CHAPTER III

GHOSTS

Exorcism of Dybbuks

*Ghosts* was published in the month of December in the year 1881 with an edition of 10,000 copies. No other play of Ibsen caused so big a frenzy of execration as *Ghosts* did. No other play earned Ibsen such titles as a ‘fallen star’, ‘crazy-cranky being’, ‘Norwegian raven emerging from the rocks with insatiable appetite for decayed flesh’, ‘outrageous and heretical individualist’, a complete untouchable’ and a ‘writer fallen into sheer delirium’. No other play was described in such derogatory invectives as a ‘piece of pugnacious propaganda’, ‘lump of dirt’, ‘morally hideous’, ‘blasphemous’, ‘revoltingly suggestive’, ‘poison of a scorpion’ and so on. In England, the play received such comments as ‘Scandinavian humbug’, maundering of ‘nook-shotten Norwegians’, ‘Ibsen’s putrid play’, ‘muck-ferreting dogs’, ‘as foul and filthy concoction as has ever been allowed to disgrace the boards of English theatre’. (Cf. F. L. Lucas), ‘a savage story’ and so on. It will be worthwhile to quote a few comments and descriptions that the first few stage performances received at the hands of contemporary press. Clement Scott describes the play in *The Daily Telegraph* as “... the sensation play that deals with subjects hitherto have been to most men horrible and to all pure women loathsome.” ¹ Editorial comment in *The Daily Telegraph* labels it as “an open drain: of a loathsome sore unbandaged; of a dirty act done publically; or of a lazar house with all its doors and windows open.” ² *The Daily News* states that the play may put forward the excuse that it exposes social hypocrisy and moral cowardice and it illustrates the evil results of the subjection of women and the slavish addiction of men to outworn creeds and ethical standards, yet it is “naked loathsome.” ³ *The Mirror* states that *Ghosts* has “... neither wit, poetry, cleverness, nor commonsense to recommend it for it is as dull and stupid as it is dirty.” ⁴ The description in an unsigned notice in *The Hawk* is full of disgust when it writes, “What merit, therefore, has it got? To my mind,
absolutely none. It has neither the merit of fine writing, the ephemeral interest of a good ghost or murder story, nor the direct truth of a chapter of forensic medicine.\(^5\) Not only the reactions of the contemporary press were hostile but the whole corpus of literary criticism over the last 100 years or so is not very favourable. However, over the years, the number of critics finding merits in the play is continuously on the increase. While some critics continue to regard it as a ‘farcical comedy’, ‘outmoded drama hopelessly antique’, there are others who view it as a pure tragedy with a far more deeper theme than *A Doll’s House*, touching Grecian heights in terms of its most skilful construction and maintenance of unities. Some even view the play as Ibsen’s deliberate attempt to tear the shroud off the corpse of contemporary life and to reveal the ugliness beneath. Therefore it will be in the fitness of things to highlight some of the representative critical evaluations done over the years. To begin with, Una Ellis Fermor finds close affinity of the play with *A Doll’s House*. In her opinion:

> *A Doll’s House* and in *Ghosts* the subject is the lie in domestic life; the first shows the destruction of a marriage by an unreal and insincere relationship between husband and wife, and the second the destruction of the lives and souls of the characters by the oppressive tyranny of convention. There is a ray of hope still in *A Doll’s House*; in *Ghosts* there is no consolation but the integrity of mind to which Mrs. Alving has won her way through the wreckage of her life.\(^6\)

Eva Le Gallienne states that though it is a play about venereal disease yet, “In studying the play closely it seems to me it was in Mrs. Alving that Ibsen was most interested: the rebellion and evolution of Mrs. Alving. It is she who is put on trial and the real tragedy lies in her struggle to escape from the spiritual as well as the physical heritage of the past.”\(^7\) However she finds flashes of sardonic humour in the play despite its stark austerity. The over all impact of the play is terrifying and even freezing the blood, she states. For Raymond Williams, the essential experience of *Ghosts* is not disease but inheritance which comes before us as hereditary syphilis. In his opinion Raymond Williams
finds recurrence of themes as presented by Ibsen in his plays *Brand* and *Emperor And Galilean*:

The theme in Ghosts is not a new one in Ibsen. The reduction of Oswald to a state of death-in-life, calling for the sun, is closely related to the last cry of Brand – Blood of children must be spilt, to atone for parent’s guilt and the last cry of Julian: oh, Helios, Helios, why has thou betrayed me?\(^8\)

Martin Lamm makes a very exhaustive analysis but concentrates increasingly on the technical aspects and niceties of the play. For him, it is the most skilfully constructed play in which Ibsen has succeeded in further reducing the number of characters and maintaining the three unities particularly that of time in the most masterly manner. The method of retrospective analysis and the dialogue conforms to the principle of unity and helps in the rigid composition of the play. Though Ibsen escapes from the long speeches beloved of French dramatists and their audience yet the dialogue lacks spontaneity found in them. Though the characters of Mrs. Alving and Manders are stereotypes and not psychologically convincing yet:

The real action in the *Ghosts* occurs in the scene where Oswald is struck by madness. Otherwise the plot consists entirely of the gradual piecemeal revelation of the past. The technique of *Oedipus Rex* has never been used so whole-heartedly as here. What is characteristic of Ibsen is that he makes the tragic revelation at the very moment when everything has been put right.\(^9\)

G.B. Shaw looks at the play in relation to *A Doll’s House* and feels that Ibsen returned to the charge with such an uncompromising and outspoken attack on marriage as a useless sacrifice of human beings to an ideal that his meaning is obscured by its very obviousness. For him “*Ghosts*, as it is called is the story of a woman who has faithfully acted as a model wife and mother, sacrificing herself at every point, with self-less thoroughness.”\(^10\) At the same time the play is also “An ordinary farcical comedy ridiculing Pastor Manders.”\(^11\)
Allardyce Nicoll's analysis states that Ibsen dared to deal with a topic absolutely taboo and wrought his modern theme to the pattern of Greek tragedy. The inexorably hung fatal curse of ancient plays has been substituted by inherited venereal disease and peoples his drama with ghosts that are no less powerful because they are unseen. But, "To a certain extent Ghosts is now an outmoded drama... and would have proved to be no more than a historical curiosity had Ibsen not cast into it a wealth of character delineation."\(^{12}\)

Michael Meyer dwells at length on the hostilities, violent commotions and hysterical outcries against this play and opines that Ibsen's contemporaries saw Ghosts primarily as a play about physical illness just as they had seen A Doll's House primarily as a play about women's rights. He laments that "with few exceptions, they failed to realise that the true subject of Ghosts is the devitalising effect of a dumb acceptance of convention."\(^ {13}\) Meyer agrees with Halvdan Koht that Oswald is branded with disease not because his father was a beast but because Mrs. Alving had obeyed the immoral ethics of society. He opines: "... In other words, Ghosts is a play about ethical, not physical debility. The importance of waging war against past, the need for each individual to find his or her own freedom, the danger of renouncing love in the name of duty---these are the real themes of Ghosts."\(^ {14}\) Desmond MacCarthy agrees with Eva Le Gallienne in so far as that it is in Mrs. Alving herself that the centre of the tragedy resides. But in MacCarthy's opinion Ghosts is the most Greek of Ibsen's plays, "It is a drama of fate overtaking a victim who had reason to hope that she had shaken off at least the pursuing furies."\(^ {15}\) Thomas E. Sanders states that Ibsen does not come out as a social doctor, concerning himself with suggested solutions to the problems. Rather he is a diagnostician, presenting a problem providing that it exists, examines its nature and causes, relates it to humanity to prove its pertinence and leave the readers with the disturbing realisation that no cure has been suggested and if society is to survive, it must find the cure. Sanders agrees with Allardyce Nicoll that in the present times, "Ghosts seems hopelessly antique with its presentation of syphilis as a social problem of great danger."\(^ {16}\) In F.L. Lucas's opinion, the Ghosts may not be
technically quite so accomplished as *A Doll's House* but the theme bites far deeper and more bitterly and "The central theme is the clash between moral courage and convention, between respectability and happiness."\(^{17}\) He highlights some objections to this play. To begin with, he finds that there is too much coincidence in the burning of the orphanage just when it was to be opened. Secondly, there are certain medical objections like if Oswald was infected with his father's disease, how could Mrs. Alving escape? Again, if Oswald was infected, how could Regina escape? Yet again, the play suffers from a certain air of pugnacious propaganda which is artistically dangerous. The theme of incest is too pitiable. He also brings out two misunderstandings about the play like, it is taken to be a play about venereal disease. Secondly, Oswald is taken to be hero but he is merely a pathetic victim. Lucas opines if he could summon the ghost of Ibsen to explain his intention behind the play, Ibsen might have said something like this:

> When Nora slammed the house-door, respectable persons screamed. What a shocking, unwomanly woman! Very well. Here is the story of a woman who did not slam the door—who bowed to society, and came back. With a heroic effort she refrained from breaking the rules; in return, they broke both her son and her; until in the end she rises up too late, and flings them all bitterly aside.\(^{18}\)

G. Wilson Knight finds the title of the play very significant because in it not only the past events are revealed and heredity comes out as a grim agent but there is also a reading of traditional valuations as dead and yet cogent forces constricting life. The past is a numinous presence and yet its origins are hard to trace. G. Wilson Knight considers Captain Alving at the root cause of all troubles. Being a debauch, he ruins Mrs. Alving's life and also that of Pastor Manders. He leaves behind a son with an incurable disease and Regina as a girl with a vicious future. With Mrs. Alving's realisation that she herself offered the Captain no inspiration, higher joy, "We seem to be drawn to rock bottom facing the ultimate problem of instinct and society, of civilisation itself."\(^{19}\) Hans Heiberg sweeps aside the traditional view points. For him, the play is neither
about venereal disease nor is Oswald the central character but it is about one of society’s worst cancers. In the play, "He [Ibsen] had exposed not only man’s sacred right to a double code of morality but also whole taboo world, which every one knew about and whispered about in corners but no one dared mention about." In contrast to Nora, the play describes a different phase of oppression of bourgeois woman and the tragedy lies in Mrs. Alving’s own feelings of co-responsibility. He highlights the point that most people thought that Ibsen, through Mrs. Alving, wanted to legalise incest and advocates sexual license and nihilism. While for Ronald Gaskell, "the whole action moves in the shadow of the past." Nissim Ezekiel, modern Indian poet and critic focuses his mind on Mrs. Alving vis-à-vis Nora and concludes that Mrs. Alving has to undergo double ordeal in the name of duty. Both before and after running away from her husband, she has to do all that convention demands from her, even suppress her maternal instincts. “But, her crime is a self-inflicted wound, an outrage which she commits upon her own individuality in the interest of a misdirected altruism and for the preservation of appearances. She, the most dutiful of persons, is guilty of dereliction of the most important duty of all: to herself.” Therefore, her emancipation is indeed a long and painful one. Francis Ferguson finds a slot for the play in the theatre of modern realism and makes certain brilliant observations. For him, the play is a thesis-thriller, plotted as a series of debates on conventional morality. The similarity between Ghosts and Greek tragedy is that there is a single fated action moving to an unmistakable catastrophe. The underlying form of Ghosts is that tragic rhythm as one finds in Oedipus Rex. To conclude, Ferguson states:

As a thesis play, Ghosts is an ancestor of many related genres: Brieux’s arguments for social reform., propaganda plays like those of the Marxists, or parables à la Andreev, or even Shaw’s more generalized plays of the play-or-thought about social questions. But this use of the theatre of modern realism for promoting or discussing political and social ideas never appealed to Ibsen.
Errol Durbach seeks to establish a relationship between *Ghosts* and the romantic stream of drama. In his opinion:

And what makes the new drama quintessentially romantic as Otten defines the term, is its refusal to affirm external criteria of social morality (as in Shakespearean mode) and its protagonist's strenuous search for moral order within to counter the cosmic emptiness and the chaos around him.  

J.D. Dhingra finds the play as an exposition of the unchristian character of the churches, selfishness, hypocrisy and baseness of ecclesiastics, their conspiracy against the quest for truth and their concern with temporal prospects, their passion for reward and praise and their subordination of Christ to Judas. In his opinion:

*Ghosts* illustrates how conformity with or violation of the existent external laws and institutions — family, marriage, society, public opinion, father, mother, duty, decency, ideals etc. — and consequent mental conflict tear asunder an individual's mind and banish the joy of life.

Gail Finney is content to look at the play as an exposition of double standard of morality adopted by church and its custodians. In his opinion:

A particularly blatant example of the double standard is found in *Ghosts* (1881), where Pastor Manders expresses moral censure for the Alving's former servant Johanna as a fallen woman but scoffs at Mrs. Alving's characterization of her deceased husband as a fallen man. Similarly, he is horrified at the mention of cohabitation outside of marriage, or free love. Since these views are voiced by a man who is shocked by any hint of free-thinking and whose unswerving adherence to principle had once sent Mrs. Alving back to her dissolute husband and hence ruined her life, it is not difficult to infer Ibsen's attitude toward them.

Bjorn Hemmer who is currently the joint editor of biennial *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen*, in his article 'Ibsen and the realistic problem drama', looks
at the play as a fine illustration of double barreled phrase 'truth and freedom', which Ibsen uses as a rallying cry. For him the play is a family drama in which liberty of the spirit, liberty of thought and liberty of human condition is at stake due to oppressive social values. Though "Ghosts brings to life a threatening and deeply tragic world, a world totally devoid of hope," yet Ibsen allows the individual to engage in much more radical encounter with society's institutionalised authorities. In his opinion:

In Ghosts Ibsen directs a blistering criticism at society and its annihilating forces. But it is a criticism which also targets the most agreeable representative of that milieu and who is its one rebellious element. It is precisely the presentation of Mrs. Alving's battle against the reactionary forces within herself that demonstrates Ibsen's insight into the psyche of the bourgeois rebel. The rebel, too, bears a share of responsibility in respect of the society which denies the new 'truth and freedom.'

In his final analysis, the play comes out as a strong defence of natural life and natural individual. While Ibsen himself had not expected the play to be adequately applauded yet he could not foresee the magnitude of public furore and odium against it. Consequently, it sold so badly that huge piles of first edition were returned to the publishers and for long 13 years, second edition could not see the light of the day. But all the while, Ibsen remained unperturbed at the vehement attacks. In one of his letters to Frederik Hegel, 2nd Jan., 1882, he states:

The virulent criticism and all the lunatic things that are being written about Ghosts I am taking completely calmly. I was prepared for something like this. When Love's Comedy came out, they howled about it in Norway just as wildly as they are doing now. They screamed about Peer Gynt as well, and no less about Pillars of Society and A Doll's House. The shouts will die down this time too, just as before.

The reason behind such a calm acceptance of public venom was that Ibsen was fully aware and confident of his positive intentions while writing this play.
The preliminary notes and jottings on one loose leaf, quarto, written on one side only clearly states Ibsen’s primary focus on the theme:

These women of the modern age, mistreated as daughters, as sisters, as wives, not educated in accordance with their talents, debarred from following their mission, deprived of their inheritance, embittered in mind—these are the ones who supply the mothers for the new generation. What will be the result?

Such a mental state of Ibsen corresponds to the present day humanistic psychologists who advocate that there has to be some natural value system which can help an individual to grow according to his or her potentials. In his book _The Psychology of Being_ , Abraham Maslow throws light on the self actualization psychology which aims at developing a theory to help human beings to become what they can and deeply need to become.

Further more, when we delve deep into the mental state of Ibsen at the time of writing this play, we find that, no doubt, Ibsen had in his mind the pricks of piercing criticism in respect of _A Doll’s House_ yet somewhere deep in his heart, Ibsen was exploring the answer to the basic existential questions like the one, he raised in one of his preliminary jottings noted on a torn envelop, addressed to Madame Ibsen and another note on the back of a newspaper wrapper addressed Hr. Dr. Henrick:

The key note must be: The luxuriant growth of our culture, in literature, all, etc.--- and by way of contrast, the whole of mankind on the wrong track... The fault lies in the fact that the whole of mankind is a failure. If a man demands to live and develop as a man should, then that is megalomania. The whole of mankind, and especially Christians, suffer from megalomania... we erect monuments to the dead; because we have obligations to them, we allow lepers to marry; but their offspring---? The unborn---?

To my mind, finding faults with the entire basis of mankind’s chosen track of life and seeing meaningless absurdity in the course of human predicament are existential questions with which Ibsen was preoccupied. Thus each of Ibsen’s
scholars talks either about venereal disease, weighty social conventions, rottenness of ecclesiastical ideals, highlighting of tabooed subjects like sex and incest, the sins of parents visiting upon children i.e. hereditary genetic disorders, the immorality of the issues raised in the play, thereby analysing the play through morally, ethically, religiously, socially and even politically acceptable modes. No critic has so far made a full scale attempt to look into the basic existential questions raised in the play. I have based my analysis and appreciation of the play with focus on the theme i.e. search for freedom on the basis of such a mental state of Ibsen as emerges from his letters, pronouncements and jottings. Existential perspective as given to us by various existentialists like Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Soren Kierkegaard and Heidegger comes very handy to unlock the intricate aspects, which are the very warp and woof of human existence. I have also invoked George Alexander Kelly’s ‘theory of personal constructs’ along with Abraham Maslow’s penetrations into the psychology of ‘being’ to highlight how Mrs. Alving’s fundamental basic urges have been smothered by the Pastor’s cold religious ethics. To me it appears that Mrs. Alving’s entire life is nothing but an existential protest against those forces that tend to curb human freedom and reduce inner realities of mind to insignificant proportions. In all actions of the play, existential motifs such as choice, anxiety, dread, anguish, absurdity, freedom and revolt are easily discernible. The entire play turns out to be a clash between two modes of life i.e. being-in-itself and being-for-itself. The lives of Mrs. Alving, Pastor Manders, Oswald and even Regina can be seen as different reactions against rationalisation of different systems that have been valuing reasons and imposing social norms and standards upon man right through the ages up to the present times. Since existentialism, be that of theistic Kierkegaard or atheistic Sartre, always focuses on the distinctive qualities of the individual person as a concrete human being and not of man in the abstract, therefore Mrs. Alving’s life turns out to be a very intense form of quest for authentic selfhood vis-à-vis Pastor’s attempts to hide himself under the shell
of 'inauthentic selfhood'. It is with these preliminary observations that the analysis of the play begins.

To begin with Mrs. Alving's search for freedom, being fatheress, the responsibility of her bringing up falls upon the shoulders of her mother and two aunts, who in turn transfer their responsibility to the father-figure Pastor Manders. In their opinion, Pastor is the most suitable person because he stands for all the religious and spiritual strength one requires in life. As a child, Helen is deprived of all that free-play of spontaneous expression of creativity and curiosity which are very essential for development of what Gordon Allport calls 'Proprium'. Instead, she is thrown into the world of Pastor Manders which appears to be well lit with the wisdom of sermons and gospels but which in reality is a dungeon of darkness. Pastor is pre-occupied with the concepts of 'order', 'perfection' and 'austerity' to teach mankind the significance of bounden duties, morality, religion, divine protection, divine will, strict social codes, faith and self-edification. His is a narrow, shrunken and closed world in which there is no room for cultivating one's intellectual potential or for giving free play to one's imaginative cravings. It is a world of do's and don'ts disapprovals, castigations and condemnations. In it, human beings are treated as born sinners and as such they have no right to human happiness, joy or sunshine. There is no scope for using one's faculties of mind to sift good from the bad. Pastor's teachings revolve around maintaining outward form in the whole gamut of relationships, even if they lack coherence, meaning and depth. Going with public opinion is the watch world for Pastor. And any attempt in the direction of becoming oneself is labelled as an act of imprudence. There is no place for art or artistic expressions as art is something which deadens human affections. In Pastor's wisdom, hot blooded young boys and girls are supposed to keep away from each other from the beginning and suppress their biological urges and instinctual expressions. In this world there is no room for what Walt Whitman advocates in respect of teacher who teaches his pupils, "You shall not look through, mine eyes either, nor take things from me. You shall listen to all
sides and filter them yourself. In other words, Pastor’s world is a den of blind
and servile obedience to the tenets which have become dogmas due to their
orthodox applications. Moreover in this world false entries are made in Church
registers under the pretext of contrition and confession. It is a heartless world
in which children are taught to honour and respect the parents and elders even
it they do not contribute anything in their growth, due to their debauch or lewd
ways of life. It is a world in which judgements are passed on the basis of
rumours and gossip without verifying the facts on the basis of first hand
knowledge. Above all, it is a split world because there is a yawning gap
between what Pastor preaches and what it actually comes to when it has to
confront reality. It is in this world that Pastor begins the task of indoctrinating
her with heavy doses of puritanical ideas, beliefs and principles which in turn go
deep into her psyche with an ambulance load of Christianity. In Mrs. Alving’s
own words, “I had been taught about duty and the sort of thing. I believed in so
long here. Every thing seemed to turn about duty – my duty or his duty.”

Therefore it is in this world that she develops her first personal, pre-
emptive and constellationary constructs. It is a different matter that she is unable
to verbalize these constructs. Kelly believes that an individual is able to form
number of personal constructs even before verbalizing them and that is
specifically true of children. In Helen’s case, Pastor Manders becomes her
impermeable super ordinate construct and his judgement about various things
stand as canons in forming subordinate personal constructs. But it must be
said at the very outset that the constructs she develops, remain inappropriate
and inadequate because Pastor’s world is a very closed world allowing no
scope for circumstances or any testing. Since childhood is the most
impressionable age, it is but natural for her to follow what Pastor ordains for
her. Moreover, he has been chosen by her mother and aunts, who can’t be ill-
meaning influences on her life. Therefore in existential frame work it is but
natural to see and seek meaning of her existence. It is not that as a child, she
does not understand the full significance of her existence in Pastor’s world.
Kelly states that however mute one may be due to inability to verbalize one's inner urges and perceptions, yet one is never passively related to one's environment. In Kelly's opinion, we are not passive organisms. Instead, we actively relate to environment often in a creative way. Therefore when she is married off to Captain Alving by the combined decision of her aunts, mother and Pastor, she becomes a helpless scapegoat. Far from pursuing his own doctrines about Christian austerity, edification and spiritual strength, Pastor takes resort to what we call Pirandello's morality that all a girl requires in life is a good house without economic worries. Pastor and her aunts have absolutely different constructs in their minds, when they take the decisions and the superordinate construct is that Captain's economic prosperity will offer Helen a good security blanket. Instead of consulting her in any way, “The three of them settled the whole matter for me” (GS.pp.130-31). On the other hand they make her believe that it will be a sheer folly to reject such an offer. The guiding principles before them were his status, power and fortune. They saw in Captain a beaming exterior, attractive manner and a pleasant disposition. Such outward traits were enough for them to think good of him as he was one of those men whose mode of life seems to have no effect on their reputations. The superordinate construct guiding them was not based on mutual compatibility between the two. They turned a blind eye to the question of analysing the totally different world in which the Captain was born, groomed and brought up. They just could not think that the world of Captain Alving was poles apart from that of Helen. While Helen has grown up amidst strict discipline and austerity, shunning all joys of life, Captain's world is founded on the very enjoyment of life. It is a world in which the mere fact that one is alive is a cause of joy and celebration. Metaphorically speaking, it is a den of darkness in which there is no warmth of primary or secondary bonds which are essential for bringing harmony in life. Instead tertiary bonds are valued in Captain's world in so far as they help in adding joys of physical nature. There are no edifying precepts or sublimating principles because, it is based on show off, ostentation and glitter. In reality, it is a world of debaucheries, depravities and degradations which
bring life to sub-human level. 'Present mirth has present laughter' (to borrow an expression from Shakespeare) is the only principle which serves as the scale to evaluate human relationships. For Captain, a woman can’t be envisioned as a mother or daughter but only as a toy to be played with. The sanctity and decorum of human relationships does not exist for him. He can very easily and without any remorse or repentance molest and even impregnate with consequences his servant and that too within the precincts of his home which for Helen is a holy and sacred place. After all, Pastor has taught her its sanctity by administering vows in the church. In Pastor’s world, everything was supposed to be worth-emulation but in her new world children do not have the privilege of emulating their fathers as there are no such deeds worth emulating. On the contrary in this new world sins of the parents are visited upon children. Therefore children do not grow up like healthy flowerlike individuals but as cursed with diseases like ‘softening of the brain’ due to hereditary genetic disorders. It is a world in which son’s only memory of his father relates to a horribly fatal incident:

Smoke, my boy, he said, ‘have a good smoke boy! And I smoked as hard as I could, until I felt I was turning quite pale and the perspiration was standing in great drops on my forehead. Thus he laughed—such a hearty laugh—(GS p.114).

It is into this world that the girl who has become dead from the waist below due to her mental conditioning at the hands of Pastor Manders is hurled. But in their decision to choose the Captain for her destiny, they erred a great deal. In this entirely new world, she finds her husband as a young man with irrepressible energy and exuberant spirits who had spent his youth in the army tasting fuller joys of life. In other words, Captain’s personal constructs are entirely different from those of Helen and there does not seem to be any rallying point between the two. She finds it rather stifling to cope with her new environment. As Kelly states that human beings always try to interpret their new experiences on the basis of past ones, Mrs. Alving does the same and therefore becomes unspeakably unhappy and stands dazed at the sudden shift from negation of
life to enjoyment of life in Captain's world. In psychological terms, she stands
sandwiched between the world of Ethos and the world of Eros in strict Freudian
sense. In existential framework, she finds herself standing on the precipice
between two worlds, one that of Descartes who said, "I think, therefore I am",
and the other of Jean Paul Sartre who said, "I am, therefore I think". From
Pastor's world of 'essence precedes existence' to Captain's world in which
'existence precedes essence' is a long and arduous journey but she has been
asked to cover it in no time. Whether she wanted to be thrown into such a
situation or not, it is completely up to her what she makes of her essence now.
It is her responsibility to shape the kind of person she is to become and to live a
meaningful and constructive life. Since it is not an easy task because many of
her traditional values and beliefs are being questioned, such a situation
naturally tends to engender inner confusion and deep spiritual strain concerning
the type of person she should become and the way of life she should build for
herself. But Samuel T. Gladding states in respect of Kelly's theory of personal
constructs:

The person does not simply react to environment instead, he or
she actively, uniquely and systematically construes it and then
utilizes these constructions to anticipate events. The individual
uses previous experience to create hypotheses about the
possible occurrences of new events. In Kelly's opinion, he or
she does not respond to the environment in order to maximize
pleasure and avoid pain, as reinforcement theorists assume.
Instead, he or she actively seeks to maximize the accuracy of
his or her views.35

Therefore for full one year, Mrs. Alving remains in a state of confusion and
dizziness, however, exploring propositional constructs through abstract
circumspection. She considers all possible ways to construe the situation and
comes to her pre-emptive phase when she reduces the number of constructs
available to her and considers seriously those that will help her to solve the
problem. Finally she decides on a course of action by making a choice of that
alternative in which a single construct she believes will help her. Refusing to
entertain any of Captain's requests and entreaties, she quits Captain's house
and runs away to her transferential figure Pastor Manders with the words, “Here I am, take me” (GS.p.135). After all the Pastor had been and still is her superordinate construct and therefore taking shelter under his patronage is an easy course of action. In existential parlance, it is an act of bad faith because existentialists believe that when the crisis comes, one has to turn to the palpitating core of reality rather than turning to authority figures. If one turns to others one has to experience abandonment and anguish is the natural result. Instead of depending upon others, filtering has to be done by one self. But in Kelly’s perspective going back to and behaving according to invalid constructs is a sign of a sick person because each individual has himself an innate potential to define and elaborate his construct system continuously. Each individual is capable of changing and replacing his present interpretation of events. Mrs. Avling could very easily go in for ‘constructive alternativism.’ Going back to Pastor is an inauthentic decision because instead of exploring new choices, she hands over her reigns of life to some one else, in this case Pastor Manders. Therefore it is bound to result in despair. More over she goes to Pastor as a child who always feels secure holding the finger of her father. Little does she realise that she is no more a helpless child ‘Helen’ but she has already become Mrs. Captain Alving and therefore she does not foresee that Pastor is not going to accept her. Far from receiving a loving and affectionate welcome, she receives a shocking treatment at the hands of the Pastor who chides her for having deserted her lawful husband. He reminds her of the values of restraint, ‘bounden duties’ and dubs her action of running away from her husband as an ‘outrageous intention’ (GS.p.120). When she tells Pastor about her unspeakable unhappiness, Pastor gives her a long, serious harangue:

To crave for happiness in this world is to be possessed by the spirit of revolt. What right have we to happiness? No! we must do our duty, Mrs. Alving. And your duty was to cleave to the man you had chosen and to whom you were bounden by a sacred bond (GS.pp.119-120).
Far from presenting himself as an affectionate lover, which she had expected him to be, he stands before her as a humble instrument of higher power, preaching that under the yoke of duty and obedience lie the seeds of rich blessings for the rest of life. Therefore he advises her to stop leading a lawless, an indisciplined, unscrupulous and reckless life, overmastered by a disastrous spirit of willfulness. She must go back to the path of duty and join her lawful husband. That way she has further tightened the noose around her neck.

In psychological parlance, it is a very traumatic situation. According to a famous Indian psychologist Sudhir Kakkar, the first trauma which a woman faces in her life is at the time of her marriage when she has to shed all props of security in the house of her parents. But in this case, Pastor’s refusal to accept her and send back to Captain Alving is a trauma upon trauma because her very being, her existence is in danger. While Captain Alving is not the man who can become her dream husband, Pastor, too, deserts her at a time when she has taken a bold and significant plunge to encounter her life.

While running to Pastor is an Arnoldian solution to come out of crisis yet it is out of place in the present context because one can never attain authenticity through application of ‘dated’ constructs to undated situations. As long as she was unmarried and in the care of the Pastor, she could very well hope and ask for his help but now she has already become Mrs. Alving by virtue of her marriage with Captain Alving. No doubt the decision to quit Alving’s house is existential yet when Pastor reminds her of her bounden duties towards her husband and sends her back to the Captain, it becomes quasi-existential. Instead of coming back to Captain, she could very well take a leap of faith. She could very well reject Pastor’s advice. She was free. She could act the way Nora did. Mrs. Linde’s advice to Nora, born out of traditional commonsense and wisdom did not have any effect on Nora. Nora never acted in terms of Mrs. Linde’s advice. Instead she chose her own way, she made her
own decisions. In this case too, Mrs. Alving could go in for elaboration of her construct system, instead of taking refuge in her old construct. It is but natural then for her to encounter a series of bad faiths from now onwards. While the locus of valuing different choices is entirely within her yet tragically enough, Mrs. Alving has become an extension and a continuation of Pastor Mander's Weltanchauuung and in the process, she becomes a pastiche and a parody there. She is a pastiche because she has accepted to be cast in the mould that Pastor Mender has given to her. She accepts his arranging her marriage, even though she feels disillusioned and disgusted. She continues with him for a long time without the courage to become herself. Courage to become oneself requires breaking away from old patterns, to stand alone and to stand on one's own. The problem of choice and responsibility becomes an agonising burden as finding a satisfying value is a difficult matter. Therefore the bid for freedom becomes quasi-existential. She forgets that meaning and essence is something which has to come from the matrix of one's own existence. In the opinion of James C. Coleman:

Some people lack "the courage to be"-to seek and follow new paths that offer greater possibilities for self-fulfillment. Often they do not want their essence to be left up to them; rather they seek some outside authority such as religion or their social group to advise them on what to believe and how to act. But if blind conformity cuts the individual off from new possibilities for being and leads to a wasted life, the individual cannot blame anyone else or evade the consequences. For to flee from one's freedom and responsibility to life is to be inauthentic, to show bad faith, and to live in despair.37

If after meeting Pastor Manders, she hits the road to perilous freedom, her choice can be considered existential. Instead, whipped, she comes back to Captain Alving and begins her second stage of un-freedom. Unlike Nora, who breaks away from her husband's world as a free-being, as pure power, Mrs. Alving becomes a parody of Captain Alving. In Kelly's perspective, she inches towards constellatory constructs while retaining her pre-emptive ones. Kelly proposes that a construct which, "...permits its elements to belong to other
realms concurrently, but fixes their realm membership, be called a constellatory construct. The point is that once we identify a person or an object of a given category, we then attribute a cluster or constellation of other characteristics to him. It is in this context that Mrs. Alving begins to develop a new relationship with her husband. She considers it imperative to act according to his wishes and the clusters around which the traditional relationship between husband and wife exists. She starts leading a totally self-consuming life by participating in Captain's drinking bouts, offering herself in all ways to his satisfaction, standing silent in the face of debaucheries and permit him to do whatever he likes or dislikes. Desmond MacCarthy states in this contexts that, "She manages to keep him at home by sharing little make-believe orgies." The implication is that she pretends to be some other woman before him so that he does not find her lacking in any way. In her own words:

I have suffered a good deal in this house. To keep him at home in the evening-and at night- I have had to play the part of boon companion in his secret drinking-bouts in his room up there. I have had to sit there alone with him, have had to hobnob and drink with him, have had to listen to his ribald senseless talk, have had to fight with brute force to get him to bed-(GS.p.124).

Her participation in his perversions opens her womb and she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son. Just as earlier she lived for the Pastor, now she lives for Captain but with a difference in that she now wants to shape him by using the child as a tool. But that never happens because as and when he goes out of his house, he indulges in long sprees of his drinking and sexual bouts. In existential parlance, her decision to give birth to a child turns out to be an act of bad faith because it is born out of blind adherence to the convention that birth of a child may bring some change in her husband. It is out of her conventional morality that by giving birth to a child, she at least wants to satisfy her instinct of motherhood. Women in Ibsen's world were duty bound to carry on the name of the clan through progeny. Had it not been so, Beata in Rosmersholm would not have gone to the millrace for suicide. She was made to believe that as a childless wife, she had no right to carry on with her
husband. Therefore birth of Oswald is the result of cowing down to convention. F.L. Lucas's observation is appropriate in this context, "The essential point is that he was not the sort of man who should ever have had a son. And if Helen Alving had not let herself be cowed down by convention, the unhappy son would never have been born."

The moment she begins to have a vision of her better future, some movement towards her freedom takes place. That is why she starts keeping herself busy by reading books which in the world of Pastor Manders was a taboo and fit for the dustbin. She sharpens her faculties of mind which help her to read between her past experiences of life. Although there is nothing new in these books yet she finds a definite confirmation of her ideas and beliefs which she holds in private and never brings out in the open for the fear of Pastor Manders and society. All this while she leads an inauthentic life. It is the result of her adherence to constellatory constructs that she confronts a very big shock when the biggest insult of her life comes before her. Her husband Captain Alving molests his servant Joanna in the four walls of the house and that too when she is physically present in the house. Much later she acquaints Pastor Manders with the details of that abominable act near the conservatory when she saw both Joanna and the Captain together:

Shortly afterwards I heard my husband come in too. I heard him say something to her in a low voice. And then I heard-(with a short laugh)-oh, it rings in my ears still, with its mixture of what was heartbreaking and what was so ridiculous-I heard my own servant whisper: “Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be!” (GS.p.124.).

And that heinous crime has its consequences in the birth of a female child Regina. This new situation poses before her a new a challenge which requires some immediate and decisive handling. Since life is a series of choices and one has to confront choices at every step, therefore Mrs. Alving has to make a choice once again. A number of options are there before her. The first choice before her is to kill him out of sheer disgust and anger but then he is her
husband to whom she is eternally bound as per the teachings of Pastor Manders. She can't go in far such a ghastly act, given her puritanical conditioning. The second choice is to call Pastor Manders to her home and acquaint him with the gruesome depravity of her 'lawful' husband and then seek his guidance. But then as things stand, he is going to advise her to forget about Captain's youthful indiscretions and 'unseemly levity'. The third choice before her is to run away to some unknown place as Nora did by taking a leap of faith. But she is till caught in her constellatory constructs with their epicentre in the pre-emptive ones. She is attached to her young son and his future. But she could act like Nora because Nora never thought of her children at the time of quitting Helmer. Not that Nora had written off her children. She could very well come back to claim them. In fact choosing does not foreclose the options. Instead choosing makes life open to more possibilities where as non choosing closes them. Therefore, she once again indulges in another bad faith. She calls Joanna to her side and gives her a sum of 70 dollars to run away to some town to look after herself and her baby. Such a decision will be of great help to her, she thinks. It will help in hushing up the scandal and in saving the reputation of her husband and household from being sullied. This may also help her in taming her husband and dissuading him from his indulgence in further dissipations. Her reading of the books helps in making her constructs permeable. It was under the weight of Pastor's indoctrinations that her constructs remained impermeable which naturally led to her being chained to custom, convention and society, thereby hampering her search for freedom.

It is through books that she is able to expand and elaborate her constructs, thereby developing a good number of propositional constructs. Samuel T. Gladding describes Kelly's concept of a propositional construct as, "A construct which leaves its elements open to construction in every respect be called a propositional construct... Propositional thinking is flexible thinking. The person is continuously open to new experience and is capable of modifying existing constructs." Mrs. Alving's psyche has been wounded due to the birth
of Regina. However she enters into the world of propositional constructs and thereby starts choosing and choosing freely. In existential perspective:

Our essence is created by our choices, for our choices reflect the values on which we base and order our lives. As Sartre put it: "I am my choices." In choosing what sort of person to become, we are seen as having absolute freedom: even refusing to choose represents a choice. Thus the locus of valuing is within each individual. We are inescapably the architects of our own lives. 42

The first decision therefore, she takes is to send Oswald away to some hostel in Paris where he is able to pursue his interests in art, away from the obnoxiously infectious influence of his father. No doubt, the decision is prompted by the fact that Oswald is seven years old, an age when a child begins to notice things and ask questions about various issues. Although in Shaw's perception it is a 'crowning sacrifice'43 yet she states, "I could endure all that, my friend, and the child would be poisoned if he breathed the air of this polluted house" (GS, pp.124-125). But here again swayed by duty and consideration, she starts writing letters to Oswald, full of lies about his father in which she tells him that Captain Alving is a decent gentleman, above board in manner and conduct. Year after year she builds a happy illusion in Oswald's mind by concealing the scandalous amusements of her husband and by painting a pink picture of his father. Other than creating false ideals, Mrs. Alving just does not assist him in any other way to 'be' and 'become' himself. Like modern humanistic psychologists, she believes that in the normal development of a child, if he is given a really free choice, he will choose what is good for his growth but little does she foresee that the world outside is no better place. She fails to realize that Oswald cannot be thrown into the abyss of aloneness, searching his own routes towards becoming himself through realisation of his potentials. In the words of Abraham Maslow:

It is necessary in order for children to grow well that adults have enough trust in them and in the material processes of growth,
i.e., not interfere too much, not make them grow, or force them into predetermined designs, but rather let them grow and help them grow in a Taoistic rather than an authoritarian way.**

No doubt she does not interfere in his growth as Pastor did in her case but by creating false ideals and illusions about his father, she is certainly creating preemptive constructs for him which are sure to check his growth. Seen in the existential ethos, she is choosing for him, which is an inauthentic decision. Therefore, it is natural for Oswald not to go in for finding some surrogate father or mother with whom he can relate, in the absence of his real parents. There is no difference between Mrs. Alving and Pastor Manders in this respect. Just as Pastor had been indoctrinating her with hollow ideals about religion, church and morality etc., in the same vein, she fills Oswald's mind. This results in Oswald's increasing dependence on what Pastor Manders describes as 'irregular homes' and therefore receives the worst of influences which even his father could not throw on him. Oswald develops his own constructs which are totally at variance with those which his mother wanted him to develop. However the traditional construct of mother-son relationship remains supreme in Mrs. Alving's mind because it is upon him that she has fixed all her hopes of life. Therefore when he comes back to her, she becomes lost in her vision of bright future that she fails to open her eyes to the most gruesome aspect of her son's life who has come after a long span of time. She simply can't see that Oswald, though in the 'flower of his early manhood' has come home, not as a healthy, full grown young man with energy, bounce and drive which normally artists have but as a boy who is 'Infernally tired', 'a living death', 'a terrible disaster'. She is simply unaware that Oswald is only clinically alive because all his faculties have forsaken him and his strength has been paralysed. He is unable to collect his thoughts because his head seems to swim, everything goes round and round. She fails to read any meaning why her young son is sleeping for hours and days. Even during mid-day, when the whole world is lost in action, Oswald prefers to lie in bed. While Mrs. Alving is happy that her son is back to his mother, she does not even consider for a moment why Oswald goes on
smoking his cigar and drinking strong liquor. She simply agrees with Oswald that, “it is a good protective against damp”(GS.p.143). She is transported into a euphoric state when Oswald tells her, “But it is so nice and cosy, mother dear (caresses her with one hand) Think what it means to me—to have come home, I sit at my mother’s own table, in my mother’s own room and to enjoy the charming meals she gives me”(GS.p.143). She is absolutely unaware of the restlessness, enervation and impatience of Oswald. Instead she boasts of his fine appetite and independent views which he has come to acquire during his stay in Paris.

But Kelly opines that “If a person relied exclusively on propositional thinking, he would be immobilised. He would continually be re-evaluating and reconstructing his experiences and as a result would be indecisive”46. Mrs. Alving stands fully immobilised when the biggest crash of her life takes place in the shape of Regina’s molestation by Oswald. The worse of worst happens when Oswald, her only hope, follows Regina to the kitchen to help her uncork the bottle of wine, and attempts to molest Regina exactly as his father had done to Regina’s mother Joanna years back. It is like falling into the cauldron of endless pain. Ibsen’s own description of the event is worth quoting here:

[From the dining-room is heard the noise of a chair falling; then Regina’s voice is heard in a loud whisper. Oswald! Are you mad? Let me go!
Mrs. Alving (starting in horror). Oh--!
[She stares wildly at the half-open door. Oswald is heard coughing and humming, then the sound of a bottle being uncorked.
Manders (in an agitated manner). What’s the matter? What is it, Mrs. Alving?
Mrs. Alving (hoarsely). Ghosts. The couple in the conservatory—over again.
Manders. What are you saying! Regina—? Is she—?
Mrs. Alving. Yes come. Not a word—!

[Grips Manders by the arm and walks unsteadily with him into the dining-room]. (GS.p.127).
Such is her helplessness that she enters from one abyss to another much more miserable. She finds herself back to the same precipice as when she had stood in case of her husband and Joanna. It requires another major decision now. Earlier she had to take the decision as wife but now she is the mother. Earlier she could hold her husband or Pastor responsible for the disaster, she has no one now to transfer the blame on. The new predicament is much more cumbersome than the previous one because on the one hand she is a wretched mother, on the other this event has transported her back to the world of her husband, which stands as colossus in her search for freedom. Not knowing how to come out of it, she once again turns to Pastor Manders to ask him what to do with Regina. But instead of taking Pastor's advice into consideration, she resorts to what Kelly calls C.P.C. cycle and does a lot of hard thinking. Since it is a very difficult situation and therefore choice is difficult. She knows that she can't be firm on sending Regina away as she had done in case of Joanna. Somewhere in the unconscious, Mrs. Alving relates Regina to herself because Regina's helplessness is of exact nature as hers was in her aunt's house who took the major decision for her, of course, with the consent of her mother. She does not want Regina to be thrown into the same dungeon as she was thrown. It is out of identification with her that she has been loving her a great deal, much more than is due to an ordinary housekeeping girl. She has been treating Regina, as if she were her own child and Regina, too, is so devoted to Mrs. Alving that, "I should be dreadfully unwilling to leave Mrs. Alving, too, she has always been good to me" (GS, p.103).

Secondly Regina knows so many of the inner details of the house that Mrs. Alving can't run the risk of kicking her out. Still more, she knows in her heart of hearts that Regina has her own claim on Captain Alving's fortune out of which Mrs. Alving does not want to keep even a penny with herself. To Engstrand, she can't be sent because Regina herself will not like to go. She hates him for the proposal of opening some brothel to be known as Seamen Home or Sailors' Home, wherein he wants her to work for money and sell her
flesh. The possibility of finding a suitable match and then marrying her off is there but then who knows, it may end up as in case of Joanna. Moreover, it will be an inauthentic decision. In that case, there will be no difference between her and Regina's aunts. The only alternative left before her is to be silent for sometime and wait for some decision which time or nature may bring forth. It is therefore that she tells the Pastor, “Not a word.”

Since this matter relates directly to Oswald, he too has to be consulted. Though apparently, the two cases seem to be similar (son repeating what father did long ago) yet it is not so for Mrs. Alving. In Shaw’s perception:

But there is this worldwide difference in her insight to the cases of the father and the son. She did not love the father; she loves the son with the intensity of a heart starved woman who has nothing else left to love. Instead of recoiling from him with pious disgust and Pharisical consciousness of moral superiority, she sees at once that he has a right to be happy in his own way, and that she has no right to force him to be dutiful and wretched in hers.48

It is through Oswald she finds that it is he who is responsible more because during his last visit he had shown Regina certain dreams about life in Paris and thereby ignited her imagination. So much so that she had started learning and speaking French with the sole aim of accompanying him to Paris. And in the kitchen, she stood with such expectant eyes that he just couldn’t resist the temptation. But Oswald tells his mother not to send her away at any cost because she is the one who is going to help in his salvation. The mother in Mrs. Alving comes once again to dominate her mind and heart that she fails to grasp the real meaning of the situation.

In existential frame work, such nerve-breaking experiences bring her to a mental state wherein she begins to feel absurdity, meaninglessness and vanity of her efforts. After all this is certainly not what she had expected or worked for. She had sent Oswald to become a young man free from harm where as he has come back as a wretched skeleton. There is a yawning gap between her
aspirations and the reality of her condition. Sartre highlights such a state of mind as:

What is meant by the absurd as a state of fact as primary situation? It means nothing less than man’s relation to the world. Primary absurdity manifests a cleavage, the cleavage between man’s aspirations to unity and the insurmountable dualism of mind and nature, between man’s drive towards the eternal and the infinite character of his existence, between the concern which constitutes his very essence and the vanity of his efforts. Chance, death, the irreducible pluralism of life and death, the unintelligibility of the real - all these are extremes of the absurd.

There are many ways open before her now to come out of this absurdity. One is to surrender, as in the past to Pastor’s will. But then she has already tested the results of Pastor’s teachings. The other is to go in for a revolt. Already she has prepared herself in so many different ways to confront the horrible realities of life. Her decisions to go in for building of orphanage and handing over its control in Pastor’s hands is an expression of inner disgust and revolt against her married life with Pastor’s chosen husband Captain Alving. It is a completely different matter that she does not come out with her real motives before public. But the real fact is that she, at no cost wants her son to inherit even a single penny that belongs to her father. More over when she decides to build the orphanage, she is not in a position to verbalise her revolt due to several reasons, Oswald-Regina relationship being one. Her revolt becomes aggressive when Pastor begins to see ‘holes’ in her future in the person of Oswald. To Pastor, Oswald’s thinking is rotten and for this, he holds her responsible. At once she bursts out at Pastor, “In my loneliness here, I have come to the same opinions as he” (GS.pp.118-19). At this Pastor stands aghast and shudders at such a moral fall of Mrs. Alving. Out of his bounden duty towards the one whom he had been showing the paths of edification, he bursts out at her:
You have been overmastered all your life by a disastrous spirit of willfulness. All your impulses have led you towards what is undisciplined and lawless. You have never been willing to submit to any restraint. Anything in life that has seemed irksome to you, you have thrown aside recklessly and unscrupulously, as if it were a burden that you were free to rid yourself of if you would. It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and so you left your husband. Your duties as a mother were irksome to you, so you sent your child away among strangers (GS.p.121).

And then he calms down a little that there is still time to reclaim her son from the paths of wickedness and labels her as, "Mrs. Alving you are a guilty mother" (GS.p.122). Not only this, he describes Oswald's moral fall as the second irresponsible act on the part of Mrs. Alving. Seeing that Mrs. Alving is very receptive to what he has been saying, Pastor Manders begins to boast of his advice he had tendered her during her previous folly:

And is it not true that my having been able to bring you again under the yoke of duty and obedience sowed the seeds of a rich blessing on all the rest of your life? Did things not turn out as I foretold to you? Did not your husband turn from straying in the wrong path as a man should? Did he not, after all, live a life of love and good report with you all his days? Did he not become a benefactor to the neighbourhood? Did he not so raise you up to his level, so that by degrees you became his fellow-worker in all his undertakings- and a noble fellow-worker, too, I know, Mrs. Alving; that praise I will give you. But now I come to the second serious false step in your life (GS.p.120).

This is too much for her now. With the strength of her son's presence by her, she almost pounces upon Pastor Manders with a vengeance. In existential perspective, this is a journey from the realisation of absurdity to encountering it through revolt. All along she had been passively watching, facing and experiencing absurdity of her life but now through revolt, she attempts, at least, to attribute some meaning to her absurd existence. It must be understood here that revolt is not something different from the absurd, for basically it is an absurd phenomenon where the divorce between consciousness and the world
continues to exist with the primary difference that here the individual lives the absurd aggressively. In the words of Thomas Hanna:

> In the dialectic of revolt, two things are revealed: what the individual man is in relation to what the world is. The relation between the individual and his world is that of conflict in which the individual is actually conscious of those categorical differences which separate his being from that of the world.⁵⁰

Seen in this perspective, Mrs. Alving's thinking transformed through her bitter experiences of life, stands in direct conflict and confrontation with what Pastor Manders had been teaching her. Not that Mrs. Alving takes up cudgels or swords against the Pastor or society but that by giving vent to her suppressed feelings, emotions and urges, she achieves great degree of clarity and unity of thought. In fact, her spirit of rebellion is only a unique aggressive response to the absurd which is not to be confused with the traditional sense of revolt or revolution itself. Herbert Read postulates the Camusian perspective of revolt with which Mrs. Alving approaches her new predicament. He states:

> Camus believes that revolt is one of the 'essential dimensions' of mankind. It is useless to deny its historical reality — rather we must seek in it a principle of existence. But the nature of revolt has changed radically in our times. It is no longer the revolt of slave against his master, nor even the revolt of the poor against the rich, it is a metaphysical revolt, the revolt of man against conditions of life, against creation itself. At the same time, it is an aspiration towards clarity and unity of thought—even paradoxically towards order. That at least, is what it becomes under the intellectual guidance of Camus.⁵¹

Therefore before Pastor goes on with his harangue, she makes him sit before her to acquaint him with her real hellish existence as also to demolish, one by one, the weak foundations of Pastor's credulous world. To begin with, she tells Pastor that he is condemning her conduct on the basis of ordinary public opinion and rumours without verifying the facts. He has no first hand information. The first revelatory shock she gives to the Pastor is regarding her
husband, "The truth is this, that my husband died just as great a profligate as he had been all his life" (GS.p.122).

She makes Pastor's head reel over the fact that all the years she had spent with the Captain were nothing but "a hidden abyss of misery" (GS.p.123). He is astonished at the fact that, how could such a state of things remain concealed. Mrs. Alving musters up courage:

That was just what I had to fight for incessantly, day after day. When Oswald was born, I thought I saw a slight improvement. But it didn't last long. And after that I had to fight doubly hard—fight a desperate fight so that no one should know what sort of a man my child's father was. You know quite well what an attractive manner he had; it seemed as if people could believe nothing but good of him. He was one of those men whose mode of life seems to have no effect upon their reputations (GS.p.123).

She tells, Pastor Manders that at the time he had administrated them marriage vows, the Captain was no honourable gentleman either. Though he was full of irrepressible energy and exuberant spirits yet:

Well, then this boy, full of the joy of life—for he was just like a boy then—had to make his home in a second-rate town which had none of the joy of life to offer him, but only dissipations. He had to come out here and live an aimless life; he had only an official post. He had no work worth devoting his whole mind to; he had nothing more than official routine to attend to. He had not a single companion capable of appreciating what the joy of life meant; nothing but idlers and tipplers (GS.pp.163-164).

He was a lost man even before his son was born and it is to this man, she tells Pastor, they had tied her through nuptial knots. Furthermore, she dwells upon the tyranny of Pastor's ethos when her training in duty, this duty, that duty did not prepare her adequately to join her husband's world, "I am afraid I made your father's home unbearable to him, Oswald" (GS.p.164). Regarding the building of the orphanage, she tells him that it is certainly not out of any regards
or love for her husband that she has spent so much money but it is only to exorcise the ghost of his left-out property and wealth. It is out of uneasy conscience that she has got the orphanage constructed and more so to silence any rumours about him. Regarding the carpenter Engstrand, she tells him not to advocate his right to take his daughter away with him because, "I know best what sort of father he had been to her" (GS.p.112). When she finds that Pastor is not ready to believe her version of things as they stood, Mrs. Alving throws light on how Engstrand married Joanna:

The girl was sent away at once, and was given a tolerably liberal sum to hold her tongue. She looked after the rest herself when she got to town. She renewed an old acquaintance with the carpenter Engstrand; gave him a hint, I suppose, of how much money she had got, and told him some fairy tale about a foreigner who had been here in his yacht in the summer. So she and Engstrand were married in a great hurry. Why, you married them yourself (GS.p.129).

While Pastor feels an inner compulsion to recall how Engstrand had come to him full of contrition, accusing himself bitterly for his light conduct he and his fiancée had been guilty of, he at once gets restless. He expresses his disgust and anger at Engstrand’s deceitfulness and immorality of such a marriage which he got solemnised through him for a paltry sum of 70 pounds.

Finding Pastor down and dampened in spirits at such a turn of events, she further demolishes his ideals by asking him certain soul-searching questions. She lambasts at Pastor and asks him to explain how her marriage is different from that of Joanna. The conversation between the two is revealing:

Mrs. Alving: What about myself then?
Manders: Just think of it—for a paltry seventy pounds to let yourself be bound in marriage to a fallen woman!
Mrs. Alving: What about myself, then?—I let myself be bound in marriage to a fallen man.
Manders: Heaven forgive you! What are you saying? A fallen man?
Mrs. Alving.  Do you suppose my husband was any purer, when I went with him to the altar, than Joanna was when Engstrand agreed to marry her?

Manders.  The two cases are as different as day from night-

Mrs. Alving.  Not so very different, after all. It is true there was a great difference in the price paid, between a paltry seventy pounds and a whole fortune.

Manders.  How can you compare such totally different things! I presume you consulted your own heart and your relations.

Mrs. Alving (looking away from him).  I thought you understood where what you call my heart had strayed to at that time.

Manders (in a constrained voice).  If I had understood anything of the kind, I would not have been a daily guest in your husband's house(GS.p.130).

Thus Mrs. Alving holds Pastor solely responsible for the disaster of her life. While Pastor has absolutely no convincing answers to any of her inconvenient questions, yet he tries to shift the blame on her that at the time of marriage, she had consulted her mother and two aunts. At once Mrs. Alving utters a sobbing cry; “If my mother could only see what all that fine proposal has led to”(GS.p.131). Pastor tries to console her through old gospels preaching law and order and differentiates her marriage from that of Joanna, “No one can be responsible for the result of it. Any way, this is to be said that the match was made in complete conformity with law and order”(GS.p.131).

At this Mrs. Alving fires a verbal salvo on the Pastor, “Oh, law and order, I often think it is at the bottom of all the misery in the world”(GS.p.131). This declaration of Mrs. Alving is the culmination of the experience of absurdity and therefore an expression of a “process of thought that is already convinced of the absurdity and apparent sterility of the world.” 52

No more does she want to live as a child before Pastor Manders because of her objective and subjective discoveries of Pastor's ethos. Her inner-self begins to shape her 'being'. Not that her discovery of falsehood and sterility of her ideals is all too sudden but that her earlier decision to run away
from her husband and then coming back, too weighs heavy upon her heart. Therefore she is fully determined to shake off all her earlier determinants. In Maslow’s perspective, from now onwards life becomes her own project now. To quote Abrahm Maslow:

However, this inner core, or self, grows into adulthood only partly by (objective or subjective) discovery, uncovering and acceptance of what is “there” beforehand. Partly it is also a creation of the person himself. Life is a continual series of choices for the individual in which a main determinant of choice is the person as he already is (including his goals for himself, his courage or fear, his feeling of responsibility, his ego-strength or “will power,” etc.). we can no longer think of the person as “fully determined” where this phrase implies “determined only by forces external to the person.” The person, insofar as he is a real person, is his own main determinant. Every person is, in part, “his own project” and makes himself.

On being labelled as wicked by Pastor, Mrs. Alving bursts out and decides to take a big leap of faith in strict existential sense, "That may be so; but I don’t attach any importance to those obligations and considerations any longer! I can’t! I must struggle for my freedom."(GS.p.131).

Although she stands before the Pastor as a rebel with firm commitment to revolt, yet a shocking sense of despair engirds her, “I ought never to have concealed what sort of life my husband led. But I had not the courage to do otherwise then—for my sake either. I was too much of a coward... If I had been the woman I ought, I would have taken Oswald into confidence and said to him: Listen, my son, your father was a dissolute man____ and I would have told him all I have told you, from beginning to end”. (GS.p.131).

While in psychological parlance, it is the enantiodromia of her life yet for this psychic transformation, she does not deny the credit which is due to Pastor Manders. It is because of his rigorous conditioning, programming and forcing her to duties that she developed a revolting spirit against all the teachings of
the Pastor, "That was what led me to examine your teachings critically. I only wanted to unravel one point in them; but as soon as I got that unraveled, the whole fabric came to pieces. And then I realized that it is only machine made" (GS.p.134). At the same time she tells at his very face most bluntly, "It is the most ignominious defeat of your life" (GS.p.135). She even touches the innermost chords of his soul when he asks him whether it was really good to send her back. She labels him as the real villain.

It is out of this state of mind that she begins to toy with the idea of finding some arrangement between Oswald and Regina, knowing fully well that Regina is Oswald's half-sister. The proposal no doubt is shocking yet she tells Pastor that a number of people in the world are closely related to each other. Mrs. Alving's readiness to marry Regina to Oswald is another form of revolt. Against the values with which she has been indoctrinated by the Pastor and society. It is because all along she has been experiencing horrible consequences of whatever she has been taught by the Pastor. There is yet another aspect of her inclination to marry Regina and Oswald and that is purely humanistic in existential framework. Psychologically speaking, one who has suffered immensely in life either becomes a criminal or utterly altruistic. Mrs. Alving chooses the second way. In this context Lucas Writes:

But here is a woman who has walked all her years as upon knives, yet has not been bowed down by it, nor embittered; whose life has been marred and muddied, but who still longs—though tragically in vain—to give her son a fuller and happier lot than her own.54

On the one hand, she becomes willing to go to any extent to help her son have the joy of life. But when the Pastor describes it as a revolting union, Mrs. Alving regresses into a spell of timidity and fear and begins to see ghosts around, of which she can't get rid of. She expresses her bewilderment before the Pastor.
Ghosts. When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was just like seeing ghosts before my eyes. I am half inclined to think we are all ghosts, Mr. Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our fathers and mothers that exists again in us, but all sorts of old dead ideas and all kinds of old dead beliefs and things of that kind. They are not actually alive in us; but there they are dormant, all the same, and we can never be rid of them. Whenever I take up a newspaper and read it, I fancy I see ghosts creeping between the lines. there must be ghosts all over the world. They must be as countless as the grains of the sands, it seems to me. And we are so miserably afraid of the light, all of us (GS.p.134).

This is how she acquaints the Pastor how she has been waging an arduous struggle against ghosts both without and within herself and the final blow which she gives to the Pastor comes at a time when the Pastor seems to agree with the version put forward by Engstrand that he has married Joanna out of sheer altruistic spirit. Engstrand has told the Pastor that by marrying Joanna, he has performed a religious duty of raising up a fallen woman. In a way, Engstrand too, unmasks the pseudo-religion of the Pastor when he asks him, “Should you say it was right for a man to raise up the fallen?”(GS.p.139). Like a daruma doll, at once Pastor changes his tone, “Forgive me for having misjudged you. And I assure you that if I can do anything for you to prove my sincere regret and my goodwill towards you—”(GS.p.141). But when he turns to Mrs. Alving to advise her, “There you see how exceedingly careful we ought to be in condemning our fellow men, “ (GS.p.143), she at once lambasts at him, “What I think is that you are, and will always remain, a big baby, Mr. Manders”. (Italics mine) (GS.p.142). This is how Mrs. Alving frees herself of all the conditioning and programming of Pastor Manders and his tenets.

No doubt, now she has freed her self of the Pastor’s constructs but it can not be denied that all her previously held values have brought her to a point where she begins to feel a sense of valuelessness. And it is an established fact in psychology that one can not live in a vacuum. She has already started reading about books containing new, fresh and advanced ideas. If Rebecca
West in *Rosmersholm* can be influenced by advanced ideas about the rationale behind marriage through the books of Dr. West, why not Mrs. Alving? Not only this, she must have come across certain other books which stood totally in opposition to the established ideals of the Church. It is interesting to mention here that even the faith of people like Matthew Arnold and Alfred Tennyson was thoroughly shaken by Darwin's theory about the survival of the fittest in the evolution of mankind and the ascent of man. Mrs. Alving's knowledge of such books comes handy to her in filling the voids created by the hollowness of the Pastor's ideals. When old values die, new values have to be found. While Erich Fromm advocates a frame of productive orientation, Abraham Maslow talks about the need to find fresh set of values:

The state of being without a system of values is psychopathogenic, we are learning. The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense that he needs sunlight, calcium or love. This I have called the "cognitive need to understand." The value-illnesses which result from valuelessness are called variously anhedonia, anomie, apathy, amorality, hopelessness, cynicism, etc., and can become somatic illness as well. Historically, we are in a value interregnum in which all externally given value systems have proven to be failures (political, economic, religious, etc.) e.g., nothing is worth dying for. What man needs but doesn't have, he seeks for unceasingly, and he becomes dangerously ready to jump at any hope, good or bad. The cure for this disease is obvious. We need a validated, usable system of human values that we can believe in and devote ourselves to (be willing to die for), because they are true rather than because we are exhorted to "believe and have faith". Such an empirically based Weltanschauung seems now to be a real possibility, at least in theoretical outline.  

With the strength she has now achieved through revolt and reading of the books, she confronts the rest of her life. And the major task before her still remains and that is how to cope with Oswald's problem, she ponders over the question whether she should now acquaint her son with the gruesome reality of her relationship with his father or not. This requires another decision. After
all, she is going to spend the rest of her life with Oswald. Therefore she
decides to tell the truth and free her son of the illusions which she herself has
created before him. Pastor’s advice carries no meaning now because he, too,
has become a ghost now. Moreover she knows how hollow Pastor’s lecture for
tomorrow is going to be. But as nature has its own methods of vengeance and
justice, the orphanage which for G. Wilson Knight is ‘a symbol of lying society’
and for Lucas ‘a Monument of falsehood’ is burnt to ashes even before its
inauguration. And the fire takes place immediately after Pastor came back
spending some edifying time holding a candle in his hands in the company of
the villain Engstrand. For Mrs. Alving, it is a sigh of relief that all is over
because even if the fire had not taken place, she was not going to be profited
by it any way. On the contrary, the building of the orphanage was an attempt to
exorcise the ghost of Captain Alving.

After the two major impediments in her freedom have been dissolved
and even the ghost of Alving has been exorcised, She pours out her psychic
anguish before Oswald only to find that Oswald is not strong enough for all that.
To her utter dismay, she finds that Oswald has come home not as a healthy
young man but as ‘spectre of a man’ who needs someone’s helping hand to
release him from eternal pain. He shares with her his inherited ‘vermolou’
which doctors have described as softening of the brain. Oswald reveals ‘like
the unwinding of a corpse’s wrapping’s that he is ill’ that he has already had an
attack of unbearable pain, the second attack is going to cause him unspeakable
suffering. Therefore Regina must be retained for the final helping hand. But
since Regina has developed her own futuristic vision now, “No, I really can’t
stay here in the country and wear myself to look after invalids” (GS. p. 65). Mrs.
Alving is left alone to lend her son the most dreaded helping hand. G. Wilson
Knight sums up her predicament, “In her are contained both Ibsen’s types, the
domestic maternal and the energetic. Trammelled by centuries of dead values,
she is shown as gradually winning freedom only to be brought up against the
final and fearful choice." 56 It is very painful to see her son with the morphia powder in his hands crying, "The Sun—the sun."

Such is the long and existential journey of Mrs. Alving. All alone she stands, with no one by her side. Captain Alving has already been dissolved into nothingness. Pastor Manders is on his way to the boat along with Engstrand. Oswald is dying just before her eyes. Life becomes a free project before her. Now she is really thrown into the world, which means that she has her existence, she has to encounter herself, make it and shape it through the entire life cycle of choices without reference to what Kierkegaard calls the shadow world of ideals, without reference to ‘prior’ meanings or givens of religion, culture, society and philosophies, howsoever ontological, entereological they may pretend to be. Her real freedom will start now because she has consciously freed herself. She will have to make some choice because in the words of T.S. Elliot, "There is nothing to escape from, nothing to escape to." Karl Jasper says " Life is extremely possible, one can't leave the field either because as Sartre says, choosing not to choose is also a choice. Thus choosing is a continuous process. And if we don't exercise choices, we can't exist. Individual choices reverberate to the end of time. She will have to define her self now because the period of existential surging has been arduously long.

In the foregoing sections, an attempt has been made to diachronise the personality profile of Mrs. Alving and Pastor Manders. In Mrs. Alving's chequered course on the perilous path of freedom, it is evident that she fails to be a quester in any substantial sense as long as she remains lost in pre-emptive constructs. Let us now see her failures and triumphs on the stages of her journey towards freedom. In the first stage which includes her programming by Pastor Manders and years of sterile marriage, the question of freedom does not arise. Freedom remains a far cry. If Nora had been in such a no-win situation. She would have called quits. This possibility that life is
extremely possible does not occur to her. In her misery she goes to Manders again who sends her back to servitude and thus begins her second stage in which she becomes a victim of bad faith and gets conceived in the process of 'mental sexuality', to adapt a phrase from D.H. Lawrence. The birth of the child begins her third stage in which she develops certain powers of initiative. She takes charge of the house, the affairs of the estate and rightly leaves Captain Alving, her husband to pine-away as a discard in his room to the inexorable workings of his 'Karma'. In this stage, Joanna becomes pregnant and she sends her away with measly money to save the family name. This act of bad faith is rationalised by her in terms of compassion which at best is phony. In this stage many years roll by and Oswald completes his childhood and enters the threshold of boyhood. To save him from the influence of his father, she despatches him to Paris to grow as an artist. She can be credited with having made a decision supposedly in Oswald's interest but there is no follow up monitoring. Oswald's return from Paris in ennui and fatigue begins the fourth stage. This stage is again characterised by internal delusion and blindness. He comes to assault on Regina and even dreams of settling down with her in wedded bliss but this planned bad faith forces Regina to leave her roof. Regina, though young and indigent chooses supportless living. The reader wishes for Mrs. Alving for having done something like that at different junctures of life. The reader wishes for her to exercise her freedom for which so many opportunities came and went. But Mrs. Alving was simply not there to exercise them.

Her planning an orphanage with Mr. Manders to exorcise the ill-gotten money and properties of Mr. Alving is an exhumation phantasy. It is not surprising that the orphanage is burnt to cinders. The last glimpse that we have of Mrs. Alving is that of Dhoomavati, a form of Kali, who is iconically portrayed as an old woman with sagging breasts, displaying wrinkled hands, sitting on a chariot on a dark gloomy day, with no sun above. Dhoomavati represents the night of disillusion, a kind of 'pralya'. Her son is dying. She is
left now with nothing. Pastor Manders is gone, Regina is gone, all phony projects are over, material and psychological. It is hoped that from the depth of desolation, perhaps the self-project of freedom may begin. Perhaps!!!.

As for Pastor's search for freedom is concerned, it must be noted at the very outset that he is one such character who not only stands as a stumbling block in Mrs. Alving's search but also closes the door of freedom upon himself. He comes before us more as a muddle-head, nincompoop and caricature than as a Pastor with spiritual aura around him. To me, Manders is such a man who prefers to live according to certain fixed principles which he has crammed and swallowed under some overpowering influence or compulsion. Though a Pastor in ecclesiastical robes yet nowhere, in the entire course of his life, does he emanate the fragrance of wisdom and religiosity. For him servile obedience to duty, religion, order and perfection are the only principles worth-holding in life and any deviation from them is not only disgusting but also detestable. He reminds me of 'Lucky' in the Lucky-Pozzo relationship in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, in which Lucky is content to enact the movements of the dance. His long monotonous practice under tyranny of Pozzo has made him forget the context and meaning of different steps in dance. Similarly Pastor fails to see that the ultimate aim of religion or morals is to add beauty, meaning and purpose in life and thereby help the practitioner of religion in sublimation of his life and not to reduce life to a state of hellish existence. In existential terminology, Pastor is a man for whom Descartesian principle 'Essence precedes existence' holds good not only for himself but also for others. Despite being a Pastor, he does not have the ability to sift good from the bad, right from the wrong and moral from the immoral. He has fixed before himself an ego-ideal that he is a responsible man of God. This ideal always presses upon him to put up a divine persona — 'I' who had thought never to appear but in ornaments of spiritual man and he spares no pains to cling tenaciously to that persona. He is always after law and its legality. Even the most sacred of the institutions like those of marriage and family are blind
translations of biblical dictums even if they do not fit well into the reality of events. For Pastor, marriage must be performed according to Christian vows which have a permanent and binding authority on the individuals. A woman can't come out of her wedlock even if the two are diametrically incompatible. Outward form must be preserved. A wife is duty-bound in the service of her husband even if the latter is debauch and depraved. She dare not leave him. And the words of man must be listened to and accepted as truth even if he enacts the drama of crying out of contrition and repentance.

The problem with Pastor is that his consciousness is clogged under the heavy weight of Christian principles, with the result that he has not been able to develop a proper attitude both towards himself as well as towards others. "Encrusted as he is by convention, fear of scandal and respect to the press and public influence," 57 as for others are concerned, he is terribly afraid of public opinion and public scandals even if they are based on fraudulent lies and utter untruth. He can’t permit himself or others to read advanced books and talk about current intellectualism and emancipating ideas which do not match with his orthodox indoctrination. He does not consider it necessary to update his knowledge. The moment he finds such books lying on the table of Mrs. Alving, he stands aghast. He denounces such books even without reading them and categorically tells Mrs. Alving, "I have read quite enough about these books to disapprove them" (GS.p.107). Therefore, he becomes a victim of bad faith, in existential perspective, under these notions. He lives in a world which is so closed from all sides that no fresh air of current intellectual tendencies is allowed to enter. That is why, on the one hand, he snubs Mrs. Alving for reading those books which go against the established ideals of the Church. On the other, he is highly critical of her decision to send her son in the wider world, "in which you have allowed your son to wander for so long" (GS.p.107). He is deadly opposed to the idea of Oswald becoming a painter. He tells Mrs. Alving that he has unqualified disapproval of the artists' life because an artist can't keep the inner man free from harm. "The problem with the Pastor is that he has
no pure consciousness and therefore no proper attitude towards himself. He is always worried about what others will say, what the public opinion will be. Never does he utter, "In my opinion it is so". Instead his opinion about men and matters always begins with, 'I am told', 'I hear', 'They say', 'What will others think' and so on. The play is replete with a number of instances where he has taken the major decisions of his life on the basis of what others will say. To begin with, he tells Mrs. Alving "My dear Mrs. Alving, there are many occasions in life when one has to rely on the opinions of others. This is the way in this world and it is quite right that it should be so what would become of society other wise"(GS.p.107). Pastor justifies not only his personal way of looking at things for the purpose of decision but also wants others to follow this method for the purpose of maintaining social harmony. It is in this context that while framing legal deeds and statues for the orphanage, he removes the word 'Chamberlain' from the title 'Chamberlain Alving Home' and substitutes it with the title 'Captain Alving Home' because the word 'captain' seems less ostentatious in general public opinion. Regarding the insurance of the orphanage and its associated buildings, personally he is in favour of getting them insured against all risks but here again, "What about the opinion of the people?"(GS.p.109). He drops the idea of insurance because he is afraid that people will take objection to it and he feels that he could hardly refuse to attach weight to the opinion of independent influential persons. He tells Mrs. Alving that the fellow clergymen may interpret—that "Neither you nor I had proper alliance on Divine protection."(GS.p.109). This will be an injurious interpretation and it may exercise hampering influence on the work of orphanage. He is afraid of putting himself in public scrutiny which may result in spiteful attacks and accusations on him through open public criticism, newspapers and reviews. Emphatically, he declares, "We have no right to do any thing that will scandalise the community"(GS.p.110). In case of Engstrand he utters, "I am told he is really making an effort to live a blameless life" (GS.p.111). To Oswald, he tells, "And I hear you have begun to make a name for your self"(GS.p.113). Similarly, he is against all artists as a class. About Captain
Alving, he tells Mrs. Alving, "I know only too well what rumour used to say of him, and I should be the last person to appraise of his conduct as a young man, supposing that rumour spoke the truth "(GS.pp.119-120). Thus he makes 'rumour' the basis of his value-judgement. In order to find out the real truth about Captain Alving, he makes no sincere effort and closes his eyes towards Captain's conduct because deep down in his psyche is the double-code of morality, one for women and the other for men. He sits and sleeps peacefully because even if the Captain were so, yet a wife has bounden duties towards her husband. He is very categorical when he tells Mrs. Alving:

But it is not a wife's part to be her husband's judge. You should have considered it your bounden duty humbly to have borne out the cross that a higher will had laid upon you. But instead of that, you rebelliously cast off your cross, you deserted the man whose stumbling foot steps you should have supported. You did what was bound to imperil your good name and reputation and came very near to imperiling the reputation of others into the bargain. (GS.p.120).

Thus here again, the cruel wrath of the Pastor is concentrated on saving 'name, 'fame' and reputation i.e. public opinion and not on the violation of decent conduct expected of Captain Alving. Pastor expects Mrs. Alving something like replacing Pippa's song, "God is in his Heaven, All's right with the world", with the line 'Her husband in the house and every thing, right with the world."

Furthermore, it is out of the public fear that he stops visiting Mrs. Alving's house after she had come running to him, slamming the door of her husband's house. He does not come to her house, even for once during her husband's life time. Not only this, knowing fully well that Mrs. Alving has constructed the orphanage not out of any regard for him but out of uneasy conscience, yet Pastor Manders does not cancel his public address at the inauguration ceremony. It is a different matter that he loses some of his courage for some time. Again, it is out of public fear that he surrenders before Engstrand in the most abject manner. He even expresses his willingness to donate money to the den of prostitution. He shudders at the very mention that Oswald's face
resembles that of a clergyman's mouth. At once he generalises that many of his colleagues in the church have similar expressions lest any body should name Pastor Manders in particular for the resemblance. Such a type of existence, which is poles apart from ground realities of life, does not help the Pastor in any way, with the result that his self can never reach the required heights to move into the greatest communication with freedom. In existential terminology, Pastor's entire life becomes a story of inauthentic living. Seen in the existential perspective, Kierkegaard also developed this type of 'existential' social criticism in *The Present Age* (1846) where he says that the levelling tendency and the rule of "the public as dominant" is to be shunned in preference to society dominated by individuals, those who precisely are not "like everybody else".

Since Pastor goes on repressing his instincts and fails to listen to his inner voices under the fear of disapprovals of society, it is impossible for him to search authentic selfhood and attain freedom. It will be worthwhile to mention here that terms 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' were first introduced by Heidegger. They designate two profoundly contrasting modes of existence. Inauthentic suggests a condition in which man is not truly himself. When man suppresses all that is unique and particular in his own being, he does not develop a distinctive personality and he often lives without any awareness of such a deficiency in his life. So is the Pastor. He simply plays his part and acts out a socially assigned or half-heartedly chosen role. He follows customs and rituals blindly without realising whether they have deeper significance for him or not. He is a passive member of the church and expects praise from others for his passion to conform to its values which are laid out before him in advance by his professional status. To me it appears, he lives a second hand life governed by others and not by the joys and agonies of personal experiences and that is the reason he does not share any genuine or deep involvement with others. For Heidegger, it is the usual way of life of people, that is "being -in - the world." He says that from day to day people live much the same life and follow the
same paths and do only that which is expected of them. This he calls "anonymous" public self which avoids the direct encounter with inner, authentic self. Even Sartre feels the same way when he says that people for the most part hover in the tension between 'being-for-itself' and 'being-in-itself' which is so to say that each man is repeatedly confronted with the possibility of freely choosing for himself, or by avoiding choice and remaining an object without identity. By implication then, authentic mode of existence then, is one in which the individual consistently strives to attain self-awareness and rather than keeping to safe, customary ways, chooses to realise his own true self. Ortega Y. Gasset, the Spanish thinker of recent times, in his book *Man and People* (1957), says that man comes to know of his true self, his 'I' only through reaction of 'liking' or 'hatred' generated in him by each separate situation. Unhappiness, sorrow, pain, tell man about his important calling or vocation. He writes, "Every one of us has to make it for himself, each his own. This life that is given us is given us empty, and man has to keep filling it for himself, occupying it. Such is our occupation."

In Maslow's perception:

This inner core, even though it is biologically based and "instinctoid," is weak in certain senses rather than strong. It is easily overcome, suppressed or repressed. It may even be killed off permanently. Humans no longer have instincts in the animal sense, powerful, unmistakable inner voices which tell them un-equivocally what to do, when, where, how and with whom. All that we have left are instinct-remnants. And furthermore, these are weak, subtle and delicate, very easily drowned out by learning, by cultural expectations, by fear, by disapproval, etc. They are hard to know, rather than easy. Authentic selfhood can be defined in part as being able to hear these impulse-voices within oneself, i.e., to know what one really wants or doesn't want, what one is fit for and what one is not fit for, etc. It appears that there are wide individual differences in the strength of these impulse-voices.

In fact behind several of Pastor's actions, there is a persona which loves body and senses. Despite his repeated and careful efforts to hide that persona from
public gaze, it does come up and out clearly in a few significant situations. For example when Pastor was preparing Regina for confirmation in Christianity, he couldn't concentrate on the pious solemnity of the occasion. Rather he couldn't resist the temptation of having a close look at her full grown body. In his own words, “Yes didn't she I fancy I remember she was remarkably well-developed bodily at the time I prepared her for confirmation” (GS.p.135). It is an established fact in psychology that repression does not kill what is repressed. On the contrary repressed instincts continue to mould the thought process of the individuals. Abraham Maslow makes a brilliant observation in this context:

Many aspects of this inner, deeper nature are either (a) actively repressed, as Freud has described, because they are feared or disapproved of or are ego-alien, or (b) “forgotten” (neglected, unused, overlooked, universalised or suppressed), as Schachtel has described. Much of the inner, deeper nature is therefore unconscious. This can be true not only for impulses (drives, instincts, needs) as Freud has stressed, but also for capacities, emotions, judgements, attitudes, definitions, perceptions, etc. Active repression takes efforts and uses up energy. There are many specific techniques of maintaining active unconsciousness, such as denial, projection, reaction-formation, etc. However, repression does not kill what is repressed. The repressed remains as one active determinant of though and behavior.62

The second major incident comes before us when Mrs. Alving pricks his heart by asking him if he really did the right thing by sending her back to Captain Alving. At once he regresses into his earlier world of senses and can't resist his utterance, “Helen!” Such a familiar address, instead of calling her Mrs. Alving, is a strong indication of his fancy for her. Still more, why should Mrs. Alving have come to him with the request ‘take me’, had he not ever presented himself to her both in body and spirit. There is an inner urge which Pastor hides in his spiritual robes. It is case of a man, in whom the spiritual and the sensuous are the two cardinal points but the persona of Pastor which he has come to live up to, is only too conductive to the expression of the spiritual with detriment to the sensuous. A worldly man is rather freer to change his persona.
from spiritual to sensuous. All the labels, ideologies personas in the fixed mode only restrict the free movements of individuals. An existentialist, therefore, refuses to be moulded by a particular fixed mode. The reason is that essence of man is what he displays through projection, which an existentialist believes over to be changing, as against Descartesian view where the essence is given priority over existence. When a man starts considering essence or persona in the fixed mode, unable to change according to inner urge, it is a state of bad faith in existentialism which can lead to a sense of guilt or alienation from one’s own self. According to existential perspective, the existence with its here and now standing for freedom has priority over essence. William Barrett points out in this context:

Modern existentialism, particularly in the writings of Sartre, has made much of the thesis: existence precedes essence. In case of man, its meaning is difficult to grasp. Man exists and makes himself to be what he is; his individual essence or nature comes out to be out of his existence, and it is in this sense it is proper to say that existence precedes essence. Man does not have a fixed essence that is handed down to him ready made, rather he makes his own nature out of his freedom and the historical conditions in which he is placed.

Instead of coming out of his historical situation by using his freedom, Pastor rather makes no efforts to develop his own nature. He is content to be steeped in the ‘essence’ handed down to him since he joined the clergy. He fails to see that man expresses himself through free choice. Freedom exists before man as freedom of choice. The authentic existence is one where man has chosen according to his innermost urge i.e. when it represents ‘ownliness’ of choice. Sartre believes that ‘being-in-itself’ is freedom or nothingness but it is out of nothingness that all the values and essences come into the world. When man chooses under the spell of man-made values, traditions or fixed mode, not heeding to his existential individuality, he gets alienated from his own freedom. Basically Sartre says that being-for-itself is all freedom. But he also delineates patterns of bad faith which can alienate man from his own freedom. In fact Sartre believes that this alienation continues till bad faith
persists. The moment an individual asserts by taking a free attitude, that nothing can bind him, which is also an existential fact, he recovers his alienated freedom. But free subjectivity, comes to stake in relation with the other. As an existentialist, Sartre thinks that there may he a "clogging of consciousness" in relation with others resulting from the loss of free subjectivity, be it sex, love, sadism, masochism, hate, shame or guilt. But an individual can again recover his 'free subjectivity asserting his freedom. In the critical moment, when Pastor could have realised the shaky ground of all the values or personas, he couldn't muster up courage to stand alone as a free self above, all these values or personas. After all, it not easy to be one's freedom, "I am abandoned in the world, not in the sense that I might remain abandoned and passive and hostile universe like a boat floating on water but rather in the sense that I find myself suddenly alone and without help, engaged in the world for which I bear the whole responsibility".

In is therefore that the Pastor is solely responsible for not choosing like a free-man. With regard to his relationship with Mrs. Alving, therefore, his decision turns out to be the biggest fiasco. He has caused her immense harm, without ever meaning to cause it. With the best of intentions, he stands as an arbiter of her life and its decisive turns. It is he who guides her at the crucial moments. His responses and reactions at the critical moments are highly unsatisfactory. He reads 'evil' in her rejection of her husband and consequent coming to him. He wraps himself in tyrannical ethos and does not let any breeze of harm to enter into that wrap. His response is culture and religion oriented. He is perfectly blind to what Abraham Maslow States in this context.

In any case, much that our or any other culture calls evil need not be considered evil in fact, from the more universal, species-wide point of view outlined in this book. If humanness is accepted and loved, then many local, ethnocentric problems simply disappear. To take only one example, seeing sex as intrinsically evil is sheer nonsense from a humanistic point of view.
For Pastor Manders, Mrs. Alving's request for shelter is sexually scandalous. He does not exercise his discretion in that sexual relationship is not the only relationship between two persons of opposite sex. He could definitely give her shelter and help her in choosing some more sublimating path. He could definitely offer her some ecclesiastical post in the religious order which he himself represents. And he knows that she is not going to disobey him, keeping in view the high regards that she has for him. He could definitely treat her "root and all" method advocated by Erich Fromm. Instead of plucking the flower from the plant of her aspirations, which is sure to wither soon after it has been plucked, he could use fresh soil, water and manure for the plant to produce more, beautiful flowers. Contrary to this, he sends her back to justify his ecclesiastical robes. He refuses to recognise the basic humanness of the situation and turns a blind eye to what F. L. Lucas states in this context.

Rules, codes, moralities, ties, we must have; but constantly we forget that laws are made for men, not men for laws. What is the object of society? That individuals should lead full, happy, and useful lives. Normal men seek happiness. Some tell them that happiness is not to be had in this world; some tell them, like your Carlyle, that it is degrading to seek happiness at all. Such minds I have come to think morbid. You may, indeed, be surprised to hear that I was influenced by the saner views on human happiness I found in an English thinker of whom I was at other times critical — John Stuart Mill.

Despite being a Pastor of repute, he never allows Mrs. Alving to follow her own moral sense, listen to her inner voices. Rather he expects her to live by dictates of society. Equally interesting is the fact that he himself, too, does not live by his own moral sense, which to my mind in badly conditioned programmed, and prejudiced. In fact his moral codes for women are different from those for men and therefore can't be employed to bring a healthy enrichment of society. Hans Heiberg's observation is very appropriate in this context:
The unmentionable disease was a consequence of strict moral code for women and wholly different code for men. Women were duty-bound to remain good and virtuous within the boundaries of marriage while men could ravage freely, whether married or no and buy themselves cheap eroticism anywhere. Pastors Manders does not understand that there are no absolutes in this world, there is no possibility of legalising choices or assigning unequivocal values to existential decisions. "Liberty", as Ibsen noted in his jottings for The Wild Duck, "consists of giving the individual right to celebrate himself, each according to his personal needs." No such right Pastor grants to Mrs. Alving. Thus instead of acting as an enlivening force and assisting men in fighting the battle with ghosts, he creates more and spreads the veil of gloom.

Therefore the key question then that springs up out of this analysis is where does Pastor reach in the end? What does he attain? No doubt he will undergo the enantiodromia of his life because all the foundational bricks of his life's edifice have been taken out by Mrs. Alving one by one. None of his decisions turns out to be authentic and productively oriented (cf. Erich Fromm) Mrs. Alving's grooming in his hands proves out to be lop-sided as it does not prepare her to face the frightening challenges of life. The sole responsibility lies on his shoulders because Pastor himself has never cared to select, reject, sift and resift what comes before him. He has never allowed himself any choice, all his decisions have been based on 'single-track methodology i.e. whatever stands the test of his fragmentary and convention-based knowledge is good and therefore must be adopted and pursued in life most vigorously, even if it goes against the inner urges. Any thing which is at variance with his crammed philosophy, must be shuddered at and shunned.

Thus it can be assumed that Pastor is a man with non-productive frame of orientation and therefore a failure. And since Pastor has no proper attitude towards himself, he does not have pure consciousness. He never talks about purification in terms of inner-self which is must for freedom. We can better
understand him in the context of Vedanta, the Indian Scripture, where the individual is considered to be ever free, though sometimes he may think himself to be bound by shackles of this world under the veil of ignorance. Though, unlike existentialism, in Vedanta the psychic apparatus (anta karana) i.e. the means of cognitions, is more ramified, far apart from ‘ahankara’ (ego), Vedanta also classifies ‘Manas’ (Mind), ‘Buddhi’ (Intellect), ‘Chitta’ (Consciousness) and Atma (Soul). Pastor’s existential analysis of having been ‘deceptive I’ can also be compared with the Vedantic exposition. The ‘Chitta’ (consciousness) may appear to be tainted through the ‘Vrittis’ (particular inclinations) of the mind or the intellect. When the Chitta (consciousness) becomes like a clean mirror, the ever free soul is realised. The Upanishads also offer testimony in this respect: “While living in the world, one must make efforts to purify the Chitta. By being absorbed in the Chitta, or the Chitta being absorbed, the hidden Brahman (God) is realised—. If the Chitta is attached to Brahman with as much intensity as it is attached to the worldly objects, who is there in the world who will not be liberated?” (Maitrani Upanishad chapter-1 Mantra 5-7).

Therefore, for realising the ever free nature of God or soul, it is imperative to be rooted in pure consciousness, from which Pastor is miles away. Sartre, no doubt, denies the existence of God but it is never the less parallel to show Pastor Mander’s state of bondage which he can certainly transcend by taking the proper attitude towards himself.

Pastor Manders, unable to stand alone in the face of all his failures, surrenders before the wily Engstrand who ultimately emerges as Pastor Manders’ “doppelganger” and takes him along with him. In the end the two are shown together travelling in the same boat, signifying the enantiodromia that Seaman’s Home will be converted into Alving’s Home, wherein Pastor may become a priest of sexuality. He is surely going to have such a fall.
To conclude, Mrs. Alving's dreadful encounters with the realities of life have left her with nothing to look back, left or right. Now all the dybbuks of her life stand exorcised. Therefore her own life, with all its zig-zag ways becomes a full scale project to be pursued freely. But in case of Pastor Manders there is ample scope to develop a proper attitude towards himself. But it is not going to happen because he has already preferred to choose wily Engstrand as his fellow traveller in the boat. There can be no question of his freedom.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2 Ibid., p.190.

3 Ibid., p:193.

4 Ibid., p. 204.

5 Ibid. ,p. 205.


11 Ibid., p.608.


14 Ibid., p.514.


18 Ibid., p. 162.


21 Ibid., p.217.


30 Ibid., p. 468.
Proprium is a term used by Allport to signify all the various aspects of the person that make him or her unique. It is a synonym for the self. It includes all aspects of personality that make for inward unity. In Allport’s opinion, the Proprium or self is continuously developing from infancy to death. It includes the bodily-self, self-identity, self-esteem, self-extension and self-image.


H. L. Menken, Intro., Eleven Plays of Henrik Ibsen (The modern Library; New York, 1957), p. 134. (All subsequent quotations have been taken from this edition and they are indicated by page numbers given in parentheses along with the abbreviation GS).


The concept of constructive alternativism underlies Kelly’s theory of cognition. Although it is an imposing term, the concept is really not too difficult to understand. It refers to the assumption that all of us are capable of changing or replacing our present interpretation of events. In colloquial terms, we can always change our minds. But the assumption also implies that our behaviour is never completely determined. We are always free to some extent to reinterpret our experiences.


Desmond MacCarth, p. xviii.

F.L. Lucas, p. 162.

Samuel T. Gladding, p. 197.

James C. Coleman, p. 70.
43 G.B. Shaw, p. 603.


45 G.B. Shaw, p.603.

46 Samuel T. Gladding, p. 197.

47 C-P-C Cycle refers to Kelly’s Model of Circumspection-Pre-emption-Control. Kelly says that the cycle begins when the person considers all the possible ways to construe a given situation. That is, one considers a series of propositional constructs that might help oneself in dealing with the situation at hand. The pre-emption phase comes into play next when one reduces the number of constructs available to one and considers seriously only those that will help oneself solve the problem. Finally, one decides on a course of action by making a choice of that alternative in a single construct one believes will lead to action that will solve the problem. Kelly states that people are continually acting in this way.

48 G. B. Shaw, p.603.


54 F.L. Lucas, p.164.

55 Abraham H. Maslow, p.266.

56 G. Wilson Knight, p.53.
57 Ibid., p.51.


61 Abraham H. Maslow, p.191.

62 Ibid., pp.191-192.


64 Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p.555.

65 Abraham H. Maslow, pp.195-196

66 Erich Fromm in his book *To Have OR TO BE* quotes Goethe’s poem titled “Found” to illustrate that encounter with reality in its totality produces best results. If one plucks a flower from a plant, it withers away very soon. But if the entire plant is taken out ‘root and all’ and replanted in congenial conditions, it can produce a large number of similar flowers. In other words, while dealing with others, one must not indulge in choose and pluck. Instead, one must look at a particular situation comprehensively, ‘root and all’ to have a better peep into reality.

67 F.L. Lucas, p.162.

68 Hans Heiberg, p.214.

69 The Concept of Doppelganger exists in Yiddish Folklore. Doppelganger refers to that aspect of personality within a person which is totally at variance or in opposition to one’s normal conscious good personality. Sometime, it happens that Doppelganger takes over one’s personality which makes difficult to explain certain actions of man.