain meaningful career goals. He treats these practical matters realistically, but as he does frequently, Ibsen here employs psychology and myth to probe beneath the play's realistic surface in order to study his characters' unconscious motivations. As Orley I. Holtan states, "This play is the most successful blending of mythic material and realistic convention of all of Ibsen's later work" (114). In essence, Solness may be "somewhat akin" to his creator, but Ibsen is the true artist who asserts his will most creatively.
Perhaps I can explain the nature of my feeling for the inscrutable forces behind life which it is my ambition to at least faintly shadow at their work in my plays. (O'Neill, qtd. in Cargill 100)

In the creation of their dramatic art, an interest in the psychology of the unconscious is one of many features that Ibsen and O'Neill share. Especially, but not exclusively, in the latter part of their careers, O'Neill and Ibsen created characters who cannot achieve individuation because they are troubled by anxieties emanating from their unconscious minds. These feelings disallow the characters' will-assertion so that they do not act creatively. As in Ibsen's plays, uncreative neurotics in O'Neill also suffer death wishes or regressive tendencies and long to return to the primal mother and her comforting womb. For example, Edmund Tyrone, who is often disgusted with life, tells his father that he, Edmund, "must always be a little in love with death!" (O'Neill, Long Day's Journey into Night 154, hereafter cited as Journey). In Rankian
terms, the creative will of the artist is even more significant in O'Neill's plays than it is in Ibsen's, who showed how he projected his anxieties onto his work (see 39-40). Like Edmund Tyrone, O'Neill also had a death wish, and "there can be no doubting his drive toward death--it is manifest not only in his attempted suicide but in the single-minded plunge into the depths of the waterfront in South America and again in New York City" (Bigsby 112). Years later, O'Neill's psychoanalyst, Dr. Gilbert Hamilton, who cured him of alcoholism, remarked to someone that "There's a death wish in O'Neill" (Gelb 597).

After a life of debauchery, hopelessness, and a brief marriage, O'Neill was confined to a sanatorium because of tuberculosis. There in 1912, he decided to get his life in order. He did so by writing plays, many of which resonate with his own experiences. However, the plays should and do stand on their own merits, regardless of their biographical significance. Nevertheless, despite some inaccuracies such as the aforementioned miserliness of James O'Neill, the plays have a definite link to the family history of the playwright. Primarily, through them O'Neill projected his problems and recreated himself, which, according to Rank, is the true purpose of artistic endeavors (TB 141-66).
Critics and Ibsen himself allude to biography in his plays. Yet when he states that Solness is a man "somewhat akin to me," or that Brand is "myself in my best moments," we really do not know what he means. In the dedication of Journey (1946), however, O'Neill tells his wife Carlotta, to whom the work is dedicated, that the play recalls "old sorrow," and that he is facing his dead "with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones" (Journey n.p.). In Journey (and this cannot be said of the The Master Builder), there is no disputing the biographical facts; the Tyrones' problems and personalities are too reflective of those in the O'Neill family. Moreover, in Journey, O'Neill's projection of his family's problems onto his art was a descent into night for the characters but a journey into light and personal catharsis for him. By resurrecting his family and exerting his creative will, O'Neill himself was reborn, and the anxieties that once led him to dissipation and despair were now alleviated, if not dispelled.

O'Neill once wrote that "there is no conscious use of psychoanalytical material in any of my plays" (qtd. in Egil Tornquist, A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-Naturalistic Technique 35). He felt that a dramatist did not need a knowledge of Freud to write psychological plays but he or she could be
"simply guided by an intuitive psychological insight into human beings and their life-impulsions that is as old as Greek drama" (DS 35). He admitted reading works by Jung and Freud, and his perusal of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) is important because the book is a study of regression and life and death instincts which predates Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* (1924). O'Neill's notes for *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931) could have come from a treatise by Rank as "he would use as an underlying theme repeated references to an idyllic South Sea island, whose appeal of peace was to illustrate the Mannons' 'longing for the primitive and mother symbol--yearning for prenatal, noncompetitive freedom from fear'" (Gelb 724).

Although there is no positive evidence that O'Neill knew Rank, it is possible that he was familiar with his theories because he owned a copy of *The Problem of Anxiety* (1936) in which Freud criticizes negatively *The Trauma of Birth* (Watt 214). In addition, O'Neill's psychiatrist, Dr. Gilbert Hamilton, mentions Rank in his study, *A Research in Marriage*, (1929); (Watt 214). There is evidence that O'Neill participated in the study (Sheaffer, *Son and Artist* 189).

It is also possible that Rank and O'Neill at least heard of each other because they were both friendly with Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe, whose son had been Rank's
patient in 1925 (Lieberman 275). Dr. Jelliffe also was the translator of the English version of Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (Lieberman 174). As for O'Neill, he saw Jelliffe "sporadically between 1923 and 1925--not to be analyzed but simply to 'talk things over'" (Gelb 565). In 1924, Rank arrived in New York and at that time, like O'Neill, attended parties at Jelliffe's home (Lieberman 230; Gelb 567).

Their fervent admiration for Nietzsche's will concepts is a unifying factor between Rank and O'Neill. They also were familiar with the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer, who in his *The World as Will and Idea* (1819) expounds an earlier, more pessimistic view of human will than Nietzsche's, who saw "willing" very positively "as my liberator and bringer of joy" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 1883-92; 261). For Rank, "Nietzsche's Dionysian will" is "an exuberant, creative affirmation of life," a way of recreating oneself (Lieberman 30). The term "will" was not used in Freudian psychology because Freud thought that Nietzsche's will philosophy was "alien to science" (qtd. in Lieberman 109). Yet Nietzsche's concept of the creative will probably had more influence on Rank's theories and O'Neill's plays than did many of Freud's teachings.
In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize of 1936, O'Neill acknowledged his own debt to Nietzsche. From the age of eighteen, he was a devotee of the German philosopher and once said that Thus Spoke Zarathustra, had "influenced me more than any book I've ever read" (qtd. in Gelb 121). Yet whereas Rank, like Nietzsche, is hopeful for humanity's self-creation; O'Neill, like Schopenhauer, is more pessimistic about people's ability to realize themselves. In many of O'Neill's plays, the characters' creative wills have failed them, and they are without even their "hopeless hopes" to comfort them. Yet despite his pessimistic view of life, O'Neill, like Ibsen, always applauds his characters' efforts to achieve individuation:

> It is the dream that keeps us fighting, willing—living . . . A man wills his own defeat when he pursues the unattainable . . . Such a figure is necessarily tragic. But to me he is not depressing; he is exhilarating. (qtd. in Ahuja 7)

When, because of a diseased and crippled body, O'Neill himself could no longer assert his own will, he gave up on life, and on Nov. 27, 1953 he died.

When he was a teenager at the Betts Academy in Stamford, CT., the young O'Neill read Bernard Shaw's The Quintessence of Ibsenism (Sheaffer, S and P 104-05). From it, he received Shaw's myopic view of Ibsen as social reformer, and this is reflected in his 1914
domestic drama *Servitude* (Bogard 32). It is hoped that O'Neill also read the 1913 version of "Quintessence" in which Shaw acknowledges Ibsen's spiritual dimension and recognizes that for the Norwegian playwright "happiness consists in the fulfillment of the will" (292). In addition, Shaw viewed Ibsen's last four plays as "tragedies of the dead" wherein "morality and reformation give place to mortality and resurrection" (267). For Shaw, Ibsen the crusader against social injustice became Ibsen the metaphysician.

We cannot ascertain whether or not O'Neill noticed the change in Shaw's criticism of Ibsen. In any case, both Ibsen and O'Neill became more psychologically-oriented in their late dramas. As each of the playwrights directed his attention inward, he debunked the narrow critical view of himself as a social reformer or realist.

O'Neill saw his first performance of *Hedda Gabler* in 1907 and was so entranced with the work that he saw it ten times (Sheaffer, *S and P* 121-22). He once said that the play "discovered an entire new world of the drama for me. It gave me my first conception of a modern theater where truth might live" (*S and P* 122).

Still, as he stated in a playbill to a 1924 production of *The Ghost Sonata* (1907), O'Neill felt Ibsen was dated and second-best to August Strindberg:
"Strindberg was the precursor of all modernity in our present theater just as Ibsen, a lesser man as he himself surmised, was the father of modernity of twenty years or so ago. . . . " (qtd. in Tornquist, "Influence" 214). But as early as 1924 and despite the fact that the setting is in the expressionist mode, in Desire Under the Elms, O'Neill drifted away from Strindberg's expressionistic techniques and adopted Ibsen's psychological realism. According to Egil Tornquist, "the author of The Iceman Cometh (1946), and A Touch of the Poet (1947), had more in common with the nineteenth-century master playwright than had the young barricade-stormer who composed The Hairy Ape" ("Influence" 215).

O'Neill's last word on Ibsen was probably in 1938 when he wrote to an editor of a Norwegian newspaper on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of Ibsen's birth. O'Neill told the man that he had recently reread all of Ibsen's plays and "the same living truth is still there . . . As dramas revealing the souls of men and women they are as great today as they will be a hundred years from now" (Letters 477). O'Neill's final verdict on Ibsen is favorable as one would expect since the two playwrights have many similar dramatic interests, the most significant of which is the probing of the underlying motivations in human behavior. O'Neill's
tribute to Ibsen is shown by the similarities between The Wild Duck and The Iceman Cometh (hereafter cited as Iceman). However, these are not the only two plays of Ibsen and O'Neill that are alike (see Intro. 20).

Both Ibsen and O'Neill present characters who are neurotic in the Rankian sense, that is they express their creative wills exclusively within their own egos (WT 154). Stephen Watt also notes that there is a non-Oedipal Rankian focus or a desire to return to the mother in Strange Interlude (1928), and Mourning Becomes Electra (1931); 212). We have seen Ibsen's characters express the same desire.

Like Ibsen, O'Neill uses certain motifs and themes to probe and enhance the psychological thrust of his plays. An important one is the effect of the past on the present lives of the characters. But O'Neill does not simply follow an Ibsen tendency; he intensifies it. For example, Rosmer and Rebecca feel so guilty about the past they commit suicide over it; yet they are fully aware of what they are doing. On the other hand, the characters in Iceman exist in a dark womb-world from which they seldom emerge. The men are in such a regressive state that they cannot discern illusion from reality. Actually, there is no real past or present for these characters because they lack a sense of time. Unlike Rosmer and Rebecca, the denizens of Hope's bar
have little control over their futures.

In Ibsen's plays, their past actions often engender present guilt that is declared outright by the characters themselves (Brand is the notable exception). Rosmer and Rebecca feel guilty over their treatment of Beata, and even Solness is somewhat remorseful for the way he has treated Aline. In the three O'Neill plays discussed here, however, there are few characters who acknowledge consciously their guilt over past actions. For example, Ephraim Cabot of Desire blames his wives, children and even God for his problems and never assumes any personal culpability. In Journey, the members of the Tyrone family frequently point the finger of blame at each other, rarely at themselves. Often, memories of the past do not engender guilt but instead remind a character of "the past happiness that helps to make the present wretched" (Pommer 35). Also, many times O'Neill's characters will blame "fate" for the things that happen to them.

On an unconscious level, some characters feel guilty over the past. We see this as Mary Tyrone fidgets with her fingers and hair whenever former events are discussed. In any case, if O'Neill's characters feel guilty about the past, they are unable to mitigate their culpability on a conscious level. Therefore, people such as Mary cannot act creatively
because they are like one of Rank's neurotics, who "tries to free himself through denial of the past, of the dependence, by the destruction of the associations in his thinking and feeling" (WT 35). Of course, Mary tries only to obliterate the past since her marriage; she revels ecstatically in the distant past.

Nevertheless, the past is just as important here as in an Ibsen work; its associations are traumatic, but it is sometimes a place of retreat and a source of comfort to those who flee present realities. The characters in Strange Interlude and Mourning Becomes Electra are typical of many O'Neill people because they long to go beyond the boundaries of their existence in search of peace and security, but they discover that this can only be accomplished through regression. Hence the characters bind themselves to death—to the womb-tomb shelter of the past. (Feldman 46)

Because they cannot relieve their anxieties, O'Neill's characters, like Ibsen's, exist in a state of immobility. As neurotics, they cannot assuage their angst through creativity. On the one hand, they suffer "life fear" because they are unable to act on their own. In The Great God Brown (1926), Dion Anthony "resorts to hiding behind a mask because of a paralyzing fear of life..." (Watt 216). In contrast, in The Emperor Jones (1920), Brutus is overcome by "death fear" as his dearly bought selfhood
is "dissolved" in the womblike darkness of the jungle. Hence the neurotics in O'Neill recall those in Ibsen who exist in a pathetic state of being unable to go either backward or forward. O'Neill describes the situation in relation to Yank in *The Hairy Ape* (1922): "Yank can't go forward, and so he tries to go back. This is what shaking hands with the gorilla meant. But he can't go back to 'belonging' either. The gorilla kills him" (qtd. in Cargill 110-11).

Like Ibsen and Rank, O'Neill was interested in mythical and religious themes and figures and used them to enhance the psychological dimension of his plays. He was attracted especially to the mother goddess, whom he probably read about in his studies of Carl Jung, whom he found "extraordinarily illuminating" as to "hidden human motives" (*Letters* 386). Typically, O'Neill's female characters are portrayed as virgins, earth-mothers or whores. He rarely if ever presents the self-confident intellectual woman such as Ibsen's Rebecca West. Rosa Parritt of *Iceman* is an exception to this rule, but she is an offstage character, and the emphasis really is on her maternal ties to Parritt.

O'Neill's females are frequently destructive figures. Evelyn Hickman, a powerful offstage character is supposedly very saintly. By her unceasing mothering however, she destroys her husband's creative will. In
effect, Evelyn and the other absent and dead women of *Iceman* apparently ruin their men's psychological lives. Because they fail to bolster the men's creative will, the males regress into alcoholic forgetfulness.

Of course, one might posit that the men are neurotic losers anyway and probably inhibited their wives' own creative wills. As Trudy Drucker states about O'Neill's women, "with few exceptions, the women in the plays don't have legitimate jobs" (8). Also, "we never hear them speak or hear their 'side' of the story" (Hall 32). Of course, that would be difficult since most of the women are dead, which in a Rankian context is very fitting since in pre-Hellenic Greek mythology, "Furies," "Harpies," and other "demons of death" are "all representatives of the primal mother" (TB 149). In any case, because they are dead or absent we never know the true nature of O'Neill's women. Whatever their reasons are, however, they cannot act creatively and neither can their men. Both O'Neill's women and men, because they are mostly neurotics who live within themselves, cannot relate to other people creatively. In effect, they are all guilty of irresponsibility in not making their marriages work.

Like Ibsen, O'Neill also employs demonic figures, who hasten the downfall of a protagonist. These figures upset the status quo of a family group although
in O'Neill, they are not usually strangers as they are in Ibsen. For example, Jamie Tyrone has satanic characteristics, and one wonders what the Tyrone family would be like without his disruptive presence. The demonic figure, "the source of nemesis" for the other characters in Desire, Iceman, and Journey is like the "refuser of festivity" in comedy (Frye 216). Characters like Jamie and Hickey, both ardent partakers of the sporting life deny everyone else the joy of living.

The destructive or "terrible mother" figures and the demonic mischief makers represent the characters' unconscious birth trauma anxieties. They attempt to pull the protagonist back to the womb and death, if not the physical death of the body then the spiritual death of the soul. Characters must fight these tempters in order to maintain their creative wills and achieve authentic selfhood. This is difficult to do because as persons "attempt to adjust to the enforced removal from the mother," they also have "the instinctive tendency to return to her" (Rank, TB 103). For the neurotics in O'Neill's plays, as in Ibsen's, the struggle to halt regression is often a futile undertaking.

O'Neill's philosophical concerns parallel Ibsen's quite frequently, but there are also some differences in their thinking on important topics. One subject the
playwrights differ about is the idea of free will vs. determinism, an important philosophical issue in modern thought. One may also consider the question in connection with Rank's theory of the creative will because people without options in their lives cannot very well assert their wills creatively.

Perhaps with the exception of *Ghosts* (1881), Ibsen is usually on the side of free choice, and O'Neill generally favors the idea that fate or chance determines human destiny (In *Desire*, Eben's choice to join Abbie is an O'Neill exception). According to Rolf Fjelde, people in Ibsen's world "choose" in order "to resist the pressures to conform. For Ibsen all hope begins with that individual choice, that assertion of freedom" (74). For example, Solness chooses to assert his will despite what society dictates. In contrast, many of O'Neill's characters seem trapped. Yet O'Neill also has his people "stand up to the challenge" of life's struggle "and fight it through, even to inevitable defeat" (Fjelde 74). Sadly, there is not much fight left in many of them, so they regress to moribund states.

In an Ibsen play, as they try to assert their creative wills, characters usually confront a hostile society. In contrast, the O'Neill character often exists in a closely-knit environment, that of the
family or a familial type of group such as is found in the early plays of the Glencairn cycle. Perhaps O'Neill felt intimidated by the Protestant atmosphere of New London where the O'Neills "were considered social upstarts and outsiders" (Orr 183). Stung by their ostracism, the O'Neill family retreated to its own world.

Regardless of the reason for O'Neill's choice of focus, his thrust gives a sense of isolation and entrapment to family enclaves in the plays. Also, by focusing on the family, O'Neill narrows the perimeters of his plays to show how modern life limits creativity, and people now turn inwardly in a neurotic, uncreative way. In Ibsen, the characters are better off fighting outside forces because in society, people have more opportunity to project their anxieties creatively rather than as members of an inbred group. In O'Neill, "the helplessness of family love to sustain, let alone heal, the wounds of marriage, of parenthood and sonship, have never been so remorselessly and so pathetically portrayed. . . . " (Bloom 12).

Although O'Neill never practiced formal religion since he gave up the Catholic faith at fifteen, the lack of its stabilizing power made him always uneasy as if his life were incomplete. Despite his apostasy and agnosticism, O'Neill dwelt frequently on metaphysical
matters. He once told a critic that "most modern plays are concerned with the relation between man and man, but that does not interest me at all. I am interested only in the relation between man and God" (qtd. in Cargill 115). However, O'Neill, like Nietzsche, believed that today God is dead.

O'Neill found a new religion in the theater. Its function was to be a "Temple" dedicated to the "celebration of life" (qtd. in Cargill 121). He celebrated life by creating himself through his characters, most of whom do not celebrate life at all. O'Neill also probed human psychology to help him in the quest for selfhood, both his own and that of his creations. He once wrote: "If we have no gods or heroes to portray we have the subconscious the mother of all Gods and heroes" (qtd. in Tornquist DS 40). And to the best of his ability, he portrayed her very well.
Desire briefly, is a tragedy of the possessive--the pitiful longing of man to build his own heaven here on earth by glutting his sense of power with ownership of land, people, money--but principally the land and other people's lives. It is the creative yearning of the uncreative spirit which never achieves anything but a momentary clutch of failing fingers on the equally temporal tangible. (O'Neill, Letters 194)

Between 1920 and 1923, Eugene O'Neill lost his father, mother, and brother. In 1924, he wrote Desire Under the Elms (hereafter cited as Desire). When the play was produced, he told Walter Huston, who played Ephraim Cabot, that the idea for it came to him in a dream (Gelb 539). The dream was probably an anxiety dream in which O'Neill's birth trauma was reproduced (Rank, TB 75). In writing Desire, which he considered a tragedy, O'Neill defused his unconscious anxieties by projecting them onto his art. As Rank explains, tragedy is the "highest cathartic development" or therapeutic activity in overcoming regressive tendencies (TB 204). In effect, by writing Desire, O'Neill overcame his own retrogression, which was
triggered by the recent loss of his family. In essence, O'Neill believed that in tragic theater, we "save ourselves" through "suffering in the suffering of others" (O'Neill, Letters 193).

Desire is more than a tragic projection of O'Neill's anxieties and the grief he suffered over the loss of his family. It also shows the very negative thoughts he had about them and "represents a nightmare projection of his past family life" (Robinson 41). Dr. Philip Weissman, "a specialist in the psychiatric aspects of the creative process," believes, like Rank, that plays are products of the unconscious and "should be treated like the manifest content of the characters in a dream or fantasy" (455).

Weissman also states that Desire is O'Neill's "unconscious autobiography," and Journey is the "conscious" one (432). Furthermore, Weissman claims that Desire is a manifestation of O'Neill's own "oedipal conflict" in which he wishes "to outdo and remove his father and have his mother as a sexual object" (448). By becoming the family cook and housekeeper, Eben Cabot (O'Neill), punishes himself "for his aggressive strivings" (448). Conversely, in his "rebellion against the father," Eben "becomes the lover of the latter's wife," whom he also perceives as a mother figure (448). In Rank's view, youngest sons like Eben are in particularly powerful positions and are considered heroes in preference to their older brothers. This is because a
youngest son is the last one to leave the mother and so "drives the others away. In this he is like the father, with whom he alone, and from the same motives, is able to identify himself (TB 112-13).

As in many of his plays (Beyond the Horizon (1920), The Long Voyage Home (1917)), Desire also portrays O'Neill's feelings of homelessness and rootlessness, which all the major characters reflect. Although over his lifetime he had five beautiful residences, O'Neill was always restless and never stayed anywhere very long. His last words, "Born in a hotel room--and God damn it--died in a hotel room!" were a poignant reminder of his acute feelings of homelessness (Gelb 939). Of course, sensations of homelessness may also mirror an infantile longing for the primal home, the womb.

As O'Neill projected his anxieties onto his art, so too do his characters attempt to project their fears and assert their individual creative wills. They are, however, like Ibsen's characters who are often unsuccessful in achieving self-realization. As Eugene M. Waith states about The Great God Brown (1926), the problem in Desire is "the deformation of a creative impulse in a hostile environment" (188). Here the hostile environment surrounds the Cabot family, who bear certain resemblances to the Tyrones of Journey and by extension, to the O'Neills as well. In Desire, family members strive to assert their own wills at the expense of other members of the group. As in Ibsen's plays, the
failure of the protagonists to achieve individualization almost always leads to death or despair. Yet paradoxically, it is often in death that the characters achieve their greatest triumphs. Like Rebecca and Rosmer of Ibsen's Rosmersholm, "Abbie and Eben, as they are reconciled to their fate (which they will), assume a dignity which approaches tragic stature" (Racey 42).

Throughout most of Desire, the members of the Cabot family are devoid of dignity. Their sordid tale begins in 1850 on a farm in New England. The patriarch of the family is seventy-five year old Ephraim Cabot, who is extremely nearsighted, and whose face "is as hard as if it were hewn out of a boulder, yet there is a weakness in it, a petty pride in its own narrow strength" (18). Cabot, as he is called in the script, has three sons: Simeon, 39; Peter, 37; both from his first wife, and Eben, 25, from his second. The elder sons leave early in the play after Eben buys their share of the farm. They then depart for California to seek their fortunes in the gold rush.

In Desire, the main focus is on Cabot, Eben, and Abbie, 35, a sensuous woman who during the play becomes the old man's third wife. These three characters are the first of many whom O'Neill portrays as "the discordant unholy trinity of the father, the son, and the mother--the father usually menacing, the son at odds with him, the mother usually the protective and loving ally of the son" (Engel 25).
addition, in *Desire*, the characters are motivated by an extreme desire for property and love.

At first, Eben hates Abbie because he feels she has usurped his place as heir to the family farm. Yet it is not as his father's heir that the young man claims the property but as his mother's. Eben believes that she was deprived of her land by Cabot, who denies this allegation and tells his son, "'Twas yer Maw's folks aimed t' steal it from me" (46). Cabot is probably lying because just previously he advises Eben that he should get married and "'arn a share o' a farm that way" (46).

In any case, because of a strong sexual attraction, Abbie and Eben overlook their differences and fall passionately in love. A baby boy is born of their relationship, whom Cabot thinks is his. He tells Eben that Abbie only used him so that she would get the farm. Eben is enraged by his father's disclosure and terminates his relationship with Abbie, who to prove her love, suffocates the baby. Eben never expected such a strong response from his lover, and he is appalled by her unnatural deed.

Eben leaves to get the sheriff, but he realizes suddenly that he is just as culpable as Abbie for the death of their son. When the sheriff arrives, Eben joins Abbie to face the consequences of her infanticide. Like Rebecca and Rosmer, Abbie and Eben accept their fate bravely and without rancor toward Cabot or anyone else. This positive ending for once
places O'Neill with Nietzsche and Rank who believe that the creative will is a "liberator and bringer of joy" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra 268). Moreover, because of its existential focus on Eben's free choice, Desire denies any naturalistic bent that critics such as Doris V. Falk suggest ("That Paradox, O'Neill" 228).

Before Abbie and Eben create themselves through death, earlier in the play they and Cabot struggle constantly to achieve individuation. Like the neurotic characters in Ibsen's dramas, however, they usually act within their own egos. There, birth trauma anxieties grow and inhibit the exercise of their creative wills. As with the Ibsen characters, Abbie, Eben and Ephraim Cabot formulate projects for themselves, but these projects are informed solely by each individual's desire. There are no reformers here like Rosmer and Brand, who also live neurotically within themselves but at least endeavor to uplift society. Rather the Cabots are more like selfish "birds of prey," nipping at each other (Heilman 83). Among the Cabots, individual desires take precedence over family harmony.

Family harmony is disturbed first by the sudden departure of Simeon and Peter. Among the Cabots, despite their boorishness, Simeon and Peter are interesting from a psychological standpoint. O'Neill's purpose in putting them in the play was probably for them to act as contrasts to Eben as well as to show how they manage to escape from their
tyrannical father, something Eben is unable to do. The oafish brothers also add a "crudely comic flavor" to the play, "but as O'Neill said with reference to *The Iceman Cometh*, it is not long before 'the comedy breaks up and the tragedy comes on'" (Falk, *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension* 94).

Simeon and Peter bear biblical names which are ironic in their case. They are neither leaders like Simon Peter nor steadfast as rocks, called "petra" in Greek. Nevertheless, these country bumpkins manage to rid themselves of anxiety. Simeon and Peter are like Rank's average person who, unlike the neurotic, "perceives himself really and adapts reality to his ego" (*WT* 93). When Eben buys their birthrights, they have no regrets and are delighted to escape a horrendous family environment to seek happiness elsewhere. Unlike Esau, their Old Testament counterpart, or Eben, their younger brother, they will no longer be bound to their father.

Simeon and Peter have suffered for years under their father's heavy yoke (O'Neill aptly refers to them as "friendly oxen") and will no longer be his slaves. They are tired of building his stone walls and fences. They themselves have become as hard as the stones surrounding them. For example, they did not help Eben's downtrodden mother, their stepmother, whom they truly liked and respected. When the men eventually settle in California,
they hope that the fields they plow will have "lumps o' gold in the furrow" and not just worthless rocks (4). As Simeon and Peter depart from the farm, they throw rocks through the parlor window, a room shown later as a place of dread for the family. In a symbolic way they are giving their father's rocks back to him. Doris V. Falk sees their gesture "as the most heroic statement in the play of freedom and maturity" ("That Paradox, O'Neill" 228).

One cannot view Simeon and Peter as neurotics in the Rankian sense. They are not immobilized by any life and death fears. With some help from Eben, they become independent of their father, stand on their own, and have no fear of life. Actually, they planned to go to California before Eben gave them the money. They also have no death fears or if they ever did they are gone by now. Even their brutal father cannot "dissolve" their zest for living.

Nor do Simeon and Peter suffer from regression because they really have conquered their anxieties through creative action. They project themselves outwardly toward the world, and take what life has to offer. The two simple rustics are full of hope as they carry off the gate to the farm, thus showing the audience that there is a way out of a dismal existence if only one has the creative will. Later, the audience will observe that Eben is unable to act as creatively as his far less intelligent siblings.
Besides Simeon and Peter, Abbie Putnam Cabot, the newest member of the Cabot clan, also struggles to create herself anew. Like Rebecca West, Abbie is a victim of an unhappy past. Orphaned young, she married a drunk and had to endure both his death and their child's. Besides bearing her loss, Abbie was forced by economic necessity to work as a drudge in other people's homes. When she met Ephraim Cabot, she saw a chance to realize herself by creating a "hum" of her own. Actually, on an unconscious level, Abbie needed a project with which she could resist the regressive feelings brought about by her dreadful life. In a Rankian sense, she wished to create herself by acquiring possessions. Her plans go awry, however, when she becomes a member of the dysfunctional Cabot family.

Although she is a simple country woman who lacks the sophistication of Rebecca West, Abbie resembles Ibsen's character in her demonic aspect, and also in the way she sacrifices her own will for the sake of her lover's happiness. Like Rebecca, Abbie is an intruding stranger who comes to a new town in order to improve herself. She, too, envisions herself as mistress of a thriving household and manager of the man who is head of it. In Abbie's case, she finds herself in the middle of a battle between father and son over which man actually is in charge.

Like Rebecca and many of the women in ancient myth, Abbie symbolizes unknowingly the dark side of the mother
image. This "Woman" everywhere "appears as bearer of the law of death," both "as affectionate and as a dark threatening power, capable of the deepest sympathy but also of the greatest severity" like the Sphinx and "the maternally formed Harpies" (Rank, TB 115). Abbie fits this severe maternal image. As Rebecca brings down the house of Rosmer, Abbie ruins the house of Cabot. As its patriarch "retires to his stony, solitary existence . . . the young and life bearing have been destroyed" (Racey 43).

Abbie's conscious purpose in life is not to devastate her new family but to create a home of her own and thus create herself. Like the Cabot men, and O'Neill himself, she tries to overcome rootlessness and lonesomeness. All of the characters, except for the elder brothers who have each other, feel an overpowering need for love and companionship. Eben and Cabot never acknowledge their need for affection because they perceive it as a weakness; Cabot detests anything "soft" and womanly. Instead of finding happiness in the Cabot household, Abbie, like the farm, becomes a piece of property for the men to haggle over. Her husband perceives her as a child-bearing chattel like his other wives. Moreover, she has no rights to his property: "Cabot: Ye're on'y a woman. Abbie: I'm yer wife. Cabot: That hain't me. A son is me--my blood--mine. Mine ought to get mine" (29).
Like the legendary Phaedra, Abbie complicates her status in the family by falling in love with her stepson, who unlike Hippolytus, returns her love. Unable to have any meaningful relationship with Cabot because she married him only for security, Abbie now projects her anxieties on Eben. At first, she fears that Cabot will leave the farm to his youngest son, but later she "grows beyond her exploitation of Eben to gain control over the farm and a feeling of security to a realization that she must love him as another human being" (Cunningham 70).

When this happens, she "plays mother" to Eben and then becomes his lover. This is "an early instance of O'Neill's mother—mistress ambiguity in sexual life . . ." (Heilman 83). Abbie's self-realization comes after she breaks down Eben's resistance to her by playing on his unconscious Oedipal fantasies. In O'Neill's first notes for the play, he explains how "Abbie adapts a very motherly attitude, not pretending but really believing it herself. She keeps kissing him, getting him all confused as to her identity and his," and Eben "feels through her, he gets his mother back" (qtd. in Floyd, The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment 280).

In effect, Abbie represents the maternal "love principle," which is the submission of one's own will to another's (Rank, WT 65). Although she is the aggressor in her relationship with Eben, by killing their child and thus
ruining her own future she proves that nothing means more to her than Eben. In essence, "she kills what she loves to prove a greater love; the suffocation of the child of love, paradoxically and tragically, symbolizes the true quality of love" (Berlin, Eugene O'Neill 77).

Through her act, heinous as it is, Abbie has dispelled her own life and death fears. As Brand and the patriarch Abraham prepared to do, she sacrifices a great love for a greater one, and in her mind is acting creatively. Furthermore, Abbie takes her punishment standing on her own, and she no longer fears that the Cabots will overwhelm her and destroy her sense of selfhood. With a new spiritual awareness, she banishes all her petty desires for material wealth and false values, and at the end of the play, goes courageously to an almost certain death.

Although Abbie is the most important onstage embodiment of the maternal principle, there are other manifestations of it as well. These figures include another human woman, a female ghost, animals, vegetation, and even inanimate objects. In Desire, the ghost of Eben's mother is the most important offstage manifestation of the maternal principle. For example, she affects strongly the actions of Abbie and Eben, and she is also significant because she frightens Cabot by her unseen but felt presence in the house. As he remarks to Abbie, "It's cold in this house. It's oneasy. They's thin's pokin' about in the dark--in the corners"
Eben's mother, like Beata Rosmer, is an eerie revenge figure who seeks vengeance on her husband because of his mistreatment of her. Evidently Cabot worked his wife to death by making her perform so many household chores that she became too tired to live. In *Desire*, the second Mrs. Cabot, like Hamlet's father, uses her son as the instrument of her revenge. In order to accomplish her purpose, she stage-manages Eben's romance with Abbie. Because Abbie has an overwhelming desire to seduce Eben in the family parlor, it is almost as if the mother is luring them there. The parlor itself is "a grim, repressed room in which the family has been interred alive" (34).

While they are in the parlor, Abbie and Eben both sense the presence of his mother, and like Hamlet with his father's ghost, are not certain if the spirit is a friendly one or not. When Abbie promises Eben that she will "take yer Maw's place," and then smothers him with kisses, Eben frees himself from her, and jumps up "trembling all over and in a strange state of terror" (36). He thinks that the ghost may be upset because Abbie has usurped her position. Abbie, however, believes that the spirit realizes that she truly loves Eben and in kindly maternal fashion, wishes them well. The incredulous Eben presumes suddenly that his mother, by approving of his love affair with Abbie, is merely working her vengeance on Cabot (37). In any case,
Eben cannot really love Abbie unless he is sure that their sexual relationship has his mother's approval (Alexander 86).

One cannot ascertain if Eben is correct about the benevolence of his mother's spirit. After all, because of their romance, Abbie and Eben forfeit their lives. The consummation of their love occurs in the mother's parlor, the room of death in which she was laid out; thus their love has a mortal quality about it. Further, like Beata's, Mrs. Cabot's spirit may be disturbed because her position has been usurped. But what position is that? Is it the position of Mrs. Cabot or is it that of Eben's mother? If there were a real Oedipal situation between Eben and his mother, she may be calling her son back to her.

Also, if Eben and Abbie are having regressive feelings, their encounter with his mother may serve to reinforce them. As Preston Fambrough believes, "The principal characters are motivated directly by demonic elements," and Cabot's "thin" or ghost is "pointing to the ineffable mystery beyond" (28). This "mystery" may be the powerful influence of the unconscious birth trauma anxieties of Abbie and Eben.

In his stage directions at the beginning of *Desire*, O'Neill presents the mother image ambiguously, and he stunningly uses oxymorons to make his point. Hovering over the Cabot house are "two enormous elms" with their branches
trailing down over the roof. It is as if they are covering the house in a womblike embrace. The trees "appear to protect and at the same time subdue. There is a sinister maternity in their aspect, a crushing, jealous absorption" (2). Their contact with "the life of man in the house" has given them an "appalling humaneness" (2). The elms set a tone of sorrow and despair to the play. They also symbolize the maternal principle of nature trying to assert itself over the stonelike masculine puritanism that prevails in the Cabot family.

According to Rank, houses are a womb symbol (TR 87). Now, however, the Cabot house has lost much of its maternal significance because "its walls are a sickly grayish and the green of the shutters faded" (2). Since the first two Cabot wives have died, the house and the maternal principle it embodies have become moribund. The house also faces a stone wall, which symbolizes the paternal forces arrayed against those of the mother. Now there are only the elms to protect the house. The maternal presence in its benevolent aspect is restored when Abbie, after her sexual encounter with Eben, "sticks her head out" the parlor window and flings open its shutters. In effect, she returns the exuberant life force once again to the lifeless Cabot house.

Min, the offstage prostitute, is another human mother figure. Because she smells like "a wa'm plowed field," she is a typical Earth Mother or female fertility symbol (10).
On separate occasions, the four male Cabots have partaken of her favors, and the elder brothers call her "The Scarlet Woman" (9). Old Cabot first visited her followed by Simeon and Peter. When Eben discovers that his father has a new bride, he goes to Min in an act of defiance showing that he is as manly as are his father and brothers.

Here O'Neill may be borrowing from Freud's Totem and Taboo (1913) by suggesting that Eben and his brothers are like the primal horde described by Freud in which the sons rebel against the father in order to possess the mother (167). In this instance, the mother figure is Min. Of course, later it will be Abbie. Rank, expanding on Freud's theory, claims that the strong father figure and "man-governed states" were set up not only as incest barriers, but also as mother substitutes. Because of her painful connection with the birth trauma, the mother can no longer exert power. Consequently, "anxiety of the mother is then transferred as respect to the King" (TB 89-94).

Eben will not relinquish his claim to "Mother" Min. As noted previously, in Rankian theory the youngest brother has preferential status over his elder brothers in his claim to the mother's affections (TB 112-13). Eben stakes his claim to the primal mother personified by Min when he states forcefully to Simeon and Peter, "She may've been his'n--an'your'n too--but she's mine now!" (12). Min, as the first human maternal image in Desire is the forerunner of
the other two female symbols of the primal mother, namely Abbie and Eben's own dead mother, both of whom he also tries to possess.

As noted, Rank believed that the primal mother was replaced by the father god in the interests of social stability or as a safeguard against incest (TB 126). In effect, "every relapse to the veneration of the mother, which can only be accomplished sexually, is therefore anti-social and is persecuted with all the horror of so-called religious fanaticism" (TB 126). In Desire, Cabot representing the paternal force, tries with ferocious intensity to suppress the maternal principle. Thus his first name, Ephraim, is ironic since it means "fruitful" (Falk, "Paradox" 229). Cabot supposedly defeats the mother principle by browbeating his family into living under his stern religious code, which is to follow a hard, unforgiving God. To Cabot, "God's hard, not easy! (31).

Besides the persecution of his family, Cabot tries to defeat the mother image and fulfill himself by keeping possession of the farm, which as a fertility area has maternal connections. At least on a conscious level, however, he does not make the earth-female connection but associates the land with his harsh version of God. Cabot's God is a paternal figure who is not gentle or kind but hard like the ubiquitous stones of the farm. By wrenching corn out of the stony soil, Cabot believes he has
served his difficult taskmaster. He does not realize however, that in myth the corn symbolizes the mother principle and is personified by the goddess Demeter. Moreover, this life-giving force cannot be suppressed.

Cabot, like James Tyrone, may be a projection of O'Neill's own father, James O'Neill, who had an extreme love for property and was also very religious. As James Tyrone and James O'Neill were both conditioned by their strict Irish Catholic upbringing, so too was Cabot influenced by his straitlaced Puritan heritage. In O'Neill's view, all these men see God in their own image. This image is unmerciful, unloving and unbending.

Virginia Floyd points out that both Irish Catholicism and New England Puritanism trace their harsh religious codes to Augustine, a fifth-century philosopher, who promulgated doctrines based on "absolute predestination, original sin, and irresistible grace" (273-74). Through the course of centuries, the Augustinian religious brand of Puritanism gave way to one based on material prosperity. Not only is the desire for wealth manifested by the Puritan Cabot in Desire, but also by James Tyrone in Journey. In any case, in Desire, O'Neill perhaps is criticizing fanaticism of all kinds. Also, by naming his self-important character "Cabot," he is ridiculing the famous patrician New England family, who, like Ephraim Cabot, talk only to God (Falk, "Paradox" 229).
Ibsen's fanatical pastor Brand is another counterpart of Cabot's, for Cabot has a "Brandlike conception of man's relation to God" (Winther 330). Both Brand and Cabot believe that man must suffer in order to attain individuation. Moreover, as neurotics each man perceives God in terms of his own ego, and believes he has an intimate and special knowledge of the divine will. In essence, Brand and Cabot each think that "he is the chosen instrument of an Old Testament God" (Carpenter 108).

Both Brand and Cabot also have projects that they believe God is directing: Brand is obsessed with fulfilling his "duty" toward his congregation and Cabot with building his personal church "on a rock--out o' stones an' I'll be in them!" (31). The would-be patriarchs really wish to promulgate the paternal "force principle" in which the individual will is exacted on others (Rank, WT 65). Both men are self-righteous tyrants, who through their uncreative but powerfull wills, destroy their wives and families. Like Brand, Cabot is a parody of the Old Testament patriarch, Abraham, as well as the just and loving God who spared Abraham's son Isaac. Cabot, who acts like a god to his own family is neither just nor loving.

Unlike Brand with Ulf, Cabot does not ruin his sons' physical bodies, but through his cruel treatment of them, he smothers their humane feelings and decimates their souls. Instead of uplifting them by his religious fervor, he has
made his children coarse and crude. Yet Cabot is really a hypocrite because even if it were desirable, he does not follow any strict religious tenets but simply talks piously and tries to impose his strict creed on others, especially his family. In other words, "he is not a God-fearing Calvinist: he is a lecher and a miser, with a biblical footnote to defend his every misdeed" (Wilkins 243).

Unconsciously, Cabot suffers birth trauma anxiety and has an infantile desire to return to the primal mother. Although man "depreciates" woman on a conscious level; "In the Unconscious he fears her" (Rank, TR 94). No matter how he treats his wives, Cabot can never escape the unconscious pull of the mother, whom he truly dreads. This is obvious because of his remarks about her ghostly presence in the house. Since he is hostile toward the mother image, Cabot will never have any peace because he is denying the life force. As he says to Abbie, who personifies this power, "Somethin's always livin' with ye" (45). By this statement he not only senses Abbie's connection with the mother, but he obviously is aware also of the other maternal presences on the farm.

Because he is haunted by these presences especially by the ghost of his second wife, Cabot can never assert his creative will through the farm. Nor can he be a creative figure through his children, since he does not recognize them as his heirs. Although he has three sons already,
Cabot desires yet another one by Abbie, who has no intention of having Cabot father her child. In reality, Cabot is so neurotic and self-centered that he would rather see the farm burn than let his legitimate heirs inherit what he "made out o' nothin' but my own sweat 'n' blood" (28). He fails to consider how much travail the other members of the family have put into the farm.

Throughout his life, Cabot was immobilized often by his life and death fears. Once he went West to where the earth was fertile and without stones. He did not stay very long, however, as the life there was "easy," not "hard." As a product of a Puritan background with its demanding work ethic, Cabot was not content simply to enjoy himself and watch his crops grow. In Rankian terms, because of his heritage he could not abide standing on his own and renouncing a "hard" life of sacrifice. As a result, he suffered life fear, which means that Cabot felt guilty about feeling good and being his own man. Because of his fear, he concocted a story that God called him back to New England. Yet after he returned there, he was unfulfilled living the stern existence that he thought God demanded: piling stone on stone in order to build walls with which to shut out the world and protect his property.

But God was not in the stones, and as Cabot tells Abbie, he became very "lonesome" by believing so (31). Actually, the mother principle is at work in Cabot's mind,
and his "lonesomeness" is a sign of his need for love. But instead of admitting his lack, Cabot experiences a severe death fear that his family may overwhelm him, and he will lose his identity. As Chester V. Long notes about Cabot, "His nearsightedness is symbolic of his inability to 'see' love--which requires giving as well as desiring" (109).

Cabot also suffers from severe regressive tendencies. His longing for the primal mother is evident particularly in his attachment to the cows on his farm, which "is practically the only indication of tenderness in his nature" (Sheaffer, S and P 67). Somehow the cows give him greater comfort than have any of his wives or children. Down in the "nice smellin' barn with the cows, Cabot escapes the coldness of his eerie house. Once after talking to Abbie about having a son, he becomes frightened because he senses the proximity of the mother image. Ironically, by then going to visit the cows, who give him "peace," he reinforces the image by seeking it unconsciously. In any case, "the voice he follows hardly echoes the voice that recalled him to New England five decades earlier; this voice is the one that had summoned him westward and has continued to lure him to the barn" (Schlueter and Lewis 112).

Cabot shows his regression when talking to Abbie about the hereafter, which he associates ironically with the Earth Mother. As he looks heavenward, he says that the sky is "like a wa'm field" (27). Also, when he thinks
about his future, Cabot makes a pun on his first name by remarking to Abbie that he is "gettin' old," and "ripe on the bough" (27). By comparing his elderly self to a piece of ripe fruit, Cabot never frees himself from the maternal presence and its connotations of fertility.

There are two occasions when Cabot seems consciously to submit to the life force of the maternal principle. Once is when he is stimulated by the sights and sounds of spring and leaves the farm in search of sexual excitement. As he tells Simeon, "I been listen' t' the cows lowin' an' everythin' else kickin' up till I can't stand it no more" (8). Cabot is animated by the vitality now present at the earth's rejuvenation, and he goes to seek it with all possible speed. Abbie is the mother figure whom he discovers on his quest. After they are married and back on the farm, he praises her beauty with sensual words from the biblical Song of Solomon: "Yew air my Rose of Sharon! Behold, yew air fair; yer eyes air doves; yer lips air like scarlet; yer two breasts air like two fawns. . . ." (27). Abbie, however, is unmoved by her husband's sudden burst of sensuality because her thoughts are really on the old man's son Eben who in the adjoining room, is thinking about her.

Cabot comes closest to the mother principle and the exuberant life force it embodies when at the christening of Abbbie and Eben's baby, he behaves like the pagan god Dionysus. As stated, Rank and O'Neill were both interested
in Nietzsche (135). They believed in his idea of the opposition of the Apollonian forces promoting logic, rationalism and order, versus the Dionysian forces that celebrate emotion, creativity and irrationality. At the party, Cabot, an Apollonian on the surface at least, sheds this image and the Dionysian "unexhausted, procreating life will" takes over his personality (Nietzsche 269).

At the beginning of Act Three, like the ancient god of wine and drunkenness, Cabot appears dispensing drinks to all his neighborhood cronies. The old Puritan has decided to hold a dance to celebrate the birth of his son by Abbie. Everyone but Cabot knows that the baby is not his child, and all his guests are snickering at him. He has had quite a lot to drink himself and is in a "state of extreme hilarious excitement" (40).

There is a demonic ambience in the room, and this mood is reinforced by the strange fiddler, "a lanky young fellow with a long, weak face" who "grins about him with greedy malice" (40). Suddenly in the middle of the dance, Cabot, like a witch doctor at some ancient fertility ritual, breaks out in a very well-executed Indian war dance. He even wears out the fiddler, who remarks pointedly, "Ye got the devil's strength in ye" (43). Somehow Cabot seems imbued with superhuman powers. Further, these Dionysian forces are not like those of his cold, hard God, but of the warm, emotional mother image. In essence, "the cold self-
denial that characterized Cabot earlier has been transformed into the fecund life force identified not with the stones but with the cows" (Schlueter and Lewis 113). Of course, since Cabot is sterile, his Dionysian persona is really ironic.

Cabot makes one last effort to assert his creative will. In Act Three, when he sees Abbie and Eben before their arrest, he tells them that he is leaving the farm forever: "I'll be a--goin' to Californi--a--t' jine Simeon and Peter--true sons of mine if they be dumb fools--an' the Cabots'11 find Solomon's Mines t'gether! (57). For once, Cabot thinks realistically by acknowledging that his stony existence on the farm has not brought him much happiness. It also appears that he feels some affection even for his oafish elder sons, Simeon and Peter. In any case, he is now acting creatively by planning to set his beloved cows free, burn down the farm and thus free himself at last from the regressive pull of the primal mother. As a gesture of farewell to her, he plans to leave the ashes of his property to Eben's mother so that she can "haunt" the devastated scene (57).

Cabot's journey to California will probably never be made, however. Since Eben has given his father's cache of money to his brothers, the old man's creative project dies before it is really born. Now Cabot has no choice but to stay on the farm with its hard paternal God manifested in
the stones and the maternal forces that inhabit its earth. Cabot seems to have what he has always wanted: no wives or children to bother him. Yet his victory over family attachments is a Pyrrhic one. He tries to convince himself that his misfortune is God's will, and that he should emulate God because God is "hard" and "lonesome." (58).

But Cabot is totally unconvincing. If he had not hurt so many people one would pity his isolation on the farm where "it's a--goin' t' be lonesomer now than ever war before" (58). For his wickedness, unless he can recover his beloved herd of cows, Cabot is condemned to a lonely existence on the farm. Throughout his life, he gave it all of his misguided, uncreative powers, yet in a moment of enlightenment when he tries to escape from it, he is unable to do so. Like Brand, Cabot never realizes that God is loving as well as stern. Because of their cold, inhuman wills, both men condemn themselves to loneliness.

Eben Cabot, whose name means "stone" in Hebrew, and whose physical description strikingly resembles that of the young O'Neill, also mirrors significantly his parents' personalities and is both loving and stern (Rule 133). He is actually a combination of maternal and paternal forces and "wears two figurative masks—one ruthless and self-centered like his father, the other sensitive and hungry for beauty and love as his mother was" (Falk, Tragic.
Moreover, these forces are at war within Eben's psyche. This factor makes him interesting from a Rankian perspective because he is more immobilized than the other characters, who are not so torn between opposing gender-related influences in their psyches. As a result of the ambiguity in his personality, throughout the play, Eben often does not know what he truly desires. At the conclusion of *Desire*, however, the maternal force of love is in the ascendancy. Although along with Abbie, Eben "has to accept physical death or a long imprisonment amounting to the same," he is "reborn out of the womb of psychological death" (Chabrowe 133).

Before he is reborn, Eben has a long struggle to assert his creative will. He attempts to do so by trying to possess his father's women and property. Yet, in a deconstructive reading of the play, Joel K. Murray and Michael K. Bowman deny the binary opposition of men and women and suggest that Eben's desire for Abbie "is really a repression of desire for his father" (80). There is no doubt that Eben emulates Cabot and has a love-hate relationship with the old man. This is shown by Eben's inability to leave the farm.

The farm is the first possession that Eben desires from Cabot, and he wants it not only because he believes it belonged to his mother but also because he finds it very
"purity" (3). Eben is in touch with his natural surroundings, which suggests that he is also communicating with the maternal principle inherent in nature. Moreover, as difficult as his life is, Eben has no intention of leaving the farm, and "has a mystical attachment to it" sensing "the wondrous background nature provides in the everlasting daily and seasonal changes" (Floyd, New Assessment 272). Once after he thinks Abbie has betrayed him so she and their son will inherit the property, he (foreshadowing Cabot), threatens to leave for California and dig for gold with his brothers.

Yet Eben, who lacks the creative will of his seemingly dumb brothers, cannot detach himself from the mother image, either from that of his dead mother or from any of the Earth Mother images in the play. After all, he could have taken the cache of money for himself instead of buying out Simeon and Peter. Anyway, obtaining their shares would not have given him any greater stake in the farm. Actually, Eben feels a profound unconscious longing for the maternal depths, and his regressive feelings are what tie him to a place he supposedly hates. As Abbie warns him, "Nature'll beat ye, Eben" (25). It has already because at that moment he is still tied completely to the farm.

Eben is often as hardhearted as is his father, as seen when they both curse their sons at different moments in the play (23,48). For his part, Eben never tries to ingratiati
himself with Cabot. To be fair, the old man has attempted to soften his harsh attitude toward his son who he thinks is "like his Maw--soft and simple!" (19). Once Cabot tells Abbie that "Mebbe I been too hard on him" (26). At another uncommon mellow moment, he tells the people at the christening dance that Eben is better than any of them (42). But because of his father's treatment of his mother, Eben can never forgive him.

Perhaps Cabot's domestic demands on Eben have made the young man "soft." Apparently, Eben has taken his mother's place in the house because before Simeon and Peter leave, it is obvious that Eben is their housekeeper. His domestic role is a regressive act on Eben's part because like his attitude toward the farm, it denotes his strong longing to return to the primal mother. This desire probably was accelerated by his own mother's death ten years ago. In essence, he attempts to reunite with his mother by becoming like her. Eben may also identify with his mother as a victim, and as such he demands restitution from his father. Since Eben has taken over his mother's chores, "it is now his turn to be enslaved" (Tornquist, DS 247).

Evidently Eben cannot act creatively in a female role. Then he tries to achieve selfhood by gaining possession of the farm, followed by a relationship with Min. He does this in order to take something formerly possessed by Cabot, as well as to assert his manhood. Eben's desire for
possessions reflects his likeness to his father, or as his brothers and Abbie describe him to Cabot, "He's the dead spit 'n' image o' yew!" (26). O'Neill also hints that Eben may be a virgin on his first encounter with Min. When Simeon and Peter ask their brother, "Was she yer fust?", Eben answers them, "None o' yer business" (13). In losing his virginity, Eben proves he is as manly as any other male member of the Cabot family. Yet his virginity may also denote that for a man of twenty-five, he has a strong sense of sinfulness. By being with Min, however, he has broken out of his Puritan mold and as he tells his brothers, his sin is as "purty" as anyone else's who has slept with her (10).

Along with his awareness of sin, Eben also has the same sense of Apollonian reason as Cabot. This is obvious in "his determination to have the farm, his logic in wresting ownership of it from his brothers, and his early rejection of the sensuous Abbie" (Floyd, New Assessment 282). Yet his reasonableness does not stop Eben from being cruel to Abbie or his father. For example, he steals Cabot's money and calls Abbie "a damn trickin' whore!" (47). Despite these outbursts, Eben is really afraid of his father, who to Eben is like God the Father whom Cabot envisages. Even though it galls him, Eben defers to his father at the christening party. He really fears the old man as Cabot fears his stern Puritan God. Eben is overwhelmed by the paternal force
principle which smothers one's own will.

Eben may resemble his father in having the avarice of a New England Puritan as well as in a penchant for Apollonian conformity and order, "but gradually this puritan goes pagan and he learns to love" (Ahuja 121). Eben finds love with his father's wife Abbie and learns how to give of himself as well as to take from others. At first, Eben fights the maternal principle embodied in Abbie, who by washing the family dishes is really "washing the dirt and soot of puritanism off the Cabot household" (Ajuha 125). Yet Eben is at first uncomfortable with Abbie because he believes she has usurped both his mother's place and his.

Also, like Hamlet with his father, Eben feels guilty that he has not acted quicker in avenging his mother. Simeon and Peter reinforce Eben's guilt by reminding him that although he was only fifteen when his mother died, and big for his age, he did nothing to help her either. Perhaps Eben should have helped more while his mother was alive. He is now suffering the unconscious guilt over past actions that was prominent in the Ibsen characters. Actually, Eben's guilt is the only one even hinted at in Desire. Simeon and Peter as well as Abbie and Cabot never feel guilty about anything in their past lives.

It is only when Abbie herself acts like a mother to him that Eben can accept her as a woman. In effect, Abbie acts as a substitute for Eben's dead mother. After Abbie (and
perhaps the ghost) lures him to the parlor, Eben uses the
dark room as a "substitution of the primal situation" (Rank, TB 87). Also, "upon consummation of that love, the maternal
ghost is somewhat placated--love has finally had natural
sexual expression" (Falk, Tragic Tension 96). One cannot
help note that the critic uses the words "somewhat placated"
Perhaps Eben's mother will never be satisfied until she is
the last presence on the farm.

For now, however, Eben is satisfied, "and his Dionysian
nature inherited from his mother, is unleashed. Totally
unrestrained, his new-found passion overpowers him" (Floyd,
New Assessment 282). Ironically, Eben's recent sensuality
has fostered a new spiritual awareness in him. He even has
a kinder attitude toward his father and says to him, "Yew
'n' me is quits. Let's shake hands" (38). Through Abbie,
Eben has accomplished two of his goals. One is a conscious
one in which he revenges his mother on Cabot by taking his
place with his father's wife. The other goal is the
fulfillment of his unconscious need for love and
understanding, which he had never felt since the death of
his mother, and which he now experiences with Abbie.

But Eben quarrels with Abbie, and his spiritual growth
is halted temporarily. Until he reunites with her at the
end of the play, Eben is tormented by the diverse values of
his parents. In a Rankian sense, he is immobilized by life
and death fears. Eben suffers life fear because he cannot
stand on his own as his brothers have. Because he has a soft maternal streak in his nature, Eben is bound to the farm and its rampant maternal presences. Moreover, the farm "is a living reminder that he has not yet revenged his mother" and "he is chained to it (unlike his brothers) by his very determination to get it back from his father" (Tornquist, DS 247). Eben is also fearful of being independent of his father, whom he resembles. However, Cabot's harsh puritannical standards overwhelm Eben and inhibit his sense of selfhood. Therefore, he experiences acute death fear of losing his own identity.

When he and Abbie reconcile, Eben is freed from all his fears and anxieties. By taking responsibility for his role in the death of their baby, he projects his unconscious traumas through a creative act. In effect, by the mature sacrifice of his ego, Eben has submitted "to the ideals of love and justice," which are actually a merger of the "maternal" and "paternal" values that were so long at odds within his psyche. Through an unselfish and free act of will, Eben is at last at peace with himself.

Fifteen years after the production of Desire, O'Neill wrote The Iceman Cometh (further cited as Iceman). This play is also concerned with many of O'Neill's ideas such as the power of the maternal influence in human behavior, O'Neill's sense of rootlessness as manifested in his characters, and the gnawing feelings of regression that
destroy the creative will. As he reached the peak of his creativity, however, O'Neill already had abandoned the melodramatic tone of Desire and created a fully-developed tragicomedy with Iceman.

First, in Iceman, the characters are often ambiguous. For example, Cabot and Harry Hope are both father figures, but whereas Hope is often changeable, Cabot is almost always a stock "terrible" father figure. Secondly, in Iceman, there is little sentimentalization as when Eben and Abbie sacrifice everything for each other. If either one of them had really wanted the farm, romance would have suffered. In addition, there is less plotting in Iceman than in Desire, and the 1946 play is more a character study than it is a story with a beginning and an end. Finally, the characters in the later play exist almost solely in severe states of regression, and "the world in which they live exists beyond desire" (Bogard 421).
CHAPTER VIII

THE ICEMAN COMETH

With the truth, one cannot live. To be able to live one needs illusions, not only outer illusions such as art, religion, philosophy, science and love afford, but inner illusions which first condition the outer. (Rank, Truth and Reality 42)

To hell with the truth! As the history of the world proves, the truth has no bearing on anything. It's irrelevant and immaterial, as the lawyers say. The lie of a pipe dream is what gives life to the whole misbegotten mad lot of us, drunk or sober. (O'Neill, The Iceman Cometh 9-10)

The year 1912 was a momentous one for O'Neill. It was then that he almost lost both his creative will and his will to live. On Oct. 2, 1909, he married Kathleen Jenkins, a young woman whom he did not love. Shortly after the marriage, O'Neill left his bride to go on a gold mining expedition in Honduras. In May 1910, soon after O'Neill's return, Kathleen gave birth to Eugene O'Neill Jr. The baby's father, who ignored his son and Kathleen, promptly set off again, this time on a sea voyage to Buenos Aires. When O'Neill returned to New York in Oct. 1911, he divorced his wife but still he was not happy.

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Besides the strain of his marital fiasco, it was difficult for O'Neill to find a satisfying career. He had tried to be an actor like his father, but found he did not care for that life. O'Neill was also depressed because of his poor relationship with his parents. Because of James O'Neill's career, the O'Neill family (which also consisted of Ella, O'Neill's mother and Jamie his brother) never had a real home. For Eugene O'Neill, "the first and deepest unhappiness of his life was that of homelessness--both psychological and physical" (Carpenter 27). This lack of permanent roots is reflected not only in O'Neill's own rootlessness, but also in his characters such as Abbie Putnam of Desire and the seaman Olson of The Long Voyage Home (1917) as well as many of those in Iceman. Lastly, his mother's morphine addiction also added to O'Neill's woes. He felt enormous guilt for it because she developed the habit as a result of his difficult birth (Griffin 4).

In 1912, with little hope for a meaningful future, O'Neill became extremely depressed. He attempted to alleviate his despair by heavy drinking and carousing at Jimmy the Priest's, a squalid saloon on a lower Manhattan waterfront, and the place he now called home. O'Neill's life was at the lowest point it would ever be, and "'the iceman' was at hand" (Carpenter 31). The iceman was death, and early in 1912, O'Neill sought it by taking an overdose of veronal tablets (Sheaffer, S & P 208). Yet fate, or the
"inscrutable force" O'Neill believed in, had other plans for him.

He was revived by his friends, but still he could not shake his despondent mood. Although he left the depravity of Jimmy the Priest's, his debauchery had taken its toll. The then twenty-four year old O'Neill contracted tuberculosis, and in late December, 1912, was admitted to Gaylord Farm, a Connecticut sanitorium. There a miracle happened. For some mysterious reason, while recovering in the peaceful atmosphere of the rest home, O'Neill made his first feeble attempts at playwriting.

When he became an artist, O'Neill's creative will overcame the self-destructive, regressive impulses that were gnawing at him because of his unhappy life. In 1912, O'Neill was at "the bottom of the sea." In 1913, however, after the copywriting of The Web and A Wife for a Life, his creativity overcame or at least ameliorated his death wish. Instead of taking his own life, O'Neill was on his way to creating a new life for himself through art.

O'Neill wrote Iceman in 1939, when he was again depressed, this time over the onset of World War II (Letters 493). Yet he chose his personally memorable year of 1912 as the setting for Iceman as he also did for Journey, his even more autobiographical work. The action of Iceman takes place in a decrepit saloon modeled on Jimmy the Priest's and
also after two other O'Neill haunts: The Hell Hole, a Greenwich Village dive, and the Garden Hotel on Madison Ave. (Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Artist 490). From his recollection of these sordid places, O'Neill created Harry Hope's saloon, which is "The End of the Line Cafe" and the "No Chance Saloon" for its various degenerate patrons, most of whom live there. The bums at Hope's are modeled on people O'Neill knew and whom he considered "the best friends I ever had" (Cargill 84).

The physical properties of the saloon reflect the despair of its residents. In his stage directions for Act One, O'Neill describes the backroom as a place with windows so grimy that no one can see outside (3). Like Brand's gloomy home, the room signifies a tomblike, unenlightened environment. From a Rankian point of view, it also symbolizes the womb to which the drunks are regressing unconsciously. The bar and backroom are separated by "a dirty black curtain," which indicates the isolation of the barflies from the general public outside. At the beginning of Act Three, the audience can observe swinging doors between the saloon and the street (155). As the doors swing in, "they lead to the dream, to the world of illusion, safety, companionship. Swinging out, they lead to death, to the world of reality, danger, alienation" (Floyd, New Assessment 526). In the backroom, on the outside of the toilet door, there is a sign that reads "This is it," which
evokes the sign over the gate of hell in Dante's *Inferno*: "Abandon all hope ye who enter here" (42). In *Iceman*, O'Neill's characters almost abandon hope.

Because they nurture one another, however, the derelicts at Hope's place do not despair. As in many of his plays, O'Neill uses a family situation to present his ideas. According to Laurin R. Porter, in *Iceman*, there are actually two families: "the family of the boarders, over which Hope presides in fatherly fashion" as well as "a unit composed of the three central characters, Larry Slade, Theodore Hickman (Hickey), and Don Parritt, which also functions as a family" (55). In addition, Ms. Porter sees the three central characters as the male members of the O'Neill family "considerably displaced" (53).

Apparently none of the bums have real families with wives and children. Nor do they have any homes of which anyone is aware. Instead, they have one another, and all of them gain comfort from supporting everyone else's illusions. In a Lacanian, feminist interpretation of *Iceman*, Ann Hall suggests that the derelicts create idealized versions of women and make them "perfect mirrors" (28). Perhaps the men are also attempting to idealize themselves and see their reflections in other men. For example, Willie Oban seems oblivious to the real characters of McGloin and Parritt but thinks he is such a fine lawyer he will easily get them acquitted of their crimes (57, 180).
The plot of *Iceman* revolves around the drunks' attempts to maintain their illusions in order to stave off death. Though alcoholic and neurotic, the group has attained its own limited tranquility. One summer day its peace is disturbed by Hickey, a fifty-year old salesman, who is a great favorite with the bums because every year on Hope's birthday he brings them plenty of booze and jokes to liven up their dismal lives. Yet Hickey's 1912 visit is different. He still brings presents for Hope's habitués, but this time he does not join them in becoming inebriated. Instead, he tries to force them to abandon their illusions, face reality, and take their places in the outside world. Much to his chagrin, however, Hickey's plan fails. Through their efforts to overcome their pipe dreams, the bums gradually turn against one another and against Hickey.

The derelicts distrust Hickey because he is sober, and they are drunk. They wonder what he wants from them. They also consider his straitlaced presence depressing. For his part, Hickey tells them that he does not need liquor anymore because he is now at peace with himself since giving up his "pipe dream" (79). Yet Hickey does not reveal his own illusion till the end of the play. Unbeknownst to the men, Hickey has just come from murdering his wife Evelyn. His illusion, which he discloses in Act Four, is that he killed her out of love. After all his cruelty to Evelyn (which entailed unfaithfulness and a resultant venereal infection),
Hickey has deluded himself that her murder was actually an act of mercy, for now she does not have to worry about him anymore (226). Truthfully, Hickey hates Evelyn for her unceasing forgiveness of his transgressions against her, and he cries out in anguish that "There's a limit to the guilt you can feel and the forgiveness and the pity you can take!" (239).

In Act Four, Hickey makes a public confession of his crime, largely through the goading of Larry Slade, a 60-year-old bum, who is a priest figure for the group. Unlike the other residents of Hope's saloon, Larry feels free of illusions, but he actually has two: that he is unafraid of death and that he does not care about other people. At the conclusion of Iceman, Larry is the only one whose illusions are destroyed. Consequently, Larry is Hickey's only "convert to death," because according to O'Neill, to be without illusions is to die (258).

Like the other derelicts, Larry drinks heavily, yet somehow he stays awake and apparently sober. But Larry also has a past he would rather forget. He was once a member of an anarchist group called the Movement but left it because he thought people's greed for power was stronger than their desire to be free (11, 27). Larry was (and maybe still is) in love with Rosa Parritt, herself a very free spirit, a kind of Mother of the Movement, who was unfaithful to Larry and to many other men as well. Now, however, Rosa and her
cohorts are in jail, betrayed by her son Don, who is a junior version of Hickey. Although he does not know Hickey before the play begins, Parritt "parrots" the older man since he, too, is a betrayer of a woman he supposedly loves. By condemning Rosa to a life in prison, Parritt might as well have shot her. Now he has come from California to be judged by Larry, whom he considers his surrogate father. Of course, the misanthropic Larry wants nothing to do with him. Unconsciously, however, he pities the young man because Parritt suffers from unmitigated guilt. At Larry's urging, Parritt commits suicide in order to be free from guilt and anxiety. Paradoxically, by dying he is reborn and finds the peace that has eluded him in life. Because he cannot live with his own mother, Parritt reunites with the primal mother.

As for the derelicts, after Hickey's arrest they convince themselves that he really meant them no harm. They think mistakenly, that his strange behavior is the result of his own admitted insanity. After Hickey leaves for prison, the men celebrate their return to the comfortable, familial world of alcoholic pipe dreams. Because all his illusions are gone, Larry cannot join them, and at the end of the play, he sits apart from the others, staring into nothingness.

From 1948 to the present, critics such as Sverre Arestad and Errol Durbach have noted the similarities between Iceman
and Ibsen's play, *The Wild Duck* (1884). A full scale comparison is not possible here, but a few connections may be addressed. First, both plays deal with the necessity for illusions (or "life-lies" in Ibsen's terms) in human psychological behavior. In *The Wild Duck*, when Gregers Werle comes to the Ekdal home with his message of truth, he shatters the family's illusions, as Hickey does when he destroys those of the wretches at Hope's saloon. Both men "are guilt-ridden destroyers who refer to illusions as the things that 'poison a guy's life'" (Floyd, *New Assessment* 518). As for Hjalmar Ekdal, he is like one of Hope's bums, who dreams of "doing great deeds another day" (Arestad, "The Iceman Cometh and The Wild Duck" 2).

O'Neill uses illusion on a much wider scale than Ibsen does. After all, in *The Wild Duck*, only Hjalmar Ekal is really fooled by Gregers Werle's false idealism. In Robert Brustein's opinion, O'Neill has universalized Ibsen's theme that "men cannot live without illusions" (341).

Another similarity between *Iceman* and *The Wild Duck* is that Gregers and Hickey are both bitter about life and want to make others as miserable as themselves. Like Brand, Rosmer, and Eben Cabot, they are also the victims of an uncaring parent. Gregers' father is a debaucher and Hickey's father was a self-righteous hypocrite who made their home a "jail" (232). Yet, despite the suffering they endured, neither Gregers nor Hickey has any sympathy for
other people's problems. As they attempt to bring truth to their friends, if not to themselves, Gregers and Hickey's interference only creates misery and unhappiness.

The suicides of Hedvig and Parritt connect the ideas of Ibsen, O'Neill, and Rank. The actions of the two young people show that they, of all the characters in both plays, are in the most extreme states of regression. Both die because they suffer from a lack of love and a sense of rootlessness and not belonging. Sadly, they have no illusions in which to take refuge, nor can they engage in an act of will to alleviate their anxieties. Thus Hedvig and Parritt have no means to achieve a sense of self except through death and reunion with the primal mother. Errol Durbach, in a study of both Iceman and The Wild Duck, posits that however "neurotic the pipe dream as an extreme manifestation of livslogn, it still remains infinitely preferable to the terrifying reality of selfconsciousness in the world" ("The 'Life-Lie' in Modern Drama" 330). As Rank, Ibsen and O'Neill would agree, for neurotics it is better to live with illusions than with devastating reality.

Besides their view that illusions are sometimes necessary to go on living, Ibsen, O'Neill and Rank are also related in their concern that individuals realize their full creative potential. However, in O'Neill's Iceman, as in Ibsen's plays, characters are often neurotic and live within their own egos. Because of their neuroses, they cannot act
creatively and overcome their birth trauma anxieties. Since they cannot overcome their anxieties through creative action, the denizens of Hope's bar exist in a constant regressive state. The bums intensify this state by their continual drunkenness. Such states denote an "agoraphobia while the immobility brings to realization at the same time the pleasurable primal situation, with the dread or horror of being freed therefrom" (Rank, TB 50). In other words, the bums fear leaving the saloon and giving up their illusion of being in the womb. Therefore, they prefer to remain in a state of paralysis.

Rank would probably compare the drunks in their alcoholic stupors to neurotics in various stages of regression. Most of the time, the derelicts lie almost lifeless on the dirty wooden tables of the backroom. According to Rank, such postures as "a bent carriage of the body, curling up in bed, lying without movement and speech for days at a time" are all physical symptoms of a desire to regress to "the intrauterine position" (TB 61). In their hallucinatory states, Willie and Hugo Kalmar reproduce the intrauterine state itself. In fact, Willie suffers enormously because his dream is a Rankian "punishment dream" in which a person "reinstates himself into a painful situation" which indicates "a wish to restore youth" and to "return to the womb" (TB 76). This is obvious as Willie emerges from a nightmare about his father, a notorious crook
of whom Willie is very ashamed (13).  

Even when they are in their infrequent wakeful states, the bums are immobilized by life and death fears. They cannot forsee a promising future, nor can they resurrect a past that is nebulous at best. As Hickey forces them from the saloon, the bums find nothing in the outside world that is personally significant, and they soon scurry back home, engulfed by their life fears: "The fear of life in Hope's saloon arises directly from life itself, which is to say from reality" (Chabrowe 77).

Yet for fear of having their personalities dissolved, the wretches cling to life and to their memories of real or imagined past glories. For example, Lewis and Wetjoen cherish the illusion that they were heroes in the Boer War. Actually, Lewis gambled away his regiment's money, and Wetjoen deserted his troops (176-77). In essence, the bums persist in their pipe dreams; otherwise they will die and lose forever the little selfhood they have. They are afraid to die, for "man's nature is such that he fears extinction no matter how painful his life may be" (Chabrowe 77). When they call Larry "Old Cemetery," the derelicts try to be humorous about death, a subject Larry discusses frequently, but one which they would rather ignore.

In their various states of regression, the denizens of Hope's saloon often display infantile modes of behavior. Like the Ibsen characters Aline Solness and Hilde Wangel,
there is also in the neurotic personalities of *Iceman* "a wish not to be grown up" (Rank, TB 66). Rolf Scheibler describes the group's childishness quite succinctly: "Now they all shelter from the world in the saloon," and depend "on Hope like children, dreaming as naively as children, playing games like children," and are "cruel and sensitive as children" (198-99). In turn, Hope treats his boarders as if they were his own offspring. For example, when Willie sings a lewd song, Hope tells Rocky, the bartender to "lock him in his room!" (41). Yet Hope himself acts like a meek, submissive child when Hickey arrives and makes everyone obey him.

Because they have no creative enterprises on which to project their anxieties, the drunks exist in a perpetual state of infantilism. Their illusions are all they have to keep them from total despair. But like dreams, illusions are insubstantial. Cora and Chuck hope to get married and own a farm someday, but as Pearl observes, "Cora don't know which end of the cow has de horns!" (69). Still her illusions sustain Cora for when, because of Hickey, she and Chuck really try to execute their impossible pairing, they almost destroy each other.

In the plays discussed previously, some of the characters have specific goals: Brand wants to build a congregation, and Eben Cabot desires to own his mother's farm. In *Iceman*, however, the characters' projects are not
only vague but often non-existent. For example, Hope claims he once wanted to be a politician and still does. But it was his wife, Bessie, who made him "make friends with everyone" (51). Actually, Hope has no inclination to enter politics; he has not set foot outside the saloon since Bessie's death, twenty years ago.

Probably the derelicts' biggest illusion is that they were once creative people whose projects somehow went awry. It is more likely that they were never creative, and perhaps unconsciously they realize this. Hugo Kalmar is a character who is definitely out of touch with reality. He makes everyone at the saloon believe that he was once a great anarchist leader. But Larry tells Rocky that for a long time the Movement has been through with Hugo, "and thanks to whiskey, he's the only one who doesn't know it" (12). Hugo is not and probably never was a man of the people. He reveals his snobbery by calling Rocky "a damned bourgeois wop" (11). The cowardly deserter Wetjoen brags that "I was so tough and strong I grab axle of ox wagon mit full load and lift like feather" (43). Like Hugo and the others, Wetjoen simply brags a lot, but his spineless actions belie his boasting.

The favorite project of Hope and his cronies is to keep and cherish their illusions. Each of the men "has a past which produced the dreadful present. The self-respect of each depends upon the belief that tomorrow will change
today, that the pipe dream will come true" (Berlin, Eugene O'Neill 131). O'Neill, too, recognizes that people's pipe dreams sustain them when they experience bad luck.

Once he was asked what is the meaning of Iceman in the modern world:

Well, all I can say is that it is a play about pipe dreams. And the philosophy is that there is always one dream left, one final dream, no matter how low you have fallen, down there at the bottom of the bottle. I know because I saw it. (qtd. in Berlin, Casebook 85)

If O'Neill sees dreams at the bottom of a bottle, he also experiences them at "the bottom of the sea." For him, "the sea is the symbol of the mystery of life to which I belong" (Letters 566). As in Ibsen's The Wild Duck and Rosmersholm, the use of sea imagery evokes the womb. The optimistic young Hedvig finds comfort in her womblike attic, which she considers "the depths of the sea" (36). O'Neill's downcast alcoholics live out their dismal lives at the "Bottom of the Sea Rathskeller" (9). There, the ships of their dreams "are long since looted and scuttled and sunk on the bottom" (9).

Despite Larry's pessimism and Hickey's haranguing, the hangers-on at Harry's manage to stay afloat, barely. Donna Moder's idea about Walt Whitman's "sea-mother" poem, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," also applies to the drunks at Hope's saloon. Like the boy in the poem, the drunks experience "the tension of ambivalent wishes for regressive
merger with the sea-mother and for autonomy through differentiation from her" (37). In essence, the bums, like the boy, experience the ambivalence and paradoxical nature of the birth trauma anxiety. At the saloon, however, they find respite from their fears in "the atmosphere of the place, the humour and friendship and human warmth and deep inner contentment of the bottom" (O'Neill qtd. in Berlin, Casebook 87). The derelicts' little harbor may be their last one, but it is a harbor nonetheless.

It would seem probable that the bums' regressive feelings, as those of many Ibsen's characters, stem from their guilt over past transgressions. As observed in Desire, however, guilt in an O'Neill play (if it is there at all) is not as evident as it is in an Ibsen work. In Iceman, guilt is expressed most clearly in the major characters Parritt and Hickey. Willie is a minor character who also experiences guilt, but, like Brand, not over his own offenses but over those of a parent. Because he was "mocked by his fellow students for his father's unsavory reputation," Willie drowns himself in alcohol (Floyd, New Assessment 516).

Unlike Willie, many of the characters disclaim responsibility for their own infractions, much less for someone else's. Often they blame their downfalls on the women in their lives. Of course, since the women involved are offstage characters, they are perceived solely from a
male point of view. This viewpoint is essentially a negative one. In characterizing women, O'Neill often follows his mentor Strindberg: "Woman for O'Neill as for Strindberg, symbolizes the split soul in the dual role of mother-mistress she plays—man's potential savior and destroyer" (Floyd, Eugene O'Neill: A World View 197).

O'Neill's characterization of women also relates to Rank's birth trauma idea according to which paradoxically, we both fear the mother but still desire to return to her. In writing Iceman, however, O'Neill does not diminish the importance of his female characters and feels he has tried to write a play "where at the end you feel you know the souls of the seventeen men and women who appear—and the women who don't appear" (qtd. in Berlin, Casebook 87).

Margie, Pearl, and Cora are the three onstage female characters in Iceman. These young women, who are "typical dollar streetwalkers" seem to have little connection with the deep psychological action of the play. However, O'Neill typically links madonnas and whores when he describes their actions to Rocky as that of two maternal affectionate sisters (62). Pearl, Margie, and Cora are really "sentimental, featherbrained, giggly, lazy, good-natured and reasonably contented with life" (62). But because they are abused both verbally and physically, an audience may have a certain degree of sympathy for them. In any case, in Iceman, "there are no women present who will impinge on the
experience of the men" (Mandl 10). The tarts are no threat to the men and in fact amuse them and raise their spirits a little. They are also engaging contrasts to the destructive offstage women.

In Iceman, the four offstage female characters are like the dead women in Rosmersholm and Desire and are vital to the present action of the play. Three of the characters have already been mentioned: Bessie Hope, wife of Harry Hope; Evelyn Hickman, wife of Hickey; and Rosa Parritt, mother of Don Parritt and former lover of Larry Slade. The fourth woman, Majorie Cameron, is the wife of James Cameron, a former journalist in the Boer War, who is also called Jimmy Tomorrow because he is always going to do something with his life, "tomorrow."

Majorie is a rather shadowy figure. We know little about her except that her husband claims she was unfaithful, and he has the illusion that her infidelity caused his drunkenness. Therefore, he does not have to address his own lack of creativity. Actually, Majorie's adultery was the result, not the cause of Jimmy's alcoholism, and he finally admits the truth after Hickey's confession in Act Four (229-30). In effect, Jimmy makes Majorie the scapegoat for his neurotic and infantile behavior. He cannot project his anxieties through writing creatively, so he blames her for his career failures. A bizarre twist to their relationship is that now Jimmy cannot remember her at all. In Act Two,
he praises Marjorie's beauty, but in Act Four, he does not even remember "if she was pretty" (229). Actually, Marjorie becomes irrelevant finally. When Jimmy, at Hickey's instigation, leaves unwillingly for the outside world, he soon collapses weeping on a nearby dock. With his illusions destroyed, Jimmy contemplates suicide (216).

Bessie Hope is the woman whose husband has idealized her publicly ever since her death. Bessie, as noted, was the guiding force behind Hope's political career, which was aborted after her death because she wanted it, and he did not. For his part, Hope acts as if he misses his wife terribly. The audience cannot really believe him after Larry tells Parritt that Bessie really "nagged the hell" out of Hope (50).

After Hickey arrives and urges everyone to wake up from his or her pipe dreams, Hope abandons his illusion that Bessie was anything but a "nagging bitch" (204). But this realization does not bring him any happiness. Hope was contented deluding himself that he had a happy marriage and a potentially rewarding career in politics. Now the liquor has lost its "kick," and he cannot ease his pain over his lost illusions (229). As far as Bessie is concerned, we will never know the real woman except that she liked to go to church and was fussy about her carpets. Evidently, she too lacked an authentic self, and because she had no project of her own, she made her husband her reason for being.
O'Neill tells us a lot about Evelyn Hickman, most of it unfavorable. Ann Hall characterizes her as a "diabolic" madonna, who "can be just as manipulative and destructive as any whore" (35). Yet Evelyn has certain things in common with her husband Hickey. Both of them come from midwestern, strict Protestant backgrounds, and each of them also has faith in pipe dreams. Evelyn's pipe dream is that someday Hickey will be a faithful husband. Like him, she is true to her Puritan heritage because she is a dedicated reformer. As Evelyn tried to remodel him, Hickey now attempts to change the derelicts.

Earlier in the play, Parritt says there is something "not human" about Hickey (126). Evelyn too has her unearthly traits. As he makes his confession, Hickey declares, "It isn't human for any woman to be so pitying and forgiving" as Evelyn was (238). By this he means that she never exhibited emotions of anger or sorrow, and her unnatural and constant forgiveness of him did not ring true. He believes that every time they kissed, she was really trying to humiliate him (239).

In a sense, Hickey was Evelyn's project, but she was destructive rather than creative in their relationship. She also destroyed herself and Hickey along with their marriage. Evelyn's unnatural, maternalistic love caused her husband's loss of self. According to Rank, "The poets have rightly symbolized by death all-absorbing love, as the complete loss
of individuality" (WT 203). Evelyn paid the price for her overpowering love for Hickey, as he changed from her loving husband into the Iceman who froze her in his cold, deadly embrace. Like so many of O'Neill's women, Evelyn made a bad marriage before she had a "real chance" to find her better self (Drucker 9).

From a Rankian perspective, Hope and Hickey, as infantile neurotics, may also be sexual failures. Their dysfunction could be the cause of their uneasy relationship with their wives (TB 47). Bessie and Evelyn remind them of the primal mother whom they both yearn for and fear. By acting too motherly, the women have fostered regressive feelings in their men. In addition, since sex is only a partial return to the mother, no woman can take the place of the womb itself to which the neurotic wishes to regress completely (Rank, TB 47). For their part, Bessie and Evelyn, by inadvertently fostering their spouses' regressive feelings, have stifled Hickey and Hope's creativity so that the men begin to hate them. To be fair to the women, however, O'Neill, unlike Ibsen, seldom portrays the figure of the wronged wife. O'Neill does not admire Hickey, but he understands his motives for murdering Evelyn. As as O'Neill presents the situation between Hickey and Evelyn, the salesman killed his wife because she prevented him from discovering his own sense of self.
In a feminist critique of *Iceman*, which uses Simone de Beauvoir's concepts of woman as "other," Bette Mandl posits that O'Neill treats his offstage female characters as "other" (11). By this she means that the women "emerge exclusively in relation to the male characters" (11). In effect, the women of *Iceman* have no identity of their own, because the men see them from their own perspectives and place them in the traditional feminine roles of wife, mother or whore. Some women in O'Neill's plays do not fit easily into a stereotypical mold. But they pay for their aberration.

For example, Evelyn may allow herself to be perceived as "other," but Rosa has fought to maintain her own identity. Of course, now she is confined to a womblike cell, and her creative will is moribund. But it is not Rosa's fault that she is a victim of treachery--her jealous son wanted to put her in the traditional category of motherhood, and when she refused that classification, he betrayed her.

In Rosa, O'Neill presents another one of his female characters whose creativity has been hampered by men (Abbie Putnam and Mary Tyrone are two others). Rosa does not live for her son or her lovers but rather for her real love, the Movement. This organization, like other units in *Iceman*, may be just another harebrained enterprise, but to Rosa, it is her life. Rosa embodies the Rankian "force" principle in which one's own will is asserted against another's (WT 65).
In her relationship with Parritt, it is her will that has prevailed, at least until her recent arrest.

Because of her confidence in herself and her cause, Rosa has no life or death fears. She is not afraid to stand on her own, nor does she fear death. For Rosa, freedom is the ultimate value in life. According to Parritt, that is why she had so many lovers, "to prove to herself how free she was" (125). Of course, while upholding freedom for herself and her comrades, Rosa denies it to others by her terrorist acts and by her stifling of Parritt's creativity. As he says about her, "She doesn't like anyone to be free but herself" (247). Whatever Rosa's faults, however, O'Neill, through the character of Larry, deplores Parritt's treatment of her. In fact, Larry has much kinder things to say about Rosa than do the other men about their women. Actually, he treats her as a person in her own right, not as his "other," and he "defends her right to live as she chooses" (Hall 45).

Throughout the ages, women like Rosa have fought to maintain their individuality. Too often men have connected women solely with female reproductive functions, and according to Rank, with the birth trauma anxiety. He explains that the ancient Greek artists had "consistently carried out the tendency to free themselves from the womb" (TB 146). They did this partly by sculpting young males standing upright to show their "severance from the mother" (TB 147).
The Greek artists took a decidedly different view from that of O'Neill in *Iceman*. There the bums are usually bent over in an almost fetal position. Unlike the ancient Greeks, the denizens of Hope's dive are unsuccessful in displacing the unconscious pull of the primal mother. This is especially true of Parritt and Hickey, two of the principal characters of *Iceman*. Larry, the third central character, in a limited way manages to resist regression through projecting his anxieties creatively.

Parritt, the youngest of the trio, is the character in *Iceman* who exemplifies most clearly the inability to overcome anxiety through artistic, creative acts which Rank recommends for overcoming anxiety. Parritt is uncreative because he is bound to his mother by hatred and love. Whether worthy or undeserving of his enmity, Rosa causes Parritt's regression, which leads ultimately to his suicide. As a result of his relationship with her, Parritt suffers severe life and death fears. Even after he is in New York and far from his mother, who is now powerless, Parritt still cannot stand on his own because his mother has always made all his decisions for him (247). Therefore, Parritt will never have an authentic career in the Movement or anywhere else. Besides, the Movement is Rosa's project, not his. Unconsciously, because he has no input in his own life, Parritt suffers the death fear that his personality is being "dissolved in the whole" (Rank, *WT*, 124). Like Brand's
forceful mother, Rosa prevented her son from acting creatively and independently.

Parritt is highly self-conscious, and unlike the drunks, is always awake and alert. Although at first he lies about the reasons for betraying his mother (for money and whores), he really has no illusions about himself. He is different from the others because he suffers consciously from severe guilt over his act of betrayal. Like Judas, he betrays someone he loves for money and then commits suicide. Before he does so, he comes to Larry to be judged. After Larry sentences him to death, Parritt "can forgive himself" at last (117).

In Robert C. Lee's opinion, it is ironical that O'Neill has the "son come to enlist the father' aid in punishing him for revenging himself against their mutual rival" (63). This rival is of course, not another man, but the Movement. As Parritt himself explains about Rosa, "She was never true to anyone else but herself and the Movement" (181). But like his mother, Parritt also values the concept of freedom. Ironically, he deprives Rosa of the liberty they both value so much. He then kills himself because his mother prizes freedom more than she loves him.

The character of Parritt recalls several figures from religion and myth. Besides Judas, he is also reminiscent of Lucifer. Like the fallen angel, Parritt is condemned by a father figure. Because of his hatred for his mother,
Parritt also wishes to destroy his creator as Lucifer wished to destroy God. In addition, both the angel and Parritt resent the power a parent figure has over them, and both have an attitude of non serviam. Parritt, however, unlike Lucifer, descends willingly into the abyss. Because he never overcomes his anxieties through creative acts of will, Parritt is impatient to reunite with the primal mother. From his perspective, taking his life and assuaging his guilt is the most creative deed Parritt will ever do. Most of all, in death Parritt obtains the peace he desperately seeks, and "peace is the central human need The Iceman defines" (Robert C. Wright 9).

As in Ibsen's plays, a character's fall or plunge symbolizes a desire to regress and thus resolves the dilemma of not being able to go forward or backward psychologically. Besides his connection with Lucifer and the fall from grace, Parritt also resembles Icarus. But here the myth is inverted. Icarus ignores his father's warning about the heat of the sun and plunges accidentally into the sea. Parritt, on the other hand, heeds his surrogate father and to rid himself of guilt, leaps purposely from the fire escape. In a sense, his death is "a redemption, the only way he can remove from himself an intolerable load of guilt and dishonor" (Gilmore 344).

By dying and redeeming himself, Parritt acts creatively at last. Not only does he pay dearly for his unnatural
crime, but just before his death, he admits finally his real reason for betraying his mother. Actually, he hates Rosa because she put "her Cause above all other claims" (Black 28). Moreover, Parritt, unlike Hickey, does not claim insanity for his betrayal, nor does he flee from life as the other characters do. Instead, he faces death bravely. In essence, "if he cannot free his mother from prison, he can at least free her from her humiliation, and thus free himself from his bondage to her" (Black 29). Like Rosmer and Rebecca, Parritt is more creative in death than he was in life. This is because he and the others finally make a choice, not the choice Rank or most other people would advise, but one which is the right choice for them.

Although he hides his real self under a mask of benevolence, Hickey is a sinister version of Parritt. Larry surmises that both men stay sober because they have things to hide (110). Hickey and Parritt suppress the betrayal of women they supposedly love; the difference between the men is that "Hickey seems the more deluded, for he openly boasts of having rid himself of all pipe dreams, whereas Parritt's false excuses do not appear to ring true even to himself" (Tornquist, DS 224). Moreover, Hickey did not betray Evelyn to an outside agency; he was her worst enemy. His betrayal is that he deceived Evelyn about his true feelings for her. Although Hickey was unfaithful, according to him, his relationship with Evelyn seemed cordial on the surface,
perhaps even loving.

Nevertheless, Hickey "progressively projects more and more of his self-hatred on Evelyn" (Gilmore 338). He even kills her with the gun he gave her for protection (238). Yet, as he is led off to prison, Hickey still maintains his love for his wife. He wants to destroy other people's pipe dreams but cannot live without them himself. In fact, "he cannot even die without them" (Tornquist, DS 228).

Hickey must cling to his illusions in order to stave off regression. Evidently he has had a successful career as a salesman, but because of his infantile ties to Evelyn and to his father, he cannot project his anxieties creatively. For example, Hickey acted like Evelyn's child, doing mischief and then running home to beg her forgiveness.

As the son of a fiery, Indiana preacher, Hickey's "marriage to an all-forgiving Methodist woman was an escape from the stern father to a loving 'mother'" (Tornquist DS 228). Again, the past of a main character is influential in the present action of Iceman. Hickey outwardly rejects his father's creed, but like O'Neill himself, takes bits and pieces from it. In Iceman, O'Neill uses the rite of confession from his Catholic background, as Hickey uses fundamentalist Protestant evangelism to convert the derelicts. Hickey, the reformer, wants to deprive the bums of their illusions; whereas his father, in the name of religion, sought to deprive people of their money. In
effect, Hickey, like his father, "has the 'saved' individual's fervent belief and desire to convert the unenlightened" (Barlow 56).

Consciously, Hickey thinks he is a rebel against his father by being a profligate "son of a gun" (231). Yet, although he avoids any connection with his father's profession, he decides to make the bums' reformation and conversion his own creative project. The derelicts are unaware initially of Hickey's evil intentions. They dislike Parritt because he never buys them drinks, and he is always morose and unfriendly. However, their jovial friend Hickey, whom they can always count on for fun, is more deserving of contempt than Parritt is.

The bums should be wary of Hickey because he is a threat to their psychic and possibly their physical well-being. To his detriment, Hope does not take seriously Cora's statement that Hickey is coming to save the bums and bring them peace (74). As Hickey resented Evelyn's attempt to change him, Hope and the others soon resent Hickey's zeal for their reformation. Instead of improving their lives, Hickey is a destructive element to the saloon's inhabitants. As another embodiment of the Rankian "force" principle, Hickey asserts his own will against those of the derelicts (WT 65).

Through his readings of Nietzsche, O'Neill was familiar with the myth of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine. In Iceman, he uses it to illustrate that Hickey, like Dionysus,
brings both joy and sorrow. Like a wine god, Hickey provides champagne for the midnight revel celebrating Hope's birthday. He also brings flowers, symbols of life and fertility, but Larry senses that Hickey really "has the touch of death on him!" (150). In any case, the Dionysian spirit is dissipated and is reaffirmed only when Hickey "is taken away," and "wine and life have kick again" (Ajuha 147).

Actually, Hickey is another demonic intruder, or "self-starting principle of malevolence" (Frye 216). Further, since his arrival is so long anticipated, like that of Beckett's Godot, "he begins to accumulate supernatural qualities" (Brustein 343). As Parritt notes, "there's something not human behind his damned grinning and kidding" (126). Moreover, Hickey's supernatural attributes are satanic rather than messianic. He "is the 'Iceman of Death' from hell. In Dante's Inferno, the center of hell is solid ice" (Welch 225). An example of Hickey's demonic qualities is his rebellion against Hope's authority as patriarch of the derelicts. As Satan tried to usurp God's position, so too does Hickey seek to overthrow Hope. Of course, O'Neill is combining a little comedy with his tragedy here. Hope is a profane rather than a divine patriarch and is more like the lord of misrule who presided over medieval revels than he is like any godlike being. At the end of Iceman, Hope performs his function very well.
As he himself asserts, Hickey's inner self is the hell that he inhabits: "I've had hell inside me" (117). Furthermore, as we observe when he "sizes up" Parritt's troubled demeanor, Hickey "can spot it in others" (117). At first, because he is an old friend, the drunks trust Hickey. Like Satan with Eve, he ingratiates himself with them and promises them great joy if only they will accede to his wishes. When they lose their illusions and are more unhappy than they were before his visit, the derelicts realize that Hickey is a deceiver. In effect, he has destroyed the family harmony of the saloon, and now "characters sneer, curse, and make accusations at one another" (Welch 225). For example, the two Boer War veterans fight, and Joe, Rocky, and Chuck's argument almost ends in bloodshed (168).

As a demonic intruder, Hickey comes to "demand something" of the hero (Schechner 159). In the depraved world of Hope's saloon, because of his essential decency, Larry is the closest one gets to an authentic hero. Hickey demands that Larry give up his illusions. He torments Larry into relinquishing the illusion that he is unafraid of death; otherwise, according to Hickey, he would just take a hop off the fire escape (116). Parritt is astute enough to realize that the wily Hickey is "no fool" where Larry's character is concerned, and he tells his old friend that Hickey's "got your number all right" (123). For his part, Hickey also senses the strange relationship between Larry
and Parritt, and predicts correctly that there will be "a final showdown" between the pair (119-20).

Although he pinpoints the relationships among other characters in the play, Hickey is not so insightful about his own life. Like many other characters in Ibsen and O'Neill, Hickey suffers from life and death fears. Yet these fears are not always constant. For example, Hickey was once connected to fundamentalism through his father and Evelyn. But Hickey, like Lucifer, is a rebel and resisted the connection because he was afraid of losing his own personality. By leading a degenerate life in opposition to his father's and wife's values, Hickey tried to overcome his death fear. But after Evelyn's death, he has no one to answer to, and he reverts to being the preacher's son. He then tries to force his hereditary moral code on his former drinking buddies. As he manages the lives of Hope's wretches, Hickey may conquer his life fear temporarily. His browbeating of the bums makes him feel superior to them, and he can be independent and no longer afraid of standing on his own.

Hickey's death fear also results from his relationship with Evelyn. Unlike Parritt, who lacked mothering, Hickey was losing his selfhood because of an excess of it. By killing Evelyn, who like the mythical Sphinx was swallowing him up, Hickey rid himself of his death fear, but in the process he is overwhelmed by guilt. His regressive feelings
resurface, and he tries to overcome them by taking refuge in the illusion that he murdered Evelyn out of pity and love. Hickey also professes to the police-(who do not believe him) that he wants to go to the Chair while still maintaining that he was insane when he killed Evelyn (245). His comments are not valid because a truly insane person would not be executed. In any case, since Hickey calls the police after his reformation of Hope fails, it is possible that now an unconscious death wish may be manifesting itself.

Actually, Hickey is immobilized between his life and death fears. Originally, he did not really want to die; otherwise he would have killed himself instead of Evelyn. On the other hand, his guilt forces him to realize that his crime demands retribution. Furthermore, the bums are tiring of his interference in their lives, and his project is really a failure. By not realizing that the drunks refuse to be changed, Hickey is really "a 'hick,' a credulous, deluded soul," and of everyone at Hope's saloon, he "was deluded most disastrously" (Sheaffer, S and A 498).

In Act Four, Hickey's psyche is destroyed. He never achieves individuation and is unable to alleviate his anxieties. He realizes finally, after everyone has suffered from his reforming zeal, that his creative project of bringing "peace" to the bums is a gigantic failure. In fact, "Hickey realizing that his mission has failed, begins to question his own peace" (Scheibler 156). As he tells the
men, "If I got balled up about you, how do I know I wasn't balled up about myself?" (231). Desperately, he clings to his illusion of loving Evelyn. It is difficult to believe him, however, after he tells everyone that he tore up her picture because "he didn't need it anymore" (238).

Hickey's statement that he was insane when he killed Evelyn is his last effort to retain a modicum of selfhood. As he is arrested, however, he can no longer distinguish truth from reality. Therefore, it is possible that he is now really deranged. It seems clear that he was sane when he shot Evelyn, but at the end of Act Four, O'Neill's stage directions that Hickey "has an obsessed look on his face" indicate that the salesman is losing his grip on reality (226). Later, the stage directions point out that Hickey is talking to the bums "in a strange running narrative manner." (228). Hickey's descent into lunacy is complete when "with a strange mad earnestness," he tells the police that he must explain to Evelyn that he was really insane when he killed her (245).

Perhaps Hickey still does not realize that Evelyn is dead, or else he plans to meet her in the hereafter. In any case, whether lucid or insane at the time of his arrest, Hickey is in a severe state of regression. As Halvard Solness became giddy on top of the tower, so too does Hickey lose control at "the bottom of the sea." Judith Barlow states clearly Hickey's overall mental state throughout the
play: "Hickey's murder of Evelyn and his actions in the bar are the deeds of a sane man. He becomes unbalanced only in his last moments on stage, when forced to confront his true motives," which occur "at the moment he recognizes his hatred" (34, 36).

At any rate, Hickey's genuine or feigned insanity has restored hope to the derelicts. They are convinced that only an insane person would try to destroy their pipe dreams. As Iceman concludes, the tragi-comic world of Hope's saloon is revived through the ritual celebration of Hope's birthday. By the recovery of their pipe dreams, the group becomes a family once again; Hope is "reborn" on his special day and takes his place as the family's comic father figure.

If Hope is the comic father figure of Iceman, then Larry is his tragic counterpart. As Hope sustains their physical needs, Larry saves the degenerates from spiritual death. He "stands aloof from the grotesque world of Hickey," and "is the most intelligent and sensitive of the figures in this play" (Scheibler 184). As he quotes from Heine and Walpole, Larry's learning is obviously far above that of the other residents of the saloon.

Like some kind of poor man's psychologist, Larry listens patiently to everyone's story and passes judgment only on Parritt. In fact, Jimmy Tomorrow characterizes Larry as "the kindest man among us" (44). Larry shows his kindness
by upholding the bums' pitiful illusions as well as their self-respect. For example, instead of destroying Rocky's dignity by calling him the pimp that he is, Larry tactfully tells him he is "a shrewd business man, who doesn't miss any opportunity to get on in the world" (12). In contrast, Hickey, who expresses the truth except when it concerns his own life, calls Rocky a "pimp" and his girls "whores" (215, 113). For their part, the prostitutes Minnie, Cora, and Pearl like Larry because he is kind to them, and they tell him, "Yuh're aces wid us" (106). When Hickey berates the former anarchist Hugo, Larry makes him desist because Hugo "has earned his dream!" (115).

By acting as Hickey's heroic antagonist, Larry preserves Hope's family of outcasts. As "the intellectual champion of the Tomorrowmen," Larry is responsible for "keeping hope alive through the anticipation of significant action on a day which never comes" (Brustein 342). Yet, as Larry helps the bums retain their illusions, his are decimated by Hickey and Parritt. Over the course of _Iceman_, they focus on his weak points and force him to confront his inner self.

Parritt brings up Larry's past relationship with him as well as the one with Rosa. But Larry claims he does not want to get involved with the Parritts or anyone else. As he tells Parritt, "I have no answer to give anyone, not even myself" (32). Yet Parritt, by his constant taunting of Larry, compels him to participate in life. Finally, Larry
is so distracted by Parritt that he tells him to "get the hell out of life" or else he will choke it out of him (248). For his part, Larry believes correctly that Hickey and Parritt are trying to taunt him back into life. Ironically, these two men who cannot help themselves are able to help someone else.

Unconsciously, Larry also suffers life and death fears. He is unsuccessful both in his career and in his love life. Actually, he is immobilized by his fears. He could not stand on his own as a successful revolutionary nor as a bulwark against Rosa's many lovers. On the other hand, despite his disclaimers, Larry likes people and asks God to let him have "the dirty, stinking bit of withered old flesh which is my beautiful little life!" (197). Larry recognizes this tension in himself because like Hamlet, he sees the "two sides of everything" (258). Therefore, he is "unable to take action in any direction" (Falk, Tragic Tension 162). Also, like Hamlet he tries to disengage himself from life but cannot.

Before Hickey's arrival at the saloon, Larry thinks he hears him knocking at the door. As in Macbeth, the sound signifies death. In any case, Hickey's visit is the occasion for his almost immediate attack on Larry. He calls him the "Old Grandstand Foolosopher," to whom "life doesn't mean a damn anymore" (83). Actually, Hickey knows that Larry really fears death, and his courage in the face of it
is a pipe dream.

Larry had a death fear about the Movement because he was afraid that he would lose his selfhood in it. On the other hand, now he lacks self-confidence since he has had no other career after he left the group. Unconsciously, however, he halts the process of his regression through his interaction with Parritt and the drunks. Through his sanction of Parritt's suicide, Larry "belies his professed indifference to values by acknowledging, however reluctantly, the truth of honor and moral responsibility" (Gilmore 345). As in The Brand-Ulf situation, a "son" is sacrificed so that a father can exert his own creative will.

By passing judgment on another person, Larry may be perceived in another light, as a Christ or messianic figure. Cyrus Day, among other critics (Frazer, Scheibler), suggests that Hickey is an inversion of such a figure and is opposite to the bridegroom Christ, for whom the soul waits in "hope of redemption" (81). Evelyn's union with her bridegroom, the Iceman Hickey, promises death, not salvation and is "a parody of union with the bridegroom" (Day 81).

Day is correct when he considers Hickey a false messiah, but he does not acknowledge Hickey's authentic counterpart, Larry. Day continues his analogy of Hickey and Christ with a comparison of the setting in Act Two with that of Leonardo da Vinci's painting The Last Supper (81). However, Day fails to notice that in O'Neill's Act Two mise en scène, the
position of Christ corresponding to the painting is taken by Larry, not Hickey.

In several aspects, O'Neill presents Larry as a messianic figure. In Act One, he describes his character's face like that of "a pitying but weary old priest's" (5). In Catholic theology, a priest is considered Christ's surrogate. In Iceman, Larry fulfills the function of priest quite well. First, he listens to many of the alcoholics' confessions about their sordid lives and hopeless dreams. Although he wishes he did not, Larry knows everyone's business and sympathizes with his or her various troubles. Like a good shepherd watching over his flock, he does not want Hickey to hurt the bums as when he tells Hope to make sure that Hickey's sales pitch is "the real McCoy and not poison" (248).

As priest figure, Larry hears confessions and later gives absolution to Parritt as he hears the young man's body fall from the fire escape: "God rest his soul in peace" (258). For his part, Parritt links Larry with Christ when he thanks his friend for judging him (Barlow 58). In addition, Larry is merciful and forgiving to Hickey, who has caused so much discord in the saloon. As priest, Larry gives Hickey a kind of last rites as he states, "May the Chair bring him peace at last, the poor tortured bastard!" (247). In effect, Larry wishes peace for Hickey who denies it to everyone else.
By approving if not promoting the departure of the demonic intruders Hickey and Parritt from the saloon, Larry is executing the priestly rite of exorcism. Larry as priest also must protect his congregation of drunks from these interlopers. Unlike the other degenerates, Larry never leaves the saloon. His protective attitude is obvious in the incident with Hope and the car. Larry, unlike Hickey, bolsters Hope's feelings of self worth by saying that he too saw a car almost hit the saloon owner (199). Of course, the automobile outside the saloon is just another one of Hope's illusions.

Actually, O'Neill's view of a messianic Larry is an ironic one. The playwright had long since relinquished his ties to the Catholic faith or any other faith for that matter. For O'Neill, the modern world is unable to find a new god to replace the old one who is now dead (Cargill 362). Therefore, Larry is not so much a false messiah like Hickey but an ineffective one. At the end of the play, all he can do is stare into the void as "the cannibals do their death dance." Like Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, he observes the human condition with deep love and pity.

For their part, the derelicts do not want Larry to protect them from their illusions about Hickey or anything else in their lives. When Jimmy says he believes Hickey's reform project is only a joke, Larry declares that "You'll make a mistake if you think he's only kidding" (86). As he
is defeated, Hickey realizes his mission of hate is futile and says, "It was a waste of time coming here" (245). Much of the credit for his defeat belongs to Larry's constant badgering of him: "What was it happened? Tell us that! And don't try to get out of it! I want a straight answer!" (204). If there had been no Larry at the saloon, Hickey might have succeeded in destroying the drunks.

Since he has exerted his creative will so effectively, it is problematic why Larry, at the end of the play, is still in such a regressive state. For one thing, through the death of Parritt and arrest of Hickey, Larry has come face to face with mortality. Secondly, he is another "refuser of festivity" because as the bums celebrate the return of their illusions, his are gone, and he has nothing to celebrate. In essence, by losing his illusions, he again experiences death's reality, which is not only physical death but soul death as well. As he sits apart from the revelers, who are now trying to reconstruct their lives, Larry "seems to absorb into himself all their former despair" (Chothia 138). Furthermore, "Larry must live with his pity for humanity" (Barlow 62).

Yet although Larry views life realistically, he is still part of it or else he would have joined Parritt. By being an active participant in the activities of the saloon, "Larry is truly reborn," because he now has a "compassionate understanding of the revelers and of life" (Burkman 28-29).
O'Neill himself once stated that in all of his plays, "sin is punished and redemption takes place" (Cargill 460).

Once when O'Neill was playing a tape recording of *Iceman*, he determined that the voice of Larry was his voice or "my ghost talking to me, or I to my ghost" (*Letters* 557). Like his character, O'Neill was afraid to live and more afraid to die. But O'Neill came out of his despair more than Larry did. He did not remain in a state of stasis but projected his anxieties onto his art.

Also, O'Neill did not forget his own past but relived it through characters such as Parritt, Hickey, and Larry. These men are facets of O'Neill's own self. Parritt is like the young O'Neill who attempted suicide, and "the Parritt who writhed under the knowledge that he had condemned his mother to a living death" (*Sheaffer, S and A* 499). Hickey is the adult O'Neill who also feels guilty over the matricidal impulses he longs to suppress. Lastly, Larry is the elderly O'Neill who is disgusted with life, but believes it is preferable to death. In effect, O'Neill wrote *Iceman* as a work that would "suddenly strip the secret soul of a man naked, not in cruelty or moral superiority, but with an understanding compassion which sees him as a victim of the ironies of life and of himself" (*Letters* 511).
In the drama man does not create life in language only. The actor performs it before our eyes in real, bodily human form and so leads art back again to the life from which it had started. (Rank, Art and Artist 292)

Everything that I have written has the closest possible connection with what I have lived through inwardly—even if I have not experienced it outwardly. (Ibsen, Letters 187)

A man wills his own defeat when he pursues the unattainable. But his struggle is his success! He is an example of the spiritual significance which life attains when it aims high enough, when the individual fights all the hostile forces within and without himself to achieve a future of nobler values. (O'Neill, qtd. in Bigsby 43)

Almost a hundred years separate the productions of Ibsen's Brand (1865) and O'Neill's Journey (1956). During that period, great changes occurred in almost every field of human endeavor. In the development of modern drama, however, there is a close association between the fanatical pastor searching for God on a mountaintop and the fanatical woman searching in the dark for her lost glasses, her lost faith, and her lost self. Ibsen and O'Neill's plays are related because they show neurotic characters seeking vainly for a sense of self. This psychological focus in drama was different from the shallow melodramatic themes and
hackneyed techniques current during the long careers of Ibsen and O'Neill.

Despite his flirtation with the Scribean well-made play, Ibsen eventually discarded its focus on "tortuous intrigue, overheard conversations, intercepted letters and strained coincidence" (Orr 6). O'Neill, Ibsen's innovative American counterpart, was also quite familiar with melodrama because his father often acted in such plays, and O'Neill deplored their triteness. Although like Ibsen, he also employed melodramatic practices in his early plays, in his late great plays, O'Neill avoided such "stage trickery" (Bogard 428).

Essentially, Ibsen and O'Neill were the founders of serious modern drama. They deserve this reputation because they created characters like Brand and Mary Tyrone who reflected the individual's anguish at being alone in a hostile world. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, because of scientific theories that debunked the existence of the supernatural, many people lost their faith in God. Without a faith to guide them, individuals were forced to rely on themselves for spiritual guidance. Unfortunately, many people were incapable of handling their own anxieties. Often they were neurotic and unable to project their troubles creatively. Of course, the new science of psychology was helpful to many of them because now they could project their anxieties onto an analyst.
Modern artists also portray alienation and despair in their works. This is seen clearly in the paintings of Edvard Munch and the writings of August Strindberg, Ibsen's fellow Scandinavians. In his last eight plays, Ibsen "goes through an existential struggle in which he portrays the world as a highly precarious place in which to live . . . and alternates between hope and despair" (Holtan 180). O'Neill also felt troubled over the individual's current lack of stability and planned a trilogy of plays "that will dig at the roots of the sickness of today as I feel it--the death of the old God and the failure of Science and Materialism to give any satisfying new One for the surviving primitive religious instinct . . . " (Letters 311).

Besides the stress of modern life, Rank posits that people also suffer anxiety from being separated from their mothers at birth. For neurotics, this traumatic experience leads to regression and life and death fears that paralyze the individual will. Paradoxically, according to Rank, a person both wants to return to the mother and to be separated from her and create a life of one's own. For Rank and Ibsen the creative will, tempered by love is an important factor in an individual's attainment of psychological wholeness. In O'Neill's plays, the will is often moribund if not dead.

O'Neill had problems handling his own anxieties. He was often suicidal which indicates that he had severe regressive
tendencies. Yet he did not kill himself but projected his problems into his plays. Once he denied being a "great student" of psychology, but later claimed he knew "quite a bit about it" (Letters 247). In any case, in a play like Iceman, O'Neill shows clearly his understanding of such things as regressive states and unconscious motives.

Although Ibsen was not suicidal (as far as anyone knows), he also liked to delve into the workings of the unconscious mind and "people's inner life" (Michael Meyer, Ibsen 695). This is obvious not only in the plays treated here, but also in much of his poetry and in his late play John Gabriel Borkman (1896), among others. Ibsen, like O'Neill also had his own anxieties and regressive tendencies, but in his comparison of a scorpion and a poet (see 40), he shows how both project their "venom" outwardly and thus creatively rid themselves of anxiety.

In their portrayals of modern men and women with their various traumas and neuroses, Ibsen and O'Neill use similar themes. Often these themes are the same as those Rank uses to elucidate his birth trauma and creative will theories. The influence of the past on the present is an outstanding feature that links all three writers. For example, Mary Tyrone's "past is the present" speech in which she still suffers profound guilt for her baby's death many years ago relates to Rank's idea that "we are able to see the past only in the light of the present" (WT 33). In Ibsen, the
pasts of Rebecca West and Halvard Solness intrude dramatically on their present lives and force them to act immediately.

In the plays of Ibsen and O'Neill, the past also manifests itself in an acute sense of homelessness and rootlessness. This is apparent in characters such as Aline Solness and Edmund Tyrone who are uncomfortable in their present surroundings and yearn for places where they formerly lived. The past also relates to the playwrights' own rootlessness. In fact, "Ibsen's own living conditions were truly impersonal, never bearing resemblance to anything which could be called a home. The same homelessness, but within his own country, was to be a personal affliction of Eugene O'Neill" (Orr 11). Often a character's past emerges in fantasies and dreams as in *Brand* and *Iceman*. In Rankian terms, such states are regressive and express an individual's desire to return to the womb, the original home..

Ibsen and O'Neill also utilize many figures from religion, myth, and literature either to parody their characters or to illustrate genuine connections of heroism between the figures and the characters. The demonic intruder is an important figure because he or she is commonly involved in the downfall of a protagonist. In Rankian thought, the demon, though not an intruder figure, is significant because it denotes unconscious feelings
related to birth trauma anxiety.

For all three writers, the female image is very meaningful, especially in her maternal aspects. In Ibsen and Rank, however, the image usually is presented more positively than it is in O'Neill, for whom the mother is frequently a viperous presence. Unlike O'Neill, Ibsen "inverts the familiar identification of his day in respect to women--the image of the woman as the foundation stone of marriage and family life" (Orr 9). Too often O'Neill portrays women as stereotypical madonnas or whores in contrast to Ibsen, who "produced more positive dimensions of female heroism which were and remain revolutionary from an artistic point of view" (Orr 9). Whether it is positive or negative, however, the female image pervades the dramas of Ibsen and O'Neill. Like the unconscious, it is often symbolized by water. This symbolism manifests itself in Rebecca and Rosmer's reunion with Beata in the millrace as well as in Edmund Tyrone's pantheistic paen to the sea. Like Edmund, his surrogate, O'Neill often saw himself in union with the maternal sea and once planned a play entitled "Sea-Mother's Son: The Story of the Birth of a Soul" (Sheaffer, S and A 257).

Many of the themes in O'Neill's twentieth-century dramas were present in primitive form in Brand which is after all a verse-drama containing many romantic elements found in epic poetry. Brand might have been a mighty Viking
hero but is actually a neurotic individual whose character is more in the mock-heroic than in the truly heroic mode. In fact, Brand lacks the self-assurance and awareness of a true hero." Yet Ibsen ends the play ambiguously because Brand does exhibit certain heroic qualities such as truthfulness and courage.

As noted, in proceeding from Ibsen to O'Neill, in works such as *Desire*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and many of the late plays, there is often a movement toward a diminution of cultural and spatial environments. In Ibsen, the characters often try to alleviate their anxieties in relation to a hostile society. O'Neill's people, on the other hand, are trapped frequently within the confines of a family group from which they cannot extricate themselves. Even O'Neill's unfinished Cycle plays portray "the history of the interrelationships of a family over a period of approximately a century" (O'Neill qtd. in Bogard 377). These families are frequently antagonistic to a character's pursuit of authentic selfhood.

Often in plays such as *Hughie* (1958), O'Neill's focus grew even narrower, and "in the last plays O'Neill walked in the valley not of death alone, but of nothingness in which all values are illusions" (Falk, *Tragic Tension* 201). As O'Neill's dramas move toward psychological darkness, they herald the nothingness that is intrinsic to the theater of the absurd. There individuals exist in severe states of
regression and come closest to living back in the womb without actually dying.

Journey is the play that strikingly exemplifies the "movement full circle in modern tragedy to the radical closure of the tragic space within. The darkness is deeper than any other twentieth-century play, and has the intensity of Lear" (Orr 204). In Journey as in Brand, there are characters who are unable to act creatively. James Tyrone, the father has ruined his life by preferring money over creativity. He cannot stand the truth about himself as he shows by constantly turning out the lights which symbolize reality. Jamie, the oldest son has no career at all and exists solely on his father's largesse. It is also unfortunate that Jamie cannot act creatively because he spends most of his time in bars and brothels and has no concern for the future. The younger son Edmund, who is modeled on the young O'Neill, is somewhat of a dreamer with an uncertain future because he has recently been diagnosed with tuberculosis. Perhaps if Edmund could get away from his family he might be able to recreate himself as O'Neill did many years after the events of 1912.

Lastly, there is the mother Mary Tyrone around whom the family and the play revolves. Mary is the prototype of all the mothers that have been discussed here before. Yet she is not the usual dead, ghostly or absent mother whom we have considered but a real woman whose character is based on
O'Neill's own mother Ella. Unfortunately, Mary unlike Ella, cannot overcome her drug addiction. Mary is also unable to exercise her will and act creatively. All her life she has been under the domination of men, and the only way she can punish them for their cruel treatment is to put herself into drug-induced stupors and let them watch her mental and physical disintegration. Like Agnes Brand, Mary has an overpowering desire to regress because she cannot have a meaningful relationship with her husband whom she truly loves.

Mary, the model of a Rankian neurotic, also lacked a creative will even before she became a Tyrone. Overly attached to her father, who according to Tyrone was quite an ordinary man, Mary never got over his leaving her by dying of consumption, the disease that now affects Edmund, her favorite son. As a young woman, Mary attempted to find a project for herself. However, she could not decide whether to be a concert pianist or a nun. Her inability to make a choice indicates her immobilization between life and death fears. As a pianist, Mary would have been thrust into the public eye where she would be all alone on a stage. As a neurotic, she could never have handled such exposure of herself. Consequently, Mary suffered the Rankian life fear of standing on one's own. Conversely, as a nun she would be hidden from the outside world. In her youth, Mary probably experienced the death fear that she
would lose her personality behind the closed doors of a nineteenth-century convent in which everyone wore the same clothes and followed almost identical lifestyles.

Instead of choosing between two careers, Mary chose marriage with an actor. Yet she did not enjoy that life either. She is still in a state of stasis. Her gnarled fingers indicate the crippling of her musical vocation, and her religious fanaticism symbolizes her nostalgic longing for a life in the convent. Finally, her careless treatment of her beautiful wedding dress denotes her disillusionment with married life.

As in Ibsen's *Brand* the past is important in O'Neill's posthumous play. In Ibsen's play, however, the protagonist's childhood was an unhappy one. Conversely, Mary would have the audience believe that her childhood was the happiest time of her life except for a brief period thirty-five years ago when she first married Tyrone, who she hoped would nurture her as her father did. Like Aline Solness and Hedda Gabler, Mary was happiest when she was daddy's girl. In Rankian terms, Mary's longing for her pre-marital past is symptomatic of her wish to re-establish the primal condition by indulging in an infantile mode of behavior.

Unlike Ibsen's characters who must contend with society, Mary and her family live within themselves. She laments her lack of friends and that she has only drunken servants to
keep her company. Mary's misery is a result of the uncaring nature of the men in her life. Because they are afraid she will buy dope, they discourage her from going outside, and they treat her as a child whose only function in life is to serve them. Of course, the family's patronizing attitude exacerbates Mary's anxieties and lack of confidence in her own selfhood. Since she has no self-confidence, Mary attempts to escape through dope to a world of fantasy and dreams.

Even if Mary wanted to be a homemaker, Tyrone is too cheap to allow her to do so. Her house is shabby, and her husband even begrudges the necessary light bulbs for its maintenance. Moreover, there is no home to keep because the men leave Mary alone while they go out carousing or chatting with the neighbors. In addition, since the men have a bad reputation in the neighborhood, none of the local women are anxious to seek Mary's friendship. In essence, after thirty-five years of abuse, Mary has not even the modicum of will she may have had at her marriage. She is also haunted by guilt over the death of Eugene as well as over her drug habit acquired after Edmund's birth. These factors coupled with an unhappy marriage so overwhelm Mary that at the end of the play, she is in deep regression.

Even as early as Brand, Ibsen and O'Neill use themes from religion and myth to make their points. In Journey, O'Neill also uses literature to make profound comparisons
between characters. For example, when Jamie perceives his mother as Shakespeare's Ophelia there is more than sarcasm in his words, for Mary does have affinities with the young Danish noblewoman. Like Ophelia, although married, Mary is virginal and also has connections with nunneries. This is evident as she drags her wedding gown on the floor and tells Edmund she is going to be a nun (172). Again, as in Brand, Rosmersholm, and The Master Builder, white signifies death. Here it signifies the death of a marriage and the death of Mary's soul. Like Ophelia, who traditionally is dressed in white, Mary's life has been affected negatively by men. It is debatable whether or not Mary is as mad as Ophelia, but she is very close to it. Through her use of drugs, Mary is committing a slow suicide, in contrast to Ophelia, who ends her life quickly by drowning. Finally, both Ophelia and Mary have regal aspirations. Mary apparently sees herself as a kind of princess or queen when she makes her grand entrance at the end of the play and stares right through her family (170).

Mary also has affiliations with a religious figure, the Virgin Mary, who is revered by Catholics and is Mary Tyrone's namesake. This fact also relates to O'Neill's fixation on the madonna image in his plays. Since she is in a regressive state, Mary Tyrone, like Solness before her, believes she has had contact with the supernatural, and that the Virgin has smiled at her (175). At the end of
the play, Mary actually assumes the persona of the Virgin. Besides the discarding of her white wedding gown, Mary is now dressed in blue, the Virgin Mary's special color. It is also "uncanny" that in the stage directions she is described as being very youthful as the biblical Mary was when she gave birth to Jesus (170). Mary Tyrone appears suddenly to her family like some kind of unexpected vision and behind her is the brilliantly lighted front parlor (169). The Virgin Mary is often depicted surrounded by light.

As Mary Tyrone presents herself to her men, it is obvious that her real interest is not with them but with creating some kind of personality for herself. She wishes to appear to them not as a wife and mother, but as a saint, remote and unattainable. For all her love for her father and her family, Mary's devotion is plainly with the maternal force. Although she disliked her own mother, Mary now yearns to return to the primal mother. As she enters the dark night of the soul, Mary is in the twentieth-century world of the absurd in which the solitary, immobilized individual is left staring into nothingness. Mary's long night's journey into the void is reminiscent of Brand's descent into the dark interior of the Ice Church. Both characters are in deep regressive states.

The purpose of this study is to show the relevance of Rank's theories to modern drama and also to encourage
further scholarly research in this area. Besides the plays presented here, the birth trauma and creative will theories are also significant in other plays, and the works do not necessarily have to be modern ones. In *Hamlet*, the whole concept of immobility may be addressed, and in *Othello*, one could explore the failure of the creative will in a protagonist who lives strictly within his own ego.

It is, however, in the modern theatrical era that Rankian theory works especially well. This is because of the alienation and despair that has been so prevalent since the middle of the last century. Anton Chekov's plays are an especially fruitful field for Rankian analysis. For example, in *The Cherry Orchard* (1964), the characters are immobilized because they cannot relive their family's glorious past, nor can they foresee a meaningful future for themselves after their estate is destroyed. In *The Three Sisters* (1901), the female characters, except for Natasha who is another Hilde Wangel, are very uncreative and exist in a constant state of stasis. By their incessant longing to return to Moscow, the three sisters are in an infantile mode of behavior that indicates their regressive longings.

Rank's theories are also applicable to the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter. In Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1960), an old man is regressing to a past which he repeats over and over on a mechanical device. In *Rockaby* (1981), as perceived by her continuous rocking, an
old woman exists in a regressive infantile state. Deborah, the leading character in Pinter's *A Kind of Alaska* (1973), has been trapped in a womblike state for twenty-nine years. In *The Homecoming* (1965), however, Ruth, another outside intruder like Rebecca West, makes herself the mistress of an all male household and thus attains a renewed sense of self.

In most of modern drama, characters like Ruth are exceptional. More often they are neurotic men and women like Brand and Mary Tyrone, who, because of anxieties originating in their births, cannot act creatively. They then become immobilized by their life and death fears. Consequently, these people never discover their authentic selves and often revert to ilusory or childish behavior. Yet many modern playwrights sustain hope even for individuals in the depths of despair. Like Rank's artists, perhaps "tomorrow" these forlorn characters will overcome their fears, and project their anxieties as their great creators have done so well.
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